



CHROME IAS

Giving Wings To Your Dreams !!!

GIST OF

EDITORIALS

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THE PROBLEM WITH RE-BASING GDP ESTIMATES

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/the-problem-with-re-basing-gdp-estimates/article29956137.ece>

Category: GS 3 (Economy)

1200 words summarized to 200

Context

CSO is to replace the GDP series of 2011-12 base year with 2017-18 as the base-year.

The dispute

- There has been a controversy over the current GDP figures.
- Annual GDP growth rates during the last few years may have been overestimated.
- Periodic rebasing of GDP series every seven to 10 years is carried out.
- Such re-basing usually led to a marginal rise in the absolute GDP size but the underlying growth rates seldom change.

The root of the problem

The source of the problem is the methodologies for calculating GDP in the 2011-12 series:

- The private corporate sector accounts for about a third of GDP. It is possible that the private corporate sector output has been overestimated.
- Govt. data does not have factory identifiers which has distorted distribution of the State domestic product (SDP) estimates across States.
- State-specific labour productivity estimates are unavailable in the 2011-12 series for the unorganised sector. Hence the method used distorts output estimation.

Can a new base year solve the problem?

Considering the methodological disputes and data related questions relating to the current national accounts series, rebasing would prove futile.

Way forward

Experts have proposed setting up an independent commission of national and international experts to review the GDP methodology.

SUBSTANCE ACROSS THE ARABIAN SEA

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/substance-across-the-arabian-sea/article29845919.ece>

Category: GS 2 (International relations)

800 words summarized to 200

Introduction

India-Saudi Arabia relations have not only remained steady, but have kept their positive trajectory.

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Acknowledging core interests

- Saudi Arabia showed an “understanding” of recent Indian actions in Jammu and Kashmir.
- Their bilateral defence, security and anti-terror cooperation has intensified.

The Riyadh summit

The third Riyadh summit was recently held. It demonstrates the two nations’ maturity and strategic construct.

The issues in the relations

- Trade has drifted downwards largely due to lower crude prices.
- The bilateral trade in has fallen in 2019 compare to 2018.
- Trade is in Saudi’s favour by ratio of 5: 1.
- Trade is dominated by the traditional commodities.
- The Saudi investment in India remains far below potential.

Reasons for optimism

- Indian community in Saudi is still the largest foreign community and their remittances remain steady.
- Saudi’s Vision 2030 lists eight major partner countries including India.
- Saudi Aramco is to be one of the two strategic partners in the proposed PSU refinery at Raigarh.
- Saudi has committed to investing \$100 billion in India.
- Setting up of a bilateral Strategic Partnership Council (SPC) to be co-chaired by India and Saudi Arabia.

Way ahead

- Greater bilateral synergy in Indian infrastructure, agriculture, start-ups, skilling and IT.
- Shifting some labour-intensive establishments from Saudi Arabia to India to boost ‘Make in India’.

Conclusion

When the sub-region’s two largest, top-performing and complementary economies join hands, the sum would be greater than the total of the parts.

CRAMPED PRISONS

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/cramped-prisons/article29857254.ece>

Category: GS 2 (Governance)

450 words summarized to 150

Introduction

With an average occupancy rate of 115% of their capacity, Indian jails continue to remain congested and overcrowded.

Facts on jail on congestion

- In 16 of the 28 States covered in the report, occupancy rate was higher than 100%.
- Only a few States have built more jails or increased capacity in prisons.
- Some States such as Tamil Nadu have reduced their prison occupancy rate to 61.3%.
- States such as U.P. continue to have high occupancy rates because of increased inmate population.
- More than 68% of those incarcerated were poor undertrials.

Law Commission recommendations

- There were a series of recommendations made by the Law Commission of India in its 268th report in 2017.
- It recommended expediting the trial process for prisoners.
- It recommended that those detained for offences of punishment of up to seven years should be released on completing one-third of that period.
- It also recommended that the police should avoid needless arrests, while magistrates should refrain from mechanical remand orders.

Conclusion

It is imperative that these recommendations are incorporated into law soonest else there is a chance of prisoners hardening as criminals rather than getting reformed.

Fusing traditional medicine with the modern

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/fusing-traditional-medicine-with-the-modern/article29881852.ece>

Category: GS 3 (Health)

700 words summarized to 200

Introduction

Revival of the Indian systems of medicine – AYUSH - served as one of the themes of the cultural nationalistic reassertion against the British rule.

Initiatives to promote AYUSH

- A number of initiatives to promote AYUSH have been recently announced. This includes:
 - ❖ creating AYUSH wings in defence and railway hospitals;
 - ❖ giving soft loans and subsidies for the establishment of private AYUSH hospitals and clinics; and
 - ❖ building institutes of excellence in teaching and research in AYUSH.
- Also, 12,500 dedicated AYUSH health and wellness centres are planned to be set up under the Ayushman Bharat mission.

A fraught relationship

- AYUSH's relationship with modern medicine has been fraught with multiple issues such as:
 - ❖ quackery by AYUSH practitioners;
 - ❖ ridicule of AYUSH treatments and procedures by many; and
 - ❖ mindless cosmeticisation and export promotion of AYUSH products.

- However, little strategy has been devised to address these concerns.

Integration of AYUSH with modern medicine

- Cross-learning and collaboration between the modern and traditional systems is required.
- We can learn from the Chinese experience of integrating Traditional Chinese Medicine with Western medicine.
- Building a strong traditional medicine evidence corpus.
- Negotiating the divergences between the two systems.
- Standardising and regulating AYUSH practices and qualifications; and

Conclusion

An integrated framework should create a middle path — fusing the two systems, while still permitting some autonomy for each.

QUALITY ON TAP

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/quality-on-tap-on-report-of-ministry-of-consumer-affairs/article30000474.ece>

Category: GS 3 (Environment)

450 words summarized to 150

Context

Govt. has released a report red-flagging tap water quality in major Indian cities.

Findings of the report

- Delhi has abysmal water quality,
- Chennai and Kolkata rank very low, and
- Mumbai is the only city with acceptable results.

Factors responsible for poor water quality

- City water systems do not comply with the national standard for drinking water, IS 10500:2012.
- expanding footprint of packaged drinking water
- State provision of piped water systems does not exist.
- Municipal water fails the Indian standard due to the lack of accountability of the official agencies, and the absence of robust data.

Approach to deal with poor water quality

- Making it legally binding on agencies to achieve standards and empowering consumers with rights is essential
- A scientific approach to water management is vital
- On the issue of regular testing, there is a case to entrust a separate agency with the task in each State
- Data on water should be made public on the same lines as air quality
- It is time to move beyond chlorinating and make tap water genuinely desirable.

AS THE SEAS COME CLOSER

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/as-the-seas-come-closer/article29902098.ece>

Category: GS 3 (Environment)

900 words summarized to 250

Large portions of coastal cities like Mumbai could be fully submerged by 2050.

How many people will be forced to migrate as a result of climate change?

Figures range from tens of millions to hundreds of millions. People may move because of drought, violence, degradation of local ecosystems, war or job loss.

Sea Level Rise

- Along with expansion of warm waters and melting of glaciers, subsidence of land also increases relative SLR.
- If high emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) were to continue, average global SLR could be as high as two metres by the end of this century.

Effects of sea level rise

- coastal flooding
- salt water intrusion into land,
- destruction of coastal infrastructure, communities and ecosystems
- around 36 million people in India will be annually affected by coastal flooding
- By 2050 about 150 million people worldwide will be permanently below the high tide line along the coast
- large portions of Mumbai and Kolkata will be fully submerged by 2050.
- in low-lying delta regions like Vietnam, people will be forced to move across borders, thus affecting political stability

What should India's policies be?

- Protecting the coast through measures such as natural barriers, levees, flood barriers and even hard barriers.
- Stopping infrastructure construction along the coasts
- Integrating anticipated SLR effects into coastal planning are essential.
- Planning for retreat from the most vulnerable areas
- Urban policies should integrate proposals for new migrants.
- Turning border regions into fortress worlds will also not be justified
- Collaborate and build regional partnerships in South Asia
- Rights, services and policies need to be applied to climate migrants.

Conclusion

The protests across the world show that there is fervour for transformation to deal with the climate crisis. This is our historic moment to act decisively.

SECURITY COMPROMISED

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/security-compromised/article29902158.ece>

Category: GS 3 (Security)

750 words summarized to 150

The two incidents of – DTrack and Pegasus- cast serious doubts on the India's claims to being a legitimate power in cyberspace.

Important issues highlighted by these cases

- There are three glaring issues highlighted by these cases.
 - ❖ First, air-gapped systems are not invulnerable. Stuxnet crossed an air gap spread to computers in India's critical infrastructure facilities.
 - ❖ Second, with the Indian military announcing that it will modernise its nuclear forces, the apparent absence of robust cybersecurity capability is a serious cause for concern.
 - ❖ Third, the surveillance of Indian citizens through WhatsApp spyware highlights once again the government's disregard for cybersecurity.
- The government comes across as incapable of protecting its most critical installations.
- These incidents also question India's claims to being a responsible power as a member of export control regimes such as the Wassenaar Arrangement.

Conclusion

India needs to get serious about cybersecurity. The security of a billion hand-held devices are of equal strategic value to the country's nuclear assets.

TURNING THE POLICY FOCUS TO CHILD UNDERNUTRITION

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/turning-the-policy-focus-to-child-undernutrition/article30019889.ece>

Category: GS 2 (social sector)

850 words summarized to 120

Introduction

The latest Global Hunger Index (GHI), 2019 ranks India at the 102nd position out of 117 countries.

Educated mothers

Stunting among children under four years came down from 46% to 19% when maternal education went up.

Decline in wasting

- The extent of decline in wasting is larger than that of stunting: about 4% points within 22 months.

- Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab and Haryana have reduced wasting by 10% points or more within just 30 months.
- Surprisingly, these States have not performed equally well in reducing stunting.

What can be done?

- Ending open defecation
- Enhancing access to safe water and sanitation
- One aspect, which is yet to be firmly
- Embedding dietary diversity into nutrition policy i.e. moving away from the present focus on rice and wheat and emphasising coarse grains.

THE MYTHS AROUND FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/the-myths-around-free-trade-agreements/article30030647.ece>

Category: GS 3 (Foreign trade)

900 words summarized to 220

Introduction

India's decision not to join the RCEP can have impact on exports, investments, integration into the global value chain (GVC) and domestic industry.

Impact on exports

- Mere signing of an FTA does not guarantee an increase in exports. Chances of exports increasing are low if import duty of the partner country is low.
- Thus, FTAs with countries such as Malaysia, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Brunei, etc. benefit few product groups only.

Investment flow

- In Australia, share of locally produced vehicles came down as the duties were reduced.
- But, India could attract significant investments in the car sector on account of high import duties.
- Most investments are a result of the package such as tax cuts, cheap land, power, etc. offered by the host country.

Global Value Chains (GVCs)

- A country cannot become a significant part of such value chains unless it has efficient infrastructure.
- For these reasons, FTAs alone do not make a country part of a value chain.
- Despite FTAs with countries such as Japan and Korea, India has a weak presence in the electronics, machinery or apparels value chains.

Protectionism

Cheaper imports may replace products from domestic industries. But, if the duty on a product is low, the local industry may not care much about the duty elimination through any FTA.

Way forward

- Improvement in firm-level competitiveness.
- Ensuring lower duties on raw materials and intermediates.
- Elaborate quality and standards infrastructure for essential products.

PUSH FOR THE BETTER

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/editorials/bpcl-disinvestment-indian-economy-nirmala-sitharaman-6130924/>

Category: GS 3 (Economy)

400 words summarized to 100

Context

Recent, the government approved the strategic disinvestment of five public sector enterprises.

Reasons behind these disinvestments

- It will help the govt. meet its disinvestment target of Rs 1.05 lakh crore.
- Govt. is facing huge shortfalls in both direct and indirect tax revenues.

The concern with the recent disinvestment

It should not be another case of public sector firms stepping in to buy these entities in order to bail out the government.

Way forward

- Drawing up a better laid out, medium-term plan for disinvestment.
- Releasing an advance calendar of disinvestment would help draw in more buyers.
- Proceeds from disinvestment should be used only for the creation of new assets, not to meet revenue expenditure.

A CUT ABOVE

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/chief-of-defence-staff-cds-exam-6129257/>

Category: GS 3 (Defence)

650 words summarized to 150

Context

We should soon be seeing the first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) take charge.

The debate

One school of thought recommends an evolutionary, incremental expansion of the role of CDS, while some feel he should be given greater operational control from the beginning.

What should be the answer to this dilemma?

- CDS can facilitate optimal, cost-effective integrated development and deployment of structures such as cyber, space, AI, etc.

- The CDS can play a stellar role in the perspective planning and development function.
- CDS can also assigned the role of reviewing of existing establishments and manpower.

Way forward

- The CDS should not become another interposed level between the Raksha Mantri and the service chiefs.
- CDS should be in charge of newer domains and organisations.
- He could be an effective mentor for realising our military-industrial power potential.
- The CDS also has a primary advisory role but must be in the operational control chain.
- In the interim, the CDS should not override the operational responsibility of the service chiefs.

Conclusion

CDS would play a far more critical role in the national security apparatus, than the three service chiefs.

THE OPACITY AROUND ELECTORAL BONDS

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/the-opacity-around-electoral-bonds/article30054174.ece>

Category: GS 2 (Polity)

1200 words summarized to 130

Context

Election Commission and the RBI had expressed reservations about the Electoral Bonds scheme.

Need for funds

- Sustaining victory over several elections requires funds.
- Having no money certainly guarantees defeat in elections.
- Advertisements, election rallies, travel, payment to party workers, all require funds.
- In India, there is the added expenditure of buying votes.

Issues with electoral bonds

- The voter does not know who is funding whom through electoral bonds.
- The bank knows the donation details. The ruling party can misuse this information for its benefit.
- Donation limits have been removed.
- The ruling party gets nearly all the funds.

Way forward

- Any political party can voluntarily choose to disclose its funds and sources
- Benchmark ourselves against the best international practices.
- There should be complete transparency in all funding.
- Political parties need to be under the Right to Information Act.

- There must be spending limits as well as donation limits.
- Public funding needs to be introduced with proper checks and balances.

TOWARDS A COLOMBO RESET

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/gotabaya-rajapaksa-sri-lanka-elections-colombo-6126280/>

Category: GS 2 (International Relations)

900 words summarized to 150

Introduction

A narrative about Colombo's renewed "tilt" towards China and against India misrepresents the complex power play involving Beijing, Delhi and Colombo.

Reset in India-Sri Lanka relations

- India can't expect its neighbours to shut down economic and commercial engagement with China.
- India should ask Colombo not to take steps with Beijing that threaten India's security.
- Sri Lanka should avoid provoking India. India too should be mindful of Colombo's security concerns.
- India should resolve problems such as the long-standing dispute over fisheries.
- India should partner with like-minded countries like Japan for infrastructure development in Sri Lanka.
- India also needs to contribute more to the development of Colombo's defence and counter-terror capabilities.
- India should encourage reconciliation within Lanka and across the Palk Strait with Tamil Nadu.

Conclusion

With a strong government in Sri Lanka, it is time for Delhi to think boldly about its relationship with Colombo.

GOING BEYOND KARTARPUR

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/going-beyond-kartarpur-corridor-inauguration-opening-india-pakistan-amarinder-singh-pm-modi-imran-khan-6115072/>

Category: GS 2 (International Relations)

900 words summarized to 250 words

Introduction

The Kartarpur Sahib Corridor is seen as a ray of hope in India-Pakistan ties.

The differences of opinion on Kartarpur

- The corridor could be a harbinger of improved relations between Delhi and Islamabad.

- The possibility that the initiative is part of Pakistan's longstanding interest in stoking Sikh separatism.
- Many in Pakistan have criticised the corridor as a violation of the nation's sovereignty.

Significance of the corridor

- At present, there is neither formal dialogue nor a back-channel dialogue between India and Pakistan.
- Political and military tensions are running high since the Pulwama terror attack, Balakot strike and abrogation of Article 370.
- Thus, the corridor is an exception to the current dynamic between India and Pakistan.

The Punjab aspect of India-Pakistan relations

- The corridor has drawn attention to an important but neglected dimension of the relations between Delhi and Islamabad-the Punjab question.
- Punjab, in recent years, has often shown the possibilities for potentially transformative breakthroughs in bilateral relations.
- Unlike Kashmir, Punjab is a coherent geographic and civilisational space.
- In contrast to Jammu and Kashmir, there is shared ethnic, linguistic and cultural identity that binds the people of Punjab

Way forward

- India should reconsider initiatives to promote cooperation across the Radcliffe Line.
- India must look beyond the formal dialogue with Pakistan.
- India could add a new layer to his diaspora diplomacy by promoting the celebration of 'Punjabiya'.

Conclusion

We need to reflect on what binds us together in the Subcontinent and how we might overcome our current divisions.

BRICS MATTERS

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/editorials/brics-summit-brasili-pm-modi-6124775/>

Category: GS 2 (International bodies)

500 words summarized to 150

Introduction

This year's summit of the BRICS forum took place in Brasilia.

Issues with BRICS

- Brazil's new president does not seem to support BRICS.
- There are internal contradictions among the BRICS member states.

Development of BRICS

- Russia helped develop the forum to counter United States after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.
- China found much in common with Russia in limiting US dominance of the world.

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- China also found the BRICS a useful forum to promote its economic agenda.

India's gains from the BRICS

- India's interests do not seem in alignment with the policies of the BRICS.
- China stalled India's efforts to join the UNSC and the NSG.
- India's biggest trade deficit is with China.
- India has cited China's economic threat for not joining RCEP.
- On countering terrorism, China views the problem through Pakistani eyes.

Conclusion

India's persistence with the BRICS says less about its ideological convictions.

OVER TO THE STATES

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/india-five-trillion-economy-nirmala-sitharaman-pm-modi-gdp-6124752/>

Category: GS 2/3

950 words summarized to 150

Introduction

In the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business, India improved its rank to 63.

The growing importance of states in India's economic management

- In the early years of our republic, the Centre dominated across all domains.
- The opposition to central dominance came in the early 1980s. The Centre yielded to the states in the political space but not in economic domain.
- That arrangement started to change with the onset of reforms from 1991. Three trends, in particular, have shifted the economic centre of gravity from the Centre to the states
 - ❖ Second-generation reforms like land, labour and taxation need the consent of states.
 - ❖ Fiscal federalism dynamics is changing in which states enjoy greater role and autonomy.
 - ❖ Much of the responsibility for improving the ease of doing business rests not with Centre but with the states. This highlights the need for coordinated action.

Conclusion

India's prospects, including our aspiration for a \$5 trillion economy, depend on cooperative federalism.

NOT AS YOU SAY, BUT AS YOU DO

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/not-as-you-say-but-as-you-do/article30109769.ece>

Category: GS 2 (International relations)

1100 words summarized to 250

Context

Sri Lanka's new President received a visit from Minister of External Affairs which denotes a welcome proactiveness in India's "Neighbourhood First" policy.

Similar initiatives by India on earlier occasions

- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj had made a similarly remarkable trip to Kathmandu.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also travelled to Bhutan, Maldives, and Sri Lanka at the beginning of his tenure.

Improving India-Sri Lanka relations

- Rapid improvement in intelligence sharing between the two countries.
- India and Sri Lanka need to complete projects that have already been announced.
- India's plan to develop Trincomalee port and oil tank farms, LNG terminals should get priority.
- Joint India-Japan agreement to develop the East Container Terminal at Colombo harbour, and other projects.

Challenges for India in the sub-continent

- Across the subcontinent, India has lagged behind in investment figures.
- India's FDI in neighbouring countries have been declining.
- Despite increase in India's aid to Maldives, no Chinese project has yet been cancelled.
- In Sri Lanka, there is little indication that any Chinese loan or project will be reversed.
- Nepal has stepped up its engagement with China after President Xi Jinping's recent visit.
- Bangladesh, India's closest partner in the region, saw \$3.6 billion in FDI from China last year, along with 'Belt and Road promises' of \$50 billion.
- India's internal issues like the dilution of Article 370, the Citizenship Amendment Bill, the NRC, etc. will impact neighbourhood relations.

Conclusion

On most of the issues, strongmen (and women) in the region are likely to do not as New Delhi says, but as New Delhi does.

INDIA'S FOOD BASKET MUST BE ENLARGED

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/indias-food-basket-must-be-enlarged/article30109818.ece>

Category: GS 2 (Health) GS 3 (Agriculture)

700 words summarized to 250

Context

India is ranked 102 in the Global Hunger Index (GHI).

Definition of hunger

Hunger is defined by caloric deprivation; protein hunger; hidden hunger by deficiency of micronutrients.

Extent of hunger in India

- 47 million children in India suffer from chronic undernutrition or stunting.
- 614 million women and more than half the women in India aged 15-49 as being anaemic.

Nutrition garden

- Recently, the govt. brought out school 'nutrition garden' to identify fruits and vegetables best suited to topography, soil and climate.
- Students also learn to cultivate fruits and vegetables in their homes and this could address micronutrient deficiencies.

Importance of agrobiodiversity

- Agrobiodiversity is crucial in food security, nutrition, and health.
- Today, only 30 crops form the basis of the world's agriculture.
- Genetic diversity of crops, livestock and their wild relatives, are fundamental to improve crop varieties and livestock breeds.
- Agrobiodiversity helps nutrition-sensitive farming and bio-fortified foods.

Development goals

- The UN Sustainable Development Goal 2 advocates for Zero Hunger.
- The Aichi Biodiversity Target focuses on countries conserving genetic diversity of plants, farm livestock and wild relatives.

Recommendations to increase agrobiodiversity

- a comprehensive policy on 'ecological agriculture' to enhance native pest and pollinator population.
- promotion of the bio-village concept of the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) for ecologically sensitive farming
- conserving crop wild relatives for crop genetic diversity
- encouraging community seed banks in each agro-climatic zone
- developing a national level invasive alien species policy
- enlargement of consumption pattern and culinary diversity to increase India's food basket.
- mainstream biodiversity into agricultural policies, schemes, programmes and projects

GETTING ORGAN DONATION TO TICK AGAIN

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/getting-organ-donation-to-tick-again/article30118791.ece>

Category: GS 2 (Health)

800 words summarized to 150

Introduction

Organ donation day (November 30) is observed with the primary objective of promoting organ donation and transplantation.

Trust deficit

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There has been suspicion of unethical practices, for example, private hospitals declaring persons brain dead in order to harvest their organs and profit from them.

The cost factor

The majority of organ recipients are rich and that is why more than three quarters of donated hearts and lungs do not get taken.

Public hospitals cannot help

- Priority should be on spending the limited allocation on areas that would benefit the greatest number of persons.
- Amount spent on organ failure prevention will save many more lives than if spent on organ transplant.

Solutions

- regulate hospitals through acts and rules.
- making Transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994 more effective.
- substitution of bureaucratic procedures for transplant approval by self-declaration
- full State autonomy in this area avoiding Central government's interference
- all State organ distribution agencies need to make their operations fully transparent.
- making online organ distribution norms and details on every organ donation

THE MISSING PIECE

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/editorials/labour-code-industrial-relations-2019-workers-6136618/>

Category: GS 3 (Economy)

450 words summarized to 100

Context

Recently, the cabinet approved the Labour Code on Industrial Relations, 2019.

Significance of the Code

This Code marks the merging of provisions of the Industrial Relations Act, the Trade Union Act and the Industrial Employment Act.

Other labour reforms under process

Underway is the amalgamation of 44 national labour laws into four codes.

Importance of labour reforms

- more productivity in manufacturing
- generation of more jobs

Way forward

- Greater flexibility required on these laws to generate more jobs.
- Vietnam, Indonesia and Bangladesh are way ahead in labour reforms and hence far more competitive. India cannot afford to remain behind.

Conclusion

Any delay or failure to push through labour reforms could further hurt economic growth.

RUSSIA RETURNS TO INDIAN OCEAN

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/indian-ocean-russia-sri-lanka-modi-putin-6136627/>

Category: GS 2 (International relations)

900 words summarized to 200

Introduction

Russia, once marginal, is re-joining the geopolitics in the Indian Ocean.

Recent Russian events in Indian Ocean

- Perekop, a training vessel of the Russian Navy, arrived in Sri Lanka.
- “Black Jack” nuclear bombers flew to South Africa.
- Russia and China are conducting a trilateral naval exercise-Moris- with South Africa.

Policy followed by India in Indian Ocean

- Until now, Delhi’s focus has been on China. This has led to the rapid expansion of India’s naval cooperation with US, Japan, and ASEAN countries.
- More recently, India has also been developing a partnership with France.
- India also wants to develop similar intensive engagement with Britain and the European Union.

Implications of Russia’s return to Indian Ocean

- As the world’s major arms exporter, Russia has effective leverage in the Indian Ocean region.
- Growth in Russia’s security role as many countries in the Indian Ocean Region struggling to cope with civil wars look up to Russia. .
- Although Russia does not have a naval base in the Indian Ocean, acquiring one is probably a high priority.
- Russian energy and mineral companies do offer important options for resource development in the Indian Ocean Region.

Conclusion

India needs an early and intensive dialogue with Moscow on the latter’s Indian Ocean collaboration with China.

A POTENTIAL SEEDBED FOR PRIVATE PROFITS

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/a-potential-seedbed-for-private-profits/article30195634.ece>

Category: GS 3 (Agriculture)

1200 words summarized to 300

Context

Seeds Bill 2019 is now under Parliament's consideration.

International agreements related to seeds that India joined

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) -1992
- Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)- 1994
- International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA - 2001
- International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) Convention- 2002.

PPVFR Act

- As India was a signatory to TRIPS and UPOV (that gave priority to breeders' rights) as well as CBD and ITPGRFA (that emphasised farmers' rights), any Indian legislation had to be in line with all.
- It was this delicate balance that the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights (PPVFR) Act of 2001 sought to achieve.

The new Seeds Bill

According to the government, a new Seeds Bill is necessary to enhance seed replacement rates in Indian agriculture, specify standards for registration of seed varieties and enforce registration from seed producers to seed retailers.

Role of private sector

- Today, more than 50% of India's seed production is undertaken in the private sector.
- Through the various versions between 2004 and 2019, private sector interests have guided the formulation of the Seeds Bill.
- Thus, many of the Bill's provisions deviate from the spirit of the PPVFR.

Issues with the Seeds Bill

- Seeds Bill insists on compulsory registration of seeds. However, the PPVFR Act was based on voluntary registration.
- Unlike PPVFR Act, Seeds Bill is not based on an IPR like breeder's rights.
- Provision for regulation of seed prices in the Seeds Bill appears neither sufficient nor credible.
- Unlike PPVFR Act, compensation for farmers in case of failure of performance of seeds is diluted in the Seeds Bill.

The way ahead

- A farmer-friendly seed legislation need to be framed and executed.
- Inclination towards hybrids should be avoided.
- Choices between hybrids, varieties and farm-saved seeds should remain open.
- Seed prices should be kept affordable.

Conclusion

For the seed sector and its laws to be truly farmer-friendly, the public sector has to recapture its lost space.

RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/retributive-justice/article30219474.ece>

Category: GS 2 (Governance)

450 words summarized to 150

Context

The heinous rape and murder in Hyderabad resulted in an outcry for justice.

Societal pressure for justice

- Such societal pressure for justice invariably weighs upon legal institutions.
- But these institutions must uphold the rule of law and procedure.

Is encounter justified?

- may deter police from pursuing the course of justice.
- may undermine people's faith in the criminal justice system.

What should have been done?

Setting up a fast-track court should have brought closure to the case in a time-bound manner.

People's Perception

There is a perception that the legal institutions are ill-equipped to deal with such crimes and to bring the perpetrators to justice.

Way Forward

- The guidelines set by the Supreme Court to deal with such events must be strictly observed.
- Much more needs to be done in terms of registration and charge-sheeting.
- Addressing the pendency in court of such cases.
- Existing laws on sexual crimes and punishment need better application.

Conclusion

Justice in any civilised society is not just about retribution, but also about deterrence and rehabilitation.