

# OFFICERS' PULSE

Issue no. 29 | 13th December to 19th December, 2020

## COVERAGE.

The Hindu

The Indian Express

PIB

Rajya Sabha TV

All India Radio

**AT A GLANCE  
& IN DEPTH.**

Polity and Social Issues

Economy

International Relations

Environment

Science and Tech

Culture

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



# News @ a glance

<b>POLITY.....</b>	<b>3</b>	2) CAATSA.....	15
1) Hunger Watch.....	3	3) US adds India in monitoring list.....	16
2) Pandemic, poverty spur child marriages.....	3	<b>DEFENCE.....</b>	<b>18</b>
3) Ayushman Bharat.....	5	1) Artillery Gun trials.....	18
4) OCI students eligible for govt quota seats...	6	2) Stealth Frigates.....	18
5) Human Development Report.....	6	3) Early Warning Aircraft.....	18
<b>ENVIRONMENT.....</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.....</b>	<b>20</b>
1) Bringing life back to Western Ghats grasslands.....	9	1) Tuberculosis Diagnosis.....	20
2) Myristica swamp tree frog.....	9	2) Sewage analysis.....	20
3) Code red: UN calls for urgent shift to planet-friendly development.....	10	3) Cybersecurity.....	21
4) Amur falcon sighted near Point Calimere..	11	4) PSLV C-50.....	21
5) Kolleru beckons nature lovers.....	12	<b>ART &amp; CULTURE.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>ECONOMY.....</b>	<b>13</b>	1) Dawoodi Bohra.....	23
1) National Payments Corporation of India...	13	<b>PIB ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>24</b>
2) Non-Banking Financial Company.....	13	1) Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Package.....	24
3) Financial Stability and Development Council.....	13	2) Vision 2035: Public Health Surveillance in India with the vision.....	25
<b>INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.....</b>	<b>15</b>	3) eSanjeevani.....	26
1) Uighurs.....	15	4) National Family Health Survey-5.....	27
		5) Quality Council of India.....	28

# News in Depth

<b>AIR NEWS</b> .....	<b>29</b>	<b>INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED</b> .....	<b>38</b>
1) Lok Adalat.....	29	1) Serow sighting in the Spiti valley.....	38
2) New Development Bank .....	30	2) The significance of US recognising Morocco's sovereignty over Western Sahara.....	38
3) Defence Acquisition Council .....	30	3) How does India choose its Republic Day Chief Guest? .....	39
<b>THE HINDU EDITORIALS</b> .....	<b>32</b>	4) How Parliament meets .....	40
1) A sector that needs to be nursed back to health.....	32	<b>RSTV BIG PICTURE</b> .....	<b>41</b>
2) Hazardous ideas for the Himalayas.....	33	1) Joint use of Chabahar Port.....	41
3) India needs to rethink its nutrition agenda	34	2) Strengthening India-Bangladesh Ties.....	41
4) Tax policy in trying times.....	35		
5) The many challenges for WTO .....	36		

# News @ a glance

## POLITY

### 1) Hunger Watch

#### What's in the news?

- The **Right to Food Campaign**, an informal network of organisations and individuals committed to the realisation of the right to food in India, has released a survey of 4,000 people living on the margins across 11 States in September and October.
- The survey, called **Hunger Watch**, recorded responses from marginalised and excluded communities, such as the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and minority religious communities including Muslims, 80% of whom earned less than ₹7,000 a month before the lockdown in March.

#### Highlights of the survey

- The survey reveals that six or seven months after the lockdown, people continued to go to bed hungry, skip meals frequently, and are unable to afford nutritious diets because of loss of income.
- It calls into question the government's decision to withdraw free foodgrains under the **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY)** after November.
- *Under PMGKY notified in March 2020, the Union government announced that 80 crore poor people would get 5 kg wheat or rice and 1 kg of preferred pulses for free every month.*

#### Drastic drop in intake

- Over half the people surveyed said their consumption of rice and wheat had decreased and 25% said this had "decreased a lot." Similarly, 64% reported a decrease in consumption of pulses, while nearly 30% said this had "decreased a lot".
- On consumption of vegetables, 73% reported a drop in consumption of vegetables, while nearly 40% said there was a drastic decrease in their use. About 71% of those who were nonvegetarians could not afford eggs or meat.

- Nearly 66% of people said they were having less than the quantity of food they used to eat.

#### Discrimination on the lines of caste and religion

- There was also discrimination on the lines of caste and religion while accessing food during the lockdown. One in four Dalits and one in four Muslims reported they faced discrimination and about 12% of Scheduled Tribes felt discriminated against.
- Similarly, sex workers, domestic workers, as well as single women faced additional difficulties as many of them had **no PDS or any documents** without which they were dependent entirely on charity from civil society organisations for their food requirements.
- This food insecurity is a direct result of economic precariousness — 43% of those surveyed had no income immediately after the lockdown in April and May, and only 3% of them have returned to the pre-lockdown income levels. As many as 56% without any income in the beginning of the lockdown still had no income.

### 2) Pandemic, poverty spur child marriages

#### What's in the news?

- The COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown have proved to be new drivers of child marriages in India.
- Across India, 5,214 child marriages were reported in the first four months of the lockdown between March and June.
- The **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** also warned that coronavirus restrictions may delay interventions against child marriage and cause a long-lasting economic downturn that will push more families into poverty, which is a key driver of child marriage.

#### Child marriages in India

- Since 1978, the legal age for marriage in India has been 18 years for women and 21 years for men. **The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006** imposes two years in prison for parents marrying off their underage children.
- While legal enactment is a necessary condition, it has proven far from sufficient to decrease the number of child marriages.
- According to a UNICEF report in 2017, around **27% of the girls under the age of 18**—over 15 lakh—became child brides in India, which is the highest in the world.

#### Major drivers of Child marriages

- According to a survey conducted by the **Centre for Social Research (CSR)**, the main driver for early marriage is **economic hardship**.
- Parents push their girls into early marriage mainly to absolve themselves of the responsibility of rearing the girl child. They feel this saves them both money and bother as the girl then becomes the responsibility of the boy's family.
- In India, there exists a **demand for child brides**. Between **female foeticide**, **skewing the sex ratio at birth** and son-preferring couples investing **fewer resources in the care of daughters** than sons, more males survive to traditional marriage age than females in India. To find brides in the face of this sex ratio imbalance is a struggle.
- There are reports in states like Haryana **"import" and "buy" brides from poorer states**.

#### Consequences

- The ramifications of the continuing practice of child marriage are well-documented. It **strips girls of educational opportunities and subjugates them to lives of oppression, domestic violence, and childbirth**.
- According to the **World Health Organization**, the primary causes of death for girls ages 15 to 19 are pregnancy or childbirth-induced complications.
- Early marriage, early pregnancies, and early motherhood have a direct bearing on **maternal and infant health**. Adolescent mothers who remain undernourished grow up to be undernourished women, who in turn give birth to undernourished children.

- According to studies done by CSR, girls who are married off early are far **more vulnerable to physical abuse, even rape**.

#### Necessary steps

- According to the **UNFPA's State of World Population Report 2020**, but two countries – China (50%) and India (40%) – together account for about 90% of the estimated 1.2 million **missing female births** annually worldwide **due to gender-biased (prenatal) sex selection**. Out of the 142 million women missing globally, 46 million are missing in India.
- Solutions to ending early and forced marriages have to do with **ending anti-female biases and discrimination against girls and women**.
- The report reiterates that child marriage happens because **girls are usually less valued than boys**, and because **poverty, insecurity and limited access to quality education and work opportunities** mean that child marriage is often seen as the best option for girls or as a way for parents to mitigate the household's difficult economic circumstances.
- Within India, **child marriage is closely tied to low levels of income and education, poverty and rural residence**. This is why **southern states** such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu have lower proportions of early marriages as compared to Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.
- Evidence suggests that **allowing girls to complete their education** delays marriage and provides them with the opportunity of being financially independent. Education acts as the agency to uphold their sexual and reproductive rights in their choice to plan, number and space the births of their children.
- **Investments in behavioural social change communication** should be stepped up manifold to change marriage norms that exclude girls and boys from marriage-related decision-making. Equally important would be to improve the **quality and enhance access to family planning services**.
- State governments can consider **providing small loans and incentives like bicycles, laptops or access to technical skills** for young women to promote secondary education and skill development. It would

unleash a virtuous cycle that would go a long way in rapidly shifting attitudes.

- Much greater attention should be paid to creating **opportunities for paid work** among women and girls; work that ensures **safety while commuting, as well at the place of work.**
- Educating the girls and parents, promoting gender sensitization and social awareness are key to eradicating minors' marriages.

#### Recent measures

- India is committed to eliminating child, early, and forced marriage by 2030 in line with **target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals.**
- A **National Action Plan to prevent underage marriages**, drafted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2013, focuses on "law enforcement, changing mind-sets and social norms, empowering adolescents, quality education and sharing knowledge."
- A report by the **Law Commission** in 2017 recommended making marriage registration compulsory to prevent forced and early marriages.
- The Union government is also considering **raising the minimum legal age of marriage for women from 18 to 21**, to reduce the prevalence of child brides in India.

### 3) Ayushman Bharat

#### About the scheme

- It is an umbrella of two major health initiatives, namely **Health and Wellness Centres** and **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY).**

#### Health and Wellness Centres

- Under this **1.5 lakh** existing Sub Health Centres (SHC), Primary Health Centres (PHC) and Urban Primary Health Centres (UPHC) to be transformed as **Health Wellness Centres (HWC)** by 2022.
- These centres will deliver **Comprehensive Primary Health Care** that is **universal and free** to users, with a focus on wellness and the delivery of an expanded range of services closer to the community.
- HWC are envisaged to deliver expanded range services that go beyond Maternal and child health care services to include care for non-communicable diseases, palliative

and rehabilitative care, Oral, Eye and ENT care, mental health and first level care for emergencies and trauma, including free essential drugs and diagnostic services.

#### Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana

- It is one significant step towards achievement of **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)** and **Sustainable Development Goal - 3** (SDG3: "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages").
- AB-PMJAY will provide financial protection to 10.74 crore poor, deprived rural families and identified occupational categories of urban workers' families as per the latest **Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) data** (approx. 50 crore beneficiaries). It will offer a benefit cover of **Rs. 500,000 per family per year.**
- This cover will take care of **almost all secondary care and most of tertiary care procedures.**
- To ensure that nobody is left out (especially women, children and elderly) there will be **no cap on family size and age** in the scheme.
- The benefit cover will also include **pre and post-hospitalisation expenses.**
- A defined **transport allowance** per hospitalization will also be paid to the beneficiary.
- Benefits of the scheme are **portable across the country** and a beneficiary covered under the scheme will be allowed to take cashless benefits from **any public/private empanelled hospitals** across the country.

#### Implementation Strategy

- At the national level to manage, a **National Health Authority** has been set up. It will be chaired by the Minister of Health & Family Welfare which will enable the decision making at a faster pace, required for smooth implementation of the scheme.
- States/ UTs are advised to implement the scheme by a dedicated entity called State Health Agency (SHA).

#### Why in News?

- Data from a survey released by the National Health Agency shows that private hospitals account for 63% for all PMJAY claims and 75% of the total claim value.
- The agency's survey also found that over **72% of private empanelled hospitals are located in just seven states:** Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Punjab and Karnataka.

- Medical audits have also revealed that **private hospitals are more likely to indulge in fraud and abuse** than public hospitals and more likely to discharge patients early post-surgery to cut costs.

#### 4) OCI students eligible for govt quota seats

##### Overseas Citizen of India

- An Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) is a person registered as OCI Cardholder under **section 7A of the Citizenship Act, 1955.**
- Following categories of foreign nationals are eligible for registration as OCI Cardholder:-
  1. who was a citizen of India at the time of, or at any time after the commencement of the Constitution i.e. 26.01.1950; or
  2. who was eligible to become a citizen of India on 26.01.1950; or
  3. who belonged to a territory that became part of India after 15.08.1947; or
  4. who is a child or a grandchild or great grandchild of such a citizen; or
  5. spouse of foreign origin of a citizen of India or spouse of foreign origin of an OCI Cardholder
- **Note:** No person who or either of whose parents or grandparents or great grandparents is or had been a **citizen of Pakistan, Bangladesh or such other country as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, specify,** shall be eligible for registration as an OCI Cardholder.

##### What benefits an OCI cardholder is entitled to?

- Multiple entry life-long visa for visiting India for any purpose.
- Parity with Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) in respect of all facilities available to them in economic, financial, and educational fields **except in matters relating to the acquisition of agricultural or plantation properties.**
- Registered OCI Cardholder shall be treated at par with NRIs in the matter of inter-country adoption of Indian children.

##### The OCI Card holder is not entitled:

- To vote,

- To be a member of a Legislative Assembly or of a Legislative Council or of the Parliament of India,
- To hold Indian constitutional posts such as that of the President, Vice President, Judge of the Supreme Court or High Court etc.
- He/she cannot normally hold employment in the Government.

##### Why in News?

- The Karnataka high court has ordered that students holding Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) cards should be treated as Indian citizens for the purpose of admission to professional courses and they are entitled to admission under the state quota.
- The court observation came while disposing of a batch of petitions by students and a writ appeal by the Karnataka state government.

#### 5) Human Development Report

##### About the report

- The Human Development Report (HDR) is an annual report published by the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).**
- The first HDR was launched in 1990 by the Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq and Indian Nobel laureate Amartya Sen. Since then reports have been released most years, and have explored different themes through the human development approach, which places people at the center of the development process.
- As part of the report, the UNDP releases the **Human Development Index.**

##### About Human Development Index (HDI)

- HDI is a statistical tool used to measure a country's overall achievement in its social and economic dimensions.
- Calculation of the index combines four major indicators:

- 1) **life expectancy for health,**
- 2) **expected years of schooling,**
- 3) **mean of years of schooling for education and**
- 4) **Gross National Income per capita for standard of living.**

- The HDI is the **geometric mean** of normalized indices for each of these indicators.

##### Why in News?

- UNDP has released its Human Development Report (HDR) 2020.

- Although this year's report covers 2019 only, and does not account for the impact of COVID, it projected that in 2020, global HDI would fall below for the first time in the three decades since the Index was introduced.

### Human Development Index

- **India ranked 131 among 189 countries on the Human Development Index for 2019**, slipping two places from the previous year. India's HDI value for 2019 is **0.645**.
- **India's gross national income (GNI) per capita on the basis of purchasing power parity (PPP), fell from \$6,829 in 2018 to \$6,681 in 2019.**
- *The PPP is a measurement for prices in different countries in terms of the purchasing power of the currency for specific goods.*
- **Life expectancy for Indian's at birth was 69.7 years in 2019.**
- In terms of GNI per capita, India at \$6,681 fared better than some others in 2019, despite a fall over the previous year. In South Asia, the average was \$6,532 and among medium HDI countries it was \$6,153.

### Performance of other countries

- **Norway** topped the HDI index, followed by Ireland and Switzerland. Hong Kong and Iceland complete the top five.
- India, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, Cambodia, Kenya and Pakistan were ranked among countries with "medium human development" with ranks between 120 and 156.
- In the BRICS grouping, Russia was 52 in the human development index, Brazil 84, and China 85.

### Comparison with previous rankings

- Between 1990 and 2019, India's HDI value **increased from 0.429 to 0.645**, an increase of 50.3%.
- Between 1990 and 2019, India's **life expectancy at birth increased by 11.8 years, mean years of schooling increased by 3.5 years, and expected years of schooling increased by 4.5 years.** India's **GNI per capita increased by about 273.9%** between 1990 and 2019.

### Planetary Pressures-adjusted HDI

- For the first time, the UNDP introduced a new metric to **reflect the impact caused**

### by each country's per capita carbon emissions and its material footprint.

- The material footprint measures the amount of fossil fuels, metals and other resources used by a country to make the goods and services it consumes. This is known as the **Planetary Pressures-adjusted HDI, or PHDI**.
- If the index were adjusted to assess the planetary pressures caused by each nation's development, **India would move up eight places** in the ranking. Norway, which tops the HDI, falls 15 places if this metric is used, leaving Ireland at the top.

### Displacements due to climate change

- After two decades of progress, the **number of people affected by hunger has been increasing** since the low of 628 million in 2014. In 2019, the number was 688 million, up 60 million in only five years.
- The report also underlined the **effects of climate change**. In 2019, some 25 million people worldwide were internally displaced because of natural hazards.
- **Disasters** continued to trigger most new displacements in 2020. Cyclone Amphan hit India and Bangladesh, driving the largest single displacement event in the first half of the year and triggering 3.3 million pre-emptive evacuations.
- The number of people vulnerable to permanent sea-level rise is estimated to increase from 110 million now to more than 200 million by 2100.

### India's green initiatives

- UNDP hailed India's commitment towards cutting down carbon emissions.
- It stated that under the **Paris Agreement**, India pledged to reduce the emission intensity of its GDP from the 2005 level by 33-35 per cent by 2030 and to obtain 40 per cent of electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030.
- As part of the plan, the **National Solar Mission** aims to promote solar energy for power generation and other uses to make solar energy competitive with fossil fuel-based options. Solar capacity in India increased from 2.6 gigawatts in March 2014 to 30 gigawatts in July 2019, achieving its target of 20 gigawatts four years ahead of schedule. In 2019, **India ranked fifth for installed solar capacity.**

**For doubts and queries email us at: [doubts@officerspulse.com](mailto:doubts@officerspulse.com)**

# ENVIRONMENT

## 1) Bringing life back to Western Ghats grasslands

### Tropical Montane Grasslands (TMG)

- TMG are high elevation grasslands that form only 2% of all grasslands in the world.
- They function in regulating the global carbon cycle and serving as a source of water to downstream communities.
- In India these are found in **Western Ghats**.

### Shola Forests



- Shola forests are montane evergreen forests found in the highest reaches of the Western Ghats.
- These forests have different scales of patchiness; first, at a large scale Sholas are found on geographically isolated high elevation regions forming one of the “**Sky-island**” systems of the world. (Sky islands are isolated mountains surrounded by radically different lowland environments)
- Second, on each ‘island’ there is a matrix of natural grassland and forests. Finally, at a third scale, human habitations have fragmented forest patches on each island.
- This leaves us with a habitat that is isolated at different scales in distance (100s of kilometres to a few meters) and time (millions of years to a few decades). At present we know close to nothing about how species cope with this isolation.

### Invasive species

- An invasive species can be any kind of living organism—an amphibian (like the cane toad), plant, insect, fish, fungus, bacteria, or even an organism’s seeds or

eggs—that is **not native to an ecosystem and causes harm**.

- They can harm the environment, the economy, or even human health. Species that grow and reproduce quickly, and spread aggressively, with potential to cause harm, are given the label “invasive.”

### Why in the news?

- A recent study has pointed that the Tropical montane grasslands in the Shola Sky Islands of the Western Ghats are being reduced by invasive species such as **acacias, pines and eucalyptus**.
- This has also affected the biodiversity of these grasslands.
- 23% of montane grasslands were reportedly converted into invasive exotic tree cover over a period of 44 years.

### Major cause of reduction

- In India, Tropical Montane Grasslands have even been classified as **wastelands** in forest management plans since they are unlikely to generate revenue, contrary to the timber (even if exotic) found in forests.
- Hence, they have been neglected which has led to their destruction.

### What steps have been suggested by the study?

- The study has identified grassland restoration sites using satellite images in **Nilgiris, Palani Hills and Anamalai** and has recommended **careful removal of young and isolated exotic trees** at the invasion front and restoring grasslands, instead of removing dense stands of mature invasive exotic trees.

## 2) Myristica swamp tree frog



### Why in the news?

- Myristica Swamp tree frog has been found in Thrissur, Kerala.

#### About



- The Myristica swamp( in the pic) is a tropical freshwater swamp forest with a large number of nutmeg trees. The Myristica tree is the most primitive flowering plant on earth.
- Myristica Swamp Tree frog is a rare arboreal species (which lives on trees most of its life).

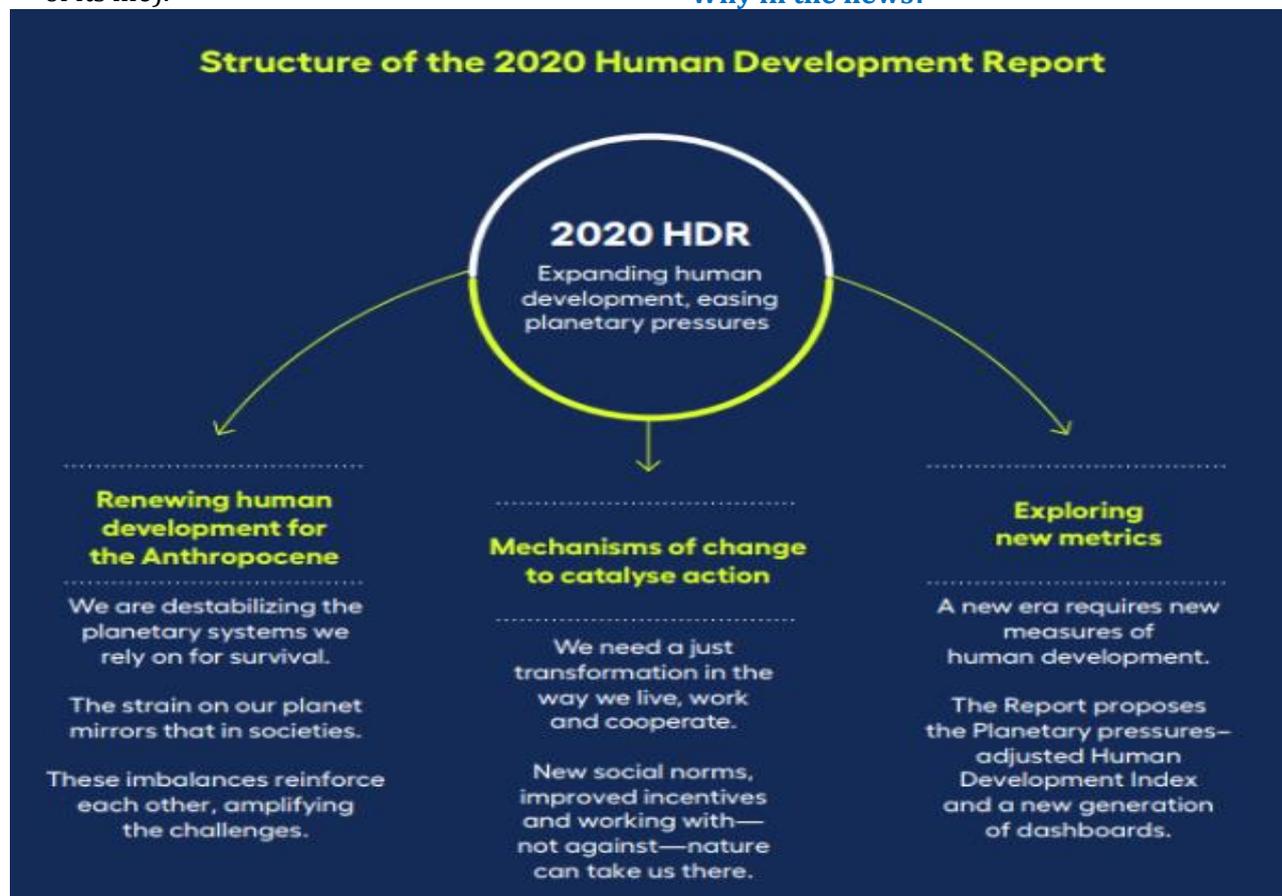
- These frogs are active only for a few weeks during the breeding season.
- Unlike other frogs, the breeding season begins in the pre-monsoon season (May) and ends before the monsoon is fully active in June. Before the end of the breeding season, the female and male frogs descend to the forest floor together.
- The female digs mud and lays eggs in shallow caves. After reproduction and spawning, they retreat to the high canopy of the tree and remain elusive until the next breeding season.

### 3) Code red: UN calls for urgent shift to planet-friendly development

#### Human Development Report (HDR)

- It has been prepared and published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) since 1990.
- It measures human development by indicators of **health, education and standards of living**.

#### Why in the news?



- HDR celebrated its 30th anniversary and revised its indicators to include

environmental factors to measure actual growth without straining the natural resources.

- The new version of HDR tries to measure two additional elements: a country's **per capita carbon dioxide emissions and material footprint**, which measures the amount of things like **fossil fuels and metal** used to make the goods and services it consumes.
- It recognised that humans on earth have started a new epoch- **Anthropocene epoch** and we must try to bring harmony with the earth through sustainable utilisation of resources.
- With change in the indicator many big countries fell in the ranking like, Australia was dropped by 72 ranks, USA was down by 45 ranks and Canada by 40 ranks.
- The report noted new estimates that by 2100 the poorest nations could experience up to 100 more days of extreme weather each year as the planet warms – but that could be cut in half if the Paris Agreement on climate change is fully implemented.
- The United Nations said under huge pressure from COVID-19, climate change and natural destruction, warning lights for the planet and societies are “flashing red” –

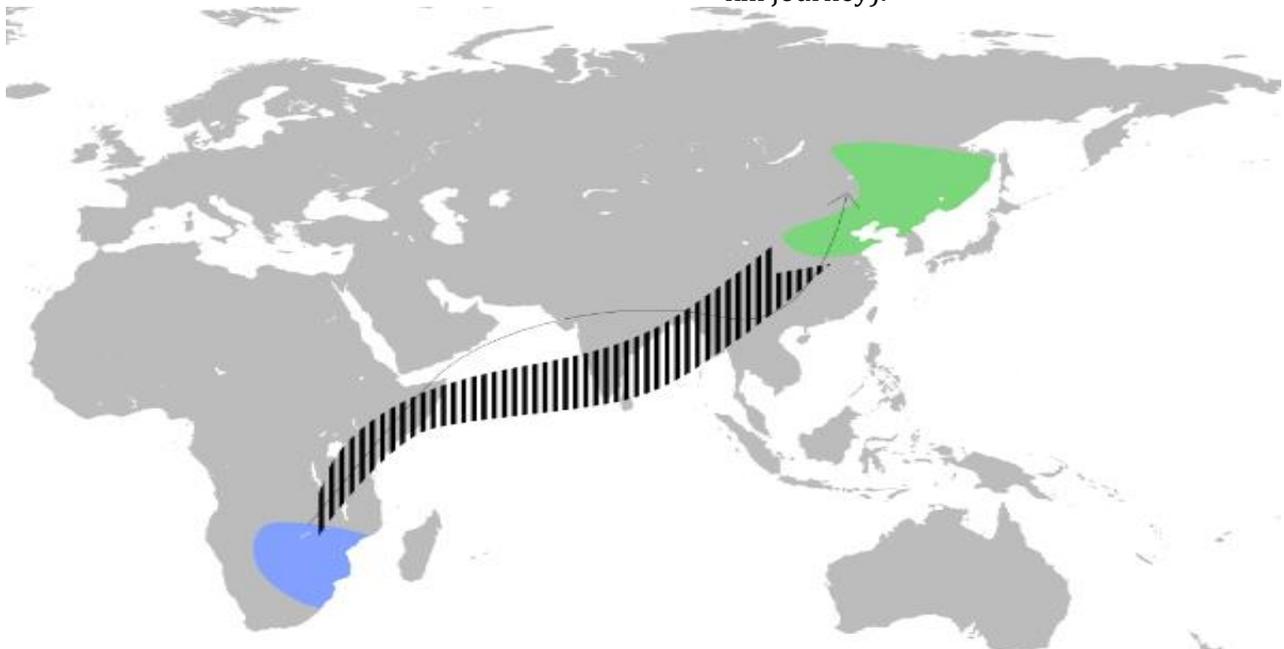
and now is the time to choose a safer, fairer path for human development.

#### 4) Amur falcon sighted near Point Calimere

##### About Amur Falcon



- The Amur falcon is a small raptor (Raptor is a bird which preys on other small animals) of the falcon family.
- It breeds in south-eastern Siberia and Northern China before migrating in large flocks across India and over the Arabian Sea to winter in Southern Africa. (Migration route given in the map). (Estimated 22,000 km journey).



- According to IUCN it has **Least Concern** conservation status. But the flocking behaviour during migration and the density, at which they occur, however, expose them to hunting and other threats.

##### Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary

- Kodiakkarai also called Point Calimere or Cape Calimere is a low headland on the Coromandel Coast, in the Nagapattinam district of the state of **Tamil Nadu**.

- It is the **apex of the Cauvery River delta**, and marks a nearly right-angle turn in the coastline.
- Point Calimere is home to the endangered **endemic Indian blackbuck** (a species of deer) and is one of the few known wintering locations of the spoon-billed sandpiper (a type of bird).
- It also holds large wintering populations of greater flamingos in India and other migratory birds.

#### Why in the news?

- An Amur falcon was sighted for the first time in the Point Calimere Sanctuary.
- This is surprising as south India does not fall in the line of Amur falcons' migratory path which mainly passes through north-east India and central India.
- Scientists predict that a change in the wind pattern, caused by Cyclones Nivar and Burevi, could have been the reason for the lone falcon to find its way to Point Calimere.

### 5) Kolleru beckons nature lovers

#### About Kolleru lake

- It is a natural eutrophic lake (a lake with high productivity, high nutrients and with dark water. The water is usually not good for drinking purpose) in **Andhra Pradesh**, situated between the two major river basins of the **Godavari and the Krishna**, fed by two seasonal rivers and a number of

drains and channels, which functions as a natural flood balancing reservoir between the deltas of the two rivers.

- It provides habitat for a number of resident and migratory birds, including declining numbers of the **vulnerable Grey Pelican** (*Pelecanus philippensis*), and sustains both culture and capture fisheries, agriculture and related occupations of the people in the area.



#### Why in the news?

- Kolleru lake has become a tourist attraction after the recovery due to heavy rains recently.
- It has revived fish populations and helped the localities revive their occupations.

For doubts and queries email us at [doubts@officerspulse.com](mailto:doubts@officerspulse.com)

# ECONOMY

## 1) National Payments Corporation of India

### About NPCI

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) was incorporated in 2008 as an umbrella organization for operating retail payments and settlement systems in India.
- It is an initiative of **the RBI and Indian Banks' Association (IBA)** under the provisions of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, for creating a robust Payment & Settlement Infrastructure in India.
- It has been incorporated as a **"Not for Profit" Company** under the Companies Act 2013.
- It has changed the way payments are made in India through a bouquet of retail payment products such as **RuPay card, Immediate Payment Service (IMPS), Unified Payments Interface (UPI), Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM), BHIM Aadhaar, National Electronic Toll Collection (NETC Fastag) and Bharat BillPay.**

### Why in News?

- The National Payments Corporation of India recently said that the COVID pandemic had increased the momentum of digitisation in the country.

## 2) Non-Banking Financial Company

### What is a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC)?

- An NBFC is a company registered under the **Companies Act, 1956** which provides banking services without meeting the legal definition of a bank.
- They engage in the business of loans and advances, acquisition of shares, bonds, etc. issued by Government or local authority. They also deal in other marketable securities of a like nature, leasing, hire-purchase, insurance business, chit business.

### What is the difference between banks & NBFCs?

- NBFCs lend and make investments and hence their activities are similar to that of banks; however there are a few differences:
  1. NBFC cannot accept demand deposits;
  2. NBFCs cannot issue cheques drawn on itself;
  3. Deposit insurance facility of Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation is not available to depositors of NBFCs, unlike in the case of banks.

### Examples of NBFCs

- Housing Finance Companies, Merchant Banking Companies, Stock Exchanges, Companies engaged in the business of stock-broking/sub-broking, Venture Capital Fund Companies, Nidhi Companies, Insurance companies and Chit Fund Companies are examples of NBFCs.

### Does the Reserve Bank regulate all financial companies?

No.

- Housing Finance Companies are regulated by **National Housing Bank**, Merchant Banker/Venture Capital Fund Company/stock-exchanges/stock brokers/sub-brokers are regulated by **Securities and Exchange Board of India**, and Insurance companies are regulated by **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority**.
- Similarly, Chit Fund Companies are regulated by the respective **State Governments** and Nidhi Companies are regulated by the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs**.

### Why in News?

- A recent study by EY, a British multinational professional services network, projects that Non-Banking Financial Companies are expecting higher credit loss, mainly due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The study is based on an analysis of the financial statements of 42 NBFCs for the year ended March 31, 2020.

## 3) Financial Stability and Development Council

### About FSDC

- Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) is an apex-level body constituted in 2010 to strengthen and institutionalize the mechanism for maintaining financial stability.
- It is **not a statutory body**.
- It is chaired by the **Union Finance Minister of India**.
- Its members include the heads of financial sector regulators (RBI, SEBI, PFRDA, IRDA), Finance Secretary and/or Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Secretary, Department of Financial Services, and Chief Economic Adviser.
- The Council **monitors macro prudential supervision of the economy**, including

functioning of large financial conglomerates, and **addresses inter-regulatory coordination and financial sector development issues**.

- It also focuses on financial literacy and financial inclusion.
- **No funds are separately allocated** to the Council for undertaking its activities.

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

- The 23rd meeting of the Financial Stability and Development Council was held recently.

**For doubts and queries email us at: [doubts@officerspulse.com](mailto:doubts@officerspulse.com)**

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

## 1) Uighurs

### About Uighur issue

- The Xinjiang province in China's far west has had a long history of discord between the authorities and the indigenous ethnic Uighur population.
- Most Uighurs are **Muslim**, their language is related to **Turkish**, and they regard themselves as culturally and ethnically close to Central Asian nations.



- Some Uighurs living there refers to the region as **East Turkestan** and argue that it ought to be independent from China. There have been open calls for **separation of Xinjiang from China** since the 1990s. Since then, China suppressed any dissent from Uyghur and began placing restrictions on them.
- Ethnic tensions caused by economic and cultural factors are considered the root cause of the recent violence. There are complaints of severe restrictions on Islam, with fewer mosques and strict control over religious schools.

### Recent developments

- Rights activists have said the Xinjiang region is home to a vast network of extrajudicial internment camps that have imprisoned at least one million people, which China has defended as vocational training centres to counter extremism.
- Most of the people who have been arbitrarily detained are Uighur.

- Human rights organizations, UN officials, and many foreign governments are urging China to stop the crackdown.
- But Chinese officials maintain that what they call vocational training centers do not infringe on Uighurs' human rights. They have refused to share information about the detention centers, and prevented journalists and foreign investigators from examining them.

### Why in News?

- A report by Washington-based think tank the **Center for Global Policy** noted that hundreds of thousands of ethnic minority labourers in China's northwestern Xinjiang region are being forced into picking cotton by hand through a coercive state labour scheme.
- According to the report, three majority-Uighur regions within Xinjiang sent at least 5,70,000 people to pick cotton as part of a state-run coercive labour transfer scheme.
- Xinjiang is a global hub for the crop, producing over 20% of the world's cotton.

## 2) CAATSA

### About CAATSA

- The Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) is an act made by the **US legislature** which mandates the U.S. administration to impose sanctions on any country carrying out significant defence and energy trade with **sanctioned entities in North Korea, Iran and Russia.**

### Why in News?

- The U.S. has imposed sanctions on NATO-ally Turkey for its purchase of Russia's S-400 missile defence system under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).
- Last year the U.S. had removed Turkey from its F-35 jet program over concerns that sensitive information could be accessed by Russia if Turkey used Russian systems along with U.S. jets.
- Turkey has responded saying that it will not step back from its decision to deploy Russian air defence systems despite U.S. sanctions.

### CAATSA and India

- India and Russia signed a \$5 billion contract for the procurement of **S-400 air defense systems** during the 2018 annual bilateral summit. India is set to get the consignment of the S-400 air defence system early next year.
- While **India has got a waiver from the outgoing Trump administration**, New Delhi hopes that the incoming Biden administration would not work towards reversing the decision.

### India-U.S. Relationship

- The US sees India as a **major market for the US defence industry**. In the last one decade, it has grown from near zero to USD 15 billion worth of arms deals.
- Since 2008, the US has bagged more than \$15 billion in arms deals including for the C-17 Globemaster and C-130J transport planes, P-8 (I) maritime reconnaissance aircraft, M777 light-weight howitzer, Harpoon missiles, and Apache and Chinook helicopters.
- In percentage terms, the US share of Indian arms imports total 23 per cent in terms of the number of contracts and 54 per cent by value.
- India was designated a **“Major Defence Partner”** of the U.S. in 2016 and it was granted **Strategic Trade Authorization tier 1 status** in 2018. These designations allowed India easier access to sensitive U.S. defence technology.
- Both countries are also coming together on **Indo-Pacific strategy** and the newly renewed **Quad platform**.
- With this context in mind, several U.S. lawmakers who favoured a close U.S.-India relationship, made a strong case for a CAATSA waiver for countries like India (and also Vietnam and Indonesia), which had historically bought Russian arms but were now buying more U.S. arms.

### What is the S-400 air defence missile system?

- The S-400 Triumpf, (NATO calls it SA-21 Growler), is a mobile, **surface-to-air missile system (SAM) designed by Russia**.
- It is the most dangerous operationally deployed modern long-range SAM (MLR SAM) in the world, considered much ahead

of the **US-developed Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system (THAAD)**.

- The system can engage all types of aerial targets including aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and ballistic and cruise missiles within the **range of 400km, at an altitude of up to 30km**.



- The system can track 100 airborne targets and engage six of them simultaneously.
- The S-400's mission set and capabilities are roughly comparable to the famed **US Patriot system**.
- The S-400 can also be integrated into the existing and future air defence units of the Air Force, Army, and the Navy.

### Why does India need it?

- From India's point of view, **China is also buying the system**. In 2015, Beijing signed an agreement with Russia to purchase six battalions of the system. Its delivery began in January 2018.
- China's acquisition of the S-400 system has been viewed as a “game changer” in the region. However, its **effectiveness against India is limited**. According to experts, even if stationed right on the India-China border and moved into the Himalaya mountains, Delhi would be at the limit of its range.
- India's acquisition is **crucial to counter attacks in a two-front war**, including even high-end F-35 US fighter aircraft.

### 3) US adds India in monitoring list What's in the news?

- The United States has once again included India in its **monitoring list of countries with potentially “questionable foreign**

**exchange policies” and “currency manipulation”.**

- India was last included in the currency watchlist in October 2018, but removed from the list that came out in May 2019.

**What does the term ‘currency manipulator’ mean?**

- This is a label given by the US government to countries it feels are engaging in **“unfair currency practices” by deliberately devaluing their currency against the dollar.**
  - *Devaluation is the deliberate downward adjustment of the value of a country's money relative to another currency, group of currencies.*
- The practice would mean that the country in question is artificially lowering the value of its currency to gain an unfair advantage over others. This is because the devaluation **would reduce the cost of exports from that country and artificially show a reduction in trade deficits as a result.**

**Why is India back in the Monitoring List again?**

- The U.S. Treasury uses three benchmarks to judge currency manipulators:

1. A bilateral trade surplus with the U.S. of more than \$20 billion.
2. A current account surplus of at least 3% of GDP.
3. Net purchases of foreign currency of 2% of GDP over a 12-month period.
  - India breached the first and the third benchmarks.
  - India, which has for several years maintained a **significant bilateral goods trade surplus** with the US, crossed the \$20 billion mark, according to the latest report. Bilateral goods trade surplus totalled \$22 billion in the first four quarters through June 2020.
  - The U.S. has included India in the list after the Indian central bank stepped up purchases of foreign currency as portfolio flows surged in the second half of the year.

**Effect on Indian Economy**

- The designation of a country as a currency manipulator does not immediately attract any penalties, but **tends to dent the confidence about a country in the global financial markets.**

**For doubts and queries email us at: [doubts@officerspulse.com](mailto:doubts@officerspulse.com)**

# DEFENCE

## 1) Artillery Gun trials

### About ATAGS

- The **indigenous** Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS) is a 155mm, 52 calibre **artillery gun** jointly developed by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation** in partnership with Bharat Forge of the Kalyani Group and the Tata Power SED.



- The project was started in 2013 by DRDO to replace older guns in service in the Indian Army with a modern 155mm artillery gun.
- It will have a **firing range of 40 km** with advanced features in terms of **high mobility, quick deployability, auxiliary power mode, advanced communication system**, automatic command and control system with night firing capability in direct fire mode.

### Why in News?

- User trials of the ATAGS developed by the DRDO are likely to be resumed.

## 2) Stealth Frigates

### Why in News?

- The first of three stealth frigates, Himgiri, being built by the Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited (GRSE) under **Project 17A** for the Navy was launched into water.

### About Project 17A

- The coveted 'Project 17A' was cleared by the govt back in 2015.
- P17A ships with a displacement of around 6,670 tonnes will be the **most advanced state-of-the-art guided missile frigates** once inducted.

- They will represent the **most advanced class of major surface warships** for the Indian Navy in a decade, also featuring BrahMos supersonic surface-to-surface missiles.
- These will also have torpedoes and rockets to hit submarines and rapid-fire guns to destroy anti-ship missiles as well as a heavy main gun to engage ships and coastal targets.
- These ships would also be loaded with an indigenous state of art electronic systems and sensor suites.
- Weapons are in integration with BrahMos and Long Range Anti-Ship Missile (LRASM) with MF STAR radar and indigenous Sonar system.
- The P17A-class will be armed and ready with the state-of-the-art Barak 8 and BrahMos surface-to-air and supersonic cruise missiles.
- The ships are named after Indian Hills like Shivalik, Himgiri, Nilgiri, Taragiri, Udyagiri.
- This project is unique in that it is being built simultaneously at two locations, at GRSE in Kolkata and Mazgaon Docks Limited in Mumbai.
- Fincantieri of Italy is the knowhow provider for technology upgrade and capability enhancement in this project.

### Stealth Frigates

- Frigates are naval vessels intermediate between corvettes and destroyers, and have had a significant role in the naval history of India.
- Frigates which employ stealth technology construction techniques in an effort to ensure that it is harder to detect by one or more of radar, visual, sonar, and infrared methods.

## 3) Early Warning Aircraft

### Why in News:

- India is going to make six new Airborne Early Warning and Control planes to be developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)

### About

- An airborne early warning and control (AEW&C) system is an **airborne radar**

**picket system** designed to detect aircraft, ships and vehicles at long ranges and perform command and control of the battlespace in an air engagement by directing fighter and attack aircraft strikes.

- The DRDO Airborne Early Warning and Control System (AEW&CS) is a project of India's Defence Research and Development Organisation to develop an airborne early warning and control system for the Indian Air Force. It is also referred to as **NETRA** Airborne Early Warning and Control System (AEW&CS).
- Airborne Early Warning & Control System (AEW&C), is a **force multiplier system** of systems for **detecting & tracking of enemy/hostile aircrafts/ UAVs etc.**
- It also enables operators onboard and on ground to **identify, assess the threat and**

**take actions** to guide interceptors to those for neutralizing the threats.

- The system is fully net centric, with complete command and control functions not only providing the available information to ground through its multiple data links but also can receive information from ground, integrate and fuse them onboard to provide the operators onboard a composite picture of the environment.
- As a **command centre**, it enables onboard operators to select, command and guide specific interceptor aircrafts towards enemy threat efficiently and neutralize them.

**For doubts and queries email us at:**  
[doubts@officerspulse.com](mailto:doubts@officerspulse.com)

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### 1) Tuberculosis Diagnosis

#### Why in News?

- IIT Madras researchers are developing a point-of-care platform for early-stage TB screening and detection using urine samples.

#### Need for a new technique

- Diagnosing TB usually involves using a sputum sample or a biopsy in the detection tests. This is not just **time-consuming or expensive**, there are also cases where getting a sputum sample is **not easy or even possible**, such as with small children or in the case of extrapulmonary TB. **Extrapulmonary tuberculosis (EPTB)** refers to disease outside the lungs.
- The glycolipid lipoarabinomannan (LAM), an integral component of the cell wall and cell membrane of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (Mtb), the disease-causing bacterium, has been explored as a **biomarker** for TB diagnosis.
- Since it is known that LAM is released into the bloodstream during active infection and passed out in urine, it can be viewed as a potential biomarker for even cases other than pulmonary TB.
- **Biomarkers** (short for biological markers) are biological measures of a biological state. By definition, a biomarker is "a characteristic that is objectively measured and evaluated as an indicator of normal biological processes, pathogenic processes or pharmacological responses to a therapeutic intervention."
- In the test conducted by the group, the sample containing **Mtb-LAM** is mixed with gold nanoparticles and incubated for five minutes.
- Then a U-shaped fibre-optic sensor device with an LED and a photodetector attached to its two ends is dipped into the mixture.
- The results are generated in the next ten minutes, and the amount of Mtb-LAM present in the mixture can be read out.

#### India's fight against TB

- Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease caused by a bacterium, ***Mycobacterium tuberculosis***. Each day, over 4000 people lose their lives to TB and close to 30,000

people fall ill with this preventable and curable disease.

- TB remains the world's **deadliest infectious killer**. Each day, over 4000 people lose their lives to TB and close to 30,000 people fall ill with this preventable and curable disease. TB is one of the leading causes of mortality in India. It kills more than 4,00,000 people in India every year.
- **Multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR TB)** is caused by strains of the tuberculosis bacteria resistant to the two most effective anti-tuberculosis drugs available - isoniazid and rifampicin. MDR TB can only be diagnosed in a specialized laboratory.
- Worldwide 4,84, 000 people were estimated to have fallen ill with multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) in 2018. In India about 1,3,000 people fell ill with drug-resistant TB.
- Directly Observed Treatment Short-course (**DOTS**) is the strategy followed for treatment of TB. Tuberculosis treatment requires at least 6 months of treatment.
- India has committed to eliminate the prevalence of TB by 2025. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is implementing the **National Strategic Plan (NSP) for Tuberculosis Elimination (2017-2025)**.

### 2) Sewage analysis

#### Why in News:

- Studies published recently in the Indian Journal of Medical Research by **ICMR-National Institute of Virology** explains the detection of the presence of SARS-CoV-2 RNA in **sewage samples** and has raised the **possibility of using environmental water surveillance** to monitor **virus activity** in infected areas.

#### About the study

- Researchers undertook the study to standardise the methodology for **detection of SARS-CoV-2 from sewage** and explore the feasibility of establishing supplementary surveillance for COVID-19.
- They have suggested that SARS-CoV-2 detection in waste waters **could be used to**

understand the **epidemiology of COVID-19**.

- **Epidemiology** is the **study of how often diseases occur in different groups of people and why**. Epidemiological information is used to **plan and evaluate strategies to prevent illness** and as a guide to the management of patients in whom disease has already developed. It is a cornerstone of public health, and shapes policy decisions and evidence-based practice by identifying risk factors for disease and targets for preventive healthcare.
- Decreasing concentration or absence of virus at previously SARS-CoV-2-positive sewage sampling sites may indicate successful implementation of COVID-19 control strategies and it may **provide evidence of the presence or absence** of SARS-CoV-2-infected populations and confirmation of COVID-19-free zones

### 3) Cybersecurity

#### Why in News:

- The FBI and the Department of Homeland Security's cybersecurity arm are investigating what experts and former officials said appeared to be a large-scale penetration of U.S. government agencies.

#### What is cybersecurity

- Cybersecurity is the **protection of internet-connected systems such as hardware, software and data from cyber-threats**. The practice is used by individuals and enterprises to protect against unauthorized access to data centers and other computerized systems.

#### India's Preparedness

- The Government has launched the online cybercrime reporting portal, **www.cybercrime.gov.in** to enable complainants to report complaints pertaining to Child Pornography/Child Sexual Abuse Material, rape/gang rape imageries or sexually explicit content.
- The Central Government has rolled out a scheme for establishment of **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)** to handle issues related to cybercrime in the country in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.

- Establishment of **National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC)** for protection of critical information infrastructure in the country.
- All organizations providing digital services have been mandated to report cyber security incidents to **CERT-In** expeditiously.
- **Cyber Swachhta Kendra** (Botnet Cleaning and Malware Analysis Centre) has been launched for providing detection of malicious programmes and free tools to remove such programmes.
- Formulation of **Crisis Management Plan** for countering cyber attacks and cyber terrorism.
- Conducting regular training programmes for network / system administrators and Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs) of Government and critical sector organisations regarding securing the IT infrastructure and mitigating cyber attacks.
- According to data compiled by the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)**, the number of registered cybercrimes increased by 63.5% in the year 2019 compared to the previous year.
- A total of 44,546 cases were registered under cybercrimes compared to 27,248 cases in 2018. In 2019, 60.4% of cybercrime cases registered were for the motive of fraud (26,891 out of 44,546 cases) followed by sexual exploitation with 5.1% (2,266 cases) and causing disrepute with 4.2% (1,874 cases).

### 4) PSLV C-50

#### Why in News:

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully placed into a transfer orbit India's 42nd communications satellite, CMS-01, carried on board the PSLV-C50, from the second launch pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre

#### About CMS-01

- **CMS-01 is a communications satellite** envisaged for providing services in extended C Band of the frequency spectrum and its coverage will include the Indian mainland, and the Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands.
- The satellite is expected to have a life of more than seven years.

- The CMS-01 satellite will be the first in a new series of communication satellites that India will be launching after the GSAT and INSAT series.

#### **About PSLV C-50**

- PSLV-C50 is the 52nd flight of PSLV and 22nd flight of PSLV in 'XL' configuration (with 6 strap-on motors)
- The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) is an expendable medium-lift launch vehicle designed and operated by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). It was

developed to allow India to launch its **Indian Remote Sensing (IRS) satellites into sun-synchronous orbits.**

- It is the **first** Indian launch vehicle to be equipped with **liquid stages.**
- The vehicle successfully launched two spacecraft – Chandrayaan-1 in 2008 and Mars Orbiter Spacecraft in 2013 – that later travelled to Moon and Mars respectively.

**For doubts and queries email us at: [doubts@officerspulse.com](mailto:doubts@officerspulse.com)**

## ART & CULTURE

### 1) Dawoodi Bohra

#### Why in News?

- An Indian mother moved the Supreme Court against a custom in the Dawoodi Bohra community which allows a man to take over from his estranged wife the custody of their child who is above seven without any due process of law.

#### About Dawoodi Bohra community

- The Dawoodi Bohras are a religious denomination within the **Ismaili branch of Shia Islam**.
- In 2018, a bench of then CJI Dipak Misra referred a petition seeking a ban on Female genital mutilation among Dawoodi Bohra girls to a five-judge Constitution Bench.

#### Female Genital Mutilation

- Female genital mutilation (FGM) involves the **partial or total removal of external female genitalia** or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.
- The reasons behind the practice vary. In some cases, it is seen as a rite of passage into womanhood, while others see it as a way to suppress a woman's sexuality. Many communities practice genital mutilation in the belief that it will ensure a girl's future

marriage or family honour. Some associate it with religious beliefs, although no religious scriptures require it.

- The practice has **no health benefits** for girls and women.
- FGM can cause **severe bleeding and problems urinating, and later cysts, infections**, as well as complications in childbirth and increased risk of newborn deaths.
- It is estimated that more than 200 million girls and women alive today have undergone female genital mutilation in 30 countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia where the practice is concentrated.
- FGM is mostly carried out on young girls between infancy and age 15.
- FGM is recognized internationally as a **violation of the human rights** of girls and women. It reflects deep-rooted inequality between the sexes, and constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against women. It is nearly always carried out on minors and is a violation of the rights of children.

**For doubts and queries email us at: [doubts@officerspulse.com](mailto:doubts@officerspulse.com)**

## PIB ANALYSIS

### 1) Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Package

#### About:

- On 12th May 2020, Prime Minister announced a special comprehensive economic package to fight the COVID-19 pandemic in India. He gave a clarion call for **AatmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyan or a Self-Reliant India Movement**. The five pillars of AatmaNirbhar Bharat –

- Economy,
- Infrastructure,
- System,
- Vibrant Demography and
- Demand.

- Key elements of the progress made so far in implementing the ongoing Schemes of the AatmaNirbhar Bharat Packages are as under:**

- Rs 3 lakh crore Collateral-free Automatic Loans for Businesses, including MSME
- Rs 45,000 crore Partial Credit Guarantee Scheme 2.0 (PCGS) for NBFCs
- Rs 30,000 crore Additional Emergency Working Capital Funding for farmers through NABARD
- Rs 2 lakh crore Concessional credit boost to 2.5 crore farmers through **Kisan Credit Cards (KCC)**

- Under the KCC Scheme, a flexible limit of Rs.10,000 to Rs.50,000 has been provided to marginal farmers (as Flexi KCC) based on the land holding and crops grown.

#### Objective / Purpose

- The Kisan Credit Card scheme aims at providing adequate and timely credit support from the banking system under a single window with flexible and simplified procedure to the farmers for their cultivation and other needs as indicated below:
  - To meet the short term credit requirements for cultivation of crops;
  - Post-harvest expenses;
  - Produce marketing loan;
  - Consumption requirements of farmer household;
  - Working capital for maintenance of farm assets and activities allied to agriculture;
  - Investment credit requirement for

agriculture and allied activities.

- Demand booster for Residential Real Estate Income Tax relief for Developers & Home Buyers
- Income Tax Refunds
- Rs 18,000 crore additional outlay for **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U)**

- The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) Programme was launched by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MoHUPA)**, in Mission mode envisions provision of **Housing for All by 2022**, when the Nation completes 75 years of its Independence. The Mission seeks to address the housing requirement of urban poor including slum dwellers through following programme verticals:
  - Slum rehabilitation of Slum Dwellers with participation of private developers using land as a resource
  - Promotion of Affordable Housing for weaker section through credit linked subsidy
  - Affordable Housing in Partnership with Public & Private sectors
  - Subsidy for beneficiary-led individual house construction /enhancement.

#### Beneficiaries:

- Beneficiaries include **Economically weaker sections (EWS), low-income groups (LIGs) and Middle Income Groups (MIGs)**.

- Rs 20,000 crore for Fishermen through **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampadan Yojana (PMMSY)**

- The Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana is a flagship scheme for **focused and sustainable development of fisheries sector in the country** with an estimated investment of Rs. 20,050 crores for its implementation during a period of 5 years from **FY 2020-21 to FY 2024-25 in all States/Union Territories**

#### Key Objectives of PMMSY:

- Harnessing of fisheries potential in a sustainable, responsible, inclusive and equitable manner

- Modernizing and strengthening of value chain - post-harvest management and quality improvement
- Doubling fishers and fish farmers incomes and generation of employment
- Social, physical and economic security for fishers and fish farmers

#### Why in News?

- Finance Minister reviewed the implementation of Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Package with Secretaries of all Ministries/Departments concerned.

## 2) Vision 2035: Public Health Surveillance in India with the vision

#### What's in the news?

- NITI Aayog has released 'Vision 2035: Public Health Surveillance in India'.

#### About:

- Vision 2035: Public Health Surveillance in India is a continuation of the work on **health systems strengthening**. It contributes by suggesting mainstreaming of surveillance by making individual electronic health records the basis for surveillance.

#### Vision

- To make India's public health surveillance system more **responsive and predictive** to enhance preparedness for action at all levels.
- **Citizen-friendly** public health surveillance systems will ensure individual privacy and confidentiality, enabled with a client feedback mechanism.
- **Improved data-sharing mechanism** between Centre and states for better disease detection, prevention, and control.
- India aims to provide **regional and global leadership** in managing events that constitute a public health emergency of international concern.

#### Highlights of the document

- This vision document on India's Public Health Surveillance by 2035 builds on opportunities that include the **Ayushman Bharat scheme** that establishes health and wellness centers at the community level- to strengthen non-communicable disease prevention, detection, and control and assures government payment for hospitalization- to reduce out of pocket

expenses of individuals and families at the bottom of the pyramid.

- It builds on initiatives such as the Integrated Health Information Platform of the Integrated Disease Surveillance Program.
- It aligns with the citizen-centricity highlighted in the National Health Policy 2017 and the National Digital Health Blueprint.
- It encourages the use of mobile and digital platforms and point of care devices and diagnostics for amalgamation of data capture and analyses.
- It highlights the importance of capitalizing on initiatives such as the Clinical Establishments Act to enhance private sector involvement in surveillance.

#### Steps that can be taken

- Establish a governance framework that is inclusive of political, policy, technical, and managerial leadership at the national and state level.
- Identify broad disease categories that will be included under Public Health Surveillance.
- Enhance surveillance of non-communicable diseases and conditions in a stepwise manner.
- Prioritize diseases that can be targeted for elimination as a public health problem.
- Establish mechanisms to streamline data sharing, capture, analysis, and dissemination for action through a comprehensive Electronic Health Records (EHR) with a unique health identifier (UHID).
- Encourage innovations at every step-in surveillance activity.

#### About NITI Aayog

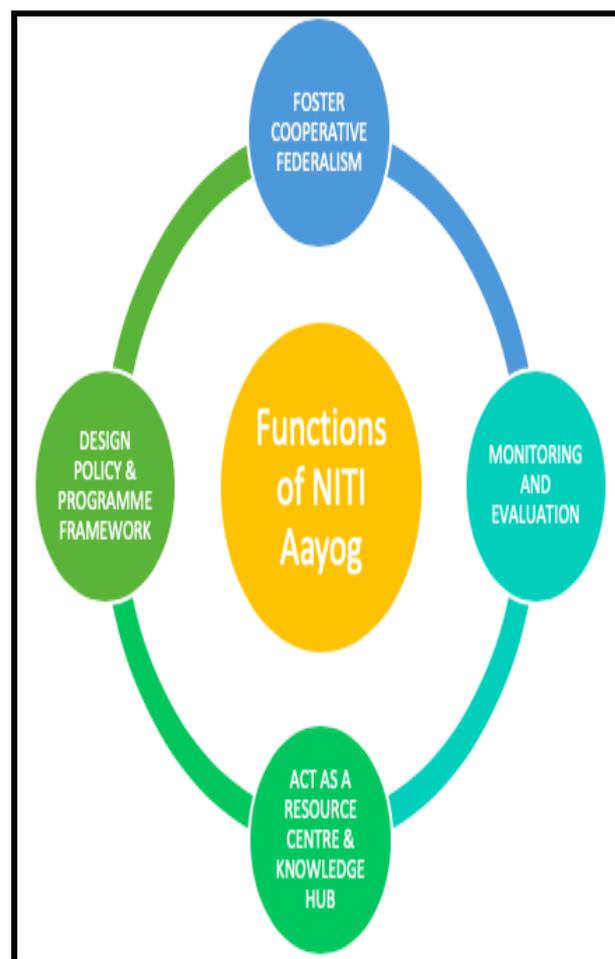
- NITI Aayog is the premier policy 'Think Tank' of the Government of India, providing both directional and policy inputs. It was formed via a resolution of the Union Cabinet on January 1, 2015 replacing the erstwhile Planning Commission .
- While designing strategic and long term policies and programmes for the Government of India, NITI Aayog also provides relevant technical advice to the Centre and States.

#### Objectives

- To foster cooperative federalism through structured support initiatives and mechanisms with the States on a continuous basis, recognizing that strong States make a strong nation.
- To develop mechanisms to formulate credible plans at the village level and aggregate these progressively at higher levels of government.
- To ensure, in areas that are specifically referred to it, that the interests of national security are incorporated in economic strategy and policy.
- To pay special attention to the sections of our society that may be at risk of not benefitting adequately from economic progress.
- To provide advice and encourage partnerships between key stakeholders and national and international like-minded Think Tanks, as well as educational and policy research institutions.
- To create a knowledge, innovation and entrepreneurial support system through a collaborative community of national and international experts, practitioners and other partners.
- To offer a platform for resolution of inter-sectoral and inter-departmental issues in order to accelerate the implementation of the development agenda.

#### Features:

- NITI Aayog is developing itself as a State-of-the-art Resource Centre, with the necessary resources, knowledge and skills, that will enable it to act with speed, promote research and innovation, provide strategic policy vision for the government, and deal with contingent issues.
- NITI Aayog's activities can be divided into four main heads:
  1. Design Policy & Programme Framework
  2. Foster Cooperative Federalism
  3. Monitoring & Evaluation
  4. Think Tank and Knowledge & Innovation Hub



### 3) eSanjeevani

#### About:

- 'eSanjeevani', is a **web-based comprehensive telemedicine** solution.
- Telemedicine entails delivery of health services from a distance using the internet and it not only extends the reach of health services but also improves quality of health services besides saving time and money. eSanjeevani in India is supposedly the first of its kind of digital transformation in the delivery of health services at national scale by a developing country.
- It extends the reach of **specialized healthcare services to masses** in both rural areas and isolated communities.
- Besides enhancing quality of medical services, addressing issues pertaining to uneven distribution and shortage of infrastructural as well as human resources,
- eSanjeevani also **aims to make healthcare services equitable by bridging the**

**digital divide** that exists between the urban vs. rural, rich vs. poor etc.

- It can also be used to provide medical education to interns, people across various Common Service Centers (CSCs), etc.

#### Key Features-

- It has been designed as a highly customizable and flexible application for the users to choose from the varied specialities such as teleophthalmology, telecardiology etc.
- It includes demographic and other patient data like clinical examination reports, physical examination reports along with the patient's medical history, family's medical history, etc.
- It enables doctors to have a video/audio conversation with the consulting medical experts at the remote end.

#### Types of telemedicine services

- This eSanjeevani platform has enabled two types of telemedicine services viz.
- **Doctor-to-Doctor (eSanjeevani) and Patient-to-Doctor (eSanjeevani OPD) Tele-consultations.**
- The former is being implemented **under the Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centre (AB-HWCs) programme.**

#### Why in News?

- eSanjeevani telemedicine service of the Health Ministry has crossed 1 million (10 lakh) tele-consultations.

## 4) National Family Health Survey-5

#### What is the National Family Health Survey?

- The NFHS is a large-scale, multi-round survey conducted in a representative **sample of households throughout India.**
- The survey provides **state and national information for India on fertility, infant and child mortality, the practice of family planning, maternal and child health, reproductive health, nutrition,** etc.
- The Ministry of Health has designated the **International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai,** as the nodal agency, responsible for providing coordination and technical guidance for the survey.

#### About National Family Health Survey-5

- The National Family Health Survey 2019-20 (NFHS-5), the fifth in the NFHS series, provides information on population, health, and nutrition for India and each state/union territory (UT).
- NFHS-5 includes some new topics, such as preschool education, disability, access to a toilet facility, death registration, bathing practices during menstruation, and methods and reasons for abortion.

#### Why in News?

- The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has released the Factsheets of key indicators on population, reproductive and child health, family welfare, nutrition and others for 22 States/UTs of the first Phase of the 2019-20 National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5).

#### Key Findings

##### Child wasting

- States such as Telangana, Kerala, Bihar, and Assam as well as the UT of J&K have witnessed an increase.
- Others like Maharashtra and West Bengal have been stagnant

- Child wasting reflects acute undernutrition and refers to children having low weight for their height.

##### Share of Children Underweight

- In the proportion of underweight children, big states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Telangana, Assam and Kerala have seen an increase.

##### Infant Mortality Rate and Under 5 Mortality

- Infant Mortality Rate and Under 5 Mortality Rate data is mostly stagnant.
- Between NFHS-3 and NFHS-4, there was progress on mortality reduction but NFHS-5 and NFHS-4 are about five years apart still there is very little progress in many states.
- In Maharashtra, the under-5 mortality rate is basically the same in NFHS-4 and in Bihar, it reduced by just 3% over five years.
- Over 60% of child mortality is explained by child malnutrition, which is the central problem and needs to be addressed.

- Infant mortality rate is the probability of dying between birth and age 1 per 1000 live births.

##### Fertility Rate

- India's population is stabilizing, as the total fertility rate (TFR) has decreased across the majority of the states.
- The TFR across most Indian states declined in the past half-a-decade, more so among urban women, according to the latest NFHS-5.
- Sikkim recorded the lowest TFR, with one woman bearing 1.1 children on average; Bihar recorded the highest TFR of three children per woman.
- In 19 of the 22 surveyed states, TFRs were found to be '**below-replacement**' which means a woman bore less than two children on average through her reproductive life.

▪ The total fertility rate (TFR) is defined as the average number of children that would be born to a woman by the time she ends childbearing.

#### Gaps in internet use

- In 2019, for the first time, the NFHS-5 sought details on two specific indicators: **Percentage of women and men who have ever used the Internet.**
  - On average, less than 3 out of 10 women in rural India and 4 out of 10 women in urban India ever used the Internet, according to the survey.
1. First, only an average of 42.6 percent of women ever used the Internet as against an average of 62.16 per cent among the men.
  2. Second, in urban India, average 56.81 per cent women ever used the Internet compared to an average of 73.76 per cent among the men.
  3. Third, dismal 33.94 per cent women in rural India ever used the Internet as against 55.6 per cent among men.
- In urban India, 10 states and three union territories reported more than 50 per cent women who had ever used the Internet: Goa (78.1%), Himachal Pradesh (78.9%), Kerala (64.9%), and Maharashtra (54.3%).
  - The five states reporting the lowest percentage of women, whoever used the Internet in urban India were Andhra Pradesh (33.9%), Bihar (38.4%), Tripura (36.6%), Telangana (43.9%) and Gujarat (48.9%).

## 5) Quality Council of India

### About Quality Council India

- The Quality Council of India (QCI) set up in 1997 is an **autonomous body** attached to the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry.**
- It was **set up jointly by the Government of India and the Indian Industry.**
- Its mandate is to establish and operate the **National Accreditation Structure (NAS)** for conformity assessment bodies and providing accreditation in the field of health, education and quality promotion .
- The Chairman of QCI is **appointed by the Prime Minister** on recommendation of the industry to the government.

### Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India's (FSSAI) initiative of '**Food Hygiene Rating Scheme**' is a certification system for food businesses supplying food directly to consumers, either on or off premise.
- The food establishments are rated based on food hygiene and safety conditions observed at the time of audit.
- The hygiene rating will be in the form of smileys (1 up to 5) and the certificate should be displayed prominently in the consumer facing area.
- The scheme aims to allow consumers to make informed choices/decisions pertaining to the food outlets where they eat by encouraging food businesses to improve their hygiene and safety standards.
- The **recognised Hygiene Rating Audit Agency** will verify the compliance with food hygiene and safety procedures laid by FSSAI.

### Why in News?

- Quality Council of India at the behest of the FSSAI has come out with a **Scheme for approval of Hygiene Rating Audit Agencies** to scale up Hygiene Rating by increasing the number of recognised Hygiene Rating Audit Agencies in the country.

**For doubts and queries email us at [doubts@officerspulse.com](mailto:doubts@officerspulse.com)**

# News in Depth

## AIR NEWS

### 1) Lok Adalat

#### About Lok Adalat

- Lok Adalat (people's courts), established by the government, settles disputes through **conciliation and compromise**. The First Lok Adalat was held in **Chennai in 1986**.
- Lok Adalat is an **alternative method of dispute resolution**. It is a forum where **disputes or cases pending in the court of law or at the pre-litigation stage** are settled amicably.
- Lok Adalats have been given **statutory status** under the **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987**.
- The procedural laws, and the Evidence Act are not strictly followed while assessing the merits of the claim by the Lok Adalat.
- Under the Act, the **award made by the Lok Adalats is deemed to be a decree of a civil court** and is **final and binding** on all parties and **no appeal lies against such an award** before any court of law.
- If the parties are not satisfied with the award of the Lok Adalat, though there is no provision for an appeal against such an award, they are **free to initiate litigation** by approaching the court of appropriate jurisdiction by filing a case by following the required procedure, in exercise of their right to litigate.
- There is **no court fee** payable when a matter is filed in a Lok Adalat. If a matter pending in the court of law is referred to the Lok Adalat and is settled subsequently, the court fee originally paid in the court on the complaints/petition is also **refunded back to the parties**.

#### No judicial role

- The persons deciding the cases in the Lok Adalats are called the **Members of the Lok Adalats**, they have the **role of statutory conciliators** only and **do not have any judicial role**; therefore they can only

persuade the parties to come to a conclusion for settling the dispute outside the court in the Lok Adalat and shall not pressurize or coerce any of the parties to compromise or settle cases or matters either directly or indirectly.

- The Lok Adalat **shall not decide the matter so referred at its own instance**, instead the same would be decided on the basis of the compromise or settlement between the parties. The members shall assist the parties in an independent and impartial manner in their attempt to reach amicable settlement of their dispute.

#### Nature of Cases to be Referred to Lok Adalat

- Any case pending before any court.
- Any dispute which has not been brought before any court and is likely to be filed before the court.
- Provided that any matter relating to an **offence not compoundable** under the law **shall not be settled in Lok Adalat**.
- *Compoundable offences are those that can be compromised, i.e. the complainant can agree to take back the charges levied against the accused, whereas, non – compoundable offences are the more serious offences in which the parties cannot compromise.*

#### How to Get the Case Referred to the Lok Adalat for Settlement?

- The State Legal Services Authority or District Legal Services Authority as the case may be on receipt of an application from any one of the parties at a pre-litigation stage may refer such matter to the Lok Adalat for amicable settlement of the dispute for which notice would then be issued to the other party.

#### Composition of Lok Adalats

- The Lok Adalat is presided over by a sitting or retired judicial officer as the chairman,

with two other members, usually a lawyer and a social worker.

- The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) along with other Legal Services Institutions (such as State Legal Services Authority, District Legal Services Authority, Taluk Legal Services Committee) conducts Lok Adalats at different levels.

#### National Lok Adalat

- National Level Lok Adalats are held for at regular intervals where on a single day Lok Adalats are held throughout the country, in all the courts right from the Supreme Court till the Taluk Levels wherein cases are disposed off in huge numbers.

#### Permanent & Mobile Lok Adalat

- **Permanent Lok Adalats** have been set up as permanent bodies with a **Chairman and two members** for providing compulsory pre-litigative mechanism for conciliation and settlement of cases **relating to Public Utility Services** like transport, postal, telegraph etc.
- **Mobile Lok Adalats** are also organized in various parts of the country which travel from one location to another to resolve disputes in order to facilitate the resolution of disputes through this mechanism.

#### Why in News?

- Over 10 lakh cases worth settlement value of nearly 3228 crore rupees disposed of in the last National Lok Adalat of the year 2020 organised through both virtual and physical mode in the country.

## 2) New Development Bank

#### About NDB

- The New Development Bank (NDB) created by the **BRICS countries** formally came into existence at the Ufa Summit (Russia) in 2015.
- It was established with the objective of financing infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies and developing countries, complementing the efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions toward global growth and development.
- In 2018, the NDB received **observer status** in the UN General Assembly.

- The five member nations – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – have an **equal shareholding in the NDB**.
- Voting power of each member is equal to the number of its subscribed shares in capital stock.
- All members of the United Nations could be members of the bank, however the share of the BRICS nations can never be less than **55% of voting power**.

#### Why in News?

- The Government of India and New Development Bank signed a loan agreement for one thousand million dollar to provide support to Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan through MGNREG Scheme.
- The programme will support the Government in mitigating the adverse economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic and enable economic recovery in the rural areas through Natural Resource Management (NRM) works.
- The programme proposes creation of durable rural infrastructure assets relating to NRM and generation of employment opportunities for rural poor, especially migrant workers who have returned from urban areas and have lost their livelihoods due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 3) Defence Acquisition Council

#### About DAC

- Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) is constituted under the Ministry of Defence (MoD) for overall guidance of the defence procurement planning process.
- It includes Defence Minister as Chairman and chiefs of tri-services, Defence Secretary, Secretary Defence Research & Development, Secretary Defence Production, Director General (Acquisition), Chief of Integrated Staff Committees and Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence as members.
- The DAC is the highest decision-making body in the defence ministry for deciding on new policies and capital acquisitions for the three services and the Indian Coast Guard.
- The objective of the DAC is to ensure expeditious procurement of the approved requirements of the Armed Forces in terms of capabilities sought, and time frame

prescribed, by optimally utilizing the allocated budgetary resources.

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

- The Defence Acquisition Council has approved proposals to procure equipment worth Rs 27,000 crore from the domestic industry.

- The proposals include various weapons, platforms, equipment and systems required by the Indian Army, the Navy and Air Force.

**For doubts and queries email us at [doubts@officerspulse.com](mailto:doubts@officerspulse.com)**

## THE HINDU EDITORIALS

### 1) A sector that needs to be nursed back to health

#### Gs2-Issues related to Health, Education NEWS

- The year 2020 has been designated as “International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife”.

#### PRESENT STATUS OF INDIA'S NURSING SYSTEM

- Nurses and midwives are central to achieving **universal health coverage in India**.
- India's nursing workforce is about two-thirds of its health workforce.
- Its ratio of **1.7 nurses per 1,000 populations** is **43% less than the World Health Organisation norm** i.e. it needs 2.4 million nurses to meet the norm.

#### CHALLENGES TO NURSING SYSTEM

- The sector is dogged by **structural challenges** that lead to poor quality of training, inequitable distribution, and non-standardised practices.

#### Uneven regulation-

- The Indian Nursing Council regulates nursing education through prescription, inspection, examination, and certification. However, the induction requirements and the functioning of regulatory bodies vary widely in the States.
- 91% of the nursing education institutions are private and weakly regulated.
- Hence, the quality of training of nurses is diminished by the uneven and weak regulation.

#### Outdated Education-

- The current nursing education is outdated and fails to cater to the practice needs. The education, including re-training, is not linked to the roles and their career progression in the nursing practice.
- There are insufficient postgraduate courses to develop skills in specialties, and address critical faculty shortages both in terms of quality and quantity.
- Thus, these factors have led to gaps in skills and competencies.

#### Faulty admission process-

- Multiple entry points to the nursing courses and lack of integration of the diploma and degree courses diminish the quality of training.

#### Inequities in distribution:

- Though the number of nursing education institutions has been increasing steadily, there are vast inequities in their distribution. Around 62% of them are situated in southern India.
- Further, the faculty positions vacant in nursing college and schools are around 86% and 80%, respectively.

#### Gaps in education, services-

- Most nurses working in the public and private health sector are diploma holders due to lack of job differentiation between diploma, graduate, and postgraduate nurses regarding their pay, parity, and promotion.
- As a result, higher qualifications of postgraduate nurses are underutilised, leading to low demand for postgraduate courses.
- Further, those with advanced degrees seek employment in education institutions or migrate abroad where their qualifications are recognised. This has led to an **acute dearth of qualified nurses in the country**.
- Compounding the problem, small private institutions with less than 50 beds recruit candidates without formal nursing education, instead they are offered courses of three to six months for non-clinical ancillary nursing roles and are paid very little.

#### Weak Regulation-

- The **Indian Nursing Act** primarily revolves around nursing education and does not provide any policy guidance about the roles and responsibilities of nurses in various cadres. Thus, endangering patient safety.
- The **Consumer Protection Act** which protects the rights and safety of patients as consumers, holds only the doctor and the hospital liable for medico-legal issues, while nurses are out of the purview of the Act. This is contrary to the practices in

developed countries where nurses are legally liable for errors in their work.

#### WAY FORWARD

- A **common entrance exam**, a **national licence exit exam** for entry into practice, and **periodic renewal of licence** linked with continuing nursing education would significantly streamline and strengthen nursing education.
- **Transparent accreditation, benchmarking, and ranking of nursing institutions** too would improve the quality.
- The **governance of nursing education and practice** must be clarified and made current.
- The Indian Nursing Council Act of 1947 must be amended to explicitly state clear norms for service and patient care, fix the nurse to patient ratio, staffing norms and salaries.
- The jurisdictions of the Indian Nursing Council and the State nursing councils must be explained and coordinated so that they are synergistic.
- Incentives to pursue advanced degrees to match their qualification will help in improving the status of nursing as a profession.
- A live registry of nurses, positions, and opportunities should be maintained to tackle the demand-supply gap in this sector.
- **Public-private partnership** between private nursing schools/colleges and public health facilities is another strategy to enhance nursing education.

#### GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

- The **National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog** has recently formulated a framework for public-private partnership in medical education that could be referred to develop a model agreement for nursing education.
- The Government has also announced supporting such projects through a Viability Gap Funding mechanism.

#### WHAT ELSE IS BEING DONE?

- The **National Nursing and Midwifery Commission Bill, 2020** is currently under consideration and will hopefully address some of the issues highlighted in the nursing system.

## 2) Hazardous ideas for the Himalayas

### GS-2 Changes in critical geographical features and their effects, GS-3 Conservation

#### NEWS

- Recently, China has announced that it is planning to build a major hydropower project as a part of its 14th FiveYear Plan (202125), on the Yarlung Zangbo River (upper stream of the Brahmaputra River), in Mêdog County in Tibet.

#### ABOUT CHINESE PROJECT

- The station is expected to provide 300 billion kWh of electricity annually.
- As per Chinese authorities, the project will help the country realise its goal of reaching a carbon emission peak before 2030 and carbon neutrality before 2060.

#### INDIA'S REACTION

- Indian counterparts have reiterated their plans to dam the Himalayas on this side of the border.
- Reportedly, it is considering a 10 GW hydropower project in Arunachal Pradesh.

#### PROJECTS CURRENTLY IN WORK

- There are two Indian hydropower projects in the works in Arunachal Pradesh on the tributaries of the Brahmaputra: **the 600 MW Kameng project on the Bichon and Tenga Rivers** and **the 2,000 MW Subansiri Lower Hydroelectric Project**.
- **China** has already **completed 11 out of 55 projects** that are planned for the Tibetan region.

#### MISADVENTURES OF THE PROJECTS

- In this mad rush of one upmanship, both countries ignore the **unviability of such 'super' dams projects**, given that the **area is geographically unstable**.
- As Himalayas are most vulnerable to earthquakes and seismic activity causing severe landslides, which, in turn, causes heavy siltation. This **siltation severely reduces the water holding capacity and life expectancy of the dams**. Desilting of dams is not an economically viable proposition and is technologically challenging.
- Even without earthquakes, the steep slopes made of soft rocks are bound to slide due to deforestation and roadbuilding. These

activities will get intensified as part of the dam building initiatives.

- Thus, making the northeast Himalayan bend with its deep gorges as the most unsuitable location for dam building.
- Also, we do not know how reservoirs with their water load would alter the existing stresses and strains on the earth's crust in the long term, impacting the frequency of earthquakes and their mechanisms.

#### **VULNERABILITY OF THE HIMALAYAN REGION**

- High seismic zones coincide with areas of high population concentration in the Himalayan region where landslides and glacial lake outburst floods are common.
- **About 15% of the great earthquakes of the 20th century (with a magnitude of more than 8) occurred in the Himalayan region.**
- The northeast Himalayan bend has experienced several large earthquakes of magnitude 7 and above in the last 100 years, more than the share from other parts of the Himalayas.
- The 1950 earthquake just south of the McMahon Line was of 8.6 magnitude, was the largest continental event ever recorded, which devastated Tibet and Assam. It killed thousands, and caused extensive landslides, widespread land level changes, gaping fissures and water and mud oozing in the Himalayan ranges. This dammed the rivers. Later the dams were breached generating flash floods in the downstream sides, seriously silting the drainage systems.
- Thus, fast developing hydro projects in the region can further add on to the problem.
- The 2015 Gorkha earthquake of magnitude 7.8 in central Nepal is the recent example of such destruction. The Earthquake caused Nepal to lose about 20% of its hydropower capacity.

#### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HIMALAYAN REGION**

- The Himalayan range is a transnational mountain chain and is the **chief driver of the Asian climate.**
- It is a **source for numerous Asian river systems and glaciers** which are now under the threat of degradation and retreat due to global warming. These river systems provide water for billions of people.
- **WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?**

- India and China need to sit together in order to deliberate on the consequences of such misadventures in an area which is vulnerable to the massive earthquakes.
- According to K. Pandit, a Himalayan ecologist, the upper Himalayas should be converted into a nature reserve by an international agreement.
- He also suggests exploring the possibility of a Himalayan River Commission involving all the headwater and downstream countries.
- Rather than engaging in unsustainable dam building activities, India and China, the major players in the region, should disengage from military adventurism and seek ways of transforming this 'roof of the world' into a natural reserve for the sake of humanity, as carbon neutrality cannot be at the expense of the environment.

### **3) India needs to rethink its nutrition agenda**

#### **GS-2 Health**

#### **NEWS**

- Poor nutritional outcomes in NFHS-5 show that a piecemeal approach does not work.

#### **CONTEXT**

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has released data fact sheets for 22 States and Union Territories (except Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh) based on the findings of **Phase I of the National Family Health Survey 5 (NFHS-5)**. The data so far paints a troubling picture in relation to nutrition outcomes.

#### **WORRYING FINDINGS**

- There is an **increase in the prevalence of severe acute malnutrition in 16 States/UTs** (compared to NFHS4 conducted in 201516). Kerala and Karnataka are the only two big States among the six States and UTs where there is some decline.
- The **percentage of children under five who are underweight has also increased in 16 out of the 22 States/UTs.**
- **Anaemia** levels among children as well as adult women have increased in most of the States (only four States/UTs—Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and

Daman and Diu, and Meghalaya showed decline in anaemia among children).

- There is also an increase in the prevalence of other indicators such as adult malnutrition most States/UTs also see an increase in overweight/obesity prevalence among children and adults.
- Thus, the data indicates towards the **inadequacy of diets in India both in terms of quality and quantity.**

#### **ECONOMIC GROWTH Vs HEALTH**

- Over the last three decades, there have been phases where India has experienced high rates of economic growth. But this period has also seen increasing inequality, greater informalisation of the labour force, and reducing employment elasticities of growth. This has resulted in the rising number of reported starvation deaths from different parts of the country.
- There are also continuous attempts to weaken the mechanism of protection schemes and public programmes such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, the Public Distribution System, the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), and school meals through underfunding.
- For instance, according to the data presented by the Minister for Women and Child Development in 2019 showed that **only about 32.5% of the funds released for Poshan Abhiyaan from 2017-18 onwards had been utilised.**
- Field surveys such as the recent '**Hunger Watch**' are showing massive levels of food insecurity and decline in food consumption, especially among the poor and vulnerable households as compared to before lockdown.

#### **POSITIVE FINDINGS**

- There are some improvements seen in determinants of malnutrition such as **access to sanitation, clean cooking fuels and improvement in women's status – a reduction in spousal violence and greater access of women to bank accounts.**

#### **CAUSES OF POOR OUTCOMES**

- Poor nutritional outcomes show that the piecemeal approach is unable to address the problem adequately.
- Universal maternity entitlements and child care services to enable exclusive

breastfeeding, appropriate infant and young child feeding as well as towards recognizing women's unpaid work burdens have been on the agenda for long, but not much progress has been made on these.

- Slowdown in economic growth for the last few years have resulted in stagnant rural wages and highest levels of unemployment and the current pandemic has further worsened the situation.

#### **WAY FORWARD**

- An employment centred growth strategy which includes universal provision of basic services for education, health, food and social security should be the imperative.
- Direct interventions such as supplementary nutrition (of good quality including eggs, fruits, etc.), growth monitoring, and behaviour change communication through the ICDS and school meals must be strengthened and given more resources.
- Need for serious introspection on not just for the programmes to address the problem of child malnutrition but also on the overall model of economic growth of the country for equitable growth.
- Need to leverage agricultural policies and programmes to be more **"nutrition-sensitive"**.
- Experience of the pandemic as well as the results of NFHS-5 indicates serious rethinking of issues related to nutrition and accord these issues priority.
- Thus, India needs to take urgent action with commitment to fight against the problem of malnutrition.

### **4) Tax policy in trying times**

#### **GS-3 Indian Economy**

##### **CONTEXT**

- The events of the pandemic show how it is the need of the hour to modernise India's archaic tax laws.

##### **GAINERS DURING PANDEMIC**

- As a result of the pandemic induced lockdown, India's GDP contracted consecutively for two quarters from April to September 2020. But some have gained from the pandemic.
- India's super rich only became richer adding **85 new Indians to the list of High Networth Individuals** (with a net worth of more than \$50 million), between January

and June, while the economy was on the verge of plunging into recession.

- Those dealing in stock exchanges also gained. Also, corporate houses, Internet service providers, laptop makers and scientists engaged in medical research are among the gainers.
- Other gainers include manufacturers of masks and Personal Protective Equipment.

#### LOSES DUE TO PANDEMIC

- For most of the country, the pandemic led to unemployment and an increase in poverty levels.
- The migrant crisis made thousands struggle to make ends meet.

#### GOVERNMENT STANCE AGAINST THE PROBLEM

- Though pure economics dictates a big fiscal stimulus at the time of falling GDP and unemployment, the government chose to rely more on monetary policy like credit easing and liquidity flow.
- There were no cuts in rates despite the fact that the real interest rate was falling.
- The **fiscal stimulus was provided in stages and stood at merely 2% of the GDP** compared to Japan's fiscal stimulus (21% of the GDP), Brazil's (10%) and China's (7%).

#### TAXING MNCs

- While the profits of Corporate have risen sharply, at the expense of wages and small and medium enterprise profits, cut in the corporate tax rates have further increased their profits.
- But tax administration in the country is struggling with the implementation of the equalisation levy due to lack of clarity in the taxation system.
- Thus, taxation of multinational corporations has become a perennial problem.

#### WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- The law related to digital taxation has to be amended following the **UN Model Convention**. India has to act in sync with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
- Examples can be taken from global practices - to increase government revenue, **Canada** government plans to levy new taxes on foreign technology companies.
- According to the Goods and Services Tax (GST) law- any reduction in the rate of tax

on the supply of goods or services has to be passed on to the consumer by way of the corresponding reduction in prices.

- But in the country, many companies are prone to benefit from GST rate reduction without passing on the benefits to the end consumers. So there is a **need to implement Anti-Profitteering Rules** vigorously when there is a reduction in the tax rate on any commodity or service.
- India's direct tax law needs to keep pace with fast changing events. In this direction- The Finance Minister announced a new scheme of **faceless assessments and faceless appeals**.
- The **dispute resolution mechanism** needs change. It is necessary that a mechanism is found to negotiate a settlement through mediation and conciliation or, if necessary, arbitration in connection with tax disputes between the taxpaying companies and the Central Board of Direct Taxes.
- Hence, in such a direction the government constituted the **Akhilesh Ranjan Task Force** to rewrite the Income Tax Act.
- Thus, there is a need to modernise our laws and make them compatible with international tax laws.

## 5) The many challenges for WTO

### GS-2 Important International institutions CONTEXT

- For the first time in its 25-year history, the World Trade Organization (WTO) will be led by a woman, as both the contending candidates for the Director-General (D-G) post are women, from Nigeria and South Korea respectively.

#### CHALLENGES FOR THE NEXT D-G OF WTO

- **Balancing the diverse and varied interests** of the 164 member countries.
- Reconciling role among the competing multilateral and national visions, for the organisation to work efficiently.
- Taking measures to **revive falling global economy** amidst global slowdown due to COVID-19 pandemic
- Working towards bringing **reforms in the multilateral trading system** to maintain the credibility of the institution.
- Bridge the divide between developed and developing nations. The core of the divide within the WTO is the **Doha Development**

**Agenda (DDA)** that is favourable for developing nations. The developed countries are working to jettison DDA in favour of a new agenda that includes, amongst others, e-commerce, investment facilitation, MSMEs and gender.

- Restoring the **WTO dispute settlement mechanism**, especially the revival of its **Appellate body**, which is also crucial for the organisation's efficient functioning.
- **Securing international cooperation and collaboration in the Post COVID world**, as no country can fight the pandemic alone.
- Mitigating the effects of the pandemic by giving clear directions on ensuring that supply chains remain free and open, recommending a standard harmonised

system with classification for vaccines, and by the removal of import/export restrictions.

- Working towards removal of barriers to intellectual property and securing a legal framework within the WTO TRIPS Agreement for Vaccine distribution.
- **Most imminently, the next D-G will need to build trust among its members that the WTO needs greater engagement by all countries, to stitch fair rules in the larger interest of all nations and thwart unfair trade practices of a few.**

**For doubts and queries email us at [doubts@officerspulse.com](mailto:doubts@officerspulse.com)**

## INDIAN EXPRESS EXPLAINED

### 1) Serow sighting in the Spiti valley

#### What is in the news?

- The himalayan serow has been sighted for the first time in the Trans-Himalayan region at Spiti valley.

#### What is a serow?



- They are herbivores resembling a cross between a goat, a donkey, a cow, and a pig.

- They are typically found at altitudes between 2,000 metres and 4,000 metres (6,500 to 13,000 feet). They are known to be found in eastern, central, and western Himalayas, but not in the Trans Himalayan region.
- The Himalayan serow is categorised as '**vulnerable**' in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. It is listed under **Schedule I** of The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972

### 2) The significance of US recognising Morocco's sovereignty over Western Sahara

#### What is in the news?

- The US has recognised the sovereignty of Morocco over disputed territory of Western Sahara.
- In turn, Morocco became the 4th Arab country to normalise relations with Israel as part of the deal.

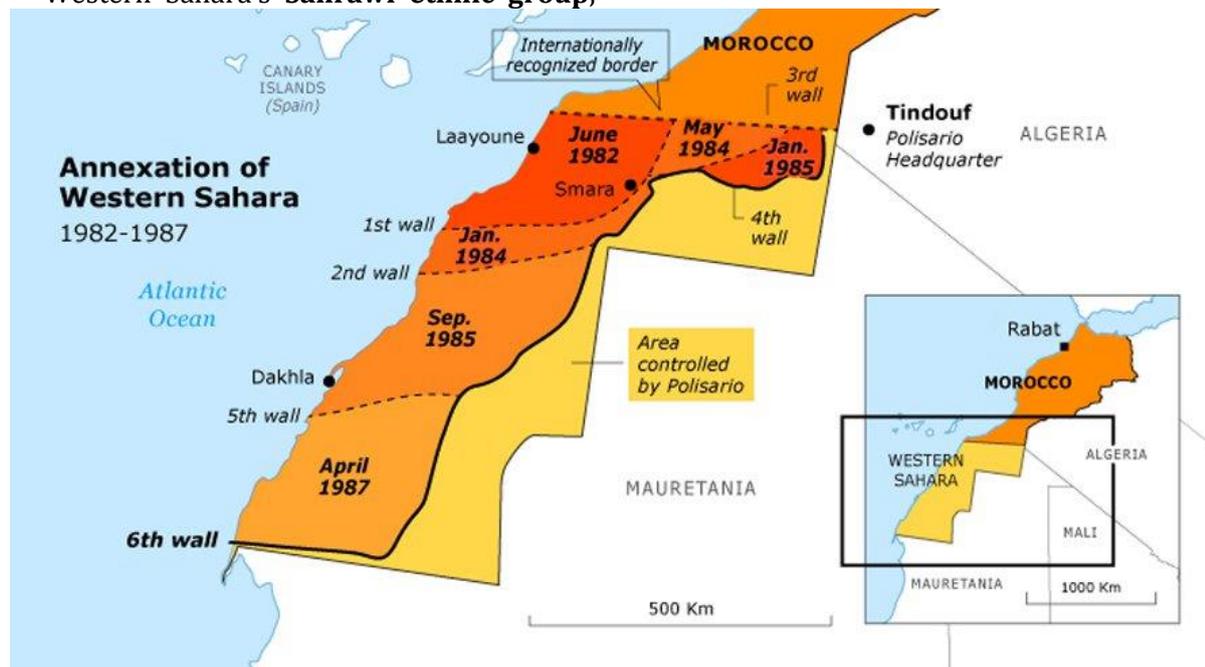
#### What is Western Sahara dispute?



- Western Sahara was a Spain colonised country which is slightly bigger than the state of Uttar Pradesh.
- In 1975, Spain withdrew from Western Sahara, partitioning the region between **Morocco**, which received the region's northern two-thirds, and **Mauritania** the remaining third in the south.
- The Mauritania part is being controlled by Western Sahara's **Sahrawi ethnic group**,

they are called **POLISARIO** and they run a government called Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR).

- But over the years Morocco has annexed parts of the Polisario controlled area and today it has been claiming that Western Sahara is a part of Morocco. A UN-brokered ceasefire stopped the war between them in 1991.



- Since then, Morocco is relocating its people in the occupied region and it has also denied referendum in the occupied region.
- The SADR is opposing Morocco's behaviour in Western Sahara, it is asking Morocco to conduct referendums in the regions it occupied.
- The SADR/Polisario has been recognised by around 70 countries, and is a member of the African Union, but lacks recognition from the world's major powers, as well as the United Nations.

#### Geographical Importance of Western Sahara

- Western Sahara is **mineral rich**. It is home to abundant **reserves of phosphate**, a key ingredient in the manufacturing of synthetic fertilisers.
- It has also lucrative fish resources and is believed to have off-shore oil.

#### India and Western Sahara

- India had recognised SADR in 1985 but cancelled its diplomatic ties in the year 2000.

- India appreciated Morocco's normalisation of ties with Israel.

#### Implications of US recognition

- It is good for Morocco as it is a symbolic victory for it. It has tried decades to get this status and is hopeful that other countries will follow the lead.
- Critics have predicted that Washington's decision could increase hostilities in the region, which in turn would further destabilise Western Africa.

### 3) How does India choose its Republic Day Chief Guest?

#### What is in the news?

- British Prime Minister Boris Johnson will be the chief guest for Republic Day 2021.
- Let us understand how India chooses Republic Day Chief Guests.

#### The Process

- The process starts almost six months ahead of Republic Day.
- The **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** considers a range of issues concerning the

nature of India's relationship with the countries.

- Factors like political, economic, commercial relations, the neighbourhood, military cooperation, prominence in regional groupings are taken into concern.
- At last when MEA chooses an option, it consults the Prime Minister and further takes clearance from Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- In the next step, the ambassadors of the chosen country are consulted and asked to confirm the availability of the to-be Chief Guest.
- Once this is confirmed, the Chief of Protocol of our nation chalks out details of the programme and logistics and are notified to the concerned chief guest country.
- All aspects of the visit are gone through, such as security, logistics, medical requirements, if necessary, with the active cooperation of the concerned Departments of the Government of India and the governments of the states which the Chief Guest may visit before coming to New Delhi, or after Republic Day.

#### 4) How Parliament meets

##### Why in the news?

- The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs said that some of the opposition parties are expressing concern about conducting the winter session of parliament this year. Concerning this the government is thinking to do away with winter session.
- Let us know how the parliament meets in this article.

##### Who convenes the sessions of parliament?

- India doesn't have a fixed parliamentary calendar. **By convention**, Parliament meets for **three sessions in a year**.
- The longest, the **Budget Session**, starts towards the end of January, and concludes by the end of April or first week of May. The session has a recess so that Parliamentary Committees can discuss the budgetary proposals.
- The second session is the three-week **Monsoon Session**, which usually begins in July and finishes in August.

- The parliamentary year ends with a three week-long **Winter Session**, which is held from November to December.
- The government has the power to take the call whether to conduct the session or not.
- The **Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs** takes the decision on convening the session **in the name of the President**.

##### What does the Constitution say?

##### Article 85

- **The President** shall from time to time summon each House of Parliament to meet at such time and place as he thinks fit, but **six months shall not intervene** between its last sitting in one session and the date appointed for its first sitting in the next session.

##### What has been the trend over the years?

- During the first two decades of Parliament, Lok Sabha met for an average of a little more than 120 days a year. This has **come down to approximately 70 days** in the last decade.
- Over the years, governments have shuffled around the dates of sessions to accommodate political and legislative demands. For example:
  - In 2011, the government agreed to cut short the Budget Session so they could campaign for Vidhan Sabha elections in five states.
  - In 2016, the Budget Session was broken up into two separate sessions to enable the issuance of an Ordinance.
  - In 2008, the two-day Monsoon Session was extended until December.
  - This year, Parliament has met for 33 days (till Dec 18th). The last time it met for fewer than 50 days was in 2008, when it met for 46 days.

##### Way forward

- The haphazardness of the meetings of legislatures hurts democracy. India needs to **adopt a fixed calendar of parliament** so that there is proper discussion on issues and demands of people are met.

**For doubts and queries email us at: [doubts@officerspulse.com](mailto:doubts@officerspulse.com)**

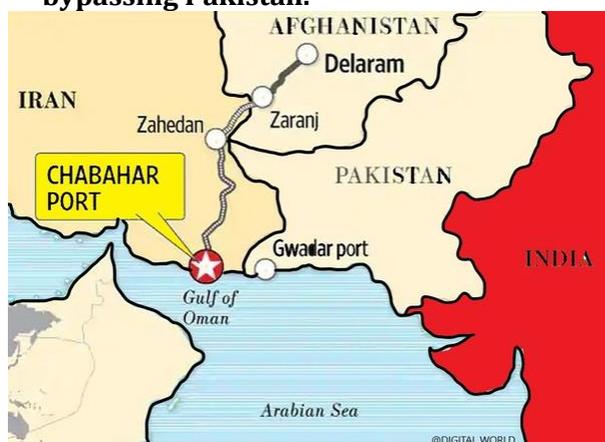
## RSTV BIG PICTURE

### 1) Joint use of Chabahar Port

- Recently, the first **Trilateral Working Group Meeting between India, Iran and Uzbekistan** on joint use of Chabahar Port was held virtually and welcomed the interest of Uzbekistan to use the Chabahar port as a transit port.

#### Significance of Chabahar Port

- The Chabahar port is located in the **Sistan-Balochistan province** on the energy-rich **Iran's southern coast** and can be easily accessed from India's western coast, **bypassing Pakistan**.



- It is being developed by **India, Iran and Afghanistan** to boost trade ties among the three countries in the wake of Pakistan denying transit access to New Delhi.
- It is considered to be a **major transit point to connect with several Central Asian countries and saves around 1 day from Kandla port for India**.
- India enjoys a fruitful relationship with Iran and also has ancient links with Uzbekistan.
- Central Asian countries are historically linked with Russia which provides an **additional leverage for India to structure its relations with Russia as well as Turkey with the help of Chabahar port**.
- **Strategic importance**- The Chabahar port can act as **India's gateway to central asian countries as well to Afghanistan** which can improve trade ties as well as bilateral ties between India and Afghanistan.

- **Commercial importance**- The pandemic has led to fall in imports as well as exports have come down which need to be sorted by getting connected towards other central asian countries for which Chabahar port is the central point for India.
- The Chabahar port has its own significance especially for India to **build ties particularly with Afghanistan**.

#### Areas of Concern

- The **US sanctions on Iran** have non-pervasive effects on the bilateral relations between Iran and India.
- The **Port handling charges** is also a major area where both the countries need to provide some structure.

#### Way Forward

- **Other central asian countries can be given access to African, Indian and South asian markets**.
- Business needs to be carried forward between Iran and India especially for building ties with Afghanistan.
- **Strengthening and maintaining good and healthy relations with Iran** is the need of the hour.

### 2) Strengthening India-Bangladesh Ties

- India and Bangladesh signed seven agreements recently to expand cooperation in diverse areas, and restored a cross-border rail link which was in operation till 1965.
- The restoration of the **Chilahati-Haldibari railway link** and signing of the pacts, providing for cooperation in areas of hydrocarbons, agriculture and textiles among others, came at a virtual summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina.

#### A Glance at relations between India and Bangladesh

- **Bangladesh is a key pillar of India's "Neighbourhood First" policy** and the ties between India and Bangladesh have witnessed an upswing in the last few years.
- Both sides have scaled up **trade and economic engagement** besides

implementing a number of connectivity and infrastructure projects.

- The major factor behind the growing relationship between India and Bangladesh is the “**Leadership consistency**”.
- There is a **continuous consensus given to Bangladesh by India** in all the aspects whether it is trade, resolving disputes by negotiations, building infrastructure and following **soft power diplomacy** besides hard power diplomacy which is followed by China.
- The **Chittagong port was made available to India for transit** which is very important for India from the security point of view.
- Thus, **connectivity is a key to prosperity and development** and restoration of railway links may further strengthen the economic ties between both the countries.

#### Major Concerns

- Bangladesh is a **part of The Belt and Road Initiative of China** which has invested 24 billion dollars for 27 projects in Bangladesh.
- China is the largest trading partner of Bangladesh and is on the way of increasing its ties.
- Eg: China gave duty free entry to 97000 products of Bangladesh.
- Several **terror organisations are getting foothold in Bangladesh** and is a major cause of concern for India.
- The **water sharing** issue between the two nations.
- The **Rohingyas issue** because they are vulnerable people who can be used as a terrorist group against India by extremist organisations.

#### Way Forward

- India needs to **open up its markets** and support the economic recovery of Bangladesh.
- **Submarines can be supplied by India to Bangladesh** rather than being supplied by China.
- Bangladesh can act as a major coordinator in the **SAARC**.
- Post pandemic, **Medical diplomacy** can be a major area for strengthening relations.
- **Tieing up with likeminded countries like Japan and the USA** may help in stabilising the relations further.

- Bangladesh can pave a way for **regional integration** because smaller countries tend to balance between larger countries.

#### Conclusion

- The Indo-Bangladesh relations have a special place and can be strengthened further by increasing trade and connectivity in the upcoming future.

**For doubts and queries email us at: [doubts@officerspulse.com](mailto:doubts@officerspulse.com)**

## References

### POLITY:

- <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/hunger-continued-even-after-lockdown-says-report/article33316582.ece>
- <https://scroll.in/article/966034/ending-early-marriage-in-india-will-take-more-than-legal-action-it-needs-real-belief-in-equality>
- <https://thediplomat.com/2020/09/early-marriages-in-india-no-childs-play/>
- <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/ShareArticle?OrgId=G1S82MA87.1&imageview=0>
- <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bengaluru/students-with-oci-card-can-get-state-quota-karnataka-hc/articleshow/79749867.cms>
- <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/human-development-index-india-drops-two-spots-to-rank-131-11608118179579.html>
- <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-hdi-ranking-2020-un-human-development-7108205/>

### Environment

- <https://www.nwf.org/Educational-Resources/Wildlife-Guide/Threats-to-Wildlife/Invasive-Species#:~:text=An%20invasive%20species%20can%20be,economy%2C%20or%20even%20human%20health.>
- <http://www.skyisland.in/shola-sky-islands.html>
- <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/bringing-life-back-to-western-ghats-grasslands/article33316899.ece#:~:text=They%20focus%20on%20identifying%20grassland,stands%20of%20mature%20exotic%20trees.>
- <https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/rare-myristica-swamp-treefrog-found-in-vazhachal-forest/article33315508.ece>
- [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr\\_2020\\_overview\\_english.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr_2020_overview_english.pdf)
- <https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/code-red-un-calls-for-urgent-shift-to-planet-friendly-development/article33335959.ece#:~:text=Under%20huge%20pressure%20from%20COVID,United%20Nations%20said%20on%20Tuesday.>

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amur\\_falcon#:~:text=Conservation%20status,Scientific%20classification](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amur_falcon#:~:text=Conservation%20status,Scientific%20classification)
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Point\\_Calimere](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Point_Calimere)
- <https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/amur-falcon-sighted-near-point-calimere/article33350400.ece>
- <https://www.easybiologyclass.com/difference-between-oligotrophic-and-eutrophic-lakes/>
- <https://rsis Ramsar.org/ris/1209>
- <https://indibuzzonline.com/india/brimming-kolleru-beckons-nature-lovers/>

### Economy

- <https://www.thehindu.com/business/pandemic-accelerated-digitisation-says-npci-coo/article33316488.ece>
- <https://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/nbfc-expect-higher-credit-loss-says-ey-study/article33330699.ece>
- [https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/fsdc-deliberates-on-measures-to-accelerate-growth-momentum-120121501043\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/fsdc-deliberates-on-measures-to-accelerate-growth-momentum-120121501043_1.html)

### IR

- <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/us-designates-pak-china-as-countries-of-particular-concern-for-violation-of-religious-freedom/article33275693.ece>
- <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/saarc-potential-cant-be-realised-until-terror-ends-pm-modi/article33281688.ece>

### Defence

- <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/indigenous-artillery-gun-to-complete-trials-by-mid-2021/article33314956.ece>
- <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/stealth-frigate-himgiri-for-navy-launched-into-water/article33328052.ece>
- <https://www.pressreader.com/india/the-hindu/20201218/281994675087061>

### S&T

- <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/coronavirus-virus-rna-found-in-sewage->

[samples-says-icmr-study/article33320384.ece](https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/a-platform-developed-for-diagnosing-tuberculosis-from-urine-samples/article33315473.ece)

- <https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/a-platform-developed-for-diagnosing-tuberculosis-from-urine-samples/article33315473.ece>
- <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/us-government-agencies-hacked-russia-a-possible-culprit/article33324223.ece>
- <https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/pslv-c50-carrying-communication-satellite-cms-01-lifts-off/article33354704.ece>

#### Editorials

- <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/tax-policy-in-trying-times/article33330601.ece>
- <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/india-needs-to-rethink-its-nutrition-agenda/article33330459.ece>
- <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/hazardous-ideas-for-the-himalayas/article33322132.ece>
- <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/a-sector-that-needs-to-be-nursed-back-to-health/article33322153.ece>
- <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-many-challenges-for-wto/article33349954.ece>

#### PIB

- 1) <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1680343>
- 2) <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1680519>
- [https://niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2020-12/PHS\\_13\\_dec\\_web.pdf](https://niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2020-12/PHS_13_dec_web.pdf)
- 3) <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1680535>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1670952>
- [https://www.cdac.in/index.aspx?id=hi\\_pr\\_eSanjeevani](https://www.cdac.in/index.aspx?id=hi_pr_eSanjeevani)
- 4) <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1680702>
- <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/malnutrition-in-kids-worsens-in-key-states-2015-19-7103820/>
- [http://rchiips.org/nfhs/NFHS-5\\_FCTS/FactSheet\\_MN.pdf](http://rchiips.org/nfhs/NFHS-5_FCTS/FactSheet_MN.pdf)

- 5) <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1680753>

#### ART and CULTURE

- <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/dawoodi-bohra-community-child-custody-custom-challenged/article33330229.ece>

#### AIR

- <http://newsonair.com/News?title=Over-10-lakh-cases-worth-settlement-value-of-nearly-Rs-3228-cr-disposed-of-in-last-National-Lok-Adalat-of-year-2020&id=406245>
- <http://newsonair.com/News?title=India-signs-one-billion-dollar-loan-agreement-with-NDB-for-Aatma-Nirbhar-Bharat-Abhiyan&id=406204>
- <http://newsonair.com/News?title=Defence-Acquisition-Council-approves-proposals-worth-Rs-27%2c000-crore-to-procure-equipment-from-domestic-industry&id=406256>

#### Indian Express

- <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/its-a-goat-its-a-pig-its-a-serow-explaining-an-unusual-sighting-in-the-spiti-cold-desert-7105007/>
- <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-the-significance-of-us-recognising-moroccos-sovereignty-over-western-sahara-7102282/>
- <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-how-does-india-choose-its-republic-day-chief-guest-7110035/>
- <https://indiankanoon.org/doc/1954133/>
- <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/parliament-winter-session-lok-sabha-rajya-sabha-7107893/>
- <https://mpa.gov.in/sites/default/files/parlia6.pdf>

#### RSTV

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55buHrASh3w&list=PLVOgWA\\_DiGzoqQsGjmaTu6f453RWpm\\_I&index=6](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55buHrASh3w&list=PLVOgWA_DiGzoqQsGjmaTu6f453RWpm_I&index=6)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yf-c19661mw&list=PLVOgWA\\_DiGzoqQsGjmaTu6f453RWpm\\_I&index=3](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yf-c19661mw&list=PLVOgWA_DiGzoqQsGjmaTu6f453RWpm_I&index=3)