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PIB

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for IAS Examination !**

**MONTHLY
COMPILATION
SEPT. 2020**

For UPSC Prelims & Mains Examination

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GENERAL STUDIES- I

Topic- *Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.*

HAMPI

Context

Ministry of Tourism organised their latest webinar on 'Hampi' under the Dekho Apna Desh Webinar series.

- It is titled '**Hampi- Inspired by the past; Going into the future.**'
- **Dekho Apna Desh Webinar Series** is an effort to showcase India's rich diversity under **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat** programme.

About Hampi

- The austere, grandiose site of Hampi was the last capital of the last great Hindu Kingdom of Vijayanagar.
- It is a UNESCO World Heritage site.
- Hampi's spectacular setting is dominated by river Tungabhadra, craggy hill ranges and open plains with widespread physical remains.
- Its name is derived from Pampa which is the old name of the Tungabhadra River on whose banks the city is built.
- In 1336 CE, the Vijayanagara Empire arose from the ruins of the Kampili kingdom.
- It grew into one of the famed Hindu empires of South India that ruled for over 200 years.
- The Vijayanagara rulers fostered developments in intellectual pursuits and the arts, maintained a strong military and fought many wars with sultanates to its north and east.

Architecture

- The site used to be multi-religious and multi-ethnic; it included Hindu and Jain monuments next to each other.
- The buildings predominantly followed South Indian Hindu arts and architecture dating to the Aihole-Pattadakal styles.
- But, the Hampi builders also used elements of Indo-Islamic architecture in the Lotus Mahal, the public bath and the elephant stables.

Vijayanagara Empire

- Vijayanagara Empire flourished as it controlled cotton and spice trade routes of Southern India.
- Medieval historians refer to Hampi as an important center of trade. However, the glory of Vijayanagara was short lived.
- With the death of Krishnadevaraya, the combined armies of the five muslim kingdoms- Bidar, Golconda, Ahmednagar and Berar destroyed this might empire in 1565.

Important attractions of Hampi

- **Virupaksha temple:** 15th Century Virupaksha temple which is one of the oldest monuments of the town.

- The main shrine is dedicated to Virupaksha, a form of Lord Shiva.
- **Hemkunta Hill:** south of the Virupaksha temple contains early ruins, Jain temples and a monolithic sculpture of Lord Narasimha, a form of Lord Vishnu.
- **Hampi Bazar street:** also known Virupaksha Bazar begins in front of the Virupaksha temple and ends at the foothill of the Matanga hill.
- **Vittal temple:** Vittal temple built in the 16th Century, and now a World Heritage monument.
- The columns of the temple are so balanced that they have a musical quality.

Mains Question:

Describe the historical and architectural significance of Hampi. What is the criteria of any site to be included in UNESCO's World Heritage List.

GENERAL STUDIES- III

Topic- *Achievements of Indians in Science & Technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.*

WORLD'S LARGEST SOLAR TREE

Context

CSIR-CMERI has developed World's Largest Solar Tree.

Highlights

- CSIR-CMERI has developed the World's Largest Solar Tree, which is installed at CSIR-CMERI Residential Colony, Durgapur.
- The **installed capacity of the Solar Tree is above 11.5 kWp.**
- It has the **annual capacity to generate 12,000-14,000 units of Clean and Green Power.**

Key features

- The Solar Tree has been designed in a manner to ensure maximum exposure of each Solar PV Panel to Sunlight and also creation of the least amount of shadow area beneath.
- There are a total of 35 Solar PV Panels in each tree with a capacity of 330 wp each.
- The energy generation data can be monitored either real-time or on daily basis.

Potential Applications

- These Solar Trees **can be aligned with Agriculture for substituting price-volatile fossil fuels.**
- Each Solar Tree has the **potential to save 10-12 tons of CO2 emissions** being released into the atmosphere as Greenhouse Gases when compared with fossil fuel fired energy generation.
- Besides, the **surplus generated power** can be fed into an Energy Grid.
- This **Agricultural Model** can help the farmers counter the effects of the uncertain variations in Agriculture related activities, thus, making farming an Economic and Energy Sustainable practice.
- The solar tree has the capability to incorporate IOT based features, i.e. **round-the-clock CCTV surveillance in agricultural fields, real-time humidity, wind speed, rainfall prediction and soil analytics sensors.**

- The Solar Trees were designed in a manner to potentially making available for widespread usage in Agricultural activities such as **High Capacity Pumps, e-Tractors and e-Power Tillers.**

Cost

- Each Solar Tree will cost Rs 7.5 lakhs.
- The interested MSMEs can align their Business Model with the **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthan Mahabhiyan (PM KUSUM) Scheme** for farmers, for developing a Renewable Energy based Energy Grid.

Significance

- This Solar Tree is a Quantum Leap towards making an Energy Reliant and Carbon Negative India.
- The CSIR-CMERI developed **solar powered e-Suvidha Kiosks** may also be connected to the Solar Trees for real-time access to the vast majority of agricultural database as well as to the **eNAM i.e. National Agricultural Market Place** for instant and real-time access to an unified online market.

Mains Question:

What are the sources of renewable energy in India? Describe the potential of each source.

GENERAL STUDIES- III

Topic- Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

GREEN TERM AHEAD MARKET (GTAM)

Context

As a first step towards Greening the Indian short term power Market, the Ministry of State (IC) Power and New & Renewable Energy launched **pan-India Green Term Ahead Market (GTAM)** in electricity.

Key points

The Government of India's target of **175 GW RE Capacity by 2022** is driving accelerated renewable penetration pan-India.

Green Term Ahead Market contracts will allow additional avenues to the RE generators:

- For sale of renewable energy;
- Enable Obligated entities to procure renewable power at competitive prices to meet their Renewable Purchase Obligations (RPO); and
- Provide a platform to environmentally conscious open access consumers and utilities to buy green power.

Key features of GTAM:

1. **Transactions through GTAM** will be bilateral in nature with clear identification of corresponding buyers and sellers, there will not be any difficulty in accounting for RPO.

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2. GTAM contracts **will be segregated into Solar RPO & Non-Solar RPO** as RPO targets are also segregated.
3. Further, within the **two segments GTAM contracts will have Green Intraday**, Day Ahead Contingency, Daily and Weekly Contracts
4. **Price discovery** will take place on a continuous basis i.e. price time priority basis. Subsequently, looking at the market conditions open auction can be introduced for daily & weekly contracts.
5. Energy scheduled through GTAM contract shall be considered as deemed RPO compliance of the buyer.

Benefits

- GTAM platform will lead to increase in number of participants in renewable energy sector.
- It will benefit buyers of RE through competitive prices and transparent and flexible procurement.
- It will also benefit RE sellers by providing access to pan- India market

Significance

The introduction of GTAM platform would lessen the burden on RE-rich States and incentivize them to develop RE capacity beyond their own RPO.

This would promote RE merchant capacity addition and help in achieving RE capacity addition targets of the country.

GENERAL STUDIES- III

Topic- *Achievements of Indians in Science & Technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.*

FARTHEST STAR GALAXIES IN THE UNIVERSE

As a landmark achievement in Space missions, Indian Astronomers have discovered one of the farthest Star galaxies in the universe.

Highlights

- India's first **Multi-Wavelength Space Observatory "AstroSat"** has detected extreme-UV light from a galaxy located 9.3 billion light-years away from Earth.
- The **galaxy called AUDFs01** was discovered by a team of Astronomers led by the **Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) Pune**.
- The discovery was an **international collaboration** by astronomers from **India, Switzerland, France, USA, Japan and the Netherlands**.
- The team observed the galaxy within the patch of sky called **the Hubble eXtreme Deep field (XDF)**, which itself sits at the centre of **the Hubble Ultra Deep Field (HUDF)**.

What is the 'Hubble Ultra Deep Field'?

- The HUDF is a small area in the constellation of **Fornax**, created using **Hubble Space Telescope** data from 2003 and 2004.
- It contains thousands of galaxies, and became the deepest image of the universe ever taken at the time.
- The **eXtreme Deep field (XDF)** contains about 5,500 galaxies.

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- AstroSat looked at a part of XDF for 28 hours in October of 2016, a feat **only space telescopes could perform because the atmosphere absorbs ultraviolet radiation.**

About AstroSat

AstroSat is the first dedicated Indian astronomy mission ***aimed at studying celestial sources in X-ray, optical and UV spectral bands simultaneously.***

- **The payloads** cover the energy bands of Ultraviolet (Near and Far), limited optical and X-ray regime (0.3 keV to 100keV).
- One of the unique features of AstroSat mission is that ***it enables the simultaneous multi-wavelength observations of various astronomical objects with a single satellite.***
- AstroSat was launched on ***28 September 2015 by ISRO into a near-Earth equatorial orbit.***
- It is a ***multi-institute collaborative project***, involving IUCAA, ISRO, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (Mumbai), Indian Institute of Astrophysics (Bengaluru), and Physical Research Laboratory (Ahmedabad), among others.

PIB-SEPTEMBER 3rd, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES- II

Topic— *Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

MISSION KARMAYOGI

Context

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has approved launching of a National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB).

Key Points

- **“Mission Karmayogi”- National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB)** is a new National Architecture for Civil Services Capacity Building.
- **Comprehensive reform** of the capacity building apparatus at individual, institutional and process levels for efficient public service delivery.
- **PM led HR Council** to approve and monitor Civil Service Capacity Building Plans.
- **Capacity Building Commission** to harmonize training standards, create shared faculty and resources, and have supervisory role over all Central Training Institutions;
- **Wholly owned Special Purpose Vehicle** to own and operate the online learning platform and facilitate world-class learning content market-place.

What is it?

“Mission Karmayogi”- National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB) has been carefully designed ***to lay the foundations for capacity building for Civil Servants.***

- So that, they remain entrenched in Indian Culture and sensibilities and remain connected, with their roots, while they learn from the best institutions and practices across the world.
- The Programme will be delivered by setting up an Integrated ***Government Online Training-iGOT Karmayogi Platform.***

Institutional framework for NPCSCB

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National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB) with the **following institutional framework:-**

- *Prime Minister's Public Human Resources (HR) Council,*
- *Capacity Building Commission.*
- *Special Purpose Vehicle for owning and operating the digital assets and the technological platform for online training,*
- *Coordination Unit headed by the Cabinet Secretary.*

Salient Features

- Supporting Transition from '**Rules based**' to '**Roles based**' HR Management. Aligning work allocation of civil servants by matching their competencies to the requirements of the post.
- To emphasize on '**on-site learning**' to complement the 'off-site' learning,
- To calibrate all Civil Service positions to a **Framework of Roles, Activities and Competencies (FRACs) approach** and to create and deliver learning content relevant to the identified FRACs in every Government entity,
- To make available to all civil servants, **an opportunity to continuously build and strengthen their** Behavioral, Functional and Domain Competencies in their self-driven and mandated learning paths.
- To encourage and **partner with the best-in-class learning content creators** including public training institutions, universities, start-ups and individual experts,
- To **undertake data analytics** in respect of data emitted provided by iGOT- Karmayogi.

Key Objective

Mission Karmayogi aims to prepare the Indian Civil Servant for the future by making him more creative, constructive, imaginative, innovative, proactive, professional, progressive, energetic, enabling, transparent and technology-enabled. Empowered with specific role-competencies, the civil servant will be able to ensure efficient service delivery of the highest quality standards.

Public Human Resources Council

- **It will be comprising** of select Union Ministers, Chief Ministers, eminent public HR practitioners, thinkers, global thought leaders and Public Service functionaries **under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister.**
- It will **serve as the apex body** for providing strategic direction to the task of Civil Services Reform and capacity building.

Capacity Building Commission (CBC)

A CBC is proposed **to set up** with a view to ensure a uniform approach in managing and regulating the capacity building ecosystem on collaborative and co-sharing basis.

The role of Commission will be as under-

- **To assist the PM** Public Human Resources Council in approving the Annual Capacity Building Plans.
- **To exercise functional supervision** over all Central Training Institutions dealing with civil services capacity building.
- **To create shared learning resources**, including internal and external faculty and resource centers.

- **To coordinate and supervise the implementation of the Capacity Building Plans** with the stakeholder Departments.
- **To make recommendations** on standardization of training and capacity building, pedagogy and methodology.

Significance

- Capacity of Civil Services plays a vital role in rendering a wide variety of services, implementing welfare programs and performing core governance functions.
- A **transformational change in Civil Service Capacity** is proposed to be affected by organically linking the transformation of work culture, strengthening public institutions and adopting modern technology to build civil service capacity with the overall aim of ensuring efficient delivery of services to citizens.

iGOT-Karmayogi platform

iGOT-Karmayogi platform brings the scale and **state-of-the-art infrastructure** to augment the capacities of over two crore officials in India.

- The platform is expected **to evolve into a vibrant and world-class market place for content** where carefully curated and vetted digital e-learning material will be made available.
- Besides capacity building, service matters like confirmation after probation period, deployment, work assignment and notification of vacancies etc. would eventually be integrated with the proposed competency framework.

GENERAL STUDIES- III

Topic- *Challenges to internal security through communication networks.*

GOVERNMENT BLOCKED 118 MOBILE APPS

Context

Government Blocks 118 Mobile Apps Which are Prejudicial to Sovereignty and Integrity of India, Defence of India, Security of State and Public Order.

Highlights

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has invoked its power under **section 69A of the Information Technology Act** and the relevant provisions of the **Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking of Access of Information by Public) Rules 2009**.
- In view of the emergent nature of threats **The GOI has decided to block 118 mobile apps.**
- As the information available they are engaged in activities **which is prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of state and public order.**

Why the Mobile Apps is being blocked?

- These measures have been undertaken since there is credible information that **these apps are engaged in activities which are prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of state and public order.**
- The government had received complaints from various sources including several reports about **misuse of some mobile apps available on Android and iOS platforms for stealing**

and surreptitiously transmitting users' data in an unauthorised manner to servers which have locations outside India.

- Therefore, the decision has been taken in a bid to **safeguard the interests of crores of Indian mobile users.**

Background

- The ban comes days after Indian intelligence agencies red flagged these Chinese apps over safety and privacy issues of users.
- The recommendations of the intelligence agencies have backing of **the National Security Council Secretariat** which determined that certain China-linked applications could be detrimental to the country's security.

Importance of such measures

This move will safeguard the interests of crores of Indian mobile and internet users. This decision is a targeted move to ensure safety, security and sovereignty of Indian cyberspace.

GENERAL STUDIES- II

Topic– *Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.*

MOU BETWEEN INDIA AND FINLAND

Context

Cabinet approves MoU between India and Finland for cooperation in the field of Geology and Mineral Resources.

Highlights

- The Union Cabinet has approved Memorandum of Understanding for **cooperation in the field of geology and mineral resources** between Geological Survey of India, and Geological Survey of Finland (*Geologiantutkimuskeskus*).
- The MoU facilitates cooperation in the field of geology, training, mineral prognostication.
- It will be cooperation for **suitability analysis, 3/4D modeling, Seismic and other Geophysical surveys finalised** with the intent of reinforcing and strengthening scientific links between the two Organisations.

Objective

- **This MoU aims to** provide with a framework and a platform to promote and foster cooperation in the fields of geology, and mineral resources between the Participants for mutual economic, social and environmental benefit;
- **It also aims** to share experiences on geological data management and information dissemination to promote exploration and mining, in the areas of geology and mineral resources.

Geological Survey of India

- Geological Survey of India (GSI) is a **premier geo-scientific organisation** of the Government of India of international repute for creation and updation of national geoscientific information and mineral resource assessment.

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- These objectives are achieved through, ground surveys, air-borne and marine surveys, mineral prospecting and investigations, multi-disciplinary geoscientific, geo-technical, geo-environmental and natural hazards studies, glaciology, seismotectonic study, and carrying out fundamental research.

Geological Survey of Finland

- Geological Survey of Finland has expertise in multi-thematic data integration and analysis using spatial platform with special emphasis on 3/4D modeling for mineral prognostication, hazard management, and environmental impact assessment.
- It have expertise in other areas of socio-economic significance and developing Decision Support System which can be used by users with minimal knowledge of GIS based modelling.

FOR PRELIMS

US-INDIA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP FORUM (USISPF)

Context

PM to give the Special Key Note Address at the 3rd Annual Leadership Summit of the USISPF.

Highlights

- The USISPF 3rd Annual Leadership Summit will be held on the 3rd September 2020.
- The US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) is **a non-profit organization**.
- It **works for the partnership between India and the U.S.**
- **The Theme** of the summit: **"US-India Navigating New Challenges"**.

PIB-SEPTEMBER 4th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES-III

Topic- *Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.*

GLOBAL INNOVATION INDEX 2020

Context

Recently, 13th edition of the Global Innovation Index was released by World Intellectual Property Organization.

What is Global Innovation Index (GII)?

- The Global Innovation Index (GII) provides detailed metrics **about the innovation performance of 131 countries and economies around the world**.
- Its **80 indicators** explore a broad vision of innovation, including political environment, education, infrastructure and business sophistication.
- The GII is co-published by **Cornell University, INSEAD, and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)**, a specialized agency of the United Nations.

The theme of this year's GII: *Who Will Finance Innovation?* – is timely given the human and global economic damage wreaked by the COVID-19 global pandemic.

India's performance

- India **climbed four spots** on the Global Innovation Index 2020 and is now at **48th position** in the list of top 50 innovative countries.
- India was at the **52nd position in 2019 and was ranked 81st in the year 2015.**
- India has now become the **third most innovative lower middle-income economy in the world.**
- India ranks in **the top 15 in indicators** such as ICT (Information and Communication Technology) services exports, government online services, graduates in science and engineering, and R&D-intensive global companies.

Global Perspective

- **Switzerland, Sweden, US, UK and Netherlands** are in the top spots of this year's ranking.
- The rankings show stability at the top but a gradual **"eastward shift in the locus of innovation"**.
- Asian economies like China, India, the Philippines and Vietnam have advanced considerably in the innovation ranking over the years.
- **South Korea** joined the top 10 for the first time.

Mains Question:

Discuss the reasons behind the consistent improvement of India in the global innovation index rankings.

GENERAL STUDIES-III

Topic- Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

ENTREPRENEURS IN RESIDENCE (EIR) PROGRAMME

Context

A brochure featuring Entrepreneurs in Residence (EIR) under the National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing Innovations (NIDHI) programme was launched by DST.

What is it?

- Entrepreneurs-in-Residence (EIR) Programme is an initiative under **National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing innovations (NIDHI)** of Department of Science and Technology.
- It supports aspiring or budding entrepreneur of considerable potential for pursuing a promising technology business idea over a period up to 18 months.
- It provides a subsistence grant up to Rs 30000 per month with a maximum cap for total support of Rs 3.6 lakh to each EIR over a maximum of 18 months.

What for?

- *The programme aims to* provide guidance to these aspiring entrepreneurs from experienced, innovative and highly successful entrepreneurs on the business concept strategy and insight into specific industries or markets.
- It inspire the best talents to be entrepreneurs, to minimize the risk involved in pursuing start-ups, and to partially set off their opportunity costs of high paying jobs.

National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing Innovations (NIDHI)

- **Department of Science and Technology (DST)** has announced **National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing Innovations (NIDHI)** as an **umbrella programme** for nurturing ideas and innovations (knowledge-based and technology-driven) into successful startups.
- **Entrepreneurs-in- Residence (EIR) Programme** is one of the programs introduced under NIDHI to inspire the best talents to be entrepreneurs, to minimise the risk involved in pursuing start-ups, and to partially set off their opportunity costs of high paying jobs.
- The NIDHI-EIR programme provides tremendous opportunities for innovative entrepreneurs to expand their networks.

The opportunities under NIDHI-EIR Programme include:

- Guidance from experienced, innovative and highly successful entrepreneurs on the business concept, strategy or venture and insight into specific industries or markets.
- Best practices for starting a business and broaden the professional network.
- Co-working spaces for developing the idea into a marketable product.
- The Programme thus encourages enterprising individuals to venture out and pursue daring entrepreneurial ideas as well as enhances the quantity and quality of startups.

Significance

The NIDHI-EIR programme provides tremendous opportunities for innovative entrepreneurs to expand their networks and get critical feedback on their ventures in order to promote their entrepreneurial career goals and aspirations.

This program is important in that it creates a pipeline of startups with a focus on young budding entrepreneurs.

Mains question:

What are the features of NIDHI-EIR programme? How it is envisioned to achieve the goal of Atmanirbharta?

GENERAL STUDIES-II

Topic- *Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

PARTIAL CREDIT GUARANTEE SCHEME (PCGS)

Context

Cabinet approves modifications in the existing 'Partial Credit Guarantee Scheme (PCGS)'.

What is Partial Credit Guarantee Scheme (PCGS)?

- The scheme allows to Public Sector Banks (PSBs) for purchasing high-rated pooled assets from financially sound Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) / Housing Finance Companies (HFCs).
- The amount of overall guarantee is limited to first loss of up to **10 per cent of fair value of assets** being purchased by the banks under the Scheme, **or Rs. 10,000 crore, whichever is lower**, as agreed by Department of Economic Affairs (DEA).
- The scheme would cover NBFCs and HFCs that might have slipped into “SMA-0” category during the one-year period prior to August 1, 2018.

Objective of the PCGS

- The Government Guarantee support and resultant pool buyouts will help address NBFCs/HFCs resolve their temporary liquidity or cash flow mismatch issues.
- It enable them to continue contributing to credit creation and providing last mile lending to borrowers, thereby spurring economic growth.

The new modifications in PCGS

- Sovereign portfolio guarantee of up to 20% of first loss for purchase of Bonds or Commercial Papers (CPs) with a rating of AA and below issued through an extension of the Partial Credit Guarantee Scheme (PCGS).
- It made NBFCs/HFCs reported under SMA-1 category on technical reasons alone during the last one year period prior to 1.8.2018 eligible.
- Relaxing the net profit criteria to the extent that the concerned NBFC/HFC should now have made a profit in at least one of the financial years of FY2017-18, FY 2018-19 and 2019-20.
- Relaxing the criteria regarding date of origination of assets to include new assets originating up to at least six months prior to the date of initial pool rating.
- Extending the Scheme from 30.6.2020 to 31.3.2021 for purchase of pooled assets.

What will be the impact of these modifications?

- COVID-19 crisis and consequent lockdown restrictions are likely to have a negative impact on both collections and fresh loan disbursements, besides a deleterious effect on the overall economy.
- The extension of the existing Scheme will address the liability side concerns.
- In addition, modifications in the existing PCGS will enable wider coverage of the Scheme on the asset side also.
- NBFCs, HFCs and MFIs play a crucial role in sustaining consumption demand as well as capital formation in small and medium segment.
- It is essential that they continue to get funding without disruption, and the extended PCGS is expected to systematically enable the same.

What is Special Mention Accounts (SMA)?

- Special Mention Accounts are those assets/accounts that show symptoms of bad asset quality in the first 90 days itself.
- The Special Mention Account identification is an effort for early stress discovery of bank loans.
- It was introduced as a corrective action plan to contain stress.

CHROME IAS ACADEMY

- As per the SMA regulations, banks should identify potential stress in the account by creating a new sub-asset category viz. 'Special Mention Accounts' (SMA).

What is the difference between NPA and SMA?

- NPA has duration of 90 days.
- On the other hand, the worst type of special mention account (SMA – 2) has less than 90 days' duration.

Classification of Special Mention Accounts

The Special Mention Accounts are usually categorized in terms of duration.

- SMA-0: Principal or interest payment not overdue for more than 30 days.
- SMA -1: the overdue period is between 31 to 60 days.
- SMA -2: an overdue between 61 to 90 days.
- SMA –NF: non-financial indications about stress of an asset are considered.

Mains Question:

The stress on NBFCs and HFCs is seen as a key reason for a slowdown in the economy, as it has caused reduced credit flow to small businesses and consumers. Discuss.

FOR PRELIMS

COMPLETE SOLARISATION OF KONARK SUN TEMPLE & KONARK TOWN

Highlights

- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has taken up the Complete Solarisation of Konark sun temple and Konark town in Odisha.
- It is in line with the Prime Minister's vision to develop the historical Sun temple town of Konark in **Odisha as 'Surya Nagri'**.
- The Scheme envisages setting up of **10 MW grid connected solar project**.
- Various solar off-grid applications like solar trees, solar drinking water kiosks, off-grid solar power plants with battery storage etc will be used with a 100% Central Financial Assistance (CFA) support.
- Implementation of this Project will be done by Odisha Renewable Energy Development Agency (OREDA).

PIB-SEPTEMBER 5th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES- II

Topic– Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.

THE FIFTEENTH FINANCE COMMISSION (XVFC)

Context

The Fifteenth Finance Commission hold discussions with its Economic Advisory Council.

About the XVFC

- The Fifteenth Finance Commission was constituted on **27 November 2017**.
- It was formed against the backdrop of the **abolition of Planning Commission** (as also of the distinction between Plan and non-Plan expenditure) and the **introduction of the goods and services tax (GST)**, which has fundamentally redefined federal fiscal relation.
- It was mandated to **give recommendations for vertical and horizontal devolution of taxes for five fiscal years, commencing 1 April 2020**. Its recommendations will cover a period of five years from April 2020 to March 2025.
- It is constituted under the **chairmanship of NK Singh**.

Finance Commission of India (FCI)

- Finance Commission of India is **established by President of India as per Article 280** of the constitution.
- **Article 280 states:** *President should, within two years of commencement of the Constitution and thereafter on expiry of every 5th year, or at such intervals as he/ she thinks necessary, would constitute a Finance Commission.*
- The finance commission is an **autonomous body** which is governed by the government of India.
- **The First Finance Commission was constituted** vide Presidential Order dated 22.11.1951 under the **chairmanship of Shri K.C. Neogy on 6th April, 1952**.
- **Fifteen Finance Commissions** have been constituted so far **at intervals of every five years**.

Two distinctive features of the Commission's work

- Involve redressing the vertical imbalances between the taxation powers and expenditure responsibilities of the Centre and the States respectively, and
- Equalization of all public services across the States.

Members

A Finance Commission would consist of a Chairman and 4 other members who are all will be appointed by the President.

The Chairman of the Commission is selected from among persons who have had experience in public affairs, and the four **other members are selected from among persons who:**

- are, or have been, or are **qualified to be appointed as Judges of a High Court**; or
- have **special knowledge of the finances and accounts of Government**; or
- have had **wide experience** in financial matters and in administration; or
- have **special knowledge of economics**

Functions

- **Distribution of net proceeds of taxes between Center and the States**, to be divided as per their respective contributions to the taxes.
- **Determine factors governing Grants-in-Aid** to the states and the magnitude of the same.
- **To make recommendations to the president** as to the measures needed to augment the Fund of a State to supplement the resources of the panchayats and municipalities in the state on the basis of the recommendations made by the finance commission of the state.
- **Any other matter** related to it by the president in the interest of sound finance.

Need and significance

- The Indian federal system allows for the division of power and responsibilities between the Centre and states.
- Correspondingly, the taxation powers are also broadly divided between the Centre and states.
- State legislatures may devolve some of their taxation powers to local bodies.

Mains Question:

Discuss the role that Finance Commission play in improving Centre state administrative relations?

GENERAL STUDIES- II

Topic- Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States.

PRADHAN MANTRI BHARTIYA JANAUSHADHI PRIYOJANA (PMBJP)

Context

Recently, Chemicals & Fertilizers ministry launched 8 immunity boosting products under Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Priyोजना (PMBJP) for sale through Janaushadhi Kendras across country.

About PMBJP

Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyोजना (PMBJP) is a campaign launched by the **Department of Pharmaceuticals** to provide quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses.

- It was launched in **November 2008** under the name **Jan Aushadi Campaign** and the scheme was rechristened in 2015.
- **Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India (BPPI)** is the implementation agency for PMBJ.
- PMBJP stores have been set up to provide generic drugs, which are available at lesser prices but are equivalent in quality and efficacy as expensive branded drugs.

Objective

Making quality medicines available at affordable prices for all, particularly the poor and disadvantaged, through exclusive outlets "**Jan Aushadhi Medical Store**", so as to **reduce out of pocket expenses in healthcare**.

Salient features of the scheme

- It aims to ensure **access to quality medicines**.
- **Extend coverage of quality generic medicines** so as to reduce the out of pocket expenditure on medicines and thereby redefine the unit cost of treatment per person.
- Create awareness about generic medicines through education and publicity so that quality is not synonymous with only high price.
- A public programme involving Government, PSUs, Private Sector, NGO, Societies, Co-operative Bodies and other Institutions.
- Create demand for generic medicines by improving access to better healthcare through low treatment cost and easy availability wherever needed in all therapeutic categories.

Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India (BPPI)

- **Bureau of Pharma Public Sector Undertakings of India (BPPI)** has been established under the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Govt. of India, with the support of all the CPSUs.
- It is the implementing agency of PMBJP.

What are the Generic Medicines?

A generic drug is a medication created to be the same as an already marketed brand-name drug in dosage form, safety, strength, route of administration, quality, performance characteristics, and intended use.

- Generic medicines are unbranded medicines which are equally safe and having the same efficacy as that of branded medicines in terms of their therapeutic value.
- These similarities help to demonstrate bioequivalence, which means that a generic medicine works in the same way and provides the same clinical benefit as its brand-name version.
- The prices of generic medicines are much cheaper than their branded equivalent.

Mains Question:

'Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Priyojana (PMBJP) will reduce out of pocket expenses in healthcare'. Discuss.

FOR PRELIMS

TEACHERS' DAY

- Every year Teachers' Day is celebrated on **5 September** in India.
- It is celebrated to commemorate the birth anniversary of second President of India Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan.
- It aims to recognise the contributions of teachers in Society.

Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM)

Context

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways addresses 60th Annual Convention of SIAM.

Highlights

- The Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) is **a not for profit apex national body** representing all major vehicle and vehicular engine manufacturers in India.
- SIAM works towards supporting sustainable development of the Indian Automobile Industry with the vision that India emerges as the destination of choice in the world for design and manufacture of automobiles.

PIB-SEPTEMBER 7th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES- II

Topic- Development processes and the development industry —the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders.

START-UP VILLAGE ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMME (SVEP)

Context

SVEP has extended business support services and capital infusion to 153 blocks of 23 states.

What is the SVEP?

- Start-Up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP) is a **sub-scheme** of National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).
- It is implemented by **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana –National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)**, Ministry of Rural Development, since 2016.

Objective of SVEP

SVEP focusses on **providing self-employment opportunities with financial assistance and training** in business management and soft skills while creating local community cadres for promotion of enterprises **to support the rural poor come out of poverty**.

Key features

- SVEP addresses **three major pillars of rural start-ups** namely – **finances, incubation and skill ecosystems**.
- Activities under SVEP are strategically designed to promote rural enterprises;
- To develop pool of **community resource persons – enterprise promotion (CRP-EP)** who are local and support entrepreneurs setting-up rural enterprises.
- To promote the **block resource center (BRC)** in SVEP blocks,
- **BRC** monitor and manage the community resource persons, appraise SVEP loan application and acts as the repository of enterprise related information in the concern block.

Significance of programme

SVEP promotes both individual and group enterprises, set-up and promote enterprises majorly on manufacturing, trading and service sectors.

- The program **invested largely on building the capacities of the entrepreneurs** to run the businesses profitably based on the local demand and eco-system.
- The CRP-EPs are certified and provides business support services to the entrepreneurs.
- Investments are also made under SVEP on use of ICT to create standard E-learning modules for minimizing the transmission loss in technical aspects like business plan and profit and loss account preparations.

Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)

DAY-NRLM was launched by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), in June 2011 as a restructured version of Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojna (SGSY).

- In November **2015, the program was renamed Deendayal Antayodaya Yojana (DAY-NRLM)**.
- DAY-NLRM aims to reduce poverty through promotion of diversified and gainful self-employment while creating skilled wage employment opportunities.

- The scheme supports building social capital and ensuring financial linkages to alleviate poverty and enhance the quality of the life of rural poor women.

The response to COVID pandemic

As the country fought the coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19), women SHGs of **DAY-NRLM** stepped up as effective frontline responders and reached the last mile ensuring an immediate relief to the rural communities and the most vulnerable population.

These SHG women shouldered the responsibilities of the situation and emerged as a strong task force in producing several quality products like masks, protective gear kits, sanitizers and hand wash across the country.

Mains Question:

Discuss the features and significance of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana –National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) in face of Pandemic.

GENERAL STUDIES- II

Topic– Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION (SCO)

Context

Raksha Mantri met General Wei Fenghe, State Councillor and Defence Minister of China on **4th September in Moscow on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting.**

About Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a **permanent intergovernmental international organization.**
- It was **created 15 June 2001 in Shanghai (China).**
- The SCO Charter was signed in 2002, and entered into force in 2003.
- The **SCO's official languages are Russian and Chinese.**

Founding members of SCO were-

1. The Republic of Kazakhstan,
2. The People's Republic of China,
3. The Kyrgyz Republic,
4. The Russian Federation,
5. The Republic of Tajikistan,
6. The Republic of Uzbekistan.

It was preceded by the Shanghai Five mechanism.

Background

- **Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan** were members of the **Shanghai Five**, Prior to the creation of SCO in 2001.

CHROME IAS ACADEMY

- **Shanghai Five (1996)** emerged from a series of border demarcation and demilitarization talks which the four former Soviet republics held with China to ensure stability along the borders.
- **Uzbekistan joined the organisation in 2001**, following this the **Shanghai Five was renamed the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**.
- **India and Pakistan became members in 2017**.

Member Countries

Now, SCO is comprised of Eight Member countries. Namely-

1. **Kazakhstan**
2. **China**
3. **Kyrgyzstan**
4. **Russia**
5. **Tajikistan**
6. **Uzbekistan**
7. **India**
8. **Pakistan**

Objectives of SCO

- Strengthening mutual trust and neighbourliness among the member states;
- Promoting their effective cooperation in politics, trade, the economy, research, technology and culture, as well as in education, energy, transport, tourism, environmental protection, and other areas;
- Making joint efforts to maintain and ensure peace, security and stability in the region;
- Moving towards the establishment of a democratic, fair and rational new international political and economic order.

Significance for India

- The SCO's significance for India lies in economics and geopolitics with the Eurasian states.
- SCO is a potential platform to advance India's Connect Central Asia policy. The SCO member states occupy the huge landmass adjacent to India's extended neighbourhood where India has both economic and security imperatives.
- Importance of SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group to stabilise Afghanistan. SCO membership provides India a vital counter to some of the other groupings it is a part of.
- The SCO provides the only multilateral platform for India to deal in close proximity with Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Mains Question:

What Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit means for India's global and regional interests?

GENERAL STUDIES- III

Topic- Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

LOW OZONE OVER BRAHMAPUTRA RIVER VALLEY

Context

Low ozone over Brahmaputra River Valley **brings good news for health** of people: Scientists

Highlights

- Scientists at the **Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES), Nainital** have evaluated the near surface ozone in the **Brahmaputra River Valley (BRV)**.
- They found relatively **low concentration of Ozone over Guwahati** compared to the other urban locations in India.
- **ARIES is an autonomous research institute** under the Department of Science and Technology (DST) Govt. of India.

Key points

- **Tropospheric, or ground-level ozone**, is created by chemical reactions between oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOC).
- It usually increases when pollutants emitted by cars, power plants, industrial boilers, refineries, chemical plants, and other sources chemically react in the presence of sunlight, impacting human health.

Observation over Brahmaputra River Valley

- The scientists analysed the variability of ozone and other air pollutants over Brahmaputra River Valley region.
- The examination of nitric oxide, nitrogen dioxide, and ozone concentrations in this study suggested that this site is well influenced by local sources such as adjacent major national highway.
- During the daylight hours, the site is in or nearly in a photo-stationary state, indicating a low impact of organic species on the ozone concentrations.

Ozone and its significance

The ozone layer is one of the most vital atmospheric components of our planet.

- It is responsible for protecting life on Earth from the harmful UV radiation from the Sun.
- It is found mainly in the upper atmosphere, an area called the stratosphere, between 10 and 50 km from the earth's surface.
- The lack of the Ozone layer can have severe implications for people living directly under it. The most prominent effects are Skin Cancer and other possibly fatal skin diseases.

Good Ozone & Bad Ozone

Good Ozone is also called **stratospheric ozone** and it occurs naturally in the upper atmosphere.

- It forms a protective layer that shields us from the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays.
- This beneficial ozone has been partially destroyed by manmade chemicals, causing what is sometimes called a "hole in the ozone."

Tropospheric, or ground level ozone, is known as Bad Ozone. It is not emitted directly into the air, but is created by chemical reactions between oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) and **volatile organic compounds (VOC)**.

- This happens when pollutants emitted by cars, power plants, industrial boilers, refineries, chemical plants, and other sources chemically react in the presence of sunlight.

- *Ozone can also be transported long distances by wind, so even rural areas can experience high ozone levels.*

Ground-Level Ozone

- **Ozone (O₃) is a colourless, reactive oxidant gas** that is a major constituent of atmospheric smog. Many factors impact ground-level ozone development, including temperature, wind speed and direction, time of day, and driving patterns.
- Ground level ozone is formed by the reaction of NO_x and VOCs under the influence of sunlight hundreds of kilometers from the source of emissions.
- Ozone concentrations are influenced by the intensity of solar radiation, the absolute concentrations of NO_x and VOCs, and the ratio of NO_x and VOCs.

Mains Question:

Write a brief note on ozone pollution and differentiate the good and bad ozone.

FOR PRELIMS

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CLEAN AIR FOR BLUE SKIES.

Highlights

*The very first International Day of Clean Air for blue skies will be held on **September 7th, 2020.***

The **United Nations General Assembly** adopted the resolution to hold an **International Day of Clean Air for blue skies on December 19, 2019.**

The Day aims to:

- **Raise public awareness at all levels**—individual, community, corporate and government—that clean air is important for health, productivity, the economy and the environment.
- **Demonstrate the close link of air quality** to other environmental/developmental challenges such as – most and foremost – climate change and the global Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Promote and facilitate solutions** that improve air quality by sharing actionable knowledge best practices, innovations, and success stories.
- **Bring together diverse international actors** working on this topic to form a strategic alliance to gain momentum for concerted national, regional and international approaches for effective air quality management.

Rashtriya Poshan Maah

*The Poshan Maah is observed **every year in the month of September.***

As part of this, the DoFPD have decided to organise activities, in various parts of the country to sensitize the target groups on the merits of nutritional security.

- **Month of September 2018** was celebrated as Rashtriya POSHAN Maah.
- The activities in POSHAN Maah **focused on Social Behavioural Change and Communication (SBCC).**

GENERAL STUDIES- III

Topic– *Achievements of Indians in Science & Technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.*

HYPERSONIC TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATOR VEHICLE

Context

DRDO successfully flight tests Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle.

Highlights

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully demonstrated the **hypersonic air-breathing scramjet technology**.
- The technology was used in the flight test of **Hypersonic Technology Demonstration Vehicle (HSTDV)**.
- The flights test was done at Dr **APJ Abdul Kalam Launch Complex at Wheeler Island**, off the coast of Odisha.

Hypersonic Technology Demonstration Vehicle (HSTDV).

- It is a new class of ultra-modern weapons **that can travel six times faster than the speed of sound (Mach 6) and penetrate any missile defence**.
- **Mach 6 translates into a speed of 7,408kmph.**
- Such vehicles are launched on rockets before they detach and move towards their target in the upper atmosphere.
- They **can be steered to add unpredictability** in an attack and because **they follow a flat and low trajectory, it is hard to detect them early with radar**.
- The hypersonic combustion sustained and the cruise vehicle continued on its desired flight path at a **velocity of six times the speed of sound**., nearly 02 km/second for more than 20 seconds.

Specifications

- An improvement over the **ramjet technology**, the **scramjet engine** operates efficiently at hypersonic speeds and allows supersonic combustion.
- The scramjet engine worked at high dynamic pressure and at very high temperature.
- **Hypersonic missiles** travel at speeds in excess of Mach 5.
- Only the **United States, Russia and China have developed technologies** to field **fast-maneuvring hypersonic missiles that fly at lower altitudes and are extremely hard to track and intercept**.

Significance

With this successful demonstration, many critical technologies such as aerodynamic configuration for hypersonic manoeuvres, use of scramjet propulsion for ignition and sustained combustion at hypersonic flow, separation mechanism at hypersonic velocities etc. were proven.

On this successful demonstration, the country enters into the hypersonic regime paving way for advanced hypersonic Vehicles.

Mains Question:

Why is the successful flight test of Hypersonic Technology Demonstration Vehicle (HSTDV) is significant? Discuss.

GENERAL STUDIES- III

Topic– Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

FIRST WORLD SOLAR TECHNOLOGY SUMMIT

Context

The first World Solar Technology Summit (WSTS) being organized by the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

Highlights

- The **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)**, as the convenor of ISA Global Leadership Task Force on Innovation, is working with ISA in organizing the summit.
- A tripartite agreement between **India's Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, the World Bank and the International Solar Alliance** is also set to be inked.
- **ISA's technology journal, Solar Compass 360** will also be launched during the summit.
- The entire proceedings will be available live in **four languages: English, Spanish, French and Arabic**.

About International Solar Alliance

- International Solar Alliance was **launched in 2015**.
- The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is an alliance of more than 122 countries **initiated by India**.
- ISA is a **coalition of solar resource rich countries lying fully or partially between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn** to specifically address energy needs by harnessing solar energy.
- **The Paris Declaration** establishes ISA as an alliance dedicated to the promotion of solar energy among its member countries.
- ISA brings together countries with rich solar potential to aggregate global demand, thereby reducing prices through bulk purchase.
- It facilitates the deployment of existing solar technologies at scale, and promoting collaborative solar R&D and capacity building.

Secretariat

- **India and France jointly laid the foundation stone of ISA Headquarters.**
- They inaugurated the interim Secretariat of the ISA in **National Institute of Solar Energy campus, Gurugram, Haryana**.

Objectives

The ISA's major objectives include global deployment of over 1,000GW of solar generation capacity and mobilisation of investment of over US\$ 1000 billion into solar energy by 2030.

Significance of ISA

More than 120 countries are geographically located in the tropics, between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn, either fully or partially. These places get ample sunlight throughout the year, making solar energy an easily available resources.

- These countries also happen to be ones where maximum growth in energy demand is expected in the coming years, considering that these are areas where current production is woefully short of requirement.
- The ISA is an effort to ensure that as these countries rapidly ramp up their electricity production, they should predominantly use solar energy and avoid fossil fuels.

Mains Question:

Discuss the key objectives of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the challenges it faces today.

GENERAL STUDIES- III

Topic— *Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.*

GLOBAL MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDEX AND INDIA

Context

Recently, Press Note on Global Multidimensional Poverty Index and India is released by NITI Ayog.

What is the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)?

The global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) measures the complexities of poor people's lives, individually and collectively, each year.

- It is released by **the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative at the University of Oxford and the Human Development Report Office of the United Nations Development Programme.**
- The Global MPI is released at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development of the United Nations **in July, every year.**
- **This report focuses** on how multidimensional poverty has declined.
- It provides a **comprehensive picture of global trends in multidimensional poverty**, covering 5 billion people.
- It probes patterns between and within countries and by indicator, showcasing different ways of making progress.
- Together with data on **the \$1.90 a day poverty rate**, the trends monitor global poverty in different forms.

Key findings: Global perspective

Across 107 developing countries, **1.3 billion people—22 percent—live in multidimensional poverty.**

- **Children show higher rates of multidimensional poverty:** half of multidimensionally poor people (644 million) are children under age 18. One in three children is poor compared with one in six adults.
- About 84.3 percent of multidimensionally poor people live in **Sub-Saharan Africa (558 million) and South Asia (530 million)**.
- **67 percent of multidimensionally poor people are in middle-income countries**, where the incidence of multidimensional poverty ranges from 0 percent to 57 percent nationally and from 0 percent to 91 percent sub nationally.
- 107 million multidimensionally poor people are age 60 or older—a particularly important figure during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Four countries halved their MPI value.** India (2005/2006–2015/2016) did so nationally and among children and had the biggest reduction in the number of multidimensionally poor people (273 million). Ten countries, including China, came close to halving their MPI value.
- The countries with the **fastest reduction in MPI value in absolute terms were** Sierra Leone, Mauritania and Liberia, followed by Timor-Leste, Guinea and Rwanda. North Macedonia had the **fastest relative poverty reduction**, followed by China, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Turkmenistan and Mongolia. Each of these countries cut its original MPI value by at least 12 percent a year.
- **In 14 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, the number of multidimensionally poor people increased**, even though their MPI value decreased, because of population growth.

Global MPI and India

NITI Aayog as the nodal agency has been assigned the responsibility of leveraging the monitoring mechanism of the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) to drive reforms. Global MPI is part of Government of India's decision to monitor the performance of the country in 29 select Global Indices.

The objective of the "Global Indices to Drive Reforms and Growth (GIRG)" exercise is to fulfil the need to measure and monitor India's performance on various important social and economic parameters.

Global MPI is computed by scoring each surveyed household on **10 parameters** based on – **nutrition, child mortality, years of schooling, school attendance, cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, housing and household assets.**

- It utilises the **National Family Health Survey (NFHS)** which is conducted under the aegis of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS).
- According to Global MPI 2020, **India is 62nd among 107 countries with an MPI score of 0.123 and 27.91% headcount ratio, based on the NFHS 4 (2015/16) data.**
- Neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka (25th), Bhutan (68th), Nepal (65th), Bangladesh (58th), China (30th), Myanmar (69th) and Pakistan (73rd) are also ranked in this index (we can pick and choose the countries).

GENERAL STUDIES- III

Topic– *Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

COMMITTEE ON CONTENT REGULATION IN GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING (CCRGA)

Context

Decisions taken at the 19th meeting (virtual) of the Supreme Court mandated Three Member Committee on Content Regulation in Government Advertising (CCRGA).

What is the CCRGA?

- As per the **directions of Supreme Court in 2015**, the Government of India had set up a **three member Committee** on Content Regulation in Government Advertising (CCRGA) in 2016.
- **It is mandated to** look into content regulation of government funded advertisements in all media platforms.
- It is empowered to address **complaints from the general public and can also take suo-moto cognizance** of any violation of the Supreme Court guidelines and recommend corrective actions.

Supreme Court Guidelines regarding CCRGA

- The **content of government advertisements** should be relevant to the **government's constitutional and legal obligations as well as the citizen's rights and entitlements**.
- The advertisement materials should be designed **to meet the objectives of the campaign** and to ensure maximum reach in a cost effective way.
- It should be accurate and not presenting pre-existing policies and products as new.
- The advertisement **content should also not promote the political interests of the ruling party**.
- Government advertising must comply with legal requirement and financial regulations and procedures.

The key decisions taken in 19th meet:

- The CCRGA meeting took a serious note of the fact that other states have yet to constitute their respective state level Committees.
- Some state governments' delay in setting up the state-level committees may be construed as contempt of Hon'ble Supreme Court's order.
- The CCRGA felt that non-compliance of its decisions was a serious matter and the Committee may be constrained to put embargo on issue of further advertisements by nodal agencies of concerned governments, which come under purview of this Committee.

PIB-SEPTEMBER 9th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES-II

Topic— Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

SVANIDHI SAMVAAD

Context

Recently, Prime Minister Modi held 'Svanidhi Samvaad' with street vendors from Madhya Pradesh.

What is the PM SVANidhi scheme?

- The Government of India had **launched PM SVANidhi scheme on 1st June, 2020** to help poor street vendors, impacted by COVID-19, resume livelihood activities.
- **Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor's Atmanirbhar Nidhi** is a special micro-credit facility scheme for providing affordable loan to street vendors.
- The scheme enabled the street vendors to resume their livelihoods that have been adversely affected due to COVID-19 lockdown.

Key features of the scheme

- PM Svanidhi, or Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi scheme is **launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs**.
- It is a **special micro-credit facility plan** to provide affordable loan of up to ₹10,000.
- It aimed to provide loan to more than 50 lakh street vendors, **who had their businesses operational on or before 24 March**.
- The scheme is **valid until March 2022**.

Implementing agencies

- **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** is the technical partner for implementation of this scheme.
- It will manage the credit guarantee to the lending institutions through **Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises**.

The loan under the Scheme

- Under the scheme, vendors can avail working capital loan of up to ₹10,000, **which is repayable in monthly instalments within one year**.
- On timely/early repayment of the loan, **an interest subsidy of 7% per annum will be credited** to the bank accounts of beneficiaries.
- There will be **no penalty on early repayment of loan**.
- A timely repayment will ensure that the vendor gets a credible credit score and are eligible for a higher loan.

Who are the Beneficiaries?

- The scheme is applicable to vendors, hawkers, thelewalas, rehriwalas, theliphadwalas in different areas/contexts who supply goods and services.
- Street vendors belonging to the surrounding peri-urban/rural areas are also included.

Why it was needed?

- India has been under an extended lockdown from 25 March to tackle the spread of covid-19.
- The lockdown has affected the lives and livelihoods of many especially daily wagers including street vendors whose businesses were affected due to the restrictions.
- Therefore, there is an urgent need to provide affordable credit for working capital through formal banking channel to street vendors to help them resume the business.

Mains Question:

In what ways the PM SVANidhi scheme will help target people? How the lockdown has affected small industries? Discuss.

GENERAL STUDIES-III

Topic- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

NATIONAL BAMBOO MISSION

Context

Recently, 22 bamboo clusters in 9 States were launched by Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.

Highlights

- 22 bamboo clusters in 9 States, i.e. **Gujarat, MP, Maharashtra, Odisha, Assam, Nagaland, Tripura, Uttarakhand and Karnataka** was launched.
- A logo for the National Bamboo Mission was also released.

What is the National Bamboo Mission (NBM)?

- The Mission was launched as a natural corollary of the historic **amendment of the Indian Forest Act in 2017**.
- Under the act, **bamboo was removed from the definition of trees**, hence bamboo grown outside forests no longer need felling and transit permissions.
- The restructured National Bamboo Mission was **launched in 2018-19** for holistic development of the complete value chain of the sector.
- The Mission is being implemented in a **hub (industry) and spoke model**.
- **Its main goal is** connecting farmers to markets so as to enable farmer producers to get a ready market for the bamboo grown and to increase supply of appropriate raw material to domestic industry.
- The NBM will be a **sub-scheme of National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) under the umbrella scheme Krishonnati Yojana**.

Objective of NBM

- **To increase the area** under bamboo plantation in **non-forest Government and private lands**.
- **To supplement farm income** and contribute towards resilience to climate change as well as availability of quality raw material for industries.
- To improve post-harvest management.
- To establish innovative primary processing units near the source of production, primary treatment and seasoning plants, preservation technologies and market infrastructure.
- **To rejuvenate the under developed bamboo industry in India**.
- **To promote skill development, capacity building, awareness generation for development of bamboo sector from production to market demand**.
- To re-align efforts so as to reduce dependency on import of bamboo and bamboo products.

Funding

- 60:40 between Centre and State Govt. for all States (excepting NE & Hilly states),
- 90:10 for the NE & Hilly States,
- 100% for Union Territories/R&D Institutes/Bamboo Technology Support Groups (BTSGs) and National Level Agencies.

Why NBM is needed?

- In India Bamboo covers 13.96 million hectares.
- The mission has special cover the North Eastern States.
- They encourage Bamboo cultivation to make sure the grass is available in the manufacturing process of Bamboo handicrafts.
- Apart from North Eastern Regions, the mission is also spread across Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Karnataka, Odisha, Chattisgarh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh.

Mains Question:

The Bamboo has been removed from the definition of trees. What are the implications of it? Describe the key features and significance of National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA).

FOR PRELIMS

HUNAR HAAT

Highlights

‘Hunar Haat’, being organised by **Union Minority Affairs Ministry**, to restart from October 2020.

The next “Hunar Haat” will be organised at Prayagraj from 9 to 18 October, 2020.

The theme — “Local to Global” and focus on indigenous exquisite Indian toys.

What is it?

Hunar Haat is an exhibition of handicrafts and traditional products made by artisans from the Minority communities.

- It is organised by Ministry of Minority Affairs.
- Hunar Haats are being organized **USTTAD (Upgrading the Skills & Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development)** scheme.
- The USTTAD scheme aims at preserving & promoting the rich heritage of the traditional arts & crafts of the Minority communities.

International Literacy Day

International Literacy Day is celebrated on 8 September each year.

- At the 14th session of UNESCO’s general conference in 1966, the first ever International Literacy Day was declared.
- Despite progress made, literacy challenges persist with at least 773 million adults worldwide lacking basic literacy skills today.

CHROME IAS ACADEMY

This year's theme: focuses on the *'Literacy teaching and learning in the Covid-19 crisis and beyond.'*

eSanjeevani

'eSanjeevani' telemedicine service, the platform of the Health Ministry providing tele-consultations, has completed 3 lakh tele-consultations.

- 'eSanjeevani', is a **web-based comprehensive telemedicine solution**.
- It is modeled on 'Sanjeevani' CDAC Mohali's' flagship integrated telemedicine solution.
- 'eSanjeevani' extends the reach of **specialized healthcare services to masses in both rural areas and isolated communities**.
- eSanjeevani aims to make healthcare services **equitable by bridging the digital divide that exists between the urban vs. rural, rich vs. poor etc.**
- eSanjeevani can also be used to provide medical education to interns , people across various Common Service Centers (CSCs), etc.

PIB- SEPTEMBER 10th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES- III

Topic- *Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.*

EASE 2.0 INDEX

Context

Recently, Finance Minister unveils Doorstep Banking Services and declares EASE 2.0 Index Results.

What is it?

A common reform agenda for PSBs, **EASE Agenda is aimed at institutionalizing clean and smart banking.**

- **It was launched in January 2018**, and the subsequent edition of the program — EASE 2.0 built on the foundation laid in EASE 1.0 and furthered the progress on reforms.
- Reform Action Points in EASE 2.0 aimed at making the reforms journey irreversible, strengthening processes and systems, and driving outcomes.

Key features of EASE Reforms Index

EASE Reforms Index has equipped with:

- Boards and leadership for effective governance,
- Instituted risk appetite frameworks,
- Created technology- and data-driven risk assessment and prudential underwriting and pricing systems,
- Introduced Early Warning Signals (EWS) systems and specialised monitoring for time-bound action in respect of stress,
- Put in place focussed recovery arrangements, and
- Established outcome-centric HR systems.

What it do?

CHROME IAS ACADEMY

- The Index **measures the performance of each PSB on 120+objective metrics** across **six themes**.
- It provides all PSBs a comparative evaluation showing where banks stand vis-à-vis benchmarks and peers on the Reforms Agenda.
- The Index follows a fully transparent scoring methodology, which enables banks to identify precisely their strengths as well as areas for improvement.
- The goal is to continue driving change by spurring healthy competition among PSBs and by encouraging them to learn from each other.

Doorstep Banking Services by PSBs

- **As part of the EASE Reforms**, Doorstep Banking Services is envisaged **to provide convenience of banking services to the customers at their door step** through the universal touch points of Call Centre, Web Portal or Mobile App.
- Customers can also track their service request through these channels.
- The services shall be rendered by the Doorstep Banking Agents deployed by the selected Service Providers at 100 centres across the country.

Performance of PSB on EASE 2.0 Index

- PSBs have shown a healthy trajectory in their performance over four quarters since the launch of EASE 2.0 Reforms Agenda.
- Significant progress is seen across **six themes of the Reforms Agenda**, with the highest improvement seen in the themes of **‘Responsible Banking’, ‘Governance and HR’, ‘PSBs as Udyamimitra for MSMEs’, and ‘Credit off-take’**.

PSBs way forward to Smart, Tech-enabled Banking for Aspiring India

A comprehensive agenda for smart, tech-enabled banking has been adopted for FY2020-21.

- Under which PSBs have initiated **eShishu Mudra** for straight-through processing of loans to micro-enterprises and digital personal loan for customers.
- PSBs have started providing customer-need driven credit offers through analytics and partnerships with FinTechs and e-commerce companies.

Mains Question:

Discuss the key features and significance of EASE Reforms Index. What are the steps have been taken under the EASE Reforms initiative?

GENERAL STUDIES- I

Topic- Role of women and women's organization, population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues, urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

ODF+ AND ODF++

Context

Recently, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has declared ODF+ and ODF++ status for Haryana and Punjab.

Highlights

CHROME IAS ACADEMY

- **All the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in Haryana** have been certified Open Defecation Free (ODF), 21 ULBs ODF+ and 13 ODF++.
- **All cities in Punjab** have been certified ODF, 33 are ODF+ and 17 are ODF++. Chandigarh is certified ODF++ and 3 Star (GFC).

What is ODF tag?

The original ODF protocol, issued in March 2016, said, “A city/ward is notified as ODF city/ward if, at any point of the day, not a single person is found defecating in the open.”

What is ODF+ and ODF++?

- ODF+ and ODF++ were **launched in August 2018** to further scale up and sustain the work undertaken by the cities after achieving the ODF status under Phase I of **the Swachh Bharat Mission — Urban (SBM-Urban)**.
- Cities that had been certified ODF at least once, on the basis of the ODF protocols, are eligible to declare themselves as SBM-ODF+ & SBM-ODF++.

Norms under ODF+: A city, ward or work circle could be declared ODF+ if, “at any point of the day, ‘Not a single person should be defecating and/or urinating in open. All community and public toilets should be properly maintained and cleaned’.

Norms under ODF++: The ODF++ protocol adds the condition that, Proper treatment and management of faecal sludge/septage and sewage is safely managed and treated. There should be no discharge or dumping of untreated faecal sludge/septage and sewage in drains, water bodies or open areas.

Mains Question:

Swachh Bharat Mission campaign has become the global benchmark for participatory and transformative development. Discuss.

GENERAL STUDIES- III

Topic- Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

JIGYASA PROGRAMME

Context

Webinar on Scientific & Technological Interventions by CSIR-CMERI combating COVID-19 under Jigyasa programme was held.

What is the Jigyasa programme?

- ‘JIGYASA’ programme is an initiative of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in collaboration with Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathans (KVS).
- The focus is on connecting school students and scientists so as to extend student’s classroom learning with that of a very well planned research laboratory based learning.

Highlights of the JIGYASA programme

CHROME IAS ACADEMY

- 'JIGYASA' would **inculcate the culture of inquisitiveness** on one hand and **scientific temper** on the other, amongst the school students and their teachers.
- The program will also enable the students and teachers **to practically live the theoretical concepts taught in science** by visiting CSIR laboratories and by participating in projects.
- The Programme is expected to connect 1151 Kendriya Vidyalayas with **38 National Laboratories of CSIR** targeting 100,000 students and nearly 1000 teachers annually.
- The focus is on connecting school students and scientists to extend student's classroom learning with a well-planned research laboratory based learning.
- It will also enable the students and teachers to practically live the theoretical concepts taught in science by visiting CSIR laboratories and by participating in mini-science projects.

The model of engagement includes:

The model of engagement includes student residential programmes, scientists as teachers and teachers as scientists, popular lecture series/demonstration programme at Schools and student apprenticeship programmes among others.

Significance of JIGYASA programme

CSIR is widening and deepening its Scientific Social Responsibility further with the programme. Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), has joined hands with Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) to implement this programme.

The focus of this scheme is on connecting school students and scientists so as to extend student's classroom learning with well-planned research laboratory based learning.

FOR PRELIMS

EK BHARAT SHRESHTH BHARAT PARV

Union Human Resource Development Minister inaugurated Ek Bharat Shreshth Bharat Parv.

Highlights

- EK Bharat Shreshth Bharat Parv is being organized by Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan under Ministry of Human Resource Development.
- This event is primarily to showcase the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshth Bharat'.
- To promote the communication & artistic skills of students through various competitions.
- It also provides a platform to teachers to express their talent in performing and visual arts.

Bharat Air Fibre Services

Recently, Bharat Air Fibre Services was inaugurated at Akola in Maharashtra to get Wireless Internet Connections on demand.

Highlights

- **The Bharat Air Fibre services are introduced by BSNL as part of digital India initiated by the Government of India.**
- It aims of providing **Wireless Connectivity in the range of 20 KMs from the BSNL Locations** and thus customers at remote places also will be benefitted as BSNL comes with cheapest services with support of **Telecom Infrastructure Partners (TIPs).**

- These services are special and different from other operators as BSNL is providing unlimited free voice calling.
- These Bharat Air Fibre services opens new way of fastest Wireless internet connectivity as well Voice services in reasonable cost.
- BSNL provides Bharat Air Fibre connectivity **upto 100 Mbps speed**.

PIB-SEPTEMBER 11th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES- II

Topic– *Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

FIVE STAR VILLAGES SCHEME

Context

India Post launched Five Star Villages Scheme to ensure 100% rural coverage of postal schemes.

Highlights

- **The Department of Posts has launched a scheme called Five Star Villages**, to ensure universal coverage of flagship postal schemes in rural areas of the country.
- **The scheme seeks** to bridge the gaps in public awareness and reach of postal products and services, especially in interior villages.
- **The scheme is being launched on pilot basis in Maharashtra**; based on the experience here, it will be implemented nation-wide.

Key features

All postal products and services will be made available and marketed and publicized at village level, under the Five Star Villages scheme.

Branch offices will function as one-stop shop to cater all post office – related needs of villagers.

The schemes covered under the Five Star scheme include:

- *Savings Bank accounts, Recurrent Deposit Accounts, NSC / KVP certificates,*
- *Sukanya Samridhi Accounts/ PPF Accounts,*
- *Funded Post Office Savings Account linked India Post Payments Bank Accounts,*
- *Postal Life Insurance Policy/Rural Postal Life Insurance Policy and*
- *Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana Account / Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana Account.*

If a village attains universal coverage for four schemes from the above list, then that village gets **four-star status**;

If a village **completes three schemes**, then that **village get three-star status and so on.**

Scheme Implementation Team

- The scheme will be implemented by a **team of five Gramin Dak Sevaks** who will be assigned a village for marketing of all products, savings and insurance schemes of the Department of Posts.
- This team will be headed by the Branch Post Master of the concerned Branch Office.
- Mail overseer will keep personal watch on progress of team on daily basis.

Campaign

The team of Gramin Dak Sevaks will conduct door-to-door awareness campaign on all schemes, covering all eligible villagers.

Significance of such schemes

Postman and Postal Department are a vital part of the ordinary citizen's life. The Postal Department has been playing a major role in the implementation of Government schemes, leveraging the immense strength of its vast network.

India Post has been serving the people in an extraordinary way in the difficult situation which has emerged due to COVID-19, by bringing them medicines and financial assistance.

Mains Question:

"India post play a vital role in connecting people along with provide several key services in remote areas". Discuss.

GENERAL STUDIES- III

Topic– Security challenges and their management in border areas; -linkages of organized crime with terrorism.

PROJECT 17A

Context

The keel laying ceremony of the third ship of the prestigious Project 17A class stealth frigates on 10 Sep 2020 was, recently, held.

What is the Project 17A?

The Project 17-A frigates integrate modern design and stealth features such as radar suppression screens and deck fittings with no radar signature.

- The Project 17-A **involves the construction of seven warships.**
- **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders** will build four vessels, while **Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE)** will construct the remaining ships.
- The project demonstrates the nation's indigenous capabilities to design, build and integrate systems for modern stealth combat ships.
- The Indian Ministry of Defence (MoD) received approval from the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) to develop warships under **the Project 17A in September 2012.**

Uniqueness

- **Construction of P17A ships differ** in the very concept of warship building by way of adoption of the modern technology '**Integrated Construction (IC)**' where the blocks are **pre-outfitted before joining to reduce the build period of warships.**

- When commissioned the platforms will enhance the combat capability of the Indian Naval fleet.

Project 17-A Nilgiri-class design and features

The Project 17-A frigates integrate modern design and stealth features such as **radar suppression screens and deck fittings with no radar signature**.

- The warships are **designed to offer superior stealth performance compared to their predecessors**.
- The latest design concept further **improves survivability, manoeuvrability and sea-keeping characteristics of the vessels**.
- The Nilgiri-class frigate ships will use high levels of automation, **which will reduce the crew complement by approximately 60% and operational costs by 20%**.
- The stern vessel's deck can accommodate two medium-sized **rotorcraft such as HAL Dhruv or Sea King Mk. 42B helicopters**.
- Each frigate will be armed with **32 Barak 8 and eight BrahMos surface-to-air missiles (SAM)**.

BrahMos is a medium-range supersonic cruise missile with a maximum operational range of 500km. The missiles will be fired from vertical launch systems.

Mains Question:

India has a vast sea line and significant presence in Indian Ocean. Write a comparative note of its capabilities with China.

GENERAL STUDIES- III

Topic– Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

‘SAROD-PORTS’

Context

Shipping ministry, has recently launched ‘**SAROD-Ports**’ (**Society for Affordable Redressal of Disputes – Ports**) through virtual ceremony in New Delhi.

What is it?

- SAROD-Ports is **Affordable Dispute Redressal Mechanism** for all kind of disputes of maritime sector.
- It will become the pivotal mechanism of **ummeed (hope), vishwas(trust) and nyaya (justice)** in the Port sector of India.
- SAROD-Ports will resolve the disputes in fair and just manner while saving huge amount of legal expenditure and time.
- SAROD-Ports is established under **Societies Registration Act, 1860**.

Objectives:

- Affordable and timely resolution of disputes in fair manner
- Enrichment of Dispute Resolution Mechanism with the panel of technical experts as arbitrators.

CHROME IAS ACADEMY

- SAROD-Ports consists members from Indian Ports Association (IPA) and Indian Private Ports and Terminals Association (IPTTA).

Key features:

- SAROD-Ports **will advise and assist in settlement of disputes through arbitrations** in the maritime sector, including ports and shipping sector in Major Port Trusts, Non-major Ports, including private ports, jetties, terminals and harbours.
- It will also **cover disputes between granting authority and Licensee/Concessionaire /Contractor** and also disputes between Licensee/Concessionaire and their contractors arising out of and during the course of execution of various contracts.
- 'SAROD-Ports' is similar to provision available in Highway Sector in the form of **SAROD-Roads constituted by NHAI**.

Background:

- The Union Cabinet has approved amendments in the Model Concession Agreement (MCA) .In January, 2018.
- The amendments in the MCA, envisaged constitution SAROD-PORTS as dispute resolution mechanism for PPP Projects in the Major Ports.

FOR PRELIMS

73rd SESSION OF WHO SOUTH EAST ASIA REGION

The 73rd session of WHO South East Asia Region held in Bangkok, Thailand.

- The **previous session was held in New Delhi**.
- South East Asia is one of the six WHO Regions.
- **The Region has 11 Member States** – Bangladesh, Bhutan, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste.

Prof C R Rao

Living legend of statistics Prof C R Rao felicitated on his 100th birthday.

Highlights

- Padma Vibhushan Prof C R Rao was working on the science of data 70 years ago and was much ahead of his times.
- He is not only a scientist but also an institution builder.
- The country and the world will always be indebted to Prof Rao for his pioneering contributions to the field of statistics.

PIB-SEPTEMBER 12th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES- II

Topic- *Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

CLIMATE SMART CITIES ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK (CSCAF) 2.0

Context

Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs (I/C) has launched the Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework (CSCAF) 2.0.

Highlights

- The Government launched **Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework (CSCAF 2.0)** and **Streets for People Challenge**.
- **CSCAF to provide Roadmap** for cities towards Combating Climate Change while planning / implementing their actions including investments.
- CSCAF initiative intends to inculcate **Climate-Sensitive Approach to Urban Planning and Development**.
- Framework with **28 indicators across five categories** developed after review of Global Frameworks/ Assessment Approaches.
- **Streets for people challenge to support** cities to develop unified vision of streets in consultation with stakeholders.
- **Aims to inspire cities to create** walking-friendly/ vibrant streets through quick, innovative/ low-cost measures.
- All participating cities to be encouraged to use **'test-learn-scale'** approach to initiate both, flagship and neighbourhood walking interventions.

Objective

The objective of CSCAF is to provide a clear roadmap for cities towards combating Climate Change while planning and implementing their actions, including investments.

Need for

- In the last decade, an increasing frequency of cyclones, floods, heat waves, water scarcity and drought-like conditions have had adverse impacts on many of our cities.
- Such extreme events and risks cause loss of life as well as impact the economic growth. In this context, CSCAF initiative intends to inculcate a climate-sensitive approach to urban planning and development in India.

Implements

The Climate Centre for Cities under National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) is **supporting MoHUA in implementation of CSCAF**.

The framework has 28 indicators across five categories namely;

- *Energy and Green Buildings,*
- *Urban Planning, Green Cover & Biodiversity,*
- *Mobility and Air Quality,*
- *Water Management and*
- *Waste Management.*

Way forward

- As the lockdowns lift, cities face many challenges in providing safe, affordable, and equitable modes of transport that enable social distancing.
- Limited public transport options, narrow, crowded sidewalks particularly in market places and deterioration of mental health, are key issues that must be addressed on priority.

Mains Question:

The Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework intends to inculcate a climate-sensitive approach to urban planning and development in India. Discuss.

GENERAL STUDIES- II

Topic- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

STREETS FOR PEOPLE CHALLENGE

Context

Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs (I/C) has launched the 'Streets for People Challenge'.

What is it?

The Streets for People Challenge **is the response to the need for making our cities more walkable and pedestrian friendly.**

- The Challenge builds on the advisory issued by MoHUA **for the holistic planning for pedestrian-friendly market spaces, earlier this year.**
- **The Challenge will support cities** across the country to develop a unified vision of streets for people in consultation with stakeholders and citizens.
- Adopting a participatory approach, cities will be guided to launch their own design competitions to gather innovative ideas from professionals for quick, innovative, and low-cost tactical solutions.

Objective

It aims to inspire cities to create walking-friendly and vibrant streets through quick, innovative, and low-cost measures.

Key features:

- All cities participating in the challenge shall be encouraged to use the 'test-learn-scale' approach to initiate both, flagship and neighbourhood walking interventions.
- The interventions can include inter alia **creating pedestrian-friendly streets in high footfall areas, re-imagining under-flyover spaces, re-vitalizing dead neighbourhood spaces, and creating walking links through parks and institutional areas.**

Implementation:

Fit India Mission, under Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, along with the **India program of the Institute for Transport Development and Policy (ITDP)** have partnered with the **Smart Cities Mission** to support the challenge.

Significance

Pedestrianisation of streets for walking and creating public spaces is a crucial step towards mitigating these issues.

Cities around the world, such as Bogota, Berlin, and Milan have responded by transforming streets for walking and cycling, to ensure safe mobility during COVID-19.

GENERAL STUDIES- III

Topic- Economics of animal rearing.

RASHTRIYA GOKUL MISSION

Context

Recently, Prime Minister inaugurated three state of the art facilities, which has been established under Rashtriya Gokul Mission in Bihar.

Highlights

PM recently inaugurated the following under **Rashtriya Gokul Mission**:

- *Semen Station with state of the art facilities in Purnea, Bihar.*
- *IVF lab established at Animal Sciences University, Patna.*
- *Sex sorted semen in artificial insemination by Baroni Milk Union in Begusarai district of Bihar.*

What is the Rashtriya Gokul Mission?

'Rashtriya Gokul Mission' was launched in 2014 to conserve and develop indigenous bovine breeds, under the **National Programme for Bovine Breeding and Dairy Development (NPBBD)**.

Key objectives of the mission

- Development and conservation of indigenous breeds.
- Undertake breed improvement programme for indigenous cattle breeds so as to improve the genetic makeup and increase the stock.
- Enhance milk production and productivity.
- Upgrade nondescript cattle using elite indigenous breeds like Gir, Sahiwal, Rathi, Deoni, Tharparkar, Red Sindhi.
- Distribute disease free high genetic merit bulls for natural service.

Implementation

1. It is being implemented through the **"State Implementing Agency"** Livestock Development Boards, i.e., SIA's (LDB's).
2. **State Gauseva Ayogs** are mandated to sponsor proposals to the SIA's (LDB's) and monitor implementation of the sponsored proposal.
3. **The "Participating Agencies"** like CFSPTI, CCBFs, ICAR, Universities, Colleges, NGO's, Cooperative Societies and Gaushalas with best germplasm.

What are Gokul Grams?

The Rashtriya Gokul Mission envisages the establishment of integrated cattle development centers, '**Gokul Grams**' to **develop indigenous breeds** including up to 40% nondescript breeds.

Gokul Grams will be established in:

- The native breeding tracts and
- Near metropolitan cities for housing the urban cattle.

Objectives:

- *Promote indigenous cattle rearing and conservation in a scientific manner.*
- *Propagate high genetic merit bulls of indigenous breeds.*
- *Optimize modern Farm Management practices and promote Common Resource Management.*
- *Utilize animal waste in an economical way i.e. Cow Dung, Cow Urine.*

Key features of Gokul Grams

- **They will be self-sustaining and will generate economic resources** from sale of **A2 milk** organic manure, vermi-composting, urine distillates, and production of electricity from bio gas for in house consumption and sale of animal products.
- They will also function as **state of the art in situ training centre for Farmers, Breeders and MAITRI's**.
- Gokul Grams act as **Centres for development of Indigenous Breeds and a dependable source for supply of high genetic breeding stock** to the farmers in the breeding tract.
- The Gokul Gram will maintain **milch and unproductive animals in the ratio of 60:40** and will have **the capacity to maintain about 1000 animals**.
- Nutritional requirements of the animals will be provided in the Gokul Gram through in house fodder production.

Mains Question:

Despite having the significant milk production in the country, the dairy industry is not up to mark. How the 'Rashtriya Gokul Mission' will help dairy industry to grow at international level as well as domestic? Discuss.

FOR PRELIMS

PUNNAPARA-VAYALAR REVOLT

The Indian Council for Historical Research (ICHR) in a report has suggested dropping the Communist martyrs of Punnapara-Vayalar, Karivelloor and Kavumbayi agitations from the list of martyrs of India's Independence struggle.

About Punnapara-Vayalar revolt:

- It was an organized working class uprising in the Princely State of Travancore, British India against the Prime Minister, C. P. Ramaswami Iyer and the state.
- The objectives of the revolt were to overthrow the exploitative diwan of Travancore and to liberate the working class from unjust taxation and exploitation of the establishment.

Shri Viswanatha Satyanarayana

125th birth anniversary celebrations of the Shri Viswanatha Satyanarayana organized by Viswanatha Sahitya Peetham.

Who was Viswanatha Satyanarayana?

- Viswanatha Satyanarayana was the **first writer to impart a true Teluguness to the Ramayana**.
- **Ramayana Kalpavruksham**, the seminal work of Shri Viswanatha had fetched him the prestigious Jnanpith Award.
- Through his works, he had highlighted the importance of imparting learning in the mother tongue, preserving culture and protecting the nature.

PIB-SEPTEMBER 14th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES- II

Topic- *Achievements of Indians in Science & Technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.*

METHANE HYDRATE DEPOSITS IN KRISHNA-GODAVARI (KG) BASIN

Context

Krishna-Godavari (KG) basin have an excellent source of fuel methane: Study

Highlights

- Methane hydrate deposits in this basin are a rich source that will ensure **adequate supplies of methane, a natural gas**.
- This study using **molecular and culturing techniques** revealed maximum methanogenic diversity in the KG basin.
- It confirms the extreme source of biogenic methane in KG **basin comparison to the Andaman and Mahanadi basins**.

What is Methane?

- **Methane (CH₄)** is a **colorless, odorless, and highly flammable** gas composed of one carbon atom and four hydrogen atoms.
- It can be **produced naturally and synthetically**, and when burned in the presence of oxygen, it produces carbon dioxide and water vapor.
- Methane is the **primary component of natural gas and is used to produce heat and electricity around the world**.
- **Methane is a clean and economical fuel**.
- Methane is also used in chemical reactions to produce other important gases like hydrogen and carbon monoxide and carbon black, a chemical compound that's found in some types of rubber used in car tires.

What is Methane Hydrate?

- Methane hydrate is a **crystalline solid that consists of a methane molecule surrounded by a cage of interlocking water molecules.**
- **Methane hydrate is an “ice” that only occurs naturally in subsurface deposits** where temperature and pressure conditions are favorable for its formation.
- **It is also called by the names** of methane clathrate, hydromethane, methane ice, fire ice, natural gas hydrate, and gas hydrate.
- **Most methane hydrate deposits also contain small amounts of other hydrocarbon hydrates.** These include propane hydrate and ethane hydrate.

Challenges in drilling Methane Hydrate

- **If the ice is removed from this temperature/pressure environment, it becomes unstable.** For this reason methane hydrate deposits are difficult to study.
- They cannot be drilled and cored for study like other subsurface materials because as they are brought to the surface, the pressure is reduced and the temperature rises.
- This causes the ice to melt and the methane to escape.

Where Are the Methane Hydrate Deposits?

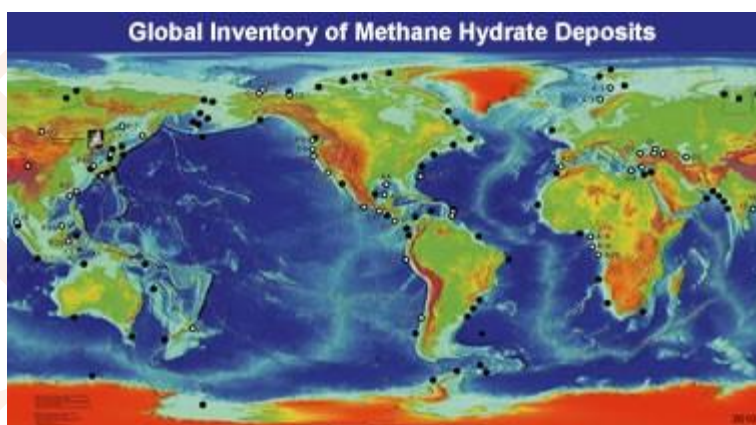
Four Earth environments have the temperature and pressure conditions suitable for the formation and stability of methane hydrate.

These are:

- *sediment and sedimentary rock units below Arctic permafrost;*
- *sedimentary deposits along continental margins;*
- *deep-water sediments of inland lakes and seas; and,*
- *Under Antarctic ice.*

With the exception of the Antarctic deposits, methane hydrate accumulations are not very deep below Earth's surface.

In most situations the methane hydrate is within a few hundred meters of the sediment surface.



Methane Hydrate deposits in India

It is found in Andaman basin, Mahanadi basins and Krishna-Godavari (KG) basin in India.

- It is
- the methane hydrates in KG Basin is twice that of all fossil fuel reserves available worldwide.

Potential and Significance

Although methane hydrate accumulations are located in difficult environments and present numerous technical challenges.

- They are widely distributed and the largest source of hydrocarbons on Earth.
- A variety of technologies could be developed to produce them using pressure reduction, ion exchange, and other processes that take advantage of their unique chemical and physical properties.
- Methane hydrate will likely play an important role in our future energy mix.

Mains Question:

Methane is the primary component of natural gas and it will likely play an important role in our future energy mix. Discuss.

GENERAL STUDIES- II

Topic- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.

EXPORT PREPAREDNESS INDEX (EPI) 2020

Context

NITI Aayog releases report on Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2020.

About it

- **NITI Aayog in partnership with the Institute of Competitiveness** released the Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2020.
- This is the first report to examine export preparedness and performance of Indian states.
- EPI intends to identify **challenges and opportunities; enhance the effectiveness of government policies; and encourage a facilitative regulatory framework.**

What is Export Preparedness Index?

The Export Preparedness Index is **a data-driven effort to identify the core areas crucial for export promotion at the sub-national level.**

- Under this **all the states and union territories have been assessed** on crucial parameters that are critical for any typical economic unit to achieve sustainable export growth.
- The Index **would be a helpful guide for the state governments** to benchmark regional performance with respect to export promotion and thus deliver key policy insights on how to improve and enhance the same.

The structure of EPI:

The structure of the EPI includes 4 pillars, namely:

1. Policy;
2. Business Ecosystem;
3. Export Ecosystem;
4. Export Performance

It also have 11 sub-pillars. These are:

Export Promotion Policy; Institutional Framework; Business Environment; Infrastructure; Transport Connectivity; Access to Finance; Export Infrastructure; Trade Support; R&D Infrastructure; Export Diversification; and Growth Orientation.

Performances of States

The most Indian states performed well on average across the sub-pillars of Exports Diversification, Transport Connectivity, and Infrastructure.

The **average score of Indian states in these three sub-pillars was above 50%.**

Overall, most of the **Coastal States are the best performers.**

- **Gujarat, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu occupy the top three ranks**, respectively.
- Six of eight coastal states feature in the top ten rankings, indicating the presence of strong enabling and facilitating factors to promote exports.
- **In the landlocked states**, Rajasthan has performed the best, followed by Telangana and Haryana.
- **Among the Himalayan states**, Uttarakhand is the highest, followed by Tripura and Himachal Pradesh.
- **Across the Union Territories**, Delhi has performed the best, followed by Goa and Chandigarh.

Challenges

*Based on the findings of the report, export promotion in India faces **three fundamental challenges**:*

- Intra- and inter-regional disparities in export infrastructure;
- Poor trade support and growth orientation among states; and
- Poor R&D infrastructure to promote complex and unique exports.

Need to address these challenges

- A joint development of export infrastructure;
- strengthening industry-academia linkages; and
- Creating state-level engagements for economic diplomacy.

These strategies could be supported by revamped designs and standards for local products and by harnessing the innovating tendencies to provide new use cases for such products, with adequate support from the Centre.

Significance:

- The Indian economy holds immense potential to become a strong exporter on the world stage.
- To realize this potential, it is crucial that India turns to its states and union territories and makes them active participants in the country's export efforts.
- In an attempt to realize this vision, the Export Preparedness Index 2020 evaluates states' potentials and capacities.

Mains Question:

Most of the Coastal States are the best performers in the Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2020. Why? Discuss.

GENERAL STUDIES- II

Topic- *Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.*

COLLABCAD

Context

Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog & National Informatics Centre (NIC) jointly launches CollabCAD in ATL schools.

What is CollabCAD?

- **CollabCAD is a collaborative network, computer enabled software system, providing a total engineering solution from 2D drafting & detailing to 3D product design.**
- **The aim of this initiative** is to provide a great platform to students of **Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs)** across country to create and modify 3d designs with free flow of creativity and imagination.
- This software would also enable students to create data across the network and concurrently access the same design data for storage and visualization.

What are Atal Tinkering Laboratories (ATL)?

- Atal Tinkering Laboratories (ATLs) are the **laboratories establishing in the schools across the India under the Atal Innovation Mission.**
- The **Atal Tinkering Lab is based on the philosophy to identify and nurture innovation in young students across the country.**
- **It aims to** 'Cultivate one Million children in India as Neoteric Innovators'.

Key Features of ATL

- ATL is a work space where young minds can give shape to their ideas through hands on do-it-yourself mode; and learn innovation skills.
- Young children will get a chance to work with tools and equipment **to understand the concepts of STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math).
- ATL would contain **educational and learning 'do it yourself' kits and equipment** on – science, electronics, robotics, open source microcontroller boards, sensors and 3D printers and computers.

Funds: AIM will provide grant-in-aid that includes a one-time establishment cost of Rs. 10 lakh and operational expenses of Rs. 10 lakh for a maximum period of 5 years to each ATL.

Tinker from Home campaign

- ATL program has launched a 'Tinker from Home' campaign.
- It aims to ensure that the children across the county have access to useful easy-to-learn online resources to keep themselves fruitfully occupied.
- The objective of the initiative is to harness the creativity and innovativeness of children by encouraging learning through self-initiation.

Mains Question:

What are Atal Tinkering Laboratories (ATL)? State the purpose of ATL.

CHROME IAS ACADEMY

FOR PRELIMS

'HINDI DIWAS -2020'

- Hindi Diwas is celebrated on 14th September each year.
- It marks the historic occasion of adoption of Hindi as an official language of the Union of India on 14th September, 1949.
- **Article 351 of the Constitution** deals with the directive to promote the use of Hindi for the official purposes of the Union.
- Hence the **Department of Official Language was set up in 1975 as an independent Department of the Ministry of Home Affairs** to accelerate the progressive use of Hindi for the official purposes of the Union.

PIB- SEPTEMBER 15th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES-I

Topic – *Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present- significant events, personalities, issues.*

SRI GURU NANAK DEV JI

Context

A Sangeet Sandhya programme as a part of the 550th Birth Anniversary celebrations of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. It was organized by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture.

550th Birth Anniversary celebrations

- Guru Nanak Jayanti is a sacred festival of the Sikh community and is widely celebrated to commemorate the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji.
- In the 2019, it falls on 12 November and is celebrated as the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. The celebration will continue for a yearlong period.

About Guru Nanak Dev

- Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1539) was born in a village, Talwandi Rai Bhoi, near Lahore (it was renamed later as Nankana Sahib).
- His parents name was Mehta Kalu Ji and Lata Tripta Ji.
- He initiated **inter-faith dialogue in the 16th century** and had conversations with most of the religious denominations of his times.
- His **written compositions were included in the Adi Granth compiled by the fifth Sikh Guru Arjan Dev (1563-1606).**
- It is known as **Guru Granth Sahib** after the additions made by the 10th guru Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708).

Guru Nanak's Teachings: Peace and Harmony for all

- Guru Nanak was a **great champion of equality**. He aimed at creating a casteless society in which there is no hierarchy.

- For him, the differences and multiple identities based on caste, creed, religion and language were irrelevant.
- **He had said**, “Preposterous is caste, vain the distinction of birth. The Lord gives shelter to all beings”.
- **Referring to women, the Guru Nanak says**: “How can they be inferior when they give birth to men? Women as well as men share in the grace of God and are equally responsible for their actions to Him.”
- **The spirit of living together and harmoniously working together** is a consistent thread of thought that runs through Guru Nanak hymns.
- He founded three pillars of Sikhism namely **Naam Japna, Kirat Karni, and Vand Chakna**.
- He consciously went **on long journeys (called uddasian) to far off places along with his two companions Bhai Bala, a Hindu, and Bhai Mardana, a Muslim**, to hold dialogues with many saints and Sufis even, some charlatans who claimed some spiritual powers and had some social following.

Conclusion

Guru Nanak Dev ji, saint-composer and amongst the great spiritual leaders, his ideas, thoughts and teachings assume far greater relevance today than ever before. They can promote peace, equality and prosperity across the globe.

Mains Question:

Discuss the values and teaching of Guru Nanak and elaborate upon their relevance in the context of present social changes.

GENERAL STUDIES-II

Topic – Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

STEPS TAKEN TO ENSURE QUALITY EDUCATION FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS

Context

Union Minister for Human Resource Development, told the Parliament about the measures taken by the Government prevent the exclusion of vulnerable groups from remote learning.

The key measures are:

Government is committed to ensure equal access to online/digital education, even when done remotely.

SWAYAM: Quality Online courses are provided through **SWAYAM** which is an indigenously developed **MOOCs (Massive Open Online Course) platform**.

SWAYAM-Prabha: Since everyone does not have access to internet, under one of the flagship Initiatives, **SWAYAM-Prabha**, Ministry of Education is providing **34 educational TV channels covering educational contents for Schools and Higher Educational Institutions**.

CHROME IAS ACADEMY

- Curriculum-based contents are telecast every day as per pre-defined schedule which can be accessed by students as per their convenience.

PM eVIDYA: A comprehensive initiative called PM eVIDYA has been initiated which unifies all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education to enable multi-mode access to education.

DIKSHA: DIKSHA the **nation's digital infrastructure for providing quality e-content** for school education in states/UTs: and QR coded Energized Textbooks for all **grades (one nation, one digital platform)**.

- Study materials have been provided on an experimental basis for 12 channels for classes 1 to 12 and actions are expedited to run these channels in a full-fledged manner.

ShikshaVani: Extensive use of Radio, **Community radio and CBSE Podcast- ShikshaVani.**

DAISY: Special e-content for visually and hearing impaired developed on **Digitally Accessible Information System (DAISY)** and in sign language on NIOS website/ YouTube.

The special initiative includes-

- **Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) ranked in top 100 NIRF or NAAC score of 3.26 can offer online programme without prior approval of UGC.**
- Institutions with NAAC score of 3.01 to 3.25 can offer online programme with prior approval of UGC.
- **For conventional courses,** the online content has been increased from up to 20% to 40% in regular degree programmes.

Mains Question:

During the pandemic the education for vulnerable groups has been affected severely.

Discuss. What are the steps taken by Government to prevent the exclusion of vulnerable groups from remote learning?

GENERAL STUDIES-II

Topic- Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life Achievements of Indians in science & technology.

ESTABLISHMENT OF BIOFUEL STATIONS

Context

The procurement of ethanol under the **ethanol blended petrol (EBP) programme** has increased from 38 crore litres to during **ethanol supply year (ESY) 2013-14 to almost five times to 188.6 crore litres during ESY 2018-19.**

Highlights

- The Government has notified the **National Policy on Biofuels-2018** on 4th June 2018.
- This policy has laid out indicative **targets of achieving 20% blending of ethanol in petrol and 5% blending of biodiesel in diesel in the whole country by 2030.**

The important measures taken to increase the production of ethanol for blending include:

- Encouraging production of ethanol from sugarcane juice and sugar/ sugar syrup.
- Fixing remunerative ex-mill price of ethanol from various feed stocks.
- Extending interest subvention to distilleries.

- Amendment to Industries (Development & Regulation) Act, 1951, for free movement of denatured ethanol for Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme.
- Reduction in Goods & Service Tax on ethanol meant for EBP Programme from 18% to 5%.
- Extension of EBP Programme to whole of India except island UTs of Andaman Nicobar and Lakshadweep with effect from 01.04.2019.
- Enhancing ethanol storage at Oil Marketing Companies locations.
- Formulating an “Ethanol Procurement Policy on a long-term basis under Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme”.

What is the Biofuels?

- Biofuels are environment friendly fuels and their utilization would address global concerns about containment of carbon emissions. These are derived from renewable bio-mass resources.
- ***Any hydrocarbon fuel that is produced from an organic matter (living or dead material) in a short period of time (days, weeks, or even months) is considered a biofuel.***

The three states of Biofuels in nature are:

- **Solid:** Wood, dried plant material, and manure
- **Liquid:** Bioethanol and Biodiesel
- **Gaseous:** Biogas

Biofuel categories in India

- **Bioethanol :** Ethanol produced from biomass such as **sugar containing materials**, like sugarcane, sugar beet, sweet sorghum etc.;

It also produces from **starch containing materials** such as corn, cassava, rotten potatoes, algae etc.; and,

Cellulosic materials such as bagasse, wood waste, agricultural and forestry residues or other renewable resources like industrial waste;

- **Biodiesel:** a methyl or ethyl ester of fatty acids produced from non-edible vegetable oils, acid oil, used cooking oil or animal fat and bio-oil;
- **Drop-in fuels:** Any liquid fuel produced from Biomass, agri-residues, wastes such as Municipal Solid Wastes (MSW), Plastic wastes, Industrial wastes etc., which meets the Indian standards for MS, HSD and Jet fuel, in pure or blended form, for its subsequent utilization in vehicles without any modifications in the engine systems and can utilize existing petroleum distribution system.
- **Bio-CNG:** Purified form of bio-Gas whose composition & energy potential is similar to that of fossil based natural gas and is produced from agricultural residues, animal dung, food waste, MSW and Sewage water.

Significance of Biofuels

Biofuels in India are of strategic importance as it augers well with the ongoing initiatives of the Government such as Make in India, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Skill Development and offers great opportunity to integrate with the ambitious targets of doubling of Farmers Income, Import Reduction, Employment Generation, Waste to Wealth Creation.

Mains question:

What is the importance of biofuels for India? The national policy on biofuels will help India unlock its biofuel potential. Critically examine.

GENERAL STUDIES-III

Topic- *Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.*

FIRE AT BAGHJAN OILFIELD IN TINSUKIA, ASSAM

Context

The raging oil well fire in Assam which continued for more than three months has been primarily controlled, and it would take a few more weeks to control the gas leakage and fire fully.

Highlights

- There has been **impact on the nearby areas** because of the heat and noise generated from the blowout well of Baghjan field.
- **Approximately 3000 affected families were evacuated to rehabilitation camps** set up by the district Administration.
- **M/s TERI** has been engaged for Ambient Air Quality (AAQ) monitoring and Bioremediation, **CSIR North East Institute of Science and Technology (NEIST)** has been engaged for Seismological Study and **IIT, Guwahati** has been engaged for heat impact through Thermal Imaging.

What was Assam gas blowout?

- On May 27, a blowout — or a sudden, uncontrolled release of gas/oil occurred at **Baghjan well in Tinsukia district of Assam**.
- After this natural gas has been continuously flowing out of a gas well in Assam following
- The Baghjan well is a purely gas-producing well in Tinsukia district, and is at an aerial distance of 900 metres from the Dibru-Saikhowa National Park.
- Oil India Limited (OIL) is drilling at here since 2006.

Cause of Blowouts?

- Lack of attention, poor workmanship, bad maintenance, old age, sabotage and morpho-tectonic factors can be the possible reasons behind blowouts.
- The pressure balance in a well may be disturbed leading to 'kicks' or changes in pressure.
- If these are not controlled in time, the 'kicks' can turn into a sudden blowout.

Impact

- Villagers have been evacuated to relief camps.
- There are reports of deaths of a river dolphin, and a variety of fish.
- Locals have complained of symptoms such as burning of eyes, headache etc.
- The gas is flowing with the wind in the radius of up to 5 km and condensate is falling on bamboo, tea gardens, banana trees, betel nut trees among others.
- The Bhagjan well is near to the Eco Sensitive Zone of the park, **Dibru-Saikhowa National Park and Maguri-Motapung wetland**.

- The gas leak has also caused deaths of Gangetic dolphins, and a variety of fish.

Dibru-Saikhowa National Park

- Dibru-Saikhowa National Park is situated in the south bank of the river Brahmaputra in Assam.
- ***It is one of the 19 biodiversity hotspots in the world.***
- Dibru-Saikhowa comprises semi-evergreen forests, deciduous forests, littoral and swamp forests and patches of wet evergreen forests.
- It is the ***largest swamp forest in north-eastern India.***
- It is an identified ***Important Bird Area (IBA)*** notified by the Bombay Natural History Society.
- The national park houses some of the rare and endangered species of flora and fauna – around 36 species of mammals and nearly 400 species of birds.

Maguri-Motapung Wetland

- ***It is part of the Dibru-Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve.***
- The wetland is named after “Magur”, the local word for the catfish ‘Clarius batrachus’.
- It is an Important Bird Area notified by the Bombay Natural History Society.

Natural Gas

- Natural gas is the cleanest fossil fuels among the available fossil fuels.
- ***It is a mix of propane, methane, propylene and other gases.***
- It is used as a feedstock in the manufacture of fertilizers, plastics and other commercially important organic chemicals and in cooking.
- It is also used as a fuel for electricity generation, heating purpose in industrial and commercial units.

FOR PRELIMS

HUNAR HAAT

Highlights

- ‘Hunar Haat’, being organised by ***Union Minority Affairs Ministry***, to restart from October 2020
- The next “Hunar Haat” will be **organised at Prayagraj from 9 to 18 October, 2020**
- **The theme — “Local to Global”** and focus on indigenous exquisite Indian toys

What is it?

Hunar Haat is an exhibition of handicrafts and traditional products made by artisans from the Minority communities.

- It is organised by Ministry of Minority Affairs.
- Hunar Haats are being organized **USTTAD (Upgrading the Skills & Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development)** scheme.
- The USTTAD scheme aims at preserving & promoting the rich heritage of the traditional arts & crafts of the Minority communities.

GENERAL STUDIES-I

Topic- *Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present- significant events, personalities, issues.*

M VISHWESHVARAYA AND ENGINEERS' DAY

Context

15 September, In India, is observed as **Engineer's Day** as a tribute to **Sir Mokshagundam Vishweshvaraya**.

About M. Vishweshvaraya

The birth anniversary of Sir Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya, one of India's finest engineers, is celebrated as Engineer's Day in India every year.

- Popularly known as **Sir MV, Visvesvaraya** was an **Indian civil engineer, a reputed statesman, and the 19th Diwan of Mysore** from 1912 to 1919.
- He was conferred India's highest honour, the **Bharat Ratna**, in 1955 and **Knighted** as a **Knight Commander of the British Indian Empire (KCIE)** by King George V.

Major Contributions

- Among some of his contributions include **the block system of irrigation in the Deccan canals in 1899**, irrigation system with water floodgates at the Khadakvasla reservoir.
- The irrigation system was later installed at **Gwalior's Tigra Dam and Mysuru's Krishnaraja Sagara (KRS) dam**, the latter of which created **one of the largest reservoirs in Asia at the time**.
- He was also called the "**precursor of economic planning in India**", according to the Institution of Engineers India (IEI).
- His books, "**Reconstructing India**" and "**Planned Economy of India**" were published in 1920 and 1934, respectively.
- He took voluntary retirement from state service in 1918, **over his disagreement with the proposal to set aside state jobs for the "non-brahmin" community**.

Engineers' Day

- While '**World Engineering Day for a Sustainable World**' is observed on **March 4** in other **countries**, it is observed on **September 15** in India as a tribute to Sir Mokshagundam Vishweshvaraya.
- The day is celebrated to recognise and honour the efforts of engineers whose innovations and ideas have made the lives of humans easier.

GENERAL STUDIES-II

Topic- *Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

HARYANA ORBITAL RAIL CORRIDOR PROJECT

Context

Cabinet approves Haryana Orbital Rail Corridor Project from Palwal to Sonipat via Sohna-Manesar- Kharkhauda.

Highlights

- This Rail Line **will start from Palwal and end at existing Harsana Kalan station (On Delhi-Ambala section)**. Total length of the project is about 121.7 km.
- The project will be implemented by Haryana Rail Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (HRIDC), a Joint Venture company set up by Ministry of Railways with Government of Haryana.

Benefits

The districts of Palwal, Nuh, Gurugram, Jhajjar and Sonipat districts of Haryana will be benefitted through this rail line.

- This **will facilitate diversion of traffic not meant for Delhi thus decongesting NCR**.
- It will **help in developing multimodal logistics hubs in Haryana State sub-region of NCR**.
- It will provide **high-speed seamless connectivity of this region to Dedicated Freight Corridor network**.
- Thus, resulting in **reduction of cost and time of transportation for EXIM traffic from NCR to ports of India**, making exports of goods more competitive.
- Approximately **20,000 passengers each day will be travelling through this line and 50 Million Tonnes goods traffic would also be carried out every year**.

Need and Significance

- The **Orbital Rail Corridor** from Palwal to Sonipat by passing Delhi is a **crucial infrastructure project for sustainable development of the National Capital Region** and to decongest existing Indian Railway network in Delhi area.
- The project will have connectivity with all the existing Railway routes originating from Delhi and passing through Haryana State as well as with the Dedicated Freight Corridor network.

GENERAL STUDIES-II

Topic- *Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.*

NATIONAL FISHERIES POLICY, 2020

Context

Government has decided for introducing a comprehensive and integrated 'National Fisheries Policy, 2020'.

Highlights

- National Fisheries Policy, 2020' will **integrate the National Policy on Marine Fisheries, 2017 (NPMF), the Draft National Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy (NIFAP) and the Draft National Mariculture Policy (NMP) along with the elements of Post Harvest**.

- Government of India has announced a new dedicated scheme for fisheries sector namely **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)** under Atmanirbhar Bharat COVID-19 Relief Package.

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)

PMMSY is a scheme to bring about Blue Revolution through sustainable and responsible development of fisheries sector.

The PMMSY will be implemented as an umbrella scheme with two separate Components, namely

- *Central Sector Scheme (CS) and*
- *Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS).*

The Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) Component is further segregated into Non-beneficiary oriented and Beneficiary orientated subcomponents/activities under the following three broad heads:

1. *Enhancement of Production and Productivity*
2. *Infrastructure and Post-Harvest Management*
3. *Fisheries Management and Regulatory Framework*

The Scheme will be implemented during a period of 5 years from FY 2020-21 to FY 2024-25.

Benefits

- Address the critical gaps in the fisheries sector and realize its potential.
- Augmenting fish production and productivity at a sustained average annual growth rate of about 9% to achieve a target of 22 million metric tons by 2024-25 through sustainable and responsible fishing practices.
- Improving availability of certified quality fish seed and feed, traceability in fish and including effective aquatic health management.
- Creation of critical infrastructure including modernisation and strengthening of value chain.
- Doubling of fishers, fish farmers and fish workers incomes by 2024.
- Social, physical and economic security for fishers and fish workers.

The difference between a Centrally Sponsored Scheme and Central Sector Scheme

In India's developmental plan exercise we have two types of schemes viz; central sector and centrally sponsored scheme.

Central Sector Schemes

These are 100% funded by the Union government and implemented by the Central Government machinery.

- ***Central sector schemes are mainly formulated on subjects from the Union List.***
- In addition, the Central Ministries also implement some schemes directly in States/UTs which are called Central Sector Schemes but resources under these Schemes are not generally transferred to States.

Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS)

These are a certain percentage of the funding is borne by the States in the ratio of 50:50, 70:30, 75:25 or 90:10.

- The implementation is by the State Governments.
- **Centrally Sponsored Schemes are formulated in subjects from the State List** to encourage States to prioritise in areas that require more attention.
- Funds are routed either through consolidated fund of States and or are transferred directly to State/ District Level Autonomous Bodies/Implementing Agencies.

GENERAL STUDIES-II

Topic- *Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

WHAT IS THE 'BLUE REVOLUTION'?

The concept of rapid increase in the production of fish and marine product through package programme is called as blue revolution.

- It has brought improvement in aquaculture by adopting new techniques of fish breeding, fish rearing, fish marketing, and fish export.
- The Blue Revolution, with its multi-dimensional activities, focuses mainly on increasing fisheries production and productivity from aquaculture and fisheries resources, both inland and marine.

Potential for Blue Revolution in India

Blue Revolution was launched in India during the seventh Five-year plan (1985-1990) when the Central Government sponsored the Fish Farmers Development Agency (FFDA).

- **India uses only about 40% of the available ponds, tanks and other water bodies for freshwater aquaculture and 15% of total potential of brackish water resources.**
- Fisheries are India's single largest agricultural export with a growth rate of 6-10% in the last five years.
- Currently, the USA is the largest market for Indian seafood products with a share of 26.46% in terms of India's exports of marine products.
- The fisheries and aquaculture production contribute around 1% to India's GDP and over 5% to the agricultural GDP.

Blue Revolution 2.0

- The focus of the Blue Revolution 2.0 is on development and management of fisheries.
- This covers inland fisheries, aquaculture, and marine fisheries including deep sea fishing, mariculture and all activities undertaken by the National Fisheries Development Board.

Objectives

To increase the overall fish production in a responsible and sustainable manner for economic prosperity

- To modernize the fisheries with special focus on new technologies
- Doubling the income of fishers and fish farmers with special focus on increasing productivity and better post-harvest marketing infrastructure.
- Tripling export earnings by 2020 with focus on benefits flow to fishers and fish farmers.
- Enhancing food and nutritional security of the country.

National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB)

- The NFDB was established in 2006 as an autonomous organization under the administrative control of the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- It aims to enhance fish production and productivity in the country and to coordinate fishery development in an integrated and holistic manner.
- Now, the Board works under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.

FOR PRELIMS

INDIAN AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE IN ASSAM

The Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), commonly known as the Pusa Institute, is India's national Institute for agricultural research, education and extension.

- **Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) in Dhemaji district of Assam** is the third IARI established in the country.
- It aims to promote agri-education and realise second green revolution in the north eastern region.
- **The first IARI was set up in the national capital way back in 1967.** The work to set up an IARI in Ranchi (Jharkhand) has started.
- IARI- Assam will be an off-campus of IARI, New Delhi, and undertake integrated multi-disciplinary research through Schools of Crop Sciences, Natural Resource Management, and Animal Sciences and Fisheries.

National Research Centre on Camels

For setting up of a branch in Gujarat of National Research Centre on Camel (NRCC), Bikaner, an appropriate size of land and other resources on nominal cost/lease basis is desired from the Government of Gujarat.

- **National Research Centre on Camel** was established in 1984 by the Central Government under Indian Council of Agricultural Research.
- It aims to promote research and development on camels.
- It is located about 8 km from Bikaner city in the state of Rajasthan in India.

Development Council for Footwear and Leather Industry

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has issued a notification, constituting Development Council for Footwear & Leather Industry (DCFLI).

Highlights

The Development Council for Footwear and Leather Industry has been established for the formulation and implementation of promotional and developmental measures for the growth of labour intensive footwear and leather sectors in India.

- Developmental Council is envisaged to play a very proactive role in preparing a futuristic vision for development, designing and manufacturing of high quality world-class footwear and leather products in India.
- **RK Gupta will chair DCFLI for two years.** 24 other members have also been nominated.

GENERAL STUDIES- II

Topic– Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

INSTITUTE OF TEACHING AND RESEARCH IN AYURVEDA BILL 2020 TODAY

Context

Parliament passed the Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda Bill 2020.

Highlights

- The Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda Bill 2020 has been passed by Rajya Sabha on 16 September. The Bill was earlier passed in Lok Sabha on 19th March, 2020.
- This paves the way to establish a state-of-the-art Ayurvedic institution called the **Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda (ITRA) at Jamnagar, Gujarat**.
- ITRA has been conferred the status of **Institution of National Importance (INI)**.

About ITRA

The ITRA is sought to be established by **conglomerating the presently existing Ayurveda institutes at Gujarat Ayurved University campus Jamnagar**.

This is a cluster of highly reputed institutions, namely,

- Institute for Post Graduate Teaching and Research in Ayurveda,
- Shree GulabKunverba Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya, and
- Institute of Ayurvedic Pharmaceutical sciences,
- MaharshiPatanjali Institute for Yoga Naturopathy Education & Research (to be made part of the Department of Swasthvritta of the proposed ITRA).

Benefits

- It is expected that the enactment of the proposal will further provide autonomy to the institute to develop patterns of teaching in undergraduate and postgraduate education in Ayurveda and Pharmacy.
- It is expected to provide the highest level of training of personnel in all important branches of Ayurveda including Pharmacy, and to take up in-depth study and research in the field of Ayurveda.

Significance

- **ITRA will be the first institution with INI status in the AYUSH Sector**, and this will enable the institution to be independent and innovative in the matter deciding course content and pedagogy.
- The decision comes at a time when global interest in health solutions based on traditional wisdom is at an unprecedentedly high level and ITRA is poised to take Ayurveda education to new vistas.

Mains Question:

Write a note on the Institution of National Importance (INI).

GENERAL STUDIES- II

Topic– Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

GLOBAL INITIATIVE TO REDUCE LAND DEGRADATION AND CORAL REEF PROGRAM

Context

Global Initiative to reduce Land Degradation and Coral Reef program launched at G20 Environment Ministers Meet.

Highlights

- The **Environment Ministerial Meeting (EMM) of the G20 countries** took place under the **Presidency of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**.
- India has taken significant steps to protect environment and forest and wildlife as well as combating pollution and climate change.

What is the Global Initiative to reduce Land Degradation and Coral Reef program?

The Global Initiative on Reducing Land Degradation **aims to strengthen the implementation of existing frameworks to prevent, halt, and reverse land degradation within G20 member states and globally**, taking into account possible implications on the achievement of other SDGs and adhering to the principle of doing no harm.

What is the Global Coral Reef R&D Accelerator Platform?

The Global Coral Reef R&D Accelerator Platform **is an innovative action-oriented initiative aimed at creating a global research and development (R&D) program** to advance research, innovation and capacity building in all facets of coral reef conservation, restoration, and adaptation, and strengthen ongoing efforts and commitments made to enhance coral reefs conservation and their further degradation.

What is the G20?

The **Group of Twenty, or the G20**, is the **premier forum for international economic cooperation**.

- The G20 brings together the leaders of both developed and developing countries from every continent.
- **Collectively, G20 members represent around 80% of the world's economic output, two-thirds of global population and three-quarters of international trade.**
- Throughout the year, representatives from G20 countries gather to discuss financial and socioeconomic issues.
- The G20 Summit is formally known as the **“Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy”**.

What is the history of the G20?

CHROME IAS ACADEMY

Originated in 1999 at the level of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, the G20 gathered for high-level discussions on macro-financial issues.

- In the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis, the G20 was elevated to include the leaders of member countries.
- **The first G20 Leaders' Summit took place in Washington D.C. in November 2008.**
- Consequently, the G20 agenda expanded beyond macro-financial issues, to include socio-economic and development issues.

Presidency

The group has no permanent staff of its own, so **every year in December, a G20 country from a rotating region takes on the presidency.**

- That country is then responsible for organising the next summit, as well as smaller meetings for the coming year.
- They can also choose to invite non-member countries along as guests.
- The first G20 meeting took place in Berlin in 1999, after a financial crisis in East Asia affected many countries around the world.

Full membership of the G20

Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union.

Mains Question:

Do you think the recent G20 summits have turned into talking shops rather than getting down to brass tacks? Critically analyse.

GENERAL STUDIES- II

Topic– *Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes and betterment of these vulnerable sections.*

SCHEME FOR AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING COMPLEXES (ARHCS)

About AHRCs

Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has initiated an Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHCs) for urban migrants/poor **as a sub-scheme under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban).**

It aims for providing accommodation at affordable rent to urban migrants/ poor has been launched on 31 July 2020 after approval of the Union Cabinet.

What is the need?

- COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in massive **reverse migration of workers/ urban poor in the country** who come from rural areas or small towns for seeking better employment opportunities in urban areas.

CHROME IAS ACADEMY

- Usually, these migrants live in slums, informal/ unauthorized colonies or peri-urban areas to save rental charges.
- They spend lot of time on roads by walking/ cycling to workplaces, risking their lives to cut on the expenses.
- Govt has decided to provide them Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (AHRCs).

How AHRCs will be developed?

Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (AHRCs) for urban migrants / poor will be developed, **as a sub-scheme under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY – U) by:**

Existing vacant government funded housing complexes: will be converted in ARHCs through Concession Agreements for 25 years.

- Concessionaire will make the complexes livable by repair/retrofit and maintenance of rooms and filling up infrastructure gaps like water, sewer/ septage, sanitation, road etc.
- **Complexes will revert to ULB after 25 years** to restart next cycle like earlier or run on their own.

Special incentives: like use permission, concessional loan at priority sector lending rate, tax reliefs at par with affordable housing etc. **will be offered to private/ public entities to develop ARHCs** on their own available vacant land for 25 years.

Who will be beneficiaries?

A large part of workforce in manufacturing industries, service providers in hospitality, health, domestic/commercial establishments, and construction or other sectors, labourers, students etc. who come from rural areas or small towns seeking better opportunities will be the target beneficiary under ARHCs.

Significance of the Scheme

- ARHCs will **create new ecosystem in urban areas making housing available at affordable rent close to the place of work.**
- Investment under ARHCs is expected to create **new job opportunities**. ARHCs will **cut down unnecessary travel, congestion and pollution.**
- The scheme would create a conducive environment for Entities to develop AHRCs on their own vacant land which will enable new investment opportunities and promote entrepreneurship in rental housing sector.

Mains Question:

Scheme for Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHCs) will create a new ecosystem in urban areas. Analyze.

FOR PRELIMS

KOSI RAIL MAHASETU

The historic Kosi Rail Mahasetu was dedicated to the Nation.

Highlights

CHROME IAS ACADEMY

- The Kosi Mega Bridge line (Kosi Rail Mahasetu) project **was sanctioned by Government of India during 2003-04.**
- The bridge is **located on the Nirmali-Saraigarh section of the East Central Railway zone's Samastipur division.**
- The Kosi Rail Mahasetu is **9 KM long** and its construction cost is Rs. 516 Crore.
- This bridge is of strategic importance along the India-Nepal border.

History of the bridge: In 1887, a meter gauge link was **built in between Nirmali and Bhaptiahi (Saraigarh).**

- During the heavy flood and severe **Indo Nepal earthquake in 1934**, the rail link was washed away and thereafter due to meandering nature of river Kosi no attempt was made to restore this Rail link for long period.

NEW PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN

Yoshihide Suga

- Japan's parliament has elected Yoshihide Suga as the country's new prime minister, following the surprise resignation of Shinzo Abe.
- The previous PM Shinzo Abe announced his resignation last month citing ill health.

PIB- SEPTEMBER 18th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES- II

Topic- *Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

THE FARMERS' PRODUCE TRADE AND COMMERCE (PROMOTION AND FACILITATION) BILL, 2020

Context

Lok Sabha passed The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020 and The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020.

Key features

The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020 seeks:

- To provide for **the creation of an ecosystem** where the farmers and traders enjoy the **freedom of choice relating to sale and purchase of farmers' produce**,
- It will facilitates remunerative prices through competitive alternative trading channels to promote efficient, **transparent and barrier-free inter-State and intra-State trade and commerce of farmers' produce outside physical premises of markets or deemed markets** notified under various State agricultural produce market legislations;
- To provide a **facilitative framework for electronic trading** and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Background

Farmers in India suffered from various restrictions in marketing their produce.

- There were **restrictions for farmers in selling agri-produce outside the notified APMC market**
- The farmers were also **restricted to sell the produce only to registered licensees** of the State Governments.
- Further, **barriers existed in free flow of agriculture produce between various States** owing to the prevalence of various APMC legislations enacted by the State Governments.

Benefits

- The new legislation will create an ecosystem where the farmers and traders will enjoy freedom of choice of sale and purchase of agri-produce.
- It will also **promote barrier-free inter-state and intra-state trade and commerce** outside the physical premises of markets notified under State Agricultural Produce Marketing legislations.
- It will open **more choices for the farmer**, reduce marketing costs for the farmers and help them in getting better prices.
- The **farmers will not be charged any cess or levy for sale of their produce under this Act.**

One India, One Agriculture Market

- The Bill basically aims at creating additional trading opportunities outside the APMC market yards to help farmers get remunerative prices due to additional competition.
- This will supplement the existing MSP procurement system which is providing stable income to farmers.

Farmers' Concerns

This leads to a situation where **local farmers do not find adequate demand for their produce at MSP in the local market.**

- Since most farmers are **small or marginal landowners**, they do not have wherewithal to transport their produce to large distances.
- Hence, **they are forced to sell them at a lower price than the MSP in the local market itself.**

GENERAL STUDIES- II

Topic- *Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

THE FARMERS (EMPOWERMENT AND PROTECTION) AGREEMENT ON PRICE ASSURANCE AND FARM SERVICES BILL, 2020'

It aims to make farmers empowered to engage with processors, aggregators, wholesalers, large retailers, exporters.

Key features of the Bill

- The Bill seeks to provide for a **national framework on farming agreements** that protects and empowers farmers to engage with agri-business firms, processors, wholesalers, exporters or large retailers for farm services.
- It **will empower farmers to sale of future farming produce at a mutually agreed remunerative price framework** in a fair and transparent manner and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Background

Indian Agriculture is characterized by fragmentation due to small holding sizes.

- It has certain weaknesses such as weather dependence, production uncertainties and market unpredictability.
- This makes agriculture risky and inefficient in respect of both input & output management.

Benefits

- The Bill will empower farmers for engaging with processors, wholesalers, aggregators, large retailers, exporters etc., **on a level playing field without any fear of exploitation.**
- It will **transfer the risk of market unpredictability from the farmer to the sponsor** and also enable the farmer to access modern technology and better inputs.
- It will reduce cost of marketing and improve income of farmers.
- ***Sale, lease or mortgage of farmers' land is totally prohibited and farmers' land is also protected against any recovery.***
- Effective dispute resolution mechanism has been provided for with clear time lines for redressal.

Farmers' Concerns

There are two broader concerns here—

- **First, one principle concern with contract farming** has been regarding the negotiating power of the two parties involved.
- It seems likely that **individual farmers might not find themselves equipped or powerful enough to negotiate with corporates or big-pocket sponsors** to ensure a fair price for their produce.
- **Second, the Bill says that the quality parameters can be mutually decided** by the two parties in the agreement.
- But the quality aspect will become crucial when a few corporates will try to usher in uniformity which might end up adversely impacting the already skewed agro-ecological diversity in the country.

Mains Question:

How the reforms proposed for agricultural sector under the realm of Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan ensure better price realization for farmers? Elucidate.

GENERAL STUDIES-II

Topic- *Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.*

ATAL BIMIT VYAKTI KALYAN YOJANA

Context

ESIC issues instructions for submission of claims for Unemployment Benefit under Atal Bimit Kalyan Yojana.

What is the enhanced relief?

- The enhanced relief under the relaxed conditions will be payable during the period of 24.03.2020 to 31st December 2020.
- Thereafter the scheme will be available with original eligibility condition during the period 01.01.2021 to 30.06.2021.

The eligibility criteria for availing the relief has also been relaxed, as under:

- The payment of relief has been enhanced to **50% of average of wages from earlier 25% of average wages payable upto maximum 90 days of unemployment.**
- Instead of the relief becoming payable 90 days after unemployment, it shall **become due for payment after 30 days.**
- The Insured Person **can submit the claim directly to ESIC Branch Office** instead of the claim being forwarded by the last employer and the payment shall be made directly in the bank account of IP.

Who are the eligible?

- Employees covered under Section 2(9) of the ESI Act 1948.
- The Insured Person (IP) should have been rendered unemployed during the period the relief is claimed.
- The Insured Person should have been in insurable employment for a minimum period of two years.
- The Insured Person should have contributed not less than 78 days during each of the preceding four contribution periods.
- The contribution in respect of him should have been paid or payable by the employer.
- The contingency of the unemployment should not have been as a result of any punishment for misconduct or superannuation or voluntary retirement.
- Aadhar and Bank Account of the Insured Person should be linked with insured person database.

Need for

- The ESI Corporation has decided to extend the scheme for one more year upto 30th June 2021.
- It has been decided to relax the existing conditions and the amount of relief for workers who have lost employment during the Covid-19 pandemic period.

What is the Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyna Yojna?

Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana is **a welfare measure being implemented by the Employee's State Insurance (ESI) Corporation.**

- It offers cash compensation to insured persons when they are rendered unemployed.
- The Scheme was introduced w.e.f. 01-07-2018. The scheme is implemented on pilot basis for a period of two years initially.

Employee's State Insurance (ESI)

- Employee's State Insurance is managed by **Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC)** according to rules and regulations stipulated there in the ESI Act 1948.
- It is **self-financing social security and health insurance scheme** for Indian workers.
- It is **autonomous corporation** by statutory creation under Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India.

Mains Question:

Discuss the role and functions of Employee's State Insurance played in the lives of the people after their retirement. What are the issues associated with it.

FOR PRELIMS

MAHALAYA AMAVASYA

'Mahalaya' was celebrated in the country on 17 September this year.

Highlights

- **Shubho Mahalaya** in largely celebrated in west Bengal and other parts of country.
- **Mahalaya is celebrated at the end of Pitru Paksha**, a 16-day period when Hindus pay homage to their ancestors.
- **It is believed that goddess Durga descended the Earth on Mahalaya** which is celebrated by the Bengalis across the globe with much fervour and zeal.
- **It is believed that mantras called 'Mahisasura Mardini' invoke the Goddess**; the most famous one being 'Jago Tumi Jago.'

What is the Pitri Paksha?

It is a 16-lunar day period in Hindu calendar when Hindus pay homage to their ancestor (Pitrs), especially through food offerings.

- The period is also known as **Pitru Pakshya, Pitri Pokkho, Solah Shraddha, Kanagat, Jitiya, Mahalaya Paksha and Aparaksha**

Shikshak Parv Initiative

- Ministry of Education organizes a webinar on Inclusive and Equitable Education under Shikshak Parv Initiative.
- It is being celebrated from 8th September- 25th September, 2020 to felicitate the Teachers and to take New Education Policy 2020 forward.

PIB-SEPTEMBER 22nd, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES-III

Topic- *Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.*

ROCKET LAUNCHING PORT

Context

The Centre is setting up a second facility due to increase in the number of launches by Isro for domestic and global customers.

Highlights

- ISRO's first and only spaceport, the **Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC)**, is located in **Sriharikota**, in the state of Andhra Pradesh.
- The **organisation launches its PSLV and GSLV rockets from here**
- The government has decided to set up a second facility in the backdrop of an increase in the number of launches by ISRO for domestic and international customers.
- **Second space rocket launching port** is being setup by ISRO in **Tamil Nadu's Kulasekarapattinam**.

Why the Kulasekarapattinam was chosen for second Launchpad?

India prefers its spaceports as close to the equator as possible and located on the east coast for two reasons.

- **First, Earth's rotation provides a speed boost to rockets launched in the eastward direction**, such as the GSLV Mk II and Mk III, and headed for an equatorial orbit around the planet.
- **The strength of the boost is higher closer to the equator.**
- **Second, in the event of a failure**, debris from an explosion would fall into the Bay of Bengal instead of onto land, potentially damaging property or taking lives.

What functions Kulasekarapattinam Launchpad will perform?

The second spaceport at Kulasekarapattinam is expected to provide an important advantage to ISRO's upcoming **Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)**, a smaller counterpart of the PSLV that the organisation has developed to launch small-satellites more frequently.

About Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC)

- **The SDSC, setup in 1971**, currently has **two active launchpads**.
- Its first Launchpad was decommissioned once the Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle programme ended in 1994.
- The first of the two active pads **mostly services the PSLV** and the second, **the GSLV**, and which ISRO is currently modifying to accommodate crewed vehicle missions as part of its upcoming human spaceflight project, Gaganyaan.
- A third launchpad in the same premises is also in the works.

Significance of SDSC for PSLV

- The **PSLV is designed to launch satellites into pole-to-pole, or polar, orbits around Earth**.
- However, it can't enter into such an orbit straightaway after launch because its trajectory needs to avoid flying over Sri Lanka, protecting its popular centres from any debris from the rocket.
- So once the rocket lifts off from Sriharikota, it flies further east to avoid Sri Lanka and then steers itself back towards the South Pole.

Significance of Second Port for SSLV

- This manoeuvre requires more fuel, and for a smaller rocket like the SSLV, the addition could eat into its already limited payload capacity and reduce the rocket's value for Antrix, ISRO's commercial ventures operator.
- By setting up a spaceport in Kulasekarapattinam, however, the SSLV will lift off over the Lakshadweep Sea and won't have to swerve around Sri Lanka as it climbs to higher altitudes.

Mains Question:

Why does India choose its spaceports as close to the equator as possible and located on the east coast? Discuss.

GENERAL STUDIES-III

Topic- Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.

INDIA BASED NEUTRINO OBSERVATORY

Context

The India based Neutrino Observatory (INO) is being planned in the Theni district in Tamil Nadu.

Highlights

India based Neutrino observatory (INO) will observe neutrinos produced in the atmosphere of the Earth.

- This observation will tell us more about the properties of neutrino particles, whose main source is the Sun and the Earth's atmosphere.
- The neutrino detector will be a magnetized iron calorimeter, which will be the heaviest one made by any country.
- The site identified is in **Bodi West Hills, in Theni district, Tamil Nadu.**

What is the INO Project?

- India based Neutrino Observatory (INO) Project is aimed at building a **world-class underground laboratory with a rock-cover** to conduct basic research on neutrino.
- The **Tata Institute of Fundamental Research is the nodal institution.**
- The observatory is to be built jointly with the Department of Atomic Energy and the Department of Science and Technology.
- The **observatory will be located underground so as to provide adequate shielding to the neutrino detector from cosmic background radiation.**
- The operation of INO will have no release of radioactive or toxic substances.
- It is not a weapons laboratory and will have no strategic or defence applications.

Key components of INO Project

- Under the Project an underground laboratory and associated surface facilities will be constructed **at Pottipuram in Bodi West hills of Theni District of Tamil Nadu.**
- An **Iron Calorimeter (ICAL) detector** for studying neutrinos will be constructed.
- Setting up of **National Centre for High Energy Physics at Madurai,**

- It will be used for the operation and maintenance of the underground laboratory, human resource development and detector R&D along with its applications.

What is the 'Neutrino'?

A neutrino is a **subatomic particle that is very similar to an electron, but has no electrical charge and a very small mass**, which might even be zero.

- Neutrinos are **one of the most abundant particles in the universe**.
- Because they have very little interaction with matter, however, they are incredibly difficult to detect.
- Nuclear forces treat electrons and neutrinos identically; neither participate in the strong nuclear force, but both participate equally in the weak nuclear force.
- **Particles with this property are termed leptons.**
- It interacts very weakly with other matter particles. So weakly that every second trillions of neutrinos fall on us and pass through our bodies unnoticed.
- **Neutrinos come from the sun (solar neutrinos) and other stars**, cosmic rays that come from beyond the solar system, and from the Big Bang from which our Universe originated.
- They can also be produced in the lab.
- The INO will study atmospheric neutrinos only. Solar neutrinos have much lower energy than the detector can detect.

Concerns

- There has been opposition from some sections of the local populace.
- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has upheld the environmental clearance granted to the India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO).
- According to Environmentalists such massive scale of construction underground, and controlled blasts, the vibrations from the explosions will badly affect the ecologically fragile Western Ghats.
- The site is near the Kerala-Tamilnadu border is close to the Mathikettan Shola National Park.

Mains Question:

Describe the significance of India based Neutrino observatory (INO) and the ecological concerns associated with it.

GENERAL STUDIES-II

Topic- Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.

FUNCTIONING OF LOKPAL

Context

The Government has sanctioned 124 posts for the Lokpal at various levels including that of the Joint Secretary, Director/Deputy Secretary, Under Secretary, Section Officer, Accounts Officer as well as secretarial and support staff.

Highlights

- The institution of Lokpal has been functioning since the **appointment of its Chairperson and eight Members in March, 2019.**

- Lokpal is an **independent statutory body** established under **section 3** of the **Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013**.
- In terms of **Section 48** of the said Act, the **Lokpal is required to present annually to the President a report on the work done by it**, which is caused to be laid in both the Houses of the Parliament.

Lokpal and Lokayukta

The **Lokpal and Lokayukta Act, 2013** provided for the establishment of Lokpal for the Union and Lokayukta for States.

- These institutions are **statutory bodies without any constitutional status**.
- They **perform the function of an “ombudsman”** and inquire into allegations of corruption against certain public functionaries and for related matters.

Composition of Lokpal

Lokpal is a **multi-member body**, which consists of **one chairperson** and a **maximum of 8 members**.

Chairperson of the Lokpal

- Chairperson should be either the **former Chief Justice of India** or the **former Judge of Supreme Court or an eminent person** with impeccable integrity and outstanding ability.
- He/she should **have special knowledge and expertise of minimum 25 years in the matters relating to** anti-corruption policy, public administration, vigilance, finance including insurance and banking, law and management.
- **Out of the maximum eight members**, half will be judicial members and **minimum 50% of the Members will be from SC/ ST/ OBC/ Minorities and women**.

Tenure

- The term of office for **Lokpal Chairman and Members is 5 years or till the age of 70 years**.
- The members are **appointed by the president on the recommendation of a Selection Committee**.

The selection committee:

- *The Prime Minister as the Chairperson;*
- *Speaker of Lok Sabha,*
- *Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha,*
- *Chief Justice of India or a Judge nominated by him/her and one eminent jurist.*
- *For selecting the chairperson and the members, the selection committee constitutes a search panel of at least eight persons.*

The Lokpal and Lokayuktas (Amendment) Bill, 2016

This Bill was passed by Parliament in July 2016 and amended the Lokpal and Lokayukta Act, 2013.

- It enables the **leader of the single largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha to be a member of the selection committee in the absence of a recognized Leader of Opposition**.

- It also amended section 44 of the 2013 Act that deals with the provision of furnishing of details of assets and liabilities of public servants within 30 days of joining the government service.
- The Bill replaces the time limit of 30 days, now the public servants will make a declaration of their assets and liabilities in the form and manner as prescribed by the government.

Mains Question:

Maladministration and corruptions are like a termite which slowly erodes the foundation of a nation and hinders administration from completing its task. How an independent institution of Lokpal would offered a solution to the never-ending menace of corruption. Discuss.

PIB-SEPTEMBER 23rd, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES- II

Topic- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 2020

Context

Parliament passes the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

Highlights

- The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill 2020 with provisions to remove commodities like cereals, pulses, oilseeds, edible oils, onion and potatoes from the list of essential commodities was passed by Rajya Sabha.
- The bill was passed by Lok Sabha on 15th September, 2020.
- **The EC (Amendment) Bill 2020 aims:** to remove fears of private investors of excessive regulatory interference in their business operations.

What is Essential Commodities Act?

- The Essential Commodities Act was enacted in 1955.
- It was used by the Government to regulate the production, supply and distribution of a whole host of commodities it declares 'essential' in order to make them available to consumers at fair prices.
- The list of items under the Act include drugs, fertilisers, petroleum and petroleum products.
- **The Centre is empowered to include new commodities** as and when the need arises, and take them off the list once the situation improves.
- Under the Act, **the government can also fix the maximum retail price (MRP) of any packaged product** that it declares an "essential commodity".

Functions under the act

- **On finding certain commodity is in short supply and its price is spiking**, the center can notify stock-holding limits on it for a specified period.

- **The States act** on this notification to specify limits and take steps to ensure that these are adhered to.
- The wholesalers, retailers or even importers are **prevented from stockpiling** the notified commodity beyond a certain quantity.
- **However, A State can choose not to impose any restrictions.** But once it does, traders have to immediately sell into the market any stocks held beyond the mandated quantity.

Benefits of the amendments

- **This will remove fears of private investors** of excessive regulatory interference in their business operations.
- The freedom to produce, hold, move, distribute and supply will lead to harnessing of economies of scale and attract private sector/foreign direct investment into agriculture sector.
- It will help drive up investment in cold storages and modernization of food supply chain.

Importance

- The ECA gives consumers protection against irrational spikes in prices of essential commodities.
- The Government has invoked the Act umpteen times to ensure adequate supplies.
- It cracks down on hoarders and black-marketeers of such commodities.
- State agencies conduct raids to get everyone to toe the line and the errant are punished.

Why it was needed?

While India has become surplus in most Agri-commodities, farmers have been unable to get better prices due to lack of investment in cold storage, warehouses, processing and export as the entrepreneurial spirit gets dampened due to Essential Commodities Act.

- Farmers suffer huge losses when there are bumper harvests, especially of perishable commodities.
- The legislation will help drive up investment in cold storages and modernization of food supply chain.
- It will help both farmers and consumers while bringing in price stability.
- It will create competitive market environment and also prevent wastage of agri-produce that happens due to lack of storage facilities.

Mains Question:

While India has become surplus in most Agri-commodities, farmers have been unable to get better prices. Discuss.

GENERAL STUDIES- II

Topic- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

INDIAN INSTITUTES OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY LAWS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2020

Context

Rajya Sabha passed Indian Institutes of Information Technology Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

Context

Key points

- The Indian Institutes of Information Technology Act of 2014 and Indian Institutes of Information Technology (Public-Private Partnership) Act, 2017 are the unique initiatives of the Government of India to impart knowledge in the field of Information Technology to provide solutions to the challenges faced by the country.
- The Indian Institutes of Information Technology Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2020 was passed in Lok Sabha on 20th March 2020.
- The **passage of the Indian Institutes of Information Technology Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2020 will amend the principal acts of 2014 and 2017.**

What the IIIT Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2020 will do?

- The Bill will **declare 5 IIITs in Public-Private Partnership mode** at Surat, Bhopal, Bhagalpur, Agartala & Raichur **as Institutions of National Importance** by granting them statutory status along with the already existing 15 IIITs under the IIIT (PPP) Act, 2017,
- IIIT Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2020 **will entitle the institutions to use the nomenclature** of Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech) or Master of Technology (M.Tech) or PhD degree as issued by a University or **Institution of National Importance.**
- The Bill will also enable the Institutes to attract enough students required to develop a strong research base in the country in the field of Information Technology.

Background

- IIITs are envisaged to promote higher education and research in the field of Information Technology.
- Under the Scheme of **Setting up of 20 new IIITs in Public Private Partnership (IIIT PPP) mode** as approved by the Union Cabinet earlier, 15 IIITs are already covered by the IIIT (PPP) Act, 2017, while remaining 5 IIITs are to be included under the Schedule of the Act.

States/districts covered

- **States:** Gujarat (Surat), Madhya Pradesh (Bhopal), Bihar (Bhagalpur), Tripura (Agartala), Karnataka (Raichur).
- Every Institute shall be open to all person irrespective of gender, caste, creed, disability, domicile, ethnicity, social or economic background.

Benefits

The emerging needs of the industry and the economy, as a whole for skilled technical manpower is expected to be met from the talent pool of trained personnel of the institutes.

GENERAL STUDIES- II

Topic- *Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

LOK SABHA PASSES 3 HISTORIC AND PATH BREAKING LABOUR CODES

Context

Minister of State (I/C) for Labour & Employment has stated that the three Bills introduced in the House for historic labour reforms in the country, will prove to be a Game Changer in the labour welfare reforms covering more than 50 crores organized and unorganized workers in the country.

Highlights

- **New Labour Codes to envisage covering over 50 crore workers** from organized, unorganized and self employed for minimum wages, social security.
- **Social Security net of ESIC and EPFO** to Widen opening up for all workers and self-employed.
- **Setting up of “Social Security Fund”** for 40 Crore unorganized workers alongwith GIG and platform workers and will help in widening Universal Social Security coverage.
- **Pay parity to women workers** as compared to their male counterparts.
- **Fixed Term Employee to get same service condition**, gratuity, leave and Social Security as that of Regular Employee.
- **50 % of the penalty** in case of accident to go to the workers alongwith other dues.
- **“National Occupational Safety and Health Board”** to be set up for providing international level safety environment.
- **Working journalists definition** to include Digital and Electronic Media.
- **Plantation workers** to also get ESIC benefits along with GIG and platform workers.
- **All migrant Workers Labour** now to be covered instead of only those brought by contactors earlier.
- **Data base on Migrant Workers** through Law to help better targeting, skill mapping and utilization of Governments Schemes by workers.
- **Migrant Workers to get journey allowance** from Employer, to visit home town once a year
- The Codes to Promote **Harmonious Industrial Relations** for higher productivity and more employment generation.
- **Labour Codes will Establish transparent**, answerable and simple mechanism reducing to one registration, one license and one return for all codes.
- **Inspector to be now made as Inspector** – cum- Facilitator and introduction of Random, Web Based Inspection System to remove Inspector Raj.

What are the three labour codes bill?

These bills are part of Government's earnest desire to bring much needed labour welfare reforms in the country which has not been done for the last 73 years.

The 3 bills which were passed in the Lok Sabha are:

1. *Industrial Relations Code, 2020*
2. *Code on Occupational Safety, Health & Working Conditions Code, 2020*
3. *Social Security Code, 2020.*

Salient features of the 3 Codes which were passed by the Lok Sabha, as under:-

Social Security Code, 2020

Extending the reach of ESIC: Effort have been made to provide right to health security under ESIC to maximum possible workers:-

- The facility of ESIC would now be provided in all 740 districts. At present, this facility is being given in 566 districts only.
- Establishments working in hazardous sectors would mandatorily be linked with ESIC, even if there is only one worker working in it.
- Provision for making scheme for linking unorganised sector and Gig workers with ESIC.
- Option to link workers working in Plantations is being given to Plantation owners.
- Option for becoming member of ESIC is also being given to establishments with less than 10 workers.

Occupational Safety, Health & Working Conditions Code, 2020

- Free health checkup once a year by the employer for workers which are more than a certain age.
- Legal right for getting Appointment Letter given to workers for the first time.
- Cine Workers have been designated as Audio Visual Worker, so that more and more workers get covered under the OSH code. Earlier, this security was being given to artists working in films only.

Industrial Relations Code, 2020

Efforts made by the Government for quickly resolving disputes of the workers:

- Provision for two members instead of one member in the Industrial Tribunal. In case of absence of one member, work can still be undertaken smoothly.
- Implementation of award in 30 days after Tribunal award.
- After recognition of Fixed Term Employment, workers will get the option of Fixed Term Employment instead of contract labour.
- With the objective of better and effective participation of Trade Unions, a provision for "Negotiating Union" and "Negotiating Council" has been made for undertaking negotiation on any dispute.
- Arrangement for going to the Tribunal has been made for resolving disputes arising between Trade Unions. Less time would be required for resolving their disputes.
- Provision has been made for giving recognition to Trade Unions at Central and State level.
- Trade Unions would be able to contribute more affirmatively and more effectively at the Central and State level.
- Provision for RE-Skilling fund has been made in the law for the first time.
- Its aim would be to re-skill those workers who have been fired from their jobs, so that they are easily able to get employment again. For this, workers would be given 15 days salary within a period of 45 days.

FOR PRELIMS

SUCCESSFUL FLIGHT TEST OF ABHYAS

- Successful flight test of ABHYAS – **High-speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT)** was conducted by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- The vehicle can be used as target for evaluation of various missile systems.

What is ABHYAS?

Abhyas is an air vehicle, designed & developed by Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE), DRDO.

- The air vehicle is launched using twin underslung booster.
- It is powered by a small gas turbine engine and has MEMS based Inertial Navigation System (INS) for navigation along with the Flight Control Computer (FCC) for guidance and control.
- **The vehicle is programmed for fully autonomous flight.**
- The checkout of air vehicle is done using laptop based Ground Control Station (GCS).

PIB-SEPTEMBER 28th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES- III

Topic- *Achievements of Indians in Science & Technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.*

DR. VIKRAM AMBALAL SARABHAI

Context

Dr Vikram Sarabhai Birth Centenary Celebrations, was organized by the Department of Space and Department of Atomic Energy.

Who was he?

- Sarabhai is considered as **the Father of the Indian space program.**
- He was **a great institution builder** and established or helped to establish a large number of institutions in diverse fields.
- After returning from Cambridge to an independent India in 1947, he persuaded charitable trusts controlled by his family and friends to endow a research institution near home in Ahmedabad.
- Thus, **Vikram Sarabhai founded the Physical Research Laboratory (PRL) in Ahmedabad on November 11, 1947. He was only 28 at that time.**

Major contributions

- Sarabhai was a creator and cultivator of institutions and PRL was the first step in that direction. Vikram Sarabhai served of PRL from 1966-1971.
- **He was also Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission.**
- He along with other Ahmedabad-based industrialists played a major role in the **creation of the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad.**

Some of the most well-known institutions established by Dr. Sarabhai are:

1. Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), Ahmedabad
2. Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad
3. Community Science Centre, Ahmedabad
4. Darpan Academy for Performing Arts, Ahmedabad (along with his wife)
5. Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Thiruvananthapuram
6. Space Applications Centre, Ahmedabad (This institution came into existence after merging six institutions/centres established by Sarabhai)

7. Faster Breeder Test Reactor (FBTR), Kalpakkam
8. Variable Energy Cyclotron Project, Calcutta
9. Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL), Hyderabad
10. Uranium Corporation of India Limited (UCIL), Jaduguda, Bihar

Indian Space Program

The establishment of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) was one of his greatest achievements.

- He successfully convinced the government of the importance of a space programme for a developing country like India **after the Russian Sputnik launch**.
- **Homi Jehangir Bhabha**, widely regarded as the **father of India's nuclear science program**, supported Dr. Sarabhai in **setting up the first rocket launching station in India**.
- This center **was established at Thumba near Thiruvananthapuram** on the coast of the Arabian Sea, primarily because of its proximity to the equator.
- After a remarkable effort in setting up the infrastructure, personnel, communication links, and launch pads, **the inaugural flight was launched on November 21, 1963 with a sodium vapour payload**.
- As a result of Dr. Sarabhai's dialogue with NASA in 1966, the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) was launched during July 1975 – July 1976.
- Sarabhai **started a project for the fabrication and launch of an Indian Satellite**. As a result, the **first Indian satellite, Aryabhata**, was put in orbit in 1975 from a Russian Cosmodrome.
- Sarabhai was very interested in science education and founded a Community Science Centre at Ahmedabad in 1966. Today, the Centre is called the **Vikram A Sarabhai Community Science Centre**.

Mains question:

How the India's Space Programme was started and discuss the role played by Dr Vikram A Sarabhai in it?

GENERAL STUDIES- II

Topic- Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance applications.

TRANSPARENT TAXATION – HONORING THE HONEST

Faceless Appeals launched by CBDT today- 'Honoring the Honest'.

Highlights

- The Income Tax Department launched **Faceless Income Tax Appeals**. Under Faceless Appeals, **all Income Tax appeals will be finalised in a faceless manner**.
- Under the Faceless Appeals, from now on, in income tax appeals, everything from **e-allocation of appeal, e-communication of notice/ questionnaire, e-verification/e-enquiry to e-hearing and finally e-communication of the appellate order, the entire process of appeals will be online**, dispensing with the need for any physical interface between the appellant and the Department.

- **There will be no physical interface** between the taxpayers or their counsel/s and the Income Tax Department.

What are the exception?

Under the faceless ecosystem with the **exception of appeals relating to serious frauds, major tax evasion, sensitive & search matters, International tax and Black Money Act.**

How it will work?

- The Faceless Appeals system will include **allocation of cases through Data Analytics and AI** under the dynamic jurisdiction with central issuance of notices which would be having **Document Identification Number (DIN)**.
- As part of dynamic jurisdiction, the draft appellate order will be prepared in one city and will be reviewed in some other city resulting in an objective, fair and just order.

Benefits

- The Faceless Appeal will provide not only great convenience to the taxpayers but will also ensure just and fair appeal orders and minimise any further litigation.
- The new system will also be instrumental in imparting greater efficiency, transparency and accountability in the functioning of the Income Tax Department.

Key Steps taken by Government for tax reforms:

- The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has carried out several major tax reforms in direct taxes in the recent years.
- Last year the Corporate Tax rates were reduced from 30 percent to 22 percent and for new manufacturing units the rates were reduced to 15 percent.
- **Dividend distribution Tax** was also abolished.

The focus of the tax reforms

The focus of the tax reforms has been **on reduction in tax rates and on simplification of direct tax laws.**

Several initiatives have been taken by the CBDT for bringing in efficiency and transparency in the functioning of the IT Department. These are:

- **Document Identification Number (DIN):** to bring more transparency in official communication through the newly introduced Document Identification Number (DIN) wherein every communication of the Department would carry a computer generated unique document identification number.
- **To increase the ease of compliance for taxpayers:** IT Department has moved forward with prefilling of income tax returns to make compliance more convenient for individual taxpayers.
- **Vivad se Vishwas Act, 2020:** With a view to provide for resolution of pending tax disputes the IT Department also brought out the Direct Tax “Vivad se Vishwas Act, 2020” under which declarations for settling disputes are being filed currently.
- **Grievances / litigation:** To effectively reduce taxpayer grievances / litigation, the monetary thresholds for filing of departmental appeals in various appellate Courts have been raised.

- **Digitalization:** Several measures have been taken to promote digital transactions and electronic modes of payment.

Conclusion

The IT department is committed to take the initiatives forward and has also made efforts to ease compliances for taxpayers during the Covid times by extending statutory timeliness for filing returns as also releasing refunds expeditiously to increase liquidity in the hands of taxpayers.

Mains Question:

Discuss the need of tax reforms in India. What are the steps taken by Government for tax reforms?

GENERAL STUDIES- III

Topic- Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.

RAISE - 2020

Context

RAISE 2020 – Mega Virtual Summit on Artificial Intelligence to be held from October 5-9.

Highlights

- RAISE 2020- '**Responsible AI for Social Empowerment 2020**,' a Mega Virtual Summit on Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- It will be organized by **the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and NITI Aayog**.
- RAISE 2020 will be a global meeting of minds to exchange ideas and chart a course **for using AI for social transformation, inclusion and empowerment in areas like Healthcare, Agriculture, Education and Smart Mobility, among other sectors.**

What is the RAISE 2020?

- RAISE 2020 is a **first of its kind, global meeting of minds on Artificial Intelligence** to drive India's vision and roadmap for social transformation, inclusion and empowerment through responsible Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- **Organized by** Government of India along with Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, the event will witness robust participation from global industry leaders, key opinion makers, Government representatives and academia.

Key features

- At the RAISE 2020 Summit, delegates and experts in research, policy and innovation on Artificial Intelligence will join from across the globe.
- 'The Impetus that **Innovation Places on Digitisation**', '**Inclusive AI**', '**Partnerships for Successful Innovation**' etc.
- The RAISE 2020 Summit will feature some of the most exciting startups working in Artificial Intelligence-related fields.

CHROME IAS ACADEMY

- This is **part of Government of India's continuing support to tech entrepreneurs and startups** by providing exposure, recognition and guidance.

Significance

- India is well-positioned to become a global leader in the development of artificial intelligence.
- It is home **to the world's third largest startup ecosystem, elite science and technology institutions** like the IITs, robust and ubiquitous digital infrastructure, and millions of newly-minted STEM graduates every year,
- Industry analysts predict that AI could add up to \$957 billion to India's economy by 2035.
- In the spirit of SabkaSaathSabkaVikas, India plans to leverage AI for inclusive development, representing the country's 'AI for All' strategy.

Mains Question:

'India is well-positioned to become a global leader in the development of Artificial Intelligence.' Why is that so? Explain.

FOR PRELIMS

CENTRE FOR DISABILITY SPORTS

Highlights

Recently, the foundation stone of '**Centre for Disability Sports at Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh**' was laid.

- Setting up of a Centre for Disability Sports at Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh was approved by the Cabinet on 28 February, 2019
- **The Centre will provide facilities of international standards to sportspersons with disabilities to compete at international level and bring laurels for the country.**
- The Centre will have provision for training, selection, sports academics and research, medical support, spectator galleries and suitable for holding national/international events.

PIB-SEPTEMBER 29th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES-I

Topic- *The Freedom Struggle – its various stages and important contributors/contributions from different parts of the country.*

SHAHEED BHAGAT SINGH

Context

Shaheed Bhagat Singh's 113th birth anniversary was celebrated on 28 September.

About Bhagat Singh

Bhagat Singh's name is synonymous with the revolutionary movement that contributed to India's freedom struggle.

He is celebrated for his gusto and courage to stand up to the British rule.

CHROME IAS ACADEMY

- Bhagat Singh, **was born in 1907** to Kishan Singh and Vidyavati at Chak No. 105 GB, Banga village, Jaranwala Tehsil in the Lyallpur district of the Punjab Province of British India present day Pakistan.
- He was attracted to socialism and socialist revolutions led by Lenin at an early age and started reading about them.
- Bhagat Singh said '**They may kill me, but not my ideas. They can crush my body, but will not be able to crush my spirit**'.
- Bhagat Singh had **fasted for 116 days in jail**. It is surprising that during this time he used to do all his work regularly, such as singing, reading writing books, visiting court every day, etc.
- **Bhagat Singh coined a powerful slogan 'Inquilab Zindabad'** which became the slogan of India's armed struggle.
- In 1924 in Kanpur, **he became a member of the Hindustan Republican Association**, started by Sachindranath Sanyal a year earlier.
- It was as a member of the HRA that **Bhagat Singh began to take seriously the philosophy of the Bomb**.
- Armed revolution was understood to be the only weapon with which to fight British imperialism.
- In 1925, Bhagat Singh and his colleagues started a militant youth organisation called the **Naujawan Bharat Sabha**.
- In April 1926, Bhagat Singh established contact with Sohan Singh Josh and through him the 'Workers and Peasants Party' which **brought out the monthly magazine Kirti in Punjabi**.
- In 1927, **he was first arrested on charges of association with the Kakori Case** accused for an article written under the pseudonym Vidrohi (Rebel).
- In 1928, Bhagat Singh changed the name of **Hindustan Republican Association to Hindustan Socialist Republic Association (HSRA)**. In 1930, when Azad was shot, the HSRA collapsed.

Martyrdom

Bhagat Singh gave his life for the country when he was sentenced to death on 23 March 1931 by execution at the ripe age of 23 along with his associates Rajguru and Sukhdev on the charges of assassinating British police officer John Saunders, who had ordered brutal police action on independence movement leader Lala Lajpat Rai.

GENERAL STUDIES-II

Topic– *Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.*

INDIA-DENMARK GREEN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Context

A Virtual Summit between India and Denmark was held on 28 September 2020.

Highlights

- India and Denmark on Monday elevated their relations to a **'green strategic partnership'** that will focus on expanding economic ties, green growth and cooperation on global challenges such as climate change.
- The new 'green strategic partnership' will build on an **existing Joint Commission for Cooperation, created in 2009**, for cooperation in politics, economics and commerce, science and technology, energy, environment and education.
- It will also complement existing joint working groups on renewable energy, urban development, agriculture, innovation, shipping, labour mobility and digitisation.

What is the Green Strategic Partnership?

The Green Strategic Partnership is a mutually beneficial arrangement to advance political cooperation, expand economic relations and green growth, create jobs and strengthen cooperation on addressing global challenges and opportunities; with focus on an ambitious implementation of the Paris Agreement and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The strain in India—Denmark relationship

- A **Danish national Kim Davy** was the main accused in the **1995 Purulia arms drop case** – which had taken India-Denmark ties to an all-time low in 2012.
- **In 2012, India had scaled down diplomatic ties with Denmark** to signal its displeasure with the refusal of Danish officials to appeal in the Supreme Court against a lower court's order barring Davy's extradition.
- The **two countries finally put their ties back on an even keel in 2018**, when they decided to separate the Davy issue from the overall relationship.

Key points of India-Denmark Green Strategic Partnership

- Close partnership in addressing global challenges and solutions on green energy transition and climate change.
- To cooperate in **water efficiency and non-revenue water** (water loss) and in this context tasked the Indian Ministry of Jal Shakti and the Danish Environmental Protection Agency and the Danish Ministry of Environment and Food **to develop a Work Plan for an initial period of three years (2021-23)**.
- To strengthen existing **City-to-City cooperation between Udaipur and Aarhus and Tumakuru and Aalborg**.
- deep **cooperation on maritime affairs** and noted the potential for enhancing cooperation in ship-building and design, maritime services and Green shipping, as well as port development.

Significance

- Both the leaders expressed their conviction that a decision of the two countries to establish Green Strategic Partnership between the Kingdom of Denmark and the Republic of India has opened a new chapter in the friendly and cooperative relations between them.
- Ambitious goals and actions will be identified within the areas and outlined in an Action Plan that will be worked out and endorsed as soon as possible.

Mains Question:

What is the Green Strategic Partnership and how it is different from the normal relationship between the countries?

GENERAL STUDIES-II

Topic- Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States.

PROMOTING BEEKEEPING TO DOUBLE FARMERS' INCOME

Context

Government has allocated Rs.500 crore towards Beekeeping under Atma Nirbhar Abhiyan.

About

- Government is promoting Beekeeping as part of its aim to double farmers' income.
- Government has allocated Rs.500 crore towards Beekeeping under the Atma Nirbhar Abhiyan.
- India is among the world's top five honey producers. China is on the top of Honey production.
- Compared to 2005-06 honey production has risen by 242% and exports shot by 265%.

National Beekeeping and Honey Mission (NBHM)

NBHM was launched in August 2017 in line with Prime Minister's call for 'Sweet Revolution' (revolution in production of honey to increase its production).

The NBHM is carried out by

- Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)
- National Bee Board (NBB)

Objective of the Mission

- Constructing a wealthy land with feasible natural environment and economy that will help the beekeepers to be independent.
- Implementing harmless apiculture technologies
- Improving the cultivation of food products through cross-pollination.
- Conducting programs and regulations to accomplish the economic, social and environmental objectives through Beekeeping and Honey enterprise.
- Encouraging scientific beekeeping management practices by incorporating awareness and training to enhance the beekeeper's skill and knowledge.
- Studying and developing protocols of best practices on all the features of beekeeping.

NBHM under the KVIC

The unorganised and the traditional methods of beekeeping were suspended with the establishment of the Khadi Village and Industry Committee (KVIC).

*The Committee plays a vital role in the livelihood of the rural areas with its **four features rendering the upliftment of beekeepers' social and economic living standards.***

1. KVIC acts liaison as an income-generating tool for the beekeepers and beekeeping.

2. KVIC ensures better food and medicine with the value of honey production and other hive products.
3. KVIC supports cross-pollination that pays the way for agriculture crops.
4. KVIC works enormously in constructing afforestation.

National Bee Board (NBB)

- **The Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture Cooperation & Farmer's Welfare** established the National Bee Board (NBB) in the year 2000.
- The main motto of the board is to improve pollination and crop productivity through beekeeping.

Key Functions of NBB

- Research and Development of honey processing units
- Production of quality honey
- The innovation of Phyto-Sanitary standards in terms of Bee-Product quality
- Migration of honeybee colonies
- Creating awareness and organising training
- Research and training on the disease-prone and its medication.

Funds under NBHM Mission

- All the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises governed by the national bodies approve fund every year through the KVIC.
- The amount is allocated for the employment and income to rural youth, both men and women for preserving the honeybee environment.

Sweet Revolution (Mithi Kranti)

- Sweet Revolution was envisioned in 2016 as a strategic step to emphasize the increase in honey production in the state, which can be a major contributor to doubling the income of the farmers.
- With the increase in income, the production of crops will also increase by 15%.

Purpose of sweet revolution

- **To make Jharkhand state in the category of developed states by 2022.**
- Providing employment by connecting the farmers of the state with bee keeping.
- To increase agriculture and horticulture yield and income of farmers.
- To make the state the leading state in the field of honey production.
- Children free from malnutrition.

Sweet Revolution in Jharkhand State

- Jharkhand is the best state to implement sweet revolution and there is huge potential for honey production.
- Approximately 30% of land is covered by forest which is the most important resource for honey production.

Mains Question:

The Sweet Revolution (Mithi Kranti) is envisioned to make farmer's income double. How it will do that? Explain the key features of 'Sweet revolution'.

7 services hosted on <http://mausam.imd.gov.in> web site of IMD have been onboarded to UMANG Application

Highlights

- UMANG stands for **Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance**.
- UMANG is a Government of India all-in-one single, unified, secure, multi-channel, multi-platform, multi-lingual, multi-service mobile app, powered by a robust back-end platform providing access to high impact services of various organization (Central and State).
- It is a mobile application to provide secured access to the citizens to multiple government services at one platform.
- It provides all pan India e-Gov services like Aadhaar and Digilocker on one single platform.

The IMD Services on UMANG App

- *Current Weather,*
- *Nowcast: Three hourly warnings of localized weather phenomena.*
- *City Forecast*
- *Rainfall Information*
- *Tourism Forecast*
- *Dangerous Weather Warnings*
- *Cyclone*