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Mains-2018

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Quick Digest

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Mentioned Under RAS Mains PAPER-I, UNIT-II

(Part-I Indian Economy, Part-2 World Economy, Part-3 Economy of Rajasthan)

⇒ Trends of Indian economy in the last half year:

- Markets have shown a lot of volatility and moved sideways both domestic and international.
- Growth momentum has started subsiding as it has been lowering from 7.4% to 7% in last quarters of FY.
- Asset qualities of financial institutions have been continued to exacerbate as challenges.
- Flows from foreign investors have dried up due to many reasons like Lira crisis, protectionism and overall liquidity has also been tight.
- One can see new reforms impacted normal business as lot of stakeholders had to struggle adjusting to the changes and resources were wasted in transitioning. Like-
 - i. Goods and Services Tax (GST)
it has helped significantly enhance productivity and efficiency by removing barriers to goods movement across state lines and creating a seamless national market.
 - ii. Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)- now banks are seeing promoters come up and repay loans to avoid going to NCLT.
 - iii. Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA)- While its impact has been seen to a lesser extent than GST and IBC, the compliance level among developers has shown a tangible shift.
 - iv. As the industry goes into some consolidation, the sector has been becoming more customer centric.

⇒ Economic growth and assumptions of IMF:

WORLD ECONOMIC OUTLOOK Report

Points can be used as: what about global economic trends?

- (a) The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has projected that global growth will be 3.3% in 2019 as against 3.6% in 2018 and 4% in 2017.
- (b) The reasons behind the lower growth are (a)lower global expansion in the second half of 2018 caused by U.S.-China trade tensions (b)macroeconomic stress in Turkey and Argentina (c)tighter credit policies in China and (d)financial tightening in advanced economies.

⇒ What about the trends of Indian economy?

- Report says that India is projected to grow at 7.3% in 2019 and 7.5% in 2020.
- The growth will be supported by the continued recovery of investment and robust consumption, thus remaining the fastest growing major economy of the world.
- IMF expects inflation to remain below the Reserve Bank of India's threshold of 4% in the current fiscal at 3.9% and marginally exceed at 4.2% next year.
- Further, Current account deficit is expected to be around 2.5% of GDP. Current account measures the flow of goods, services and investments into and out of the country.

⇒ National mineral policy 2019

What are the key provisions?

- Industry status - The NMP 2019 proposes to grant industry status to mining activity.
- This is to boost financing of mining for private sector and for acquisitions of mineral assets in other countries by private sector.
- Right to first refusal - Earlier, if a firm that has a reconnaissance permit (RP) finds evidence of minerals, it must inform the government. The government will then auction off the area.
- But under the new policy, such firms will get the right of first refusal i.e. the same firm would be given the area for mining.
- Private sector - NMP 2019 talks of rationalizing reserved areas earmarked for PSUs which have not been used; these areas will now be put to auction.
- This will give more opportunity to the private sector for participation in mining activities.
- The policy also underlines the need to harmonize India's tax, levy and royalty rates to global benchmarks to draw higher private participation.
- Transportation - NMP 2019 focuses on use of coastal waterways and inland shipping for evacuation and transportation of minerals.
- It also encourages dedicated mineral corridors to facilitate the transportation of minerals.
- Fund - The policy calls for the utilization of the district mineral fund for equitable development of project affected persons and areas.
- Export Import - NMP 2019 proposes a long-term export-import policy for the mineral sector as an incentive for investing in large scale commercial mining activity.
- Inter-Generational Equity - NMP introduces the concept of Inter-Generational Equity that deals with the well-being of both the present generation and future generations.
- It also proposes to constitute an inter-ministerial body to institutionalize the mechanism for ensuring sustainable development in mining.
- Regulation - For regulation of the Minerals sector, E-Governance, IT enabled systems, awareness and information campaigns will be incorporated.
- Online public portal with provision for generating triggers at higher level in the event of delay of clearances by the state has been put in place.

So, can we conclude the objectives?

- It aims to bring in further transparency, better enforcement, balanced social and economic growth.
- This could significantly address the issues of project affected persons especially those residing in tribal areas.
- ease merger and acquisition of mining entities
- attract private sector participation in exploration
- allow transfer of mining leases
- create dedicated mineral corridors

⇒ National software policy:

- It aims to help the industry grow at CAGR of 40% to reach \$70-80 billion by 2025, while creating employment opportunities for 3.5 million people.

- Initially an outlay of ₹ 1,500 crore is being planned for various schemes under in policy in the next seven years.
- Further, the policy proposes to create a ₹ 5,000 crore fund with industry participation to promote emerging technology such as Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, Big Data and robotics. Of this, government contribution will be ₹ 1,000 crore.

So What Is Compound Annual Growth Rate?

Compound annual growth rate (CAGR) is the rate of return that would be required for an investment to grow from its beginning balance to its ending balance, assuming the profits were reinvested at the end of each year of the investment's lifespan.

⇒ What is the "Ind AS and it was in news ?

- Indian Accounting Standard is nothing but just the Accounting standard adopted by companies in India.
- This was issued under the supervision of Accounting Standards Board (ASB) which was constituted as a body in the year 1977.
- ASB is a committee under Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) which consists of representatives from government department, academicians, other professional bodies viz. ICAI, representatives from ASSOCHAM, CII, FICCI, etc.
- Ind AS has been governing the accounting and recording of financial transactions as well as the presentation of statements such as profit and loss account and balance sheet of a company.

What is the need?

- In recent past there has been a heated debate about Indian companies moving to the globally accepted International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) for their accounts.
- But firms have resisted the shift, stating that this will lead too many changes in the capture and reporting of their numbers.
- Ind AS has been evolved as a compromise formula that tries to harmonize Indian accounting rules with the IFRS. The IFRS9 standards created in the aftermath of the financial crisis

Why it was in news again?

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has deferred the implementation of the new accounting norms, Ind AS, indefinitely, as necessary amendments to the relevant law are yet to be made.

Who will get the benefit?

The move will bring huge relief to the banks which are yet to recognize stressed assets and make necessary provisions as that would require higher capital.

⇒ Aadhaar Bridge Payment System (ABPS)

What is this?

It is a system implemented by NPCI is used by the government departments and agencies for electronic transfer of benefits and subsidiaries under Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme launched by GoI.

What are potential benefits of this?

(How does the ABPS can create some difference?)

It will skip some inordinate delays, multiple channels & paperwork involved in the existing system.

After this Customer not required to open multiple bank accounts for receiving benefits and subsidies of various social welfare schemes Customer just need to open one account.

What are the concepts such as “Mapping and Seeding” in Aadhaar ?

- (A) Seeding - Aadhaar seeding is a process by which Aadhaar numbers of residents are included in the service delivery database of service providers (In this Case he service provider is Bank) for enabling de - duplication of database and Aadhaar based authentication during service delivery.
- (B) Mapping- Regarding the issue of mapping Aadhaar numbers in APB (Aadhaar Payment Bridge) as provided by NPCI (National Payments Corporation of India), a facility called ‘Aadhaar Lookup’ has been introduced in the APB system. This facility would allow the members to know the status of Aadhaar mapping in the APB system and can be used for verification of a list of Aadhaar numbers through an upload process and response thereof. This would help the members to process Direct Benefits Transfer (DBT) transactions more efficiently and help reduce returns.

⇒ **King fisher Air India and now Jet Airlines case-**

Reasons behind such slowdown in aviation industry –

- The cost of operation for Indian airlines is very high compared to its peers in other parts of the world.
- Due to competition revenue is lower compared with counterparts across the globe.
- ATF (aviation turbine fuel, which is around 50% of total operational cost) has not been covered under Goods and Services Tax (GST). Thus, at present, it attracts an excise duty of 11%. Over this central levy, states charge different rates of value-added tax (VAT) that goes up to 30%.
- Along with above all, various surcharges, user development fee (UDF) and steep navigational, landing and parking charges at airports make the cost structure of domestic airlines unviable.

⇒ **What do you understand by Blue Revolution scheme ?**

- Realizing the immense scope for development of fisheries and aquaculture, the Government of India had restructured the Central Plan Scheme under a umbrella of Blue Revolution.
- It provides for a focused development and management of the fisheries sector to increase both fish production and fish productivity from aquaculture and fisheries resources of the inland and marine fisheries sector including deep sea fishing.

What does the marine fish policy talk about ?

- **The new National Policy on Marine Fisheries** talks of introducing deep-sea fishing vessels and assisting fishing communities to convert their vessels and gears for the waters beyond.
- **The policy envisages intensive fish farming** through increased stocking of seed, better feed quality and diversification of species. Innovative practices such as recirculatory aquaculture system aim to realize the goal of more crop per drop. As a result, the productivity of freshwater fish farms has gone up.
- **More area should be brought under fish farming.** The government has invested in hatcheries to meet the ever-increasing demand for good quality fish seed. The expansion of aquaculture can increase this demand exponentially. Future policies must prioritize seed production in order to attain self-sufficiency in the sector.

- The introduction of **cage culture in reservoirs and other open water bodies can also increase the output**. This new practice gives freedom to fishermen from the risk of traversing dangerous rivers and restricted reservoirs.
- **Government should fill the large infrastructure gaps in fisheries sector** in the country through developing infrastructure projects such as fishing harbors/ fish landing centers, fish seed farms, fish feed mills/plants, setting up of disease diagnostic and aquatic quarantine facilities, creation of cold chain infrastructure facilities such as ice plants, cold storage, fish transport facilities, fish processing units, fish markets, etc.
- **Regular stocking of reservoirs and other water bodies can be done to increase in fish catch**. Open sea cage culture is at a pilot stage and the initial trials have given promising results. This may prove another game changer.
- **There should be an increased investment for the Blue Revolution to supplement the fisheries sector**.
- The new fisheries department is expected to give undivided attention to creating and strengthening infrastructure facilities in marine and inland fisheries and give a boost to aquaculture and post-harvest activities.
- **Comprehensive fisheries education and research should be promoted.**
- The country should be producing more than 15 million tonnes of fish by the end of 2019. It should be on its way to becoming a hub for sustainable fish production.**pic**

⇒ **Key Terms: Fiscal federalism**

Fiscal Federalism refers to the division of responsibilities with regards to public expenditure and taxation between the different levels of the government. Having a Fiscal Federalism mechanism allows the government to optimize their costs on economies of scale.

Q- Challenges towards fiscal federalism?

- The states have lost their autonomy after GST was introduced.
- 15th finance commission has been asked whether revenue deficit grants must be given to all states.
- The Centre and all States were ruled by the same party and many of the powerful provincial leaders migrated to the Centre.
- Moreover, economic planning at a nation-wide level helped this centralizing process.
- However, Central transfers to States are not confined to the recommendations of the Finance Commissions. There are other channels such as the discretionary grants of the Central government.
- FRBM acts have imposed an asymmetric burden on the state governments in the face of non-compliance to the targets by the central government.

⇒ **Five varieties of Indian coffee awarded GI certification named**

1. Coorg Arabica coffee
2. Wayanad Robusta coffee
3. Chikmagalur Arabica coffee
4. Araku Valley Arabica coffee
5. Bababudangiris Arabica coffee

Potential benefits of the Tags -

- The identification is expected to enhance their visibility globally and allow growers to get the attractive value.
- Too, It will help to integrate farmers with markets in a transparent manner, and lead to realization of remunerative prices for coffee producers.

Basics about GI Act, 1999:

- GI indicates goods as originating in a specific geographical region, the characteristics, qualities or reputation thereof essentially attributable to such region.
- In line with the World Trade Organization-Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (WTO-TRIPS) obligations, India enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act, 1999 (GI Act) and has set up a registry in Chennai to register such names.
- It covers items across the spectrum as agricultural goods, manufactured and natural goods, textiles, handicrafts and food stuffs.
- GI Registry's website lists popular GIs like Basmati rice, Darjeeling tea and Pashmina shawls etc.

⇒ Periodic labor force survey: NSSO

- The country's unemployment rate stood at a 45-year-high of 6.1 per cent in 2017-18.
- The unemployment rate was at its highest level since 1972-73.
- The report said that joblessness stood at 7.8 percent in urban areas compared with 5.3 parts in the countryside.
- To compare, the unemployment rate in the country had gone down to 2.2% in 2011-12, according to NSSO data.
- This data was collected by the NSSO between July 2017 and June 2018 – and is the first official employment

⇒ Angel Tax Relief

Q. What is Angel Tax?

- Introduced from union budget 2012 – 2013.
- A term used when an unlisted company, mostly start up, raises funds through shares and the prices of such shares might higher than their **fair market value(FMV)**.
- -Such higher market prices are considered as income FOR such company by govt. So, that money attracts tax named **ANGEL TAX**.

Q. What are angel investors?

- Who invests in small startup or entrepreneurs in their starting phase, often such investors are among family and friends (startups that don't qualify for bank financing)?

Q. Reason behind such tax?

- Startups are mostly based on innovative ideas thus the products or services which they sell would remain incomparable in market. The same case of incomparability would also apply with their shares.
- Thus, they can get higher rate than their **FAIR MARKET PRICE** for shares. This loophole attracts black money of money launders and provide them a way to convert it into white.
- Due to incomparable situation of shares for start-ups, govt. introduced a fix rate (30%) of tax on angel investment, which is called as **ANGEL TAX**.

Q. Why protest Angel tax?

- (A) Investors, foreign and domestic, become worry when they are charged with a fixed and higher rate of tax even for an untested idea (start-up).
- (B) Section 56 (2) of IT act 1961 gives free hand to income tax official to harass even genuine start-ups.
- (C) Such higher rate of tax (30% previously) curbs the investment by one third of total amount. Lower the investment, reduces the job creation, this eventually converts in economics slowdown.
- (D) It was against our ease of doing business environment.

Q. What are the new relaxation?

- (A) Govt. has widened the definition of start – ups as
 - 10 year of its corporation instead of 7 years.
 - Turnover criteria will be 100 crores instead of 25 cr.
 - Share by all investors will be up to 25 crores.
- (B) Govt. Set up a working group to investigate issue faced by angel investors.
- (C) Rather go to different agencies, now eligible start up only must file a duly signed self-declaration with DPIIT for availing exemptions. DPIIT will transmit such data to CBDT.

⇒ Recapitalization of Banks

What is Meant by recapitalization?

Recapitalization is the process of restructuring a company's debt and equity mixture, often to make a company's capital structure more stable.

News – Recently govt. infused 48k crores to recapitalization of the 12 PSU banks.

Background – In 2017, govt. announced a bailout package of worth 2.11 lakh crores for recapitalization.

Why it is Needed – An Asset quality review, conducted by RBI, unearthed that there was a high level of NPAs due to irrational lending.

Factors of Recapitalization –

- (A) Budgetary Support
- (B) Recapitalization bonds
- (C) Sale of shares of banks.

Thus, recapitalization by Govt. injects money without incurring any liability to banks.

Objectives –

- (A) Banks can meet regulatory capital norms of PCA or closer to it.
- (B) New fresh fund will be delivered to banks.
- (C) Eventually the above all will boost the cycle of economic.

⇒ RBI cuts rates to boost growth

The Reserve bank of India (RBI) in its bi-monthly monetary policy review reduced repo rate by 25 basis points to 5.75% from current 6.0% with immediate effect. This is RBI's third cut this year and has reduced Repo rate at lowest since 2010.

Key Highlights

With Repo Rate adjusted to 5.75%, consequently Reverse Repo Rate under Liquid Adjustment Facility (LAF) stands adjusted to 5.5% and Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate to 6.0%. Other

revised Rates- Cash reserve ratio (CRR) unchanged at 4%; Retail inflation forecast raised marginally to 3% - 3.1% for _first half (H1) of 2019-20 and 3.4% -3.7% for second half (H2).

GDP Growth Rate:

RBI lowered Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth forecast for _nancial year 2019- 20 to 7% from 7.2% in April Monetary Policy.

This is in range of 6.4% to 6.7% for _first half (H1) of 2019-20 and 7.2-7.5% for second half (H2) with risks evenly balanced.

This lowered forecast was taking into account current weak global demand due to escalation in trade wars and weakened private consumption in rural areas.

In an attempt of boosting digital transactions, RBI decided to do away with charges levied on **RTGS** and **NEFT** transactions and banks will be required to pass this benefit to their customers.

Too, RBI changed its stances of the policy from **neutral to accommodative**.

Note- Revise/Remember basics of monetary policy & it's impact on economy

Key terms

Basically, any central bank chooses one among three types of **stances** about monetary policies-

(A) **Calibrated Tightening** - **CB** either keeps the rates constant or increase the rates. (Fight with inflation stance)

(B) **Neutral** – Policy about rates would depend on further macroeconomic conditions thus, it may increase or decrease in future. (Not promising)

(C) **Accommodative** – In such direction RBI normally decrease policy rate which increase flow of money in economy. (Fight with slowdown stance)

⇒ **Recapitalization of bank or NBFCs key terms about the topic**

(A) **Capital** – It comprises the physical and non-physical assets (Education / skill) used in making goods and services. Hence, Capital is a money invested by shareholders.

(B) **Money** – It is primarily a mean of exchanging one goods for another.

- Capital is measured in minatory terms. Additionally, money can buy physical assets (i.e.-land), thus, capital is often thought of money.

(C) **Finance** – A broad term that describes the management of large amounts of money. Especially by govt. or large companies.

Related News –

(A) The central govt. has infused 48,239 cr. For recapitalization of 12 PSBs.

Objectives –

(A) It will improve the balance sheets of such banks with fresh capital.

(B) Banks could prevent themselves from RBI's prompt corrective action (PCA) framework

(C) Overall, It will boost the cycle of economy.

Q. What is meant by recapitalization

It is a strategy to boost the financial base of an entity to overcome a tough financial situation.

Because capital is the money put by the owner / stakeholders to run an enterprise. Since the govt. is the biggest shareholder in the PSBs, it infuses the money in banks to make them financially strong.

Q. What is prompt corrective action (PCA) framework?

It is a tool of RBI to curb further deterioration of state-run banks, which are already surviving in unhealthy situation.

Q. What are the tools of PCA?

Certain types of restrictions like- halting branch expansion, capping on lending limit, supersession of bank's board, stopping dividend payment etc. They are divided into two types (A) mandatory (B) Discretionary.

Q. What are the parameters which invoke PCA?

- (A) Capital to risk assets ratio (CRAR) – the bank's available capital, expressed as a percentage of bank's risk – weighted credit exposure (asset quality)
- (B) Net NPA (Nonperforming asset) – maximum at 12%.
- (C) Return on assets (ROA) – negative for 4 consecutive years
- (D) Tier – 1 capital leverage ratio.

PM – KISAN Scheme

Q. What is the scheme all about?

PRADHAN MANTRI KISAN SAMMAN NIDHI (PM KISAN) scheme.

Objective – Provide a respectable living standard to small (<1 ha.) and marginal land (<2ha) holding farmers through direct cash transfer. (*assured income support*)

Q. What was the need for such scheme?

- (A) Increasing ineptness of farmers – nearly 52 % out of total ag. Household were indebted. (All India financial inclusion survey 2016-17 by NABARD)
- (B) As the survey of NABARD, only 10.5% were found a valid KCC. it shows The lack of institutional credit awareness.
- (C) Low average monthly income – as Ashok Dalwai committee observed, average household income was only Rs. 6,246 and the expenditure (average) is 6,223 rupees. this results inadequate saving capacity and further low investment in farm sector.
- (D) Average annual income of small and marginal farmers is well below than the average income of all farmers.

Q. So, what is the scheme actually?

As announced in interim budget 2019-20

- (A) Direct income support at the rate of 6000 per year in 3 equal instalments.
- (B) Farmers those having cultivable land upto 2 hectares.
- (C) Wholly funded by GOI
- (D) Expected coverage of 12 crore small and marginal farmers.

⇒ Key challenges with unaddressed reasons behind farm distress –

- (A) There has been good monsoon and record Ag. Production for last years but recently we faced a nationwide farmer's protest.

The reason behind the protest was slowdown in market prices of Ag. Productions.

This is not going to be addressed by PM-KISAN.

- (B) Cash benefit alone can't solve supply side mismanagements.
- (C) Through such schemes, we are only increasing money flow in the economy with the as it is supply goods & service. This situation only converts into higher inflation rate.
- (D) Such scheme doesn't create jobs. In practical meaning govt. doesn't try to make be independent such beneficiaries.
- (E) It doesn't cover landless poor.
- (F) It implies 500/month is a too little amount.
- (G) It doesn't even create any properties for community as MGNREGA.
- (H) Land records might become the bottleneck for the identification of beneficiaries.

⇒ Global Economic Prospect Report: World Bank

Key Findings – (it can be used as-GLOBAL ECONOMIC TREND)

- (A) The tittle darkening skies due to the growth forecast is toward **slowdown** from 2.9% in 2019 to 2.8% in 2020. (Global growth rate)
- (B) **Trade tension** among major powers will continue elevate the risk of softening global growth as it affects investor's sentiments. Because US & China alone account for 20% of global trade and 40% of global GDP.
Brexit, Russia-Iran trade tension will further intensify the problem.
- (C) Appreciation in the US Dollar can reduce the economic activities in emerging economies.
- (D) Significant economic damage would be faced by EU, UK along with north African countries which are closely trading with EU.
- (E) Demonetization and GST have too, affected Chinese economy negatively.
- (F) Recurring severe weather events could deepen poverty through volatility in global food prices.
Policies regarding human capital, trade integration and the challenge of informality (unorganized sector) should be fastened.

Q. About the report –

- (A) Issued by WB biannually (Jan. & June)
- (B) A flagship report which focuses specially on emerging and developing countries.

⇒ External Commercial Borrowing & RBI

News –

- (A) Since the ease of doing business is the target of govt., RBI has been liberalizing ECB norms.
- (B) According the new norms all companies that can receive FDI can also raise funds through ECB.

So, what is the ECB?

Developing countries always keep getting foreign capital for their developmental policies. Lack of domestic capital is the very reason behind this.

So, there are some very famous ways of foreign capital like FDI, FPI along with ECB.

The ECB is loan to an Indian entity by a nonresident lender like foreign commercial banks. It may also have a minimum maturity period like 3 years thus, it provides stability in investment unlike foreign institutional investments.

Significance of ECBs for India:

In the post reform period ECB has emerged as a major path for foreign capital along with FDI, In recent years the contribution of ECBs was between 20 to 35% of the total foreign capital flow of India.

- (A) Relatively long-term capital unlike FIIs.
- (B) ECBs remain in the form of foreign currencies, thus they help for healthy import management
- (C) Lower Interest rate in comparison with domestic landings.
- (D) Lending form internationally recognized source like banks, Export agencies, international capital market etc.

⇒ Farm Loan Waivers

(A) Reasons behind Agrarian distress? (crux)

- Poor farm income due to low market prices for agriculture produce.
- Supply side factors along with middle men.
- Fragmentation (Lack of consolidation of land holdings)
- Poor irrigation facilities.
- Crop Failure.
- Non institutional money lenders.
- Higher rate of **INCIDENCES OF INDEBTNESS**(NABARD)
- Lack of effective remedial policies.
- Higher vulnerability for climate change.

Q. What could be some potential reforms?

- (A) Market reforms (APMC amendment / repeal)
- (B) Export policy with a long-term target.
- (C) Crowding out of intermediaries.
- (D) Properly implementation of E-NAM platform.
- (E) Fresh R&D should be promoted.
- (F) PPP mode should be more & more invited for infra project related to agriculture.
- (G) Focus must be on yield (productivity) in comparison with developed countries.
- (H) Land records and land holding should be promptly digitalized & enhanced.
- (I) Effective and efficient water management technology should be introduced.

Q. Does loan waiver in agriculture sector really provide relief?

We all know that large agrarian distress demands some new policy attention. As in recent past we have seen a nationwide farmers protest.

But the loan waiver is not the solution as experts suggest including RBI analysis, instead India need a carefully designed policy intervention which would identify the genuine beneficiaries.

Loan waivers are not fruitful –

- (A) Such waivers adversely affect the *repayment discipline* of debtors. farmers who pay their loan on time feel be cheated after such waivers.
- (B) PSBs only get their principle amount in such cases of waivers. So, the banks show reluctance in future credit disbursement in Ag sectors.
- (C) Eventually the whole scenario leads for providing more boost to private money lenders.
- (D) Such waiver doesn't provide any new investment in Ag sector. Such waiver can be categorized as consumption expenditure in economics.
- (E) Most of such loans are availed by big land holders, warehouses owners and food processors etc.

- (F) Such waiver doesn't include landless tenants, which are the most vulnerable section of agriculture sectors.
- (G) According to RBI data, only less than 40% of total farm credit is used by small and marginal farmers. Instead the big giants use a big store of such loans and their waiver as well.

⇒ **Does Resignation of RBI Governor Create any Impact on Economy ?**

- (A) Such event shows further uncertainty in policies of central bank like other issues that come the preview of governor domain.
- (B) This reveals tussle b/w govt. and central bank and portfolio investors see it as collapse of promising policies. Thus, it does impact on healthy stock market.
- (C) Due to above reason pulling out of foreign money by portfolio investor's build harm the prices of domestic currency.
- (D) Rating agencies like Moody's would provide negative credit rating.
- (E) Foreigner as well as domestic investor get an unhealthy financial market.
- (F) Eventually such incidences reduce strength of Indian institutions.

⇒ **Credit Stimulus for MSME Sector**

Q. What is credit stimulus?

Providing loans at a cheaper rate of interest to for a particular sector to boost money flow in the particular sector.

The rationale behind such moves is to promote growth in particular sector with reducing their dependence on informal borrowings.

News – GOI has announced a credit stimulus for MSME sector which is facing credit tightening due to three sectors –

- (A) GST Implementation
- (B) Demonetization
- (C) Reduce credit flow by NBFCs due to IL & FS crisis.

Key Highlights

- (A) Sanctioning of business loans up to 1 cr. Within 50 minutes.
- (B) PSUs new bound to purchase at least 25% of their overall purchases MSMEs.
- (C) Interest subvention of 2%

5 key aspects to facilitate MSMEs by govt.

1. Access to credit
2. Access to market
3. Technology upgradation
4. Ease of doing business
5. Security fo employees

⇒ **RBI's Autonomy and Relation with Govt.**

1. RBI has autonomy in two terms.
 - (A) As monitory authority
 - (B) As regulator

2. Relationship b/w RBI & Govt.

- Section 7 of RBI Act, 1934 states: Govt. can issue directions to RBI in public interest.

News – The govt. was asking the central bank to hand over a part of its surplus reserves to put that to more productive use.

Q. How RBI gets capital –

1. Initially a small paid up capital provided by govt.
2. Various operations along with CGRA (currency & gold revaluation account) on behalf of the GOI and the CF (contingency fund) arise form monetary and exchange operations.

Q. Why RBI Needs Capital –

1. Liquidity to banks.
2. Loan to state & central govt.
3. Liquidity crisis (as IL & FS crisis)

Q. Why RBI Liable to GOI –

1. Govt. owned entity thus it submits yearly accounts to GOI
2. Transfer a part of its profit as GOI is the owner.

Q. Why Capital Reserves and Autonomy are Interconnected?

At the time of financial crisis, RBI provides finance to banks without relying on govt. so it is a matter of autonomy.

Q. How Much Reserve Should be There?

- (A) According to Basel norms capital assets as percentage of total assets should be of 12%.
(B) As per annual report 2018, RBI's capital as a percentage of the assets is around 27%.
(9.59 lakh crore out 36.2 lakh crores of total assets)

Q. Why GOI needs the capital from the reserves?

As no source is visible given the huge amount of govt's bad debt problem.
Eventually Bimal Jalan panel on RBI's economic capital framework was constituted.

⇒ **Bi-monthly Monetary Policy Statement by RBI**

What does the Preamble of RBI says about its mandate?

- (A) Regulations (Notes & Reserves)
(B) Operate (Currency & Credit System)
(C) Price stability with the objective of growth.

Some New avatar of Price Stability (Inflation)-

- (A) RBI Act, 1934 was amended in 2016 to provide a statutory basis for flexible inflation targeting framework.
(B) Target sets by GOI + RBI, once in every 5 years. (Aug 2016 to March 2021)
(C) Base CPI
(D) 4 +/- 2 percent.
(E) MPC (Governor +6 Members)
(F) Bimonthly Statement.

Reasons Behind the Lower Inflation –

- (A) Lower Food inflation due to excess supply domestically & internationally.
(B) Fuel prices and electricity prices have been moderating.

Strategy for New India @75

What is this – A Vision document of NITI Aayog, which talks about to build new India by 2022. It provides a target by 2030 towards USD 5 trillion Economy.

- 41 different areas under 4 sections- Drivers, Infrastructure, Inclusion and Governance

Key Recommendation - @75

- (A) Investment rate from about 29% (2017-18) to about 36% of GDP by 2022-23.
- (B) All villages to be digitally connected.
- (C) Freight transport through water ways to be doubled.
- (D) The size of the economy to be increased to \$4 trillion.
- (E) Tax-GDP ratio to be raised from 17% to 22%
- (F) To get enough jobs and universal prosperity, we need 9% growth rate.
- (G) Rationalization of direct taxes and ease the tax compliance burden.
- (H) Must convert farmers to “Agripreneurs”.
- (I) Zero budget natural farming.

⇒ **E-commerce & FDI Norms**

Does Size matter?

The Market size of E-commerce -

US \$33billion (ES 2017-18), and \$38.5 b. in 2017-18 (NASSCOM)

It has been showing 19% growth rate in 2016-17 and 17% is expected in FY 2018-19.

It is projected to stand at \$150 bn by 2022.

The Reasons Behind the Growth –

(E- marketplace provides)

- Reduction in Rates
- Convenience
- Huge Domestic and international investment
- Job Creation

Models of E-commerce – At Present till 1st of Feb. 2019

Market based model (100% FDI is allowed with automatic route-RBI)

Inventory based model (FDI is not allowed)

Key terms –

- **Privet Labels** - it includes 3 types of products
 - E-commerce's self-produce- kindle device
 - Vendor's 25% on raw material capping, online retailers from selling products through vendors in which they have an equity interest.
 - Vendor's 25% of total selling capping means a vendors can not sell more than 25% of its total selling through a single e-market place.
 - **Exclusive Deals** – Exclusive launch of POCO on flipkart, ONE PLUS on Amazon. The new policy disallows exclusive deals with brands for selling products only on their platforms.
 - **Exclusive cashback services like** – One plus provides 2k discount on amazon exclusively.
- Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry is going to ban all such discriminatory treatments.

Impact –

- On Big e-commerce giants will lose v/s small like Snapdeal will get some more equal platform.
- On Small domestic and international vendors, such vendors will flex more muscles as more opportunities will be created.

- consumers may face some less attractive deals
- Start-Ups & Make In India will get a new fuel to boost with more indiscriminatory treatment.
- Above all efforts towards equal market place will lead to generate New Employment in economy.

⇒ **Bank Merger –**

The banking companies (Acquisition and transfer of undertakings)

Act, 1970 & 1980

- Lets Understand Key terms - Merger v/s amalgamation

Merger - In such case, when two entities merge one would lose its identity. Like Airtel merged a cellular network company in Rajasthan named Oasis.

Amalgamation – In case of this, the both entities will hold their identity and they may also create a new one. (Hero – Honda)

What is meant by NPA – When An asset, including leased asset, becomes non performing when it ceases to generate income for the bank.—RBI

- From where we get the idea of bank merger ?

Background – Committee on financial system (CFS) headed by Narismhan (I – 1991, II – 1998)

Narsimhan – I suggested 3 tier system of banks –

Very big banks > Nationalized banks > Regional banks

Thus, there was a consolidation plan in post liberalization era.

- Leeladhar committee (2008) & P J Nayak committee (2014) also recommended for such mergers.

What is the experience in recent past (Present Scenario) –

1, We have recently merged 5 associate banks of SBI with the SBI itself.

2, Bhartiya Mahila bank with SBI.

Need for Merger –

High number – High density – The same customers.

High NPA demands recurring (again and again) recapitalization.

(3) Regulatory burden on RBI

What is the Deal –

(A) we are going to merge BoB + Vijaya + Dena .It would be 2nd largest among Public sector banks.

(b) What about their NPAs – before merger they hold NPA - BoB (5.4%), Vijaya (4.1%), Dena (11.04%)

(b) After merger the Cumulative NPA would be just (5.71%).

What is The Process for it ? –4 steps

- Proposal made and approved by board of directors of all three banks.
- Govt. makes a scheme for merger.
- Approved by cabinet.
- Approved by the both houses of parliament.

⇒ **IL & FS Crisis**

Infrastructure leasing and financial services.

What is this –

- It is a core investment company. Means carrying on the business of acquisition of shares and securities and which satisfies some conditions like as on the date of the last audited balance sheet :-
- it holds not less than 90% of its net assets in the form of investment in equity shares, preference shares, bonds, debentures, debt or loans in group companies;
- the IL&FS Founded in 1987 with equity from CBI, UTI & HDFC to fund infrastructure projects.

- Major shareholders – ICIC, SBI, Orix corp. Japan, Abu Dhabi investment Authority (a SWF)
- It is a NBFC, under companies act, 1956, which is engaged in the business of loans, acquisition of stocks, equities, debt etc.

What are the Sources for its Funding?

- **(CP) commercial papers** – (short term) with a term of 3 to 12 months.
- **Debentures** – (short term) to pay upcoming expenses, unsecured (no collateral)
- **(ICD) Inter-corporate deposits** – (short term) unsecured borrowing from other corporate entities. (registered under Company Act.)
- **Term Loan** – From banks, (Long terms)

What was the crisis – It had run out of money and therefor, has been unable to serve its repayment obligations.

Contributing Factors behind the crisis –

(These points can be used for any such cases of bank/NBFC failure or reasons behind increasing NPA in Indian PSBs)

- a. Assets liability mismatch (outflow – inflow of liability)
- b. Detained refinancing by banks due to RBI's PCA.
- c. Reduction in credit resulted in lowering of prices of bonds.
- d. Unlike bank, no window for repo (LAF)
- e. Unviable projects of road & water due to hurdles such as Environment and land clearances etc.

Terms of Reference of 15th finance commission

Constitutional Article 280 provides that

- FC will be appointed by President
- For the period of Five years –
- Qualifications would be decided by parliament –
- FC submits its recommendations to the Prez.

Duties –

- (A) Tax distribution b/w union & state.(divisible tax pool)
- (B) Determine the Principles of Gran.-in-aid to states
- (C) state's consolidated fund to foster local govts.
- (D) Other matters referred by the Prez.

What are Terms of Reference for 15th FC–

- (A) Should Grants in aid by center to state be continued or not?
- (B) Fiscal situation of GOI after enhanced devolution (as 14th FC) from 32% to 42% (out of divisible pool)
- (C) Performance based incentives to state.
- (D) Promoting ease of doing business.

What are the Controversies –

- A. According to Article 275, grants are constitutional but now questionable under ToR, it becomes unconstitutional.
- B. Incentivization of states, based on their performance becomes cause of worry. Some states could not perform better because of their already weak financial conditions. In such Scenario incentives to achiever (already prosperous) states may again cause for stable hindrance of backward states.

C. Again, Using the population data 2011 as the base for tax devolution as 14thFC. Mostly southern states invested a huge cost to achieve a lower population growth rate & it turns into a number of elderly people as well. This needs more expenditure on social security schemes. So instead of UP BIHAR types populous states, southern states has been demanding to incentivize their population control achievements.

⇒ Global Start up Ecosystem Report 2018

By – **Startup Genome**, a research foundation.

Key Finding –

- US is the leader with 41% share of startups.
- India has 43% tech-based ventures out of total.
- Around 800 startups are taking roots in India.
- Bengaluru is becoming the global hub among others.

Ecosystem in India –

- Mudra yojana – easy low-cost finance (loans up to 10 lakhs)
- Venture capitalist and Angel companies are providing flexible finance instead of banks.
- Fund of funds for startups, under SIDBI (10,000 crore to finance alternative investment funds)
- Tax exemptions by GOI for start ups
- Angel tax exemption for 10 year (paid-up capital 25 lakhs) above FMV (fair market value)
- Tax holiday – exemption from IT up to 3 years.
- MHRD & Dept. of science & tech research have established, 13 start up centers, 16 tech business incubators.
- Easy exit in 90 days. (IBC)

⇒ Reasons Behind the Depreciation of Rupee

- Hike in crude oil price.
- Tariff war.
- Hovering trade deficit.
- Reduced capital flow to emerging economies
- Political uncertainties.

Key Terms –

Devaluation & Revaluation – when Govt. of a state, intentionally reduces the price of its own currency in foreign market, this called as devaluation. E.g.- CHINA, to achieve its cheaper export targets.

Depreciation & Appreciation- Automatic increase and fall of a currency in line with market demand and supply internationally, without Govt.'s intervention.

⇒ NRI Bonds

Why – To control the failing value of rupee.

What are these –

- Bonds issued by RBI of NRIs to attract their investment in india.
- It is among the tools to curb the depreciation of rupee.
- It provides Higher returns than other similar investments.
- It is a Safe tool due to RBI& Govt backing.

Background – Such bonds was also issued in 1998 and 2000 to curb the problems.

Reasons behind the move – The rupee fall of 13.7% since the beginning of the year due to -

- FPI pulled out 47 crores money in the first half of the year till December 2018. (A 10 year's high)
- Reducing demand for Indian exports due to deglobalization.
- Increased current account deficit due to price hike in crude oil.

⇒ **New Agriculture Export Policy 2018**

Aim – Increase India's export from current \$37 billion to \$60 billion by 2022.

Objectives –

Diversification in export-cart and destinations- (i) we will include more commodities in our Agri export list instead of our traditional exports. (ii) we will also explore more market internationally instead of our traditional trading partners.

Boost export of high value & perishables Agri exports like fruits and vegetables.

Nobel, indigenous, organic, ethnic, traditional products of our country will be promoted which are exclusively produced and used in Indian plates.

Tackle institutional mechanism and bottlenecks like sanitary and phytosanitary barriers by EU on Indian Alfonso.

Provide export opportunities to farmers through trade facilities in exports.

Doubling India's Agri export by integrating with global value chain.

Key terms –

(a) **Value Chain** -a business model that describes the full range of activities needed to create a product or service. For companies that produce goods, a value chain comprises the steps that involve bringing a product from conception to distribution, and everything in between—such as procuring raw materials, manufacturing functions, and marketing activities.

(b) **SPS measures-**

- The Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures is one of the final documents approved at the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of the Multilateral Trade Negotiations. It applies to all sanitary (relating to animals) and phytosanitary (relating to plants) (SPS) measures that may have a direct or indirect impact on international trade.
- Countries agree to base their SPS standards on science, and as guidance for their actions, the agreement encourages countries to use standards set by international standard setting organizations.
- In this SPS agreement, countries maintain the sovereign right to provide the level of health protection they deem appropriate, but agree that this right will not be misused for protectionist purposes nor result in unnecessary trade barriers.

⇒ **What is the purpose of Fiscal Stability Report by RBI ?**

FSR reflect the collective assessment of the risks to financial stability as also the capacity to recover offinancial system, (observed by Financial stability and development council).

The biannual report discusses issues relating to development & regulation of the financial sector.

Findings- I (Global)

- Although the global economic environment and emerging trends (i.e.-Trade war) pose challenges but theIndia's financial system remains stable.
- Global growth for 2018 & 2019 remains steady.

- Tightening of financial conditions, protectionist trade policy (deglobalization)& global geopolitical tension (i.e. Iran-US) has significantly increased, which will spill-over to emerging economies like sanctions to control Iranian oil on India & China.
- Gradual monetary policy normalization in Advanced Economies (like US federal bank has been shifting towards attractive policy rates after 2008th recession), uncertainty in global trade (protectionist) regime may negatively affect capital flow & exert pressure to on Emerging Markets.

II Domestic –

- While inflation remains curtailed, GDP showed slight moderation in Q2 (7%) of 2018-19.
- Structural changes in domestic financial system like (Startups and Angel Investments) through diversified financing demanding a call for greater vigilance.
- Decline in GNPA ratio since sep.2015. (11.5% in march 2018) (10.8% in sep.2018) (10.3% in march 2019)

⇒ What is the difference between FRP v/s MSP ?

What is MSP? – It is a market intervention by GOI (govt. of india) to protect agriculture producer against any sharp fall in farm prices.

When the Govt does declare it? – At the beginning of the sowing season.

For Which products? – Some certain crops based on the recommendations of the CACP (commission for agriculture costs and prices). Thus, it is like a guarantee price by GOI. Now It is 50% more than the input costs.

(B) Fair and Remunerative Prices –

What is this? –

- A guarantee price for Sugarcane farmers by sugar mills.
- It is the minimum price that the sugar mills must pay to farmers.
- It is supposed to signal to farmers the need to Plant cane for the coming year.
- This intervention was advised by Rangarajan committee report on sugarcane industry.

Who Decides this – Cabinet committee on economic affairs on behalf of CACP's advice?

⇒ All India rural Financial Inclusion Survey 2016-17

By – NABARD

Key Highlights –

It measure incidences of indebtedness (IOI) – the proportion of household reporting Outstanding debt (unpaid portion of a debt that includes interest accrued on the principle).

Key findings -

IOI for Ag households – 52.5%

For non-Ag households (IoI) – 42.8%

All India rural household (IoI) – 47.4%

In monetary value –

Debt on Average Ag household – 1,04,62

For Non Ag – 76,000

Combined – 91,407

Only 10.5% were found with a valid KCC.

Utilize 66% of credit as sanctioned limit.

⇒ **Public Credit Registry :**

What – To help banks to distinguish b/w a good and a bad borrower, PCR would be an information repository that will provide information at all loans taken by an individual or a firm.

How – Incorporation of UID, as Aadhar for individual and corporate identification number for firms.

Suggestion by- Viral acharya committee

⇒ **Sunil Mehta Committee :**

Mandate – NPA and stressed assets

Recommendation – “Project Sashakt”

- Loan up to 50 crores should be dealt at bank level – 90 days.
- Loan up to 50-500 crores should be dealt by lead bank (as inter credit agreement)-180 days
- Above 500 crores should be dealt by Asset management company supported alternative investment fund will hold 76% stake in the asset.
- Asset trading platform should be created for both performing and non performing assets.
- A steering committee by banks for the resolution of SMEs, with a provision for additional funds.(90 days).

Causes for distress in the banks asset

- Prolonged world economic slowdown.
- Complex working of the bureaucracy.
- Long gestation period of several infra projects.
- Politically inspired agitation.
- Poor risk assessment system.

⇒ **ILO Report on Wage in India**

Key Finding –

- The average daily wage has shown a 92% increase from 1992. Wage growth rate has also increased.
- Geographical divide- Urban worker still earning more than twice of a rural worker. (base 2011-12)
- **Gender divide** – Male gets more labor than female. The difference is still at 34% (wage gap). It is still above the global average of 23%.
- The report calls for stronger implementation of minimum wage laws and collective bargaining by workers.
- Actions should be taken to bridging the gaps b/w such divides like (a) urban- rural, (b) man-women & (c) Regular-casual workers.

⇒ **Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF)**

News – Andhra has announced a target to cover all farmers by 2024.

AP initiated it as a pilot project in 2015. Now it has become the first state to implement a ZBNF policy.

It was initially launched under Rastriya Krishi Vikash yojana 2015.

Subhash Palekar of Karnataka is the pioneer name for ZBNF.

What is ZBNF – The four pillars of ZBNF:

- I. **Microbial culture:** It provides nutrients, but most importantly, acts as a catalytic agent that promotes the activity of microorganisms in the soil, as well as increases earthworm activity; During the 48 hour fermentation process, the aerobic and anaerobic bacteria present in the cow dung and urine

multiply as they eat up organic ingredients (like pulse flour). A handful of undisturbed soil is also added to the preparation, as inoculate of native species of microbes and organisms. It also helps to prevent fungal and bacterial plant diseases.

- II. Treatment of seeds, seedlings or any planting material: It is effective in protecting young roots from fungus as well as from soil-borne and seedborne diseases that commonly affect plants after the monsoon period.
- III. Mulching: Soil Mulch: This protects topsoil during cultivation and does not destroy it by tilling. It promotes aeration and water retention in the soil. Straw Mulch: Straw material usually refers to the dried biomass waste of previous crops, it can be composed of the dead material of any living being (plants, animals, etc).
- IV. Moisture: it is a necessary condition for the roots of the plants.

It is, basically, a natural farming technique that uses biological pesticides instead of chemical-based fertilizers. Farmers use earthworms, cow dung, urine, plants, human excreta and such biological fertilizers for crop protection. Intercropping and Contour Bunds are some of the techniques of ZBNF. It reduces farmers' investment. It also protects the soil from degradation.

⇒ OECD Assessment : Indian Ag Policy

Conducted By – OECD & ICRIER (Indian Council for research on international economic relations)

Time Period – About 17 years (2000-01 to 2016 – 17)

Indicators – PSE and CSE (Producer support estimate & Consumer support estimate) at farm gatelevel.

Key High Lights –

Twin challenges to policy makers, the one is to incentivize farmers and the another is to ensure consumer have access to food at affordable prices.

(B) India's PSE, on average during 2014 – 2016 was minus 6 percent of farm receipts. India is among the minorities, which has negative PSES.

(C) Therefore, we can see pro-consumer bias in India's trade and marketing policy.

⇒ New Back Series Data Released by the Govt. Shows Both Tax & Compliance have Risen.

- Growth of 80% in the number of returns filed, 3.79 crore in FY 2013-14 to 6.85 crore in FY 2017-18.
- Number of people have also increased by 65%.
- Higher level of compliance due to crucial legislative / administrative measures such as Digitization of tax collection, information shearing assessments.
- Effects of demonetization.
- Ease of getting refund by small & medium tax payers.
- Tax to GDP ratio rose to 5.98% in FY 2017-18 (highest in the last 10 years)

Tax growth rate surpassed the growth in GDP. Implies an increase of about 18% from the previous year.

(Tax buoyancy – A tax is said to be buoyant if the tax revenues increase more than proportionately in response to a rise in national income or output.

A tax is buoyant when revenues increase by more than, say, 1 per cent for a 1 per cent increase in GDP.

⇒ High Level Advisory Group (HLAG)

Why – Address the ongoing challenges in the global trade scenario & look into opportunities.

Head – Surjit Bhalla member of pm's economic advisory council.

⇒ The Future of Jobs Report 2018

By – World Economic Forum, is the international organization for public private cooperation, Switzerland.

Key assumptions –

- The report gets a look at how new technologies like Artificial Intelligence, will affect global labor forces.
- In 2018, 71% of task hour were performed by a human, that will drop just 48% by 2025 machine will perform the remaining 52%
- 50% of all global companies expect automation to cut their full time work force in the next four years.
- Enough skill will lead to a net gain in new jobs.
- In India, 54% employees will need reskilling by 2022. 10% would need more than a year of training in order to meet the demand of the new economy.

⇒ New RBI norms for ECB Hedging

Q. What hedging mean in finance?

Hedging is an investment position intended to offset potential losses or gains that may be incurred by a companion investment. Thus, it is a risk management technique used to reduce any substantial losses by future price fluctuation.

Q. How does hedging work?

For example, I start a factory of steel utensils. What is the new material for it ? the steel sheets. Over a period if I feel that fluctuation in raw steel prices harm any business stability. Thus I sign a fixed price contract with raw steel company for next 6 months. Thus, I would hedge my business from market volatility.

In the same manner some credit guarantee companies, Bank also provide hedging to a company's shares / bonds for future market volatility.

Q. What says the RBI in new norms?

- (A) RBI relaxed Mandatory hedge coverage. It could be now 70% instead 100% as previous under track-1 of ECB Framework. According to the RBI, Track I refers to medium-term foreign currency-denominated ECB with a minimum average maturity of 3-5 years.
- (B) This will reduce the cost of funds for companies which raise foreign funds.

Define the Tracks ECB framework for raising loans.

- (A) Track – 1 – Minimum average 3-5 years (Foreign currency denominated)
- (B) Track – 2 – Minimum average maturity 10 years (Long Term) foreign currency denominated
- (C) Track – 3 – Minimum maturity 3 to 5 year but rupee denominated.

⇒ Systemically Important Financial Institution (SIFIs)

What is meant?

An institute whose distress or disorderly failure because of their size, complexity and systemic interconnectedness, would cause significant disruption to the whole financial system and economic activity.

Why such identification matters?

The SIFIs or TBTF (too big too fail) entities would going into troubles, posing threat to the system and eventually to the whole economy so such identification is crucial.

Who identifies such institutions ?

Globally – Financial stability board, based on the suggestion of G-20 leaders in Pittsburgh summit in 2009. FSB formulates a framework for assessing and regulating SIFIs.

Domestically – RBI

Example – SBI, ICICI, HDFC (Banks) IL & FC (NBFC)

Banks whose assets exceed 2% of GDP are considered part of this group.

⇒ **Why Dollar takes flight and rupee plunges ?**

(A) **Recent reasons behind falling of rupee**

- A higher oil import bill, demands for more dollars by oil marketing companies.
- Foreign investors who are pulling out their money from India due to US federal Reserve rate hike.
- General global negative sentiments for emerging market after Argentina and turkey's economic crisis.

What is tax to GDP ratio?

The part of collected total revenue out of GDP of a country. So if we target a stable tax to GDP of ration, it is necessary to maintain the same rate of tax revenue which would of GDP. Thus, tax to GDP ratio hikes when a country's tax revenue grow with a higher pace than the GDP.

Why is matters ? Because taxes are related to economic activity as the ration should stay relatively consistent. Some countries aim to increase the tax to GDP ratio address deficiencies in their budgets.

⇒ **Tax Buoyancy:(Can be measured with GDP or national income)**

We all know that as any economy achieves faster growth, the tax revenue of the govt. also gets up. thus it shows govt.'s tax revenue growth in comparison with GDP growth.

Note – The rate of tax revenue increase should happen without increasing in tax rate. (No charges in tax slaps or tax rate)

So, overall universal prosperity would be the reason if a tax is buoyant.

Q. What is tax elasticity?

Elasticity can be qualified as the ratio of the percentage change in one variable to the percentage change in another variable. A tool to measure responsiveness of one variable to changes in another.

If govt. lowers the rates of direct tax, how will that affect the total tax direct tax collection. So, it is more responsive.

Mentioned Under
RAS Mains PAPER-II, UNIT-II
General Science & Technology

⇒ **PM-JAY App:**

- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Abhiyaan, also known as Ayushman Bharat is the world's
- largest health scheme.
- Recently the JAY App, which aims to effectively implement Ayushman Bharat, was launched.
- Aim- It will help users get easy access to information on the scheme, check eligibility find hospitals nearby and get assisted help.

⇒ **Coffee Blockchain:**

The Coffee Board of India has launched blockchain based coffee e-marketplace integrate the farmers with markets in a transparent manner.

Objective-

- This will enable growers find better price for their produce, the Coffee Board has launched Coffee Blockchain, a marketplace app, developed in coordination with Eka Software Solutions.
- The pilot project has about 20 participants, including 14 coffee growers, and will run for four-to-six months.

What are Blockchains?

- It is a data structure that is secure, cryptography-based, and distributed across a network.
- This supports technology supports cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin, and the transfer of any data or digital asset.
- It allows the transfer of digital goods without the need for centralized authorization of transactions

How it operates?

- The technology facilitates transactions to be simultaneously anonymous and secure, peer-to-peer, instant and frictionless.
- It has distributing trust from powerful intermediaries to a large global network, which through mass collaboration, clever code and cryptography, enables a tamper-proof public ledger of every transaction that's ever happened on the network.

What is a block?

- it is the "current" part of a blockchain which records some or all of the recent transactions, and once completed, goes into the blockchain as permanent database.
- Each time a block gets completed; a new block is generated.
- Blocks are linked to each other (like a chain) in proper linear, chronological order with every block containing a hash of the previous block.

Benefits of blockchain technology:

- Like a public ledger system, it records and validates each and every transaction made, which makes it secure and reliable.
- Thus, All the transactions made are authorized by miners, which makes the transactions immutable and prevent it from the threat of hacking.

- Through this way Blockchain technology discards the need of any third-party or central authority for peer-to-peer transactions.
- In nutshell, it allows decentralization of the technology.

⇒ **GENOME Sequencing project by CSIR**

What do you understand by Genome sequencing?

Key term: Genome

- A genome is an organism's complete set of DNAs, including all its genes.
- Each genome contains all the information needed to build and maintain that organism.
- In humans, a copy of the entire genome—more than 3 billion DNA base pairs—is contained in all cells that have a nucleus.

Genome sequencing: It is figuring out the order of DNA nucleotides, or bases, in a genome—the order of As, Cs, Gs, and Ts that make up an organism's DNA. The human genome is made up of over 3 billion of these genetic letters.

- Sequencing the genome doesn't immediately lay open the genetic information of an entire species.
- Even with a rough draft of the human genome sequence in hand, much work remains to be done.
- Scientists still have to translate those strings of letters into an understanding of how the genome works.

What is the methodology?

- Genomes will be sequenced based on a blood sample.
- Every person whose genomes are sequenced will be given a report.
- The participants would be told if they carry gene variants that make them less responsive to certain classes of medicines. For instance, having a certain gene makes some people less responsive to clopidogrel, a key drug that prevents strokes and heart attack.

Who is responsible for this project in India ?

The sequencing to be done at the CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB) and the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB).

How is it useful?

- **Determining genetic traits and gene-disease link:** Ever since the human genome was first sequenced in 2003, it opened a fresh perspective on the link between disease and the unique genetic make-up of each individual. Nearly 10,000 diseases — including cystic fibrosis, thalassemia — are known to be the result of a single gene malfunctioning
- **Mapping population diversity:** Participants of genome-sample collections represent diversity of the country's population.
- It will help us to compare causes of diseases across other countries.
- For instance, in developed countries diarrheal infections are rarer than in India. It will help understanding of role of genes in this and can track health changes over long periods.
- This project would prove India's capabilities at executing whole-genome sequencing.

⇒ **Human Genome Project (HGP)**

The Human Genome Project (HGP) was a large, international and multi-institutional effort that took 13 years [1990-2003] and \$2.7 billion to produce a blueprint of the sequence of genes and spaces between genes that make up a typical human genome.

Human Genome Project – Write (HGP – Write)

- Fast forward to 2016 and another project, called the Human Genome Project–write (HGP write), now underway to synthesize a human genome from scratch.
- The original HGP was a “read” in that it used chemicals and instruments to decipher the genome for the first time. The new project, its proponents say, is to write or build an
- artificial human genome with sophisticated bioengineering tools.

RELEVANT NEWS –

- An international team led by the Hyderabad-based **International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)** has identified in chickpea four important genes for heat tolerance and three important genes for drought tolerance.
- The study was based on complete genome sequencing of 429 chickpea lines from 45 countries. More than 90% of chickpea cultivation area is in South Asia, including India.

⇒ Cell-based meat

- Clean meat would be produced through cellular agriculture with cells sourced from animals and cultivated into meat.
- Hence, it promises to revolutionize the food system by providing protein without harming the environment.
- The Atal Incubation Centre of the CCMB is working towards promoting clean meat sector.
- It aims to feed 10 billion people by 2050 by creating a platform for tasty, affordable protein.

⇒ RUCO initiative: Bio-ATF

- We are well known about Oil from jatropha seeds propelled the country’s first ever bio jet fuel-powered flight.
- International standards permit a blend rate of up to 50% biofuel with ATF.
- Now recently, Dehradun-based Indian Institute of Petroleum has successfully finished a pilot test to convert used cooking oil into bio-aviation turbine fuel (Bio-ATF), which can be blended with conventional ATF and used as aircraft fuel.

New ways :

- The test assumes importance as the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India(FSSAI) has launched the Repurpose Used Cooking Oil (RUCO) initiative to collect and convert used cooking oil into bio-fuel.
- The food safety body says that by 2020, it should be possible to recover about 220 croreliters of used cooking oil for conversion into bio-fuel.

⇒ Dial 112

The Ministry of Women and Child Development has launched some important initiatives on women’s safety. They are:

- (a) Panic button.
- (b) DNA Analysis Facilities in States.

What is Panic button: ?

This was mandated in 2015, mobile phone manufacturers and mobile telephony service providers by the Ministry of Telecom to include a physical panic button on all mobile phones in the country.

This panic button must be backed by an emergency response mechanism through the local police when panic button message would alert the specified family members etc. of a woman in distress situation.

The emergency response system might be triggered in the following manners:

(a) smart phones- the power button when pressed three times quickly.Or Dialing 112 from any phone.

(b) In case of keypad phones, long press of the touch key 5 or 9.Using 112 India Mobile App.

Such emergency message coming out of the above modes, will trigger a response from the emergency response Centre through a team of trained personnel who can handle emergency requests of various kinds and get the necessary relief services launched.

⇒ DNA Analysis Facilities in States:

- To remove delays after complaints in cases of sexual assault investigations, it was proposed that dedicated DNA analysis facilities should be created in the forensic science laboratories on a mission mode.
- Testing of DNA samples within mean time from the crime scene is the quickest process of obtaining forensic evidence in cases of sexual assault on women.
- In the initial phase, dedicated DNA analysis facilities have been sanctioned for the forensic science laboratories located at Chennai, Madurai, Agra, Lucknow, Mumbai and Kolkata.

⇒ National Policy on Electronics 2019

- The Policy targets India as a global hub for Electronics System Design and Manufacturing - (ESDM) by encouraging and driving capabilities in the country.
- This focuses on developing core components, including chipsets, and creating an enabling environment for the industry to compete globally.
- **Targets:** Promote domestic manufacturing and export in the entire value-chain of ESDM for economic development to achieve a turnover of USD 400 billion (approximately INR 26,00,000 crore) by 2025.
- This will include targeted production of 1.0 billion (100 crore) mobile handsets by 2025.

Salient Features of NPE 2019

- i. Create eco-system for globally competitive ESDM sector: Promoting domestic manufacturing and export in the entire value-chain of ESDM.
- ii. Provide incentives and support for manufacturing of core electronic components.
- iii. Provide special package of incentives for mega projects which are extremely high-tech and entail huge investments, such as semiconductor facilities display fabrication, etc.
- iv. Formulate suitable schemes and incentive mechanisms to encourage new units and expansion of existing units.
- v. Promote Industry-led R&D and innovation in all sub-sectors of electronics, including grass root level innovations and early stage Start-ups in emerging technology areas such as 5G, IoT/ Sensors, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning, Virtual Reality (VR), Drones, Robotics, Additive Manufacturing, Photonics, Nano-based devices, etc.
- vi. Provide incentives and support for significantly enhancing availability of skilled manpower, including re-skilling.
- vii. Special thrust on Fabless Chip Design Industry, Medical Electronic Devices Industry, Automotive Electronics Industry and Power Electronics for Mobility and Strategic Electronics Industry.

- viii. Create Sovereign Patent Fund (SPF) to promote the development and acquisition of IPs in ESDM sector.
- ix. Promote trusted electronics value chain initiatives to improve national cyber security profile.

⇒ **PCSK-9 gene mutation:**

- The PCSK9 are a new class of injectable drugs that reportedly reduce 'bad' cholesterol levels by up to 60% when combined with a statin (another class of drugs prescribed to help lower cholesterol levels).
- Geneticist Helen Hobbs found that when people had a mutation in PCSK9, they ended up with lower levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) or bad cholesterol. This mechanism of mutation protected people against heart disease without any side effects.
- Low-density lipoprotein cholesterol is considered the 'bad' variant of cholesterol as it contributes to plaque deposition, leading to the hardening and narrowing of arteries or 'atherosclerosis' (thickening of artery walls owing to accumulation of white blood cells).

⇒ **NITI Aayog – Discussion Paper on Artificial Intelligence (AI) Ecosystem in India**

- AI – An area of computer science that emphasizes the creation of intelligent machines that work and react like humans.
- Example – Speech Recognition, Learning, Planning, Problem Solving, Sophia, Siri, Facial Detection, etc.
- Aayog focuses on 5 Sectors – Agriculture, Education, Health, Smart Cities & Transport.
- This says India has the Potential to become an AI “garage” solution provider for the world, with 40% solution potential.
- However, NITI Aayog doesn't talk about funding, it just says about institutional structure.

⇒ **Operation Sagar Rani**

- BY-Food safety department. (FSSAI)
- Objective- To ensure **the safety of fish sold in the market**. Ensuring hygienic treatment at the handling & distribution centers.
- Such fishes have high content of **Formalin (Formaldehyde) which is Toxic & Carcinogenic Preservatives**
- How can a common people detect It (formaldehyde contamination) ? –
 - **Stiff & Rubbery meat,**
 - **hard scales,**
 - **red gills & clear eyes,**
 - **too without typical smell.**
- Tested by Indian **Institute for Toxicology Research, Lucknow.**

⇒ **Center of excellence for Blockchain Tech. Hyderabad**

To Kickstart innovation in the field of BC.

BC – An incorruptible digital ledger of transactions that can be programmed to record not just financial transaction but virtually everything of value.

Key terms-

1. Ledger
2. Transaction
3. Block
4. Decentralization

5. Public key v/s Private key

⇒ Dinesh Sharma committee : issues relating to cryptocurrencies

- Committee to regulate Virtual currencies which is now remains as Unregulated money.
- Such currencies remains-
 - Decentralized & peer-to-peer transaction.
 - Recorded in decentralized ledger “Blockchain”
 - Transferable, Storable & Tradeable electronically.

SRIMAN – “Rent-a-lab” Policy – Rental Income Scientific Research Infrastructure management and network- SHRIMAN

- Through this, Govt will Lease out labs to researchers across the country.
- All such labs which have equipment worth 10 lakh or more.

Some crucial segments Eg- DNA sequencing machines, radio telescope, particle accelerators. This will Not apply to strategic sectors.

B.N. Shrikrishna Committee

- on Data protection
- Draft personal data protection bill 2018

Recommendations –

1. Restrictions on Processing and Collection of Personal Data

The committee recommends that processing (collection, recording, analysis, disclosure, etc) of personal data should be done only for “clear, specific and lawful” purposes. Only that data which is necessary for such processing is to be collected from anyone.

2. Processing of Personal Data for “Functions of the State”

One of the more problematic suggestions of the committee is that they suggest that your personal data may be processed by the government if this is considered necessary for any function of Parliament or State Legislature. This includes provision of services, issuing of licenses, etc. On the face of it, this looks extremely vague and could lead to misuse.

3. Right to be Forgotten

The committee recommends giving “data principals” (persons whose personal data is being processed) the ‘right to be forgotten’.

This means they will be able to restrict or prevent any display of their personal data once the purpose of disclosing the data has ended, or when the data principal withdraws consent from disclosure of their personal data. In the EU, this has been used by people to get unflattering records of them on news websites taken down after the matter is no longer a matter of public interest.

4. Data Localization

Personal data will need to be stored on servers located within India, and transfers outside the country will need to be subject to safeguards. Critical personal data, however, will only be processed in India.

5. Processing of Sensitive Personal Data to Require Explicit Consent

The Committee recommends that “sensitive” personal data (such as passwords, financial data, sexual orientation, biometric data, religion or caste) should not be processed unless someone gives explicit consent – which factors in the purpose of processing.

So, if you have disclosed your sexual orientation in a survey where you were told it would be used to assess the numbers of people with such orientation in a particular place, your name and orientation cannot then be sent to an advertising agency to send you targeted ads, as this is different from the purpose you had agreed on.

6. Data Protection Authority

The Committee has recommended setting up a Data Protection Authority which is supposed to “protect the interests of data principals”, prevent misuse of personal data and ensure compliance with the safeguards and obligations under the data protection framework by corporations, governments or anyone else processing personal data (known as “data fiduciaries”).

The Authority shall have the power to inquire into any violations of the data protection regime, and can take action against any data fiduciaries responsible for the same.

7. Aadhaar Act Amendments

The Committee has suggested recommendations to the Aadhaar Act 2016 to ensure autonomy of the UIDAI and “bolster data protection”.

8. RTI Act Amendments

The Committee recommends the amendment amend section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act that pertains to the disclosure of personal information in the larger public interest.

What is the perspective of Personal Data? – A natural person could directly or indirectly be identifiable through any such information, is considered as PD.

What do you understand by Data Localization ?

Concept - The personal data of a country’s residents should be processed & stored in that country.

Types of data localization–

1. Restrict the flow entirely.
2. Data mirroring (sharing but a copy should be stored)

Present regulations – Mutual legal assistance treaties (MLATs) for cross border sharing by individual.

Global initiatives –

1. Russia has the most restrictive regulations.
2. GDPR (General data protection regulation) by EU for data mirroring
3. Critical information/important data cross border transfer must under go a security assessment in china
4. Clarifying lawful overseas use of data act (CLOUD ACT) by trump in us.

In Our Country –

- RBI’s circular for payments data store mandatory by oct. 15, 2018 by everyone.
- B.N. shrikrishna committee in draft law in data protection suggested 1. mirroring (personal data of Indians) 2. critical personal data must be stored & processed within India.
- A leaked draft of e-commerce & cloud competing policy (draft) also tilting towards localization.

⇒ **What is RISECREEK:SHAKTI ?**

- **SHAKTI** –it is India’s First microprocessor (indigenous), made by BY-IIT Madras, MeiTy + ISRO.
- This is Based on instruction set architecture (ISA)- a set of basic instruction called RISC-5
- This would work based on Open Source ISA means – Customizable to any device.

- **What is the Significance for our country ?** – we can reduce dependency on imported microchips for communication & defense sector.

⇒ First Cyber University – Maharashtra

What is the Theobjective?

1. We have A gap of 1.5 crore professionals in 10 sectors shortfall in the IOT & Cyber forensics sectors.
2. It is Required to have cyber professionals 30 lakh with each year, while we have the supply is only at 1 lakh.

What the Univ. will do ?

1. It will Train around 30k professionals per year.
2. 15 areas of IOT, AI & Data analytics.

⇒ Gene Editing – Crisper – Cas9

“Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic repeats”

New Invention – Bacteria’s natural defense mechanism to alter an organism’s genetics code.

CAS9 – it is Just an enzyme, which is guided by pre designed RNA sequences, works like a scissors..

- It works like a molecular scissors, to cut & paste a DNA stands at a specific locations and modify genes function.

Implications –

What are the issues with the experiment?

- One of its controversial applications is modifying the genes of eggs, sperm, or early embryos to alter a human life.
- This could result in “designer babies” i.e the ability to create smarter or more athletic humans.
- The implications of introducing modified genomes into the human gene pool are vastly unknown.
- Creating children with preferred traits also raised bio-ethical concerns as it goes against natural process.
- If this technology becomes a realistic, the wealthy would be able to afford the selection of desirable traits in their offspring, while those of lower socioeconomic standing would not be able to access the same options.
- As a result, economic divisions may grow into genetic divisions, with social distinctions delineating enhanced individuals from unenhanced individuals.

In short : (for 15 words answer)

Positive (1) Potentials to edit out genes that can cause congenital/hereditary diseases.

Negative(2) Specter of eugenics.

Bio-Ethics (3) Control or detect evolutions.(Designer babies)

⇒ Genome Asia 100k

What – it is aNonprofit group of scientists with a mission to generate genomic information for Asian population.

The reason behind the move is Promote genetic understanding to support research for healthy living of the population.

BY- Led by the national technology university (NTU) Singapore.

The Plan -toSequence the whole genome of 1,00,000 Asians including 50k Indians

⇒ **Digi Yatra:**

- Face recognition technology for flyers at airport.
- Biometric enabled digital processing technique by scanning a QR code along with facial recognition.
- Travelers will skip by queues at various check points.

⇒ **“Innovate 2 Cultivate” Program**

- What is this? – A program which connects START UPS of specific crops with their producers (Farmers) to convey the innovations at ground level.
- By Whom – A non profit organization, MARICO innovation foundation.
- Where – at Coimbatore.
- Why – Transmit new technology of as the solution for organic micro nutrients, pest

⇒ **GSLV – MK – III**

- What- It is a launch vehicle, crucial for chandrayan – 2 and human space mission (Gaganyaan) by India.
- Why in News –
- It successfully placed “GSAT-29” the heaviest satellite in the Indian space history.
- GSAT-29 – To fulfill communication requirements of areas remote areas such as NE & J&K,
- A milestone towards achieving self reliance in launching heavier satellite.

HysIS- Hyper Spectral Imaging Satellite

India’s own earth observation satellite

Objective – Polar synchronous orbit, along the earth’s geographic north & south pole.

(Not with Magnetic Pole)

Observation Targets – (Up till 2023)

1. Provide observation within
 - (A) Visible
 - (B) Near infrared
 - (C) Short Wave Infrared bands (electromagnetic spectrum)
2. Earth’s Magnetic Field
3. Atmospheric activity and climate change.

GSAT – 7A

What – Military communication satellite, primarily built for India Air Force.

Command Area – It will provide communication capability to users in the

KU – band over the India region.

- Ku-band provides superior real time aircraft to aircraft communication.

Additions – GSAT-7 (2013) has been providing similar linking facilities to ships of navy.

GSAT – 11

What – Indian communication satellite, rode up on Ariane 5 ECA (European launch vehicle)

Where – Took off from French Guiana (S.America)

Background – HTS family of ISRO –

High – throughput communication satellite

Parts – (A) GSAT – 29 (B) GSAT – 19 (C) GSAT – 11

Significance – (1) High speed data service to untoucted areas from space, unlike fiber and lined connections.

(2) Backbone of pan India digital program and services. i.e. – **Digital India, Bharat Net**

(3) it meets unprecedented data demand of country.



Mentioned Under

RAS Mains PAPER-II, UNIT-III

Earth Science (Geography & Geology) Part-A World, Part-B Indian, Part-C Rajasthan

⇒ World Environment Day 2019

- The UN Environment Program (UNEP, or UN Environment) annually organizes events for World Environment Day, which encourages worldwide awareness and action for the protection of the environment.
- It is celebrated on 5 June in over 100 countries. In 2019, China will host the global World Environment Day celebrations on the theme, 'Air Pollution'.

⇒ Global Deal for Nature

- The Global Deal for Nature (GDN) is a time-bound, science-driven plan to save the diversity and abundance of life on Earth.
- The GDN campaign is being driven by **One Earth**, an initiative of the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation that aims to marshal support from international institutions, governments, and citizens of planet Earth to support ambitious conservation goals.

In news:

- A paper published in Science outlines a new "Global Deal for Nature," officially launching an effort to establish science-based conservation targets covering all of planet Earth, including terrestrial, freshwater, and marine ecosystems.
- The Global Deal for Nature proposes a target of 30 percent of the planet to be fully protected under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity by 2030. But because much more of Earth's natural ecosystems need to be preserved or restored in order to avert the worst impacts of runaway global warming, another 20 percent of the planet would be protected under the GDN as Climate Stabilization Areas (CSAs).

⇒ Earth day 2019

- Each year, **April 22** is celebrated as **Earth Day**. Worldwide, various events are held to demonstrate support for environmental protection. First celebrated in 1970, Earth Day now includes events in more than 193 countries, which are coordinated globally by the Earth Day Network.
- The **theme** of this year's Earth Day is '**protecting the planet's species diversity**'.

⇒ Earth hour 2019

- Famous monuments across the world went dark on March 31st night to observe the World Wide Fund for Nature's Earth Hour to spark global awareness and action on nature and the environment.
- Since 2007, Earth Hour has been a movement to bring awareness to climate change, while promoting action to preserve the climate and environment.
- **Earth Hour 2019** with its campaign **#connect2Earth** aims to create awareness regarding the importance of saving nature as our lives depend on its health.
- Participation will mark Earth Hour by switching off unnecessary lights for the hour to symbolise a commitment to change beyond the hour.

- Starting as a symbolic lights out event in Sydney in 2007, Earth Hour is now the world's largest grassroots movement for the environment, inspiring millions of people to take action for our planet and nature.

⇒ 6th edition of Global Environment Outlook report

Global Environment Outlook report has been released. The report is **the sixth and is the UN's most comprehensive report on the state of the global environment** since the fifth edition in 2012.

About GEO report:

- The GEO is often referred to as *UN Environment's flagship environmental assessment*.
- The *first publication was in 1997* and was originally requested by Member States.
- *It is a flagship report because it fulfills the core functions of the organization*, which date back to the UN General Assembly resolution that established the UNEP in 1972.

Key observations:

Pollution related risks:

- A quarter of all premature deaths and diseases worldwide are due to manmade pollution and environmental damage.
- Deadly emissions, chemicals polluting drinking water, and the accelerating destruction of ecosystems crucial to the livelihoods of billions of people are driving a worldwide epidemic that hampers the global economy.
- There is a growing chasm between rich and poor countries as rampant overconsumption, pollution and food waste in the developed world leads to hunger, poverty and disease elsewhere.

Impact:

- As greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise amid a preponderance of droughts, floods and super storms made worse by climbing sea levels, there is a growing political consensus that climate change poses a future risk to billions.
- But the health impacts of pollution, deforestation and the mechanized food-chain are less well understood. Nor is there any international agreement for the environment close to covering what the 2015 Paris accord does for climate.
- Poor environmental conditions “cause approximately 25% of global disease and mortality” — around 9 million deaths in 2015 alone.
- Lacking access to clean drinking supplies, 1.4 million people die each year from preventable diseases such as diarrhea and parasites linked to pathogen-riddled water and poor sanitation.
- Chemicals pumped into the seas cause “potentially multi-generational” adverse health effects, and land degradation through mega-farming and deforestation occurs in areas of Earth home to 3.2 billion people.
- *Species extinction* rates also continue to increase at a pace that could compromise Earth's ability to meet human needs, the report says.

⇒ 8 govt missions under National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)

1. National Solar Mission
2. National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency
3. National Mission on Sustainable Habitat
4. National Water Mission
5. National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem
6. National Mission for a Green India
7. National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture
8. National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change

⇒ National Mission for a Green India

- Also termed as the Green India Mission/Scheme, it aims at protecting; restoring and enhancing India's diminishing forest cover and responding to climate change by a combination of adaptation and mitigation measures.
- Driven by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, it received the nod of approval from the Cabinet in 2014.

Goals of the mission-

- To increase forest/tree cover to the extent of 5 million hectares (mha) and improve quality of forest/tree cover on another 5 mha of forest/non-forest lands;
- To improve/enhance eco-system services like carbon sequestration and storage (in forests and other ecosystems), hydrological services and biodiversity; along with provisioning services like fuel, fodder, and timber and non-timber forest produces (NTFPs); and
- To increase forest based livelihood income of about 3 million households.

⇒ Plastic waste : UN Environment Forum

UN Environment Assembly is the top annual forum on the planet's environmental crisis.

- Countries from around the world set their sights on a **pivotal deal to curb plastic waste**.
- The UN environment forum was held in Nairobi.
- The UN wants individual countries to sign up to “significantly” reduce plastic production, including a phasing out of single-use plastics by 2030 — a goal inspired by the 2015 Paris Agreement on voluntary reductions of carbon emissions.

Despite a ban on the import of plastic waste into India, the influx of PET bottles has quadrupled from 2017 to 2018 (due to legal loophole)

- Indian firms are importing plastic scraps from China, Italy, Japan and Malawi for recycling.
- To incentivize domestic plastic recycling units, the government had banned the import of plastic waste, particularly PET bottles in 2015.
- In 2016, an amendment allowed such imports as long as they were carried out by agencies situated in Special Economic Zones. It's this loophole that's been exploited.

Solid plastic waste has been prohibited from import into the country including in Special Economic Zones (SEZ) and by Export Oriented Units (EOU).

- The change in law was part of the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management & Transboundary Movement) Amendment Rules, 2019.
- A lack of an efficient waste segregation system and inadequate collection is the root cause for this wide gap.

⇒ IQ Air Group: top polluted cities list.

It is a ground-based sensor located in 3,000 cities from 73 countries and was compiled by IQAir Group, a manufacturer of air-monitoring sensors as well as purifiers and environmentalist group Greenpeace.

-Fifteen of the top 20 most polluted cities in the world are located in India.

- **Gurugram in Haryana topped the list** with an average annual particulate matter (PM 2.5) quality of 135 micrograms/cubic metre, in 2018.
- Bangladesh the most polluted followed by Pakistan and India respectively.

- Iceland with the cleanest air.

National clean air program

Centre launched a program to reduce particulate matter (PM) pollution by 20-30% in at least 102 cities by 2024.

About NCAP

- National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) is scheme to provide the States and the Centre with a framework to combat air pollution.
- It is a five-year action plan with a tentative target of 20-30% reduction in concentrations of PM10 and PM2.5 by 2024, with 2017 as the base year.
- It is a ₹300-crore programme.

⇒ Measures and Policies for Tackling Climate Change by India:

Key actions India has taken towards combating and adapting to climate change:

- India's National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) which covers eight major missions on Solar, Enhanced Energy Efficiency, Sustainable Habitat, Water, Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem, Green India, Sustainable Agriculture and Strategic Knowledge on Climate Change.
- Generating 175 GW of renewable energy by 2022
- Smart cities, electric vehicles, energy efficiency initiative
- Leapfrogging from Bharat Stage -IV to Bharat Stage-VI emission norms by April 2020
- India's forest and tree cover has increased by 1 percent as compared to assessment of 2015.
- Schemes like UJJWALA for LED distribution has crossed the number of 320 million while UJJWALA for distributing clean cooking stoves to women below poverty line has covered more than 63 million households.
- International Solar Alliances (ISA)
- FAME Scheme – for E-mobility
- Atal Mission for Rejuvenation & Urban Transformation (AMRUT) – for Smart Cities
- Swachh Bharat Mission

India recently submitted its Second Biennial Update Report (BUR) to UNFCCC in December 2018 as per the reporting obligations under the convention.

The report brings out the fact that emission intensity of India's GDP came down by 21% between 2005 & 2014 and India's achievement of climate goal for pre-2020 period is on track.

Given the weak efforts of the developed world to assist the developing countries so far, an assessment of India's capacity to undertake a low-carbon transition may well provide a reliable template for developing countries to emulate.

⇒ Climate talks in Katowice, Poland: COP 24

What was agreed at COP24?

- Countries settled on most of the tricky elements of the "rulebook" for putting the 2015 Paris agreement into practice.

- This includes how governments will measure, report on and verify their emissions-cutting efforts, a key element because it ensures all countries are held to proper standards and will find it harder to wriggle out of their commitments.
- This global deal is meant for climate actions by all the countries across the globe post-2020.

-What it contains?

The Katowice package includes guidelines that will operationalize the transparency framework. It sets out how countries will provide information about their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that describe their domestic climate actions.

This information includes mitigation and adaptation measures as well as details of financial support for climate action in developing countries.

Besides transparency framework, the Katowice package also includes guidelines that relate to the process for establishing new targets on finance from 2025 onwards to follow-on from the current target of mobilizing \$100 billion per year from 2020 to support developing countries.

It also includes how to conduct the Global Stocktake (GST) of the effectiveness of climate action in 2023 and how to assess progress on the development and transfer of technology.

Significance of the rulebook:

The global rules are important to ensure that each tonne of emissions released into the atmosphere is accounted for. In this way, progress towards the emission limitation goals of the Paris Agreement can be accurately measured. Currently, climate actions of rich nations for pre-2020 period are being guided by the Kyoto Protocol.

⇒ The Lancet countdown on health and climate report:

The Lancet countdown on health and climate report was released recently. Coming on the eve of the UN climate conference in Katowice, Poland, the report of the Lancet panel for 2018 brings clarity, placing connected issues in perspective for governmental action.

⇒ Adverse Health Impacts of Climate Change

- The world is facing the biggest health challenge of 21st century due to climate change amid rising global temperature.
- There has been increase in frequency, duration and intensity of heat waves in India which has resulted in increased deaths due to heat stroke, heart failure, acute kidney failure and frequent cases of dehydration.
- Because of heat waves, there has been loss of work hours and labour capacity. The maximum impact of heat wave has been in the agricultural sector – a large section of the population that depends on farming.
- This has resulted in decline in household income. As per World Bank estimate, in India there will be high socio-economic cost which may lead to erosion of 2.8% of GDP by 2050.
- The increase in heat wave may also result in pre-mature deaths, increase in vector borne disease, decrease in labor capacity and it will also adversely affect food production leading to food insecurity.

⇒ Bio plastic :

Bio plastics are an emerging alternative to plastics but only 2% of global plastic production is bio-based.

What is Bio Plastic?

- Bio-plastics mean that these plastics are biodegradable.
- Unlike conventional plastics, these items can be broken down by microbes in industrial composting facilities within six months.
- This makes them a promising, if partial, solution to India's plastic problem.

What are the raw materials used to manufacture?

- Bio-plastics can be made out of dozens of different feed stocks.
- Polylactic acid is one of the commonest bio-plastics in use (PLA).
- PLA is extracted from food crops starch like corn and cassava.
- Bioplastics, on the other hand, are in principle climate-neutral since they are based on renewable raw materials such as maize, wheat and sugarcane. These plants get the CO₂ that they need from the air through their leaves.
- Producing bioplastics therefore consumes CO₂, which compensates for the amount that is later released at end-of-life. Overall, their net greenhouse gas balance is assumed to be zero.
- This PLA is then imported by Indian companies, who blend it with other ingredients to make carry bags, bin liners or cutlery.
- Polyhydroxyalkanoates, or PHA, is another feedstock that is synthesized by having bacteria feed on vegetable oils or sugars from food crops.

What are the challenges and concerns regarding Bio-plastics?

- The obvious **roadblock** in the way of bio-plastics fulfilling their eco-friendly purpose is that most of them require industrial composting facilities to be disposed of.
- But most cities lack an adequate number of such facilities.
- This means the bio-plastics end up on the streets, harm the environment and defeat its very purpose of tackling plastic pollution.

Beach pollution

- In addition to air and water pollution, India can now add one more category to its pollution worries: **beach pollution**.
- Tourism and Fishing are contributing most of the plastic litter on beaches, according to a study by the National Centre of Coastal Research (NCCR).
- The NCCR conducted a qualitative analysis of the litter on six different beaches on the eastern and western coasts. It found that **plastic litter from tourism alone accounted for 40%-96% of all beach litter**.
- While fishing nets were a major contributor, the processing of fish on the beach also produced a lot of litter. Waste from fishing was high in three of the six beaches studied.
- Other than the plastic litter dropped by tourists, similar waste from creeks and inlets made its way into the sea in the monsoon.
- Most of the litter consisted of plastic bottles, cutlery, and thermocol.

⇒ Blue Flag certification

- The Chandrabhaga beach on the Konark coast of Odisha will be the first in Asia to get the Blue Flag certification.
- The tag given to environment-friendly and clean beaches, equipped with amenities of international standards for tourists.
- It was awarded the honor on World Environment Day on June 5.
- Twelve more beaches in the country are being developed by the Society for Integrated Coastal Management (SICOM), an Environment Ministry's body working for the management of coastal areas, in accordance with the Blue Flag standards.

Blue Flag standards:

The standards were established by the Copenhagen-based Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) in 1985.

- It challenges local authorities and beach operators to achieve high standards (33 standards) in the four categories of: water quality, environmental management, environmental education and safety.
- A beach must be plastic-free and equipped with a waste management system.
- Clean water should be available for tourists, apart from international amenities.
- The beach should have facilities for studying the environmental impact around the area.

⇒ Nitrogen pollution : South Asian Nitrogen Hub

A major international research programme is being carried out to tackle the challenge that nitrogen pollution poses for environment, food security, human health and the economy in South Asia. The research programme will be carried out by South Asian Nitrogen Hub.

- Nitrogen : As pollutant
- While the burning of crop residue is said to be a key contributor to winter smog in many parts of North India, it contributes over 240 million kg of nitrogen oxides.
- Though agriculture remains the largest contributor to nitrogen emissions, the non-agricultural emissions of nitrogen oxides and nitrous oxide are growing rapidly, with sewage and fossil-fuel burning — for power, transport and industry — leading the trend.
- As fertilizer, nitrogen is one of the main inputs for agriculture.

What is PM2.5?

- PM2.5 refers to atmospheric particulate matter (PM) that have a diameter of less than 2.5 micrometers, which is about 3% the diameter of a human hair.
- Fine particles can come from various sources. They include power plants, motor vehicles, airplanes, residential wood burning, forest fires, agricultural burning, volcanic eruptions and dust storms.
- A study has found widespread uranium contamination in groundwater from aquifers in 16 Indian states.

What are the findings?

- The main source of Uranium is natural.
- But human factors such as groundwater-table decline and nitrate pollution may exacerbate the problem.
- Over-exploitation of groundwater for irrigation also have exacerbated the problem.

- Many of India's aquifers are composed of clay, silt and gravel carried down from the Himalayas by streams or uranium-rich granitic rocks.
- When over pumping of these aquifers' groundwater occurs and their water levels decline, it induces conditions that enhance uranium enrichment in the shallow groundwater that remains.
- Nearly a third of all water wells tested in Rajasthan contained uranium levels that exceed the WHO safe drinking water standards.
- It also identified aquifers contaminated with similarly high levels in 26 other districts in northwestern India and nine districts in southern or southeastern India.
- So there is a need to revise current water-quality monitoring programmes in India and re-evaluate human health risks in areas of high uranium prevalence.

⇒ Causes of winter pollution in Delhi

- The road dust and pollution from heavy vehicles are primarily responsible for the noxious pall that sets on Delhi and other urban centers.
- The burning of paddy stubble by farmers to clear their fields for the next crop is considered to be responsible for 20% of the smog.
- Given Delhi's geography, low wind speeds and a spike in local pollution (from vehicles, biomass burning, firecrackers, etc.) raise the particulate matter count dramatically during winter.

Government Steps

- To address this, and under directions from the Supreme Court-constituted Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority, or EPCA, the Centre is partnering with Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to provide farmers with a range of mechanized implements to clear their fields of paddy crop residue to prepare for sowing wheat.
- There is a 50% subsidy to farmers, and a 75% waiver to cooperative societies, agencies that rent out equipment, farmers' interest groups or gram panchayats to buy such machines.
- States have got nearly Rs. 650 crore to help farmers buy subsidised equipment such as Happy Seeder, paddy straw choppers and Zero Till Drill.
- Punjab, which of the three States has the largest acreage under paddy, has a target of procuring 24,315 machines by October 15.
- A task force, headed by the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister and comprising Environment Ministry officials and Chief Secretaries of these States, have been meeting since January to prepare for the winter.

⇒ The 1.5°C challenge

Introduction

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change releases its 'special report' on keeping warming to under 1.5°C as compared to pre-industrial times.
- The 2015 agreement, which has become the cornerstone of climate change mitigation efforts worldwide, proposed to keep the increase in global average temperature to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels.
- But the report that was released on recently has found this threshold to be inadequate.

⇒ Observations of the report

- The IPCC believe that complete decarbonisation is not an impossible goal.

- In a break from its tradition of not recommending policy prescriptions, the global body has called for up-scaling low-carbon technologies and increased energy efficiency.
- But such interventions will not be enough and investments will have to move towards afforestation and technology-centered approaches, including ones that involve sucking the greenhouse gas before it reaches the atmosphere.
- The report also emphasizes adaptation methods.

Warnings by report

- The world is already 1°C hotter than what it was 150 years ago.
- It could witness greater frequency of droughts and floods, more intense tropical cyclones and increased ocean acidification and salinity if the planet heats by a further 0.5°C. That could happen anytime between 2030 and 2050.
- A more than 1.5°C warming will be precarious, and a 2°C rise would be catastrophic.
- This means that current mitigation efforts — calibrated to stave off calamitous events by 2075 — will require drastic up-scaling.

⇒ Pollution forecast system

The Central government announced a pollution forecast system that can alert, three days in advance, about the likelihood of extreme pollution events and dust storms.

- The National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting, the IMD and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, are involved with developing the application.
- The system is expected to be made available to the public soon via the CPCB and the Environment Pollution Control Authority.

⇒ India and heat wave

According to recent UN climate report –

- India to face threat of deadly heat waves
- If the average global temperature rises by more than one degree Celsius from the present, India could “annually” expect conditions like the 2015 heat wave that killed at least 2,000
- The report stated that capping the rise in temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius would require “rapid and far-reaching” transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport and cities.

Observations of the report

- The IPCC believe that complete decarbonization is not an impossible goal.
- In a break from its tradition of not recommending policy prescriptions, the global body has called for up-scaling low-carbon technologies and increased energy efficiency.
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Concerns

- What is worrying is that the world is not even on course to meet the comparatively conservative demands of a 2°C-rise-in-temperature scenario.
- One of the criticisms of the Paris Accord-mandated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) is that they are insufficient to meet these demands.
- Another major concern is about climate financing, which has remained unresolved.

⇒ Climate financing

- The imperative of making communities resilient in the face of global warming and the focus on novel technologies require that urgency is accorded to shoring up climate finances.
- Unfortunately, funding has been the Achilles' heel (a weakness or vulnerable point) of global climate change negotiations.
- As of December 2017, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) — the main instrument of fulfilling the developed countries' collective promise of putting \$100 billion annually into the hat by 2020 — had disbursed less than 10 per cent of its commitment.
- And in July, a meeting of the fund's board ended without a decision on how to bolster the agency's pool.
- The rulebook of the Paris Climate Accord, that is slated to be finalised by the end of the year, is mandated to take care of these concerns.
- It will now also need to factor in the challenges laid out by the IPCC report.

⇒ What is the difference: 1.5°C and 2°C?

- For most people, the difference between 1.5°C and 2°C may seem trivial when daily temperatures fluctuate much more widely. However, the reference here is to global average temperatures.
- Different regions of the earth will warm at different rates. For instance, the Arctic is already experiencing warming that is many times higher than the global average.
- Half a degree of warming makes a world of difference to many species whose chance of survival is significantly reduced at the higher temperature.
- At 1.5°C warming, ocean acidification will be reduced (compared to 2°C warming), with better prospects for marine ecosystems.
- There will likely be less intense and frequent hurricanes, not as intense droughts and heat waves with smaller effects on crops, and the reduced likelihood of an ice-free Arctic in summers.
- Studies conservatively estimate sea levels to rise on average by about 50 cm by 2100 in a 2°C warmer world, 10 cm more than for 1.5°C warming.
- But beyond 2100, the overall assurance of much higher sea level rise is greater in a 2°C world.
- The risks to food security, health, fresh water, human security, livelihoods and economic growth are already on the rise and will be worse in a 2°C world.

- The number of people exposed to the complex and compounded risks will also increase and the poorest, mostly in Asia and Africa, will suffer the worst impacts.
- Adaptation, or the changes required to withstand the temperature rise, will also be lower at the lower temperature limit.
- The danger of crossing tipping points, or thresholds beyond which the earth's systems are no longer able to stabilise, becomes higher with more warming.
- Such tipping points include melting of Greenland ice, collapse of Antarctic glaciers (which would lead to several metres of sea level rise), destruction of Amazon forests, melting of all the permafrost and so on.

⇒ What is meant by Ghost Gear?

- Ghost gear is the waste left from fishing activities that now floats in our oceans and has the potential to entangle or kill the animals that live there. It is estimated in fact that for each piece of ghost gear six animals are harmed.
- Animals of all sizes, from whales to the endangered Loggerhead and Leatherback sea turtles, to small fish like the Brook Trout, run the risk of being entangled, injured and even killed every day.
- Recently, In March 2018, fishermen hauled 400 kg of fishing nets out of the sea in a few locations off Kerala's south coast.
- There are many such reports of divers regularly making underwater trips just to extract nets that have sunk to the ocean floor off India's coasts, ranging from Tamil Nadu to Maharashtra.
- The problem of ghost gear (any fishing equipment that has been lost, discarded or abandoned in water bodies) has grown from fishing fallout that people had not heard of to one that is now difficult to ignore.

Global Initiatives to control Ghost Gears:

- To tackle this global issue, World Animal Protection founded the Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI), a cross-sectoral alliance committed to driving solutions to the problem of ghost gear worldwide.
- The GGGI works to build evidence, develop best practices and inform policies, and catalyze solutions.
- Last year the GGGI supported a project to remove old crab traps in McIntyre Bay, British Columbia and launched a Best Practice Framework for the seafood industry and other stakeholders to prevent and mitigate the impacts of lost fishing gear and marine litter.
- "The Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI) has more than 80 industry participants who are driving solutions to the problem of lost and abandoned fishing gear, from removing gear from our oceans to converting recycled nets to skateboards and swimwear.
- The GGGI is a platform where governments and other stakeholders come together to improve the health of marine ecosystems, protect marine animals from harm and safeguard human health and livelihoods."

Indian initiative to control Ghost Gear:

- ✓ Scientists at Kochi's Indian Council of Agricultural Research Central Institute of Fisheries Technology studied ghost nets in Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ According to the scientists, the government is also currently preparing a national ghost net management policy.

- ✓ While that would be an extremely welcome and timely move to tackle the growing ghost gear phenomenon, a larger question remains.
- ✓ When bigger violations, such as large vessels fishing where they are not supposed to, are not checked, there is less possibility that a policy on the management of ghost nets would be implemented.

⇒ SAFAR –

System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research

- It is a research program to build Air-Pollution mitigation strategies in consonance with nation's economic development
- It is launched in greater metropolitan cities of India to provide location specific information on air quality in near real time

Objective-

- The ultimate objective of the project is to increase awareness among general public regarding the air quality in their city well in advance so that appropriate mitigation measures and systematic action can be taken up for betterment of air quality and related health issues.

Pollutant monitored-

- Pollutants monitored: PM1, PM2.5, PM10, Ozone, CO, NO_x (NO, NO₂), SO₂, BC, Methane (CH₄), Non-methane hydrocarbons (NMHC), VOC's, Benzene, Mercury.
- Monitored Meteorological Parameters: UV Radiation, Rainfall, Temperature, Humidity, Wind speed, Wind direction, sola

In News

- The new air quality monitoring station at Chandni Chowk, which measures the concentration of Particulate Matter (PM) 1, has thrown up worrying results.
- According to the data collected by the Ministry of Earth Science's System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR), the concentration of the particle, which is under 1 micron in size, touched 54.32 micrograms per cubic metre on October 16.
- This was the highest this season so far.
- There are no national or international acceptable standards for PM1 concentration in the air, unlike those for PM2.5 and PM10.

What is PM 2.5 and PM10 and how they affect health?

- **PM** is also called **Particulate Matter or particle pollution**, which is a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets present in the atmosphere. The particles present in the air are so minute that you cannot even view through naked eyes.
- PM2.5 refers to the atmospheric particulate matter that has a diameter of less than 2.5 micrometres, which is about 3% of the diameter of human hair.
- **Sources of Particulate Matter**
- Particulate Matter is of different sizes and it can be due to both human and natural sources. Sources can be primary and secondary.
- The primary source includes automobile emissions, dust and cooking smoke.
- The secondary source of pollution can be due to complex reactions of chemicals like sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide.
- These particles are mixed in air and pollute it.

- Apart from these, forest fires, wood burning stoves, agricultural burning, smoke of the industry, dust occur from various construction sites also causes air pollution etc.

What are the health effects of PM2.5 and PM10?

- Due to small in size both PM2.5 and PM10 particles act as gas.
- When you breathe, these particles they penetrate into the lungs, which can lead to cough and asthma attacks.
- High blood pressure, heart attack, stroke etc. serious diseases may occur and as a result of which premature death can occur.
- Do you know that if the level of PM2.5 is high in the air mist or fog increases and the visibility is affected.
- The worst effect of these particles in the air is on children and the elderly people.

How much level of PM2.5 and PM10 should be there in the air?

- Normal level of PM10 should be 100 micrograms cubic metre and PM2.5 level should be 60 microgram cubic meter.
- As we know that the level of PM2.5 and PM10 in the air is increasing which is causing air pollution and on the other hand risk of diseases is also emerging day by day. So, we should take precautions like use mask etc.

Preventive measures from Air Pollution

- People should use masks to avoid air pollution and should consult a doctor if problem is severe.
- Avoid exercising outside when the pollution level is high.
- Do not burn wood or thrash because these particles are the main source of pollution.
- Do not smoke at both indoor and outdoor places.
- To keep your indoor space safe from air pollution, you can also use air purifier. Air purifier can reduce the rate of air pollution inside your home.
- If air pollution lasts for several days, then change the place for some time.

⇒ Measures and Policies for Tackling Climate Change by India:

- Under the Paris Agreement, India has submitted its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the UNFCCC outlining Eight (8) targets for 2021-2030, including
- To reduce Emission Intensity of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 33 to 35 percent by 2030 from 2005 level,
- To achieve about 40 percent cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030 with the help of transfer of technology and low cost international finance including from Green Climate Fund (GCF).
- To create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tones of CO₂ equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by 2030.
- The other targets pertain to sustainable lifestyles; climate friendly growth path; climate change adaptation; climate change finance; and capacity building and technology.

⇒ What do you understand with cross-border environmentalism?

- Consequences of environmental degradation do not respect national or state boundaries.

- Pollution can originate in one country but can cause damage in another country's environment, by crossing borders through pathways like water or air. Pollution can be transported across hundreds and even thousands of kilometers.
- Wind and water too don't respect national boundaries. One country's pollution quickly can, and often does, become another country's environmental and economic crisis. e.g.- Bihar is helping destroy the Chure/Siwalik range of Nepal to feed the construction industry's demand for boulders and conglomerate, even though this hurts Bihar itself through greater floods, desertification and aquifer depletion.

How India is concerned?

- Impact of ecosystem destruction on life and livelihood is very high in South Asia.
- Distress is paramount in the northern half of the subcontinent – especially from the Brahmaputra basin to the Indus-Ganga plain.
- Therefore, there is a need for South Asian people to join their hands across borders to save our common ground.
- As the largest nation-state of South Asian region and the biggest polluter whose population is the most vulnerable, India needs to be alert to the dangerous drift.

⇒ Concept of 'Atmospheric brown cloud' and 'Seet lahar'

- Scientists are studying about 'atmospheric brown cloud' and its influence on excessive melting of snows in the central Himalaya.
- This cloud is made up of 'black carbon' containing soot and smog sent up by stubble burning, wood fires, smokestacks and fossil fuel exhaust, as well as dust kicked up by winter agriculture, vehicles and wind.
- It rises over the plains and some of it settles on Himalayan snow and ice, which absorb heat and melt that much faster.
- Seet lahar – a violent type of mudflow or ground-hugging fog that engulfs the subcontinent's northern plains for ever-extended periods in winter - is one more concern.

⇒ What do you understand by Green GDP ?

Green GDP is expected to account for the use of natural resources as well as the costs involved.

This includes medical costs generated from factors such as air and water pollution, loss of livelihood due to environmental crisis such as floods or droughts, and other factors.

Starting this year (2018), the government will begin a five-year exercise to compute district-level data of the country's environmental wealth.

⇒ What about 'green skilling' program?

The government has also launched a 'green skilling' programme (Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change) under which youth, particularly school dropouts, would be trained in a range of 'green jobs'— as operators of scientific instruments used to measure environmental quality, as field staff in nature parks, and as tourist guides. Some of the labour required for the survey would also be sourced from the green-skilled workforce.

Bharat Stage VI (BS-VI) grade fuel :

NCR districts switch to Euro-VI grade fuels (BS-VI fuels). The supply of ultra-clean Euro-VI grade fuel (also known as Bharat Stage VI grade fuel) began in cities adjoining the National Capital Region (NCR) on April 1, 2019.

The BS-IV norms have been enforced across the country since April 2017. In 2016, the Centre had announced that the country would skip the BS-V norms altogether and adopt BS-VI norms by 2020.

What are BS norms?

The BS — or Bharat Stage — emission standards are norms instituted by the government to regulate the output of air pollutants from internal combustion engine equipment, including motor vehicles.

India has been following the European (Euro) emission norms, though with a time-lag of five years.

Difference between BS-IV and the new BS-VI:

- ✓ The major difference in standards between the existing BS-IV and the new BS-VI auto fuel norms is the presence of sulphur.
- ✓ The newly introduced fuel is estimated to reduce the amount of sulphur released by 80%, from 50 parts per million to 10 ppm.
- ✓ As per the analysts, the emission of NO_x (nitrogen oxides) from diesel cars is also expected to reduce by nearly 70% and 25% from cars with petrol engines.

⇒ Virtual Climate Summit

- It is an innovative climate summit which is an entirely online event to be a carbon neutral event.
- It is the world's first ever political global meeting to be held in online.
- Its focus is on to renew political momentum in tackling climate change.
- It was announced in the Global Environment Facility (GEF) assembly recently held in Vietnam.
- It is the brainchild of Marshall Islands President who insisted upon such summit in the GEF assembly.
- The summit is convened by the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) in its capacity as the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) chair.
- Its main aim is to encourage the international community to keep global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

⇒ Climate Vulnerable Forum

- The climate vulnerable forum is an international partnership of countries highly vulnerable to a warming planet.
- The Forum serves as a South-South cooperation platform for participating governments to act together to deal with global climate change.
- It brings together climate vulnerable developing countries from across Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific.
- The forum held its first meeting in Maldives in the year 2009.
- CVF High-level meeting was last convened during the UNFCCC Climate Change Conference in Paris (COP21).
- The Manila-Paris Declaration and the 2016-2018 Roadmap of the CVF, adopted at this meeting, spell out the CVF's planned efforts during this time period.

- The forum has a rotating chairmanship that has been held by Maldives, Kiribati, Bangladesh, Costa Rica and Philippines, Ethiopia and currently held by Republic of Marshall.

⇒ **What is the new target and actual status of renewable energy installations of India ?**

- In 2015 Union government has announced 175 GW of renewable energy installations, recently the target has been increased to 225 GW.
- If India hits the 175 GW target, it stands to meet its greenhouse-gas emission goal under the Paris climate agreement.
- Of the current goal of 100 GW from solar energy by 2022, 40 GW is to come from rooftop installations, and 60 GW from large solar parks.
- But India has missed several interim milestones since it announced its 175 GW target.
- The obstacles have capped capacity addition to 69 GW till date, with India missing its 2016 and 2017 milestones.
- The misses happened despite renewable capacity being augmented at a blistering pace.

The composition of past target ?

175 GW renewable energy targets by 2022 –

- 100 GW Solar
- 60 GW Wind
- 10 GW Biomass and
- 5 GW Hydro

What are the challenges in achieving the ambitious target?

- **Lower Margins** - Wind and solar tariffs have hit such low levels that suppliers are working with wafer-thin margins.
- Rooftop solar clocked a compound annual growth rate of 117% between 2013 and 2017 India only hit 3% of its goal by the end of 2017.
- **Policy Lacunas** - In the solar sector alone, which the government is prioritising, policy uncertainties loom large.
- Homeowners aren't warming up to the idea of installing photovoltaic panels on their terraces because the economics does not work out for them.
- **Practical challenges** - Technological and financial challenges remain, both wind and solar generation could be erratic.

The WHO global air pollution database report

- 14 Indian cities among the 15 of the world's most polluted, in terms of particulate matter (PM) 2.5 concentration.
Vehicular pollution:
- Vehicular pollution contributes around 35 per cent of the total PM 2.5 emissions today. Of the total vehicular pollution, 40 per cent to 45 per cent comes from two-wheelers and another 30 per cent to 35 per cent from four wheelers.

⇒ **How to address vehicular pollution along with BS-VI norms ?**

Adoption of alternate mobility technologies:

- We need to assess and refine the monetary incentives that are offered to bridge the viability gap for electric vehicles for the purpose of containing urban pollution.

- These include upfront subsidies, road/registration tax, reduced taxes, and interest rate subsidy. Globally, incentives for adoption of alternate mobility technologies have been known to help — China grants a 45 per cent subsidy on vehicle purchases and Norway and Brazil have their own schemes.
- Given their significance in an EV, India might need to consider pushing for battery localisation. Cell investments would need a long lead-time to materialise. Hence, the government needs to drive immediate investments by providing subsidies and tax breaks to local manufacturers along with support for research and development in the e-mobility domain.

Non-monetary incentives:

Technology choices should be rewarded with exemption from tolls/taxes, special toll lanes and other preferred access to public infrastructure.

Globally, Norway gives preference to high occupancy vehicles and China gives preferential licence access. London imposes congestion charges during working hours on weekdays to vehicles entering the city centre.

All these disincentives to traditional cars help in the push for electric vehicles.

Providing an enabling infrastructure:

There is an early need to standardise charging infrastructure/equipment to ensure interoperability and make it widespread.

European manufacturers have formed a consortium, “Ionity”, to provide interoperable charging points across the continent. Similarly, China has standardised charging infrastructure to ensure increased usage and set up 16,000 charging points across the country. The country aims to set up more than 4.8 million charging points at an investment of almost \$20 billion by 2020. China has regulations to include charging infrastructure in all residential buildings. India needs to start learning from global examples to push enabling infrastructure.

⇒ South Asia’s Hotspots - The Impact of Temperature and Precipitation Changes on Living Standards report by World Bank.

What are the findings of the World bank report?

- A World Bank report has estimated the impacts of climate change on the GDP and living standards in India and region.
- The report found that rising temperatures and changing monsoon rainfall patterns from climate change could cost India 2.8% of GDP.
- Which would also depress the living standards of nearly half the country’s population by 2050.
- It looks at six countries in South Asia and how projected changes in temperature and precipitation will affect living standards in these countries.
- The report has used annual household consumption as a proxy for living standards, and identifies “hotspots” districts where these changes will have a notable effect on living standards.
- For India, it has projected that living conditions in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh will decline by more than 9%, followed by Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra.
- The report states approximately 600 million people in India today live in locations that would become moderate or severe hotspots by 2050 under the carbon-intensive scenario.

⇒ WHAT IS CEMS?

- Continuous emission monitoring system (CEMS) and continuous effluent quality monitoring system (CEQMS) are real-time air and water pollution monitoring systems respectively.

- Continuous ambient air quality monitoring system (CAAQMS) is used for monitoring ambient air quality on real-time basis.

In news:

- Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has directed State Pollution Control Boards (SPCB) to close down industrial units that haven't installed Online Continuous Emission Monitoring Systems (OCEMS).
- It is mandatory for a new industrial unit to install an OCEM to commence operations.
- The CPCB has since 2015 made it mandatory for industries to install OCEMS.

Background

- The continuous monitoring system, as a new age technology, not only provides credible and accurate pollution measurement to the operator, but also enables to take mitigation measures on time and helps in process optimization by providing real-time data.
- Industrialised nations such as the US, the UK, the Germany etc. have successfully adopted, experienced and benefitted from this technology since more than three decades.
- India, in 2014, initiated installation of CEMS and CEQMS in 17 categories of highly polluting industries and common pollution treatment facilities.
- In addition, grossly polluting industries (GPIs) located in the Ganga basin are also required to install CEQMS for monitoring and reporting of effluent quality on real-time basis.
- The central pollution control board (CPCB) had issued the directions to state pollution control boards (SPCBs) and pollution control committees (PCCs) to mandate the installation of CEMS and CEQMS in industries.
- CAAQMS is installed both by the government as well as industries to monitor ambient air quality in the respective regions

⇒ What is UN's REDD

Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries, programme lays emphasis on planting and maintaining forests as a means to counter climate change.

⇒ In-house air pollution

The dangerous smoke — from wood, dung, kerosene or charcoal fires used by 3 billion people in villages and slums across Africa, Central America and Asia — was estimated by health officials to shorten millions of lives every year.

Factors such as socio-economic (availability and easy access, also determined by household income and price of fuel, education and awareness), culture or lifestyle, and, to a large extent, government policies also influence cooking fuel choice.

⇒ Initiatives taken to address in-house pollution

National level programmes to ensure that most switch to clean cooking fuels have been initiated since the 1980s.

National Project on Biogas Development (NPBD)

- It was launched in 1981-82 by the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources.

- Though the socio-economic and environmental impact of biogas is well recognized, NPBD has been receiving public attention and scrutiny in India because of its vast potential on the one hand and its poor performance, high mortality and non-functionality rates on the other.
- The programme has been hampered by mala fide practices, poor construction material, a lack of maintenance, misrepresentation of achievements and a lack of accountability and follow-up services.

Once again, in order to ensure access to clean energy —a key focus area for poverty alleviation —the government launched a flagship programme, **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana** in May 2016.

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana

- It is a scheme of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas for providing LPG connections to women from Below Poverty Line (BPL) households (with a cumulative target of providing LPG connections to more than eight crore families).
- Further, the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) has been holding auctions across cities for distribution of gas for cooking through PNG.
- However, since conventionally, governments have been **subsidising LPG** and as such a **consumption-based subsidy is not available for biogas and PNG**, it has led to a preference for LPG over other cleaner, safer, more cost effective and locally available options (biogas in rural areas).
- Further, **LPG import along with large subsidies are a drain on government resources** which hamper the focus on other social development programmes.

⇒ Green crackers: SWAS, STAR & SAFAL

- As the name suggests, green crackers are said to be less harmful as compared to the conventional firecrackers. Green crackers do not contain harmful chemicals. It means that less pollution emission resulting in reduced air pollution.
- The crackers have been named as Safe Water Releaser (SWAS), Safe Thermite Cracker (STAR) and Safe Minimal Aluminium (SAFAL).
- According to the researchers, the crackers have the unique property of releasing water vapour and/or air as a dust suppressant and diluent for gaseous emissions that match with the performance in sound with traditional conventional crackers. These crackers are now under the testing stage at the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation.
- E-crackers or electric crackers are being tested by at the CSIR-CEERI in Pilani, Rajasthan.

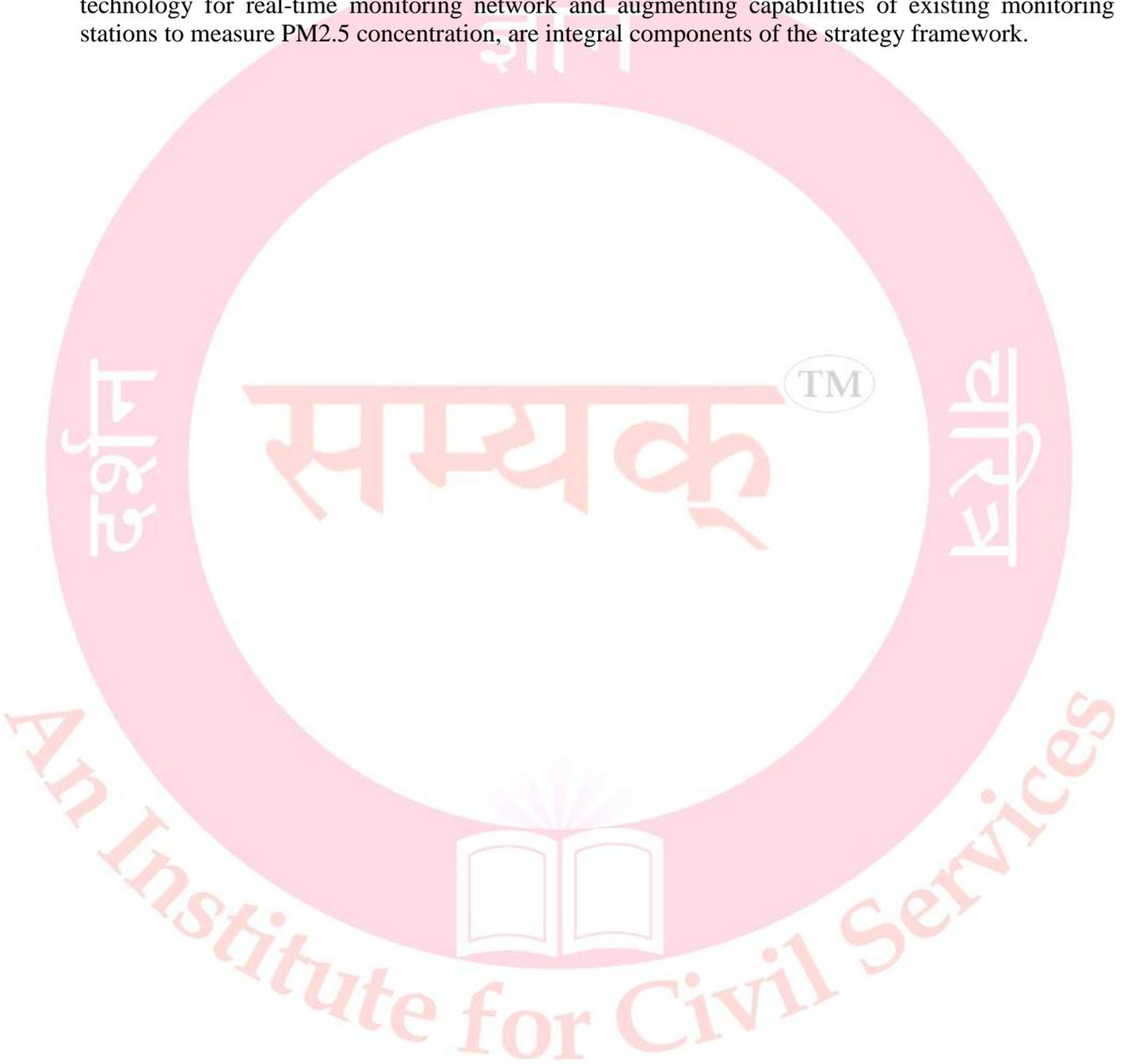
⇒ Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) had asked polluted cities (or 'non-attainment' cities) to implement 42 measures aimed at mitigating air pollution - as part of the **National Clean Air Campaign (NCAP)**.

- These included steps such as implementing control and mitigation measures related to
- vehicular emissions,
- re-suspension of road dust and other fugitive emissions,
- bio-mass,
- municipal solid waste burning,
- industrial pollution,
- construction and demolition activities.

The non-attainment cities are those that have fallen short of the **National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)** for over five years.

Objective of NCAP

- The NCAP aspires to overcome the deficits of the ongoing government initiatives targeted towards air pollution control.
- It lays down a comprehensive strategy framework for enhanced management of air quality.
- Augmentation of existing air quality monitoring network by increasing number of existing manual and continuous monitoring stations, introducing rural monitoring stations, identifying alternative technology for real-time monitoring network and augmenting capabilities of existing monitoring stations to measure PM2.5 concentration, are integral components of the strategy framework.



Mentioned Under
RAS Mains PAPER-III, UNIT-I
Indian Political System, World Politics & Current Affairs

(1) Political Dynamics – Issues related to national integrity & Security

(2) Potential areas of socio-political conflicts

Q-What is the Standard operating procedure (SOP) ?

- Govt. started of two confidence-building measures (CBMs) between India and Pakistan — cross-LoC trade and cross-LoC travel.
- It has emerged as representative of a constructive bilateral engagement process amid political upheavals between the two country.
- Cross-LoC trade is an intra-Jammu and Kashmir trade, in the form of barter of goods on a reciprocal basis which was Started on October 21, 2008.
- The SOP enlists the 21 categories of items to be traded on zero tariffs. The trade-in (import) and trade-out (export) goods must be balanced to zero for each trading firm within a period of three months.

Does it really has its importance in line with CBMs ?

- ✓ Since 2008, trade has shown an average year-on-year growth of about 19%, reaching acumulative value of over ₹ 6,500 crore to date. It has generated more than 1.6 lakh job days.
- ✓ Hence, we can see indicates the potential that this trade holds for social and economic development within Jammu and Kashmir.

Why recently it was in news?

The government of India announced the suspension of trade across LoC at the two designated points expressing concerns over ‘illegal inflows of weapons, narcotics and currency’ in the country.

Section 69 (1) of the Information Technology Act of 2000 and Rule 4 of the Information Technology 2009 Rules:

Govt on surveillance allows 10 central agencies, from the Intelligence Bureau to the Central Board of Direct Taxes to the Cabinet Secretariat (RAW) to the Commissioner of Delhi Police, to **intercept, monitor and decrypt “any information” generated, transmitted, received or stored in “any computer resource”**.

The Centre told the Supreme Court that its December 20, 2018 notification allowing 10 central agencies to snoop on people is in fact a measure to protect citizens’ privacy.

For public order

The Centre says its December 20 order derives statutory justification from Section 69 of the Information Technology Act of 2000



- Section 69 gives the govt. the power to intercept, monitor or decrypt any information through any computer resource
- It says surveillance can be done if authorities are "satisfied that it is necessary or expedient to do so in the interest of the sovereignty or integrity of India, defence of India, security of the state,

friendly relations with foreign states or public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of any cognizable offence or for investigation of any offence"

- The reasons for surveillance have to be recorded in an order in writing

- The subscriber or intermediary or any person in-charge of the computer resource shall provide access to the computer resource to the government. Lack of co-operation shall be punished with a prison term which may extend to 7 years and a penalty

⇒ Issue of Official secrets act

Recently in the Supreme Court, the publishers were threatened by Govt to invoke the Official Secrets Act against two publications that had run reports on the Rafale deal, based on documents which, the government claimed, had been stolen.

What is the act all about ?

- ❖ The original version was The Indian Official Secrets Act (Act XIV), 1889 which was amended several times.
- ❖ The main objective of muzzling the voice of many newspapers that had come up in several languages, and were opposing the Raj's policies, building political consciousness and facing police crackdowns and prison terms.
- ❖ It mainly deals with two aspects — spying or espionage.
- ❖ According to it Secret information can be any official code, password, sketch, plan, model, article, note, document or information.

Who decides the norms about secrecy?

It is the government's discretion to decide what falls under the ambit of a "secret" document to be charged under OSA.

Who would become the traitor?

Both the person communicating the information, and the person receiving the information, can be punished.

Is there any conflict with RTI?

Section 22 of the RTI Act gives for its primacy vis-a-vis provisions of other laws, it provides an overriding effect, notwithstanding anything inconsistent with the provisions of OSA.

Hence if there is any inconsistency in OSA about furnishing of information, it will be superseded by the RTI Act.

Chances of misuse of OSA : It is against -

- Constitutional Freedom to Use and Publicize information (Article 19)

- Arbitrary discretionary powers of government to decide what falls under the ambit of a “secret” document to be charged under OSA..
- OSA might curb the effective role of press.(4th pillar of democracy).
- Conflict with RTI Act, on the issue of confidentiality.
- Chances of Misuse in Name of National Security.

⇒ **What are the provisions to curb hate speeches in India ?**

Tackling hate speech

Some laws that can be used in speeches that are communally sensitive or incite religious feelings:

(i) Indian Penal Code, 1860

- Section 124A IPC penalises sedition
- Section 153A IPC penalises 'promotion of enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony'

(ii) Representation of The People Act, 1951

- Section 123(3A) and Section 125 prohibits promotion of enmity on grounds of religion, race, caste, community or language in connection with election as a corrupt electoral practice and prohibits it

(iii) Cable Television Network Regulation Act, 1995

- Sections 5 and 6 of the Act prohibit transmission or re-transmission of a programme through cable network in contravention to the prescribed programme code or advertisement code

(vi) Cinematograph Act, 1952

- Sections 4, 5B and 7 empower the Board of Film Certification to prohibit and regulate the screening of a film

⇒ **What is the Model code of conduct by Election Commission ?**

A set of guidelines issued to regulate political parties and candidates prior to elections. Such rules which are related to- 8 provisions dealing with

- 1) General conduct
- 2) Meetings
- 3) Processions
- 4) Polling day,
- 5) Polling booths,
- 6) Observers
- 7) The party in power, and
- 8) Election manifestos.

Too, according to it, politicians must also avoid advertising at the cost of the public exchequer or using official mass media for publicity on achievements to improve chances of victory in the election.

Does MCC possess legal mandating ?

It has evolved as part of the ECI's drive to ensure free and fair elections and was the result of a consensus among major political parties. Thus, it has no statutory backing it means anybody breaching the MCC can't be proceeded against under any clause of the Code.

As Everything is voluntary the EC can use moral sanction or censure for its enforcement through notices.

⇒ **EC and Internet and Mobile Association of India: Code of Ethics**

Section 126 of the RPA prohibits political parties and candidates from campaigning in

the two days before voting. However, the Representation of People Act (RPA), 1951, does not cover social media.

Internet and Mobile Association of India — the body that represents social media firms — took a decisive step towards plugging this gap.

What the code maintains actually?

- Due processed within three hours for violations reported under the Section 126”.
- transparency in paid political advertisements that shows the clear cut message.
- EC’s nodal officers on how their “platforms work and on mechanisms for sending requests on dealing with offensive material”.
- “reporting mechanism” within social media companies.

-Tendered vote :

- According to Section 49P of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, if a voter realizes that someone has already voted in her name, she can approach the presiding officer at the polling booth and flag the issue.
- Upon answering the presiding officer’s questions about her identity satisfactorily, the voter will be allowed to cast a tender vote.
- Tender votes are cast on ballot papers and sealed and locked away.
- These votes are useful when the margin between the winning candidate and the runner-up is slim. However, if the difference is large, tender votes are not counted.

⇒ Sabrimala judgement : the constitutional provisions for entry of women in temple.

It is the **fundamental duty of citizens under Article 51A (h)** of the Constitution to “**develop scientific temper, humanism, spirit of enquiry and reform.**” That is what the Supreme Court judgment urges citizens to do.

Discrimination with women based on biological factors is discriminatory and as a result violates **Articles 14 (right to equality), 15 (prohibition of discrimination), 17 (untouchability)**, and cannot be protected by “morality” based on Articles 25 (freedom to practice and propagation of religion), 26 (Freedom to manage religious affairs).

Article 25 (1) provides **freedom of conscience and right to practice religion**. “All persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion...”

What is the counter argument to restrict women’s entry ?

the centuries old belief that the Sabarimala deity “Lord Ayyappa” is a ‘Naishtika Brahmachari’, whose penance should not be disturbed by the entry of women worshippers of the menstruating age of 10-50.

Faith versus equality

SC hears 65 petitions that sought review of its verdict that lifted the bar on all women from praying at Sabarimala

AGAINST ENTRY OF WOMEN

Senior advocate K. Parasaran (Nair Service Society): Exclusion is based on the character of the deity as a 'naishtika brahmachari'. Its wishes have to be respected

Senior advocate V. Giri for the 'tantri' (priest): Every devotee has a fundamental right to worship in a manner is in sync with the character of the deity

THOSE IN FAVOUR

Senior advocate Jaideep Gupta for Kerala govt.: The exclusion of women is not essential to Hindu religion as women are allowed in other Ayyappa temples

Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi for the TDB: The spirit of the judgment is equal entitlement for man and woman in society



⇒ Q. What is your idea about Competitive populism?

- Political parties that providing individual benefits is the surest way to win over voters, especially the poor.
- Indian politics is replete with numerous examples of political parties competing in promising individual benefits such as social welfare pensions, loan waivers, housing, Rs2 rice, free power, etc.
- Such individual-centric promises are a natural progression from the well-documented practice of purchasing votes by allurements of liquor and cash.
- The result is an increasing trend towards competitive populism, targeted at the individual voter and pandering to the lowest common denominator, which threatens to engulf our polity like cancer.
- A consensus, rather than competition, between the Centre and States would ensure dovetailing of welfare schemes giving more bang for the buck.
- A realistic evaluation of existing welfare schemes is also required, so that modifications can be made wherever required and non-productive schemes can be axed.
- Most importantly, evaluation of the output of all Government schemes should be done by professionals or by a set of bureaucrats, different from those who had implemented that scheme.

⇒ ARTICLE 35 A

-THE NEWS - a Kashmiri woman, Charu Wali Khan filed a petition change the constitutional provision as she wanted succession rights in the state though she is settled outside the state.

What the article says ?

- The article authorizes the state's legislature to define "permanent residents" of J&K and provide them with notable benefits exclusive only to them.
- Meanwhile, Article 35A proscribes non-permanent residents from permanently settling in the state, buying immovable property, acquiring land, applying for government jobs, any kind of scholarships and aids and other public welfare projects.

- The article also referred to as the Permanent Residents Law also bars a woman (belonging to the state) from any property rights if she marries a person from outside the state. The provision also extends to the children of such women as they do not have any succession rights over the property.

⇒ **NRC**

(A) What is NRC?(National Register of Citizens)

Background –

- (1) **Yandabotreaty** (1825) of British India was very liberal toward emigrants in Assam from adjacent provinces.
- (2) The adjacent peasants used to come to Assam due to its fertile lands.
- (3) It seems likely to alter permanently the whole features of Assam & to destroy the whole structure of Assamese culture & civilization.
- (4) Post partition too, the influx was maintained at a high rate.
- (5) Eventually GOI Formulated the Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act, 1950. This was based on NRC, which was prepared with census 1951.
- (6) So, the NRC contains the name of all Indian citizens.
- (7) The NRC is now being updated for Assam due to illegal migrant problem.

(B) What is Assam accord?

- NRC was prepared in 1951, but there was a large-scale continuous migration. The influx increased during 1971's war.
- Some student leaders of Assam protested at large against the influx and demanded deportation on illegal migrants. This is known as agitation or Assam movement of 1979 by all Assam Students Union (AASU).
- After a 6 year long bloody agitation, a MOU was signed between AASU & Govt. on 15th of Aug. 1985 (The Assam Accord).

List of Documents –

Who are eligible to register –

LISTS OF DOCUMENTS	
LIST A A person's name on any one of these documents, if issued before the midnight of March 24, 1971, will make him/her eligible for inclusion in the updated NRC:	LIST B If a person has no List A document that carries his/her name, he/she can furnish a List A document that carries the name of a direct ancestor (father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, and so on), along with a List B document to establish his/her relationship with the ancestor. The List B documents — which are not subject to the March 24, 1971, cut-off date — are:
(1) 1951 NRC	(1) Birth certificate
(2) Any Assam voter list up to March 24, 1971	(2) Land document
(3) Land and tenancy records	(3) Board/university certificate
(4) Citizenship certificate	(4) Bank/LIC/post office records
(5) Permanent residential certificate	(5) A certificate from a circle officer or gram panchayat secretary in case of a married woman
(6) Refugee registration certificate	(6) Voter list
(7) Passport	(7) Ration card
(8) LIC policy document	(8) Any other legally acceptable document.
(9) Any government-issued licence/certificate	
(10) Any govt service/ employment certificate	
(11) Bank or post office accounts	
(12) Birth certificate	
(13) Board/university educational certificate	
(14) Court records/processes	

Why NRC is now being updated?

It is now being updated for Assam, which has had long-lasting foreigner problem, to weed out illegal immigrations and deter further influx. AS DIRECTED by SC.

Who is updating it ?

Citizenship being a subject of union list, thus the state govt. machinery is responsible to implement the decision of GOI (by registrar – general of India)

-Why the citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2016 has led to protest?

- The bill aims to provide citizenship to those who had been forced to seek shelter in India because of religious persecution or fear of persecution in their home countries,
- It affects primarily Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhist, Parsis, and Christians from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Why the protest by ethnic Assamese?

The bill paved the way for non-Muslim minorities who came to Assam from Bangladesh to get citizenship.

Current Status of the bill

It is dead now because of nearby dissolution of Lok Sabha, as it was only passed by Lok Sabha and currently pending with Rajya Sabha.

⇒ **Rohingyas and India**

(1) Who are Rohingyas?

An ethnic group of **Rakhine province (western Myanmar)**, largely comprising of Muslims. They speak a dialect of Bengali instead of commonly spoken Burmese in the country.

(2) What is the issue?

Myanmar considers them as persons who migrated to their land during British colonial rule. Thus, according to the **Burmese Citizenship Law, 1982**. Rohingyas are eligible for citizenship of Myanmar if one provides proof that his/her ancestors had lived in the country prior to 1823. So, they are classified as **“Resident foreigners” or “Associate citizens”**

(3) The Rohingya issue post first general election in Myanmar

In 2012, political reforms were started, which eventually converted into first general elections in 2015. But the newly elected government denied providing citizenship to Rohingya's.

(4) The atrocities towards Rohingya's –

There has been a sectarian violence between Rohingya's and Rakhine's Buddhist natives for many years. But in August 2017 Arakan Rohingya's Salvation Army (ARSA) conducted a coordinated attack on 30 police posts. Which led to ethnic cleansing in Rakhine province by the state. Thousands of Rohingya's fled from their homes and sought refugees in neighboring Muslim majority nations such as Bangladesh, India and other south-east Asian nations.

(5) India's Stand on the Issue

The migrated people create a new burden on limited resources they also make a trouble of internal security along with ethnic disbalance of a country. Thus, India doesn't consider Rohingya's as refugees, instead India takes them as illegal migrants.

(5) Does India have any international legal obligations towards migrants?

UN refugee convention (1946) and its protocol (1967) define the legal obligation of states to protect refugees but **India is not signatory to the protocol.**

(6) So, what is now in India about Refugees?

The foreigners act (1946) and the registrations of foreigner's act (1939) currently deal with entry and exit of all refugees.

⇒ PRINCIPLE OF NON-REFOULEMENT

- ✓ The 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, “no contracting State shall expel or return a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.”
- ✓ Too, refugee law is part of International Human rights law.
- ✓ However, INDIA is not signatory of any such laws but the prohibition of non-refoulement of refugees constitutes a norm of customary international law, which binds even non-parties to the Convention.

⇒ Lok pal Bill and the Appointment

Pinaki Chandra Ghose is set to be India's first Lokpal. (or first anti-corruption ombudsman)

Q- How many institutions a Actors against corruption-

The lokpal, the CVC & the CBI.

So, Corruption cases under the Prevention of Corruption Act and the Indian Penal Code can be investigated either by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) or the Anti-Corruption Bureau(ACB) in each state.

A short history of the bill

- In 1966 1st ARC (administrative reform commission) recommended two independent authorities – one at the center and another at the state level to probe complaints against public functionaries.
- Till 2011, there were 8 attempts to pass the bill which faced failure in Lok Sabha.
- Constitution review commission headed by M.N. Venkatachalam, in 2002, also recommended Lok Pal&Lokayukt.
- 2005, second ARC also recommended the same as ARC 1st.
- Finally, in 2013 parliament passed the Lok Pal bill.

Why there is a delay in appointment of LOKPAL after 2013?

- The provision of appointment committee for LOKPAL has been emerging as a hurdle. It says, one member of appointment committee should be leader of opposition. It means party with 10% seats in Lok Sabha.
- Since there is no single opposition party with 10% seats in Lok Sabha the provision of 2013 bill couldn't be fulfilled.

Try To read basics about Lok pal bill 2013

⇒ Article 35 A –

Read basics since 1954.

Background– The article empowers the J&K state's legislature to define “**permanents residents**” of the state and confer on them special rights and privileges in public sector jobs, acquisition of property in the state, scholarships and other public hold and welfare.

Such laws granting special rights to permanent resident would not be deemed as a violation of the fundamental rights of the other citizens.

What is the issue?

- A petition has been field in the Supreme Court which says article 35 A was against the very spirit of oneness of India, as it created a class within a class of India citizens. Thus, it violates FR 14, 19 & 21 of Indian constitution
- The SC has said that it would take an “**In-chamber**” decision on the petition.

“In chamber” decision –

A process of decision making where the court doesn't conduct formal proceedings and the orders are issued from the Justice's chambers.

Against 35 A-

- Classification of non-permanent citizens as “**second – class citizens**”.
- Such persons are also debarred from contesting elections.
- Refugees of partition are still not treated as “**state subject**”.

- The whole special provision for special treatment was inserted by with mere presidential order, which by-passed article 368. (The power to amend constitution within parliament)
- The article 35 A ultra-vires the FR 14 (right to equality) & article 21 (protection of life)
- Issues of gender equality, as it doesn't provide permanent resident certificate to children of women who get married outside J&K.

In favor of 35A –

- (1) Plebiscite is still pending which was referred prerequisite for consolidation J&K's relation with union of India.
- (2) Article 370 empowers presidents of India to bypass article 368 for J&K.
- (3) The Delhi agreement of 1952 after article 370 provides exclusive powers to J&K legislative for its "state subjects"
- (4) the Instrument of accession provides guarantee to that the state's autonomy will not be disturbed.
- (5) The accession of J&K was conditional with regards to preservation of their sovereignty.
- (6) UK & HP also have some special rights. It can't be challenged on behalf of FR.

⇒ Mob Violence & Mob Lynching

A New & emerging serious law and order problem.

(1) What?

(2) The word "lynch" originated on mid-18th century America, meaning killing someone for an alleged offence without a legal trial. Thus, any incident of extrajudicial killing by a group of people as informal public execution is a mob lynching.

(3) The reason behind the tendency of lynching

- Mob tends to enforce law by itself if it starts losing trust in the willingness and capabilities of law enforcement agencies to address crimes. It is a collective hate crime against one or a group of people.

What is the News? –

-In response to a PIL, SC describe it as "horrendous acts of mobocracy" and the top court ordered for framing a special law on lynching, which would preserve the "pluralistic social fabric" of India.

(4) Reasons behind such lynching in recent times

- Climate of hate speech, which instigates people to act out their prejudices.
- Senior leaders (political) defend such speakers.
- It is openly and intentionally encouraged by senior political leaders.
- An administrative failure because police usually record the incident as a crime of law like smuggling, animal cruelty, road rage, beef eating etc.

(5) Rajiv Gauba Committee (what measures you would suggest to control such cases)

A high-level committee had been constituted to check case of "mob Lynching", which recommends some measures –

- (A) It found fake posts or rumors floating on various social media platforms. So social media must act in a time bound manner.
- (B) Social media should be made accountable for not blocking such malicious rumors up till filing a FIR against their country head.
- (C) A portal, which would be linked with NCRB (National Crime Report Bureau) where people can report such content.

(D) SP level officer and a special task force to closely monitor and prevent such mob attacks.

⇒ **Right to privacy v/s snooping**

News –Section 69 (1) of the IT Act, 2000 and

(A) Rule 4th of the IT (procedure and safeguard for interception, monitoring and decryption of information) Rules, 2009.

Based on the above two, MHA(ministry of home affairs) issued an order which authorized 10 central agencies to intercept, monitor and decrypt “any information generated, transmitted, received or stored in any computer of India”.

What is the requirement?

According to an affidavit submitted by government in SC “The grave threats to the country from terrorism, radicalization, cross border terrorism can’t be ignored and a strong and robust mechanism for timely and speedy collection of actionable intelligence is imperative to counter threats to national security”.

Why the issue is in court? What is the controversy

- This bill tilts heavily towards govt. it is invading individual privacy which was recognized by SC in K.S. Puttuswami judgement. (Aadhar Case)

⇒ **DNA Technology (use and application) Regulation Bill, 2018**

Rationale – DNA data would be used to define categories of persons including offenders, suspects and undertrial along with support and strength the justice delivery system of the country.

Key Highlights –

- (1) National and regional **DNA data banks** for identification of victims, suspects, undertrial, missing persons and unidentified human belongings.
- (2) **Punishment** – people or entities who are not supposed to have DNA profile information, would be punished with **three-year jail** term (up to) and a **fine up to 1 lakh rupees**. Punishment for both seekers and providers of such DNA informations.
- (3) DNA profiles samples and records would **only** be used **for identification** and not for other purpose.
- (4) **Cross matching** for Missing person with unidentified dead bodies would be allowed.
- (5) **DNA regulatory board** for DNA laboratories which would analysis such DNA samples.

⇒ **DATA protection and B.N Shrikrishna committee**

What is data – Distinct pieces of information. It can exist in variety of forms as numbers or text on pieces of papers, as bits in electronics memory or as facts stored in a person’s mind.

So, Information In raw or unorganized form, that refers to or represents, conditions, ideas or objects.

What is big data ?

A large volume of structured, semi-structured and unstructured data that has the potential to be mined for advanced analytical application such as AI & machine learning. It is often characterized by 3 Vs –

- (A) Extreme volume of data
- (B) Wide variety
- (C) Velocity at which the data must be processed.

Although it doesn't equate to any specific volume of data like terabytes, petabytes etc.

Confidential Data v/s Personal data

- (A) Various organizations deal with a lot of data which are confidential and sensitive in nature like revenue numbers, inventory details etc. but not personal in nature.
- (B) Any piece or element of data that can – directly or indirectly, by itself or in combination with other data can identify or potentially identify an individual, would be personal data.

What is data localization?

The act of storing data on any device that is physically present within the borders of a specific country where the data was generated.

Why data localization is necessary for India?

The extensive data collection by technology companies has been allowing them to process and monetize Indian user's data, outside the Indian borders. Thus, securing citizen's data is inevitable for data privacy, data sovereignty, national security and economic development of the country.

It can turn disastrous if not contained within certain limitations.

Justice B.N. shrikrishna committee's recommendations

- (A) **Categorization** of personal data by govt. (should be there)
- (B) **Processing centers** for personal data within our country.
- (C) **Penalties** on processors and **compensation** for victims in case of violation of privacy.
- (D) Separate and stringent norms for protecting the **data of children**.
- (E) Companies should be barred from certain types of data processing which includes behavioral monitoring, targeted advertising and tracking surfing history etc.

⇒ Process to change the name of a city or village

Recent Examples – West Bengal (Bangla) Allahabad (Prayagraj) and Faizabad (Ayodhya)

What is the Procedure –

In case of state's name – Article 3 provides the power to parliament to change the name of a state even if such proposal does come from the state or not.

In case of city / village's name –

A proposal for renaming a town / village / city are submitted by the state government to the MHA.

MHA considers the proposal in consultation with other agencies (mostly Min. of railways, Department of post & survey of India) and issues a NOC (No Objection Certificate) in case whether the proposal is approved.

Once the approval is received, a gazette notification is issued by the relevant state govt.

⇒ Ten Years of 26/11 Terror Strikes

Steps Taken by India to Strengthen Security Set-up:

- (A) Joint operation center of NAVY to keep vigil over India's extended coastline.
- (B) Coastal security has been becoming at high priority with the navy / coast guard and marine police.
- (C) The national Intelligence grid (NATGRID) to create an appropriate database of security related information.
- (D) **National investigation agency (NIA)** – a specialized agency to deal with terrorist offences.
- (E) 4 new operation centers for NSG to quick & rapid response.

Important Add-ons –

- (A) The R.D. Pradhan committee was constituted to probe the intelligence lapses of 26/11.
- (B) **What do you mean by “Deep State”?**
 - It refers to unelected shadow govt. who takes majority of the decisions of a country.
 - Thus, it is like “state within a state”.
 - It may be military, bureaucracy, intelligence group etc.
 - This turns mostly referred for ISI, armed forces and fedayeen group in concern with Pakistan.

⇒ Adultery Law Under Section 497 of IPC

What is Adultery?

Sex between a married man or woman and someone, with he or she is not married to (not that person's wife or husband)

What IPC clause 497 States?

- (A) Whoever has sexual intercourse with a person who is and whom he knows or has reason to believe to be the wife of another man, without the consent or cognizance of that man (the husband), such sexual intercourse not amounting to the offence of rape but would be guilty of the offence of adultery.
- (B) In such crime/offence man shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to five years, or with fine or with both. In case of adultery, the wife shall not be punishable as an abettor and an unmarried woman cannot be prosecuted for adultery.

What SC observed? –

- (1) As the law, wife can be subjected to someone else's desire if her husband's consent would be there. That is not India morality. Thus, the law seems to be pro-women, but it is against-women.
- (2) The issue is adultery is a private matter thus it can be a ground for civil laws (as divorce) but not for criminal punishment.
- (3) Court denied men's ownership over women's sexuality & relationship.

⇒ Section 377 of IPS (Navtej Jauhar Case or Naz Foundation Case)

What Does it Say?

- (A) Section 377 of IPS criminalizes unnatural sex between two individuals. The offence is punishable with imprisonment up to life.
- (B) It was based on 16th century law, called the **Beggary act**, which was introduced in India by Britishers.
- (C) It refers to “unnatural offences”. As it considers carnal intercourse against the order of nature of with any man, woman or animal, shall be punishable.

What is the observation of The Top court?

Petitioners from diverse religion, age, sex and other background said to apex court that the sec. 377 legitimizes the stigma associated with sexual orientation and its expression something which is essential.

- (A) SC says society owes an apology to the LGBTQ community for the years of stigma imposed on them.
- (B) Criminalizing homosexuality is “unconstitutional” and LGBTQs possess “full range of constitutional rights, the court observes.
- (C) LGBTQ has equal citizenship and equal protection of laws including sexual orientation and choice of partner.
- (D) Yogyakarta principles is a document about human rights in the areas of sexual orientation and gender identity. (Meeting held at Yogyakarta, Indonesia 2006) for human rights.

⇒ RTI act and 13 years of experience

News - Govt. proposed some changes in RIT Act:

- (A) Change in the fixed tenure Of five years.
- (B) Proposal to do away with the equivalence of the CIC with the election commissioners, as govt. considers that the transparency is less important for a democracy than holding of free and fair elections.
- (C) Some changes were proposed in the types of information.

SC on 15th Feb. 2019

Eventually, The SC opined that center shall continue CIC with the same status of CEC as prescribed in RTI act. It is an emphatic rejection of the RTI (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

Persistent challenges to RTI

- (A) Inadequate authority to enforce their decisions. It seems helpless if its directions are ignored.
- (B) Information related to higher levels of govt. has been remaining beyond its access. Thus, it only works (mostly) at the lower level cases.
- (C) Govt. allows vacancies to remain for long duration in the commission.
- (D) Govt. mostly appoint loyal bureaucrats without their expertise in such field.
- (E) Ministries use AG & solicitor general to defend the orders of information commission. They usually fill a slew of writ petition in SC & HCs which creates indirect burden on IC.

⇒ Uniform Civil Code

Q. What is UCC?

A code which administers a same set of secular civil laws, govern all people irrespective of their religion, caste and tribe.

A uniform criminal code is applicable to all citizens irrespective of their religion, caste, gender etc.

Q. What is the need for UCC?

Indian constitutional mandate of securing justice and equality for all citizens in civil matters comprise issues such marriage, divorce, succession and other family matters.

Q. Constitutional Provision for UCC

Article 44 in part- IV (DPSP) of constitution.

Positive aspects of UCC

- (A) It provides a uniform platform for civil & personal laws which are required for every modern secular democracy.
- (B) It has been observed that men have preferential status in all personal laws as succession and inheritance. So, the UCC provides a nondiscriminatory ground for gender parity.
- (C) UCC matches social attitude of youth (gender equality) which comprises 55% of present India.
- (D) UCC supports national integration as it provides equality before court in all personal laws regardless any religion or caste.
- (E) It provides opportunity to bypass any alteration in personal laws in the path of societal reform.

Negative aspects of UCC

- (A) Tremendous cultural diversities of India across religion, sects make it practically more difficult.
- (B) Communities as observed feel that the UCC is encroaching their right to religious freedom.
- (C) Although, religion is a matter of personal belief, UCC reduces scope of such freedom through codification of uniform laws.
- (D) Sensitive and tough task.

Opinion of law commission about UCC

- (A) Law commission observed that religious and regional diversities should not be subsumed under the louder voice of majority.
- (B) LC found UCC is neither necessary nor desirable at this stage.
- (C) Thus, LC has rightly recognized the plurality of our society due to multiple sources of law.
- (D) It proposed internal reforms in personal laws to make them more compatible with essence of our constitution.

⇒ Section 124 – A for IPC: The Sedition

Meant by Sedition – Whoever (brings or attempts to bring) into (hatred or contempt or excites or attempt to excite) disaffection towards, the government established by law in India – according to IPS.

Forms of Sedition –

- (A) Any material written or spoken
- (B) Slogans, speeches, newspapers, books etc.
- (C) Cartoons, posters, pictures, videos

In simple terms, an attempt which leads to violence against government or public disorder through symbolic or linguistic means in vocal or written forms would be considered as sedition and punishable.

Q. Why it is there?

This charge was used by colonial government to suppress the freedom movement.

Tilak and Gandhi faced the sedition charges in between freedom struggle, too.

Q. Constitutional provisions

The point worth noting here is the word sedition is not mentioned anywhere in the IPC or in the Indian constitution.

Q. Why it has been becoming draconian law?

(A) After independence, still, it has been remaining a tool that the country is now using against its own people.

(B) Some misguided people have been turned “anti-national” in recent time.

Q. What is the rate of actual conviction out of such charges?

While going through the national crime record bureau we can clearly get that despite the rise in sedition cases, conviction happens in barely a few out of all.

Q. How does the Apex court look toward the issue ?

(A) Kedarnath singh v/s state of Bihar –

SC upheld the sedition’s validity but observed that-

“A citizen has a right to say or write whatever he/she likes about the govt. or it measures by way of criticism or comment, so long as he does not incite people to violence.

(B) Maneka Gandhi case -

On behalf of article 21 SC stated that criticizing and drawing general opinion against the govt. within a responsible limit which does not incite people to rebel, is should be considered as freedom of speech.

(C) Balwant Singh v/s state of Punjab.

SC observed “Raising some slogan (Khalistan zindabad) a couple of times, which neither evoked any response nor any reaction from the public can not attract such punishment.

Q. How does the Law commission observe it? (Conclusion or balanced approach)

For merely expressing a thought that is not in consonance with the policy of govt. of the day, a person should not be charged for sedition.

If the country is not open to positive criticism, there lies title difference b/w post and pre-independence eras.

⇒ Aadhar issue and the supreme court

(A) Concerns related to Aadhar

- An intrusion on privacy of citizens.
- A huge project for future commercial exploitation
- It must be scrutinized by SC
- The act was passed as a money bill which bypasses the parliamentary democracy.

(B) Supreme court’s observation regarding the issues

- Aadhar is a “document of empowerment” as it fulfils the govt’s legitimate aim to provide dignity to a large marginalized population.
- It is an “Unparalleled” identity proof as it can’t be duplicated like PAN, ration card etc.
- DBT through “fool-proof” Aadhar helped welfare reach the poor.
- Remedial treatment should be there for to plug the loopholes instead of replacing the whole.
- Technology had become a vital tool for ensuring good governance in a social welfare state.

(C) After SC verdict voluntarily & mandatory

(1) Voluntarily –

- Bank Account

- Mobile phone connection
- Private companies
- School admission
- NEET, JEE, UGC, CBSE

(2) **Mandatory –**

- (a) Subsidies, benefits etc. but in case of authentication failure alternative provisions should be there (Instruction to UIDAI)
- (b) Pan card
- (c) Authentication records should not be retained for more than six months.

⇒ **Governor and our political experience**

Try to remember/read – Basic history of governor’s post.

Role of governor: Crux

- (A) A pivot role in federal structure of our country, as it maintains effective communication b/w state and the union.
- (B) It ensures continuance of governance in times of constitutional crisis.
- (C) One can call the post as conscience keeper of the community when the question of majority arises in a state. (Government formation)

Q. Why it was in news?

In recent past a high-drama was played in Karnataka and TN election on the name of “discretion” of governor.

Q. What is SC’s view on “Discretion” of governor?

The famous S.R. Bommai verdict allowed apex court to investigate claims of mala fide in the governor’s advice.

Q. What are the contentious question about the post

- (A) Appointment of the post has becoming a retirement package for politicians.
- (B) Political tilt towards ruling party of central govt.
- (C) It becomes hard for the candidate to manage the required neutral post.
- (D) Formation of govt. in a state (post-election/constitutional breakdown) or imposition of presidential rule have emerged as the debate attracting issues.

Governor’s Rule in J&K

Q. Where is the provision?

We all know that the state has its own constitution of J&K provides for the same.

Q. What is the provision?

- (A) The failure of constitutionality of government results in governor’s rule in the state instead of presidential rule for other state of India.
- (B) Prerequisite consent of Prez. Of India is essential for such imposition.

(C) In such period, the state assembly remains suspended or can be dissolved.

The Difference with other States

- (A) Such governors rule converts in presidential rule after six months if the constitutional deadlock does not resolve.
- (B) Article 370 provides limited jurisdiction to union while imposition of such emergency.
- (C) Ground for such emergency could be defense, foreign relations, communication and finance.



Mentioned Under
RAS Mains PAPER-III, UNIT-I
World politics and current affairs

⇒ **India - US (Recent Development)**

Reasons behind some tension B/W both the countries:

- Increasing India closeness with China after Wuhan meeting, the issue of Doklam doesn't has any weight nowadays.
- Quadrilateral grouping was among burning issue last year but it is also losing its importance after India's rejection of joint military exercise with the Quad countries.
- CAATSA – Act Countering America's adversaries through sanctions act.
- On the other hand, India's acceptance of military exercise with SCO countries (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation)
- India's tilt towards Iran and Venezuela for its energy security, too, after American sanctions.

Several trade and WTO disputes like :

- India-US Foundational Agreements
- H1BVISA
- Dairy and Park
- Medical devices
- Data localization
- Harley V/s Royal Enfield
- Russian S-400 missile.

Short Explanations of Issues:

(A) H1B Visa –

- It is a nonimmigrant Visa; it allows American companies to recruit theoretical & technical experts.
- Tech companies of America hire thousands of employees mostly from India and China through this.
- This Visa has an annual numerical cap of 65000 for each fiscal year. First 20K out of the 65k can get exemption of master degree of their field.

What is the New bill? 'Protect and Grow American jobs act" proposes

- i. Prohibitions to employees if they employ more than 50% people with H1B Visa.
- ii. The bill increases the minimum salary of H1B Visa holder should be 1,00,000 \$ per annum master degree exemption.

(B) Data Localization: This topic has covered in economy section of this book.

(C) E-Commerce FDI cap - Read economy section.

(D) What is Generalized System of Preferences ?(GSP)

- With the views to help poor & developing countries in 1976 US started GSP program.

➤ In this program US provides preferential duty free entry up to 4800 products from 129 countries. Hence, the exporter countries can get more access to US market in the path of achieving sustainable growth of their economy.

What is India's stake out of such benefits ?

- As the GSP allows market access at nil or low duties, India was the biggest beneficiary of the scheme in year 2017.
- The main products of basket are machinery and parts, spark ignition, generators, chemical pesticides, made ups (Pillow and Cushion Cover) & women's woven dress.

What would be the impact on India?

- US \$ 5.6 billion worth of Indian exports will suddenly lose the market in US. This could impact employment in the country as India predominantly exports intermediate and semi-intermediate goods from small and medium enterprises.

Q. What is (CAATSA) countering America's adversaries through sanctions Act?

The law was passed by US congress in 2017. Which aims to counter the aggression by Iran, Russia and North Korea through punitive measures. So, it mandates US administration to impose sanctions on any country carrying out significant defense & energy trade with sanctioned entities in N. Korea, Iran and Russia.

How India would be affected by this law?

Indian deal with Russia of the S-400 Triumf. Modern long range surface to Air Missile (MLSAM)

US provided a modified waiver to section 231 of CAATSA. Reasons behind such move?

- (A) India is a key player in Indo pacific strategy.
- (B) Opportunities to trade in arms with India. India's defense industry is a major market.
- (C) India was designated as "Major defense partner" by US.
- (D) As a sovereign country. India Can't be dictated on its strategic interest by a third country.

What is India US 2+2 dialogue?

- It was agreed b/w the two countries in June 2017.
- 2+2 means - strategic (defense) and foreign ministers and secretaries of both side.

AIM - Peace & stability in Indo-Pacific region through enhanced strategic coordination b/w both the countries.

Key steps :

- (A) Indian access to encrypted American technology through COMCASA (Communication Compatibility and Security Arrangement) agreement.
- (B) Hot lines b/w the both counter parts of defense & external affairs minister.
- (C) Tri-Service joint exercise.
- (D) Focus on Indo-Pacific region towards a "free and open" Indo pacific.

What is COMCASA?

This provides a legal framework for the transfer of communication. Security equipment from US to India. Thus, it will enhance India's defense preparedness through inter operability between the forces.

Why US needs India?

- Big market
- Counterterrorism
- Strategic relationship
- China's growing hegemonic situation specially in SCS (South China Sea)
- Towards peace & prosperity in Indo-Pacific region.
- US expects to India to play the larger role of a "Net security provider" in the region.

What is LSA (logistic Support Agreement)?

This would set a framework for two countries to share military (all 3 segments) logistics.

Because in past, in 1991, at the time of Gulf war. India denied American aircraft for refueling from India territory.

Now the LSA would allow the both sides military to use each military base without conflict.

What is BECA?

The basic exchange and cooperation agreement set a normative frame through which the US could share sensitive data to air transport and navigation with India.

⇒ India - EU Relation

The new India strategy document by the EU

(A) What does the document say?

- This document talks about a road map for future India-EU partnership.
- Key focus areas are:
 - i. Strategic partnership agreement
 - ii. Intensified dialogue on Afghanistan and Central Asia
 - iii. Technical co-operation to CWIB radicalization, extremism, terror financing and fight against terrorism.
 - iv. In a more transformative shift this document clearly recognize the need to develop defense and security cooperation with India.
- EU's focus on India has been growing for recent past due to dramatical changes in the geopolitics and geo economics of the 21st century.

(B) Reason behind such shift?

- The EU is India's largest trading partner ahead of China and US. Again, India is 9th biggest partner of EU's overall trade.
- With around 1.25 billion people, India is the second most populous state, with 4th position in world's economies.
- Thus, we can clearly observe India is rapidly integrating with global economy.

Some natural reasons behind the EU's tilt towards India.

- (A) The shackling scenario of global politics after Brexit, Trump administration and geo-political

tension in Euresia (After Crimea).

- (B) China's increasing hegemony.
- (C) Wide spreading image of India which is crafting impact beyond south Asia and Indo-pacific
- (D) International solar alliance, India and EU countries (Specially France) are working together bilaterally. Hence, the consensus has got changed.

Note : Try to recall/revise background of India-EU relations since 1960s to Joint Action Plan, 2005.

Potential Areas of future relationship :

- (A) In SMEs (Small and Medium Sized Enterprises) Companies and startups of EU has smart technologies and wealth as well. So India can get a robust cooperation in the segment like Environment, Communication, Energy and infrastructure India can tap such opportunities through EU's business support program which aims at existing business opportunities.
- (B) Space would be the next area for Cooperation, as both the countries had significantly working separately in common segments as satellite navigation and space research.
- (C) Cyber security and data protection.
- (D) Maritime security and freedom of navigation from South China Sea to Mediterranean.

⇒ **India-Russia**

India's Concerns With Russia

Once –special and privileged strategic partnership

- Present tilt towards China which has border disputes with India & close ties with Pakistan. Russia is also growing relations with Pakistan as it held its first ever military exercises with Pakistan
- Divergences between New Delhi and Moscow on terrorism emanating from Pakistan and Afghanistan
- Russia did not back India's demand to name two Pakistan-based terror groups as perpetrators of terrorism against India last year at the Goa BRICS summit
- Russia favoring a role for the rebel Taliban in a future Afghanistan

On the other hand, Russia has been concerned at the rapidly warming ties between India and the US including the recent signing of a military logistics agreement.

Importance of India for Russia

- A market for its goods to bypass Western sanctions imposed after its power push in Ukraine.
- India is a natural partner for Russia & have been tried & tested in tough situation like Ukraine Crisis
- India remains the biggest importer of defense equipment from Russia
- India is still a vast market for Russian energy resources & hydrocarbons
- Despite its renewed friendship with China, Russia will soon find itself in competition with it as Beijing regards itself as the new G2 along with the US. India can help provide the multi-polarity that Russia fiercely seeks

Importance of Russia for India

- It can meet its abundant energy requirements at a cost-effective price
- India still needs to collaborate with Russia to master future technology in defence & space
- India needs support of Russia to pursue nanotechnology on grand scale; an expertise of Russia

worldwide

- It improves India's bargaining power when it negotiates arms sales with the West
- Geopolitically, Russia continues to be a balancing force against China & Pakistan in our region.
- Russia can be a major market for Indian industry such as pharmaceuticals, manufactured goods, dairy products, bovine meat and frozen seafood
- Joint projects on exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons in the Arctic shelf of Russia
- Support for India's bid for permanent membership in UNSC and NSG

Russia- Pakistan Relations

Pakistan after independence joined western military block by signing SEATO & CENTO, thus making Pakistan and Russia Cold War rivals. However, only recently in 2014 Russia lifted its self-imposed arms embargo on Pakistan and signed a landmark military cooperation agreement.

- Both the countries share a common threat i.e. Islamic State of Iraq and Levant
- Increased coordination on combating Narcotic Trade
- Handing over of Chechen Terrorist by Pakistan to Russia
- Pakistan has offered Russia to use the new Gwadar port.
- Russia which currently faces several sanctions after its aggression in Ukraine, is set to find new market for its defense equipment in Pakistan
- Russia understands Pakistan's crucial role in establishing resolving civil war in Afghanistan through dialogue with Taliban

Issues of terrorism

- Counterterrorism is another area where both countries find a convergence of interest.
- Both countries strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms, stressing the need for an effective global effort in dealing with the terrorist menace.
- They also called for the elimination, once and for all, of all terrorist -safe havens, presumably referring to Pakistan.
- India and Russia also share concerns about the aggravation of the security situation in Afghanistan, including along its borders.
- India openly shared Russia's concerns over developments in Syria
- India's stance on Syria will certainly help cement its ties with Russia countering the earlier feeling that India was not coming forward to support Russia in difficult times.

The Iran factors

Amidst the American sanctions on Iran becoming a new reality, several projects that both New Delhi and Moscow are interested in are under threat of being shelved.

Developing Chabahar Port is of high significance to India as it is regarded as a crucial transit point in the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and some other connectivity projects aimed at increasing Indian trade with Central Asia.

A transport network connecting India and Russia could facilitate India-Iran bilateral trade as well. Hence, implementation of the 16-year old agreement on INSTC is of vital importance for both Moscow and New Delhi.

Conclusion

The geopolitical environment that India and Russia have been operating in since 2014 continues to shape their bilateral relationship. US-Russia relations are unlikely to improve in the near-term. India-China relations, notwithstanding economic cooperation, continue to suffer from trust deficit and remain at variance on various strategic matters. Meanwhile, Moscow and New Delhi seem to be adapting to the changing geopolitical realities but they have a long way to go in terms of addressing each other's strategic concerns. Moscow's growing strategic convergence and understanding with Beijing and New Delhi's growing defence and security cooperation with Washington have gained momentum due to objective reasons. Neither India nor Russia, however, view these endeavours as potential disruptors to their bilateral cooperation.

⇒ INDO-SINO

Relation

Major irritants

- Border Disputes – Share about 3,488-km long border which is yet to be fully delineated.
- India supports a Tibetan gov. in exile formed by Dalai Lama, unacceptable to china. China recently opposed to the Dalai Lama's visit to Arunachal Pradesh, particularly Tawang, which it considers as Southern Tibet.
- China began the practice of issuing stapled visa to residents of AP and J & K, though it stopped it for J & K but continues for AP.
- China has an undeclared policy of String of Pearls to encircle India, which involves building of ports and naval bases around India's maritime reaches. While India has been trying to develop closer arrangements with the countries surrounding China viz. Japan, South Korea & Vietnam
- China has been building dams in Tibet part of Brahmaputra. India has objected to it but there has been no formal treaty over sharing of the Brahmaputra water.
- China has been blocking India's attempt to entry to NSG & has also blocked India's attempt at the UN for sanctions against Jash-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar.
- India considers building of the CPEC as China's interference in India's sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- Trade imbalance with the imbalance skewed in China's favor viz. \$46.56 billion in 2016

China Pak Axis

- Higher than the mountains, deeper than the oceans, sweeter than honey
- China is Pakistan's great economic hope and its most trusted military partner
- Pakistan lies at the heart of China's geostrategic ambitions i.e. New silk road connecting the energy fields of the Middle East and the markets of Europe to China
- China opposed India's admission into permanent seat of UNSC, & insisted for Pakistan
- CPEC – will connect Kashgar in China's Xinjiang province with the port of Gwadar
- Military and nuclear arms support by China in the past besides economic support

OBOR – Will Connect Asia, Africa, Middle East & Europe

- Three main goals of China are:

- Economic diversification
- Political stability and the
- Development of a multipolar global order

India's Objection to OBOR

Projects in the Gilgit-Baltistan region, ignoring India's —sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Lack of transparency in China's agenda, New Delhi believes that it is not just an economic project but one that China is promoting for political control

Smacks of Chinese neo-colonialism – Could push smaller countries on the road into a crushing debt cycle, destroy the ecology and disrupt local communities.

India fears that CPEC, passing through the Pakistan controlled Kashmir, would serve the purpose of granting legitimacy to Pakistan's control over the region, and by promoting the construction of the corridor, China intends to meddle in the Kashmir dispute.

Indian security experts also fear that after gaining access to Gwadar port, the Chinese will find it easy to sail into the Indian Ocean.

The Baloch Angle

Gwadar is located in Baluchistan, & Baloch are against CPEC because they claim that the CPEC's benefits will not flow to them.

They further state that CPEC is not an economic project. Pakistan and China together are building a military infrastructure in Balochistan's coastal areas. The purpose is to strengthen their military supremacy in the region which will undermine the stability of the region.

A fear of a massive inflow of migrants from different areas of Pakistan which will change the demography of Balochistan and reduce the Baloch people to a permanent minority in their historic homeland.

South China Sea Dispute

New islands were constructed by dredging sand onto reefs, an effort by China to boost its claim to all of the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea. It has also built ports, Runways and radar facilities on the manmade islands. satellite images of the islands, show that China now appears to have installed large anti-aircraft guns and weapons systems as well – Paracel and Spratly islands

- China rejected an international ruling on the South China Sea as – null and void and devoid of any –binding force.
- China's development in the region is seen as threatening to other nations Taiwan, Brunei, Philippines and Malaysia.
- About half of the world's annual merchant fleet tonnage—passed through the South China Sea in 2010. Any tension in the region may immensely affect the international trade and economy
- China has demonstrated a desire to control all of the passage through what it considers its sphere of naval power. This predilection is in direct opposition to the U.S.-backed global standard of free passage through the high seas.

India has made it clear that it recognised that the tribunal had been set up within the jurisdiction of the UN's Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) that must be given the –utmost respect. As part of a soft- diplomacy effort, India is looking to have South China Sea countries such as Vietnam, Malaysia and

Philippines use the tsunami early warning-system developed by India.

Cooperation between India and China

- Both members of BRICS, which is now establishing a formal lending arm, the New Development Bank.
- India, a founding member of the China-backed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.
- China welcomed India's full membership of Shanghai Cooperation Organization.
- Both countries have advocated democratization of international institutions such as World Bank, IMF
- China and India have similar stand during WTO negotiations.

China and India, being the main targets of criticism by the US and its friends, have so far successfully coordinated their strategies in the environmental summits

Recent developments

1. Indo-China Protocol for Export Of Indian Chili Meal

This was 4th protocol signed between India and China from 2018 (and overall 9th protocol in number) that allows export of farm commodities from India to China.

Both countries agreed to resolve their market access issues expeditiously in order to promote more balanced trade.

The Protocols signed between India and China on Agricultural Commodities (With years of Signing):

1. Mango (2003)
2. Bitter Gourd(2005)
3. Grapes(2005)
4. Rapeseed meal(2015)
5. Basmati Rice(2006)
6. Basmati Rice & Non-Basmati Rice(2018)
7. Fish meal/ Fish oil(2018)
8. Tobacco Leaves (January,2019)
9. Chilli Meal (May,2019)

2. India launches third IT corridor in China

India has launched its third IT corridor in China. The corridor will facilitate partnerships between Indian and Chinese companies. National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) entered into a partnership with China's Xuzhou city from Jiangsu Province in China to help develop the IT corridor.

IT Corridor

- IT corridor facilitates partnerships between Indian and Chinese companies by enabling Indian software and service industry associations to enter the Chinese market and seize the development opportunities in China.
- The earlier two corridors launched at Dalian and Guiyang cities has brought to fore opportunities with over 300 companies where more than 10 Indian SME companies have signed deals worth 31 Million RMB(USD 4.5 million).
- The first two corridors had enabled cooperation in the emerging technologies such as AI, IoT and Analytics in the Chinese market.

3. 5C approach by China

- China's Ambassador for India suggested a-5C approach to bettering India - China ties with more - communication, cooperation, contacts, coordination, and control (and management of differences).
- China will import more sugar, non-Basmati rice and high-quality medicines from India to reduce trade imbalance.
- A new \$100 b. bilateral trade target has been set by 2022.
- India allowed to facilitate the establishment of Bank of China branch in Mumbai.

4. Wuhan spirit

- It is the capital city of Hubei Province in central China.
- Also a major industrial city for a longtime.
- The 1911 Republican revolution started there.
- China normally prefer this place as a place other
- than Beijing or Shanghai, and Wuhan was a natural choice

So what is Wuhan Spirit ?

- Apex Leaders of both the countries had a very successful meeting in Wuhan in April 2018.
- They concluded mutual trust and they jointly planned for the future of improvement and the strengthening of the China-India relationship.

⇒ 10th BRICS Summit

- **Theme of 10th BRICS Summit:** "BRICS in Africa: Collaboration for Inclusive Growth and Shared Prosperity in the 4th Industrial Revolution .
- 10th summit meeting was on the occasion of the centenary of the birth of Nelson Mandela and every leader at summit recognizes his values, principles and dedication to the service of humanity.

BRICS outreach to Africa

The BRICS outreach to Africa began at the last summit hosted by South Africa, in 2013.

Aim is to increase engagement and cooperation with non-BRICS countries, in particular emerging and developing countries, and relevant international and regional organizations.

BRICS Plus

- China has invited Egypt, Kenya, Tajikistan, Mexico and Thailand as guest countries for the 9th BRICS summit
- China clarified that the invitation is not an attempt to expand the group under its 'BRICS Plus' approach.
- India had also invited BIMSTEC countries on sideline of BRICS summit at Goa.

Key outcomes of 10th Summit On Global Order

- Reaffirm their commitment to the principles of mutual respect, sovereign equality, democracy, inclusiveness and strengthened collaboration.

On UN reform

- They reaffirm the need for a comprehensive reform of the UN, including Security Council. China and Russia reiterate the role of Brazil, India and South Africa in international affairs and support their aspiration to play a greater role in the UN.

On Sustainable Development and climate change

- Support for the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), in coordinating

and reviewing global implementation of the 2030 Agenda

On Energy

- Agreed to establish the BRICS Energy Research Cooperation Platform

On Agriculture

- Reaffirm and support the establishment of the BRICS Agricultural Research Platform (ARP) initiated by India in 2016

Cooperation in biodiversity conservation On Blue Economy

- Cooperation in strategic areas of maritime transport, shipbuilding, offshore oil and exploration, aquaculture, port development, research and technology, conservation and sustainable use of marine resources, marine and coastal tourism as well as coastal industrial zone development

On Terrorism

- Support adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) by the United Nations General Assembly.

On Arms race in Outer Space

- Reaffirmed that the prevention of arms race, including the placement of weapons in outer space would avert a great danger for international peace and security

On Africa

- Supports African Union's commitment to the "Silencing of the Guns by 2020" and their efforts to strengthen the African Peace and Security

On Economy

- Focus on the 4th Industrial Revolution and the establishment of the BRICS Partnership on New Industrial Revolution (Part NIR)
- The PartNIR aims at deepening BRICS cooperation in digitalisation, industrialisation, innovation, inclusiveness and investment, to maximise the opportunities and address the challenges arising from the 4th Industrial Revolution.
- Reaffirm the centrality of the rules-based, transparent, non-discriminatory, open and inclusive multilateral trading system, as embodied in the World Trade Organisation (WTO)
- BRICS Local Currency Bond Fund
- Signed Memorandum of Understanding on Collaborative Research on Distributed Ledger and Block chain Technology in the Context of the Development of the Digital Economy

1. Cooperation on IPR

2. People to People

3. Cooperation

⇒ G-20 summit

The G20 Summit 2018 concluded on December 1, 2018 in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The theme of the summit was '*Building Consensus for Fair and Sustainable Development*'.

G20: The G20 (or Group of Twenty) is an international forum for the governments and central bank governors from 19 countries and the European Union. It was founded in 1999 with the aim to discuss policy pertaining to the promotion of international financial stability.

Together, the G20 members represent –

- Two thirds of the world population.
- 85% of the global gross product.

- 75% of international trade.
- 80% of global investments in research and development.

Important takeaways of 13th summit include

- **Collaboration at legal level-** Often incoherence in legal processes of countries is seen as an inefficient way in acting against economic offenders therefore India has called for streamlining the legal process by effectively freezing of the proceeds of crime, early return of offenders and efficient repatriation of the proceeds of crime.
- **Reinforcing UN principles** – India has suggested that all principles of UNCAC (United Nations Convention Against Corruption) and UNOTC (United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime), particularly the International Cooperation should be fully and effectively implemented.

Upgrading FATF – India has asked for stronger cooperation that FATF should observe for information exchange among financial units and competent authorities. Also, FATF should formulate a standard definition of fugitive economic offenders.

- **FATF should also develop a common SOP** (standard operating procedure) related to identification, extradition and judicial proceedings for dealing with fugitive economic offenders to provide guidance and assistance to G20 countries, subject to their domestic law.

Promoting Multilateralism

- India advocated strengthening of global governance institutions like WTO. It emphasized on the need to reform WTO to be able to carry out free and fair trade especially forming global value chain in Agriculture sector. India also promoted regional stability and cooperation through BRICS, SCO, East Asia summit etc.

Nine points agenda on fugitive economic offenders: By PM Modi

1. Strong and active cooperation across G-20 countries to deal comprehensively and efficiently with the menace economic offenders.
2. Cooperation in the legal process such as effective freezing of the proceeds of crime, early return of the offenders and efficient registration of the proceeds of crime should be enhanced and streamlined.
3. Joint effort by G-20 countries to form a mechanism that denies the entry and safe havens to all fugitive economic offenders.
4. Principles of United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UNOTC), especially related to –International Cooperation should be fully and effectively implemented.
5. **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** should be called upon to assign priority and focus to establishing international co-operation that leads to timely and comprehensive exchange of information between the competent authority and FIUs.
6. FATF should be tasked to formulate a standard definition of fugitive economic offenders
7. FAFTF should also develop a set of commonly agreed and standardized procedures related to identification, extradition and judicial proceedings for dealing with fugitive economic offenders to provide guidance and assistance to G-20 countries subject to their domestic law.
8. Common platforms should be set up for sharing experiences and best practices including successful cases of extradition gaps in existing systems of extradition and legal assistance etc.

9. G-20 Forum should consider initiating work on locating properties of economic offenders who have a tax debt in the country of their residence for its recovery.

Fugitive Economic Offenders in India

Who are they?

- According to **Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018**, a fugitive economic offender 'is - any individual against whom a warrant for arrest in relation to a scheduled offence has been issued by any court in India, who:
 - (i) leaves or has left India so as to avoid criminal prosecution ; or
 - (ii) refuses to return to India to face criminal prosecution."

⇒ G-77

The Group is the largest coalition of Third World nations in UN. Office of the Chairman of G-77 is located at New York, USA.

Objectives

The Group aims to provide the developing world the means to articulate and promotes its collective economic interests; enhance its joint negotiating capacity on all major international economic issues in the UN system and other international fora; and promote economic and technical cooperation among developing countries.

Structure

(Recently in news)

The annual meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of member-countries is the most important decision-making body.

The decision to elect Palestine as the 2019 Chair of the G77 was taken in September, 2018 by the foreign ministers of the Groups' member states.

A month later, the UN General Assembly approved a resolution that enabled Palestine a non-member Observer State at the world body additional privileges and rights, such as participating in international conferences held under its auspices, for the duration of its role as G77 Chair.

⇒ SAARC

- PM of India has invited **BIMSTEC** (The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) partners for his second swearing in ceremony, reversing the previous stand of inviting the **SAARC**(South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) leaders including Pakistan for a similar event in 2014.
- This shows a major shift in India's foreign policy **towards East**, specifically BIMSTEC and also focus on the relevance of India's **Neighborhood First Policy**.
- Strategic Shift From SAARC to BIMSTEC
- PM of India had invited **SAARC countries** for his swearing in ceremony in 2014, including Pakistan on the lines of his Neighborhood first policy.
- Prime Minister had also participated in the **18th SAARC summit at Kathmandu** in November 2014.
- But post **Uri attack**, (on Indian military base) in October 2016, India gave a renewed push for the BIMSTEC that had existed for almost two decades but been largely ignored.
- Alongside the **BRICS summit in Goa**, PM hosted an **outreach summit** with BIMSTEC leaders.

- BIMSTEC countries had supported New Delhi's call for a **boycott of the SAARC** summit scheduled in Islamabad in November 2016.
- As a result, SAARC summit was postponed for an **indefinite period**, India had claimed victory in **isolating Pakistan**, having accused that country of carrying out the Uri attack.
- Since 2016 there has been **no movement forward on resuming the SAARC** summit.
- BIMSTEC had emerged as an **alternative regional platform** where five SAARC (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka) countries could gather and discuss sub-regional cooperation.



Mentioned Under
RAS Mains PAPER-III, UNIT-III
(Part-C Law - Concepts of Law, Contemporary Legal Issues, Crimes Against Women & Children, Important Land Laws in Rajasthan)

What is the meaning of LIMBS (Legal Information Management and Briefing System)?

- LIMBS is one of the progressive steps taken by the Ministry of Law and Justice in the direction of digital India.
- It is in line with Prime Minister's vision of Digital India to digitalise the details of court cases and brings various stakeholders on a single platform.

What are the Benefits of LIMBS?

- LIMBS will help in organizing otherwise scattered Information at one single database and also create a professional base available for expert advice
- It will help in reducing government litigations.
- LIMBS provides a low cost web technology access to all the stakeholders involved in a court case in a coordinated way whereby it provides inputs which are available seamlessly on 24x7 basis as per the defined access rules.
- In this way it is possible to know the various stages of a case and monitor its progress on a continued basis through an elaborate set of user friendly reports.
- LIMBS aims to reduce financial burden, save time and bring efficiency in the working of various Departments of a Ministry.
- This will not only help to introduce transparency but also a sense of ownership among various stakeholders during the life cycle of a court case.
- It will help authorities to take 'data driven decision making' and to evaluate performance of various stakeholders and to conduct legal audit.
- It is based on the objective of achieving 'minimum government and maximum governance'
- It will help authorities to take 'data driven decision making' and to evaluate performance of various stakeholders and to control legal audit.

What need to be done?

- The government must cease to be a compulsive litigant, and executive power should be made use to reduce the grievance of the future litigant.

⇒ Amendments to the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012.

What are the amendments proposed?

- The act will be amended to introduce the death penalty as a punishment for offences of penetrative sexual assault and aggravated penetrative sexual assault.
- The following cases will be treated as "aggravated offence".
 1. Cases of sexual assault by police officers,
 2. by members of the armed forces,
 3. by public servants,
 4. by relatives,

5. gang-penetrative sexual assault,
 6. where the survivor is less than 12 years old and
 7. attempt to inject hormones in children to attain early sexual maturity for the purpose of penetrative sexual assault
- A hefty fine would be imposed for not deleting, not destroying child pornographic material or not reporting child pornography.

What are the concerns?

- **Burden of proof** - Usually, in criminal cases, the burden of proof lies on the prosecution, and the guilt must be proved beyond reasonable doubt.
- Under POCSO, however, there is a presumption that a person who is prosecuted for an offence has actually committed the offence, unless the contrary is proved (Section 29).
- Instead of “innocent until proven guilty”, the court assumes that the accused is guilty once the prosecution lays the foundation of the case.
- The Act also presumes that the accused person had a sexual intent when touching the child (Section 30).
- The amendment does not address this existing issue with the bill.
- Under Article 21 of the Constitution, a person can only be deprived of their life or liberty in accordance with the procedure established by law, which should be just, fair and reasonable.
- Thus, by additionally imposing the death penalty for offences that already carry such stringent presumptions violates the right to life guaranteed under the Constitution.
- - To overturn the presumptions, the accused needs to bring witnesses and documents in their defence or conduct a stellar cross-examination, which **Evidence** require high quality lawyering.
- However, if the accused is in jail, their family will have to collect evidence and find witnesses.
- For migrant workers, it is even more difficult since their neighbors or employers may not readily give evidence.
- **Legal procedure** -The 262nd Law Commission Report has recommended universal abolition of the death penalty, except in terror cases.
- This has not been given due credence.
- **Premise** - Further, the reason given for introducing the death penalty is that it will deter child sexual abuse.
- However, the government does not cite any evidence to prove that the death penalty can achieve this goal, in the absence of better policing and shorter trials.

⇒ What was the Proposed Amendments to RTI Act:

- The govt has recently proposed some changes in the act which are said to be regressive in nature.
- There are set of targeted and fashioned amendments to the RTI Act which will not only undermine one part of the Act but structurally weaken the independence and authority of the only body that gives it teeth, thereby nullifying the entire Act.
- The government proposes to do away with the equivalence of the Central Information Commissioners with the Election Commissioners on the ground that the two have different mandates.

- The underlying assumption that transparency is less important for a democracy than holding of free and fair elections is absurd.
- The government also proposes to replace the existing fixed five-year tenure of the Information Commissioners with tenure as may be prescribed by it.
- This would make the tenure largesse to be bestowed by the government.
- This would be detrimental to the independence and authority of the Information Commissions.

⇒ **Government has approved the principle of net neutrality.**

Three basic points of net neutrality include:

- All sites must be equally accessible
- All sites must be accessible at the same speed.
- The cost of access must be the same for all sites (per Kb/Mb or as per data plan).
- Net Neutrality refers to the principle that Internet service providers should enable access to all content and applications regardless of the source, and without favouring or blocking particular products or websites.
- In other words, Net neutrality is a principle that says Internet service providers should treat all traffic on their networks equally.
- That means companies should not block or slow down access to any website or content on the Web - for instance, to benefit their own services over those of competitors.
- Net neutrality is an idea derived from how telephone lines have worked since the beginning of the 20th century. In case of a telephone line, you can dial any number and connect to it.
- It does not matter if you are calling from operator A to operator B. It doesn't matter if you are calling a restaurant or a drug dealer.
- The operators neither block the access to a number nor deliberately delay connection to a particular number, unless forced by the law.
- Most of the countries have rules that ask telecom operators to provide an unfiltered and unrestricted phone service.

⇒ **Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018**

Background:

- On the recommendation of the Justice Verma Committee, Criminal Law (Amendment) Act was passed by the Lok Sabha in 2013.
- Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) was substituted with Sections 370 and 370A, which defined trafficking and laid out the punishment for it.

Positive aspects of the Bill:

1. Multipronged approach

- Approaches to prevention, rescue and rehabilitation to create a robust policy framework against trafficking
- It places at its core the rights and welfare of victims of human trafficking. There are aggravated forms of trafficking which have been introduced, such as
- Trafficking for the purpose of begging, or bearing a child, or for the purpose of marriage or under the pretext of marriage by administering narcotic drugs, hormones, or chemical substances for the purposes of early sexual maturity, and so on.

- The prosecution under these offences will be made timely and efficient by special public prosecutors.
- Protection to witnesses and confidentiality of victims by recording their statements through video conferencing and by in camera proceedings Time-bound trials and repatriation of victims

2. Rescue and Rehabilitation:

- A rehabilitation fund has been introduced for the first time. This will be used for the physical, psychological and social well-being of victims.
- Capacity building of victims by providing capital, infrastructure, education and skill development to empower them to access justice and to prevent further trafficking

3. National Anti-Trafficking Bureau:

- The National Anti-Trafficking Bureau will coordinate with authorities in foreign countries and international organizations and facilitate inter-State and trans-border transfer of evidence and materials.
- It will strengthen the intelligence apparatus to improve the collection, collation and dissemination of operational intelligence.
- The Bureau will also coordinate actions and enforcement by various bodies or authorities established under this Bill.
- There will be State and District Anti-Trafficking Committees which will arrange for appropriate training and sensitization of functionaries of all personnel.

4. Breaking the Network:

- It is crucial to note that trafficking is an organised crime.
- In order to break the organised nexus, at the national and international levels, the Bill proposes attachment and forfeiture of property and to remit the proceeds of crime in the rehabilitation fund.
- It will also freeze bank accounts of those whose funds have been utilised to facilitate trafficking. By doing this, the Bill handicaps the organised trafficking networks.
- The Bureau will also develop and monitor a database on every crime under this Act.
- Systematic surveillance of offenders will, in about three years, not only help prevent trafficking but pre-empt it.

⇒ UNIFORM CIVIL CODE

- A Uniform Civil Code means a common set of laws and regulations, governing individual matters for all citizens of the country, irrespective of religion.
- Now, different laws regulate these aspects for adherents of different religions. These laws are differentiated from public law and cover marriage, maintenance, inheritance, adoption and divorce.
- As things stand, there are different laws governing these aspects for different communities in India.
- Thus, the laws governing inheritance or divorce among Hindus would be different from those pertaining to Muslims or Christians and so on. The demand for a uniform civil code essentially means unifying all.
- Article 44 of the Constitution, which is one of the Directive Principles of State Policy states that The State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India.

Law commission and UCC

- In a consultation paper released recently, the Law Commission of India has boldly said that a uniform civil code (UCC) is neither feasible nor necessary at this stage.

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF THE DECISION OF THE LAW COMMISSION:

- It is worth noting that in Article 44, the framers of the Constitution have used the term 'uniform' and not 'common' because 'common' means one and same in all circumstances whatsoever and 'uniform' means 'same in similar conditions'.
- It is an erroneous perception that we have different personal laws because of religious diversity. As a matter of fact, the law differs from region to region.
- It seems the framers of the Constitution did not intend total uniformity in the sense of one law for the whole country because 'personal laws' were included in the Concurrent List, with power to legislate being given to Parliament and State Assemblies.
- Preservation of legal diversity seems to be the reason of inclusion of Personal Law in the Concurrent list. The Law Commission has given due weightage to this diversity.
- Enacting just laws is more desirable than tinkering with personal laws for the sake of 'uniformity'.
- 'Legal pluralism' and 'radical libertarianism' are well-recognised scholarly traditions. There is a consensus that the state is not the only source of law.
- History has many instances of pluralistic legal systems where multiple sources of law existed.
- Therefore, the Law Commission has rightly recognised the plurality of diverse personal laws and proposed internal reforms in personal laws to make them compatible with the constitutional provisions of equality and non-discrimination.
- There are hopes that religious communities in general and Muslims in particular will now as a first step initiate meaningful dialogue on internal reforms in personal laws.

⇒ What is meant by Human Trafficking?

As per UNODC (UN Office on Drugs and Crime) that serves as guardian of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, trafficking includes recruitment, transportation or receipt of a person by using force, threat, fraud or deception for the purpose of exploitation which often includes bonded labor, forced labor, sexual slavery, organ transplant, forced marriage etc.

The feature of the bill

- **Comprehensively deals with the offence:**
 - It covers various forms of trafficking such as trafficking for the purpose of forced labour, begging, trafficking by administering chemical substance or hormones on a person for early sexual maturity, trafficking of a woman or child for marriage or under the pretext of marriage or after marriage etc.
 - It also penalizes facilitation of trafficking by issuing or forging certificates or proofs of compliance with government requirements.
 - The bill recognizes the transnational nature of the crime and leaves the task of coordinating with International agencies to secure international assistance; to facilitate the transfer of evidence; to facilitate video conferencing in judicial proceedings etc. to the National Anti-Trafficking Bureau (NIA).
- **Punishment laid out :**

- This includes a rigorous punishment of 10 years to life term and a fine of not less than 1 Lakh Rs.
- Abetment to the crime will invite a jail term of three years.
- The bill also provides for attachment and forfeiture of property and proceeds of crime.
- **Offers protection/confidentiality to the victim :**
 - By not disclosing their identity
 - By recording statement through video-conferencing
- **Offers speedy justice :**
 - Ensures time-bound trial which must complete within a period of one year.
 - The trial will be held under designated courts in each district.
- **Provides for rehabilitation of the victim:**
 - A Rehabilitation fund is created for providing education, skill development, health care/psychological support, legal aid, safe accommodation to the victim thereby ensuring victim s wellbeing.
 - Rehabilitation services provisioned are not contingent on the outcomes of the case.
- **Lays down an institutional mechanism:**
 - Designated bodies will be responsible at district, state and central level for prevention, protection, investigation and rehabilitation work
 - National Investigation Agency (NIA) will perform the tasks of Anti-Trafficking Bureau at the national level.

⇒ **Child Adoptions: Amendment to Juvenile Justice Act**

Context:

- The government introduced an amendment to the Juvenile Justice (JJ) Act, 2015, in the Lok Sabha to empower District Magistrates with the authority to grant adoption orders.

Details:

- The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Bill, 2018, revises the provisions governing adoptions in the JJ Act by making changes to Section 56, 58, 59, 60, 61, 63, 64 and 65, where the word “court” has been replaced by “District Magistrate.”
- The changes are applicable for both domestic and international applications.
- The bill also proposes the transfer of all adoption cases in various courts to the District Magistrates concerned.

Why was the amendment proposed?

- The heavy workload of the courts had been resulting in “inordinate delay” in issuing adoption orders. as many as 629 cases relating to the passing of orders for adoption were pending in various courts across the country as on July 20, 2018
- The amendment was proposed with the objective of avoiding pendency of cases.
- The bill seeks to empower the district magistrates to issue orders for adoption in order to avert inordinate delay by the courts in doing the same.
- It will make the adoption procedure faster for prospective parents, by avoiding delays in courts.

⇒ Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)

- Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) is a statutory body of Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India.
- It functions as the nodal body for adoption of Indian children and is mandated to monitor and regulate in-country and inter-country adoptions.
- CARA is designated as the Central Authority to deal with inter-country adoptions in accordance with the provisions of the Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoption, 1993, ratified by Government of India in 2003.
- CARA primarily deals with adoption of orphan, abandoned and surrendered children through its associated /recognised adoption agencies.

⇒ What does the Sec 124 A of IPC say ?

- Sec 124-A deals with sedition, and was introduced by the British colonial government in 1870.
- It says that the act of Sedition is to bring hatred or contempt towards the Government established by law in India.
- In this case, the punishment may be of imprisonment for life and fine, or imprisonment for 3 years and fine.
- It was actually brought to suppress the freedom struggle prevalent then.

What is meant by Sedition and When it has to be Applied?

- “Conduct or speech inciting people to rebel against the authority of a State or monarch” can be considered as Sedition.
- The sedition law was incorporated into the Indian Penal Code (IPC) in 1870 as fears of a possible uprising plagued the colonial authorities.
- Section 124 A of IPC 1860:
“Whoever, by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempt to bring into hatred or contempt or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards the Government established by Law is punishable with imprisonment for life.”
- For India, it’s a question of walking the fine line between liberty and security, tough choices and hard lessons.

WHAT IS IT?

- **Sedition law:**
Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code, 1860
- **Definition:** Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards, the government established by law in India, shall be punished
- **Punishment:**
Imprisonment for life, to which fine may be added, or imprisonment which may extend to three years, to which fine may be added, or just a fine

WHAT THE SUPREME COURT SAID: LANDMARK JUDGEMENTS

1962 KEDAR NATH SINGH VS STATE OF BIHAR

The Supreme Court held that “a citizen has a right to say or write whatever he likes about the government, or its measures, by way of criticism or comment, so long as he does not incite people to violence”

1982 P. ALAVI VS STATE OF KERALA

Where the court held that sloganeering, criticising of Parliament or the judicial set-up did not amount to sedition

1995 BALWANT SINGH AND ANR VS STATE OF PUNJAB

The SC says: “Raising some slogan (“Khalistan Zindabad”) a couple of times...which neither evoked any response nor any reaction from the public cannot attract such punishment”

⇒ Cow Vigilantism and Lynching

Rule 3 in the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Establishment & Regulation of Societies for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) Rules, 2001, empowers “civil society groups” to protect animals.

- According to Rule 3(5) of PCA Rules, 2001 – a State can confer powers upon “any society” in district to prevent cruelty against animals.
- Rule 3 is providing State accreditation to cow vigilantism.
- Rule also providing police powers to civil society groups to stop vehicles, search premises and seize animals.

⇒ Aadhar and Supreme Court

The Supreme Court recently upheld the constitutionality of the Aadhaar in its majority verdict (4 out of 5 judges).

AADHAAR IS...

<h4 style="color: red; margin: 0;">NOW NOT NEEDED FOR</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Employee pension■ Admission to school■ Taking CBSE, NEET, JEE, UGC exams■ Re-verification of mobile number■ Bank accounts■ Mutual fund investments■ Insurance policies■ Credit cards■ New/existing post office schemes■ New/existing NSC accounts■ New/existing PPF accounts■ New/existing Kisan Vikas Patra accounts <h4 style="color: red; margin: 0;">STILL NEEDED FOR</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ PAN card■ National Child Labour Project (NCLP)■ Scholarships for school students, such as National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme, National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education, Inclusive Education of the Disabled at Secondary Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Mid-day Meal for children■ Assistance/scholarship given by Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities■ Supplementary Nutrition Programme under ICDS Scheme■ Payment of honorarium to AWWs & AWHs under ICDS Scheme■ ICDS Training Programme■ Supplementary Nutrition for children offered at creche centres■ Honorarium to creche workers and creche helpers■ Maternity Benefit Programme■ Scheme for Adolescent Girls■ National Mission for Empowerment of Women■ Ujjwala Scheme■ Swadhar Scheme■ Integrated Child Protection Scheme■ STEP programme■ Rashtriya Mahila Kosh■ Pradhan Mantri Matru Vanana Yojana■ Painting, essay contests under IEC component of human resource development and capacity building
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Aadhaar as identity proof

- Cabinet approved the promulgation of an Ordinance to allow voluntary submission of Aadhaar as identity proof for use by private entities such as banks, telcos and fintech firms.

- The Ordinance also gives a child an option to exit from Aadhaar on attaining 18 years of age.
- The amendment also provides for civil penalties for violations of the Aadhaar Act and provisions by entities in the Aadhaar ecosystem.
- It permits the entities to perform authentication only when they are compliant with the standards of privacy and security specified by the authority.

⇒ Provisions of the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2018

Triple Talaq as void and illegal

- The bill says that "any pronouncement of talaq by a person upon his wife, by words, either spoken or written or in electronic form or in any other manner whatsoever, shall be void and illegal."
- It makes instant triple talaq or talaq-e-biddat illegal and void, be it in any form- spoken form, in writing or by electronic means such as email, SMS and WhatsApp or in any other manner whatsoever.
- It defines 'talaq' as 'talaq-e-biddat' pronounced by a Muslim man resulting in instant and irrevocable divorce. Talaq-e-biddat refers to the practice under Muslim personal laws where pronouncement of the word 'talaq' thrice in one sitting by a Muslim man to his wife results in an instant and irrevocable divorce.

Declaration of talaq a cognizable and non-bailable offence

- It makes declaration of talaq a cognizable and non-bailable offence. A husband declaring talaq can be imprisoned for up to three years along with a fine.
- The offence will be cognizable only if information relating to the offence is given either by the woman against whom talaq has been declared or by any person related to her by blood or marriage.
- Any offence committed under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 will be treated as cognizable and non-bailable.

Powers of magistrate

- The magistrate can decide on releasing the husband on bail only after hearing the woman against whom talaq has been pronounced, and only if the Magistrate is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for granting bail.
- The offence of instant triple talaq "compoundable", where a magistrate can use his powers to settle the dispute between a husband and his wife. It allows a wife to drop the case, if husband returns to her later and they arrive at a compromise.

Allowance and custody

- It envisages entitling divorcee Muslim women for maintenance. It gives power to wife, upon whom talaq is pronounced, to approach a magistrate seeking subsistence allowance for herself and her minor children.
- A married Muslim woman will be entitled to custody of her minor children in the event of pronouncement of talaq by her husband, which will be determined by the Magistrate.

Significance

- The Bill will help in ensuring gender justice and gender equality of married Muslim women and will help them in practicing their fundamental rights of non-discrimination and empowerment.

⇒ Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) an offence : SC

Context

The Supreme Court has said no one can violate the integrity and the bodily privacy of a woman in the name of religion after the Centre condemned the practice of female genital mutilation performed by some communities on children as a religious practice.

Background

- It is a ritual performed on every girl child within the Dawoodi Bohra religious community.
- The FGM is performed “illegally upon girls (between five years and before she attains puberty)” and
- The practice of ‘khatna’ or ‘FGM’ or ‘Khafd’ also amounts to causing inequality between the sexes and constitutes discrimination against women.
- Since it is carried out on minors, it amounts to serious violation of the rights of children as even minors have a right of security of person, right to privacy, bodily integrity and the freedom from cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment.
- This is happening without any medical reason and does not have any reference in the Quran.
- It violates the rights of the child and human rights.

SC view

- Such practices on children would be an offence under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.
- Just because something is “essential”, does not mean it is above constitutional morality.
- If we do not go by the Constitution, then morality is left to the mob. The people on the streets will say what is moral and what is immoral.

Govt View

- The practice violated various fundamental rights of the girl child and moreover, such kind of genital mutilation has serious repercussions on their health.

Current Status in India

- There is no law in India banning FGM or Khatna.

International Practice

- Countries like the United Kingdom, Australia and around 27 African countries have banned this practice.
- It violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- It is a crime in the United States of America under the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996.

⇒ Sabarimala temple : Why in news?

The Supreme Court, in a recent judgement, allowed women, irrespective of their age, to enter Kerala's Sabarimala temple.

What is the ruling?

- In a 4-1 majority, the court struck down provisions of the Kerala Hindu Places of Public Worship (Authorisation of Entry) Rules, 1965.
- The Rules banned women between the age of 10 and 50 from entering the Sabarimala temple, a practice in place for centuries.
- The judgment came over a clutch of petitions challenging the ban, which was upheld by the Kerala High Court.

What is the SC's rationale?

- **Religious Rights** - The Constitution protects religious freedom in two ways:
 - i. protects an individual's right to profess, practise and propagate a religion
 - ii. assures protection to every religious denomination to manage its own affairs
- The Sabarimala temple case represented a conflict between -

- i. the group rights of the temple authorities in enforcing the presiding deity's strict celibate status
 - ii. the individual rights of women in 10-50 age group to offer worship there
- The Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) had argued that they form a denomination and hence be allowed to make rules.
 - The court instead ruled that Ayyappa devotees do not constitute a separate religious denomination.
 - It held that prohibition on women is not an essential part of Hindu religion, and hence the court can intervene.
 - The judgement establishes the principle that individual freedom prevails over professed group rights, even in matters of religion.
 - **Social notions** - The judgement relooks at the stigmatization of women devotees based on a medieval view of menstruation as symbolizing impurity and pollution.
 - So much so, exclusion based on the notion of impurity is a form of untouchability.
 - Also, the argument that women of menstruating age could not observe the 41-day period of abstinence failed to make sense.
 - The court noted that any rule based on segregation of women pertaining to biological characteristics is unconstitutional.

Decriminalization of the offence of ADULTERY by holding Section 497 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) unconstitutional

⇒ **BACKGROUND-**

India was one of the few countries in the world that still considered adultery an offence.

- The Indian definition of this crime was that it did not punish the erring spouses, but instead punished the adulterous man, or rather 'the outsider', for having extra-marital relations with a woman who he knows to be married.
- It was only an offence if the husband had not consented to this relation, implicitly suggesting that the wife was the property of her husband.
- Hence, the husband was considered to be the "victim" of adultery and could file a case. The same recourse was, however, not available to the wife.

⇒ **Observations of the SC**

- The court observed that the issue of adultery between spouses was a private matter, and could be a ground for divorce under civil law.
- It did not warrant the use of criminal sanction against any party involved.
- Moreover, no justification can be given by the state for penalizing people with imprisonment for making intimate and personal choices.
- Addressing the issue of making the penal provisions of adultery gender neutral, the court held that even then the matter was private, and anything otherwise would be a grave intrusion into the privacy of individuals.
- As the law previously stood, the victim would be the husband alone, whose property (i.e. the wife) was trespassed upon. The court dismissed this regressive patriarchal notion of women being "chattels" of their husband.
- The court held that Section 497, as it existed, denied women ownership of their sexuality and agency over their own relationships.

Rights violated by Section 497 of IPC

- The court relied on *K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India* to explain this deprivation of autonomy as a violation of their right to privacy and to live with dignity, thus violating their fundamental rights under Article 21 of the Constitution.

- The adultery provision also violated the right to equality guaranteed under Article 14. The fact that the commission of the offence would have been in the absence of the husband's consent proved the inequality between the spouses.
- Section 497 consumed the identity of a wife, as an individual with rights as an equal partner to the marriage, tipping the scales to favor the husband.

⇒ Proposed Amendments to RTI Act:

- The govt has recently **proposed some changes** in the act which are said to be **regressive in nature**.
- There are set of targeted and fashioned amendments to the RTI Act which will not only **undermine one part of the Act** but **structurally weaken** the independence and authority of the only body that gives it teeth, thereby **nullifying the entire Act**.
- The government proposes to do away with the **equivalence** of the **Central Information Commissioners** with the **Election Commissioners** on the ground that the two have different mandates.
- The underlying assumption that **transparency** is less important for a democracy than holding of free and fair elections is absurd.
- The government also proposes to **replace the existing fixed five-year tenure** of the Information Commissioners with tenure as may be prescribed by it. This would make the tenure largesse to be **bestowed by the government**.
- This would be detrimental to the **independence and authority** of the Information Commissions.

⇒ Me too

- The 'MeToo' movement was founded in 2006 by Tirana Burke.
- It was to help survivors of sexual violence, by creating a community of survivors who move forward together.
- The #MeToo spread virally as a hashtag used on social media in an attempt to demonstrate the widespread prevalence of sexual harassment in the workplace.
- It started gaining national attention in October 2017 in the U.S, after allegations of sexual assault by Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein surfaced.
- It has gained momentum in India in the recent weeks.
- As women increasingly speak up on harassment experiences, the general criticism is about the delay in the reporting.
- But it is to be understood that the dominant status of men in workplaces i.e power and privilege, the very lack of understanding on what constitutes sexual harassment, the social stigma associated with the instances, the lack of trust on people to share this, the lack of awareness on the legal recourses available and above all the emotional trauma out of the incident, significantly, silence women from opening out.

Provisions in India

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 is a legislative act in India that seeks to protect women from sexual harassment at their place of work.

- The Act came into force from 9 December 2013. This statute superseded the Vishakha Guidelines for prevention of sexual harassment introduced by the Supreme Court of India.
- The Act will ensure that women are protected against sexual harassment at all the workplaces, be it in public or private. This will contribute to realization of their right to gender equality, life and liberty and equality in working conditions everywhere.

Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act 2017

What are the key provisions of the Act?

- The Act extends women's paid maternity leave from 12 to 26 weeks.

- Of these, up to eight weeks can be taken pre-delivery.
- Enterprises with 50 or more employees must also provide crèches.
- They should allow the mother four crèche visits, daily.
- Women with two or more children get reduced entitlements.
- The costs of these benefits are to be borne solely by employers.

Amendments seek to improve infant mortality rate (34 per 1,000 live births) and maternal mortality rate (167 per 100,000 live births).

- To ensure that working women are not forced to discontinue breastfeeding.
- To make provision for just and humane conditions for work and maternity relief (Article 42).

⇒ **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2016**

New definition:

The amendments passed include a change in the previous definition of transgender persons as “neither wholly female or wholly male”, which was criticized as being insensitive.

According to the new definition, a transgender person is somebody “whose gender does not match the gender assigned to that person at birth and includes trans-men or trans-women, persons with intersex variations, gender-queers, and persons having socio-cultural identities such as **kinnar, hijras, aravani, and jogta**”.

Highlights of the Bill:

- The Bill aims to stop discrimination against a transgender person in various sectors such as education, employment, and healthcare.
- It also directs the central and state governments to provide welfare schemes for them.
- The Bill states that a person will be recognised as transgender on the basis of a certificate of identity issued through the district screening committee.
- This certificate will be a proof of identity as transgender and confer rights under this Bill.

Criticisms:

- Several civil society groups have been vocal about their opposition to the Bill.
- The Bill disregards many of their suggestions as also some of the crucial points raised by the standing committee report of July 2017.
- This includes the right of transgender persons to self-identification, instead of being certified by a district screening committee.
- The panel had also pointed out that the Bill is silent on granting reservations to transgender persons.
- The bill has prescribed punishments for organised begging.
- However, the Bill doesn't provide anything to better to condition in those areas, it doesn't provide for reservation.
- The Transgender Bill does not mention any punishments for rape or sexual assault of transgender persons as according to Sections 375 and 376 of the Indian Penal Code, rape is only when a man forcefully enters a woman.

Problems faced by transgender community–

- Criminal law is largely gender neutral in India while **personal laws** in India are chiefly gendered. The third gender is thus completely visible in criminal cases while invisible when it comes to the benefits accruing from family law.
- We have been taught that there are only two genders in the world and anything beyond is considered as abnormal . Transgenders fall into that abnormal zone making them an unwanted minority.

- Family looks at the identity change of their boy or girl as a social humiliation. Family is not ready to accept them as they are with their present identity. Some parents employ violence to change the behavior of their kids .
- Many a times they face insults, violence and humiliations while growing up which continues when they are adults.
- Since they are not qualified to be **employed** most often end up in taking up begging in the streets and are pushed into sex work.
- Another major area of concern is the constant **denial of housing** in housing societies and other areas leading them to being housed in slums.

⇒ What is the Devadasi system?

Devadasi system is a religious practice whereby parents marry a daughter to a deity or a temple. The marriage usually occurs before the girl reaches puberty.

In recent decades, the practice has been used to push young girls into prostitution.

While various state governments have enacted laws to stop such practices, the tradition remains entrenched in some parts of the country, especially some southern states.

Laws prohibiting its practice:

The practice of Devadasi system in any form is in total contravention of the provisions of Section 370 and 370A as amended through Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 as well as Section 372 of Indian Penal Code. It is also against Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act.

With Courtesy: *The Hindu, Indian express, The mint, The Economist, PIB, Websites of Govt. of INDIA, India 2019, Civils daily, Investopedia, Quora, Forum ias, IasBaba, Ias parliament, Drishti ias, Insightsonindia ias and such other online knowledge platforms.*

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