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**MONTHLY
COMPILATION
NOV. 2020**

For UPSC Prelims & Mains Examination

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CHROME IAS ACADEMY

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GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

COAL BED METHANE (CBM)

Context

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has brought out policies/notifications after Coal Bed Methane (CBM) Policy 1997.

What is Coal Bed Methane (CBM)?

Coal Bed Methane (CBM) is an unconventional form of natural gas found in coal deposits or coal seams.

- CBM is formed during the process of coalification, the transformation of plant material into coal.
- It mainly consists of Methane (CH₄) with minor amounts of nitrogen, carbon dioxide and heavier hydrocarbons like ethane.

What are the possible uses of CBM?

- CBM can be used in Industries such as in cement production, rolling mills, steel plants, and for methanol production.
- CBM can also be used in Power generation and as Compressed natural gas (CNG) auto fuel.

CBM potential in India

India has the fifth-largest coal reserves in the world. So it has significant prospects for exploiting CBM.

- CBM has been looked at as a clean alternative fuel with significant prospects.
- As of now there is no data available related to the total prognosticated CBM resources in the country.
- India's CBM resources are estimated at around 92 trillion cubic feet (TCF), or 2,600 billion cubic metres (BCM).
- The country's coal and CBM reserves are found in Gondwana sediments of eastern India.
- The Damodar Koel valley and Son valley are prospective areas for CBM development.

Environmental effects of CBM

CBM mainly consists of Methane (CH₄) with minor amounts of nitrogen, carbon dioxide and heavier hydrocarbons like ethane.

- Methane has been labelled as a Green House Gas (GHG) by United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Its global warming potential is 21 times more than that of the Carbon Dioxide.

- But **CBM** is considered as a clean fuel which on combustion emits only carbon dioxide and water.
- Using **CBM** as a fuel will halt its emission into environment and thus reducing emission of green house gas from coal mining.
- Extraction of CBM prior to coal mining activities makes mining activities safer by degassing the coal seams.

Concerns

- **Methane**, a greenhouse gas emitted through CBM extraction.
- The **water discharges** from CBM extraction could potentially have harmful effect on downstream water sources.
- **Disturbance of lands drilled** and its effect on wildlife habitats results in ecosystem damage.
- **CBM production behavior is complex** and difficult to predict in the early stages of recovery.

Mains Question:

What is coalbed methane? How it extracted and what is its significance? Discuss.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

MALABAR-20

Context

The 24th edition of the MALABAR naval exercise is scheduled in two phases in November 2020.

Highlights

- **Phase 1** of the Exercise **MALABAR 20** involving participation by **Indian Navy (IN)**, **United States Navy (USN)**, **Japan Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF)**, and **Royal Australian Navy (RAN)** is set to commence off Visakhapatnam in **Bay of Bengal** from 03 to 06 November 2020.
- **Phase 2** of **MALABAR 20** is scheduled to be conducted in the **Arabian Sea** in mid-November 2020.

About MALABAR exercise

MALABAR series of maritime exercises commenced in 1992 as a bilateral IN-USN exercise.

- **JMSDF joined MALABAR in 2015.**
- The 2020 edition will now witness **participation of the RAN in this joint** maritime exercise.

China's concern

- Beijing has long **opposed a coalition of democracies** in the Indo-Pacific region.
- It sees the **maritime Quadrilateral as an Asian-NATO** that seeks only to contain China's rise.
- Also, at a time of **strained bilateral ties with China**, the **involvement of Australia in the Malabar drill** could only be construed as a move directed against Beijing.

India's concern

Following the stand-off in Ladakh, many Indian analysts believe the **time is right for India to shed its traditional defensiveness in the maritime domain.**

1. The realists advocate an **alliance with the U.S., Japan and Australia to counter Chinese moves in the Indian Ocean.**
2. However, by **putting more pressure on China and moving to expand its sphere of influence into the entire Indian Ocean and the South Pacific**, India may be risking harsh consequences.
3. At a time when **India and China are negotiating a truce on the border in Eastern Ladakh**, the participation of Australia in the Malabar exercise sends contrary signals to Beijing.
4. If China responded churlishly through aggressive posturing in the Eastern Indian Ocean, it **could needlessly open up a new front in the India-China conflict.**
5. Besides, **cooperation with the U.S. and Japan without attendant benefits of strategic technology transfers will not improve the Indian Navy's deterrence potential in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).**

Mains Question:

Discuss why expansion of Malabar Exercise to include Australia is important for India.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

CHAMPIONS: TECHNOLOGY PLATFORM

Context

Prime Minister recently launched **CHAMPIONS: Technology Platform** to empower MSMEs.

Highlights

'CHAMPIONS' stands for **Creation and Harmonious Application of Modern Processes for Increasing the Output and National Strength.**

- The portal is aimed for making the smaller units big by solving their grievances, encouraging, supporting, helping and handholding.
- It is a real one-stop-shop solution of MSME Ministry.

- It is a technology packed control room-cum-management information system.
- The system is enabled by Artificial Intelligence, Data Analytics and Machine Learning.
- It is also fully integrated on real time basis with GOI's main grievances portal CPGRAMS and MSME Ministry's own other web based mechanisms.
- The portal enables the potential MSMEs who are able to withstand the current situation and can become national and international champions.

CHAMPIONS' Hub & Spoke Model

- As part of the system a network of control rooms is created in a Hub & Spoke Model.
- The Hub is situated in New Delhi in the Secretary MSME's office.
- The spokes are in the States in various offices and institutions of MSME Ministry.

FOR PRELIMS

STATES FORMATION DAY

Andhra Pradesh (1 November 1956)

In an effort to gain an **independent state based on linguistic identity**, and to protect the interests of the Telugu-speaking people of Madras State, **Potti Sreeramulu fasted to death in 1952.**

- As Madras became a bone of contention, **in 1949 a JVP committee report** stated: "Andhra Province could be formed provided the Andhras give up their claim on the city of Madras (now Chennai)".
- After Potti Sreeramulu's death, the **Telugu-speaking area of Andhra State was carved out of Madras State on 1 October 1953, with Kurnool as its capital city.**
- On the basis of the **gentlemen's agreement of 1 November 1956**, the **States Reorganisation Act formed combined Andhra Pradesh** by merging Andhra State with the Telugu-speaking areas of the already existing Hyderabad State.

Karnataka (1 November 1956)

Karnataka is the **largest state in South India and seventh largest in India.**

- It was formed **on 1 November 1956, with the passage of the States Reorganisation Act.**
- **Originally known as the State of Mysore, it was renamed Karnataka in 1973.**

Madhya Pradesh (1 November 1956)

Madhya Pradesh came into being on 1 November 1956.

- After India's independence, **Madhya Pradesh state was created with Nagpur as its capital:** this state included the southern parts of the present-day Madhya Pradesh and northeastern portion of today's Maharashtra.
- **In 1956, this state was reorganised** and its parts were combined with the states of Madhya Bharat, Vindhya Pradesh and Bhopal to form the new Madhya Pradesh state, **the Marathi-speaking Vidarbha region was removed and merged with the Bombay State.**

- It was reorganised on 1 November 2000 to create a new Chhattisgarh state.
- The successive state, now, is bounded in north by **Uttar Pradesh**, east by **Chhattisgarh**, south by **Maharashtra** and west by **Gujarat** and **Rajasthan**.

Kerala (1 November 1956)

Kerala is a state on the southwestern Malabar Coast of India.

- It was **formed on 1 November 1956, following the passage of the States Reorganisation Act**, by combining Malayalam-speaking regions of the **erstwhile states of Travancore-Cochin and Madras**.
- It is **bordered by** Karnataka to the north and northeast, Tamil Nadu to the east and south, and the Lakshadweep Sea to the west.

Haryana (1 November 1966)

Haryana as a state came into existence on **1 November 1966 the Punjab Reorganisation Act (1966)**.

- The state was created after the recommendation of **Shah Commission**.
- The Shah commission was constituted on 23 April 1966 **to divide the existing state of Punjab** and determine the boundaries of the **new state of Haryana after consideration of the languages spoken by the people**.

Chhattisgarh (1 November 2000)

The present state of Chhattisgarh was **carved out of Madhya Pradesh** on 1 November 2000.

- The demand for a separate state was first raised in the 1920s. Similar demands kept cropping up at regular intervals.
- The government of India subsequently set **1 November 2000, as the day the state of Madhya Pradesh would be divided into Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh**.

VAIBHAV Summit

Vaishwik Bharatiya Vaigyanik (VAIBHAV) Summit was started from 2nd October 2020 – the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and **concluded on the occasion of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Jayanti, 31st October 2020**.

- It is a **global summit of Overseas and Resident Indian scientists and academicians**.
- The Summit is a joint effort of various Science & Technology (S&T) and Academic organisations, including Department of S&T, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

Key objectives

- To reflect in-depth on the collaboration and cooperation instruments with academia and scientists in India.
- To bring out the comprehensive roadmap to leverage the expertise and knowledge of global Indian researchers for solving emerging challenges.
- To create an ecosystem of Knowledge and Innovation in the country through global outreach.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

PRADHAN MANTRI BHARTIYA JANAUSHDHI PARIYOJANA (PMBJP)

Context

Union Minister for Chemicals & Fertilizers held a comprehensive review meeting of Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP).

Highlights

- PMBJP has achieved **sales of Rs 358 crores worth of pharma products through 6600 Jan Aushadhi stores** during first seven months of this fiscal (up to Oct 31st).
- It is likely to surpass sales of Rs 600 crore for entire fiscal year against Rs 419 crore in 2019-20.

About PMBJP

Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (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.

GENERAL STUDIES-III

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

13th URBAN MOBILITY INDIA (UMI) CONFERENCE-2020

Context

The 13th Urban Mobility India (UMI) Conference is being organized by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on 9th November 2020.

Highlights

Theme: The main theme of this year’s event is **“Emerging Trends in Urban Mobility”**.

Focus: the focus of UMI will be on innovative measures taken at national and international level to address the challenges posed by Covid-19 pandemic and to provide accessible and convenient transport to the people.

What is the Urban Mobility India (UMI)?

- It is a part of government’s **National Urban Transport Policy, 2006 (NUTP)**.
- It is an **annual international Conference-cum-Exhibition** on Urban Mobility India popularly known as UMI organized by Urban Ministry.

Objective

- To disseminate information to the cities, whose officials attend the conference to help them keep up-to-date with latest and best urban transport practices globally.
- The **event brings together national and international experts**, technology and service providers, policy makers, practitioners and officials from the urban transport sector **under one roof**.

National Urban Transport Policy (NUTP)

The National Urban Transport Policy, 2006 (NUTP) was issued by The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India**.

The objective of the policy is to ensure safe, affordable, quick, comfortable, reliable and sustainable access for the growing number of city residents to jobs, education, recreation and such other needs within our cities.

Why it was needed?

Urbanization in India is a reality of the 21st century, which has culminated in the development of India as one of the fastest growing major economy in the world.

- The transport sector is an important component of the urban economy.
- However, with rapidly increasing mobility, needs and availability of technology, there is **expected shift from vehicle ownership to vehicle sharing and public transport**, with higher emphasis on multimodal seamless connectivity and clean mobility.
- These **emerging trends are likely to bring a paradigm shift** in the expectations of the commuters and our cities need to adapt to the rapidly changing mobility needs.

The Initiatives taken by Government to address Urban Transport issues:

- **Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission JNNURM, 2005:** JNNURM was launched in 2005 and closed in 2014 (now succeeded by Atal AMRUT Mission).
- **National Urban Transport Policy (NUTP), 2006:** The policy envisages safe, affordable, quick, comfortable, reliable and sustainable urban transport through establishment of quality focused multi-modal public transport systems.
- **Green Urban Transport Scheme, 2016:** To improve **non-motorised transport infrastructure** such as dedicated lanes for cycling, pedestrians, increasing access to public transport, use of clean technologies and adoption of **intelligent transport systems (ITS)**.
- **Mass Rapid Transit/ Transport Systems (MRTS):** The metro rail has come up as a favoured alternative of mass transport in Indian cities.
- **Bus Rapid Transport System (BRTS):** To segregates the movement of buses from all other transport modes, and to introduce other safety related changes in the road infrastructure.
- **Promotion of Electric Vehicles:** Indian Government plans to have an all-electric fleet of vehicles by 2030.

Mains Question:

National urban transport policy highlights on moving people instead of moving vehicles. Critically discuss the success of Government's various policies on the urban transport.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

HEALTH INDEX

Context

The second edition of NITI Aayog's Health Index was recently released in its report titled '*Healthy States, Progressive India*'.

About the NITI Aayog's report

The report focuses on measuring the overall performance and incremental improvement in the states and union territories with **2015-16 as the base year and 2017-18 as the reference year**.

- **The health index report has been developed by NITI Aayog**, with technical assistance from the World Bank, in consultation with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- **Health index is based on 23 health indicators** with major weightage given to mortality rate, total fertility rate, and sex ratio.
- **The ranking was done under three categories** – larger states, smaller states and Union territories (UTs).
- **It aims-** to establish an annual systematic tool to measure and understand the heterogeneity and complexity of the nation's performance in Health.
- **The Health Index does not capture non-communicable diseases, infectious diseases and mental health.**

Key findings

- **Kerala is on top the list for the best performing State** in the health sector among the 21 large States.
- It followed by **Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu**.
- In incremental performance, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Jharkhand are at the top.
- **Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttarakhand have been shown as the worst performers.**
- Among the 8 Empowered Action Group States, only 3 States i.e. **Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh showed improvement in the overall performance.**
- **Among the smaller states, Mizoram ranked first in overall performance.**
- Tripura and Manipur in smaller state category were the top two states in terms of incremental performance.
- **Overall health index scores have decreased the most for Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.**

Significance

Health Index is a concept to encourage States into action, public health must become part of the mainstream politics.

- It has been developed **as a tool to leverage co-operative and competitive federalism** to accelerate the pace of achieving health outcomes.
- The Centre has paid attention to tertiary care and reduction of out-of-pocket expenses through financial risk protection initiatives such as Ayushman Bharat.
- **It would also serve as an instrument for “nudging”** States & Union Territories (UTs) and the Central Ministries to a much greater focus on output and outcome-based measurement of annual performance.

Mains Question:

Analyse the findings of the NITI Aayog’s Health Index report that was released recently.

FOR PRELIMS

VIRTUAL GLOBAL INVESTOR ROUNDTABLE (VGIR)

Context

PM will chair Virtual Global Investor Roundtable on 5th November.

Highlights

It is an **exclusive dialogue between** leading global institutional investors, Indian business leaders and the highest decision makers from the Government of India and Financial Market Regulators.

- The **VGIR is being organized by the Ministry of Finance, Government of India, and National Investment and Infrastructure Fund.**
- **Top Pension and Sovereign Wealth Funds from across the world** will participate in the Roundtable.
- These global institutional investors represent **key regions including the US, Europe, Canada, Korea, Japan, Middle East, Australia, and Singapore.**
- **VGIR 2020 will focus** on discussions around India’s economic and investment outlook, structural reforms and the **government’s vision for the path to a USD 5 trillion economy.**

PIB-NOVEMBER 5th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES-II

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

MULTI-LOCATION CLAIM FACILITY OF EPFO

Context

EPFO has recently launched a multi-location claim settlement facility.

About

The multi-location claim settlement facility will bring a **paradigm shift by allowing EPFO offices to settle online claims from any of its regional offices, across the country.**

- All types of online claims i.e. provident fund, pension, partial withdrawal and claims and transfer claims can be processed under this novel initiative.
- **The first batch of multi-location claims** under this path-breaking project was settled for **Gurugram Region** on 10th June 2020.

Why it is launched?

EPFO has **moved away from the existing system of geographical jurisdiction for claim processing** by rolling out multi-location claim settlement facility.

- This will allow offices with lesser workload to share the burden of offices that have accumulated a higher level of pendency, due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- It enables fast-tracking of settlement process through most appropriate engagement of EPFO's workforce in all its regional offices across the country.

Objective

The initiative aimed at enhancing ease of living experience for its members, has been achieved in record time.

Significance

- The launch of multi-location claim settlement facility is a momentous step towards the larger objectives of ushering faceless claims processing.
- Thereby, it will bring greater levels of transparency, efficiency, reduction of member grievances and expeditious settlement of online claims in line with Prime Minister's vision of Digital India.

Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)

- The EPFO is an organization tasked to assist the Central Board of Trustees.
- ***Employees' Provident Fund is a statutory body.***
- It is formed by the ***Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952.***
- ***It is under the administrative control of the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India.***

GENERAL STUDIES-III

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

INDIAN GAS EXCHANGE: IGX

Context

India launched its first gas exchange which has been named as the Indian Gas Exchange (IGX).

What is the IGX?

Indian Gas Exchange (IGX) is **the first nationwide online delivery-based gas trading platform.**

- It is incorporated as a wholly owned subsidiary of the IEX – India's energy market platform.
- The platform is fully automated with web-based interface to provide seamless trading experience to the customers.

Functions of IGX

IGX platform will allow buyers and sellers of natural gas to trade both in the **spot market and in the forward market** for imported natural gas across three hubs —Dahej and Hazira in Gujarat, and Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh.

- The exchange also allows much shorter contracts – for delivery on the next day, and up to a month – while ordinarily contracts for natural gas supply are as long as six months to a year.
- The **domestically produced natural gas will not be sold on the exchange.**
- The price of domestically produced natural gas is decided by the government.

What is the 'Spot market' and 'Future Market'?

- The spot market is a public financial market **in which financial instruments or commodities are traded for immediate delivery.**
- A forward market is an over-the-counter marketplace **that sets the price of a financial instrument or asset for future delivery.**

Benefits

- IGX is expected to facilitate transparent price discovery in natural gas, and facilitate the growth of the share of natural gas in India's energy basket.
- This will help the **nation move towards free market pricing of natural gas.**
- It removes the requirement for buyers and sellers to find each other to ensure a fair price deal.
- Shorter and longer contracts period will allow buyers and sellers greater flexibility.

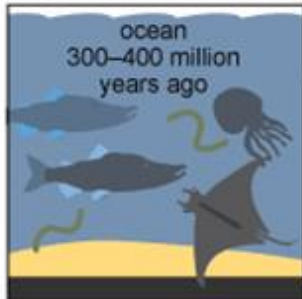
Why it was needed?

India's domestic production of gas has been falling over the past two fiscals as **current sources of natural gas have become less productive.**

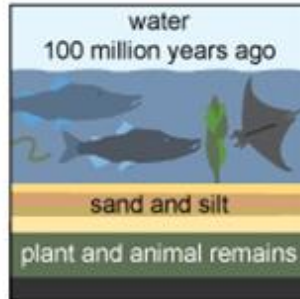
- Also **domestically produced natural gas currently accounts for less than half of India's natural gas consumption.**
- The imported natural gas accounts for fulfilling the demand of the other half consumption.
- LNG imports are set to become a larger proportion of domestic gas consumption as India moves to increase the proportion of natural gas in the energy basket from 6.2% in 2018 to 15% by 2030.

Petroleum and natural gas formation

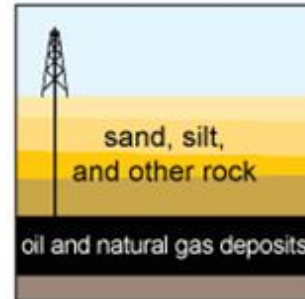
Tiny marine plants and animals died and were buried on the ocean floor. Over time, the marine plants and animals were covered by layers of silt and sand.



Over millions of years, the remains were buried deeper and deeper. The enormous heat and pressure turned the remains into oil and natural gas.



Today, we drill down through layers of sand, silt, and rock to reach the rock formations that contain oil and natural gas deposits.



Source: Adapted from National Energy Education Development Project (public domain)

Mains Question:

What is the 'Spot market' and 'Future Market'? Discuss the features and significance of Indian Gas Exchange.

GENERAL STUDIES -II

Topic- Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (GPAI)

Context

India has joined Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) as a founding member.

What is GPAI?

GPAI is an international and multi-stakeholder initiative to guide the responsible development and use of AI, grounded in human rights, inclusion, diversity, innovation, and economic growth.

- It is a first-of-its-type initiative for evolving better understanding of challenges and opportunities around AI using the experience and diversity of participating countries.
- The alliance aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice by supporting advanced research and applied activities on AI-related priorities.

Structure

GPAI will be supported by a Secretariat, to be hosted by the **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris**, as well as by two Centers of Expertise — one each in Montreal and Paris.

What it will do?

- GPAI will **bring together leading experts from industry, civil society, governments, and academia to collaborate to promote responsible evolution of AI.**
- It will also evolve methodologies to show how AI can be leveraged to better respond to the present global crisis around COVID-19.

India and GAPI

- **India has joined the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) as a founding member** to support responsible and human-centric development and use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- GPAI is being launched by **the league of leading nations and economies** including the **India, US, the UK, EU, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, and Singapore.**

Significance of GAPI for India

By joining GPAI as a founding member, India will actively participate in the global development of Artificial Intelligence, leveraging upon its experience around use of digital technologies for inclusive growth.

Mains Question:

Discuss the objectives of the GPAI. What are the significance of GAPI for India?

FOR PRELIMS

LUHRI STAGE-I HYDRO ELECTRIC PROJECT

Cabinet approves Rs 1810 crore Investment Proposal of 210 MW Luhri Stage-I Hydro Power Project.

Highlights

- **The Luhri Stage-I Hydro Electric Project is located on river Satluj** which is situated in **Shimla & Kullu districts of Himachal Pradesh.**
- This project is being **implemented by Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam Limited (SJVN) on Build-Own-Operate-Maintain (BOOM) basis** with active support from Government of India and State Government.
- SJVN has forayed into the fields of Renewable Energy, Power Transmission and Thermal power generation.

International Virtual Election Visitors Programme 2020 (IEVP)

ECI to host International Election Visitors Programme 2020 for Bihar Legislative Assembly Elections.

Highlights

- The Election Commission of India is organizing an **International Virtual Election Visitors Programme 2020 (IEVP)** for foreign Election Management Bodies (EMBs)/Organisations, in the context of the ongoing Bihar Legislative Assembly Elections.
- Delegates from **over 40 countries across the world** and 3 international organizations (viz. **International IDEA, International Foundation of Electoral Systems (IFES) and Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB)**) have been invited to participate in the IEVP 2020.

PINAKA Rocket System

Recently, **Enhanced PINAKA rocket**, developed by DRDO has been successfully flight tested from Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.

About PINAKA Rocket System

Pinaka is a **multiple rocket launcher** produced in India and developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for the Indian Army.

- The system has a **maximum range of 40 km for Mark-I and 75 km for Mark-II**, and can fire a salvo of 12 HE rockets in 44 seconds.
- The system is **mounted on a Tatra truck for mobility**.
- Pinaka **saw service during the Kargil War**, where it was successful in neutralising enemy positions on the mountain tops.
- **Enhanced version of the Pinaka rocket** would replace the existing Pinaka Mk-I rockets which are currently under production.

PIB-NOVEMBER 6th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

BIO FORTIFIED CROPS

Context

A bio fortified crop- **Madhuban Gajar** was developed by a **farmer scientist from Junagadh district, Gujarat**.

Highlights

Madhuban Gajar is a biofortified carrot variety with high β -carotene and iron content.

- It is a highly nutritious carrot variety developed through the selection method with **higher β -carotene content (277.75 mg/kg) and iron content (276.7 mg/kg) dry basis**.
- It is used for various value-added products like carrot chips, juices, and pickles.

What is the BIO- Fortification?

Biofortification is the process by which the nutritional quality of food crops is improved through agronomic practices, conventional plant breeding, or modern biotechnology.

- **Biofortification aims to** increase nutrient levels in crops during plant growth rather than through manual means during processing of the crops.
- Biofortification may therefore present a way to reach populations where supplementation and conventional fortification activities may be difficult to implement and/or limited.

What is the Fortification of a crop?

Fortification is the practice of **deliberately increasing the content of an essential micronutrient**, i.e. vitamins and minerals (including trace elements) in a food.

- So as to improve the nutritional quality of the food supply and provide a public health benefit with minimal risk to health.

Examples of biofortification projects include:

- iron-biofortification of rice, beans, sweet potato, cassava and legumes;
- zinc-biofortification of wheat, rice, beans, sweet potato and maize;
- provitamin A carotenoid-biofortification of sweet potato, maize and cassava; and
- amino acid and protein-biofortification of sorghum and cassava.

How are crops fortified?

Biofortified crops can be developed by traditional breeding methods, **provided there is sufficient genetic variation in crop populations for the desired trait (such as high protein content).**

- In staple grains such as rice, **improvement of some complex traits such as vitamin A is not possible using conventional breeding strategies**, as there are no natural rice varieties rich in this vitamin.
- All plants produce pro-vitamin A, but only in the green organs of the plant and not in the starch-storing part of the seed.
- Conventional breeding is also **very difficult in vegetatively propagated varieties** (such as cassava and potatoes), due to the scarcity of genetically well-defined breeding lines.
- In addition, **conventional breeding can change important traits of the crops desired by consumers, such as taste.**
- **Agricultural biotechnology methods, and in specific genetic engineering (GM), represent therefore a very valuable, complementary strategy for the development of more nutritious crops.**
- Agronomic biofortification entails application of minerals such as zinc or iron as foliar or soil applications, drawing on plant management, soil factors, and plant characteristics to get enhanced content of key micronutrients into the edible portion of the plant.

Benefits and Concern of Biofortification of Crops

- Biofortification capitalizes on the consistent daily intake of food staples, thus indirectly targeting low-income households who cannot afford a more diverse diet.
- **After the initial investment of developing fortified crops, no extra costs are met, making this strategy very sustainable.**
- Furthermore, the improved varieties can be shared internationally.
- **Biofortified seeds are also likely to have an indirect impact in agriculture, as a higher trace mineral content in seeds confers better protection against pests, diseases, and environmental stresses, thereby increasing yield.**
- Biofortification is not a panacea in itself but a very important complement to dietary variety and to supplementation.

Mains Question:

What do you understand by fortification of foods? Discuss its advantages and associated concerns.

GENERAL STUDIES- II

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

SEAPLANE PROJECTS

Context

Minister of State for Shipping (I/C), reviewed the seaplane projects on Indian water bodies.

What is a Seaplane project?

A seaplane, unlike a conventional aircraft, can land both on a waterbody and on land.

Seaplane helps to increase connectivity without building highways and runways.

- India, having large number of natural water bodies, provides ideal opportunity for seaplane operations.



What is the Water Aerodrome?

A water aerodrome is ***an area of open water that can be used by seaplanes as well as amphibious aircraft to land and take off.***

- Moreover, depending on the volume of traffic, ***water aerodrome may have a terminal building on the shore or on a jetty where planes can dock, and bays where they can be parked.***
- The water dromes are present in some island nations, especially in the richer ones like the British Virgin Islands.
- Also, there are few in Canada, including Yellowknife on the Great Slave Lake, Tofino on Vancouver Island and Whitehorse on Schwatka Lake.

Seaplane projects in India

The ***first attempt for seaplane operations was taken by Manmohan Singh government in 2010.***

- The Airport Authority of India is working on ***seven locations in the three States of Gujarat, Assam and Odisha to locate positions for seaplane operations.***
- Till now, ***16 seaplane routes have been identified*** under Regional Connectivity Routes under UDAN scheme.
- Seaplane projects will provide faster and hassle free travel option for the long, treacherous and hilly regions of the country.

Challenges in Seaplane Operations

- A proper and ***comprehensive regulation for seaplane operations is lacked.***
- High duties levied on the import of aircraft could hamper the implementation especially in the nascent stage.
- There are apprehensions regarding the ***adverse environmental impacts*** that may arise due to seaplane operations.
- Seaplane operations, ***may cause disturbance to natural habitation of water bodies***, such as in Chilka lake, a Ramsar site and home to many migrated birds.
- Kerala government withdrew its permission for seaplane operations due to ***fishermen apprehensions*** that it affects their livelihood.

Mains Question:

Discuss the Significance of seaplane projects and the potential in India.

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.

FOR PRELIMS

INTERNATIONAL SATAVADHANAM PROGRAMME

The 'International 'Satavadhanam'' program is a **unique literary feat, to preserve and promote Telugu language traditions** launched by the Vice President.

Highlights

‘Avadhanam’ as a literary feat has greatly contributed to the Telugu language’s glorious tradition.

- ‘Avadhanam’ is an exciting literary performance that involves solving tricky literary posers, improvising poems and tests a person’s capability of performing such multiple tasks simultaneously.
- It is like a test of the poet’s literary prowess and scholarship.
- The ‘International ‘Satavadhanam’’ program, was organized by Dr. Medasani Mohan under the auspices of Sri Krishnadevaraya Satsang in Tirupati.

Gandhian Young Technological Awards

Recently, Gandhian Young Technological Awards in two categories -SITARE-GYTI and SRISTI-GYTI awards were given.

What are the Gandhian Young Technological Awards?

Gandhian Young Technological Innovation awards constitute two categories of awards, SITARE–GYTI under Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and SRISTI-GYTI given by SRISTI.

The full Form of these two awards are

- Students Innovations for Advancement of Research Explorations – Gandhian Young Technological Innovation (SITARE-GYTI), and
- Society for Research and Initiatives for Sustainable Technological Innovations-Gandhian Young Technological Innovation (SRISTI-GYTI) awards.

The awards and appreciations are given under these two categories to encourage technology students to move towards setting up Biotech and other start-ups.

PIB-NOVEMBER 7th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

RO-PAX SERVICE

PM to inaugurate **Ro-Pax terminal at Hazira** and flag off Ro-Pax ferry service between Hazira and Ghogha on 8th November.

What is the ROPAX service?

- ROPAX (roll on/roll off passengers) service is a water transport service project under Eastern Waterfront Development.

- Ro-Pax ferry service will reduce travel time, logistics cost and lower environmental footprint.
- It will create **new avenues for jobs & enterprises and give a boost to tourism** in the region.

Ro-Pax terminal

- The Ro-Pax Terminal being inaugurated at Hazira is of 100 meters length and 40 meters width.
- The terminal has wide ranging facilities including administrative office building, parking area, substation and water tower etc.

Ro-Pax Ferry Vessel

- **The Ro-Pax Ferry Vessel 'Voyage Symphony'** is a three decks vessel with DWT 2500-2700 MT, with displacement of 12000 to 15000 GT.
- It has a load capacity of 30 trucks (of 50 MT each) on the main deck, 100 passengers cars on the upper deck and 500 passengers plus 34 crew & hospitality staff on the passenger deck.

Benefits

- There will be **several wide-ranging benefits** of the Hazira-Ghogha Ro-Pax ferry service.
- It will work as a **Gateway to South Gujarat and Saurashtra region**.
- It will **reduce the distance between Ghogha and Hazira** from 370 Km to 90 Km.
- The reduced cargo travel time from 10 to 12 hours to about 4 hours will result in **huge savings of fuel and lower the maintenance cost of vehicles** drastically.

About Eastern Waterfront Development

The Eastern Waterfront is a plan of **Mumbai Port Trust's (MbPT's)** to develop the port lands across **Mumbai's eastern coast stretching from Sassoon Dock to Wadala**.

- **MbPT is an autonomous Body** of the Government of India under the Ministry of Shipping.
- The project focus on a water transport by making a provision for water taxis, international and domestic cruises and ro-pax services.

GENERAL STUDIES - I

Topic- Important Geophysical phenomena, flora and fauna and the effects of such changes.

ROLE OF ANCIENT ALGAE

Context

Scientists have studied about the **role of ancient algae in building a healthy global marine ecosystem**.

Background

A study of a microscopic ancient marine algae (Coccolithophores) has found **that there is a decrease in the concentration of oceanic calcium carbonate (CaCO_3) in the Southern Indian ocean.**

The study is led by the **National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR).**

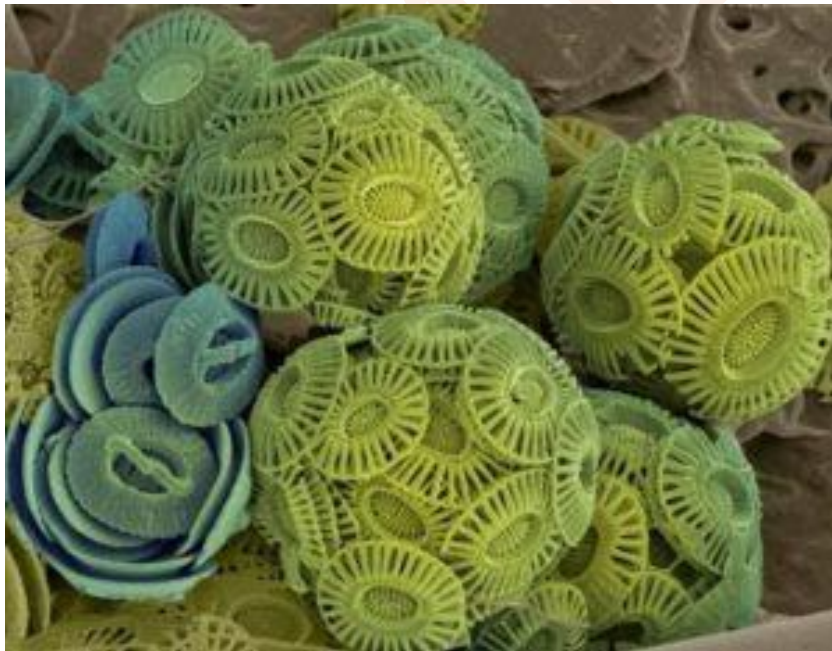
The cause of decrease

- **This decrease in CaCO_3 is attributed to** the increase in the concentration of another single-celled algae known as diatoms.
- This, in turn, will affect the growth and skeleton structure of coccolithophores, with potential significance for the world ocean ecosystem.

What are the Coccolithophores?

Coccolithophores are single-celled algae living in the upper layers of the world's oceans.

- They have been playing a key role in marine ecosystems and the global carbon cycle for millions of years.
- Coccolithophores calcify **marine phytoplankton** that produces up to 40% of open ocean calcium carbonate and responsible for 20% of the global net marine primary productivity.



What is their role?

Coccolithophores **build exoskeletons from individual CaCO_3 plates consisting of chalk and seashells building the tiny plates on their exterior.**

- Though **carbon dioxide is produced during the formation of these plates, coccolithophores help in removing it from the atmosphere and ocean by consuming it during photosynthesis.**
- **At equilibrium,** coccolithophores absorb more carbon dioxide than they produce, which is beneficial for the ocean ecosystem.

Key findings of Study

The abundance and diversity enrichment of coccolithophores in the southern Indian Ocean is **highly dependent on time and influenced by various environmental factors such as** silicate concentrations, calcium carbonate concentration, diatom abundance, light intensity and availability of macro and possibly micronutrient concentrations.

Role of weather

The reduction of coccolithophore diversity in the **early summer and late summer periods** is due to an increase in the presence of diatom algae.

- It occurs after sea ice breakdown with climate change and ocean acidification, and increases the silicate concentration in the waters of the Southern Ocean.
- **These are controlled by environmental factors in early and mid-austral summer, and grazing pressure in late austral summer.**
- Also, **physical forcing may play an important role in the transport of coccoliths and coccospheres at high latitudes**
- It indicates that the southward extension of coccolithophores is important and may occur for short periods during hot summer.

Conclusion

The results of the study point to **climate change as a major reason for the altered coccolithophore calcification rate.**

- **Different environmental factors and the ability of the species to adapt to those environmental changes would ultimately determine the future coccolithophore calcite production.**
- These investigations are important for future intervention to bring positive changes in the marine ecosystem and global carbon cycle.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

BANKING REGULATION (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE, 2020

Context

In pursuance of the commitment to ensure safety of depositors across banks, the President has promulgated the Banking Regulation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020.

What is it?

- The Ordinance amends the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 as applicable to Cooperative Banks.

- The Act regulates the functioning of banks and provides details on various aspects such as licensing, management, and operations of banks.
- Under the act, ***all urban and multi-State cooperative banks will come under the direct supervision of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).***

Exclusions: The Act does not apply to certain cooperative societies.

These are:

- *Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS),*
- *cooperative land mortgage banks, and*
- *Any other cooperative societies (except those specified in the Act).*

What for?

The Ordinance seeks ***to protect the interests of depositors and strengthen cooperative banks.***

- It will improve governance and oversight by extending powers already available with RBI in respect of other banks to Co-operative Banks as well for sound banking regulation.
- It will ensure professionalism and enabling their access to capital.
- ***The amendments do not affect existing powers of the State Registrars of Co-operative Societies under state co-operative laws.***

Background

Currently, all the ***urban and multi-State cooperative banks*** come under dual regulation of the RBI and the Registrar of Co-operative Societies.

- Co-operative banks are registered under the States Cooperative Societies Act.
- ***Registrar of Co-operative Societies***, is responsible for incorporation, registration, management, audit, supersession of board and liquidation.
- ***RBI is responsible*** for regulatory functions such maintaining cash reserve and capital adequacy, among others.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has regulatory power over these banks under the ***Banking Regulations Act, 1949, and the Banking Laws (Co-operative Societies) Act, 1955.***

Why this ordinance was needed?

The ordinance comes after ***several instances of fraud and serious financial irregularities*** were reported within the urban and multi-State cooperative banks.

- This includes the major scam at the Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank last year.
- In September, the RBI was forced to supercede the PMC Bank's board and impose strict restrictions.

Significance

There are 1482 urban co-operatives banks and 58 multi-state co-operative banks in the country at present.

CHROME IAS ACADEMY

- These banks have a depositor base of 8.6 crores, and about Rs. 4.84 lakh crore of capital.
- ***The ordinance empower the RBI to regulate all urban and multi-state co-operative banks on the lines of commercial banks.***
- It will also provide more security to depositors.

FOR PRELIMS

INDIA-ITALY VIRTUAL SUMMIT

A Virtual Bilateral Summit between Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of Italy Prof. Giuseppe Conte was held on 6th November, 2020.

Highlights

The Summit provided an opportunity to the two leaders to comprehensively review the broad framework of the bilateral relationship.

- On regional and international issues, both sides **agreed to coordinate closely at multilateral fora** especially G-20.
- **Italy will assume the Presidency of G-20 in December 2021 followed by India in 2022.**
- **Together, India and Italy will be part of the G20 Troika from December, 2020.**
- India welcomed **Italy's decision to join ISA** as soon as the ratification process is completed.

PIB-NOVEMBER 9th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

EOS-01 MISSION

Context

India's latest earth observation satellite, EOS-01, was launched on November 7, 2020.

Highlights

- India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, **in its fifty first flight (PSLV-C49)**, successfully launched **EOS-01 along with nine international customer satellites** from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR, Sriharikota.
- **The nine customer satellites from** Lithuania (1), Luxembourg (4) and USA (4) were launched under a commercial arrangement with **New Space India Limited (NSIL)**.

About EOS-01

- **EOS-01 is an earth observation satellite**, intended for applications in **agriculture, forestry and disaster management support.**

- EOS-01 is another **Radar Imaging Satellite (RISAT)** that will work together with RISAT-2B and RISAT-2BR1 launched last year.
- **EOS-01 was initially named RISAT-2BR2**, and was supposed to be the third of the **three-spacecraft constellation** aimed at providing **all-weather round-the-clock service** for high-resolution images.
- Henceforth, it seems, **all the earth observation satellites would be called EOS-series**.

What it will do?

Land and forest mapping and monitoring, mapping of resources like water or minerals or fishes, weather and climate observations, soil assessment, geospatial contour mapping are all done through earth-observation satellites.

Radar imaging

Depending on the **wavelength of the electromagnetic radiation used by the radar**, different properties on land can be captured in the image.

- Radar can **distinguish one kind of target from another** (such as a bird from an aircraft), and some systems are able **to recognize specific classes of targets** (for example, a commercial airliner as opposed to a military jet fighter).
- One big advantage that radar imaging has over optical instruments is that **it is unaffected by weather, cloud or fog, or the lack of sunlight. It can produce high-quality images in all conditions and at all times.**
- **According to ISRO**, EOS-01 is intended for applications in agriculture, forestry and disaster management support.
- The radar images are also considered to be **immensely useful for military requirements**.

Mains Question:

What is the Radar Imaging? Discuss the uses and significance of EOS-series.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

AIM–SIRIUS INNOVATION PROGRAMME 3.0

Atal Innovation Mission and Sirius (Russia) Launch ‘AIM–Sirius Innovation Programme 3.0’.

Highlights

- The **AIM–Sirius programme is a first Indo-Russian bilateral youth innovation initiative** for School Students.
- It will Foster Innovative Collaborations among Indian and Russian Youth.
- It seeks to develop technological solutions (both web- and mobile-based) for the two countries.

What is the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)?

- AIM is the Government of India's flagship initiative to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.
- It includes **Self-Employment and Talent Utilization (SETU)**, which is the Government of India's endeavour to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Objective

Its objective is to serve as a platform for promotion of world-class Innovation Hubs, Grand Challenges, Start-up businesses and other self-employment activities, particularly in technology driven areas.

Key function of AIM

- **Entrepreneurship promotion** through Self-Employment and Talent Utilization, wherein innovators would be supported and mentored to become successful entrepreneurs.
- **Innovation promotion:** to provide a platform where innovative ideas are generated.

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.
- It aims to 'Cultivate one Million children in India as Neoteric Innovators'.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

ATAL BEEMIT VYAKTI KALYAN YOJANA (ABVKY)

Context

Claims through Affidavit Form no longer required now under Atal Beemit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana (ABVKY) of ESIC.

Highlights

- While analysing the response of the beneficiaries to the Scheme under relaxed conditions, it was found that the condition of submitting the claim in Affidavit Form is causing inconvenience to the claimants.
- ESIC relaxed the eligibility conditions for the period **24 March to 31 December 2020** to provide relief to the workers who have become unemployed during COVID-19 Pandemic.

About ABVKY:

Atal Beemit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana (ABVKY) was launched by the **Employee's State Insurance (ESI)** in 2018.

CHROME IAS ACADEMY

- It aims to financially support those **who lost their jobs or rendered jobless for whatsoever reasons due to changing employment pattern.**
- Under it, unemployment benefit is paid to the workers covered under the Employees' State Insurance (ESI) scheme.
- Unemployment benefit is paid in the form of cash compensation upto 90 days, once in a lifetime, to be claimed after three months (90 days) in one or more spells for being rendered unemployed.

ESI Scheme in India

The Employees' State Insurance Corporation is a **pioneer Social Security organization.**

- It **provide comprehensive social security benefits** like reasonable Medical Care and a range of Cash Benefits in times of need such as employment injury, sickness, death etc.
- It is covering about 3.49 Crores of family units of workers and providing matchless cash benefits and reasonable medical care to its 13.56 crore beneficiaries.

About Employee's State Insurance (ESI)

ESI 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.
- The **Union Minister of Labour and Employment is its Chairman.**
- It is managed by **Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC)** according to rules and regulations stipulated there in the ESI Act 1948.

About the ESI Act, 1948:

- ESI Act, applies to **all factories and notified establishments** located in implemented areas **employing 10 or more persons.**
- **It is applicable on employees drawing wages up to Rs. 21,000 per month (Rs. 25,000 for persons with disabilities).**

GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

NANOBLITZ 3D

Context

New tool can map Nano-mechanical properties of materials like multi-phase alloys, composites & multi-layered coatings.

About

Scientists from **International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials (ARCI)** collaboration with **Nanomechanics Inc., Oak Ridge, USA** have jointly

CHROME IAS ACADEMY

developed an advanced tool for mapping Nano-mechanical properties of materials like multi-phase alloys, composites, and multi-layered coatings.

What is NanoBlitz 3D?

- **NanoBlitz 3D is an advanced indentation technique for mapping the mechanical properties of composites, solders, and multiphase materials.**
- Each indentation takes less than one second.

Potential Applications

- The **high-speed mapping capabilities** of the tool can also be used to quickly establish structure-property linkages at a micrometer length scale or higher.
- This can help to understand multi-scale mechanics and aid in development of hierarchical materials.

Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials (ARCI)

International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials (ARCI) was established in the year 1997.

- It is an **Autonomous Research and Development Centre of Department of Science and Technology (DST)**, Government of India.
- Its main campus is at Hyderabad and with operations in Chennai and Gurgaon.

FOR PRELIMS

MAAREECH: ADVANCED TORPEDO DECOY SYSTEM

Navy Inducts Indigenously Developed Torpedo Decoy System

Highlights

- Maareech is a new induction in Anti – Submarine Warfare capability of the Indian Navy.
- Advanced Torpedo Decoy **System Maareech is capable of being fired from all frontline warships.**
- It is Designed & Developed by DRDO labs (NSTL and NPOL).

PIB-NOVEMBER 10th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

BRICS FINANCE MINISTERS AND CENTRAL BANK GOVERNORS (FMCBG)

Context

Finance Minister Finance participated in the **1st BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) meeting**.

Highlights

- 1st BRICS FMCBG meeting was organised under the **BRICS Russian Chairmanship**.
- The BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors also discussed expansion of the membership of the New Development Bank.
- The agenda of the meeting included discussions on the outcomes of G20 Saudi Presidency in 2020.
- All the **BRICS countries are the members G20**.

India's Response:

- India observed that the G20, has provided broad guidance to navigate a collective global response to the COVID-19 crisis along with other significant initiatives.
- Additionally, the **G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative** ensured immediate support to address the liquidity needs of low-income countries.

On taxation of digital economy

- BRICS members have played an important role in ensuring that concerns of emerging economies are appropriately reflected in these initiatives.
- On the **ongoing international efforts to find a solution to the issue of taxation of digital economy**, a consensus solution will play an important role in ensuring fairness, equity and sustainability of tax systems.

On New Development Bank

- The BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors also discussed expansion of the membership of the New Development Bank (NDB).
- India supported the expansion of the membership of NDB and emphasised the importance of regional balance.
- It shared its perspective on **Russia's initiative to develop an integrated Digital Platform (Data Room)**.

What is BRICS?

BRICS is the group of five major emerging countries – **Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa**.

- It together **represents about 42% of the population, 23% of GDP, 30% of the territory and 18% of the global trade**.
- The **acronym BRIC was coined by by economist 'Jim O'Neill' of Goldman Sachs in 2001** to indicate the emerging powers that would be, alongside the United States, the five largest economies of the world in the 21st century.
- In 2006, BRIC countries started their dialogue, which since 2009 takes place at annual meetings of heads of state and government.

- In 2011, with South Africa joining the group, the BRICS reached its final composition, incorporating a country from the African continent.

Structure

- **BRICS does not exist in form of organization**, but it is an annual summit between the supreme leaders of five nations.
- The **Chairmanship of the forum is rotated annually among the members, in accordance with the acronym B-R-I-C-S.**
- BRICS cooperation in the past decade has expanded to include an annual programme of over 100 sectoral meetings.

New Development Bank

NDB is a multilateral development bank jointly founded by the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) at the **6th BRICS Summit in Fortaleza, Brazil in 2014.**

- The bank is set up to foster greater financial and development cooperation among the five emerging markets.
- **It is headquartered at Shanghai, China.**
- The NDB was given observer status in the United Nations General Assembly, establishing in 2018.
- NDB is different from the World Bank in structure.
- World Bank assigns votes based on capital share, while in the **New Development Bank each participant country will be assigned one vote, and none of the countries will have veto power.**

GENERAL STUDIES - III

Topic– Major Crops – cropping patterns in various parts of the country.

SAFFRON BOWL OF INDIA EXTENDS TO THE NORTH EAST

Context

NECTAR undertakes a pilot project to explore feasibility of growing saffron in North East region.

Highlights

- Jammu and Kashmir is called the **Saffron bowl of India.**
- The saffron bowl, **which was so far confined to Kashmir**, may soon expand to the North East of India.
- Plants from **seeds transported from Kashmir to Sikkim and acclimatized** there are now flowering in **Yangyang in the Southern part of the North-East state.**
- **Similarity of climatic and geographical conditions** between Pampore (Kashmir) and Yangyang (Sikkim) leads to successful sample farming of Saffron in Yangyang

Saffron production in India

Saffron production has long been restricted to a **limited geographical area in the Union territory of Jammu & Kashmir**.

- **Pampore region, in India, commonly known as Saffron bowl of Kashmir**, is the main contributor to saffron production, followed by Budgam, Srinagar, and Kishtwar districts.
- Saffron has traditionally been associated with the **famous Kashmiri cuisine**.
- It's its **medicinal values** were considered as part of the **rich cultural heritage of Kashmir**.
- As saffron growing was confined to very specific areas in Kashmir, its production remained limited.
- Though the **National Mission on Saffron** focused on several measures to improve its farming, the measures were still limited to the specified areas of Kashmir.

National Saffron Mission (NSM)

National Saffron Mission (NSM) **launched by the Centre in 2010**

- **It aims to boost saffron cultivation has failed to yield the desired results** even though the five-year project was extended by another two years in October 2015.
- The project's report card is dismal if one goes by the complaints of the saffron cultivators. However, officials connected with the Mission claim it is a success.
- The NSM was enhanced to Rs 400 crore in 2015. **Its duration was extended by two years.**

North East Centre for Technology Application and Reach (NECTAR)

- NECTAR is an autonomous body under the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India.
- It is supporting a pilot project to explore the feasibility of growing saffron in North East region of India, with the same quality and higher quantity.

Mains Question:

The saffron bowl, which was so far confined to Kashmir, is now expanding to the North East of India. Discuss.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

SATAT SCHEME

Context

A MoU was signed today on Waste to Energy plant at Okhla, Delhi, between Indian Oil, NTPC Ltd and South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC).

Highlights

The management of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) is a major issue in Delhi, and this Energy plant will open the path towards the solution.

- The Indian Oil, SDMC and NTPC are coming together for this landmark project that has the potential to carve out a greener and more energy efficient future for the Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- This is an existing model of providing offtake guarantee, under the SATAT scheme for compressed biogas production plants.

About the SATAT Initiative

Sustainable Alternative towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT) is an initiative aimed at setting up of Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) production plants.

- It makes CBG available in the market for use in automotive fuels by inviting Expression of Interest from potential entrepreneurs.
- The initiative was launched in October 2018 by the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas in association with Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) Oil Marketing Companies (OMC).

What is the Bio-gas?

Bio-gas is **produced naturally through a process of anaerobic decomposition from waste / bio-mass sources** like agriculture residue, cattle dung, sugarcane press mud, municipal solid waste, sewage treatment plant waste, etc.

- **After purification**, it is compressed and called CBG.
- CBG has pure **methane content of over 95%**.

What is the CBG?

Compressed Bio-Gas is exactly similar to the commercially available natural gas in its composition and energy potential.

- CBG has same calorific value (~52,000 KJ/kg) and other properties like CNG.
- It can be used as an alternative, renewable automotive fuel. Given the abundance of biomass in the country.
- Compressed Bio-Gas has the potential to replace CNG in automotive, industrial and commercial uses in the coming years.

Benefits of the programme

There are multiple benefits from **converting agricultural residue, cattle dung and municipal solid waste into CBG on a commercial scale**:

- Responsible waste management, reduction in carbon emissions and pollution
- Additional revenue source for farmers
- Boost to entrepreneurship, rural economy and employment
- Support to national commitments in achieving climate change goals
- Reduction in import of natural gas and crude oil
- Buffer against crude oil/gas price fluctuations

Significance

The potential for Compressed Bio-Gas production from various sources in India is estimated at about 62 million tonnes per annum.

Mains Question:

Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) production has potential to play a significant role as a sustainable alternative towards Affordable Transportation. Discuss.

FOR PRELIMS

STATEHOOD DAY: UTTARAKHAND

Uttarakhand was formed on **9th November 2000** as the 27th State of India.

- It was carved out of northern Uttar Pradesh.
- Located at the foothills of the Himalayan mountain ranges, it is **largely a hilly State**, having **international boundaries with China (Tibet) in the north and Nepal in the east**.
- On its north-west lies Himachal Pradesh, while on the south is Uttar Pradesh.

India Mobile Congress 2020

The **fourth edition of the India Mobile Congress (IMC) 2020** was announced.

- This prestigious event, jointly organized by the **Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and Cellular Operators Association of India (COAT)**.
- This **year IMC's theme** is going to be – “Inclusive Innovation – Smart | Secure | Sustainable”.
- **IMC** is considered the **largest Digital Technology Forum in Asia**.

PIB-NOVEMBER 11th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

20th SUMMIT OF SCO COUNCIL OF HEADS

Context

20th Summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Heads of State was held on November 10, 2020 (in Video Conference Format).

Highlights

The Meeting was **chaired by the President of the Russian Federation Mr. Vladimir Putin**.

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi led the Indian delegation.
- Other **SCO Member States** were represented by their Presidents, while India and Pakistan were represented at the level of Prime Minister.
- **Other participants were:** Secretary General of the SCO Secretariat, Executive Director of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure, the Presidents of the four Observers (Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran, Mongolia) of the SCO.
- **President Emomali Rahmon of the Republic of Tajikistan** for assuming the chairmanship of SCO next year.

India and SCO countries relationship

- India has strong cultural and historical connect with the SCO region and it has firm commitment towards **strengthening connectivity in the region** with initiatives like **International North-South Transport Corridor, Chabahar Port and Ashgabat Agreement**.
- **20th anniversary of SCO** will be observed in **2021** as the **“SCO Year of Culture”**.
- The **first SCO exhibition on Shared Buddhist Heritage** to be organized by National Museum of India, **SCO Food Festival in India next year** and the **translation of ten regional language literary works** into Russian and Chinese.

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.

- ***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-

- ***Kazakhstan***
- ***China***
- ***Kyrgyzstan***
- ***Russia***
- ***Tajikistan***
- ***Uzbekistan***
- ***India***
- ***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 - II

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

THIRTY- METER TELESCOPE (TMT) PROJECT

Context

Indian astronomers collaborated with Nobel laureate on Thirty Meter Telescope Project.

Highlights

- **2020 Physics Nobel Laureate Prof. Andrea Ghez** had worked closely with Indian astronomers on the design of back-end instruments and possible science prospects of the **Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) project**.
- The **TMT is being installed at Maunakea in Hawaii**, which can revolutionized the understanding of the universe and the enigmas in it.

What is the Thirty-meter telescope (TMT)?

The Thirty-meter telescope (TMT) project is an **international partnership** between **CalTech, Universities of California, Canada, Japan, China, and India**.

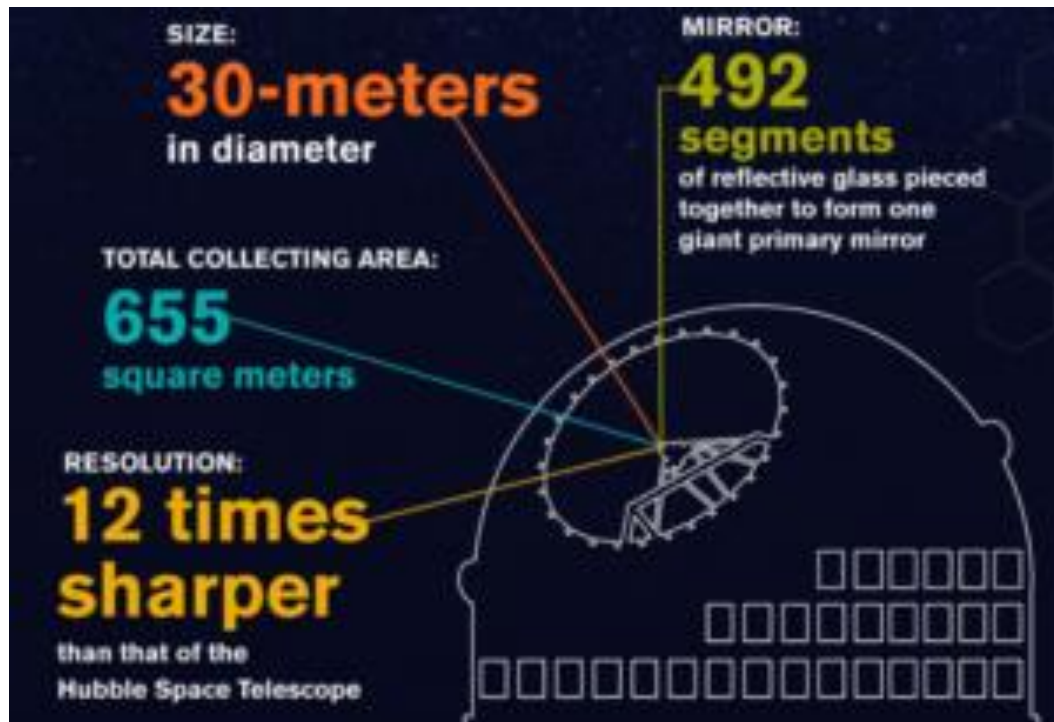
The Thirty Meter Telescope is a **new class of extremely large telescopes** that will allow us to see deeper into space and observe cosmic objects with unprecedented sensitivity.



Key features of TMT

- With its 30 m prime mirror diameter, **TMT will be three times as wide**, with nine times more area, than the **largest currently existing visible-light telescope in the world**.
- This will provide unparalleled resolution with TMT images more than **12 times sharper** than those from the **Hubble Space Telescope**.

- **When operational**, TMT will provide new observational opportunities in essentially every field of astronomy and astrophysics.



What will TMT Explore?

TMT will be a unique tool for probing many outstanding open questions in astronomy.

- Its adaptive optics and spectroscopic capabilities will allow astronomers to explore the **mysterious period in the life of the universe when the first stars and galaxies were formed.**
- It will provide information about the **nature of “first-light” objects and their effects on the universe’s evolution.**
- TMT’s high resolution will extend scientists’ capability **to detect and investigate black holes** that reside in the center of many distant galaxies.
- TMT will also play a very important role in advancing our knowledge of **the physical processes that lead to star and planet formation.**
- TMT will be able to characterize and study the properties of exoplanets leading us closer **to finding out if life exists beyond the Earth.**

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

SPECIAL LIQUIDITY SCHEME FOR NBFCS AND HFCS

Context

CHROME IAS ACADEMY

With a view to improving the liquidity position of NBFCs as well as HFCs, the Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs announced a launch of a Special Liquidity Scheme.

Key features of the Scheme

RBI will provide funds for the Scheme by subscribing to government guaranteed special securities issued by the Trust.

- **The total amount** of such securities issued outstanding shall not exceed Rs. 30,000 crores at any point of time.
- **Government of India will provide an unconditional and irrevocable guarantee** to the special securities issued by the Trust.
- The Scheme is being launched on July 1, 2020 through a Special Purpose Vehicle in the form of **SLS Trust set up by SBI Capital Markets Limited (SBICAP)**.

Eligibility

Any NBFC including Microfinance Institutions registered with RBI under the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 **(excluding those registered as Core Investment Companies)**.

Any HFC registered with the National Housing Bank (NHB) under the National Housing Bank Act, 1987.

These must be complying with the following broad conditions:

- **Compliance with RBI regulations on Capital adequacy**
- **Net NPA is less than 6% as on 31.03.2019**
- **Net profit in at least one of the two preceding financial years**
- **Rated as investment grade by a rating agency**

Significance

This facility is a part of the Government of India and RBI's efforts to alleviate the concerns of the market participants on the availability of funds to the sector.

FOR PRELIMS

NATIONAL EDUCATION DAY

- The **birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad on 11 November** is celebrated as the **National Education Day**.
- The National Education Day (Rashtriya Shiksha Diwas) programme was organised by **Indian Institute of Technology Bombay** to commemorate **the birth anniversary of India's First Education Minister Maulana Abul Kalam Azad**.

Hunar Haat

Hunar Haat will restart from tomorrow after a gap of about 7 months due to the Corona pandemic.

- Union Minority Affairs Ministry will inaugurate “HunarHaat” at DilliHaat, Pitampura.
- Hunar Haat, to be held from 11-22 November, restarts with **the theme of “Vocal for Local”**.

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.

INSPIRE Programme

“Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE)” is an innovative programme sponsored and managed by the Department of Science & Technology for attraction of talent to Science.

- **The basic objective of INSPIRE is** to communicate to the youth of the country the excitements of creative pursuit of science, attract talent to the study of science at an early age.
- A striking feature of the programme is that **it does not believe in conducting competitive exams for identification of talent at any level**.
- It believes in and relies on the efficacy of the existing educational structure for identification of talent.

PIB-NOVEMBER 13th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES- II

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

PLI SCHEME TO 10 KEY SECTORS

Context

The Union Cabinet has given its approval to introduce the **Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme** in the 10 key sectors.

It aims **for Enhancing India’s Manufacturing Capabilities and Enhancing Exports** – Atmanirbhar Bharat.

The 10 key sectors are:

1. Advance Chemistry / Cell (ACC) Battery
2. Electronic/Technology Products
3. Automobiles & Auto Components
4. Pharmaceuticals drugs
5. Telecom & Networking Products
6. Textile Products: MMF segment and technical textiles
7. Food Products
8. High Efficiency Solar PV Modules
9. White Goods (ACs & LED)
10. Speciality Steel

Other highlights

- The PLI scheme will be **implemented by the concerned ministries/departments** and will be **within the overall financial limits prescribed**.
- Under PLI Scheme for 10 sectors, **about ₹1.46 lakh crore outlay are estimated for over the next five years**.
- These sectors have been identified on the basis of their potential to create employment and make India self-reliant.

What is PLI scheme?

Production Linked Incentive Schemes (PLI Scheme) **are an outcome- and output-oriented scheme where incentives will be paid only if the manufacturers make the goods.**

- These schemes provide **the cash incentives for five to seven years and all the sunrise and important sectors** are proposed to be covered in this.
- **The sectors** includes automobile, networking products, food processing, advanced chemistry and solar PV manufacturing.

Key features of the scheme:

- The scheme shall extend an incentive of 4% to 6% on incremental sales (over base year) of goods manufactured in India and covered under target segments, to eligible companies, **for a period of five (5) years with financial year (FY) 2019-20 considered as the base year for calculation of incentives.**
- The Scheme will be implemented through a Nodal Agency which shall act as **a Project Management Agency (PMA)** and be responsible for providing secretarial, managerial and implementation support and carrying out other responsibilities as assigned by MeitY from time to time.

Eligibility

- All electronic manufacturing **companies which are either Indian or have a registered unit in India** will be eligible to apply for the scheme.

- These companies can either create a new unit or seek incentives for their existing units from one or more locations in India.
- Any **additional expenditure incurred by companies on plant, machinery, equipment, research and development and transfer of technology** for manufacture of mobile phones and related electronic items will be eligible for the incentive scheme.
- However, all **investment done by companies on land and buildings for the project will not be considered** for any incentives or determine eligibility of the scheme.

Significance

The scheme, will on one hand attract big foreign investment in the sector, while also encouraging domestic mobile phone makers to expand their units and presence in India.

Mains Questions:

How the initiative like 'Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI)' can boost the Indian Economy? Discuss.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

17th ASEAN INDIA SUMMIT

Context

The 17th ASEAN-India Summit was organized under the **chairmanship of H.E. Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of Vietnam the current Chair of ASEAN.**

The Summit, which saw the participation of **all ten ASEAN Member States**, was conducted in virtual format.

Highlights of the summit

- The ASEAN leaders acknowledged India's contribution towards promoting peace and stability in the region and welcomed **India's support to ASEAN centrality.**
- The Leaders also welcomed the **adoption of the new ASEAN-India Plan of Action for 2021-2025.**
- The discussions also covered regional and international issues of common interest and concern, including South China Sea and terrorism.
- Both sides noted the importance of promoting a rules-based order in the region including through upholding adherence to international law, especially the **UNCLOS.**
- The leaders affirmed the importance of maintaining and **promoting peace, stability, safety and security in the South China Sea, and ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight.**

About ASEAN

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, *was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand.*

- *The Founding Fathers of ASEAN* was *Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.*
- *Brunei Darussalam, Viet Nam, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Cambodia* joined the ASEAN in later years.

Aims and Purposes

As set out in the ASEAN Declaration, the aims and purposes of ASEAN are-

- To accelerate the **economic growth, social progress and cultural development** in the region through joint endeavours in the spirit of equality and partnership.
- To strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asian Nations;
- To promote regional peace and stability through abiding **respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries of the region** and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter;
- To promote active **collaboration and mutual assistance on matters of common interest** in the economic, social, cultural, technical, scientific and administrative fields;
- To maintain **close and beneficial cooperation with existing international and regional organisations** with similar aims and purposes, and explore all avenues for even closer cooperation among themselves.

Fundamental Principles

Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) of 1976 contained the fundamental principles of ASEAN-

- Mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, and national identity of all nations;

The right of every State to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion or coercion;

1. Non-interference in the internal affairs of one another;
2. Settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful manner;
3. Renunciation of the threat or use of force; and
4. Effective cooperation among themselves.

ASEAN-India Relations

- The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) comprises of Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Thailand, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam.
- India's focus on a strengthened and multi-faceted relationship with ASEAN is an outcome of the significant changes in the world's political and economic scenario since the early 1990s and India's own march towards economic liberalisation.

- India's search for economic space resulted in the 'Look East Policy'.
- The Look East Policy has today matured into a dynamic and action oriented 'Act East Policy'.
- India's relationship with ASEAN is a key pillar of our foreign policy and the foundation of our Act East Policy.
- ASEAN is the second largest trading partner of India after China.
- India and ASEAN represent fast moving economies.
- ASEAN remains central to the economic integration of the Indo-Pacific region through Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

India currently is working with ASEAN on multiple connectivity projects, through land, water, and air. Such as-

1. India-Myanmar-Thailand Highway,
2. Kaladan Multinational Transit Transport Project,
3. Project Development Fund for CLMV countries (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam).

Mains Question:

Given the China's aggressive attitude in South China Sea, discuss the significance of ASEAN-India Relations

GENERAL STUDIES -III

Topic— changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL SERVICES CENTRES AUTHORITY (BANKING) REGULATIONS, 2020

Context

IFSC Authority approves the International Financial Services Centres Authority (Banking) Regulations, 2020,

The salient aspects of the Banking Regulations include:

- Laying down the **requirements for setting up IFSC Banking Units (IBUs)**
- **Permitting persons resident outside India** (having net worth not less than USD 1 Million) **to open foreign currency accounts** in any freely convertible currency at IFSC Banking Units (IBUs)
- **Permitting persons resident in India** (having net worth not less than USD 1 Million) **to open foreign currency accounts** in any freely convertible currency at IFSC Banking Units (IBUs).
- Laying down the **permissible activities of IBUs** including credit enhancement, credit insurance, and sale , purchase of portfolios, engage in factoring and forfaiting of export receivables and undertake equipment leasing, including aircraft leasing
- Permitting the **Authority to determine business that a Banking Unit may be permitted to conduct in INR with persons resident in India and persons resident outside India,**

subject to settlement of the financial transaction in relation to such business in freely convertible foreign currency.

What is the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC)?

IFSC is a jurisdiction that provides financial services to resident and non-resident Indians in foreign currencies.

- Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) is a business district promoted by the Gujarat government.
- The units in IFSC will be recognised as non-resident entity under the FEMA regulations of Reserve Bank of India.
- ***The SEZ Act 2005 allows setting up an IFSC in an SEZ or as an SEZ after approval from the central government.***

What is the objective of setting up GIFT IFSC?

- The aim is to develop a world-class smart city that becomes a global financial hub with the development of an International Financial Services Centre.
- The government is also trying to bring back the financial services and transactions that are currently carried out in offshore financial centres by local corporate entities and overseas branches or subsidiaries of financial institutions (FIs) to India.

What are the services an IFSC can provide?

- Fund-raising services for individuals, corporations and governments
- Asset management and global portfolio diversification undertaken by pension funds, insurance companies and mutual funds
- Wealth management
- Global tax management and cross-border tax liability optimization, which provides a business opportunity for financial intermediaries, accountants and law firms.
- Global and regional corporate treasury management operations that involve fund-raising, liquidity investment and management and asset-liability matching
- Risk management operations such as insurance and reinsurance
- Merger and acquisition activities among trans-national corporations

What does an IFSC require?

IFSCs such as Dubai International Financial Centre and Shanghai International Financial Centre, which are located within SEZs, have six key building blocks:

- Rational legal regulatory framework
- Sustainable local economy
- Stable political environment
- Developed infrastructure
- Strategic location
- Good quality of life

Significance

- Over the last decade or so a significant market share in financial services related to India has moved to other international financial centres.
- Bringing this business to India is clearly beneficial in terms of economic activity and employment gains for India.
- Given the world class business environment and competitive tax regime at GIFT-IFSC, it is expected that trading of INR-USD contracts may bring volumes to India.
- This would also bring larger global participation in India through IFSC and connect India's IFSC globally.

Mains Questions:

Discuss the significance of international financial services centres.

FOR PRELIMS

FEDERATION EQUESTRE INTERNATIONALE (FEI) EVENTING

- Equestrian Federation of India (EFI) is Organising Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) Eventing from 12-15 Nov.
- It is an international horse riding competition.
- The FEI Eventing Competition will be held at Army Polo and Riding Centre (APRC), Delhi Cantt from 12 – 15 Nov 2020.

PIB-NOVEMBER 17th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

BIRSA MUNDA

Context

15 November, is celebrated as the Birth anniversary of Birsa Munda.

About Birsa Munda

Birsa Munda was a young freedom fighter and a tribal leader, whose spirit of activism in the late nineteenth century, is remembered to be a strong mark of protest against British rule in India.

- **Born on November 15, 1875**, belonged to the Munda tribe in the Chhotanagpur Plateau area.
- He is often referred to as '**Dharti Abba**' or the **Earth Father**.
- He led the **rebellion that came to be known as Ulgulan (revolt)** or the Munda rebellion against the British government-imposed feudal state system.
- In recognition of his impact on the national movement, **the state of Jharkhand was created on his birth anniversary in 2000**.

Social reforms

Birsa Munda was also a founder of a **new religion called Birsait**. The religion believed in one God and encouraged them to revert to their original religious beliefs.

- People started referring to him as **an economical religion healer, a miracle-worker and a preacher**.
- People belonging to the **tribe of Mundas, Oraons and Kharias** moved together to visit the new prophet and to find a cure to their problems.
- He **awakened the masses and sowed the seeds of revolt in them against the landlord as well as the Britishers**.

Revolutionary activities

He organized **masses to stop paying debts/interest to moneylenders and taxes to the British**.

- By this, he led a revolt to bring an end to Victorian rule and the **establishment of Munda Rule in Jharkhand (erstwhile Bengal Presidency region)**.
- **He formed two military units**— one for military training and armed struggle, the other for propaganda.
- He **combined religion with politics** and traveled across villages giving discourses and building a politico-military organization.
- His struggle against the exploitation and discrimination against tribals led to the passing of the **Chotanagpur Tenancy Act in 1908** which restricted the passing of land from the tribal people to non-tribals.
- On **March 3, 1900, Birsa Munda was arrested by the British police while he was sleeping** with his tribal guerilla army at Jamkopai forest in Chakradharpur. He died in Ranchi jail on **June 9, 1900 at a young age of 25**.

Achievements

Birsa's achievements as a young tribal revolutionary has continued to be celebrated over decades now and he has successfully carved out a space for himself in popular and folk literature, academia, and mass media.

Mains Question:

Birsa Munda have an indelible marks in the history and in awakening the Tribal. Write a short note on it.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

SPECIAL LIQUIDITY SCHEME FOR NBFCs AND HFCs

Context

With a view to improving the liquidity position of NBFCs as well as HFCs, the Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs announced a launch of a Special Liquidity Scheme.

Key features of the Scheme

- **RBI will provide funds for the Scheme** by subscribing to government guaranteed special securities issued by the Trust.
- **The total amount** of such securities issued outstanding shall not exceed Rs. 30,000 crores at any point of time.
- **Government of India will provide an unconditional and irrevocable guarantee** to the special securities issued by the Trust.
- The Scheme is being launched on July 1, 2020 through a Special Purpose Vehicle in the form of **SLS Trust set up by SBI Capital Markets Limited (SBICAP)**.

Eligibility

- Any NBFC including Microfinance Institutions registered with RBI under the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 (**excluding those registered as Core Investment Companies**).
- Any HFC registered with the National Housing Bank (NHB) under the National Housing Bank Act, 1987.

These must be complying with the following broad conditions:

- **Compliance with RBI regulations on Capital adequacy**
- **Net NPA is less than 6% as on 31.03.2019**
- **Net profit in at least one of the two preceding financial years**
- **Rated as investment grade by a rating agency**

Significance

This facility is a part of the Government of India and RBI's efforts to alleviate the concerns of the market participants on the availability of funds to the sector.

GENERAL STUDIES- II

Topic– Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

CODE ON SOCIAL SECURITY 2020

Context

Labour ministry notifies draft rules under Code on Social Security 2020.

Background

The draft rules provide for **operationalization of provisions in the Code on Social Security, 2020** relating to Employees' Provident Fund, Employees' State Insurance Corporation, Gratuity, Maternity Benefit, Social Security and Cess in respect of Building and Other Construction Workers, Social Security for Unorganised Workers, Gig Workers and Platform Workers.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DRAFT

Aadhaar based registration

- The draft rules provide for **Aadhaar based registration including self-registration by unorganised workers, gig workers and platform workers on the portal of the Central Government.**
- The rules further provide for **Aadhaar based registration of Building and Other Construction Workers** on the specified portal of the Central Government and the State Government or the State Welfare Board.

Migrant workers

- Where a **building worker migrates from one State to another he shall be entitled to get benefits in the State** where he is currently working and it shall be the responsibility of the Building Workers Welfare Board of that State to provide benefits to such a worker.
- Provision has also been made in the rules **regarding gratuity to an employee who is on fixed term employment.**
- The rules also **provide for single electronic registration of an establishment** including cancellation of the registration in case of closure of business activities.

Self-assessment

- The **procedure for self-assessment and payment of Cess** in respect of building and other construction workers has been elaborated in the rules.
- The rate of **Interest for delayed payment of such cess has been reduced from 2 per cent every month** or part of a month to 1 per cent.

Powers of Assessing Officer

- Under the existing rules, the Assessing Officer has the **power to direct that no material or machinery can be removed or disturbed from the construction site.**
- Such power for indefinitely stopping of construction work has been withdrawn in the draft rules.
- Further, under the draft rules, the **assessing officer can visit the construction site only with the prior approval** of the Secretary of the Building and Other Construction Workers Board.
- The rules have also provided for the manner of payment of contribution by the aggregators through self-assessment.

About the Code on Social Security 2020

Revamping labour regulations has been an area of focus for the government.

- **The objective:** is to **consolidate and simplify the multitude of labour regulations into four labour Codes** – the Code on Wages, Social Security, Industrial Relations and Occupational Safety and Health, subsuming 29 existing regulations.
- The **Code on Social Security 2020, which received the Presidential Assent on 28 September 2020, subsumes nine regulations** relating to social security, retirement and employee benefits.

Mains Question:

Write a critical note on Code on Social Security 2020.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

ISLAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (IDA)

Context

The Union Home Minister chaired the sixth meeting of the Island Development Agency (IDA).

About

The programme ‘**Holistic development of islands**’ was reviewed by Island Development Agency (IDA).

- For the first time in the country, an initiative of sustainable development in the identified Islands within scientifically-assessed carrying capacity has been taken-up.
- **Four islands of Andaman & Nicobar** and **five islands of Lakshadweep** have been identified.
- In the second phase, suitable sites in 12 more islands of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and 5 islands in Lakshadweep have been covered.

Island Development Agency (IDA)

Island Development agency (IDA) was **constituted in 2017** for the holistic development of islands.

- The meetings of the agency are chaired by the **Union Home Minister**.
- **Members of IDA include** -cabinet secretary, the home secretary, secretary (environment, forests and climate change), secretary (tourism) and secretary (tribal welfare).

Why IDA is established?

- A number of offshore-identified islands of India hold **immense unexploited potential**.
- These islands have prospects for fostering growth and achieving cohesive socio-economic development of the region in particular and also, the nation as a whole.

- They can significantly contribute to the GDP by leveraging the gains from promoting infrastructure and tourism on a large scale.

SIGNIFICANCE OF IDA

Strategic Significance

- **Location of Andaman & Nicobar (A&N Islands) and the Lakshadweep Islands and China's assertive expansionist policy** in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) make it crucial.
- Development of critical infrastructure and upgrade the military base in these regions.
- **Illicit activities** such as Pirates and territorial violations can be curbed if the Islands such as Lakshadweep are strategically developed.

Economic Significance

- The Islands host an **unexplored Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)** with clearly demarcated boundaries that can be capitalized on in numerous ways.
- The **varied ecosystem can be exploited for its medicinal plants and exotic plant species, sustainable agriculture and horticulture practices conducive to the agro-climatic conditions** of the regions can be propagated.
- **Fisheries**, the main occupation of the larger population of these regions, can be given a thrust to develop modernized and sustainable inland fisheries.
- The Islands can be developed as **prime Tourist Hotspots**.

Mains Question:

Discuss the Economic and strategic significance of 'Holistic development of islands' program.

FOR PRELIMS

STATEHOOD DAY: JHARKHAND

Jharkhand was founded by the **Bihar Reorganisation Act** on **15 November 2000** as the **28th State of India**.

- **15 November** is also observed as the birth anniversary of the legendary **Bhagwan Birsa Munda**.
- Jharkhand is also known as **'The land of forest' or 'Bushland'**.
- Situated in northeastern India, presently, **Jharkhand state shares its border** with Bihar to the north, Uttar Pradesh to the northwest, Chhattisgarh to the west, Odisha to the south and West Bengal to the east.
- The State of Jharkhand comprises forests of **Chhotanagpur plateau and Santhal Pargana** and has different cultural traditions.

Statue of Peace

'Statue of Peace' is being installed at **Vijay Vallabh Sadhana Kendra, Jetpura, in Pali, Rajasthan.**

- It is established to mark the **151st birth anniversary celebrations of Jainacharya Shree Vijay Vallabh Surishwer Ji Maharaj.**
- The 151-inch tall statue **has been made from Ashtadhatu- 8 metals**, with Copper being the major constituent, and
- Shree Vijay Vallabh Surishwer Ji Maharaj (1870-1954) led an austere life as a Jain Saint working selflessly and dedicatedly to spread the message of Lord Mahavira.

PIB-NOVEMBER 18th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

12th BRICS Summit 2020

Context

Prime Minister Modi addressed virtually to the 12th BRICS Summit on 17th November 2020.

Highlights

The 12th BRICS Summit is being **hosted by Russia.**

- The summit is being held in the backdrop of the **75th anniversary of the United Nations** and in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- This year's **theme is: 'Global Stability, Shared Security and Innovative Growth.**
- In **2021, BRICS will complete 15 years.**

Background

The BRICS summit is taking place at a time two of the Bloc's members, India and China, are locked in a bitter border standoff in eastern Ladakh for over six months.

- Both Mr. Modi and Mr. Xi had come face-to-face virtually at the annual summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) on November 10.
- The **BRICS is known as an influential Bloc that represents over 3.6 billion people**, or half of the world's population.
- The BRICS countries have a **combined GDP of USD 16.6 trillion.**

What is BRICS?

BRICS is the group composed by the *five major emerging countries – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.*

- It together represents about **42% of the population, 23% of GDP, 30% of the territory and 18% of the global trade.**

- The **acronym BRIC was coined by by economist 'Jim O'Neill' of Goldman Sachs in 2001** to indicate the emerging powers that would be, alongside the United States, the five largest economies of the world in the 21st century.
- In 2006, BRIC countries started their dialogue, which since 2009 takes place at annual meetings of heads of state and government.
- **In 2011, with South Africa joining the group**, the BRICS reached its final composition, incorporating a country from the African continent.

Structure

- BRICS does not exist in form of organization, but it is an annual summit between the supreme leaders of five nations.
- The Chairmanship of the forum is rotated annually among the members, in accordance with the acronym B-R-I-C-S.
- BRICS cooperation in the past decade has expanded to include an annual programme of over 100 sectoral meetings.

Objectives

The BRICS seeks to deepen, broaden and intensify cooperation within the grouping and among the individual countries for more sustainable, equitable and mutually beneficial development.

- The BRICS countries act as one to promote a more legitimate international system, including **advocating reform of the UN Security Council**.
- The BRICS group is a **South-South framework for cooperation**.
- **To provide an alternative of the current governance of Western financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank** for that they have announced the establishment of the bank.

BRICS on global institutional reforms

The BRICS **was formed initially for co-operation to start among the BRICs nation was the financial crises of 2008**.

- The crises raised doubts over sustainability of the **dollar-dominated monetary system**.
- **The BRICs called for** the “the reform of multilateral institutions in order that they reflect the structural changes in the world economy and the increasingly central role that emerging markets now play”.
- BRICs managed to push for institutional reform which led to **International Monetary Fund (IMF) quota reform in 2010**.

Challenges before BRICS

- The marked **dominance of big three Russia-China-India** is challenge for the BRICS.
- To become a true representative of large emerging markets across the world, BRICS must become pan-continental.
- Its membership must include more countries from other regions and continents.

- The BRICS will need to expand its agenda for climate change and development finance, aimed at building infrastructure dominates agenda.
- As BRICS moves forward foundational principles of BRICS i.e. respect for sovereign equality and pluralism in global governance are liable to be tested as the five member countries pursue their own national agendas.

Mains Question:

The issue such as, the military standoff between India and China on the Doklam plateau, is a threat to the notion that a comfortable political relationship is always possible amongst the BRICS. Discuss.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE (IMFC)

Context

Union Minister of Finance & Corporate Affairs attended through video-conference the Plenary Meeting of the International Monetary and Financial Committee.

Highlights

Union Minister attended through video-conference the Plenary Meeting of the International Monetary and Financial Committee of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

- The discussions were based on IMF Managing Director's Global Policy Agenda titled, ***"Exceptional Times – Exceptional Action"***.
- The members of the IMFC updated the committee on the actions and measures taken by member countries to combat COVID-19.

About IMFC

- The International Monetary and Finance Committee have 24 members, drawn from the pool of 187 governors.
- The IMFC represents all the member countries of the Fund.

What it does?

- The IMFC discusses the management of the international monetary and financial system.
- The IMFC meets twice a year, during the Spring and Annual Meetings.
- It also discusses proposals by the Executive Board to amend the Articles of Agreement.
- The Committee discusses matters of common concern affecting the global economy and also advises the IMF on the direction its work.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

AGRICULTURE INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

Context

The GOI has given its approval to a new pan India **Central Sector Scheme-Agriculture Infrastructure Fund**.

About the Agri-Infra Fund

The Agri-Infra Fund was **part of the Rs 20 lakh crore stimulus package** announced in response to the COVID-19 disaster. **The duration of the Scheme** shall be from FY2020 to FY2029 (10 years).

Under the scheme, Rs. One Lakh Crore will be provided by banks and financial institutions as loans to:

- Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS),
- Marketing Cooperative Societies, Farmer Producers Organizations (FPOs),
- Self Help Group (SHG),
- Farmers, Joint Liability Groups (JLG),
- Multipurpose Cooperative Societies, Agri-entrepreneurs, Startups, Aggregation Infrastructure Providers and
- Central/State agency or Local Body sponsored Public Private Partnership Project.

Objective:

The scheme shall provide a **medium – long term debt financing facility** for investment in viable projects **for post-harvest management Infrastructure and community farming assets** through interest subvention and financial support.

Key features of the scheme

- Loans will be disbursed in four years starting with sanction of Rs. 10,000 crore in the current year and Rs. 30,000 crore each in next three financial years.
- **Interest subvention:** All loans under this financing facility will have interest subvention of 3% per annum up to a limit of Rs. 2 crore.
- This subvention will be available for a maximum period of seven years.
- **Credit guarantee:** will be available for eligible borrowers from this financing facility **under Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) scheme** for a loan up to Rs. 2 crore.
- The fee for this coverage will be paid by the Government.
- **In case of FPOs** the credit guarantee may be availed from the facility created under **FPO promotion scheme of Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare (DACFW)**.

Implementation

- Agri Infra fund will be managed and monitored through an **online Management Information System (MIS) platform**.
- It will enable all the qualified entities to apply for loan under the fund.
- The **National, State and District level Monitoring Committees** will be set up to ensure real-time monitoring and effective feed-back.

Mains question:

The Agriculture Infrastructure Fund project by way of facilitating formal credit to farm and farm processing-based activities is expected to create numerous job opportunities in rural areas. How? Discuss.

FOR PRELIMS

BLOOMBERG NEW ECONOMY FORUM

Context

PM Modi address the **3rd Annual Bloomberg New Economy Forum** on 17th November 2020.

What is the Bloomberg New Economy Forum?

The Bloomberg New Economy Forum was **established in 2018 by Mr. Michael Bloomberg**.

- It seeks **to build a community of leaders** to engage in real conversations leading to actionable solutions about the critical challenges facing a world economy in the throes of a historic transition.
- The inaugural Forum was held in Singapore, and the second annual Forum was hosted in Beijing.
- These covered a range of topics, including global economic management, trade and investment, technology, urbanization, capital markets, climate change, and inclusion.

Bengaluru Tech Summit, 2020

PM to inaugurate Bengaluru Tech Summit, 2020 on 19th November.

Highlights

- The Bengaluru Tech Summit is scheduled from 19th to 21st November, 2020.
- **The theme of the summit: "Next is Now".**
- **The summit is organised by** the Government of Karnataka along with Karnataka Innovation and Technology Society (KITS), Karnataka government's Vision Group on Information Technology, Biotechnology & StartUp, Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) and MM Activ Sci-Tech Communications.

India-Luxembourg Virtual Summit

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his counterpart from Luxembourg Xavier Bettel will hold a virtual summit on 19 November.

Highlights

- It will be the **first stand-alone summit** meeting between India and Luxembourg in the past two decades.
- India and Luxembourg have continued to maintain high-level exchanges in the recent past.
- **Luxembourg is one of the most important financial centres globally.**
- Several Indian companies have raised capital by issuing **Global Depositary Receipts (GDRs)** at the Luxembourg Stock Exchange.
- Several Luxembourg-based investment funds hold substantial banking and asset management market share in portfolio investments in India.

PIB-NOVEMBER 19th, 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.*

PM-FME SCHEME

Context

The capacity building component of the **Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises scheme (PM-FME Scheme)** and **GIS One District One Product (ODOP) digital map of India** was launched by Union Government.

What is the PM-FME Scheme?

Launched under the **Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan**, the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PM-FME) Scheme is a **centrally sponsored scheme**.

- the scheme envisions **to directly assist the 2,00,000 micro food processing units** for providing financial, technical, and business support for upgradation of existing micro food processing enterprises.
- **Tenure of the PM-FME Scheme** will be with an outlay of Rs. 10,000 crore over a period of **five years from 2020-21 to 2024-25**.

Objectives

- It aims **to enhance the competitiveness of existing individual micro-enterprises** in the unorganized segment of the food processing industry.

- **To promote formalization of the sector** and provide support to Farmer Producer Organizations, Self Help Groups, and Producers Cooperatives along their entire value chain.

KEY FEATURES OF THE SCHEME

Imparting training

The scheme envisages imparting training to food processing entrepreneurs, various groups, viz., SHGs / FPOs / Co-operatives, workers, and other stakeholders associated with the implementation of the scheme”.

- **The training of Master Trainers aims to** benefit nearly 8 Lakhs beneficiaries from micro-enterprises including members of Farmer Producer Organizations, Self-Help Groups, Cooperatives, Tribal communities, and others.

Capacity building

Capacity building is an important component of PM-FME scheme.

- Under the capacity building component of the PM-FME scheme, training of the Master Trainers would be delivered through online mode, classroom lecture and demonstration, and self-paced online learning material.
- **NIFTEM and IIFPT are playing a key role** by providing training and research support to selected enterprises/groups/clusters in partnership with State Level Technical Institutions.
- **The Master Trainers will train the District Level Trainers**, who will train the beneficiaries. The current training is based on Fruits and Vegetable processing & EDP.
- The **assessment and certification of the training program** under the capacity building will be provided by FICSI.

GIS ODOP digital map of India

Under the PM-FME scheme, **states have identified the food products of districts**, keeping in view the availability of existing clusters and raw materials.

- The GIS ODOP digital map of India **provides details of ODOP products of all the states and facilitate the stakeholders.**
- The digital map also has **indicators for tribal, SC, ST, and aspirational districts.**
- It will enable stakeholders to make concerted efforts for its value chain development.

Mains question:

What the Government has envisioned by the capacity building component of PM-FME Scheme? Discuss.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

GLOBAL PREVENTION COALITION (GPC) FOR HIV PREVENTION

Context

Recently, The Ministerial meeting of the Global Prevention Coalition (GPC) for HIV Prevention was organized virtually.

Highlights

- The conference was **hosted by UNAIDS and UNFPA** on behalf of the Global HIV Prevention Coalition (GPC).
- The conference this year holds significance in **achieving the 2016 UNGA commitment to end AIDS by 2030.**
- Member States of GPC had agreed **to reduce new adult HIV infections by 75% at the end of 2020 from 2010 levels.**

What is the Global Prevention Coalition (GPC) for HIV Prevention?

- The Global HIV Prevention Coalition **was formed in 2017.**
- It is a **global coalition of United Nations Member States, donors, civil society organizations and implementers** was established to support global efforts to accelerate HIV prevention.

Members

Its membership includes the 25 highest HIV burden countries, UNAIDS Cosponsors, donors, and civil society and private sector organizations.

Objectives

- The overarching goal of the Global HIV Prevention Coalition is **to strengthen and sustain political commitment for primary prevention** by setting a common agenda among key policy-makers, funders and programme implementers.
- It also seeks **to ensure accountability** by measuring and tracking progress in HIV prevention in the countries identified as priorities in the fast-track strategy spearheaded by UNAIDS.

Target set by GPC

With countries and communities at the centre, it seeks to ensure accountability for delivering prevention services at scale in order:

- To achieve the targets of the 2016 Political Declaration on Ending AIDS.

- a 75% reduction in HIV infections towards fewer than 500 000 infections by 2020, and
- To ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030.



HIV and AIDS in India

- India has the **third largest HIV epidemic in the world**, with 2.1 million people living with HIV.
- India's epidemic is concentrated among key affected populations, including sex workers and men who have sex with men.
- **Compared to neighbouring countries**, India has made good progress in reducing new HIV infections by half since 2001.
- Despite free antiretroviral treatment being available, uptake remains low as many people face difficulty in accessing clinics.
- In 2017, **88,000 people in India were newly infected with HIV**. The majority were men, who accounted for 50,000 new infections.
- There were 34,000 new infections among women and around 3,700 among children (aged 0-14 years).

India's HIV prevention initiatives

National AIDS Control. Organization (NACO) is the body responsible for formulating policy and implementing programmes for the prevention and control of the HIV epidemic in India.

- A key goal of the NACP-IV is to reach 80% of key affected populations with targeted interventions.
- Targeted interventions are implemented on the premise that prevention of HIV transmission among key affected populations will also lower HIV transmission among the general population.
- The generic Anti-Retroviral drugs (ARV) from India to the world has had a critical impact in controlling the HIV epidemic.

Mains Question:

“India’s HIV prevention model can be adopted and scaled up in many countries by tailoring the intervention as per local settings”. Discuss.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

DIRECT MARKETING

Context

Union Agriculture Minister asked Chief Ministers of States to encourage direct marketing through Cooperatives/ Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) etc.

Highlights

- ‘Direct Marketing’ helps decongest mandis and facilitates timely marketing of farm produce during lockdown.
- Government of India has been making concerted efforts to facilitate farmers in direct marketing and assure better returns.
- The States have been requested to promote the concept of ‘Direct marketing’ to facilitate farmers/ group of farmers/FPOs/ Cooperatives in selling their produce to bulk buyers/big retailers/processors etc.

Measures taken

In order to decongest wholesale markets & to boost the supply chain, following two modules under National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) have been introduced:

FPO Module

- FPOs can directly trade with e-NAM portal.
- They can upload produce details from collection centers with picture/quality parameter and avail the bidding facility without physically reaching to the mandis.

Warehouse Based Trading Module

Farmers can sell their produce from Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA) registered warehouses notified as deemed market, and do not physically bring the produce to the nearest mandis.

What is Direct Marketing?

- Direct marketing is a promotional method.
- It involves presenting information about your company, product, or service to your target customer without the use of an advertising middleman.

- It is a targeted form of marketing that presents information of potential interest to a consumer that has been determined to be a likely buyer.

What are the Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)?

- It is one type of **Producer Organizations (PO)** where the members are farmers.
- Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) is providing support for promotion of FPOs.
- PO is a generic name for an organization of producers of any produce, e.g., agricultural, non-farm products, artisan products, etc.

What are the essential features of a PO?

- It is formed by a group of producers for either farm or non-farm activities.
- It is a registered body and a legal entity.
- Producers are shareholders in the organization.
- It deals with business activities related to the primary produce/product.
- It works for the benefit of the member producers.
- A part of the profit is shared amongst the producers.
- Rest of the surplus is added to its owned funds for business expansion.

How does the FPO's helps?

- FPOs help in collectivization of such small, marginal and landless farmers in order to give them the collective strength to deal with such issues.
- Members of the FPO will manage their activities together in the organization to get better access to technology, input, finance and market for faster enhancement of their income.

Benefits

- Small and marginal farmers do not have economic strength to apply production technology, services and marketing including value addition.
- Through formation of FPOs, farmers will have better collective strength for better access to quality input, technology, credit and better marketing access through economies of scale for better realization of income.

FOR PRELIMS

AI SUPERCOMPUTER PARAM SIDDHI

India's AI supercomputer Param Siddhi 63rd among top 500 most powerful non-distributed computer systems in the world.

- Param Siddhi, is a **high performance computing-artificial intelligence (HPC-AI)** supercomputer established under **National Supercomputing Mission (NSM)** at C-DAC.
- The supercomputer with Rpeak of 5.267 Petaflops and 4.6 Petaflops Rmax (Sustained) was conceived by C-DAC and developed jointly with support of Department of Science and Technology (DST), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) under NSM.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

Topic– India and its neighborhood- relations.

LAUNCH OF RUPAY CARD PHASE TWO IN BHUTAN

Context

Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with his Bhutanese counterpart Lotay Tshering on launched RuPay card Phase-II.

Highlights

- The prime ministers of the two countries had jointly launched **Phase-I of the project during Mr. Modi's state visit to Bhutan in August last year.**
- The **implementation of Phase-I of RuPay cards in Bhutan** has enabled visitors from India to access ATMs and Point of Sale (PoS) terminals across Bhutan.
- The RuPay card Phase-II will **allow Bhutanese card holders to access the RuPay network in India.**

What is the RuPay card?

The RuPay card is an Indian debit and credit card payment network, with acceptance at ATMs, POS devices and e-commerce websites.

Cooperation between India-Bhutan

India and Bhutan share a special partnership, anchored in mutual understanding and respect, reinforced by a shared cultural heritage and strong people to people links.

Trade and Economic assistance:

- The trade between the two countries is governed by the **India Bhutan Trade and Transit Agreement 1972 which was last renewed in November 2016.**
- The agreement establishes a free-trade regime between the two countries and also provides for duty-free transit of Bhutanese exports to third countries.
- India is Bhutan's leading development partner. Since the launch of **First Five Year Plan of Bhutan in 1961**, India has been extending financial support to Bhutan's FYPs.

Water Resources:

India is providing electricity to Bhutan for its domestic use and revenue from surplus electricity exported to India.

- This **hydropower cooperation comes under 2006 Agreement on Cooperation in Hydropower.**
- Under this agreement, India has agreed to assist Bhutan in the development of minimum of 10,000 MW of hydropower and import of surplus electricity from same by year 2020.

- So far, Government of India has constructed three Hydroelectric Projects (HEPs) in Bhutan. Currently, India is helping Bhutan in the development of power plant on Mangdechhu River.

Border Management:

There is a **Border District Coordination Meeting (BDCM)** Mechanism between the bordering States and the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) to facilitate coordination on border management and other related matters.

Educational and Cultural Cooperation:

- About 60,000 Indian nationals live in Bhutan, employed mostly in the hydro-electric power construction and road industry.
- In addition, around 8000-10,000 daily workers enter and exit Bhutan every day in border towns.
- A large number of college going Bhutanese students study in India and Indian Government provides number of scholarships to Bhutanese students.

Significance of India- Bhutan Relationship

- Bhutan is a neighboring country and shares border with four Indian States: Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal and Sikkim.
- It also serves as a buffer between India and China.
- Bhutan provides a market for Indian commodities and is a destination for Indian investment. Bhutan is also a rich source of hydropower for India.

Mains Question:

Peace, stability and security of Bhutan's Borders are crucial for India. Discuss.

GENERAL STUDIES -II

Topic– Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW (VNR) 2020

Context

NITI Aayog presented India's second Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the **United Nations High-level Political Forum (HLPF)** on Sustainable Development, 2020.

What is the HLPF?

The United Nations High-level Political Forum (HLPF) is the **foremost international platform for follow-up and review of progress on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

The HLPF meets annually in July for eight days under the auspices of the **Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)** of the UN.

Voluntary National Review (VNR)

The VNRs presented by Member States at the HLPF are a critical component of the review of progress and implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

- The reviews are voluntary and state-led and are aimed at facilitating the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned.
- The process of preparation of a country's VNR provides a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of various relevant stakeholders.
- NITI Aayog prepared and presented India's first VNR in 2017.

India VNR 2020

- India presented its VNR along with other second time presenters like Bangladesh, Georgia, Kenya, Morocco, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria and Uganda.
- India's VNR this year has undertaken a paradigm shift in terms of embodying a "whole-of-society" approach in letter and spirit.
- NITI Aayog engaged with sub-national and local governments, civil society organizations, local communities, people in vulnerable situations and the private sector.
- As part of this process, NITI Aayog partnered with UN in India and Civil Society Organisations to curate a consultative process.

India has been playing in promoting global engagement platforms such as:

- the International Solar Alliance (ISA),
- the Coalition for Disaster Resilience Infrastructure (CDRI), and
- the active participation in implementing the Sendai Framework, UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Paris Climate Agreement.

Decade of Action: Taking SDGs from Global to Local

- The India VNR 2020 report was also unveiled during this event.
- The report is a comprehensive account of the adoption and implementation of the 2030 Agenda in India.
- Apart from presenting a review of progress on the 17 SDGs, the report discusses at length the policy and enabling environment, India's approach to localising SDGs, and strengthening means of implementation.

Conclusion

In line with the theme of **Taking SDGs from Global to Local**, the goal-wise account of progress on the SDGs has been appended with examples of a range of diverse good practices and success stories of interventions from the States, especially Aspirational Districts.

The India VNR 2020 represents NITI Aayog's efforts in embodying the whole-of-society approach and its commitment towards localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

AIDS TO NAVIGATION BILL, 2020

Context

Shipping Ministry issues draft “Aids to Navigation Bill 2020” for public consultation.

About the Draft Bill

The ‘Aids to Navigation Bill, 2020’ is aimed **to regulate state-of-the-art technologies of marine navigation that were earlier used to tangle in statutory provisions of Lighthouse Act, 1927.**

- The draft bill is proposed **to replace the almost nine-decade old Lighthouse Act, 1927.**
- It seeks **to incorporate the global best practices**, technological developments and India’s International obligations in the field of Aids to Marine Navigation.
- This initiative is part of the proactive approach adopted by the Ministry of Shipping by **repealing archaic colonial laws and replacing it with modern and contemporary needs of the maritime industry.**

Key Highlights

- **The legislation aims to regulate** state-of-the-art technologies of marine navigation that were earlier used to tangle in statutory provisions of Lighthouse Act, 1927.
- The draft bill aims **to empower the Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships (DGLL)** with additional power and functions such as Vessel Traffic Service, Wreck flagging, training and certification.
- DGLL, under this Act, will empower **to implement other obligations under International Conventions, where India is a signatory.**
- It also provides for **identification and development of heritage lighthouses.**
- **It comprises a new schedule of offences** along with commensurate penalties for obstructing and damaging the aids to navigation and non-compliance with directives issued by the Central Government and other bodies under the draft bill.

Significance

With the advent of modern technologically improved aids to maritime navigation, the role of authorities regulating and operating maritime navigation has changed drastically.

Therefore the new law encompasses a major shift from lighthouses to modern aids of navigation.

INDO-THAI COORDINATED PATROL (CORPAT)

The 30th edition of India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT) between the Indian Navy and the Royal Thai Navy is being conducted from 18 – 20 November 2020.

- To reinforce maritime links, the two navies have been carrying out CORPAT along their International Maritime Boundary Line **twice a year since 2005**.
- **The aim of this initiative** is keeping this vital part of the Indian Ocean safe and secure for commercial shipping and international trade.
- **CORPAT builds up** the understanding and interoperability between navies and facilitates institution of measures to prevent and suppress Illegal Unreported Unregulated (IUU) fishing, drug trafficking, maritime terrorism, armed robbery and piracy.
- It further **enhances the operational synergy** by exchange of information for prevention of smuggling, illegal immigration and for conduct of **SAR operations at sea**.

World Fisheries Day

World Fisheries Day is celebrated on 21st November every **year to demonstrate solidarity with all fisherfolk, fish farmers and concerned stakeholders throughout the world**.

- **On 21st November 1997**, the working fishermen and women representing World Forum of Fish Harvesters & Fish Workers from 18 countries met at New Delhi and established the **World Fisheries Forum (WFF)** advocating for a global mandate of sustainable fishing practices and policies.
- **The event aims to draw attention to** overfishing, habitat destruction and other serious threats to the sustainability of our marine and inland resources.
- The celebrations serve to focus on **changing the way the world manages global fisheries to ensure sustainable stocks and healthy ecosystems**.

Awas Diwas and Awas Week

Awas Diwas is celebrated on **20th November 2020** while Awas Week will be observed on (16th November 2020 to 22nd November 2020).

It is an initiative of **Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Health and Family welfare**.

Activities to be taken up during the celebration of Awas Diwas/ Awas Week include:

- Sensitization of beneficiaries about PMAY-G
- Organizing visits of the beneficiaries to the sites with demonstration houses.
- Organizing interaction of PMAY-G beneficiaries with local bankers to facilitate a loan to beneficiaries of PMAY-G.
- Organizing Bhoomi Pujan, Grih Pravesha, etc.
- Any other activities as it deems appropriate during the Awas Diwas/ Awas week celebrations.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

ACTIVE PHARMACEUTICAL INGREDIENTS (APIS)

Context

TIFAC releases report on 'Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients- Status, Issues, Technology Readiness and Challenges'.

Highlights

The report titled '**Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients- Status, Issues, Technology Readiness, and Challenges**' was brought out recently by **Technology Information Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC)**.

Major recommendations of the report

1. focus on engineering and scale aspect of technology development,
2. need for Mission mode Chemical Engineering with defined targets for uninterrupted synthesis of molecules and
3. to create mega drug manufacturing clusters with common infrastructure in India and
4. the technology platform to be developed for biocatalysis towards reducing process steps for cost optimization and for fluorination,
5. Investment on priority in fermentation sector of large capacity and scale supporting techno-economic feasibility,
6. Attention to technologies like hazardous reactions, flow chemistry, cryogenic reactions, and membrane technology.

What is an Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs)?

According to WHO, The active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) is,

"Any substance or combination of substances used in a finished pharmaceutical product (FPP), intended to furnish pharmacological activity or to otherwise have direct effect in the diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment or prevention of disease, or to have direct effect in restoring, correcting or modifying physiological functions in human beings."

In other words,

- **Every medicine is made up of two main ingredients** — the chemically active APIs and chemically inactive, excipients. (**Excipients are the substance that delivers the effect of APIs to one's system**)
- **Active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) is a chemical compound that is the most important raw material to produce a finished medicine.**
- **In medicine, API produces the intended effects to cure the disease.**

Example: Paracetamol is the API for Crocin and it is the API paracetamol that gives relief from body ache and fever. Fixed-dose combination drugs use multiple APIs, while single-dose drugs like Crocin use just one API.

What is TIFAC?

- Technology Information Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC), **an autonomous organization** under the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India.
- TIFAC activities encompass a wide array of technology areas and fill a critical gap in the overall S&T system of India.
- The organization has carried out technology foresight exercise, facilitated and supported technology development; prepared technology linked business opportunity reports and implemented mission-mode programmes.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT, 2019

Context

The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 comes in to force from 20th July 2020.

About the Act

- The Consumer Protection Bill, 2019 was introduced in Lok Sabha by the Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution on July 8, 2019.
- The bill received President's assent on August 9, 2019, and was also notified in the Gazette of India on the same date.
- The Bill replaces the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.

Key features of the Bill include:

Definition of consumer

- A consumer is defined as a person who buys any good or avails a service for a consideration.
- ***It does not include a person who obtains a good for resale or a good or service for commercial purpose.***
- It covers transactions through all modes including offline, and online through electronic means, teleshopping, multi-level marketing or direct selling.

Rights of consumers

There are six consumer rights have been defined in the Bill. These includes:

1. be protected against marketing of goods and services which are hazardous to life and property;
2. be informed of the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and price of goods or services;
3. be assured of access to a variety of goods or services at competitive prices; and
4. Seek redressal against unfair or restrictive trade practices.

Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

- The central government will set up a CCPA to promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers.
- It will regulate matters related to violation of consumer rights, unfair trade practices, and misleading advertisements.
- The **CCPA will have an investigation wing**, headed by a Director-General, which may conduct inquiry or investigation into such violations.

Functions of CCPA

- inquiring into violations of consumer rights, investigating and launching prosecution at the appropriate forum;
- passing orders to recall goods or withdraw services that are hazardous, reimbursement of the price paid, and discontinuation of the unfair trade practices, as defined in the Bill;
- issuing directions to the concerned trader/ manufacturer/ endorser/ advertiser/ publisher to either discontinue a false or misleading advertisement, or modify it;
- imposing penalties, and
- Issuing safety notices to consumers against unsafe goods and services.

Penalties for misleading advertisement

- The CCPA may impose a penalty on a manufacturer or an endorser of up to Rs 10 lakh and imprisonment for up to two years **for a false or misleading advertisement**.
- In case of a subsequent offence, the fine may extend to Rs 50 lakh and imprisonment of up to five years.

Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission

- Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions (CDRCs) will be set up at the district, state, and national levels.
- Complaints against an unfair contract can be filed with only the State and National Appeals from a District CDRC will be heard by the State CDRC.
- Appeals from the State CDRC will be heard by the National CDRC. Final appeal will lie before the Supreme Court.

Jurisdiction of CDRCs

- The District CDRC will entertain complaints where value of goods and services does not exceed Rs one crore.

- The State CDRC will entertain complaints when the value is more than Rs one crore but does not exceed Rs 10 crore.
- Complaints with value of goods and services over Rs 10 crore will be entertained by the National CDRC.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

ROUTEING SYSTEM IN SOUTH WEST INDIAN WATERS

Context

Routeing system in South West Indian waters separated for Merchant and Fishing Vessels.

Highlights

The Ministry of Shipping has ***separated the operation routes of merchant vessels and fishing vessels in South West Indian waters***, considering the safety and efficiency of navigation.

Why the Routes were separated?

- The Arabian Sea around the south-west coast of India is a busy sea route.
- ***The substantial number of merchant ships passing through the area, along with large number of fishing vessels are operating in the area.***
- It sometimes causes accidents between them, resulting in damage of property and environmental pollution, and in several instances has resulted in loss of lives also.

Benefits

- It will ***also ensure improvement in avoidance of collision, ease in flow of traffic along with safety of life*** at sea and enhance ***protection of marine environment***.
- It is a very proactive and positive step ***of Directorate General of Shipping which will efficiently regulate shipping traffic in this region.***

FOR PRELIMS

UMANG

Online conference under chairmanship of Union IT Minister to be organized to mark 3 Years of UMANG.

Key features of UMANG APP

The UMANG mobile app (**Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance**) is a Government of India all-in-one single, unified, secure, multi-channel, multi-lingual, **multi-service mobile app**.

- It provides **access to high impact services** of various organizations of Centre and States.
- UMANG was **developed by National e-Governance Division (NeGD)**, Ministry of Electronics & IT.
- **The aim to** develop UMANG was to enable 'Ease of Living' for Citizens by facilitating simple and effortless access to major Government services from a single mobile app.
- UMANG's **international version** to be launched during the conference for selected countries;
- **The international version of App will help** Indian international students, NRIs and Indian tourists abroad, to avail services of Indian Government, anytime.

AIM–Sirius Innovation Programme 3.0

'AIM–Sirius Innovation Programme 3.0' Finale Showcases Brilliant Co-Innovation Capability of Indo-Russia school children.

Highlights

- The **AIM–Sirius programme is a first Indo-Russian bilateral youth innovation initiative** for School Students.
- It will Foster Innovative Collaborations among Indian and Russian Youth.
- It seeks to develop technological solutions (both web- and mobile-based) for the two countries.

Exercise SIMBEX-20

Indian Navy (IN) is scheduled to host the **27th edition of India – Singapore Bilateral Maritime Exercise SIMBEX-20** from 23 to 25 November 2020 in **Andaman Sea**.

- The SIMBEX series of exercises between IN and Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN), being conducted annually **since 1994**.
- **It aimed at** enhancing mutual inter-operability and imbibing best practices from each other.
- The exercise, being conducted as a '**non-contact, at sea only**' exercise in view of COVID-19 pandemic.
- **SIMBEX series of exercises exemplify** the high level of coordination and convergence of views between India and Singapore, particularly in the maritime domain.

EXERCISE SITMEX-20

The **2nd edition of India, Singapore and Thailand Trilateral Maritime Exercise SITMEX-20**, from 21 to 22 November 20 in **Andaman Sea**.

- **The first edition of SITMEX**, hosted by Indian Navy, was conducted off Port Blair in September 2019.
- **SITMEX series of exercise aim to** strengthen mutual confidence and develop common understanding and procedures towards enhancing the overall maritime security in the region.

PIB-NOVEMBER 24th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES - III

Topic– Disaster and disaster management.

NATIONAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (NCMC)

Context

National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) reviewed the status of impending Cyclone **through video conferencing** with the Chief Secretaries of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

About NCMC

It is a committee set up by the Government of India in the **wake of a natural calamity for effective coordination and implementation of relief measures and operations.**

- **At the national level**, Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) and National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) **are the key committees involved in the top-level decision-making with respect to Disaster Management (DM).**
- A National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) has been constituted in the Cabinet Secretariat.
- It is headed by Cabinet Secretary.

Key functions:

1. The NCMC gives direction to the Crisis Management Group as deemed necessary.
2. Oversee the Command, Control and Coordination of the disaster response.

Composition

The composition of the Committee is as under-

- Cabinet Secretary Chairman,
- Secretary to Prime Minister Member, Secretary (MHA) Member,
- Secretary (MCD) Member,
- Director (IB) Member,
- Secretary (R&AW) Member,
- Secretary (Agri & Coopn.) Co-opted Member,
- An officer of Cabinet Secretariat, Convenor.

GENERAL STUDIES- III

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

LOK ADALATS

Context

27 E-Lok Adalats organized in 15 States leading to disposal of 2.51 lakh cases from June to October, 2020.

What are the 'Lok Adalats'?

Lok Adalat is one of the **alternative dispute redressal mechanisms**.

It is a forum **where disputes/cases pending in the court of law or at pre-litigation stage are settled/** compromised amicably.

What is the Legal status of Lok Adalats?

Lok Adalats have been given **statutory status** under the **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987**.

- Under the said Act, the award (decision) made by the **Lok Adalats is deemed to be a decree of a civil court**.
- Its **decisions are final and binding on all parties** and no appeal against such an award lies before any court of law.
- If the parties are not satisfied with the award of the Lok Adalat though there is no provision for an appeal against such an award, but they **are free to initiate litigation by approaching the court of appropriate jurisdiction** by filing a case by following the required procedure, in exercise of their right to litigate.
- The **Lok Adalat shall not decide the matter so referred at its own instance**, instead the same would be decided on the basis of the compromise or settlement between the parties.

Fee in the Lok Adalats

- There is **no court fee** payable when a matter is filed in a Lok Adalat.
- If a matter pending in the court of law is referred to the Lok Adalat and is settled subsequently, the **court fee originally paid in the court on the complaints/petition is also refunded** back to the parties.

Members of Lok Adalat

The persons deciding the cases in the Lok Adalats are called the Members of the Lok Adalats.

- They have the **role of statutory conciliators** only and **do not have any judicial role**.
- Therefore, they can only persuade the parties to come to a conclusion for settling the dispute outside the court in the Lok Adalat and shall not pressurize or coerce any of the parties to compromise or settle cases or matters either directly or indirectly.
- The members shall assist the parties in an independent and impartial manner in their attempt to reach amicable settlement of their dispute.

Nature of Cases to be Referred to Lok Adalat

1. Any case pending before any court.

2. Any dispute which has not been brought before any court and is likely to be filed before the court.

Provided that **any matter relating to an offence not compoundable under the law shall not be settled in Lok Adalat.**

Levels and Composition of Lok Adalats:

At the State Authority Level –

The **Member Secretary of the State Legal Services Authority** organizing the Lok Adalat would constitute benches of the Lok Adalat.

- each bench comprising of a **sitting or retired judge of the High Court or a sitting or retired judicial officer** and any one or both of- a member from the legal profession;
- A social worker engaged in the upliftment of the weaker sections and interested in the implementation of legal services schemes or programmes.

At High Court Level –

The **Secretary of the High Court Legal Services Committee** would constitute benches of the Lok Adalat.

- Each bench comprising of a **sitting or retired judge of the High Court and any one or both of- a member** from the legal profession;
- A social worker engaged in the upliftment of the weaker sections and interested in the implementation of legal services schemes or programmes.

At District Level –

The **Secretary of the District Legal Services Authority** organizing the Lok Adalat would constitute benches of the Lok Adalat.

- Each bench comprising of a sitting or retired judicial officer and any one or both of either a member from the legal profession;
- A social worker engaged in the upliftment of the weaker sections and interested in the implementation of legal services schemes or programmes or a person engaged in para-legal activities of the area, **preferably a woman.**

At Taluk Level –

The **Secretary of the Taluk Legal Services Committee** organizing the Lok Adalat would constitute benches of the Lok Adalat.

- Each bench comprising of a sitting or retired judicial officer and any one or both of either a member from the legal profession; and/or
- a social worker engaged in the upliftment of the weaker sections and interested in the implementation of legal services schemes or programmes or a person engaged in para-legal activities of the area, preferably a woman.

National Lok Adalat

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

- From February 2015, **National Lok Adalats** are being held on a specific subject matter every month.

Permanent Lok Adalat

The other type of Lok Adalat is the Permanent Lok Adalat, **organized under Section 22-B of The Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.**

- Permanent Lok Adalats have been **set up as permanent bodies with a Chairman and two members** for providing compulsory pre-litigative mechanism for conciliation and settlement of cases relating to Public Utility Services like transport, postal, telegraph etc.
- Here, even if the parties fail to reach to a settlement, the Permanent Lok Adalat gets jurisdiction to decide the dispute, provided, the dispute does not relate to any offence.
- Further, the Award of the **Permanent Lok Adalat is final and binding on all the parties.**
- The jurisdiction of the Permanent Lok Adalats is **upto Rs. Ten Lakhs.**

Mobile Lok Adalats

Mobile Lok Adalats are also **organized in various parts of the country which travel from one location to another to resolve disputes** in order to facilitate the resolution of disputes through this mechanism.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

4th EDITION OF KHELO INDIA YOUTH GAMES

Context

Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports announced the host state for the fourth edition of Khelo India Youth Games.

Highlights

- The fourth edition of Khelo India Youth Games will be **hosted by Haryana.**
- The Games will be held in **Panchkula** in Haryana.

Khelo India Scheme

- The Khelo India scheme **under Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports** has been running successfully across the country.
- The Khelo India Scheme was launched in 2016.
- **It submerged three schemes** – *Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan (RGKA), Urban Sports Infrastructure Scheme (USIS) and National Sports Talent Search Scheme (NSTSS).*

Objective of the Scheme

- Khelo India (National Programme for Development of Sports Scheme) aims to achieve the ***twin objectives of mass participation and promotion of excellence in sports***.
- ***The scheme strives to promote “Sports for All” as well as “Sports for Excellence”.***
- The scheme was revamped in the year 2017.
- It aims to mainstream sports as a tool for individual and community development, economic development and national development.

Khelo India programme has been divided into 12 verticals. These are—

1. *Play Field Development*
2. *Community Coaching Development*
3. *State Level Khelo India Centres*
4. *Annual Sports Competition*
5. *Talent Search and Development*
6. *Utilization and Creation/Upgradation of Sports Infrastructure*
7. *Support to National/Regional/State Sports Academics*
8. *Physical fitness of school children*
9. *Sports for Women*
10. *Promotion of sports amongst people with disabilities*
11. *Sports for Peace and Development*
12. *Promotion of rural and indigenous/tribal games*

Significance of Khelo India Scheme

- Talented players identified in priority sports disciplines at various levels by the High-Powered Committee will be provided annual financial assistance of INR 5 lakh per annum for 8 years.
- Under this program, about 20 million children of age group of 10 to 18 years will be included in the National Physical Fitness Campaign.

Mains Question:

Given the India's youth population, the performance in Olympic Games is not satisfactory. Why? Discuss.

PIB-NOVEMBER 25th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

SAHAKAR PRAGYA

Sahakar Pragya, an innovative capacity building initiative for the farmers associated with such entities in the country was launched by Union Agriculture Ministry.

What is the Sahakar Pragya?

Sahakar Pragya is an initiative of **National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC)**. It is a part of a series of initiatives taken up by NCDC to strengthen India's cooperative societies.

- As part of the initiative, **18 regional training centres and 45 training modules for primary cooperatives were launched.**
- The **NCDC will run these training centres across the country**, along with the **Laxmanrao Inamdar National Academy for Cooperative Research and Development (LINAC).**

Objective

- **The training modules aim** to impart knowledge and organisational skills.
- It attempt to prepare the primary cooperative societies across the country to be able to play a big role in the government's AtmaNirbhar Bharat initiative.

National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC)

- NCDC is a **statutory corporation** set up under the **National Cooperative Development Corporation Act, 1962.**
- The NCDC is functioning **as an apex financial and developmental institution exclusively devoted to the cooperative sector.**
- NCDC functions through its Head Office at New Delhi and multiple Regional Offices.

Functions:

The objectives of NCDC are planning and promoting programmes for production, processing, marketing, storage, export and import of agricultural produce, foodstuffs, industrial goods, livestock and certain other notified commodities and services on cooperative principles.

Mains Question:

Discuss the roles and functions of NCDC.

GENERAL STUDIES - I

Topic– Important Geophysical phenomena.

CYCLONE NIVAR

Within a week, the second cyclone is taking shape in the North Indian Ocean region. The Bay of Bengal will see its second Severe Cyclone of the year, after Super Cyclone Amphan formed in May.

What are the cyclones?

A cyclone is a large scale air mass that rotates around a strong center of low atmospheric pressure. Cyclones are characterized by inward spiraling winds that rotate about a zone of low pressure. It is distinguished by swift and often destructive air circulation.

Meteorologically it is classified into two categories:

- Tropical cyclones
- Temperate cyclones or Extratropical cyclones

Tropical cyclones are of thermal origin.

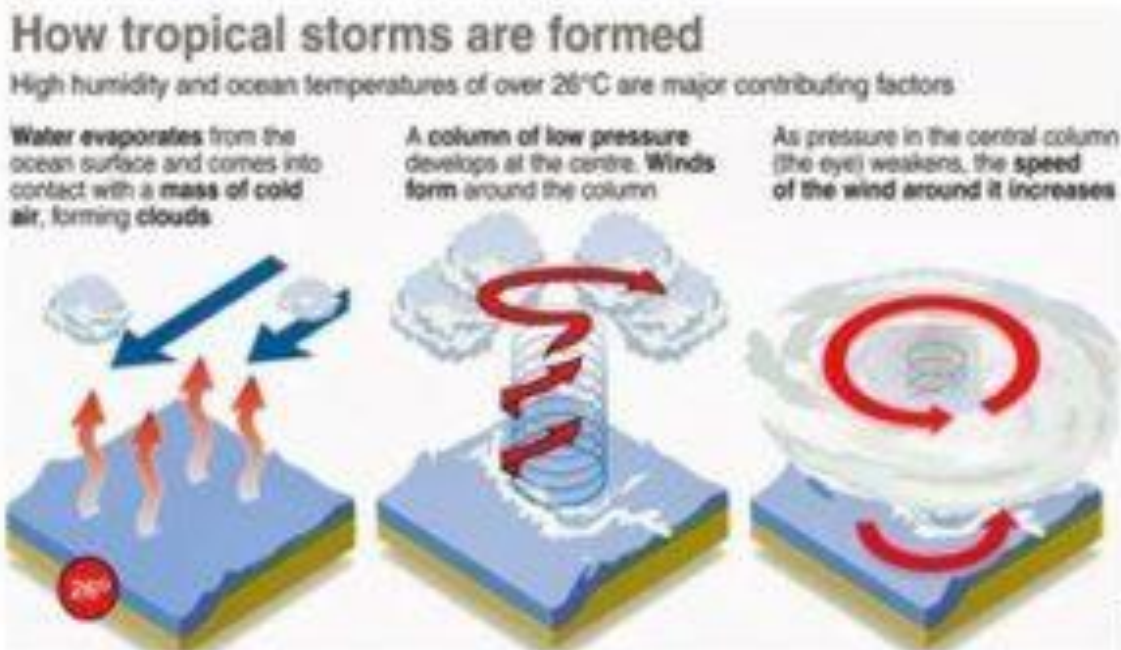
- It is caused by the warmness of ocean water and low air pressure center.
- It occurs between **Tropic of Cancer** and **Tropic of Capricorn**.

The temperate cyclone is of frontal origin.

Extratropical cyclones generally occur outside the tropics and in the middle latitudes of Earth between 30° and 60° latitude.

What are Tropical Cyclones?

- Tropical Cyclones are low pressure systems that form over warm tropical waters and have strong wind force exceeding 63 km/h to 90 km/h near the centre.
- They derive their energy from the warm tropical oceans waters having temperatures of 27° C or more which feeds the storm.
- After their formation they can persist over lower sea-surface temperatures.
- Tropical cyclones associated with the convergence of wind rotating inwards to the low-pressure point forming a closed cyclonic vortex.
- **Coriolis force** and the rapid inward circulation to the low-pressure area is the reason behind the formation of the cyclonic vortex.



Source: AFP news agency

- The circular eye or centre of a tropical cyclone is an area characterised by light winds and often by clear skies. Eye diameters are typically 40 km but can range from under 10 km to over 100 km.

- In the middle is the center of the low-pressure area which is called EYE region where the atmosphere is calm.
- The area around the eye region is called Eyewall and it is surrounded by a dense ring of cloud about 16 km high which makes the belt of strongest winds and heaviest rainfall.
- Tropical Cyclones are associated with **cumulonimbus cloud** with torrential rainfall due to which flooding and damaging storm surges that can cause inundation of low-lying coastal areas.

Categories of tropical cyclone

According to the wind speed, Tropical Cyclones are classified in to five categories:

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Category 5
Minimal damage	Moderate damage	Extensive damage	Extreme damage	Catastrophic
				
Winds 119-153 kph	Winds 154-177 kph	Winds 178-208 kph	Winds 209-251 kph	Winds 252 kph and more

Cyclone Category	Wind Speed in Km/h	Damage Capacity	Type of Disturbances	Wind Speed in Km/h
01	120-150	Minimal	Low Pressure	Less than 31
02	150-180	Moderate	Depression	31-49
03	180-210	Extensive	Deep Depression	49-61
04	210-250	Extreme	Cyclonic Storm	61-88
05	250 +	Catastrophic	Severe Cyclonic Storm	88-117
			Very Severe Cyclone	118-221
			Super Cyclone	More than 221

- **Category 1:** Less than 125 km/h strong winds – Minimal house damage. Damage to some crops, trees and caravans. Boats may drag moorings.
- **Category 2:** 125 – 164 km/h Destructive winds – Minor house damage. Significant damage to signs, trees and caravans. Heavy damage to some crops. Risk of power failure. Small boats may break moorings.
- **Category 3:** 165 – 224 km/h Very destructive winds – Some roof and structural damage.
- **Category 4:** 225 – 279 km/h Very destructive winds – Significant roofing and structural damage
- **Category 5:** More than 280 km/h extremely destructive winds – Extremely dangerous with widespread destruction.

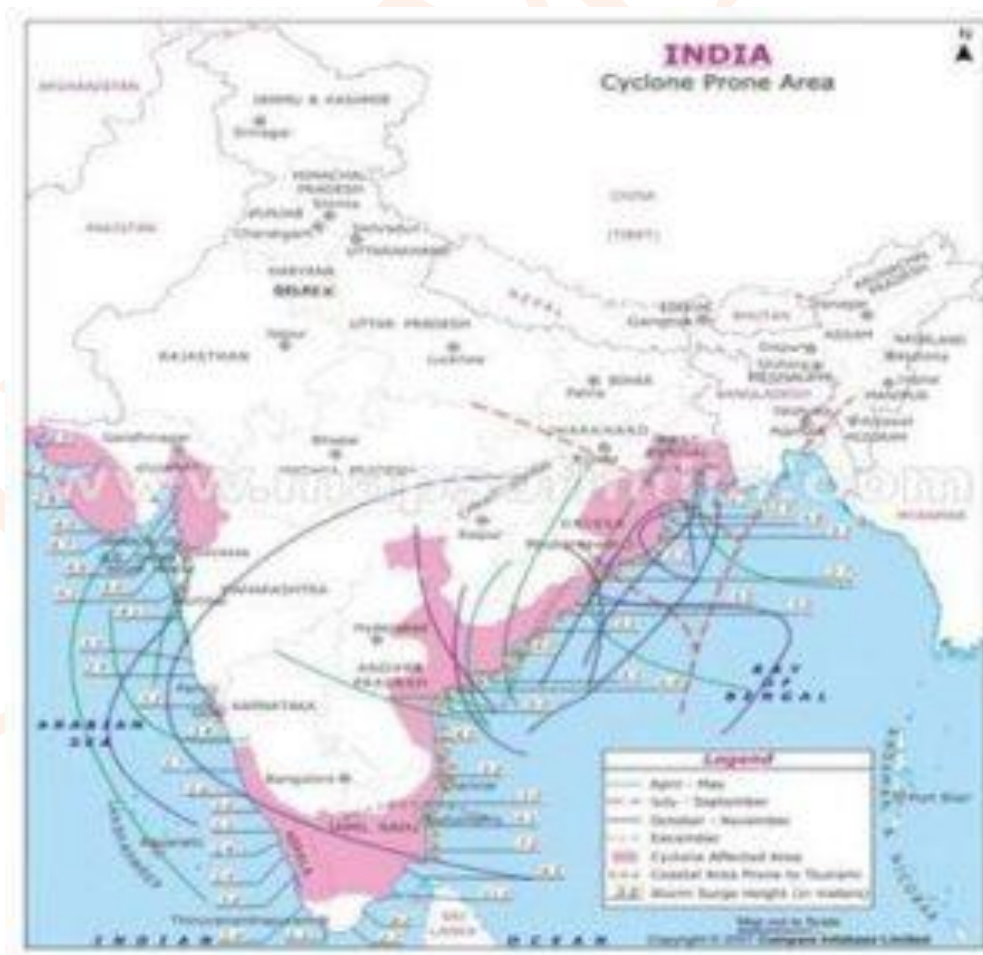
Favourable Conditions for Tropical Cyclone Formation

- Large sea surface with temperature more than 27-degree Celsius.
- Presence of the Coriolis force enough to create a cyclonic vortex

- A low-pressure condition where **ITCZ** forms between **5 to 8 degree** north and south of the equator.
- An adequate amount of **vapour supply** through evaporation.
- **Differential heating** of land and sea.
- Small variations in the vertical wind speed
- **Strong anticyclonic divergence** in the upper atmosphere.

Effects of cyclones

- **Strong winds/Squalls:** high-speed winds of tropical cyclones cause severe damage to the infrastructure. Installations, dwellings, communication system etc. and destroyed lives and property.
- **Storm surge:** Severe tropical cyclone cause an abnormal rise in sea level results in the drowning of low lying areas in the coastal region. Due to which there is loss of lives, destruction of vegetation and the salt content in seawater reduces the soil fertility.
- **Heavy rainfall:** Torrential rains cause floods resulting in loss of shelter. Also cyclonic rainfall causes landslides, soil erosion and weaken the embankments.
- **Tropical cyclone in India**
- India with a long coastline of 7516.16 km is one of the worst affected regions, where it is exposed to around 10% of tropical cyclones in the world.



- The Bay of Bengal, located in the northeast of the Indian Ocean, is responsible for the formation of some of the strongest and deadliest tropical cyclones in the world.
- Majority of the cyclones affecting India originates from the Bay of Bengal striking the eastern coast.
- The Arabian Sea is located in the northwest of the Indian Ocean. The ratio of occurrence of cyclone between the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea is approximately **4:1**.
- Storms typically do not reach a high intensity in the Arabian Sea due to dry air coming from the desert of the Arabian Peninsula and unfavorable wind shear from the monsoon.
- In Indian Ocean cyclones mainly occur during the month of May, June, October, and November.

Cyclone 'Nivar'

The **cyclones, 'Nivar'** is heading towards Karaikal in Puducherry and is expected to make the landfall on November 25.

- **Nivar** is the third name to be used from the new list of names for North Indian Ocean Cyclones, released in 2020. It was **suggested by Iran**.

Naming of cyclones

- The **World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)** has devised a mechanism where countries submit a list of names from time to time.
- Names of cyclones are chosen from this pool.
- For cyclones in the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea, the naming system was agreed by eight member countries of a group called **WMO/ESCAP and took effect in 2004**.
- These eight countries are – Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

Mains Question

What are Cyclones? How are they named? Discuss.

FOR PRELIMS

LACHIT DIWAS

On **November 24**, Assam celebrates Lachit Diwas in remembrance of Lachit Borphukan's valour and heroism.

Who was Lachit Borphukan?

Lachit Borphukan was a **commander and Borphukan (Phu-Kon-Lung) in the Ahom kingdom**, located in present-day Assam, India.



- He is known for his leadership in the **1671 Battle of Saraighat** that **thwarted a drawn-out attempt by Mughal forces under the command of Ramsingh I to take over Ahom kingdom.**
- The battle of Saraighat was fought **on the banks of the Brahmaputra in Guwahati.**
- Lachit Borphukan was an outstanding leader and strategist, who played a pivotal role in protecting the unique culture of Assam.
- Since 1999, the National Defence Academy (NDA) has been conferring its best cadet with the **Lachit Borphukan gold medal** every year.

Sir Chotu Ram

On November 24, PM Pays Tribute to Sir Chotu Ram Ji on His Birth Anniversary.



Who was Sir Chotu Ram?

Sir Chhotu Ram, was a **prominent politician in British India's Punjab Province, an ideologue of the pre-Independent India.**

- He belonged to the Jat community and championed the interest of oppressed communities of the Indian subcontinent.
- For this feat, **he was knighted in 1937.**
- Sir Chotu Ram Ji fought for the rights of the farmers but also became the voice of workers, vulnerable and exploited sections of the society.
- **On the political front**, he was a co-founder of the **National Unionist Party** which ruled the United Punjab Province in pre-independent India and kept Congress and Muslim League at bay.

PIB-NOVEMBER 26th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES - II

Topic– *Indian Constitution- historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.*

26th NOVEMBER EVERY YEAR IS CELEBRATED AS CONSTITUTION DAY IN INDIA

26th November every year is celebrated as Constitution Day in India.

Context

26th November every year is celebrated as Constitution Day in India.

Highlights

- Constitution Day also known as '**Samvidhan Divas**', is celebrated in our country on 26th November every year **to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India.**
- The **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment on 19 November, 2015**, notified the decision of the Government of India to celebrate 26 November as 'Constitution Day'.
- The day is celebrated **to promote Constitution values among citizens.**

What is the Constitution of India?

The **Constitution is a set of written principles and precedents of the Government of India** that frames fundamental political principles, procedures, rights, directive principles, restrictions, and duties of the government and the citizens of the country.

It declares India to be a **sovereign, secular, socialist, and democratic republic** and assures its citizens' **equality, liberty, and justice.**

History of constitution Day

On 26th November 1949, the Constituent Assembly of India adopted the Constitution of India, which came into effect from 26th January 1950.

- The **two months between the adoption and enforcement of the Constitution** was used for reading and translation of the document from English to Hindi.
- The Constituent **Assembly met for 166 days for two years, 11 months, and 18 days** before the Constitution was finally adopted.
- The members of the Constituent Assembly signed two hand-written copies of the document on **24 January 1950 and two days later**, it became the law of the land.

Significance

The Constitution Day is celebrated as a mark of tribute to India's first Law Minister BR Ambedkar, who played a pivotal role in drafting the Indian Constitution.

Mains Question:

What is the Constitution? Describe the significance of a constitution in the governance of a country.

GENERAL STUDIES- II

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

PRAGATI (PRO-ACTIVE GOVERNANCE AND TIMELY IMPLEMENTATION)

Context

PM chairs 33rd PRAGATI interaction

About PRAGATI

Prime Minister had launched the multi-purpose and multi-modal governance platform PRAGATI on 25th March 2015.

- PRAGATI is an integrating and interactive platform, aimed at addressing the common man's grievances.
- PRAGATI also helps in simultaneously monitoring and reviewing important programmes and projects of the Government of India, as well as projects flagged by various State governments.

Key Features of PRAGATI

The PRAGATI platform uniquely bundles three latest technologies:

1. Digital data management,

2. Video-conferencing,
3. Geo-spatial technology.

It also offers a unique combination in the direction of cooperative federalism.

- It is a **three-tier system (PMO, Union Government Secretaries, and Chief Secretaries of the States)**.
- With this, **the Prime Minister is able to discuss the issues with the concerned Central and State officials with full information and latest visuals of the ground level situation.**

Aim

The platform is aimed at addressing common man's grievances, and simultaneously monitoring and reviewing important programmes and projects of the Government of India as well as projects flagged by State Governments.

How it works?

- **Prime Minister interacts** with the Government of India Secretaries, and Chief Secretaries **through Video-conferencing enabled by data and geo-informatics visuals.**
- The system will ride on, strengthen and re-engineer the data bases of the **CPGRAMS** for grievances, Project Monitoring Group (PMG) and the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- **These issues can be viewed by** the Union Government Secretaries and Chief Secretaries after entering into the application.
- With this, **the Prime Minister is able to discuss the issues with the concerned Central and State officials with full information and latest visuals of the ground level situation.**
- It is also an innovative project in e-governance and good governance.
- The **programme will be held once in every month on Fourth Wednesday** -to be known as PRAGATI Day.

GENERAL STUDIES- II

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

NATIONAL MEDICINAL PLANTS BOARD

Context

The National Medicinal Plant Board on **24th November** to celebrate its Establishment Day. On this occasion, a **"Status Report of NMPB 2020"** and **"Ayur-veg"** e-book were also released.

About National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB)

- In order to promote medicinal plants sector, the Government of India has set up National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB) on **24th November 2000**.
- Currently the board is located in **Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha & Homoeopathy)**, Government of India.

Mandate

The primary mandate of NMPB is to **develop an appropriate mechanism for coordination** between various ministries/ departments/ organizations in India and implements support policies/programs for overall (conservation, cultivation, trade and export) growth of medicinal plants sector both **at the Central /State and International level**.

Aims and objectives

- NMPB's main objective is the development of medicinal plants sector through developing a strong coordination between the stakeholders i.e., farmers, traders, and manufacturers benefiting each of them.
- The endeavor would increase the income and livelihood of the farmers and tribes.
- It would facilitate backward integration with the industry/ manufacturers through post-harvest management.
- Introduction of new IT tools and market linking activities further help the farmers as well as the industry.

Importance of medicinal plants

India is one of the richest countries in the world **in terms of biodiversity, has 15 agro-climatic zones**.

- Out of the **17000-18000 species of flowering plants**, more than 7000 are estimated to have medicinal usage in folk and documented systems of medicine like Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha & Homoeopathy (AYUSH System of Medicine).
- Medicinal plants are not only a **major resource base for the traditional medicine & herbal industry** but also provide livelihood and health security to a large segment of Indian population.

Demands of medicinal plants

- About **1178 species of medicinal plants are estimated to be in trade** of which 242 species have annual consumption levels in excess of 100 metric tons/year.
- The domestic demand of medicinal plants has been estimated 1,95,000 MT for the year of 2014-2015 and export demand of medicinal plants has been estimated 1,34,500 MT during 2014-2015.

Role and significance of NMPB

The NMPB **reaches out to farmers and traders** through a regional as well as state-wise networking through the state and regional representations.

Each state is having a **State Medicinal Plants Board (SMPB)** while there are **seven Regional Cum Facilitation Centres (RCFCs)** to co-ordinate between the SMPBs and NMPB.

Mains Question:

What are the medicinal plants? Describe their significance in Indian medicinal practices and economic importance as well.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

NATIONAL STARTUP ADVISORY COUNCIL (NSAC)

Context

Central Government notifies the structure of National Startup Advisory Council.

Highlights

- The Central Government has notified the structure of the National Startup Advisory Council.
- It **will advise the Government** on measures needed to build a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation and startups in the country.

Functions of NSAC

- The Council will **suggest measures to foster a culture of innovation** amongst citizens and students.
- **Promote innovation** in all sectors of economy across the country, including semi-urban and rural areas,
- **Support creative and innovative ideas** through incubation and research and development to transform them into valuable products,
- **Processes or solutions to improve productivity and efficiency** and create an environment of absorption of innovation in industry.

Structure of NSAC

- The National Startup Advisory Council will be **chaired by Minister for Commerce & Industry**.
- The Council will **consist of the non-official members, to be nominated by Central Government**.
- The nominees of the concerned Ministries/Departments/Organisations, **not below the rank of Joint Secretary** to the Government of India, will be **ex-officio members** of the Council.
- **Joint Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade** will be the **Convener of the Council**

Term

The term of the **non-official members of the Startup Advisory Council** will be for a period of **two years**.

FUNDAMENTALS

NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development)

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is an Apex Development Financial Institution in India.

- The Bank has been entrusted with “matters concerning Policy Planning and Operations in the field of credit for Agriculture and other Economic activities in Rural areas in India”.
- NABARD is active in developing Financial Inclusion policy.
- **It is one of the premier agencies providing developmental credit in rural areas.**
- **NABARD Head Office at Mumbai, Maharashtra, India**

Background

NABARD was established on **the recommendations of B.Sivaraman Committee**, to implement the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Act 1981.

- It replaced the Agricultural Credit Department (ACD) and Rural Planning and Credit Cell (RPCC) of Reserve Bank of India, and Agricultural Refinance and Development Corporation (ARDC).
- **NABARD came into existence on 12 July 1982** by transferring the agricultural credit functions of RBI and refinance functions of the then Agricultural Refinance and Development Corporation (ARDC).
- **NABARD is India's specialised bank for Agriculture and Rural Development in India.**
- **International associates of NABARD** include World Bank-affiliated organisations and global developmental agencies working in the field of agriculture and rural development.
- It was set up with an initial capital of Rs.100 crore, **its' paid up capital stood at Rs.10,580 crore as on 31 March 2018.**
- Consequent to the revision in the composition of share capital between Government of India and RBI, **NABARD today is fully owned by Government of India.**

Vision

Development Bank of the Nation for Fostering Rural Prosperity.

Mission

- Promote sustainable and equitable agriculture and rural development through participative financial and non-financial interventions, innovations, technology and institutional development for securing prosperity.

GENERAL STUDIES-II

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

EMERGENCY CREDIT LINE GUARANTEE SCHEME (ECLGS)

Context

Extension of Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme through ECLGS 2.0 for the 26 sectors.

Highlights

- The Government has extended Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) through ECLGS 2.0 for the 26 sectors **identified by the Kamath Committee and the healthcare sector.**
- **Under ECLGS 2.0** entities with outstanding credit above Rs. 50 crore and not exceeding Rs. 500 crore as on 29.2.2020, which were less than or equal to 30 days past due as on 29.2.2020 are eligible.
- **The modified Scheme** will provide an **incentive to Member Lending Institutions (MLIs)** to enable availability of additional funding facility to the eligible borrowers, both MSMEs/business enterprises and identified sectors that supports MSMEs.
- It will go a long way in contributing to economic revival, protecting jobs, and create conducive environment for employment generation.

What is the ECLGS?

The Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) was unveiled **as part of the Rs 20 lakh crore comprehensive package** announced by Finance Ministry in May 2020.

- It aims **to aid Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector in view of the economic distress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.**
- The Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme provides 100% guarantee coverage by **National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited (NCGTC) to Member Lending Institutions (MLIs)** on GECL of up to Rs. 3 lakh crore to eligible MSMEs.

Objective

- To provide an incentive to Member Lending Institutions (MLIs), i.e., Banks, Financial Institutions (FIs) and Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs).
- To increase access to, and enable availability of additional funding facility to MSME borrowers.
- Providing 100 per cent guarantee for any losses suffered by them due to non-repayment of the GECL funding by borrowers.

Who are the Member Lending Institutions (MLIs) under the Scheme?

- All Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) are eligible as MLIs.
- NBFCs which have been in operation for at least 2 years as on 29.2.2020, and Financial Institutions (FIs) will also be eligible as MLIs under the Scheme.

Significance of the Scheme

- Enabling MSMEs to meet their operational liabilities and restart their businesses.
- By supporting MSMEs to continue functioning during the current unprecedented situation, the Scheme is also expected to have a positive impact on the economy and support its revival.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

UNIQUE DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (UDIN)

Context

CBDT to validate Unique Document Identification Number (UDIN) generated from ICAI portal at the time of upload of Tax Audit Reports.

ABOUT UDIN

Unique Document Identification Number (UDIN) is an **Advanced Solution for Document Verification**.

- UDIN is a unique number which is to be generated for every document certified /attested by practicing Chartered Accountants and will be registered with UDIN Portal at <https://udinical.org> (with effect from 1st July, 2018).
- UDIN aims to address the concern of documents/certificates issued by any other person not being practicing Chartered Accountants.

Need for

It has been noticed that financial documents/ certificates attested by **third person misrepresenting themselves as CA Members** are misleading the Authorities and Stakeholders.

- ICAI is also receiving number of complaints of **signatures of CAs being forged by non CAs**.
- **To curb the malpractices**, the Professional Development Committee of ICAI has implemented in phased manner an innovative concept of UDIN i.e. Unique Document Identification Number.
- **All Certificates are being made mandatory with effect from 1st February, 2019.**

Significance

- With this system level integration, UDIN provided for the audit reports/certificates submitted by the Chartered Accountants in the e-filing portal shall be validated online with the ICAI.
- This will **help in weeding out fake or incorrect Tax Audit Reports** not duly authenticated with the ICAI.

GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

KNOWLEDGE RESOURCE CENTRE NETWORK (KRCNET)

Context

Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) has launched '**Knowledge Resource Centre Network' (KRCNet)** on its Foundation Day.

Key points

- Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) aims to develop a **World-Class Knowledge Resource Centre Network (KRCNet)** under the Digital India initiative.
- The traditional libraries of the MoES system will be upgraded into a **top-notch Knowledge Resource Centres (KRC)**.
- KRCs will be connected with each other and integrated into the KRCNet portal.
- **It will be a single point entry to the intellectual world of Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).**

Salient objectives of the KRCNet:

- **Establish a Total Quality Management (TQM) system** by securing ISO certification for documenting MoES knowledge resources, its maintenance, easy retrieval and dissemination.
- **Collect, collate, analyze, index, store and disseminate the intellectual resources,** products and project outputs available in MoES headquarter and its institutes.
- **Develop and maintain an up-to-date meta-data of the print & digital resources** available in MoES headquarter and MoES institutes, including MoES services.
- Periodically organize training workshops to popularize usage of electronic journals, databases, digital products, data analytics etc.

GENERAL STUDIES-III

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

INTERNATIONAL THERMONUCLEAR EXPERIMENTAL REACTOR (ITER)

Context

The ITER Organization celebrated the **Start of Assembly of the ITER Tokamak** with a ceremony at **Saint-Paul-Lez-Durance, France**.

What is ITER?

- **ITER ("The Way" in Latin) is one of the most ambitious energy projects in the world** today.
- The ITER international collaboration, large-scale building project that is underway in Saint Paul-lez-Durance, southern France.
- **In southern France, 35 nations are collaborating** to build the world's largest tokamak.
- **It is a magnetic fusion device** that has been designed to prove the feasibility of fusion as a large-scale and carbon-free source of energy **based on the same principle that powers our Sun and stars**.

Key features of ITER

- ITER will be the first fusion **device to produce net energy**.
- **ITER will be the first fusion device to maintain fusion for long periods of time**.
- It will be the first fusion device **to test the integrated technologies, materials, and physics regimes necessary for the commercial production of fusion-based electricity**.
- The idea for an international joint experiment in fusion was **first launched in 1985**.

The ITER Members

China, the European Union, India, Japan, Korea, Russia and the United States—are now engaged in a 35-year collaboration to build and operate the ITER experimental device, and together bring fusion to the point where a demonstration fusion reactor can be designed.

What Will ITER Do?

- The amount of fusion energy a tokamak is capable of producing is a direct result of the number of fusion reactions taking place in its core.
- Scientists know that **the larger the vessel, the larger the volume of the plasma ... and therefore the greater the potential for fusion energy**.

The machine has been designed specifically to:

- Produce 500 MW of fusion power
- Demonstrate the integrated operation of technologies for a fusion power plant
- Achieve a deuterium-tritium plasma in which the reaction is sustained through internal heating
- Test tritium breeding
- Demonstrate the safety characteristics of a fusion device

What is Fusion?

- ***Fusion is the energy source of the Sun and stars.***
- In the tremendous heat and gravity at the core of these stellar bodies, hydrogen nuclei collide, fuse into heavier helium atoms and release tremendous amounts of energy in the process.

Fusion in the Laboratory

- Twentieth-century fusion science identified the most efficient fusion reaction in the laboratory setting to be the ***reaction between two hydrogen isotopes, deuterium (D) and tritium (T).***
- The DT fusion reaction produces ***the highest energy gain at the “lowest” temperatures.***

Conditions

Three conditions must be fulfilled to achieve fusion in a laboratory:

- ***Very high temperature*** (on the order of 150,000,000° Celsius);
- ***Sufficient plasma particle density*** (to increase the likelihood that collisions do occur);
- ***Sufficient confinement time*** (to hold the plasma, which has a propensity to expand, within a defined volume).

How does Fusion take place?

- At extreme temperatures, electrons are separated from nuclei and a gas becomes a plasma—often referred to as the fourth state of matter.
- Fusion plasmas provide the environment in which light elements can fuse and yield energy.
- ***In a tokamak device***, powerful magnetic fields are used to confine and control the plasma.

What is a TOKAMAK?

- ***The tokamak is an experimental machine designed to harness the energy of fusion.***
- Inside a tokamak, the energy produced through the fusion of atoms is absorbed as heat in the walls of the vessel.
- Just like a conventional power plant, a fusion power plant will use this heat to produce steam and then electricity by way of turbines and generators.

India's Contribution

India is contributing, viz., *the cryostat, in vessel shields, substantial contributions to the cooling water, cryogenic and cryo-distribution systems, auxiliary heating devices using RF and beam technologies, multi mega watt power supplies and several diagnostics to help ITER to achieve and demonstrate its goal.*

PIB-NOVEMBER 28th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

NATIONAL ORGAN DONATION DAY

Context

The 11th National Organ Donation Day was celebrated on 27 November 2020.

Highlights

- **World Organ Donation Day** is observed every year on **13th of August**.
- The aim of this day is to motivate normal human beings to pledge to donate organs after death, and to spread awareness about the importance of organ donation.
- The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare of India launched the 6th World and **first ever Indian Organ Donation Day and Organ Donation Congress in 2010 in New Delhi**.

Organ donation in India

- As per the reports, the number of transplants done annually in India has been rising slowly **around 5000 kidneys, 1000 livers and around 50 hearts**.
- However, the **current organ donation rate is very poor in India** – 0.86 per million when compared to 46.9 Spain's and America's 31.96 per million.
- If India reaches a 1 per million donation rate, it would almost meet current demands for organs.

What is the Organ Donation?

Organ Donation is donating a donor's organs like heart, liver, kidneys, intestines, lungs, and pancreas, after the donor dies, for the purpose of transplanting them into another person who is in need of an organ.

National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO)

- NOTTO is a **National level organization** set up under Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.
- It is mandated under the **Transplantation of Human Organs (Amendment) Act 2011** to carry out activities for promotion of organ donation from deceased persons, putting systems in place for organ donation and transplantation and training the necessary manpower and personnel.

It has following two divisions:

- "National Human Organ and Tissue Removal and Storage Network"
- "National Biomaterial Centre".

ROTTA-SOTTO

The **Regional Organ & Tissue Transplant Organisations (ROTTA)** at regional level and the **State Organ & Tissue Transplant Organisations (SOTTO)** at state level are for setting up network among hospitals and tissue banks for procurement and sharing of organs obtained from the deceased donors and their timely allocation.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

TOPS SCHEME

Context

8 Para athletes in four different sports included in TOPS scheme.

What is the TOPS Scheme?

The **Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS)** is a flagship program of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

- The Scheme looks to add a premium to the preparations of these athletes so that they can win Olympic medals in **2020 and 2024 Olympics**.
- Under the Scheme, the **Department of Sports shall identify athletes who are potential medal winners in 2020 / 2024 Olympics**.
- The idea of the Scheme is **to also keep an eye in the future and fund a Developmental Group of Athletes** who are medal prospects for the **Olympic Games in Paris in 2024 and Los Angeles Games in 2028**

Recent Success of TOPS

The TOPS sponsored athletes gained relative success at the 2016 Rio Olympics and the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

- **P V Sindhu and Sakshi Malik** captured silver and bronze in Badminton and Wrestling respectively at the 2016 Rio Olympics.
- **In the 2016 Paralympic Games**, the TOPS Athletes won 2 Gold, 1 Silver and 1 Bronze demonstrating the effectiveness of the Scheme.
- In recent **Commonwealth Games** out of the 70 athletes who won medals at the CWG, **47 of them were supported under the TOP Scheme**.

Mission Olympic Cell (MOC)

The Mission Olympic Cell is a **dedicated body created to assist the athletes who are selected under the TOP Scheme**.

- The MOC is **under the Chairmanship of the Director General, Sports Authority (DG, SAI)**.

- The MOC focuses on selection, exclusion and retention of athletes, coaches, training institutes that can receive TOPS assistance.

GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

ELECTRONIC VACCINE INTELLIGENCE NETWORK (EVIN)

Context

Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network (eVIN) has ensured essential immunization services during the COVID pandemic.

What is it?

The Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network (eVIN) is an innovative technological solution aimed at strengthening immunization supply chain systems across the country.

- This is being implemented under National Health Mission (NHM) by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- eVIN aims to provide real-time information on vaccine stocks and flows, and storage temperatures across all cold chain points in the country.

Key features

- eVIN combines state-of-the-art technology, a strong IT infrastructure and trained human resource to enable real time monitoring of stock and storage temperature of the vaccines kept in multiple locations across the country.
- The Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network has helped create a big data architecture that generates actionable analytics.
- It help to encourage data-driven decision-making and consumption based planning that helps in maintaining optimum stocks of vaccines leading to cost savings.

Significance

This robust system has been used with the requisite customization during the COVID pandemic for ensuring continuation of the essential immunization services and protecting our children and pregnant mothers against vaccine preventable diseases.

GENERAL STUDIES- III

Topic – *Issues related to food security*

PROMOTING PULSES AND OILSEEDS CULTIVATION

Context

Six more states selected for promoting pulses and oilseeds cultivation under the National Food Security Mission (NFSM).

Background

The Government is implementing the **National Food Security Mission (NFSM) – Oilseeds and Oil Palm** to increase production of oilseeds and domestic availability of edible oils.

- **The NFSM–(OS&OP)** is under implementation in 29 States and has three subcomponents namely, Oilseeds, Oil palm and Tree Borne Oilseeds (TBOs).
- **The main objective-** is to increase oilseeds production & productivity and area expansion under oil palm & TBOs cultivation.
- **More than 12 per cent of total cropped area in the country is used for cultivation of oilseeds.**

The states under the mission

- Government of India is promoting pulses and oilseeds cultivation in rice fallow areas of six eastern states (**Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal**) since 2016-17.
- **From 2019-20, six more states** (Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh) have been included to bring additional area and production of pulses and oilseeds.

About NFSM

- National Food Security Mission (NFSM) is a Central Scheme of GOI launched in 2007 for 5 years.
- It was launched **to increase production and productivity of wheat, rice and pulses on a sustainable basis so as to ensure food security** of the country.
- **The aim is** – to bridge the yield gap in respect of these crops through dissemination of improved technologies and farm management practices.

Mains Question:

During the COVID-19 Pandemic the importance of National Food Security Mission has been increased manifold. Discuss.

FOR PRELIMS

INDIA CLIMATE CHANGE KNOWLEDGE PORTAL

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change launched the “India Climate Change Knowledge Portal”.

- The portal will be a **“single point Information resource”** which provides information on the different climate initiatives.

- India has practically achieved its Pre-2020 Climate Action targets.

The **eight major components** included in the knowledge portal are:

1. India's Climate Profile
2. National Policy Framework
3. India's NDC goals
4. Adaptation Actions
5. Mitigation Actions
6. Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation
7. International Climate Negotiations
8. Reports & Publications

PIB-NOVEMBER 30th, 2020

GENERAL STUDIES - I

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

GURU NANAK DEV JI GURPURAB

Context

Guru Nanak Dev Ji Gurpurab, also known as Guru Nanak's Prakash Utsav and Guru Nanak Dev Ji Jayanti, **celebrates the birth of the first Sikh guru, Guru Nanak.**

- Guru Nanak Jayanti is **celebrated on the full moon day of Kartik month, also known as Kartik Poornima.**
- This year, followers of Guru Nanak will celebrate the Guru Nanak Jayanti on November 30, 2020.

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 - III

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

AI & ROBOTICS TECHNOLOGIES PARK (ARTPARK)

Context

An AI & Robotics Technologies Park (ARTPARK) **set up in Bengaluru** will promote technology innovations in AI (Artificial Intelligence) & Robotics.

Highlights

- ARTPARK to **usher in a new model of industry, academia and government** collaboration in AI & Robotics for societal impact.

- The **triple helix of industry, academia and government** sets a template of partnership in the frontier areas of technology.
- One such service will be **Bhasha Setu** – that will enable real-time Indic language translation, both of speech to speech and speech to text

What is the ARTPARK?

ARTPARK, is a **unique not-for-profit foundation established by Indian Institute of Science (IISc)**, Bengaluru with support from AI Foundry in a **public-private model**.

- It is **being funded** by Department of Science & Technology (DST), Govt. of India, under the **National Mission on Inter-disciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS)**.
- It will **bring about collaborative consortium of partners** from industry, academia and government bodies.
- This will lead to **cutting edge innovations** in terms of new technologies, standards, products, services and intellectual properties.

Significance

It **will be leading to societal impact** by executing ambitious mission mode R&D projects in healthcare, education, mobility, infrastructure, agriculture, retail and cyber-security focusing on problems unique to India.

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.*

THE SARAS COLLECTION

Context

Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Ministry launched “The Saras Collection” on the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal.

What is it?

‘The Saras Collection’ is a **unique initiative of GeM and the Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)**, Ministry of Rural Development.

- It **showcases daily utility products made by rural self-help groups (SHGs)**.
- It aims to provide SHGs in rural areas with market access to Central and State Government buyers.

Key features

Under this initiative, the SHG sellers will be able to list their products in 5 product categories, namely:

1. handicrafts,
2. handloom and textiles,
3. office accessories,
4. grocery and pantry, and
5. Personal care and hygiene.

Benefits of Saras Collection

- The Saras Collection will provide SHGs direct access to Government buyers.
- It will do away with intermediaries in the supply chain, thus ensuring better prices for SHGs and spurring employment opportunities at the local level.

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.

Government e Marketplace (GeM)

GeM is a **state-of-the-art national public procurement platform** of Ministry of Commerce and Industries.

- It aims to enhance transparency, efficiency and speed in public procurement.
- GeM is a **100 percent Government owned Section 8 Company set up as the National Public Procurement Portal** for procurement of goods and services required by Central and State Government organizations.
- It **provides an online, end to end solution** for procurement of goods and services for all Central Government and State Government Ministries, Departments, Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs), local bodies and autonomous organisations.

What the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) do?

GeM will **provide dashboards for functionaries at the national, state, district and block level.**

- It will **provide them real time information** about the number of products uploaded by SHGs, and value and volume of orders received and fulfilled.
- Potential buyers shall be able to search, view, cart and procure such products through the stipulated modes of procurement.

CEREMONIAL CHANGE-OVER OF THE ARMY GUARD BATTALION

President of India witnesses Ceremonial change-over of the Army Guard Battalion.

Highlights

- The President witnessed the Ceremonial change-over of the Army Guard Battalion stationed at Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- The **5th Battalion of the 1st Gorkha Rifles**, completed its three and half year's tenure as **Ceremonial Army Guard Battalion**.
- It handed over the charge to the **6th Battalion of the Sikh Regiment**.

What is it?

Different Infantry units of the Army function as the Ceremonial Army Guard in Rashtrapati Bhavan **by rotation**.

The Army Guard Battalion performs ceremonial duties at various important events such as Guard of Honours to the dignitaries, Republic Day Parade, Independence Day Parade, Beating the Retreat Ceremony apart from performing ceremonial.

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