



# CHROME IAS

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# PIB

**Date wise compilation of  
PIB - so that you don't  
miss any relevant news  
for IAS Examination !**

**MONTHLY  
COMPILATION  
JAN. 2021**

**For UPSC Prelims & Mains Examination**

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# CHROME IAS ACADEMY

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### GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

## FLASH FLOOD GUIDANCE SERVICES FOR SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES

### Context

Flash Flood Guidance Services launched; the first of its kind for **South Asian countries namely India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka**.

### Highlights

- India has launched first- of-its kind Flash Flood Guidance services for South Asian countries — **India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka** — to issue impact-based forecasting of floods, which are very sudden and of short duration, **at watershed and also city level**.
- The Flash Flood Guidance is a **robust system designed by the India Meteorological Department (IMD)**.
- It aims to provide the necessary products **in real-time to support the development of warnings for flash floods about 6-12 hours in advance** at the watershed level with resolution of 4km x 4km for the flash flood prone South Asian countries.

### Background

Earth System Science deals with the Earth system's five components—**Atmosphere, Hydrosphere, Cryosphere, Lithosphere, and Biosphere**, and their complex interactions.

- The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) holistically addresses all the aspects relating the Earth System Science for providing **weather, climate, ocean, coastal state, hydrological and seismological services**.
- The services include** forecasts, warnings and detection for various natural disasters like tropical cyclones, storm surge, floods, heatwaves, thunderstorm and lightning and earthquakes etc.
- MoES is also mandated** to conduct ocean survey and exploration for living and non-living resources and explore all the three poles (Arctic, Antarctic and Himalayas).
- The services provided by MoES are effectively used by various agencies and state governments for saving human lives and minimising damages due to natural disasters.

### The major programmes of Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)

#### Atmospheric and Climate Research-Modelling Observing Systems and Services (ACROSS)

- It is an umbrella scheme of IMD primarily encompassing ongoing programs in an integrated manner aimed at providing efficient weather and climate services across the country in various sectors.

## **Ocean Services, Modelling, Application, Resources and Technology (O-SMART)**

- The services rendered under the O-SMART will provide economic benefits to a number of user communities in the coastal and ocean sectors, namely, fisheries, offshore industry, coastal states, Defence, Shipping, Ports etc.

## **Polar and Cryosphere Research (PACER)**

- Pacer Programme supports studies of various aspects relating to Polar and Cryosphere with special emphasis on the Antarctic, Arctic and Glaciers of Himalayas.
- This includes maintenance of observation systems, expeditions, Indian stations, Polar Research vessels etc. in these environments.

## **Seismology and Geoscience Research (SAGE)**

The Seismological Facilities for the Advancement of Geoscience and Earth Scope (SAGE) comprise a distributed, multi-user, national facility for the development, deployment, and operational support of modern digital seismic instrumentation to serve national goals in basic research and education in the earth sciences, earthquake research, global real-time earthquake monitoring, and nuclear test ban verification.

## **Research, Education and Training Outreach (REACHOUT) Programme**

This scheme provides support to academic/research organizations in various sectors of Earth System Sciences including technology development.

## **GENERAL STUDIES - II**

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

## **IFSCA BECOMES MEMBER OF IOSCO**

### **Context**

*The International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) has become an Associate Member of the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO).*

### **What is the IOSCO?**

The International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO) is the **international organization that brings together the world's securities regulators, covering more than 95% of the world's securities markets**, and is the **global standard setter for the securities sector**.

- IOSCO works closely with the G20 and the Financial Stability Board (FSB) in setting up the standards for strengthening the securities markets.
- The **IOSCO Objectives and Principles of Securities Regulation have been endorsed by FSB** as one of the key standards for sound financial systems.

### **Significance of membership**

- The membership of IOSCO would **provide IFSCA the platform to exchange information at the global level and regional level** on areas of common interests.
- Further, the IOSCO platform would **enable IFSCA to learn from the experiences and best practices of the regulators** of other well established financial centres.

## What is the IFSCA?

**International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)** was established by central government to regulate all financial services in **International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs)** with headquarters in Gandhinagar (Gujarat).

**The IFSCA regulates financial products** such as securities, deposits or contracts of insurance, financial services, and financial institutions set up in an IFSC.

## Mains Question:

*'The Indian insurance sector is underperforming compared to that of developed and emerging economies. Discuss.'*

## GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

## RODTEP SCHEME

### Context

*Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) Scheme implemented from Jan, 1.*

### Background

- Currently, there are certain taxes/duties/levies, at the central, state and local level, which are incurred in the process of manufacture and distribution of exported products but are not being refunded under any mechanism.
- Therefore, a scheme for "Reversion of duties and taxes on export product" was announced by Finance Minister in her Budget Speech on 1st February 2020.

### Objectives of the RoDTEP Scheme

- To make **Indian exports cost competitive and create a level playing field** for exporters in International market;
- To **boost better employment opportunities** in export oriented manufacturing industries

### Salient features of the RoDTEP Scheme

- Benefit would be **provided on certain taxes/duties/levies (other than GST) which are not refunded for exports**, such as, VAT on fuel used in transportation, Mandi tax, duty on electricity used during manufacturing etc.



- The refund would be claimed as a percentage of the **Freight on Board (FOB)** value of exports.
- **Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS)** benefits would be discontinued on such tariff line/item for which benefit under RoDTEP Scheme is announced.

## 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.

## FOR PRELIMS

### DRDO FOUNDATION DAY

*On Jan, 1 DRDO observed the 63rd Foundation Day of its establishment.*

## Highlights

DRDO was formed in 1958 from the amalgamation of the then already functioning Technical Development Establishment (TDEs) of the Indian Army and the Directorate of Technical Development & Production (DTDP) with the Defence Science Organisation (DSO).

- DRDO is the **R&D wing of Ministry of Defence**, Govt of India.
- Its vision is to **empower India with cutting-edge defence technologies and a mission to achieve self-reliance in critical defence technologies and systems**.
- Equipping our armed forces with **state-of-the-art weapon systems** and equipment in accordance with requirements laid down by the **three Services**.
- Today, **DRDO is working in multiple cutting edge military technology areas**, which include aeronautics, armaments, combat vehicles, electronics, instrumentation, engineering systems, missiles, materials, naval systems, advanced computing, simulation, cyber, life sciences and other technologies for defence.

## PIB-JANUARY 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

## EMERGENCY APPROVAL OF COVID-19 VIRUS VACCINE

### Context

The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has given nod to two Coronavirus vaccines, one developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University and the other by Bharat Biotech, for restricted emergency use.

### About Covishield

Covishield has been **developed by Oxford University in collaboration with pharma major AstraZeneca**.

- India's **Serum Institute** is their manufacturing and trial partner.
- Covishield **uses a replication-deficient chimpanzee viral vector based on a weakened version of a common cold virus (adenovirus)**.
- The adenovirus causes infections in chimpanzees and contains the genetic material of the SARS-CoV-2 virus spike protein.
- After vaccination, the surface spike protein is produced, priming the immune system to attack the SARS-CoV-2 virus if it later infects the body.

### About Covaxin

Covaxin is **India's first indigenous vaccine** against Covid-19.

- It has been developed by **Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research and National Institute of Virology**.
- Covaxin is an **inactivated vaccine**.



## What is the inactivated vaccine?

An inactivated vaccine is one **which is developed by inactivating (killing) the live microorganisms that cause the disease.**

- This destroys the pathogen's ability to replicate, but keeps it intact so that the immune system can still recognise it and produce an immune response.
- There are many inactivated vaccines against Hepatitis A, Influenza, Polio, Rabies, which offer "excellent protection", Bharat Biotech has said.

## What is emergency use approval?

In an emergency situation, like a pandemic that is causing great human loss and damage to the economy, it may not be possible to have all the data related to safety and efficacy that regulators expect in normal times.

- The regulator will have to rely on preliminary data to assess whether a particular vaccine or drug will actually save lives and whether its benefits outweigh risks.
- The regulators may also take a cue from what the other regulators have done.

## What is the legal position in India about emergency use?

- Unlike in the US, **in India, the Drugs and Cosmetics Act doesn't have any specific provision** that allows the special use of drugs and other medical products during emergencies like pandemics.
- But **if there is an emergency and unmet medical need**, and the drug or vaccine in question has evidence of safety and efficacy, the Indian regulator has the flexibility to approve the drug, on condition that the vaccine maker will have to do post-marketing surveillance.

## Concerns about these approval

- **Neither Covishield nor Covaxin has completed a crucial phase-3 trial**, under which a vaccine candidate is administered to volunteers at multiple locations across the country, in India.
- The **CDSCO approval was based on a recommendation by a Subject Expert Committee** of technical experts **who deliberated for two days in sessions lasting over 12 hours** on approvals to the two vaccines.

## 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.**

## INVEST INDIA PROGRAMME

### Context

Commerce and Industry Minister announce 'Invest India' Special Desk for North East States.

### What is the 'Invest India' initiative?

'Invest India' is India's official agency dedicated to investment promotion and facilitation.

- It is **set up as a nonprofit venture under the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion**, Ministry of Commerce and Industries, Government of India.
- It was **set up in 2010 for prospective overseas investors** and to those aspiring Indian investors desiring to invest in foreign locations.
- It acts as a structured mechanism to attract investment. Invest India is essentially an Investment Promotion Agency in India.

## Mandate

The core mandate of Invest India is **investment promotion and facilitation**.

- It **provides sector-specific and state-specific information** to a foreign investor, assists in expediting regulatory approvals, and offers hand-holding services.
- To assist Indian investors to make informed choices about investment opportunities overseas.
- **Functions**
- Invest India provides aftercare services that include initiating remedial action on problems faced by investors by involving the Government Departments concerned.
- Invest India regularly partners with similar agencies across the world in an endeavor to enhance bilateral investment and economic engagement.

## Significance

Invest India is intended to become the first reference point for the global investment community – both domestic and foreign. **Make in India campaign / programme is managed by Invest India.**

## Mains Question

*Discuss the role and need of FDI in India? What are the hindrances for it and how can we overcome from these?*

## FUNDAMENTAL TOPICS:

### GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

## COAL BED METHANE (CBM)

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

- CMB is formed during the process of coalification, the transformation of plant material into coal.

- It mainly consists of Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) 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 (CH<sub>4</sub>) 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.
- So, is not only considered as an efficient fuel.
- 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 the environmental concerns related with it? Discuss.**

## FOR PRELIMS

### NATIONAL POLICE K - 9 JOURNAL

*Union Home Minister released inaugural issue of "National Police K-9 Journal".*

#### **Highlights**

- It is the first such publication in the country on the subject of **Police Service K9s (PSKs)** i.e. **Police Dogs**.
- The **police dog squad can act as a force multiplier to ensure the safety of society**, much like the way drones or satellites are being used in the country.
- A special '**Police K9 Cell**' was established in **November 2019** under the Police Modernization Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- It has mandate of '**Mainstreaming and Augmentation of Police Service K9s in the country**'.

#### **Agatti Island of Lakshadweep**

*Recently, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has issued an interim stay on felling of coconut trees on Agatti Island in Lakshadweep.*

#### **Highlights**

- The **Agatti Island is being developed as a tourism place**, and for this indiscriminate cutting of coconut trees for a beach road was going on.
- The **tree-felling was violating the Union Territory's (UT) Integrated Island Management Plan (IIMP)**.
- IIMP includes holistic island development plans prepared by the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM) for implementation by coastal States/ UTs.

#### **About the Agatti Islands**

- **Agatti Island is a 7.6 km long island, situated on a coral atoll called Agatti atoll in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep, India.**
- Fishing is the most important industry of Agatti which is perhaps the only island besides Minicoy getting surplus fish.
- Next to fishing, coir (coconut fibre) and copra (dried meat or kernel of the coconut) are the main industries.

### GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

## 40<sup>th</sup> INDIAN SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION TO ANTARCTICA

### Context

India, recently, launched the 40<sup>th</sup> scientific expedition to Antarctica.

### Highlights

- This Indian expedition **marks four decades of country's scientific endeavour** to the southern white continent.
- The chartered ice-class vessel MV Vasiliy Golovnin will make this journey and will reach Antarctica in 30 days.
- After leaving behind a team of 40 members, it would return to India in April 2021.

### Indian Antarctic expeditions

The Indian Antarctic expeditions **began in 1981**. The first trip comprised of a team of 21 scientists and support staff **led by Dr SZ Qasim**.

- After a humble beginning, the Indian Antarctic programme has now credited to have built **three permanent research base stations in Antarctica**—named **Dakshin Gangotri, Maitri, and Bharati**.
- As of today, **India has two operational research stations** in Antarctica named Maitri and Bharati.
- The **National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), Goa**, manages the entire Indian Antarctic program.

### 40<sup>th</sup> Indian Antarctic expedition

The focus of the 40<sup>th</sup> Indian Antarctic expedition is to support the ongoing scientific projects on climate change, geology, ocean observations, electric and magnetic flux measurements, environmental monitoring; resupplying of food, fuel, provisions and spare; and accomplishing the return of the winter crew.

- India is committed **to maintaining the continent of Antarctica free of COVID-19**.
- The expedition will duly follow all protocols for the deployment of men and material as per **Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programs (COMNAP)**.

### GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

## SAGARMALA SEAPLANE SERVICES (SSPS)

## Context

Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways is kicking off ambitious Project of Sagarmala Seaplane Services (SSPS) with potential airline operators.

## Highlights

Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways is initiating the process of commencing operations of the Seaplane services.

- It will be started on the select routes, under a **Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)** framework through prospective airline operators.
- The project execution and implementation would be through **Sagarmala Development Company Ltd (SDCL)**, which is under the administrative control of the Ministry.

## Proposed Destinations

Several destinations are envisaged for seaplane operations.

- The proposed Origin-Destination pairs under **Hub and Spoke model** include various islands of Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep, tourist places across the country and/or any other Hub & Spoke suggested by the Operator.
- One such Seaplane Service is already in operation between Kevadia and Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad.



## Benefits of Sea Plane services

- **To provide connectivity and easier accessibility** to remote locations, SDCL is exploring plans to leverage the potential of the vast coastline and numerous water bodies/ rivers across India by commencing seaplane operations.
- **Sea Plane will utilize the nearby water bodies for take-off and landing** and thus connect those places in a much economical way.



- The conventional airport infrastructure like a **runway and terminal buildings are not required for seaplane operations.**
- Apart from providing air connectivity to various remote religious/tourist places, it will boost tourism for domestic and international holidaymakers.

## Significance

The seaplanes services will be a game-changer providing a **supplementary means of faster and comfortable transportation** across the nation.

- It will save travel time and stimulate localized short distance travelling **especially in the hilly regions** or across the rivers/lakes etc.
- In addition to the infrastructural enhancements at the places of operations, it will enormously boost tourism and business activities.

## Mains Question:

*'The seaplanes services will play a game-changer role by providing a supplementary means of faster and comfortable transportation across the nation'. Discuss.*

## GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

All CSE relevant fundamental information about important Institutions.

## COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL OF INDIA (CAG)

It is an **independent authority under the Constitution of India**, and the head of the Indian Audit & Account Department.

- He is the **guardian of the public purse** and controls the entire financial system of the country at both the levels- the center and state.
- His duty is to uphold the Constitution of India and the laws of Parliament in the field of financial administration.
- In 1976, **he was relieved of his responsibilities with regard to the compilation and maintenance of accounts of the Central government due to separation of accounts from audit.**

## Constitutional Provisions

- **Article 148**– broadly deals with the CAG appointment, oath and conditions of service.
- **Article 149**– deals with Duties and Powers of the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India.
- **Article 150**- says that the accounts of the Union and of the States shall be kept in such form as the President may, on the advice of the CAG, prescribe.

- **Article 151**— says that the reports of the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India relating to the accounts of the Union shall be submitted to the president, who shall cause them to be laid before each House of Parliament.
- **Article 279**— Calculation of “net proceeds” is ascertained and certified by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India, whose certificate is final.
- **Third Schedule**— Section IV of the Third Schedule of the Constitution prescribes the **form of oath or affirmation** to be made by the Judges of the Supreme Court and the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India at the time of assumption of office.
- **Sixth Schedule**— the accounts of the District Council or Regional Council should be kept in such form as CAG, with the approval of the President, prescribes.

## Source of powers of the CAG

CAG derives its audit mandate from different sources-

- **Constitution**— Articles **148 to 151 of the Constitution**. Article 149 stipulates the Duties and Powers of the Comptroller and Auditor General
- **Statute**— the Comptroller and Auditor General's (Duties, Powers and Conditions of Service) Act, 1971, i.e. DPC Act, 1971.
- **Regulations**— Regulations on Audit and accounts as framed and notified in the official Gazette. Regulations on Audit & Accounts-2007
- **Scope of audit**— Within the audit mandate, the Comptroller and Auditor General is the sole authority to decide the scope and extent of audit to be conducted by him or on his behalf.

## CAG audits:

- The accounts related to **all expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India, Consolidated Fund of each state and UT having a legislative assembly.**
- All expenditure **from the Contingency Fund of India and the Public Account of India as well as the Contingency Fund and Public Account of each state.**
- All trading, manufacturing, profit and loss accounts, balance sheets and other **subsidiary accounts kept by any department of the Central Government and the state governments.**
- The receipts and expenditure of all bodies and authorities substantially **financed from the Central or State revenues; government companies; other corporations and bodies, when so required by related laws.**
- The accounts of any other authority **when requested by the President or Governor.** Local bodies.

## What are the constitutional duties of CAG?

- CAG **advises the President** with regard to prescription of the form in which the accounts of the Centre and states shall be kept.
- CAG ascertains and certifies the net proceeds of any tax or duty and his **certificate is final on the matter.**

- CAG acts as a **guide, friend and philosopher** of the **Public Accounts Committee** of the Parliament.
- He compiles and maintains the **accounts of state governments**.
- CAG **submits his audit reports relating to the accounts of the Centre and states to the President or the Governor respectively**, who shall, in turn, place them before both the houses of Parliament and Assembly.

## **CAG submits 3 audit reports to the President–**

- Audit report on appropriation accounts,
- Audit report on finance accounts
- Audit report on public undertakings.

## **Provisions of Independence of CAG**

For effective functioning of this important institution of the CAG it is paramount to ensure independence. There are several provisions enshrined in the Constitution to safeguard CAG's independence:

- CAG is **appointed by the President** by warrant under his hand and seal and provided with **tenure of 6 years or 65 years of age, whichever is earlier**.
- CAG is provided with a **security of tenure and can be removed by the President only in accordance with the procedure mentioned in the Constitution** that is the manner same as removal of a Supreme Court Judge. (It means he does not hold his office on the pleasure of President.)
- He is **not eligible for further office, either under the Government of India or of any state, after he ceases to hold his office**.
- His **salary and other service conditions though determined by the Parliament** cannot be varied to his disadvantage after appointment.
- The **administrative expenses of the office of CAG**, including all salaries, allowances and pensions are charged upon the **Consolidated Fund of India** that is not subject to vote.

## **How the Indian CAG is different from British CAG?**

- CAG of India only performed the role of an Auditor General and not of a Comptroller but in Britain it has the power of both Comptroller as well as Auditor General.
- In India the CAG audits the accounts after the expenditure is committed i.e. ex post facto.
- In **UK no money can be drawn from the public exchequer without the approval of the CAG**.
- In India, CAG is not a member of the parliament while in Britain; CAG is a member of house of the Commons.

## **Mains Question:**

***Why the independence of Comptroller and Auditor General of India is paramount? What are the provision are made to ensure it? Describe.***

# CHROME IAS ACADEMY

## FOR PRELIMS

### CSIR-NPL

*CSIR-NPL celebrates its 75th Foundation Day*

#### Highlights

- The CSIR- National Physical Laboratory of India, situated in New Delhi, **is the measurement standards laboratory of India.**
- It maintains standards of **SI units in India** and calibrates the national standards of weights and measures.
- The National Physical Laboratory, India was one of the earliest national laboratories set up under the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research.
- Then Prime-Minister **Jawaharlal Nehru** laid the foundation stone of **NPL on 4 January 1947.**

### PIB-JANUARY 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021

#### GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

### STEM LEARNING

#### Context

*Vice President Calls for bridging gender divide in STEM-related employment.*

#### Background

- While India produces the **highest percentage of women STEM graduates in the world** (about 40 percent), **their share in STEM jobs in India is very low at 14 per cent.**
- The under-representation in post-graduate and doctoral studies too needs to be rectified expeditiously.

#### What is STEM Education?

STEM is a curriculum based on the idea of **educating students in four specific disciplines — science, technology, engineering and mathematics —** in an interdisciplinary and applied approach.

- Rather than teach the four disciplines as separate and discrete subjects, **STEM integrates them into a cohesive learning paradigm** based on real-world applications.

#### Features of STEM education

- **Integrating STEM in the education sector results in** developing curiosity, inquisitiveness, critical-thinking, problem-solving capacities, imagination, questioning and exploration skills among learners.
- **This leads to** innovation, designing and making, testing and modifying solutions of complex problems.

## STEM education in India

In India, though nascent, there is a lot of innovation which is taking place with regard to STEM:

- The education sector is **looking beyond smart classrooms towards hands-on learning and STEM enhancement** on their current information and communications technology and smart class platforms.
- **Many STEM companies are working with schools** to help them set up STEM centres, tinkering labs with upcoming technologies like Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality.
- The **government is looking to help educational institutions** to upgrade their library infrastructures with more engaging learning assets and management tools, and implementing Learning Management Systems, assessment systems, language labs, library management system, gamification, etc.
- **New 'entry level' coding devices** are coming to market that provide schools with the ability to teach simple coding and bring STEM to life in the classroom.

## Challenges in the implementation of STEM education

- One of the biggest challenges involved in the implementation of STEM education is **to design infrastructure, curriculum and to equip children with the best guidance and support.**
- Another challenge could be funding.
- Investing in educating the ecosystem about **the need for such programmes is one of the ways of overcoming these limitations.**
- Many of **the educators still think that by introducing STEM, students will get diverted from their studies** and they would not be able to complete their defined curriculum in that stipulated amount of time.
- The only way to address this is by making them aware and changing their beliefs by showing them the positive results of introducing their kids to STEM learning methodology.

## STEM education around the world

Countries around the world are adopting this methodology by introducing national curricula that set frameworks and projects which apply the STEM methodology.

- **The U.K. rolled out the micro:bit project** to one million children in 2016 and several other countries have followed including Singapore and Iceland.
- Several countries, upon realising the potential of a STEM-incorporated programme, have risen to the occasion and persuaded their respective governments, districts and schools to make the transition.

- **Japan, for example,** has already taken the first steps towards this methodology by introducing national STEM frameworks for 2020 and others are quickly joining as well.

## Way forward

Being the second most populated country with unmatched talent and culture, India needs a combined support from government and other education societies to avail the opportunity and benefits of STEM education.

## GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

## BLUE ECONOMY

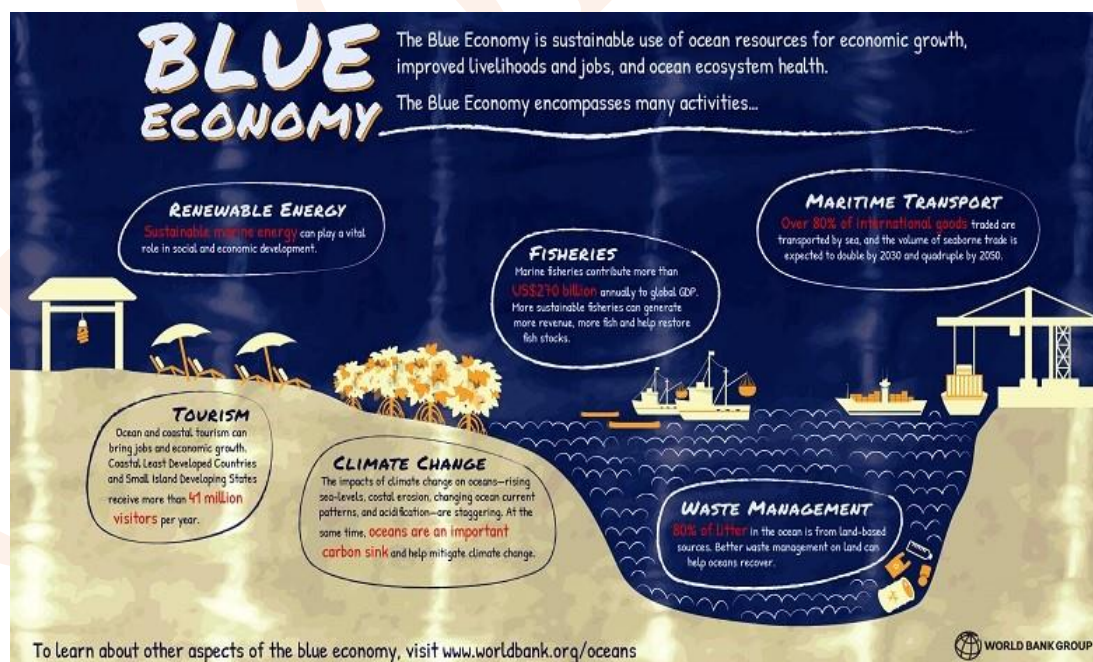
### Context

*Blue Economy is going to be an important source of Aatmanirbhar Bharat: PM*

### What is the Blue Economy?

Blue economy is a term in economics relating to the exploitation and preservation of the marine environment.

- The concept of Blue economy was **introduced by Gunter Pauli** in his 2010 book- “**The Blue Economy: 10 years, 100 innovations, 100 million jobs**”.
- It suggests the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, and ocean ecosystem health.



### Key elements of Blue Economy

1. Oceans are an important carbon sink (blue carbon) and help **mitigate climate change**.
2. **Sustainable marine energy** can play a vital role in social and economic development.



3. **Sustainable fisheries** can generate more revenue, more fish and help restore fish stocks.
4. Over 80% of international goods traded are **transported by sea**.
5. Ocean and coastal tourism can bring jobs and **economic growth**.
6. Better **waste management** on land can help oceans recover.

## Objectives of the Blue Economy

The objective of the Blue Economy is **to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth** and employment opportunities within the Indian Ocean region's maritime economic activities.

The Blue Economy is determined to initiate appropriate programs for:

- The sustainable harnessing of ocean resources; research and development;
- Developing relevant sectors of oceanography;
- Stock assessment of marine resources;
- Introducing marine aquaculture, deep sea/long line fishing and biotechnology; and
- Human resource development; among others.

## Significance

Oceans cover **72 percent of the surface of our blue planet** and provide a substantial portion of the global population with food and livelihood.

Enhancing more than **80 percent of global trade**, marine and coastal environments constitute a key resource for economic development.

## GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

## KAMDHENU GAU-VIGYAN PRACHAR-PRASAR EXAM

### Context

Rastriya Kamdhenu Aayog announces Kamdhenu Gau-Vigyan Prachar-Prasar Exam.

### Highlights

- Rastriya Kamdhenu Aayog (RKA) has come out with a noble **initiative of making Study materials about Cow Science available** and conduct "**Kamdhenu Gau-VigyanPrachar-Prasar Examination**".
- This will infuse the curiosity into all Indians about the cows, and **make them aware of the unexplored potential and business opportunities a cow can offer**, even after it stops giving milk.
- **KamdhenuGau-VigyanPrachar-Prasar Exam** will be an online exam to be conducted throughout the country on 25th February, 2021.

## Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog (RKA)

- Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog (RKA) has been constituted by Prime Minister for the conservation, protection and development of cows and their progeny and for giving direction to the cattle development programmes.
- RKA is high powered permanent body to formulate policy and to provide direction to the implementation of schemes related to cattle so as to give more emphasis on livelihood generation.
- RKA is trying to its best to implement the vision of 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat'.

## FOR PRELIMS

### TOYCATHON-2021

*Taking a giant leap in the path of becoming 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', Several Ministries along with All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) have jointly launched Toycathon-2021.*

#### Highlights

**This Toycathon is aimed to** conceptualize innovative toys based on the Indian value system which will inculcate the positive behaviour and good value among the children.

- This is a special kind of hackathon where students and teachers, design experts, toy experts and startups will get together **to crowd source ideas for developing toys and games.**
- **The Toycathon is based on nine themes** Indian Culture, History, Knowledge of India and Ethos; Learning, Education and Schooling; Social and human values; Occupations & specific fields; Environment; Divyang ; Fitness and sport; Out of the box, creative and logical thinking and Rediscovering/redesigning traditional Indian toys.

### PIB-JANUARY 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021

#### GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

### NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE PIPELINE (NIP)

#### Context

*Finance Minister reviewed the National Infrastructure Pipeline project.*

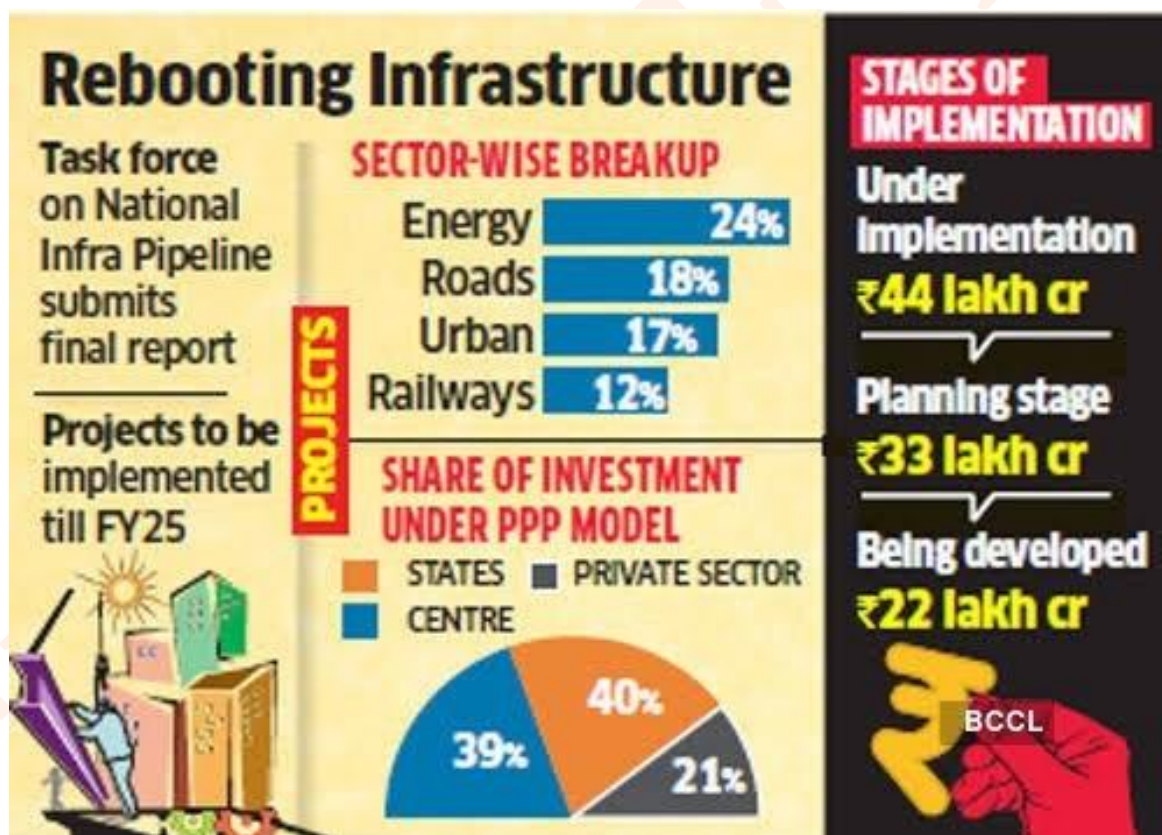
#### What is NIP?

The National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) is a group of social and economic infrastructure projects in India over a period of five years (FY 2019-25).

- It is a first-of-its-kind, whole-of-government exercise to provide world-class infrastructure to citizens and improving their quality of life.
- It aims to improve project preparation and attract investments into infrastructure.
- The NIP project was first made public by the Prime Minister of India during his 2019 Independence Day speech.

## Key features

- To draw up the NIP, a **High-Level Task Force was constituted** under the chairmanship of the Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance.
- **During the fiscals 2020 to 2025**, sectors such as Energy (24%), Roads (19%), Urban (16%), and Railways (13%) amount to around 70% of the projected capital expenditure in infrastructure in India.
- It has outlined plans to invest more than ₹102 lakh crore on infrastructure projects by 2024-25.
- capital expenditure will be shared by the Centre, States and the private sector in a **39:39:22 formula**.



## Progress of NIP

The NIP has managed to achieve substantial progress.

- The NIP was launched with 6,835 projects, which is now expanded to more than 7,300 projects.
- Many Ministries/departments have shown substantial progress in project implementation and expenditure, especially, in Q2 of FY21.

- In addition, majority of ministries/departments have targeted substantially high Infra-expenditure in FY21 than the actual expenditure of FY 20.

## GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

### LONGITUDINAL AGEING STUDY OF INDIA (LASI)

#### Context

Union Health Minister released INDIA REPORT on Longitudinal Ageing Study of India (LASI) Wave-1.

#### What is the LASI?

The Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI) is a **full-scale national survey of scientific investigation of the health, economic, and social determinants and consequences of population aging in India.**

- The LASI is a **nationally representative survey** over 72,000 older adults age 45 and above across all states and union territories of India.
- LASI is envisioned to be **conducted every 3 years for the next 25 years.**
- It is well-positioned **to evaluate the effect of changing policies on the behavioural outcomes** in India.

#### Key features

LASI focuses on the health, economic, and social well-being of India's elderly population.

- The concept of LASI is comparable to the **Health and Retirement Study (HRS)** in the United States.
- It is appropriately harmonized with other health and retirement studies such as **SHARE, ELSA & MHAS, including its sister surveys in Asia.**

#### Key findings of the report

The LASI, Wave 1 covered a baseline sample of 72,250 individuals aged 45 and above and their spouses including 31,464 elderly persons aged 60 and above and 6,749 oldest-old persons aged 75 and above from all States and Union Territories (UTs) of India (excluding Sikkim).

- In 2011 census, the 60+ population accounted for 8.6% of India's population, accounting for 103 million elderly people.
- Growing at around 3% annually, the number of elderly age population will rise to 319 million in 2050.
- 75% of the elderly people suffer from one or the other chronic disease.
- 40% of the elderly people have one or the other disability and 20% have issues related to mental health.

This report will provide base for national and state level programmes and policies for elderly population.

## Significance and need for

Although adult health and ageing is increasingly attracting a substantial amount of attention, **no comprehensive and internationally comparable survey data currently available in India** covers the entire range of topics necessary for understanding the economic, social, psychological, and health aspects of adults and the aging process.

The Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI) is designed to fill this gap.

## GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

## BUSINESS RESPONSIBILITY REPORTING (BRR)

### Context

Ministry of Corporate Affairs releases the Report of the Committee on Business Responsibility Reporting.

### About it

A panel on Business Responsibility Reporting (BRR) has proposed a new reporting framework for companies to better reflect the intent and scope of reporting on non-financial parameters.

### Highlights of the Report

- A new reporting framework called as '**Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report (BRSR)**' is recommended.
- The Committee recommended **two formats for disclosures**: one 'comprehensive format' and the second a 'Lite version'.
- The implementation of the reporting requirements should be done in a gradual and phased manner.
- The Committee also recommended that the BRSR be integrated with the MCA21 portal.
- As a long-term measure, the Committee envisions that the information captured through BRSR filings be used to develop a Business Responsibility-Sustainability Index for companies.
- IICA is taking forward the initiative and launching a certificate course on Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) from August 2020.

### Background

## CHROME IAS ACADEMY

- The Ministry of Corporate Affairs has been taking various initiatives for ensuring responsible business conduct by companies.
- As a first step towards mainstreaming the concept of business responsibility, the 'Voluntary Guidelines on Corporate Social Responsibility' were issued in 2009.
- These guidelines were subsequently revised as 'National Voluntary Guidelines on Social, Environmental and Economic Responsibilities of Business, 2011 (NVGS)' after extensive consultations with business, academia, civil society organizations and the government.
- After extensive consultations with various stakeholders, the Committee submitted its Report to the Central Government.
- In its Report, the Committee recommended a new reporting framework called as the '**Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report (BRSR)**'.

### Significance

- Indian companies are aspiring to have global foothold and thus they cannot ignore the emerging trend of corporate governance, i.e. Responsible Business.
- SEBI said that due to increasing trends of Social and Governance (ESG) investing, the demand for non-financial reporting is also growing and in this respect the BRSR framework will set the stage for sustainable investing.

### Mains Questions:

**Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) makes companies more profitable and sustainable. Analyse.**

## FOR PRELIMS

## SWACHH BHARAT MISSION ACADEMY

Union Minister for Jal Shakti launched the Swachh Bharat Mission Academy as part of the ongoing week-long behaviour change campaign 'GandagiMukt Bharat'.

### Highlights

- **It is a phone-based academy** will provide this free of charge, access to on-demand, anytime, anywhere training course with high quality and standardized content over basic mobile phone.
- It will also **improve the knowledge and interpersonal communication skills in order to enhance the quality of interaction with the beneficiaries.**
- The IVR based **training course contains a 60 minutes module** spanning various topics under ODF-S as well as SLWM.
- The **SBM Academy course has four chapters**, each with four audio lessons and a multiple-choice quiz at the end of the chapter.



## MADHUBAN GAJAR CARROT

### Context

*Biofortified carrot variety developed by farmer scientist benefits local farmers*

### Highlights

- **Madhuban Gajar is a biofortified carrot variety with high  $\beta$ -carotene and iron content.**
- It is a highly nutritious carrot variety developed through the selection method with **higher  $\beta$ -carotene content (277.75 mg/kg) and iron content (276.7 mg/kg) dry basis.**
- **In the trials by NIF – India**, it was found that Madhuban Gajar carrot variety possesses a significantly higher root yield (74.2 t/ha) and plant biomass (275 gm per plant) as compared to check variety.

### First Silk Training cum Production Center

**Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** set to open the first of its kind Training cum Production Center of Silk in the **far-flung tribal village of Chullyu in Arunachal Pradesh.**

- The training cum production center is the first of its kind facility in Arunachal Pradesh and a big boost to weaving activities in the entire region.
- Training of artisans and supporting the **production of Eri Silk**, which is indigenous to the North Eastern states, will create local employment and sustainable development in the region.

## PIB-JANUARY 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### GENERAL STUDIES - I

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

## PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS

### Context

*The 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention, is being organized on 9th January 2021, despite the ongoing Covid pandemic.*

### Highlights

- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is celebrated on **9th January** to mark the contribution of Overseas Indian community in the development of India.
- PBD Convention is the flagship event of the **Ministry of External Affairs** and provides an important platform to engage and connect with the overseas Indians.
- PBD conventions are **being held every year since 2003.**
- **Since 2015**, its format has been revised to celebrate the PBD **once every two years.**

The theme of 16th PBD Convention 2021: “Contributing to Aatmanirbhar Bharat”.

## Why PBD is celebrated on January 9?

January 9 was chosen as the day to celebrate this occasion since it was **on this day in 1915 that Mahatma Gandhi**, the greatest Pravasi, **returned to India from South Africa**, led India's freedom struggle and changed the lives of Indians forever.

## Significance

- These conventions provide **a platform to the overseas Indian community to engage with the government and people of the land of their ancestors** for mutually beneficial activities.
- These conventions are also **very useful in networking among the overseas Indian community** residing in various parts of the world and enable them to share their experiences in various fields.

## GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

## NEW INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME FOR JAMMU & KASHMIR (J&K IDS, 2021)

### Context

Government of India has formulated New Industrial Development Scheme for Jammu & Kashmir (J&K IDS, 2021) for the development of Industries in the UT of Jammu & Kashmir. *Government approves Central Sector Scheme for Industrial Development of Jammu & Kashmir.*

### Highlights

- J&K IDS, 2021 is a Central Sector Scheme.
- For the first time, any industrial incentive scheme is taking the **industrial development to the block level**.
- Scheme is **upto the year 2037** at a total cost of Rs. 28,400 crore
- Scheme while encouraging new investment, also **nurtures the existing industries in J&K** by providing them working capital support at the rate of 5% for 5 years
- **Main purpose of the scheme** is to generate employment which directly leads to the socio economic development of the region
- **Aims at** development of Manufacturing as well as Service Sector Units in J&K
- Scheme envisages greater role of the UT of J&K in registration and implementation of the scheme

### Key Features of the Scheme:

- Scheme is made **attractive for both smaller and larger units**.

- Smaller units with an investment in plant & machinery upto Rs. 50 crore will get a capital incentive upto Rs. 7.5 crore and get capital interest subvention at the rate of 6% for maximum 7 years
- **The scheme aims** to take industrial development to the block level in UT of J&K, which is first time in any Industrial Incentive Scheme of the Government of India.
- It attempts for a more sustained and balanced industrial growth in the entire UT.
- Scheme has been simplified **on the lines of ease of doing business** by bringing one major incentive- GST Linked Incentive- that will ensure less compliance burden without compromising on transparency.
- **It is not a reimbursement or refund of GST** but gross GST is used to measure eligibility for industrial incentive to offset the disadvantages that the UT of J&K face.
- Earlier schemes though offered a plethora of incentives. However, the overall financial outflow was much lesser than the new scheme.

### Major Impact and potential:

Scheme is to bring about radical transformation in the existing industrial ecosystem of J&K with emphasis on job creation, skill development and sustainable development.

- It will attract new investment and nurturing the existing ones, thereby enabling J&K to compete nationally with other leading industrially developed States/UTs of the country.
- It is anticipated that the proposed scheme is likely to attract unprecedented investment and give direct and indirect employment to about 4.5 lakh persons.

## GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

## BUREAU OF INDIAN STANDARDS

### Context

*Bureau of Indian Standards celebrates its foundation day on 6th January 2021*

- Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is the National Standard Body of India working under the aegis of Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Government of India.
- BIS is responsible for the harmonious development of the activities of standardization, marking and quality certification of goods and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

### Statutory Framework

BIS was established by the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 1986 which came into effect on 23 December 1986.

The Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016 made the BIS a National Standards Body. The **BIS Act** has been implemented since 12 October 2017.

**The highlights of the new BIS Act are:**

- Positions BIS as the National Standards Body.
- Allows multiple conformity assessment schemes in line with global practices.
- Enables the Government to authorize any agency apart from BIS to certify and enforce conformity to a standard.
- Enables the Government to include products under mandatory certification on grounds of health, safety, environment, national security and prevention of deceptive practices.
- Enables the Government to bring Hallmarking of precious metal articles under mandatory certification.
- Provides consumer protection measures like recall of non-conforming standard marked products, compensation to the consumer and more stringent penal provisions.

## Key Activities

The activities of BIS can be broadly grouped under the following heads:

1. Standards formulation
2. International activities
3. Product Certification
4. Hallmarking
5. Laboratory services
6. Training services – National Institute of Training for Standardisation
7. Consumer Affairs and Publicity

## GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

## AIR UNIQUE-QUALITY MONITORING (AUM)

### Context

*Indigenous Air Unique-quality Monitoring (AUM) Photonic System developed for Real-Time Remote Monitoring of Air Quality.*

### What is the AUM system?

- The AUM system is ***an innovative application of the principles of laser backscattering, statistical mechanics, optoelectronics, artificial intelligence, machine/deep learning, and Internet of Things.***
- It can ***identify, classify, and quantify various pollutants simultaneously*** (of orders of less than one part per billion) and meteorological parameters, with very high precision, sensitivity and accuracy.

### Need for

- World Health Organisation (WHO)'s reports show ***that the worsening state of poor air quality is responsible for more than 7.5 million fatalities worldwide annually.***

- This highlights the *necessity for accurate, yet cost-effective monitoring of air quality parameters as monitoring is critical to solution.*
- The *current systems and technologies* used for air quality monitoring are prohibitively expensive for wider deployment.
- This underlines the need for development of systems for real-time remote monitoring of relevant air quality parameters.

## Who developed?

- With the support from Department of Science and *Technology's Clean Air Research Initiative, Gayatri Vidya Parishad-Scientific and Industrial Research Centre (GVP-SIRC) & GVP College of Engineering, Visakhapatnam*, has developed an indigenous photonic system for real-time remote monitoring of air quality parameters.
- The system titled AUM (Air Unique-quality Monitoring) had CATS Eco-Systems, Nashik as the technology transfer partner for commercialization.

## Significance

This system can boost the nation's efforts towards self-reliance in high-end technologies and can additionally be instrumental in supporting the endeavours in improving the nation's health and economy.

## Mains Questions:

*Discuss the reason behinds worsening state of poor air quality in Indian metro cities. Given the air quality on Delhi-NCR, What are the initiatives has been taken up by government to redress this problem.*

## FOR PRELIMS

# NAVAL INNOVATION AND INDIGENISATION ORGANISATION (NIIO)

*Recently, Raksha Mantri has launched the Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation (NIIO).*

## Highlights

The NIIO is a **three-tiered organisation.**

- **Naval Technology Acceleration Council (N-TAC)** will bring together the twin aspects of innovation and indigenisation and provide apex level directives.
- A **working group** under the N-TAC will implement the projects.
- A **Technology Development Acceleration Cell (TDAC)** has also been created for induction of emerging disruptive technology in an accelerated time frame.

- The NIIO puts in place dedicated structures for the end users to interact with academia and industry towards fostering innovation and indigenisation for self-reliance in defence in keeping with the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

## PIB-JANUARY 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

## NCAVES INDIA FORUM-2021

### Context

**Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of the Ecosystem Services (NCAVES) India Forum-2021** is being organised by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

### What is NCAVES project?

The Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services (NCAVES) project seeks to advance the theory and practice of environmental and ecosystem accounting in **Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa**.

- It aims to assist the five participating partner countries, to advance the knowledge agenda on environmental-economic accounting, in particular ecosystem accounting.
- The project will have a duration until the end of 2021.

### Implementation:

The project has been jointly implemented by the **United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)**, the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** and the **Secretariat of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD)**.

### Objectives of the Project:

**The Project aims to assist the five participating partner countries**, namely Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa, to advance the knowledge agenda on environmental-economic accounting, in particular ecosystem accounting.

It will initiate pilot testing of **SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting (SEEA EEA)** with a view to:

1. Improving the measurement of ecosystems and their services (both in physical and monetary terms) at the (sub) national level;
2. Mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystems at (sub) national level policy planning and implementation;
3. Contribute to the development of internationally agreed methodology and its use in partner countries.



## About NCAVES India Forum 2021

In India, the NCAVES project is being implemented by the **MoSPI with collaboration of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) and the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC).**

### Objectives:

The objectives of the National Forum would be:

- To present India's achievements in the domain of Natural Capital Accounting (NCA);
- To prioritize the emerging opportunities for NCA in India;
- To familiarize stakeholders with the work undertaken by the different international agencies in the area of NCA; and
- To provide a platform to selected Research Institutions to present their research conducted in the valuation of ecosystem services.

### Significance:

The participation in the project has helped MOSPI commence the compilation of the Environment Accounts as per the UN-SEEA framework.

- The MOSPI has also released environmental accounts in its publication **"EnviStats India"** on an annual basis since 2018.
- Several of these accounts are closely related to the social and economic attributes, making them a useful tool for the Policy.

### Mains Question:

***Participation in the NCAVES project will help India to advance the theory and practice of environmental and ecosystem accounting. Discuss.***

## 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.

## NATIONAL YOUTH PARLIAMENT FESTIVAL

### Context

*The second National Youth Parliament Festival is being concluded on 12 January.*

### What is the National Youth Parliament Festival?

National Youth Parliament Festival (NYPF) is based on the idea given by Prime Minister in his Mann Ki Baat Address on 31st December 2017.

- The objective of National Youth Parliament Festival is **to hear the voice of youth between 18 and less than 25 years of age**, who will join various careers in coming years, including public services.
- Taking inspiration from the idea of Prime Minister, **the first NYPF 2019** was organised at District, State & National level.

## National Youth Festival

National Youth Festival is celebrated **every year from 12th to 16th January**.

- **12th January being the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda**, is observed as National Youth Day.
- This year, NYPF is also being organized along with the National Youth Festival.

### Objective:

The objective of the National Youth Festival is **to bring youth of the country together to showcase their talents; provide them an arena, by creating a mini-India**, where youth interact in formal and informal settings and exchange their social and cultural uniqueness.

- It is also **to promote national integration**, spirit of communal harmony, brotherhood, courage and adventure.
- The basic aim is to propagate the spirit, essence and concept of **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat**.

**Theme of National Youth Festival-2021:** 'YUVAAH – Utsah Naye Bharat Ka'

Due to COVID-19, the 24th National Youth Festival is being held in virtual mode.

## GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

## GREEN FUEL: ETHANOL

### Context

*Recently, Government discussed the ways and means to increase the supply of ethanol to OMCs was discussed to achieve the objective of the Government to increase blending percentage in petrol.*

### Improving viability of sugar industry

- Government has taken various measures to improve viability of sugar industry, thereby **enabling sugar mills to make timely payment of cane dues of farmers**.
- Going forward, **diversion of excess sugarcane and sugar is the long term solution** for addressing the problem of excess stock and improving viability of sugar industry.
- **Ethanol is a green fuel & its blending with petrol also saves the country's foreign exchange.**

### Ways and means to blending percentage in petrol

- The producers of ethanol (sugar mills), **buyers of ethanol (OMCs)** and the lenders (banks) will enter into a tri-partite agreement (TPA).
- It would enable them **for producing, buying and paying for the ethanol through an escrow account etc.**, the banks can consider giving loans to sugar mills even with weak balance sheets.

- This would facilitate **mills to avail loans from banks to set up new distilleries or to expand their existing distilleries.**
- Thereby, help in achieving the blending target under Ethanol Blended with Petrol programme.

### Way forward

- To encourage sugar mills to divert excess sugarcane to produce ethanol for blending with petrol, **the Government has allowed production of ethanol from B-Heavy Molasses, sugarcane juice, sugar syrup and sugar; and has also fixed the remunerative ex-mill price of ethanol derived from these feed-stocks.**
- Sugar mills having distillation capacity have been advised to divert B-heavy molasses and sugar syrup for producing ethanol to utilize their capacity to maximum extent.
- States have also been requested to ensure smooth movement of molasses & ethanol.

### What is Bioethanol?

Bioethanol fuel is **mainly produced by the sugar fermentation process**, although it can also be manufactured by the chemical process of reacting ethylene with steam.

- Bioethanol is the principle fuel used as a **petrol substitute** for road transport vehicles.
- The main sources of sugar required to produce ethanol come from fuel or energy crops.
- **Ethanol or ethyl alcohol (C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>5</sub>OH) is a clear colourless liquid, it is biodegradable, low in toxicity and causes little environmental pollution if spilt.**
- By blending ethanol with gasoline we can also oxygenate the fuel mixture so it burns more completely and reduces polluting emissions.

### Mains Question:

***The Government's initiative to increase blending percentage in petrol would enable sugar mills to make timely payment of cane dues of farmers. Discuss.***

## GENERAL STUDIES - I

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

## NEW CIRCLES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

### Context

Recently, Ministry of Culture has announced 7 new circles of Archaeological Survey of India.

### Highlights

The Ministry of Culture has announced **7 new circles of Archaeological Survey of India.**

- The new circles have been created in **Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, West Bengal and Gujarat.**
- **Hampi, Trichy, Raiganj, Rajkot, Jabalpur, Jhansi & Meerut** have been announced as new circles.

- Earlier there were **29 ASI circles across the country.**

## **New circles:**

1. **Trichy in Tamil Nadu:** which has thousands of temples and glorious memories of the **Chola kings**, Trichy has been made a new circle along with the **circle of Chennai.**
2. **Hampi city in Karnataka:** is a place of international importance from the point of view of archaeological heritage therefore the Hampi Sub-Circle now has been made a new full fledged circle.
3. **Raiganj In West Bengal:** has been made a new circle along with Kolkata, this will eliminate geographical inconvenience in a big state like Bengal.
4. **Rajkot In Gujarat:** has been announced a new circle along with Vadodara.
5. **Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh:** has been announced a new circle along with Bhopal. This will include the monuments from Jabalpur, Rewa, Shahdol and Sagar divisions.
6. **Jhansi in Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh**
7. **Meerut in western Uttar Pradesh** have been announced **two new circles along with Lucknow and Agra in Uttar Pradesh.**

## **About Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**

- The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), **under the Ministry of Culture**, is the premier organization for the archaeological researches and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation.
- **Maintenance of ancient monuments and archaeological sites** and remains of national importance is the prime concern of the ASI.
- Besides it regulate all archaeological activities in the country as per the provisions of the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.**
- It also regulates Antiquities and Art Treasure Act, 1972.

## **Mains Question:**

*Discuss the role and importance of Archaeological Survey of India in course of maintain History.*

## **FOR PRELIMS**

# **NATIONAL INTERNET EXCHANGE OF INDIA (NIXI)**

## **Context:**

*NIXI Offers free Domain in Local Indian Languages*

## **Highlights**

- The National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) announced that it will offer a free **IDN (Internationalized Domain Name)** in any of their preferred **22 official Indian language along with every IN domain** booked by the registrant.
- Applicant will also get a **free email in local language.**

- This offer has been created **to stimulate the adoption of भारत (IDN) domain** name and proliferation of local language content.

## About NIXI

National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) is a **not for profit organization working since 2003** for spreading the internet technology to the citizens of India.

## PIB-JANUARY 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

## NORTH EAST VENTURE FUND (NEVF)

### Context

*The North East Venture Fund (NEVF) is gaining popularity among Start-Ups and young entrepreneurs: Minister*

### What is the NEVF?

The North East Venture Fund (NEVF), is the first and the only dedicated Venture Fund for the North Eastern Region.

- The Venture Fund Scheme launched in September 2017 by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER).
- It was intended to promote growth of business ventures and skill development in the region.

### Key features:

- The North East Venture Fund (NEVF) was set up by **joint efforts** from Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) and North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd (NEDFi).
- It aims to **encourage entrepreneurs and Start-ups and to empower entrepreneurs from the North Eastern Region (NER).**
- It is a **close ended fund** with capital commitment of Rs 100 crore.
- The investment size with the Venture Fund Scheme ranges between Rs.25 lakhs and Rs. 10 crores with a long term horizon of five to ten years.

### Objective:

To contribute to the entrepreneurship development of the NER and achieve attractive risk-adjusted returns through long term capital appreciation by way of investments in privately negotiated equity/ equity related investments.

### About NEDFi:

North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd (NEDFi) was **incorporated as a public limited company** in 1995 under the Companies Act, 1956.

It is categorized as **Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC)**-Loan Company and was registered with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in 2002.

## GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

### KHADI PRAKRITIK PAINT

#### Context

Recently, an innovative new paint developed by Khadi and Village Industries Commission was launched.

#### Highlights

- The **eco-friendly, non-toxic paint**, called “Khadi Prakritik Paint” is a first-of-its-kind product, **with anti-fungal, anti-bacterial properties**.
- **Based on cow dung as its main ingredient**, the paint is cost-effective and odorless, and has been **certified by Bureau of Indian Standards**

#### Key features of the Khadi Prakritik Paint:

- Khadi Prakritik Paint is **available in two forms** – distemper paint and plastic emulsion paint.
- The paint is **free from heavy metals like lead, mercury, chromium, arsenic, cadmium** and others.
- This is estimated to generate additional income of Rs 30,000 (approx) per annum per animal to farmers/ gaushalas.

#### Benefits:

- It will be a **boost to local manufacturing and will create sustainable local employment** through technology transfer.
- This technology will **increase consumption of cow dung as a raw material** for eco-friendly products.
- It will generate **additional revenue to farmers and gaushalas**.
- Utilization of cow dung will also **clean the environment and prevent clogging of drains**.

## GENERAL STUDIES - II

### Important International institutions

### ASIAN INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT BANK (AIIB)



## Context

*Government of India and AIIB sign agreement for \$500 million to improve the network capacity, service quality and safety of the suburban railway system in Mumbai.*

## Highlights

- The Government of India, the Government of Maharashtra, Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) signed a loan agreement for a \$500 million **Mumbai Urban Transport Project-III**.
- It aims to improve the network capacity, service quality and safety of the **suburban railway system in Mumbai**.
- The Project is expected to increase network capacity in the region with the reduction in journey time and fatal accidents of commuters.

## Benefits

- It is estimated that among primary beneficiaries of the project, **22% are female passengers** who will benefit from improved safety and quality of service.
- The Mumbai Urban Transport Project-III will also help in **reducing carbon emissions** by shifting passengers away from higher-carbon road transport towards efficient and convenient rail-based mobility.
- In addition, female passengers will benefit from improved safety and quality of service.

## Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)

- The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is a **multilateral development bank with a mission to improve social and economic outcomes in Asia**.
- It is **headquartered in Beijing**, and **began its operations in January 2016** and have now grown to **103 approved members worldwide**.
- The bank was **proposed by China in 2013** and the initiative was **launched at a ceremony in Beijing in October 2014**.
- It received the highest credit ratings from the three biggest rating agencies in the world, and **is seen as a potential rival to the World Bank and IMF**.
- Fourteen of the G-20 nations are AIIB members including France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom.

## Key Organs of AIIB

**Board of Governors:** The Board of Governors consists of one Governor and one Alternate Governor appointed by each member country. Governors and Alternate Governors serve at the pleasure of the appointing member.

**Board of Directors:** Non-resident Board of Directors is responsible for the direction of the Bank's general operations, exercising all powers delegated to it by the Board of Governors.

**Senior Management:** headed by the President who is elected by AIIB shareholders for a five-year term and eligible for reelection once.

**International Advisory Panel:** The Bank has established an International Advisory Panel (IAP) to support the President and Senior Management on the Bank's strategies and policies as well as on general operational issues.

## Significance of AIIB

According to the United Nations the AIIB have a potential for 'scaling up financing for sustainable development' for the concern of global economic governance.

**The capital of the bank is \$100 billion**, equivalent to 2/3 of the capital of the Asian Development Bank and about half that of the World Bank.

## Mains Question:

*Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is seen as a potential rival to the World Bank and IMF. Discuss.*

## CHROME FACTS FOR PRELIMS

### SEA VIGIL - 21

The second edition of the **biennial pan-India coastal defence exercise 'Sea Vigil-21'** will be conducted on 12-13 January 2021.

- The exercise is being coordinated by the Indian Navy.
- The **entire coastal security set up was reorganised after the 26/11 Terror attack** at Mumbai which was launched via the sea route.
- The exercise is a build up towards the major Theatre level exercise **TROPEX [Theatre-level Readiness Operational Exercise]** which Indian Navy conducts every two years.
- **SEA VIGIL and TROPEX together** will cover the entire spectrum of maritime security challenges, including transition from peace to conflict.
- Assets of the **Indian Navy, Coast Guard, Customs and other maritime agencies will participate in SEA VIGIL.**

## 51st IFFI

The 51st Edition of the International Film Festival of India, IFFI will be held from **16th to 24th January in Goa.**

IFFI announced this edition's **Country in Focus for the 51st IFFI is Bangladesh.**

## About IFFI:

The International Film Festival of India (IFFI), **founded in 1952**, is one of the most significant film festivals in Asia.

- It is currently **held annually, in the state of Goa.**

- The festival is **conducted jointly by** the Directorate of Film Festivals (under Ministry of Information and Broadcasting) and the state Government of Goa.

### The festival aims at:

1. Providing a common platform for the cinemas of the world to project the excellence of the film art;
2. Contributing to the understanding and appreciation of film cultures of different nations in the context of their social and cultural ethos; and
3. Promoting friendship and cooperation among people of the world.

## NATIONAL ENERGY CONSERVATION AWARDS 2020

### Context

*Indian Railways bags 13 awards at the 'National Energy Conservation awards 2020'.*

### Highlights

**National Energy Conservation Awards (NECA)** for the year 2020, organized by the **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)**, Ministry of Power.

### About the award

- The Ministry of Power, Government of India has **launched a scheme in 1991**, to give national recognition through awards to industries and establishments that have taken special efforts to reduce energy consumption while maintaining their production.
- The awards were given away for the first time on December 14, 1991, which was declared as the '**National Energy Conservation Day**'.

### About BEE

Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), is a statutory body under Ministry of Power.

- It is mandated to implement policy and programmes in energy efficiency and conservation.
- The objective of such initiatives is to reduce energy intensity in our country by optimizing energy demand and **reduce emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG)** which are responsible for global warming and climate change.

## PIB-JANUARY 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### GENERAL STUDIES - III

**Topic**– *Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices;*

## PRADHAN MANTRI FASAL BIMA YOJANA (PMFBY)

### Context

*Crop Insurance Scheme- the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) successfully completes 5 Years of operations on 13th January 2021.*

## What is the PMFBY?

The PMFBY was **launched in 2016** and **replaces all the prevailing yield insurance schemes in India**. It replaced the **National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS)** and **Modified National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (MNAIS)**.

- The scheme has been launched **with an impetus on crop sector** and has **extended coverage under localized risks, post-harvest losses etc.**
- It aims at **adoption of technology** for the purpose of yield estimation.
- **The scheme is mandatory for farmers who have taken institutional loans from banks.**
- **It's optional for farmers who have not taken institutional credit.**

## Objectives

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) **aims at supporting sustainable production in agriculture sector** by way of –

- Providing **financial support to farmers suffering crop loss/damage arising out of unforeseen events.**
- **Stabilizing the income** of farmers to ensure their continuance in farming.
- Encouraging farmers **to adopt innovative and modern agricultural practices.**
- **It aims** to ensure flow of credit to the agriculture sector which contributes **to food security, crop diversification and enhancing growth and competitiveness of agriculture sector.**
- To protecting farmers from production risks.

## KEY FEATURES OF PMFBY

### Uniform Premium

It envisages a uniform premium of only **2% to be paid by farmers for Kharif crops**, and **1.5% for Rabi crops**. The premium for annual **commercial and horticultural crops will be 5%.**

### Use of Technology

- The new scheme envisages utilizing innovative technologies like satellite imagery, vegetation indices etc.
- The mandatory usage of smart phones / hand held devices for increasing the speed and accuracy during yield estimation.
- In order to minimize the area discrepancy in coverage, the scheme also promotes the digitization of land records.

### Better Coverage

- Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) aims at covering the losses suffered by farmers due to reduction in crop yield as estimated by the local appropriate government authorities.

- The scheme also covers pre sowing losses, post-harvest losses due to cyclonic rains and losses due to unseasonal rainfall in India.
- There is a provision to cover losses due to localized calamities such as inundation also in addition to the previously covered hailstorm and landslide risks.

## Significance

The scheme was conceived as a milestone initiative to provide a comprehensive risk solution at the lowest uniform premium across the country for farmers.

- As an **end to end risk mitigation mechanism** for farmers, the scheme extends coverage for the **entire cropping cycle from pre-sowing to post-harvest** including coverage for losses arising out of prevented sowing and mid-season adversities.
- Individual farm level losses arising out of localized calamities and post-harvest losses are also covered due to perils such as **inundation, cloudburst and natural fire**.

## GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

## URBAN LOCAL BODIES REFORMS

### Context

*Manipur becomes the 4th State to complete urban local bodies reforms Additional borrowing permission of Rs.75 crore issued.*

### Highlights

- Manipur has become the 4th State in the country to successfully undertake “**Urban Local Bodies (ULB)**” reforms stipulated by the **Department of Expenditure**, Ministry of Finance.
- By this, the State has become eligible **to mobilise additional financial resources of Rs.75 crore through Open Market Borrowings**.
- Manipur has now joined the **three other States namely, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana**, who have completed this reform.

### Reforms in the Urban Local Bodies

- Reforms in the Urban Local Bodies and the urban utilities reforms are **aimed at financial strengthening of ULBs in the States** and to enable them to provide better public health and sanitation services.
- Economically rejuvenated ULBs will also be able to create good civic infrastructure.

### Areas of ULB's reforms

The four citizen centric areas identified for reforms were

- Implementation of One Nation One Ration Card System,

- Ease of doing business reform,
- Urban Local body/ utility reforms and
- Power Sector reforms.

## Current status

- So far 10 States have implemented the One Nation One Ration Card System.
- 7 States have done ease of doing business reforms, and 4 States have done local body reforms.
- Total additional borrowing permission issued so far to the States who have done the reforms stands at Rs.54,265 crore.

## GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

# FINANCIAL STABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (FSDC)

## Context

*FSDC meeting held recently was chaired by the Union Finance Minister*

## What is it?

- The Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) **is an apex-level body** constituted in December, 2010 by the government of India.
- FSDC was set up **to strengthen and institutionalise the mechanism for maintaining financial stability**, enhancing inter-regulatory coordination and promoting financial sector development.
- **FSDC is not a statutory body.**

## Composition of FSDC

The Council is chaired by the Union Finance Minister.

Members are:

- Governor, Reserve Bank of India;
- Finance Secretary and/or Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs;
- Secretary, Department of Financial Services;
- Chief Economic Adviser,
- Chairman, Securities and Exchange Board of India;
- Chairman, Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority and
- Chairman, Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority.
- The chairman of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board (IBBI).
- Secretary, Ministry of electronics and information technology (MeitY).



## Functions

FSDC is formed to bring greater coordination among financial market regulators.

- The Council deals, inter-alia, with issues relating to financial stability, financial sector development, inter-regulatory coordination, financial literacy, financial inclusion and macro prudential supervision of the economy including the functioning of large financial conglomerates.
- No funds are separately allocated to the Council for undertaking its activities.

## GENERAL STUDIES - I

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

## ODF+ AND ODF++

### Context

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

### Highlights

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

### What is ODF tag?

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

### What is ODF+ and ODF++?

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

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

**Norms under ODF++:** The ODF++ protocol adds the condition that, Proper treatment and management of faecal sludge/septage and sewage is safely managed and treated. There

should be no discharge or dumping of untreated faecal sludge/septage and sewage in drains, water bodies or open areas.

**Mains Question:**

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

## CHROME FACTS FOR PRELIMS

### RED RIBBON QUIZ COMPETITION

The Grand Finale of the Red Ribbon Quiz Competition' organized by the **National AIDS Control Organization**.

**Highlights**

- The red ribbon is the universal symbol of awareness and support for people living with HIV.
- **National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO)** has been implementing the Adolescence Education Programme since 2005 in collaboration with NCERT in more than 50,000 schools.
- **NACO has also established 12,500 Red Ribbon Clubs (RRCs)** to reach out to the college going youth.
- This programme is a **comprehensive promotional and preventive intervention** to harness the potential, specifically to mainstream HIV prevention, care & support and treatment, impact mitigation, stigma reduction and enhance Voluntary Blood Donation.

### PIB-JANUARY 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021

#### GENERAL STUDIES - III

**Topic**— *India and its neighborhood- relations.*

### SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION BETWEEN INDIA AND UAE

**Context**

*Cabinet approves MoU between India and UAE for Scientific and Technical Cooperation.*

**Highlights**

The MoU provides for **sharing of knowledge, data and operational products** for meteorological, seismological and oceanic services, such as Radar, Satellite, Tide gauges, seismic and Meteorological stations.

- **Exchange of scientific and technical information** related to common interest activities.
- Organization of bilateral scientific and technical seminars and training courses on problems related to the fields of cooperation.
- **Deployment of Meteorological observation networks** on mutual agreement over Ocean waters.
- Cooperation in the **development of special capacities of Tsunami models researches** for faster and more reliable forecasts of Tsunamis propagating through the Oman Sea and Arabian Sea.
- Cooperation to support the **Tsunami Early Warning Centre (TEWC)** in the form of forecast modelling software, specifically designed to support the Tsunami forecasting operations.
- Sharing the **real-time seismic data of some of Seismic stations** situated in south and west of India and North of the UAE.
- Cooperation in **Early warnings of Sand and Dust storms** through the exchange of knowledge.

## Need for:

Due to **evolutionary nature of weather**, regional collaboration can help improve understanding of changing weather patterns, devise effective response strategies, lower investment costs, and foster regionally relevant technological innovation and address challenges related to modernization and sustainability of weather services.

## Background:

**Weather services make critical contributions in enhancing efficiency of weather dependent sectors of economy;** and in managing risk in weather-dependent economic sectors such as agriculture, transport, water etc. which underpin the economic growth in the region.

Resilience can be **strengthened through regional and global cooperation** as countries invest in early warning systems and modernize weather and forecasting services.

## Way forward:

Collaborative participation within **MoES (India) and NCM-UAE** in terms of activities related to multi-hazard early warning system and climate resilience can significantly contribute to economic growth in the region.

## GENERAL STUDIES- III

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

### ‘SAROD-PORTS’

## Context

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

## What is it?

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

## Objectives:

- Affordable and timely resolution of disputes in fair manner
- Enrichment of Dispute Resolution Mechanism with the panel of technical experts as arbitrators.
- SAROD-Ports consists members from Indian Ports Association (IPA) and Indian Private Ports and Terminals Association (IPTTA).

## Background:

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

## GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

## EASE 2.0 INDEX

### Context

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

### What is it?

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

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

### What it do?

- The Index **measures the performance of each PSB on 120+objective metrics** across **six themes**.
- The goal is to continue driving change by spurring healthy competition among PSBs and by encouraging them to learn from each other.

## **Performance of PSB on EASE 2.0 Index**

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

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

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

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

### **Mains Question:**

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

## **CHROME FACTS FOR PRELIMS**

### **VETERANS DAY**

Indian Armed Forces will be celebrating Veteran's Day on 14 Jan 2021.

- The day was chosen as recognition of the services rendered by the **first Commander-in-Chief of Indian Armed Forces, Field Marshal KM Cariappa**, OBE who retired on this day in 1953.

### **Smart Water Supply Measurement and Monitoring System**

National Jal Jeevan Mission (NJJM) in partnership with **Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology** launched an ICT Grand Challenge, for development of a 'Smart water supply measurement and monitoring system' on 15th September, 2020.

- Jal Jeevan Mission would be the user agency of the Grand Challenge and C-DAC, Bangalore is the implementing agency, providing technical support for the challenge.
- Enthusiastic participation was observed from all over India.



The poster for the ICT Grand Challenge features a green and blue color scheme. At the top, it displays logos for the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, Government of India, Digital India, and Har Ghar Jal. Below these, it lists supporting organizations: CDAC, MeitY Startup Hub, SEPI, and myGov. The main title 'ICT Grand Challenge' is in large green letters. The subtitle reads 'Grand challenge for development of smart water supply measurement & monitoring system'. A section titled 'Awards & Recognition :' lists six bullet points detailing the funding and support for different stages of the challenge. At the bottom, it states the application submission date as 5th October 2020 and mentions that the application form is available at MeitY Startup Hub. The background includes a stylized illustration of a person's head with gears and a water supply system diagram.

MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Digital India  
Power To Empower

Har Ghar Jal  
Jal Jeevan Mission

Supported by: सी डैक CDAC | MEITY STARTUP HUB | एस सी पी SEPI | myGov मेरी सरकार

## ICT Grand Challenge

Grand challenge for development of smart water supply measurement & monitoring system

### Awards & Recognition :

- ✓ Ideation to prototype stage : Funding for 10 selected teams @ Rs 7.5 Lakh each
- ✓ Prototype to product stage : Funding for 4 selected teams @ Rs 25 Lakh each
- ✓ Product deployment stage : Funding for 4 selected teams for Field trail, Testing, Deployment, Logistics & Travel, sourcing & installation (of Hardware & Software)
- ✓ Winner-1 @ Rs 50 lakh and Runner-ups-2 @ Rs 20 Lakh each
- ✓ Incubation and Marketing support by Meity and Jal Jeevan Mission
- ✓ Approved Solution - would be listed in GeM portal

Application submission  
5<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Application form available at MeitY Startup Hub

### Bharat Air Fibre Services

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

### Highlights

- The Bharat Air Fibre services are introduced by BSNL as part of digital India initiatives by the Government of India.
- It aims of providing **Wireless Connectivity in the range of 20 KMs** from the **BSNL Locations** and thus customers at remote places also will be benefitted as BSNL comes with cheapest services with support of **Telecom Infrastructure Partners (TIPs)**.
- BSNL provides Bharat Air Fibre connectivity **upto 100 Mbps speed**.



**PIB-JANUARY 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

## GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

### **PMKVY 3.0**

#### **Context**

*Third phase of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY 3.0) to be launched soon.*

#### **About it:**

- The third phase of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY 3.0) will be launched in **600 districts across all states of India.**
- **Spearheaded by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)**, this phase will focus on new-age and COVID-related skills.

#### **About PMKVY 3.0:**

**Skill India Mission PMKVY 3.0** envisages training of eight lakh candidates over a scheme period of 2020-2021.

- The 729 Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras (PMKKs), empaneled non-PMKK training centres and more than 200 ITIs under Skill India will be rolling out PMKVY 3.0 training **to build a robust pool of skilled professionals.**
- On the basis of the learning gained from PMKVY 1.0 and PMKVY 2.0, the Ministry has improved the newer version of the scheme to match the current policy doctrine and energize the skilling ecosystem affected due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **About PMKVY:**

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), launched in 2015, is the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) implemented by National Skill Development Corporation.

- The objective of this Skill Certification Scheme is to enable a large number of Indian youth to take up industry-relevant skill training that will help them in securing a better livelihood.
- Individuals with prior learning experience or skills will also be assessed and certified under **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).**

#### **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 2.0 (PMKVY 2.0) 2016-20**

After the successful implementation of pilot PMKVY (2015-16), **PMKVY 2016-20 was launched by scaling up both in terms of Sector and Geography** and by greater alignment with other missions of Government of India like Make in India, Digital India, Swachh Bharat, etc.

#### **Objectives of PMKVY 2016-20**

Enable and mobilize a large number of youths to take up industry designed quality skill training, become employable and earn their livelihood.

- Increase productivity of the existing workforce, and align skill training with the actual needs of the country.
- Encourage standardisation of the Certification process and put in place the foundation for creating a registry of skills.
- Benefit 10 million youth over the period of four years (2016- 2020).

## Skill India Mission

“Skill India Mission” has gained tremendous momentum through launch of its flagship scheme PMKVY to unlock the vision of making India the ‘Skill Capital’ of the world.

## GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

## NATIONAL INNOVATION FOUNDATION (NIF) – INDIA

### Context

Science & Technology minister dedicates an Innovation Portal developed by National Innovation Foundation (NIF) – India to the nation.

### About it:

Innovation Portal is **developed by National Innovation Foundation (NIF) – India**, an autonomous body of the Department of Science and Technology (DST).

- The National Innovation Portal (NIP) is **currently home to about 1.15 lakh innovations scouted from common people of the country**, covering Engineering, Agriculture, Veterinary and Human Health.
- In terms of **domain areas**, presently the innovations cover Energy, mechanical, automobile, electrical, electronics, household, nutraceuticals etc.

### National Innovation Foundation (NIF) – India:

It is an autonomous body of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India.

- It was **set up in February 2000 at Ahmedabad, Gujarat.**
- **It aims** to provide institutional support for scouting, spawning, sustaining and scaling up the grassroots innovations across the country.
- Its mission **is to help India become a creative and knowledge-based society** by expanding policy and institutional space for grassroots technological innovators.
- It is **India’s national initiative to strengthen the grassroots technological innovations and outstanding traditional knowledge.**

## GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

### EXPORT PREPAREDNESS INDEX (EPI) 2020

#### Context

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

#### About it

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

#### What is Export Preparedness Index?

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

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

#### The structure of EPI:

The structure of the EPI includes 4 pillars, namely:

- *Policy;*
- *Business Ecosystem;*
- *Export Ecosystem;*
- *Export Performance*

#### It also have 11 sub-pillars. These are:

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

#### Performances of States

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

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

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

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

### Challenges

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

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

### Need to address these challenges

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

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

### Significance:

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

### Mains Question:

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

## CHROME FACTS FOR PRELIMS

### 'PRARAMBH: STARTUP INDIA INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT'

- The Summit is being organized by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.
- The Summit marks the **fifth anniversary of the Startup India initiative, launched on 16 January, 2016**.
- The Summit will be the largest startup confluence organised by the Government of India since the launch of the Startup India initiative.

## India's first indigenously Developed 9mm Machine Pistol

- India's first indigenous 9mm Machine Pistol has been **jointly developed by DRDO and Indian Army**.
- **3D Printing process has been used** in designing and prototyping of various parts including trigger components made by metal 3D printing.
- The weapon has huge potential in Armed forces as personal weapon for heavy weapon detachments, commanders and counter terrorism operations etc.
- The weapon is **named "Asmi" meaning "Pride", "Self-Respect" & "Hard Work"**.

## Polio National Immunisation Day

Polio **National Immunisation Day** rescheduled to 31st January 2021.

- The massive countrywide COVID-19 vaccination drive will be rolled out from 16th January, 2021.
- This would be world's largest immunisation exercise.
- Therefore, it has been decided by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) to reschedule the **Polio vaccination day, also known as the National Immunisation Day (NID) or "Polio Ravivar" to 31st January 2021**.

## PIB-JANUARY 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### GENERAL STUDIES-I

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

## THIRUVALLUVAR DAY

### Context

15th January is celebrated as Thiruvalluvar Day and is declared as a public holiday in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry (erstwhile Pondicherry).

### Highlights

- It is celebrated on the fourth day of Pongal celebrations when people pay respect to elders and elders offer blessings in cash and kind.
- Womenfolk leave food on banana leaves or turmeric plants for the birds to feed.

- Food is offered in different colours to attract birds.

## Who was the Thiruvalluvar?

Thiruvalluvar, a poet and philosopher, is regarded as a cultural icon by Tamils.

- While **not much is known about Thiruvalluvar's life**, speculations about it have been largely deduced from his work **Thirukkural and other Tamil texts**.
- Earliest references of the poet are found in the **text Tiruvalluva Maalai**.
- **Legends say he may have lived in the town of Mylapore**, a neighbourhood in present-day Chennai and flourished between the 4th century and 6th century.
- **His most popular work is Thirukkural, a collection of couplets on ethics, politics, economy and love.**
- **Thirukkural** contains 1330 couplets (kurals) that are divided into 133 sections of 10 couplets each.
- The **text is divided into three parts** with teachings on dharma, artha, and kama (virtue, wealth and love).



## Temples and monuments of Thiravalluvar

In the early **16th century**, a temple dedicated to Thiruvalluvar was built within the **Ekambareswarar temple complex in Mylapore, Chennai**.

- Locals believe that this was where he was born, **underneath a tree within the temple complex**.



- In 1976, a temple-memorial called Valluvar Kotam was built in Chennai and houses one of the largest auditoriums in Asia. A 133-foot tall statue of **Thiruvalluvar** stands at **Kanyakumari** as well.

## GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

### WORLD SOLAR TECHNOLOGY SUMMIT

#### Context

International Solar Alliance (ISA) is preparing a **detailed project report (DPR)** on the **creation of World Solar Bank** with authorised capital of USD 15 billion to fund projects.

#### International Solar Alliance (ISA)

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

#### Secretariat

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

#### Objectives

- The ISA's major **objectives include global deployment of over 1,000GW of solar generation capacity** and mobilisation of investment of over US\$ 1000 billion into solar energy by 2030.
- The ISA envisions to enable the full ecosystem for availability and development of technology, economic resources, and development of storage technology, mass manufacturing and innovation.

## Need for

- The **reduced cost of technology** would enable the undertaking of more ambitious solar energy programmes.
- Noting that Solar is **key source of affordable and reliable energy**, successful project implementation could play significant role in achieving the universal energy access **goal (SDG 7)**.
- **The ISA has 67 countries as ISA has six programmes** Solar Applications for Agricultural Use, Affordable Finance at Scale, Mini Grids, and Solar Rooftops and Solar E-mobility & Storage and Large-Scale Solar Parks.

## Mains Question:

International Solar Alliance could be the climate change game-changer. Discuss.

## GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

## PARTIAL CREDIT GUARANTEE SCHEME (PCGS) 2.0

### Context

Partial Credit Guarantee Scheme (PCGS) 2.0 extended with greater flexibility to respond to emerging demands.

### What is the PCGS 2.0?

The Partial Credit Guarantee Scheme 2.0 was launched as part of the government's Rs 21-lakh crore relief package in May.

- **It aims to provide Portfolio Guarantee for purchase of Bonds or Commercial Papers (CPs) with a rating of AA and below issued by NBFCs/HFCs/ MFIs by Public Sector Banks (PSBs).**

### What is the Partial Credit Guarantee Scheme (PCGS)?

The scheme allows to Public Sector Banks (PSBs) for purchasing high-rated pooled assets from financially sound Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) / Housing Finance Companies (HFCs).

- The amount of overall guarantee is limited to first loss of up to **10 per cent of fair value of assets** being purchased by the banks under the Scheme, **or Rs. 10,000 crore, whichever is lower**, as agreed by Department of Economic Affairs (DEA).
- The scheme would cover NBFCs and HFCs that might have slipped into "SMA-0" category during the one-year period prior to August 1, 2018.

### What is Special Mention Accounts (SMA)?

- Special Mention Accounts are those assets/accounts that show symptoms of bad asset quality in the first 90 days itself.
- The Special Mention Account identification is an effort for early stress discovery of bank loans.
- It was introduced as a corrective action plan to contain stress.
- As per the SMA regulations, banks should identify potential stress in the account by creating a new sub-asset category viz. 'Special Mention Accounts' (SMA).

## What is the difference between NPA and SMA?

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

## Classification of Special Mention Accounts

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

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

## Mains Question:

What are the Special mention accounts? The initiatives such as Partial Credit Guarantee Scheme are crucial in times of COVID-19. Discuss.

## CHROME FACTS FOR PRELIMS

# FOOD CORPORATION OF INDIA (FCI)

## Context:

57th Foundation day of FCI on 14th January 2021.

## About FCI:

The Food Corporation of India was setup under the **Food Corporation's Act 1964**, in order to fulfill following objectives of the Food Policy:

- Effective price support operations for safeguarding the interests of the farmers.
- Distribution of foodgrains throughout the country for public distribution system.
- Maintaining satisfactory level of operational and buffer stocks of foodgrains to ensure National Food Security.

Since its inception, FCI has played a significant role in India's success in transforming the crisis management oriented food security into a stable security system.

## 73<sup>rd</sup> ARMY DAY

### Context

Every year Indian Army celebrates 15th January as 'Army Day'.

### Highlights:

It is celebrate to commemorate the day when **General (later Field Marshal) K M Cariappa** took over the command of Army from **General Sir FRR Bucher**, the last British Commander-in-Chief in 1949 and became the first Commander-in-Chief of Indian Army post Independence.

## INDIA METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT (IMD)

### Context

India Meteorological Department (IMD) celebrates its 146th Foundation Day.

### About IMD:

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is an **agency of the Ministry of Earth Sciences** of the Government of India.

- It is the principal agency responsible for meteorological observations, weather forecasting and seismology.
- IMD is headquartered in Delhi and operates hundreds of observation stations across **India and Antarctica**. Regional offices are at Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata, Nagpur, Guwahati and New Delhi.
- IMD is also one of the **six Regional Specialised Meteorological Centres of the World Meteorological Organisation**.
- It has the responsibility for **forecasting, naming and distribution of warnings for tropical cyclones in the Northern Indian Ocean region, including the Malacca Straits, the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf**.

## PIB-JANUARY 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

## SKOCH CHALLENGER AWARD

### Context

SKOCH Challenger Award was given to Ministry of Panchayati Raj for Transparency in Governance.

## About the SKOCH Challenger Award

The SKOCH Challenger Awards are distinctive for its approach of selection of awardees, **which is not based on the nomination but on discovery.**

- The SKOCH Challenger Award **is considered India's Highest Independent Honour** and is conferred after exhaustive research and expert evaluations.
- The SKOCH Challenger Awards **acknowledge people, projects and institutions that go the extra mile to make India a better nation.**

## About SKOCH Group

SKOCH Group is **India's leading think tank dealing with socio-economic issues** with a focus on inclusive growth since 1997.

- SKOCH Group is able **to bring an Indian felt-needs context to strategies** and engages with fortune-500 companies, state owned enterprises, government to SMEs and community-based organisations with equal ease.
- **The repertoire of services include** field interventions, consultancy, research reports, impact assessments, policy briefs, books, journals, workshops and conferences.
- **SKOCH Group has instituted India's highest independent civilian honours** in the field of governance, finance, technology, economics and social sector.

## Major initiatives of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj for strengthening e-Governance in Panchayati Raj Institutions:

### SVAMITVA Scheme:

The launch and implementation of **SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas)** Scheme has been one of the major steps ahead towards ensuring socio-economic empowerment of the rural masses.

- **SVAMITVA Scheme aims** to provide an **integrated property validation solution** for rural India, engaging the latest drone surveying technology, for demarcating the inhabitant land in rural areas.
- This is expected **to pave the way to use their property as a financial asset for availing loans and other financial benefits from banks** as in the case in towns and cities.

### e-GramSwaraj:

**In order to strengthen e-Governance in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)**, e-GramSwaraj application has been developed.

- **The application subsumes** various other applications currently available applications in the Panchayat Enterprise Suit (PES) under e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project (MMP).
- e-GramSwaraj application **provides single window** with the complete profile of the Gram Panchayat, including details of Panchayat Finances, asset details, activities taken up through Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP), Mission Antyodaya survey reports etc.
- **The application aims to** bring in more transparency, thus strengthening the e-Governance in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).

## **On-line Monitoring Systems of Central Finance Commission (CFC) Funds Flow & Proper Utilisation:**

The Online Payment Module (**erstwhile PRIASoft-PFMS Interface (PPI)**) is one of its kind whereby Gram Panchayats are carrying out online payments to the vendors and service providers.

- **The main objective of introducing such a module** is to have a sound financial management system in the Panchayats leading to their greater credibility and image.
- **IT based solutions like the PRIASoft – PFMS interface** for making all payments under CFC grants and Mobile app – mActionSoft has been developed to enable PRIs upload geo-tagged photos of the works/assets created out of CFC.

## **Audit Online:**

The **Fifteenth Finance Commission** has prescribed for preparation of online audited accounts of the RLBs.

- In this regard, MoPR has conceptualized and developed an application called **“AuditOnline” for online audit of Panchayat accounts** in order to strengthening the transparency and accountability at grassroots level.

## **ServicePlus:**

ServicePlus – a versatile and secure solution for service delivery – makes all Government services accessible to the common man in his/her locality.

## **Gram Manchitra – Geo-Spatial Planning Application:**

Gram Manchitra is a Spatial Planning Application for facilitating and supporting Gram Panchayat users to perform planning at Gram Panchayat level with the use of geo spatial technology.

## **GENERAL STUDIES - III**

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

## **SAKSHAM**

### **Context**

PCRA launches month-long mass awareness campaign ‘SAKSHAM’ to spread awareness about ‘Green and Clean Energy’.

### **What is ‘Saksham’?**

‘Saksham’, is an annual one-month long, people-centric fuel conservation mega campaign of Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA).

- It is launched under the aegis of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- It aims to reach the nook and corner of the country with the **message of fuel conservation, Greener Environment and better Health.**



## **Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA)**

Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) is a registered society set up under the aegis of Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Government of India.

- As a non-profit organization, PCRA is a national government agency engaged in promoting energy efficiency in various sectors of economy.
- It helps the government in proposing policies and strategies for petroleum conservation.
- It aims at reducing excessive dependence of the country on oil requirement.

## **Mandate**

- PCRA is entrusted with the task of creating awareness amongst the masses about the importance, methods and benefits of conserving petroleum products & emission reduction.
- PCRA aims at making oil conservation a national movement.
- It sponsors R&D activities for the development of fuel-efficient equipment / devices and organizes multi-media campaigns for creating mass awareness for the conservation of petroleum products.

## **Objectives**

- To formulate strategies and promote measures for accelerating conservation of petroleum products leading to environment protection, energy security and sustainable development.
- To provide training and technical advisory services, designed to achieve economy & efficiency in use of petroleum products for cleaner environment.
- To function as a Think Tank to the Govt. of India for proposing policies and strategies on petroleum conservation and environment protection aimed at reducing excessive dependence on oil.

## **GENERAL STUDIES - II**

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

## **NATIONAL FISHERIES POLICY, 2020**

### **Context**

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

### **Highlights**

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

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

## **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)**

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

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

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

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

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

## **The difference between a Centrally Sponsored Scheme and Central Sector Scheme**

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

### **Central Sector Schemes**

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

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

### **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS)**

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

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

### INDIAN AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE IN ASSAM

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

- **Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) in Dhemaji district of Assam** is the third IARI established in the country.
- It aims to promote agri-education and realise second green revolution in the north eastern region.

#### National Research Centre on Camels

A branch of National Research Centre on Camel (NRCC), Bikaner, is being set up in Gujrat.

- **National Research Centre on Camel** was established in 1984 by the Central Government under Indian Council of Agricultural Research.
- It aims to promote research and development on camels.

### PIB-JANUARY 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021

#### GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

### WHAT IS THE 'BLUE REVOLUTION'?

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

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

#### Potential for Blue Revolution in India

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

- **India uses only about 40% of the available ponds, tanks and other water bodies for freshwater aquaculture and 15% of total potential of brackish water resources.**
- Fisheries are India's single largest agricultural export with a growth rate of 6-10% in the last five years.

- Currently, the USA is the largest market for Indian seafood products with a share of 26.46% in terms of India's exports of marine products.
- The fisheries and aquaculture production contribute around 1% to India's GDP and over 5% to the agricultural GDP.

## Blue Revolution 2.0

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

## Objectives

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

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

## National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB)

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

## GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

## SCHEME FOR AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING COMPLEXES (ARHCS)

### About AHRCs

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

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

## What is the need?

- COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in massive **reverse migration of workers/ urban poor in the country** who come from rural areas or small towns for seeking better employment opportunities in urban areas.
- Usually, these migrants live in slums, informal/ unauthorized colonies or peri-urban areas to save rental charges.
- They spend lot of time on roads by walking/ cycling to workplaces, risking their lives to cut on the expenses.
- Govt has decided to provide them Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (AHRCs).

## How AHRCs will be developed?

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

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

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

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

## Who will be beneficiaries?

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

## Significance of the Scheme

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

## Mains Question:

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

## GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

### GLOBAL INITIATIVE TO REDUCE LAND DEGRADATION AND CORAL REEF PROGRAM

#### Context

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

#### Highlights

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

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

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

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

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

### IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

#### What is the G20?

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

- The G20 brings together the leaders of both developed and developing countries from every continent.
- **Collectively, G20 members represent around 80% of the world's economic output, two-thirds of global population and three-quarters of international trade.**
- Throughout the year, representatives from G20 countries gather to discuss financial and socioeconomic issues.



- The G20 Summit is formally known as the “**Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy**”.

## What is the history of the G20?

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

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

## Presidency

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

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

## Full membership of the G20

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

## PIB-JANUARY 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

## NORTH EASTERN COUNCIL (NEC)

### Context

Union Home Minister to chair the 69th Plenary Session of North Eastern Council.

### Highlights

- The 69th Plenary Session of North Eastern Council (NEC) is being held in **Shillong, Meghalaya**.
- The Plenary is expected to deliberate on the progress of ongoing projects, outlays by Central Ministries in the North Eastern Region and plans for the period beyond March 2021 during the term of the Fifteenth Finance Commission.

## About ZONAL COUNCIL

The idea of creation of Zonal Councils was mooted by the first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru in 1956.

- These are **statutory bodies** established under the **States Reorganisation Act 1956** and **not constitutional bodies**.
- They are **only deliberative and advisory bodies**.
- As per States Re-organisation Act, each Zonal Council shall meet at such time as the Chairman of the Council may appoint in this behalf.

## Objective

The main objectives of setting up of Zonal Councils are as under:

- Bringing out national integration;
- Arresting the growth of acute State consciousness, regionalism, linguism and particularistic tendencies;
- Enabling the Centre and the States to co-operate and exchange ideas and experiences;
- Establishing a climate of co-operation amongst the States for successful and speedy execution of development projects.

## Five Zonal councils are:

In the light of the vision of Pandit Nehru, **five Zonal Councils** were set up **vide Part-III of the States Re-organisation Act, 1956**.

**The present composition of each of these Zonal Councils is as under:**

1. **The Northern Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, National Capital Territory of Delhi and Union Territory of Chandigarh;
2. **The Central Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh;
3. **The Eastern Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Sikkim and West Bengal;
4. **The Western Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra and the Union Territories of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli;
5. **The Southern Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and the Union Territory of Puducherry.

## Zonal Councils in North Eastern States

**The North Eastern States i.e.** (i) Assam (ii) Arunachal Pradesh (iii) Manipur (iv) Tripura (v) Mizoram (vi) Meghalaya and (vii) Nagaland are **not included in the Zonal Councils**.

- Their special problems are looked after by the North Eastern Council, **set up under the North Eastern Council Act, 1972**.
- **The State of Sikkim has also been included in the North Eastern Council** vide North Eastern Council (Amendment) Act, 2002 notified on 23rd December 2002.
- Consequently, action for exclusion of Sikkim as member of Eastern Zonal Council has been initiated by Ministry of Home Affairs.

## Functions

A Zonal Council may discuss, and make recommendations with regard to:

- Any matter of common interest in the field of economic and social planning;
- Any matter concerning border disputes, linguistic minorities or inter-State transport;
- Any matter connected with or arising out of, the re-organization of the States under the States Reorganisation Act.

## GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

## PRADHAN MANTRI AWAAS YOJANA – GRAMIN

### Context

PM to release financial assistance to over 6 lakh beneficiaries in UP under Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin.

### Highlights

- Prime Minister will release financial assistance of around Rs. 2691 crores to **1 lakh beneficiaries in Uttar Pradesh** under Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G).
- So far 1.26 crore houses have already been built across the country under the scheme.
- The scheme has **provisions for convergence with other schemes** for providing LPG connection under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Scheme, electricity connection, access to safe drinking water under Jal Jeevan Mission, etc.

### Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G)

Prime Minister gave the clarion call of “**Housing for All by 2022**”, for which a flagship programme of PMAY-G was **launched on 20th November, 2016**.

- The erstwhile rural housing scheme **Indira Awaas yojana (IAY)** has been restructured into Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana –Gramin (PMAY-G).
- PMAY-G is implemented by the **Ministry of Rural Development**.
- **PMAY-G aims at** providing a pucca house, with basic amenities, to all houseless householder and those households living in kutcha and dilapidated house, by 2022.
- **Target:** Construction of 2.95 crore houses with all basic amenities by the year 2022.

### Assistance:

- Under PMAY-G, **each beneficiary is given 100% grant** of Rs.1.20 lakh (in **plain areas**) and Rs. 1.30 lakh (in **Hilly States/North Eastern States/Difficult areas/UT of J&K and Ladakh/IAP/LWE districts**).
- The beneficiaries of PMAY-G, in addition to the unit assistance, are also provided **support of unskilled labour wages under MGNREGS and assistance of Rs. 12,000 for construction of toilets** through Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G).

## Selection of beneficiaries:

Identification of beneficiaries eligible for assistance and their prioritisation to be done using information from **Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC), 2011**, subject to 13 point exclusion criteria, followed by Gram Sabha verification.

**Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana Gramin**

In the context of Government's priority for "Housing for All" by 2022, the rural housing scheme Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) has been restructured as Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) and implemented from the financial year 2016-17.

Highlights of PMAY-G

- Assistance to be provided for construction of 1 Crore. houses in rural areas over the period of 3 years from 2016-17 to 2018-19
- Unit assistance enhanced from Rs.70,000 to Rs. 1,20,000 in plain areas and from Rs.75,000 to Rs. 1,30,000 in hilly states/difficult areas /IAP districts
- Use of SECC-2011 data for identification of beneficiaries
- Focus on improvement of the quality of house construction and timely completion
- Use of AwaasApp to capture geo-referenced, time and date stamped photographs of the present dwelling and of new house at various stages of construction
- Beneficiaries would be facilitated to avail an optional loan of upto Rs. 70,000/- for construction of the house
- Development of house design typologies for states/UTs
- Interest subsidy of 3% under "Rural Housing Interest Subsidy Scheme (RHIS)" for those not covered under PMAY-G

## GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

## NATIONAL STARTUP ADVISORY COUNCIL (NSAC)

### Context

Nomination of members to the National Startup Advisory Council.

### Highlights

- Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) had constituted the 'National Startup Advisory Council' dated 21st January 2020.
- 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**.

## CHROME FACTS FOR PRELIMS

### PARAKRAM DIWAS

Government announces **23rd January** to be celebrated as "PARAKRAM DIWAS" every year.

- Government of India has decided to celebrate the **125th Birth Anniversary year of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose** in a befitting manner at national and international level.
- **In order to honour and remember Netaji's** indomitable spirit and selfless service to the nation, Government of India has decided to celebrate his birthday on the 23rd day of January every year as "PARAKRAM DIWAS".
- **It aims to inspire people of the country**, especially the youth, to act with fortitude in the face of adversity as Netaji did, and to infuse in them a spirit of patriotic fervour.

## Exercise Desert Knight-21

**Indian Air Force and French Air and Space Force (Armée de l'Air et de l'Espace)** will conduct a bilateral Air exercise, **Ex Desert Knight-21 at Air Force Station Jodhpur**.

- The exercise marks an important milestone in the **series of engagements between the two Air forces.**
- As part of Indo-French defence cooperation, Indian **Air Force and French Air and Space Force have held six editions of Air Exercises named 'Garuda'**, the latest being in 2019 at Air Force Base Mont-de-Marsan, France.

## PIB-JANUARY 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021

### GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

## RATLE HYDRO POWER PROJECT

### Context

Cabinet approves the Investment Proposal of Rs. 5281.94 crore for 850 MW Ratle Hydro Power Project.

### About the project:

**850 MW Ratle Hydro Electric (HE) Project** is located on **river Chenab**, in **Kishtwar district** of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

- It is being developed by a **new Joint Venture Company (JVC)** to be incorporated between National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (**NHPC**) and Jammu & Kashmir State Power Development Corporation Ltd (**JKSPDC**).
- The **equity contribution** between the NHPC and JKSPDC is **of 51% and 49% respectively**.

### Salient Features

- Government of India is providing grant of Rs. 776.44 crore for Equity contribution of JKSPDC in the JVC to be set up for construction of Ratle HE Project (850 MW).
- NHPC shall invest its equity Rs.808.14 crore from its internal resources.
- The Ratle Hydro Electric Project shall be commissioned within a span of 60 months.
- The **Power generated from the Project will help in providing balancing of Grid and will improve the power supply position.**

### Implementation Strategy

Government of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, to make the Project viable, **will extend exemption from levy of Water Usage Charges for 10 years** after commissioning of the project.

- As well as reimbursement of SGST by the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir for all supplies to the project was also accorded.
- e., the free power to the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir would be 1% in the 1st year after commissioning of the Project and rising @1% per year to 12% in the 12th year.



## Benefits

- The construction activities of the Project will result in **direct and indirect employment to around 4000 persons**.
- It will also contribute in **overall socio-economic development of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir**.
- Further, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir will be **benefitted by getting free power worth Rs. 5289 crore** and through levy of Water Usage Charges worth Rs.9581 crore from Ratle Hydro Electric Project, **during project life cycle of 40 years**.

## GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

## SECOND EDITION OF INDIA INNOVATION INDEX

### Context

NITI Aayog, along with the **Institute for Competitiveness**, today released the second edition of the India Innovation Index.

- The report **examines the innovation capabilities and performance of the states and union territories. The first edition of the index was launched in October 2019.**
- In the second edition too, the index found that the **level of competitiveness among the states and union territories was high**, which is essential for them to continually improve on their enabling factors as well as innovation performance, year by year.

### Objective of India Innovation Index:

The India Innovation Index aims:

1. To create an extensive framework for the continual evaluation of India's innovation environment.
2. To rank states and UTs based on their scores, recognize opportunities and challenges, and assist in tailoring government policies to foster innovation.

NITI Aayog, with its mandate of promoting '**competitive federalism**' among all states and union territories, is committed to utilize the India Innovation Index in catalysing the innovation outcome of the nation.

### Highlights

1. In the '**Major States**' category, **Karnataka continued to occupy the top position**, while Maharashtra moved past Tamil Nadu to reach the second place.
2. Telangana, Kerala, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab completed the **top ten in that order**.

3. **Karnataka's rank is attributable to** its substantive number of venture capital deals, registered geographical indicators and information and communications technology exports.
4. Karnataka's high **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** inflow has also enhanced the innovation capabilities of the state.
5. Four southern states—**Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Kerala**—occupied the top five spots under the 'Major States' category this year.
6. **Overall, Delhi retained its first rank**, while Chandigarh made a big leap since 2019 and landed in the second place this year.
7. Under the '**North-Eastern/Hill States**' category, Himachal Pradesh moved up from the second position to emerge as the top ranker this year, while 2019's top performer (in this category), **Sikkim, slipped down to the fourth position.**

Rank	Major States	Score
1	KARNATAKA	42.50
2	MAHARASHTRA	38.03
3	TAMIL NADU	37.91
4	TELANGANA	33.23
5	KERALA	30.58
6	HARYANA	25.81
7	ANDHRA PRADESH	24.19
8	GUJARAT	23.63
9	UTTAR PRADESH	22.85
10	PUNJAB	22.54
11	WEST BENGAL	21.69
12	RAJASTHAN	20.83
13	MADHYA PRADESH	20.82
14	ODISHA	18.94
15	JHARKHAND	17.12
16	CHHATTISGARH	15.77
17	BIHAR	14.48

Rank	UT and City States	Score
1	DELHI	46.60
2	CHANDIGARH	38.57
3	DAMAN & DIU	26.76
4	PUDUCHERRY	25.23
5	GOA	24.92
6	DADRA & NAGAR HAVELI	22.74
7	ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS	18.89
8	JAMMU & KASHMIR	18.62
9	LAKSHADWEEP	11.71

Rank	NE and Hill States	Score
1	HIMACHAL PRADESH	25.06
2	UTTARAKHAND	23.50
3	MANIPUR	22.78
4	SIKKIM	20.28
5	MIZORAM	16.93
6	ASSAM	16.38
7	ARUNACHAL PRADESH	14.90
8	NAGALAND	14.11
9	TRIPURA	12.84
10	MEGHALAYA	12.15

## The parameters

The innovation inputs were measured through **five enabler parameters**, and the output through **two performance parameters**.

- **Enabler parameters:** 'Human Capital', 'Investment', 'Knowledge Workers', 'Business Environment', 'Safety and Legal Environment'
- **Performance parameters:** 'Knowledge Output' and 'Knowledge Diffusion'.

## Significance and benefits of the Index

- The India Innovation Index will create **synergies between different stakeholders in the innovation ecosystem**, thus enabling India to shift to competitive good governance.
- The index is a **great beginning to improve the innovation environment in the country**.
- It is the right step towards making India the innovation leader of the world.
- The index could be of vital significance to the states in identifying their innovation performance and initiating necessary policy interventions to leverage their unique strengths.

## GENERAL STUDIES - III

**Topic—** *Disaster and disaster management.*

## NATIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE FUND (NDRF)

### Context

National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) celebrated its 16th Foundation Day on 20 Jan.

### What is the NDRF?

National Disaster Response Fund is established under the **Disaster Management Act, 2005 (DM Act)**.

- As defined in Section 46 of the Act, **NDRF is a fund managed by the Central Government for meeting the expenses for emergency response, relief and rehabilitation due to any threatening disaster situation or disaster.**
- NDRF is constituted **to supplement the funds of the State Disaster Response Funds (SDRF)** of the states to facilitate immediate relief in case of calamities of a severe nature.

### What is the Disaster?

The DM Act defines "disaster" to mean 'a catastrophe, mishap, calamity or grave occurrence in any area, arising from natural or man-made causes, or by accident or negligence which results in substantial loss of life or human suffering or damage to, and destruction of, property, or damage to, or degradation of, environment, and is of such a nature or magnitude as to be beyond the coping capacity of the community of the affected area.'

### Sources of Financing NDRF

The NDRF is financed through the levy of a cess on certain items, chargeable to excise and customs duty, and approved annually through the Finance Bill.

- The requirement for funds beyond what is available under the NDRF is met through general budgetary resources.
- Currently, a **National Calamity Contingency Duty (NCCD)** is levied to finance the **NDRF** and additional budgetary support is provided as and when necessary.
- The funds contributed to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund or the State Chief Minister's Relief Fund are exempt from income tax.

## Features of NDRF

The primary purpose of NDRF is to supplement the SDRF, in case there is a calamity of "severe nature" which requires assistance over and above the funds available under SDRF.

- **NDRF is located in the "Public Accounts" of Government of India under "Reserve Funds not bearing interest"**
- **Department of Agriculture and Cooperation under Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) monitors** relief activities for calamities associated with drought, hailstorms, pest attacks and cold wave /frost while rest of the natural calamities are monitored by Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- The financial assistance from **SDRF/NDRF is for providing immediate relief and is not compensation for loss/damage to properties /crops.**
- In other words, NDRF amount can be spent only towards meeting the expenses for emergency response, relief and rehabilitation.
- The **National Executive Committee (NEC)** of the National Disaster Management Authority takes decisions on the expenses from National Disaster Response Fund.
- **Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) audits the accounts of NDRF.**

## CHROME FACTS FOR PRELIMS

### SINGAPORE DEFENCE MINISTERS' DIALOGUE

The 5th Defence Ministers' Dialogue (DMD) between India and Singapore was held.

- At this 5th DMD, the Implementing **Agreement on Submarine Rescue Support and Cooperation** between the two Navies was signed between both countries.
- Defence and security engagements between India and Singapore have broadened significantly in scale and scope across all three Services of the Armed Forces as well as in the areas of defence technology and industry.

## Howrah-Kalka Mail renamed as "Netaji Express"

Ministry of Railways has rechristened the name of Train No. 12311/12312 Howrah-Kalka Mail as "Netaji Express".

- It is noteworthy that Howrah -Kalka Mail is a very popular and **one of the oldest trains of Indian Railways.**
- The Howrah-Kalka Mail is **running between Howrah (Eastern Railway) and Kalka (Northern Railway)** via Delhi.

## PIB-JANUARY 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021

### GS - 2<sup>nd</sup> PAPER

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

## PRADHAN MANTRI AWAS YOJANA (URBAN)

### Context

- crore Houses approved under PMAY(U) so far.

### About the PMAY- U mission

The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) Programme was **launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MoHUPA).**

### Objectives

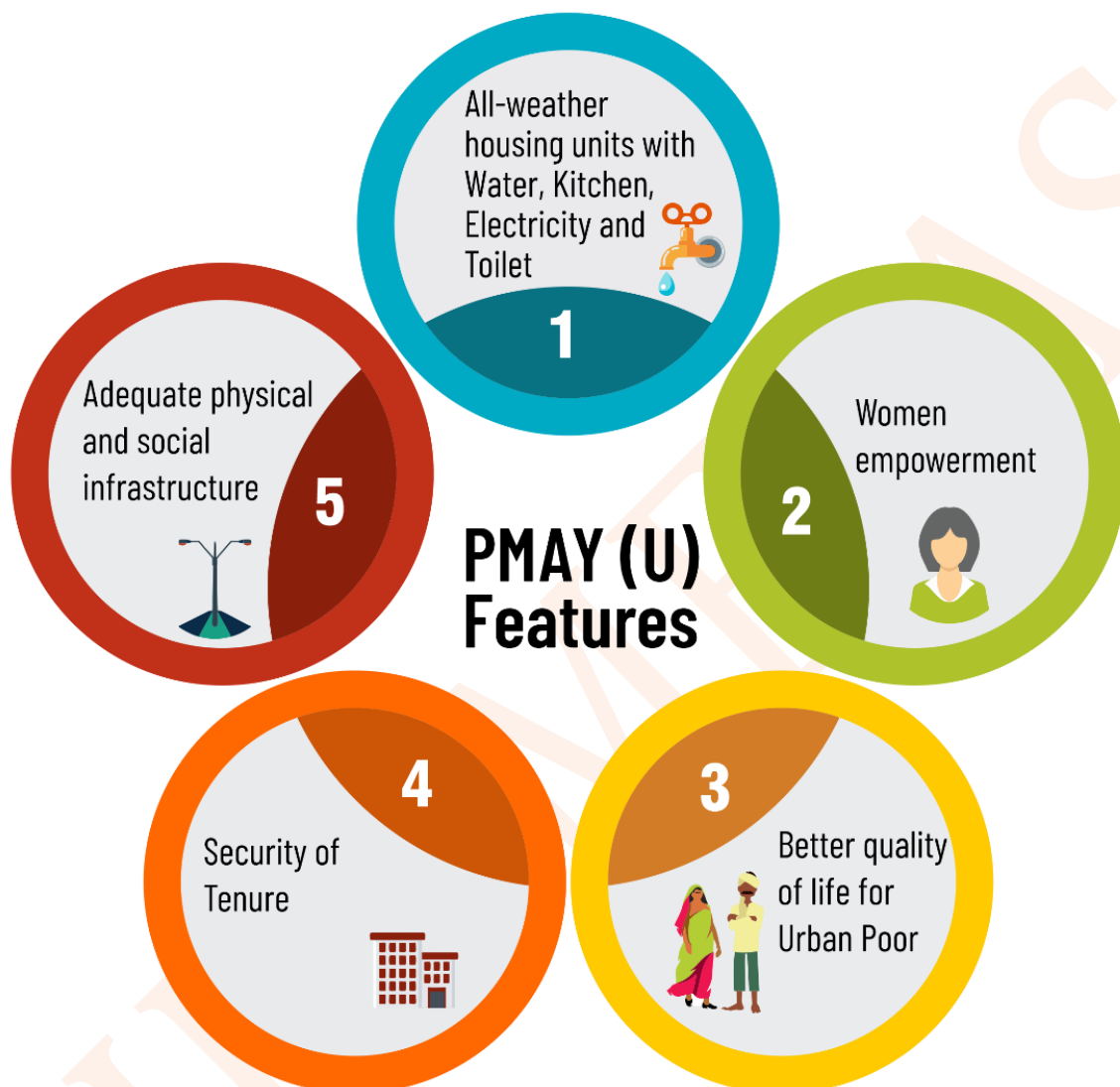
The Mission **will be implemented during 2015-2022** and will provide central assistance to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and other implementing agencies through States/UTs for-

- **In-situ Rehabilitation of existing slum dwellers** using land as a resource through private participation
- Credit Linked Subsidy
- Affordable Housing in Partnership
- Subsidy for Beneficiary-led individual house construction/enhancement.
- Credit linked subsidy component will be implemented as a **Central Sector Scheme** while other three components will be implemented as **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS).**

### Beneficiaries

- The mission seeks to address the **housing requirement of urban poor including slum dwellers.**
- Beneficiaries include Economically weaker section (EWS), low-income groups (LIGs) and Middle Income Groups (MIGs).
- The **annual income cap is up to Rs 3 lakh for EWS, Rs 3-6 lakh for LIG and Rs 6 + -18 lakhs for MIG.**
- A beneficiary **family will comprise husband, wife, unmarried sons and/or unmarried daughters.**

**A slum is defined-** “as a compact area of at least 300 people or about 60 – 70 households of poorly built congested tenements in unhygienic environment usually with inadequate infrastructure and lacking in proper sanitary and drinking water facilities.”



## Significance

- PMAY-U does offer a huge opportunity for several sectors by setting off a virtuous cycle.
- The construction opportunity is of about four billion square feet over the life of PMAY-U and all that would translate into 9-10 crore incremental jobs over the execution period.

## GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

## SCHEME FOR AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING COMPLEXES (ARHCS)



## About AHRCs

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

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

## What is the need?

- COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in massive **reverse migration of workers/ urban poor in the country** who come from rural areas or small towns for seeking better employment opportunities in urban areas.
- Usually, these migrants live in slums, informal/ unauthorized colonies or peri-urban areas to save rental charges.
- They spend lot of time on roads by walking/ cycling to workplaces, risking their lives to cut on the expenses.
- Govt has decided to provide them Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (AHRCs).

## How AHRCs will be developed?

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

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

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

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

## Who will be beneficiaries?

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

## Significance of the Scheme

- ARHCs will **create new ecosystem in urban areas making housing available at affordable rent close to the place of work.**
- Investment under ARHCs is expected to create **new job opportunities.** ARHCs will **cut down unnecessary travel, congestion and pollution.**

- The scheme would create a conducive environment for Entities to develop AHRCs on their own vacant land which will enable new investment opportunities and promote entrepreneurship in rental housing sector.

## **Mains Question:**

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

## **GENERAL STUDIES - III**

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

## **ROCKET LAUNCHING PORT**

### **Context**

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

### **Highlights**

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

### **Why the Kulasekarapattinam was chosen for second Launchpad?**

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

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

### **What functions Kulasekarapattinam Launchpad will perform?**

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

### STATEHOOD DAY

#### Meghalaya: 21 January 1972

Meghalaya was **formed by carving out two districts from the state of Assam**: the United Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills, and the Garo Hills on 21 January 1972.

- The state is bound to the **south by the Bangladeshi divisions of Mymensingh and Sylhet, to the west by the Bangladeshi division of Rangpur, and to the north and east by India's State of Assam.**
- The capital of Meghalaya is Shillong. During the British rule of India, the British imperial authorities nicknamed it the "Scotland of the East".
- **English is the official language of Meghalaya.**
- Unlike many Indian states, Meghalaya has historically followed a **matrilineal system** where the lineage and inheritance are traced through women;
- The **youngest daughter inherits all wealth** and she also takes care of her parents.

#### Tripura: 21 January 1972

- **Following the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971**, the Indian government reorganised the North East region to ensure effective control of the international borders – **three new states came into existence on 21 January 1972: Meghalaya, Manipur, and Tripura.**
- Tripura is the **third-smallest state in the country**, and is bordered by Bangladesh to the north, south, and west, and the Indian states of Assam and Mizoram to the east.

#### Manipur: 21 January 1972

- Manipur is **bounded by the Indian states of Nagaland to the north, Mizoram to the south and Assam to the west.**
- **It also borders two regions of Myanmar, Sagaing Region to the east and Chin State to the south.**
- Manipur has been **at the crossroads of Asian economic and cultural exchange** for more than 2,500 years.
- It has long connected the Indian subcontinent and **Central Asia to Southeast Asia, China (or East Asia), Siberia (Russia), Micronesia and Polynesia**, enabling migration of people, cultures and religions.

#### Exercise Kavach

A large scale Joint Military exercise 'Exercise Kavach' is being conducted in the coming week **under the aegis of the Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC)**, the only Joint Forces Command of the country.

- It involves the assets of **Indian Army, Indian Navy, Indian Air Force and Indian Coast Guard.**
- The joint force would execute multi domain, high intensity offensive and defensive manoeuvres **in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.**

- **The tri-services exercise** aims to fine tune joint war-fighting capabilities and SOPs towards enhancing operational synergy.

## Film City in Sikkim

- The **Government of Sikkim** has decided to set up a **Film City Complex** in the vicinity of the capital city of Gangtok.
- The Film City Complex envisages an Acting School, different kinds of Film Sets as well as Artificial Sets, Ramps for fashion events, Miniplex Cinema, Amphi Theatre, Mobile Theatre, Concert Halls, Recreation Park, Editing Studios, Sound Studios, etc.

## Khelo India Winter Games

- Khelo India Winter Games is being **organized in Ladakh**.
- **Zaskar Winter Sports & Youth Festival 2021** will be started on 18th January.
- **Organized by Ladakh Administration**, the main attractions of the **first-ever Zaskar Winter Sports & Youth Festival** are **Chadar trek**, snow skiing, snow scooter and hiking, ice hockey, and others.

## PIB-JANUARY- 25<sup>th</sup> JANUARY- 2021

### GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

## ‘AYUSHMAN CAPF’ SCHEME

### Context

Union Home Minister launched ‘Ayushman CAPF’ scheme for personnel and dependents of Central Armed Police Forces on **23rd January, 2021** in Guwahati, Assam.

### About the scheme:

‘Ayushman CAPF’ is a **convergence scheme** being implemented on **Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY IT** platform.

- It is a joint initiative of **the Ministry of Home Affairs and the National Health Authority**.
- It will provide **cashless healthcare services** to the serving CAPF personnel from **all seven forces**, viz. **Assam Rifles, BSF, CISF, CRPF, ITBP, NSG and SSB**, and their **dependents** through Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY IT platform.

### Key features:

- Comprehensive coverage of OPD, IPD and follow-ups
- Cashless treatment at empaneled private hospitals
- Portability to ensure access to health services across the country
- Paperless to ensure ease and convenience
- Dedicated call center for support and grievance redressal

- Well defined set of health benefits packages
- Pan India expansion of the scheme will be done in phased manner

## Benefits:

All CAPF personnel and their families in the country, with a simple card swipe, will receive free treatment in 24,000 hospitals.

## GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

## NATIONAL VOTERS DAY

11th National Voters' Day (NVD) to be celebrated on **25th January 2021**.

**Theme:** Making Our Voters Empowered, Vigilant, Safe and Informed'

## About NVD:

- The National Voters' Day has been celebrated on **January 25 every year since 2011**.
- It marks the **foundation day of Election Commission of India**, e. **25th January 1950**.
- **The main purpose of the NVD celebration:** is to encourage, facilitate and maximize enrolment, especially for the new voters.

## Election Commission of India (ECI)

The Election Commission of India is an **autonomous constitutional authority** responsible for administering Union and State election processes in India.

**Article 324 in the Indian Constitution** gives power to the Election Commission to direct, control, and conduct elections to all Parliament, to the Legislature of every state and of elections to the offices of the President and Vice President held under the Constitution.

## Key points about ECI

- Election Commission of India is a **permanent Constitutional Body**.
- Originally the commission had only a Chief Election Commissioner.
- It currently consists of Chief Election Commissioner and two Election Commissioners.
- For the first time two additional Commissioners were appointed on 16th October 1989 but they had a very short tenure till 1st January 1990.
- Later, on 1st October 1993 two additional Election Commissioners were appointed.

## GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

## BODOLAND TERRITORIAL REGION (BTR) AGREEMENT

## Context

The first anniversary of the historic Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) agreement was celebrated in Assam.

## Highlights of the Bodo Agreement

- The agreement has signed to redraw and **rename the Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) as the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR)**, in Assam.
- The BTAD and other areas mentioned under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution **have been exempted from the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019.**
- The villages dominated by Bodos that were presently outside the BTAD would be included and those with non-Bodo population would be excluded.
- **Bodo language with Devanagari script would be the associate official language for the entire Assam.**
- The criminal cases registered against members of the NDFB factions for 'non-heinous' crimes shall be withdrawn by the Assam government and in cases of heinous crimes it will be reviewed.
- Families of the people killed during the Bodo movement would get ₹5 lakh each.
- A Special Development Package of ₹1500 crore would be given by the Centre to undertake specific projects for the development of Bodo areas.

## Significance of the agreement

- The signing of the agreement would end the 50-year-old Bodo crisis.
- People previously associated with armed resistance groups will be rehabilitated by Centre and Assam Government.
- They will be assimilated in the mainstream now.
- It will further protect and popularise the unique culture of the Bodo people and will give them access to a wide range of development-oriented initiatives.
- It will bring peace, harmony and togetherness in the people of Assam.

## Who are Bodos?

- Bodos are the **single largest community among the notified Scheduled Tribes in Assam.**
- Bodos are a part of Bodo-Kachari and constitute about 5-6% of Assam's population.
- They have controlled large parts of Assam in the past.
- The four districts in Assam, **Kokrajhar, Baksa, Udalguri and Chirang**, constitute the **Bodo Territorial Area District (BTAD)**, are home to several ethnic groups.

## What is the Bodo Crisis?

- Bodos living in the hills would be conferred a Scheduled Hill Tribe status.
- **Bodos maintained their original ethnic identity for centuries** despite the efforts of modernization and sanskritisation.
- They **faced a series of issues such as illegal immigration, encroachment of their lands, forced assimilation, loss of language and culture** in 20th century.

## CHROME IAS ACADEMY

- The 20th century Bodos emerged as a leading tribe in Assam and they heralded the movements for safeguarding the rights of the tribal communities in the area.
- Since then **Bodos are consistently deprived of the political and socio-economic rights** by successive state and central governments.

### Demand for Bodoland?

- The isolation of the Bodos, its complex social character, and its backwardness compared to other parts of the country has all resulted in the demand for autonomy.
- The Bodos have not only become an ethnic minority in their own ancestral land but have also been struggling for their existence and status as an ethnic community.
- In 1966-67, the demand for a separate state called Bodoland was raised under the banner of the **Plains Tribals Council of Assam (PTCA)**.
- The Assam Accord of 1985 was signed to address the demands of protection and safeguards for the 'Assamese people'
- This led the Bodos to launch a movement to protect their own identity.
- **The first organised demand for a Bodo state came in 1967-68.**
- The Assam Accord of 1985, gave rise to Bodo aspirations and in 1987, ABSU revived the Bodo statehood demand.

### The first Bodo accord

- The first Bodo accord was signed with the **All Bodo Students Union (ABSU)** in 1993.
- It led to the creation of the **Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC)** with some limited political powers.

### The second Bodo Accord

- The second Bodo Accord was signed by the extremist group Bodo Liberation Tiger Force (BLTF), the Centre and the state in 2003.
- This led to the creation of **Bodoland Autonomous Council (BTC)**, which is an autonomous body under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

## CHROME FACTS FOR PRELIMS

### SUBHASH CHANDRA BOSE AAPDA PRABANDHAN PURASKAR 2021

The Govt of India has invited nominations for the "Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar" for excellence in the field of Disaster Management.

- These awards are announced **on the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose on 23rd January every year.**
- **The award aims to** recognise the excellent work done by individuals and institutions in India in the field of disaster management.



- In addition to a certificate, these awards carry a cash award of Rs 51 lakhs for an Institution and Rs 5 lakhs for an Individual.

**For the year 2021 following** have been selected for the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar for their excellent work in Disaster Management.

1. **In the institutional category:** Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society, and
2. **In the Individual category:** Rajendra Kumar Bhandari

### **‘Ooceraea joshii’ new Ant species**

Two new species of a **rare ant genus** have been discovered in India.

- The species of the **ant genus Ooceraea found in Kerala**, and Tamil Nadu add to the diversity of this rare genus.
- They differ from others of the same genus on the basis of the number of antennal segments.
- One of them found in the **Periyar Tiger Reserve of Kerala**, has been named *Ooceraea joshii*, in honour of Prof. Amitabh Joshi, a distinguished evolutionary biologist from Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (**JNCASR**).
- The **genus is currently represented by 14 species** of which eight possess nine-segmented antennae, while five possess eleven- segmented antennae and one species has recently been reported with eight-segmented antennae.
- In India, the **genus was so far represented by two species with nine- and eleven-segmented antennae**
- The newly **discovered ant species with ten segmented antennae discovered**, establish an old world lineage that contains a species emerging as the only model organism among the ant subfamily.



## Statehood Day: Uttar Pradesh

After India's independence, the **United Provinces** were renamed "**Uttar Pradesh**", with the change coming into effect on **24 January 1950**

- Uttar Pradesh with roughly 200 million inhabitants, it is the **most-populous state in India** as well as the **most-populous country subdivision in the world**.
- It was **created on 1 April 1937 as the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh** during British rule, and was **renamed Uttar Pradesh in 1950**.
- **On 9 November 2000**, a new state, Uttarakhand, was carved from the state's Himalayan hill region.
- The state is bordered by **Rajasthan to the west, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi to the northwest, Uttarakhand** and an international border with Nepal to the north, **Bihar to the east, Madhya Pradesh to the south, and touches the states of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh to the southeast**.

## PIB-JANUARY – 27<sup>th</sup> JANUARY- 2021

### GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

## GREEN TAX

### Context

The Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways has approved a proposal to levy a "**Green Tax**" on **old vehicles** which are polluting the environment.

- The Minister also approved the policy of deregistration and scrapping of vehicles owned by Government department and PSU, which are above 15 years in age.
- **Revenue collected from the Green Tax** to be kept in a separate account and used for tackling pollution, and for States to set up state-of-art facilities for emission monitoring.

### All about the new tax:

- **Transport vehicles older than 8 years** could be charged Green Tax at the time of renewal of fitness certificate, **at the rate of 10 to 25 % of road tax**;
- **Personal vehicles** to be charged Green Tax at the time of **renewal of Registration Certification after 15 years**;
- **Public transport vehicles**, such as city buses, **to be charged lower Green tax**;
- **Higher Green tax (50% of Road Tax)** for vehicles being registered in highly polluted cities.
- **Differential tax**, depending on fuel (petrol/diesel) and type of vehicle;

### Exemption:

- Vehicles like strong **hybrids, electric vehicles and alternate fuels like CNG, ethanol, LPG** to be exempted;
- **Vehicles used in farming**, such as tractor, harvester, tiller etc to be exempted;

## The benefits of the “Green Tax” could be:

- To dissuade people from using vehicles which damage the environment
- To motivate people to switch to newer, less polluting vehicles
- Green tax will reduce the pollution level, and make the polluter pay for pollution.

## Why this Tax has been implementing?

It is estimated that **commercial vehicles**, which constitute about 5% of the total vehicle fleet, **contribute about 65-70% of total vehicular pollution**.

- The **older fleet, typically manufactured before the year 2000** constitute less than 1 % of the total fleet but contributes around **15% of total vehicular pollution**.
- These **older vehicles pollute 10-25 times more** than modern vehicles.

## GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

## PADMA AWARDS

### Context:

7 personalities were awarded the Padma Vibhushan, 10 named for the Padma Bhushan and 102 named for Padma Shri.

### About Padma Awards:

The Padma Awards are one of the highest civilian honours of India announced annually on the eve of Republic Day.

### The Awards are given in three categories:

1. **Padma Vibhushan** (for exceptional and distinguished service),
2. **Padma Bhushan** (distinguished service of higher order) and
3. **Padma Shri** (distinguished service).

The award seeks to **recognize achievements in all fields of activities or disciplines where an element of public service is involved**.

- The Padma Awards are conferred on **the recommendations made by the Padma Awards Committee**, which is **constituted by the Prime Minister** every year.
- Padma Awards, which were instituted in the year 1954, is announced every year on the occasion of Republic Day **except for brief interruption(s) during the years 1978 and 1979 and 1993 to 1997**.

### Eligibility:

- All persons without distinction of race, occupation, position or sex are eligible for these awards.
- However, Government servants including those working with PSUs, except doctors and scientists, are not eligible for these Awards.

### History and Relevance:

# CHROME IAS ACADEMY

The Government of India instituted **two civilian awards—Bharat Ratna & Padma Vibhushan in 1954.**

- **The Padma Vibhushan had three classes** namely **Pahela Varg, Dusra Varg and Tisra Varg.**
- These were subsequently renamed as **Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri** vide Presidential Notification issued on January 8, 1955.

## **BHARAT RATNA**

Bharat Ratna is the **highest civilian award of the country.**

- It is awarded in recognition of exceptional service/performance of the highest order in any field of human endeavour.
- The **recommendations for Bharat Ratna are made by the Prime Minister** to the President of India.
- The number of Bharat Ratna Awards is **restricted to a maximum of three in a particular year.**
- Government has conferred **Bharat Ratna Award on 45 persons till date.**

## **2021 Padam awards:**

### **Padma Vibhushan (7)**

1. **Shri Shinzo Abe** – Public Affairs – **Japan**
2. Shri S P Balasubramaniam (Posthumous) – Art – Tamil Nadu
3. Belle Monappa Hegde – Medicine – Karnataka
4. **Shri Narinder Singh Kapany** (Posthumous) – Science and Engineering – **United States of America**
5. Maulana Wahiduddin Khan – Others – Spiritualism – Delhi
6. Shri B. B. Lal Others – Archaeology – Delhi
7. Shri Sudarshan Sahoo – Art – Odisha

### **Padma Bhushan (10)**

1. Krishnan Nair Shantakumari Chithra – Art – Kerala
2. Shri Tarun Gogoi (Posthumous) – Public Affairs – Assam
3. Shri Chandrashekhara Kambara – Literature and Education – Karnataka
4. Sumitra Mahajan – Public Affairs – Madhya Pradesh
5. Shri Nripendra Misra – Civil Service – Uttar Pradesh
6. Shri Ram Vilas Paswan (Posthumous) – Public Affairs – Bihar
7. Shri Keshubhai Patel (Posthumous) – Public Affairs – Gujarat
8. Shri Kalbe Sadiq (Posthumous) Others-Spiritualism – Uttar Pradesh
9. Shri Rajnikant Devidas Shroff – Trade and Industry – Maharashtra
10. Shri Tarlochan Singh – Public Affairs – Haryana

## **CHROME FACTS FOR PRELIMS**

## **‘AYU SAMVAD’ Campaign**

# CHROME IAS ACADEMY

- “AYU SAMVAD” (My Health My Responsibility) is one of the **largest public awareness campaign program on AYURVEDA and COVID 19 PANDEMIC**.
- It is being organized by **All India Institute of Ayurveda** and supported by **Ministry of AYUSH**.
- **The main objective** of the campaign is to create awareness through Lecture series to make common people aware about the theme “Ayurveda for COVID 19 Pandemic”.

## Akash-NG Missile

- DRDO conducted the successful maiden launch of **Akash-NG (New Generation) Missile** from Integrated Test Range off the coast of Odisha.
- Akash-NG is a new generation **Surface to Air Missile** meant for use by Indian Air Force with an **aim of intercepting high maneuvering low RCS aerial threats**.

## STATEHOOD DAY

### Himachal Pradesh: 25 January 1971

Himachal became a **Part ‘C’ state** on **26 January 1950** with the implementation of the Constitution of India and the Lieutenant Governor was appointed.

- Himachal Pradesh became a **union territory on 1 November 1956**.
- Some **areas of Punjab State were merged with Himachal Pradesh** on 1 November 1966 on enactment by Parliament of the **Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966**.
- On 18 December 1970, the State of Himachal Pradesh Act was passed by Parliament, and the **new state came into being on 25 January 1971**.
- Himachal Pradesh is bounded by the **UT of Jammu and Kashmir** to the north, by the **Tibet Autonomous Region of China** to the east, and by the states of **Uttarakhand** to the southeast, **Haryana** to the south, and **Punjab** to the west.

### Bharat Parv 2021

- Bharat Parv, a mega event is **organized every year to coincide with the republic Day Celebrations**.
- First time **it was started in the year 2016** and the event is organised in front of the ramparts of the Red Fort.
- The event envisages **generating patriotic fervor and showcases the rich and varied cultural diversity** of the country.
- Bharat Parv 2021 will be organized by **Ministry of Tourism**.

## PIB-JANUARY – 28<sup>th</sup> JANUARY- 2021

### GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

## WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

## Context

*PM will address WEF's Davos Dialogue on 28th January.*

## Highlights

- The 51st World Economic Forum Annual Meeting will be held in Davos, Graubunden, Switzerland on 26-29 January 2021.
- It will be known as 'DAVOS AGENDA'.
- **The theme** of WEF's Davos Dialogue: **"The Great Reset"**
- The Meeting will connect **key global governmental and business leaders in Davos** with a global multi-stakeholder network in 400 cities around the world for a forward-oriented dialogue driven by the younger generation.

## About 'World Economic Forum':

- The World Economic Forum is the **International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation**.
- It was established in **1971 as a not-for-profit foundation**.
- It is headquartered in **Geneva, Switzerland**.
- It is **independent, impartial** and not tied to any special interests.
- The Forum strives in all **its efforts to demonstrate entrepreneurship in the global public interest** while upholding the highest standards of governance.

**Prioritized key areas at the platform:** Economy, Ecology, Technology, Society, Geopolitics and Industry.

## Activities:

The Forum **engages the foremost political, business, cultural and other leaders of society** to shape global, regional and industry agendas.

1. The activities are shaped by a **unique institutional culture founded on the stakeholder theory**, which asserts that an organization is accountable to all parts of society.
2. The institution carefully blends and balances the best of many kinds of organizations, from both the **public and private sectors, international organizations and academic institutions**.

## Key Publications of WEF

- Global risk report, 2018
- Readiness for the future of production
- Global gender gap report
- Inclusive development index
- Global competitiveness report (index)
- Global human capital report (index)
- Travel and tourism competitiveness report (index)
- Global energy architecture performance index report



## GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

### FUTURE INVESTMENT INITIATIVE FORUM

#### Context

Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare addressed the 4th edition of the Future Investment Initiative Forum.

- The forum is **being hosted in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**.
- **The purpose of the forum:** to find solutions on how business and government can expand access to healthcare, train healthcare workers, remove regulatory barriers and encourage investment in advanced health technologies.

**Theme of 4th edition of the FII: “The Neo-Renaissance”**

#### About Future Investment Initiative (FII):

- **The FII** is an **annual investment forum held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**, to discuss trends in the world economy and investment environment.
- It is hosted by the **Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia (PIF)**.
- It is widely described as **“Davos in the desert”**.
- The first event was in **October 2017**.
- **The FII** is an **international platform for expert-led debate between global leaders, investors and innovators** with the power to shape the future of global investment.
- **It is focused on** utilizing investment to drive growth opportunities, enable innovation and disruptive technologies, and address global challenges.

#### India at 4<sup>th</sup> FII:

India highlighted the **five big trends which are emerging due to COVID-19** and influencing global business:

1. The impact of Technology and Innovation
2. Importance of Infrastructure for Global Growth
3. Changes coming in human resource and future of work
4. Compassion for environment
5. Business friendly governance with focus on whole of society and government approach

## GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

### INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY (IEA)

#### Context

*India signs Strategic Partnership Agreement with International Energy Agency (IEA).*



## About the Partnership Agreement:

The Framework for **Strategic Partnership** was signed to strengthen mutual trust and cooperation & enhance global energy security, stability and sustainability.

- This partnership will lead to an extensive exchange of knowledge and would be a stepping stone towards India becoming a full member of the IEA.
- The contents of the Strategic partnership will be jointly decided by the IEA Members and India.

## It will include:

- A phased increase in benefits and responsibilities for India as an IEA Strategic partner, and
- Building on existing areas of work within Association and the **Clean Energy Transitions Programme (CETP)**, such as Energy Security, Clean & Sustainable Energy, Energy Efficiency, Enhancing petroleum storage capacity in India, Expansion of gas-based economy in India etc.

## Implementation:

The **IEA Secretariat will be responsible for implementation** of the cooperative activities in India and for facilitating discussion between the IEA Members and India to further develop the Strategic Partnership.

## About IEA:

The International Energy Agency (IEA) is a **Paris-based autonomous intergovernmental organization**.

- It was established in the framework of the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1974** in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis.
- The IEA was initially **dedicated to responding to physical disruptions in the supply of oil**, as well as serving as an information source on statistics about the international oil market and other energy sectors.

## Functions:

- The IEA acts as a **policy adviser to its member states**, but also works with non-member countries, especially China, India, and Russia.
- The Agency's mandate has broadened to focus on the **"3Es"** of effectual energy policy: **energy security, economic development, and environmental protection**.
- **The IEA has a broad role** in promoting alternate energy sources (including renewable energy), rational energy policies, and multinational energy technology co-operation.

## Structure:

The IEA is an autonomous inter-governmental organisation within the OECD framework, headed by its Executive Director.

- **The Governing Board** is the main decision-making body of the IEA, **composed of energy ministers or their senior representatives from each member country**.
- Through the IEA Ministerial Meeting that takes place every two years.
- The **IEA Secretariat develops ideas for existing or new work programmes**, which are then discussed with member countries in various IEA committees and ultimately presented to the Governing Board for approval.

## GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

### INDIA ENERGY MODELING FORUM

#### Context

Recently, NITI Aayog Announced Governing Structure of India Energy Modelling Forum.

#### Highlights

- **India Energy Modelling Forum (IEMF)**—jointly launched by **NITI Aayog and United States Agency for International Development (USAID)** under the US–India Strategic Energy Partnership—on 2 July.
- NITI Aayog announced its governing structure on 8 October.
- The governing structure of IEMF will **consist of an inter-ministerial and a steering committee.**
- The inter-ministerial **committee will be convened by NITI Aayog and headed by its CEO.**

**It will comprise senior officials from** the ministries of

1. Petroleum and natural gas;
2. Power;
3. New and renewable energy;
4. Coal;
5. Environment, forest and climate change; and
6. Department of science and technology.

This committee will review the studies/modelling activities and provide directions and new areas of research.

#### Background

India and the US have a long-standing collaboration on energy.

- The **Sustainable Growth pillar**, one of the four of the US–India SEP, is being chaired by NITI Aayog and USAID.
- **This pillar brings together Indian and US researchers and decision-makers to collaborate in three focal areas: energy data management; energy modelling, and promotion of low carbon technologies.**
- IEMF was launched under the area of energy modelling.
- Through collaborations with global energy modelling forums, **such as Stanford Energy Modelling Forum and Energy Modelling Platform for Europe**, IEMF hopes to share and learn from best practices.

## What is the India Energy Modeling Forum?

- **India Energy Modeling Forum (IEMF)** is a part of the Sustainable Growth pillar of the US–India Strategic Energy Partnership (SEP).
- It aims to engage Indian researchers, knowledge partners, think tanks and national and international government agencies and departments for modelling and long-term energy planning.

## The Forum aims to:

- Provide a platform to examine important energy and environmental related issues;
- Inform decision-making process to the Indian government;
- Improve cooperation between modelling teams, government, and knowledge partners, funders;
- Facilitate exchange of ideas, ensure production of high-quality studies;
- Identify knowledge gaps at different levels and across different areas;
- Build capacity of Indian institutions.

## What is 'Energy Modelling'?

Energy modeling or **energy system modeling** is the process of building computer models of energy systems in order to analyze them.

- Such **models often employ scenario analysis to investigate different assumptions** about the technical and economic conditions at play.
- Outputs may include the system feasibility, greenhouse gas emissions, cumulative financial costs, natural resource use, and energy efficiency of the system under investigation.

## What are Energy Modelling Forums (EMF)?

The **Energy Modelling Forum (EMF) in USA** was established in 1976 at Stanford University.

- It aimed to connect leading modelling experts and decision makers from government, industry, universities, and other research organizations.
- The forum also provides an unbiased platform to discuss the contemporary issues revolving around energy and environment.

## Mains Question:

*Discuss the objectives and significance of Indian Energy Modelling Forum.*

**PIB-JANUARY – 29<sup>th</sup> JANUARY- 2021**

## GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

## NATIONAL MARINE TURTLE ACTION PLAN

## Context

The Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has released 'Marine Mega Fauna Stranding Guidelines' and 'National Marine Turtle Action Plan'.

## About it:

- The documents launched contains **ways and means** to promote inter-sectoral action for conservation.
- They also guide **improved coordination** amongst the government, civil society and all relevant stakeholders on the response to cases of stranding, entanglement, injury or mortality of marine mammals and also conservation of marine turtles.

## Marine biodiversity in India

India has **rich marine biodiversity** along a vast coastline of over 7,500 km.

- From colorful fish, sharks, including Whale Sharks, turtles and big mammals like whales, dolphins and dugongs to bright corals, marine habitats not only harbor diverse species but also provide resources essential for human wellbeing.
- Millions of **people depend on these resources** ranging from maritime trade and transport, food, mineral resources, cultural traditions, spiritual values and inspiration that draws tourists from around the world.



## Need for:

- Despite the immense economic, ecological and cultural values of marine habitats in India, **marine mega fauna species and marine turtles face a wide variety of challenges** including stranding and entanglement.
- Managing such challenging situations requires coordination, action and people's participation which would help in the long-term conservation of marine species and their habitats.

### Significance:

These two documents highlight **actions to be taken for handling stranded animals on shore, stranded or entangled animals in the sea or on a boat**, management actions for improved coordination, reducing threats to marine species and their habitats, rehabilitation of degraded habitats, enhancing people's participation, advance scientific research and exchange of information on marine mammals and marine turtles and their habitats.

## GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

## URBAN LOCAL BODIES (ULB) REFORMS

### Context

Rajasthan becomes the 5th State to complete Urban Local Bodies (ULB) reforms.

### Highlights

- The Urban Local Bodies (ULB) reforms were **stipulated by the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance**.
- By completing ULB reforms **Rajasthan** has thus become **eligible for additional reform linked borrowing**.
- Accordingly, the State has been granted permission by the Department of Expenditure to mobilise **additional financial resources of Rs. 2,731 crore through Open Market Borrowings**.
- The other four other States are, **Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur and Telangana**, who have completed ULB reforms.

### What is the ULB Reforms?

- **Reforms in Urban Local Bodies are aimed at** financial strengthening of ULBs in the States and to enable them to provide better public health and sanitation services to citizens.
- **Economically rejuvenated ULBs** will also be able to create good civic infrastructure.

### The four citizen centric areas identified for reforms are:

1. Implementation of One Nation One Ration Card System
2. Ease of doing business reform
3. Urban Local body/ utility reforms

## 4. Power Sector reforms.

### Implementations:

In process of ULB reforms the State will notify:

- floor rates of property tax in ULBs which are in consonance with the prevailing circle rates (i.e. guideline rates for property transactions) and
- floor rates of user charges in respect of the provision of water-supply, drainage and sewerage which reflect current costs/ past inflation.

The State will put in place a system of periodic increase in floor rates of property tax/ user charges in line with price increases.

### Significance:

Linking mobilization of a part of additional financial resources **to reforms has pushed reforms by many States in the four citizen centric areas.**

So far 11 States have implemented the One Nation One Ration Card System, 8 States have done ease of doing business reforms, 5 States have done local body reforms and 1 State has completed power sector reforms.

## GENERAL STUDIES - II

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

## NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES (NTDS)

### Context:

India Joins the World **to Light Up Qutub Minar** As a Sign of Unity to Combat Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs).

### Highlights

- January 30, 2021 will mark the **second annual World Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD) Day.**
- It is highlighting the **global community's commitment to ending Neglected Tropical Diseases** that cause immeasurable suffering among the world's most marginalized communities.
- India joins the world to Combat Neglected Tropical Diseases. On this day the Qutub Minar will be lit up along with other landmarks across the world.

### What are the Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs)?

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates show that a billion people in 149 countries suffer from one or more neglected tropical diseases.



- These include **dengue, trachoma, filariasis and leishmaniasis**, and are caused by viruses, bacteria, parasites or helminthes.
- These are called neglected because they do not receive much attention.
- They occur most often in developing countries of the world which suffer from poor sanitation, lack of potable water and deficient health care access.
- The importance of these diseases is both medical and socio-economic.

## Effects of NTDs:

NTDs include **several parasitic, viral, and bacterial diseases** that cause substantial illness for more than one billion people globally.

- **Affecting the world's poorest people**, NTDs impair physical and cognitive development, contribute to mother and child illness and death, make it difficult to farm or earn a living, and limit productivity in the workplace.
- As a result, **NTDs trap the poor in a cycle of poverty and disease**.
- NTDs are found in several countries in **Africa, Asia, and Latin America**.
- NTDs are **especially common in tropical areas** where people do not have access to clean water or safe ways to dispose of human waste.

## GENERAL STUDIES - III

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

## NCAVES INDIA FORUM 2021

### Context

The NCAVES India Forum 2021 is being organised by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

### What is it?

**Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of the Ecosystem Services (NCAVES)** India Forum-2021 is a part of **NCAVES project of United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)**.

- **It aims to help** five countries for addressing the concerns of sustainability and conserving the environment for future use while charting the course for economic development.
- India is one of the five countries taking part in this project – the other countries being **Brazil, China, South Africa and Mexico**.
- It is being organized in India by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

### NCAVES project:

The Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services (**NCAVES**) project seeks to **advance the theory and practice of environmental and ecosystem accounting** in Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa.



The project has been **jointly implemented by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Secretariat of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD).**

- It aims to assist the five participating partner countries, to advance the knowledge agenda on environmental-economic accounting, in particular ecosystem accounting.
- The project will have a duration until the end of 2021.

### Objectives:

The objectives of the National Forum would be:

- To present India's achievements in the domain of Natural Capital Accounting (NCA);
- To prioritize the emerging opportunities for NCA in India;
- To familiarize stakeholders with the work undertaken by the different international agencies in the area of NCA; and
- To provide a platform to selected Research Institutions to present their research conducted in the valuation of ecosystem services.

### Key Focus area:

1. Efforts made by the international agencies in the domain of natural capital accounting and valuation of ecosystem services
2. Policy Demand for NCA in India
3. Achievements in natural capital accounting and valuation of ecosystem services and prospects of natural capital accounting in India.

### Significance:

The participation in the project has helped MOSPI commence the compilation of the Environment Accounts as per the UN-SEEA framework.

- The MOSPI has also released environmental accounts in its publication "EnviStats India" on an annual basis since 2018.
- Several of these accounts are closely related to the social and economic attributes, making them a useful tool for the Policy.

## CHROME FACTS FOR PRELIMS

### KALA UTSAV 2020

Kala utsav is an **initiative of ministry of Education.**

- It is organised **for promoting arts in Education by nurturing and showcasing the artistic talents among students.**
- Kala Utsav 2020 was launched online on 10 January 2021 through a digital platform.
- In the competitions of Kala Utsav 2020, **a total of nine art forms**, namely— 1. Classical singing 2. Traditional folk song 3. Classical instruments 4. Traditional/folk instruments 5. Classical dance 6. Folk dance 7. Visual Arts (Two-dimensional) 8. Visual Arts (Three-dimensional) 9. Local games-toys are included.
- Earlier there **were only four art forms in Kala Utsav.**

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF ECONOMIC SURVEY 2020 -21

Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Economic Survey 2020-21 in the Parliament on 29 January.

The key highlights of Economic Survey 2020-21, which is **dedicated to the COVID Warriors**, are as follows:

#### **Saving Lives and Livelihoods amidst a Once-in-a-Century Crisis**

- India focused on saving lives and livelihoods by its willingness to take **short-term pain for long-term gain**, at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Response stemmed from the **humane principle** that: **Human lives lost cannot be brought back.**

- An **early, intense lockdown provided a win-win strategy** to save lives, and preserve livelihoods via economic recovery in the medium to long-term
- Strategy also motivated by the Nobel-Prize winning research by Hansen & Sargent (2001): a policy focused on **minimizing losses in a worst-case scenario** when uncertainty is very high
- India's strategy **flattened the curve**, pushed the peak to September, 2020
- After the September peak, India has been unique in experiencing **declining daily cases despite increasing mobility**
- **V-shaped recovery**, as seen in 7.5% decline in GDP in Q2 and recovery across all key economic indicators vis-à-vis the 23.9% GDP contraction in Q1

#### **State of the Economy in 2020-21: A Macro View**

- COVID-19 pandemic ensued **global economic downturn**, the most severe one since the Global Financial Crisis
- The lockdowns and social distancing norms brought the already slowing **global economy to a standstill**
- Global economic output estimated to fall by 3.5% in 2020 (IMF January 2021 estimates)
- Governments and central banks across the globe deployed various policy tools to support their economies such as lowering policy rates, quantitative easing measures, etc.

India adopted a **four-pillar strategy** of **containment, fiscal, financial, and long-term structural reforms**:

- As per the advance estimates by NSO, India's GDP is estimated to grow by (-) 7.7% in FY21 – a **robust sequential growth of 23.9%** in H2: FY21 over H1: FY21
- India's **real GDP** to record a **0% growth in FY2021-22** and **nominal GDP** to grow by **15.4%** – the **highest since independence**.

- **Government consumption** and **net exports** cushioned the growth from diving further down, whereas investment and private consumption pulled it down
  - The recovery in second half of FY2020-21 is expected to be powered by **government consumption**, estimated to grow at **17% YoY**
  - Exports expected to decline by 5.8% and imports by 11.3% in the second half of FY21
  - India expected to have a **Current Account Surplus of 2% of GDP** in FY21, a **historic high after 17 years**
  - **On supply side**, Gross Value Added (GVA) growth pegged at -7.2% in FY21 as against 3.9% in FY20.
1. **Agriculture set to cushion the shock of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Indian economy in FY21 with a growth of 3.4%**
  2. **Industry and services estimated to contract by 9.6% and 8.8% respectively during FY21**
- The **external sector** provided an effective cushion to growth with India recording a **Current Account Surplus of 3.1% of GDP** in the first half of FY21:
1. **Strong services exports** and weak demand leading to a sharper contraction in imports (merchandise imports contracted by 39.7%) than exports (merchandise exports contracted by 21.2%)
  2. **Forex reserves** increased to a level so as to cover 18 months worth of imports in December 2020.
  3. **External debt** as a ratio to GDP increased to 21.6% at end-September 2020 from 20.6% at end-March 2020.
  4. Ratio of forex reserves to total and short-term debt improved because of the sizable accretion in reserves.

**V-shaped recovery** is underway, as demonstrated by a sustained resurgence in high frequency indicators such as power demand, e-way bills, GST collection, steel consumption, etc.

India became the **fastest country to roll-out 10 lakh vaccines** in 6 days and also emerged as a **leading supplier of the vaccine** to neighbouring countries and Brazil.

## **Does Growth lead to Debt Sustainability? Yes, But Not Vice- Versa!**

**Growth leads to debt sustainability** in the Indian context but not necessarily vice-versa.

Debt sustainability depends on the '**Interest Rate Growth Rate Differential**' (IRGD), i.e., the difference between the interest rate and the growth rate.

In India, **interest rate on debt is less than growth rate** – by norm, not by exception.

- **Negative IRGD in India**– not due to lower interest rates but much higher growth rates – prompts a debate on fiscal policy, especially during growth slowdowns and economic crises
- **Active fiscal policy** can ensure that the full benefit of reforms is reaped by limiting potential damage to productive capacity

- Fiscal policy that provides an impetus to growth will lead to **lower debt-to-GDP ratio**
- Given India's growth potential, **debt sustainability is unlikely to be a problem** even in the worst scenarios
- **Desirable to use counter-cyclical fiscal policy** to enable growth during economic downturns
- Active, counter-cyclical fiscal policy – not a call for fiscal irresponsibility, but to break the intellectual anchoring that has created an **asymmetric bias against fiscal policy**

## Does India's Sovereign Credit Rating Reflect Its Fundamentals? No!

The **fifth largest economy in the world** has never been rated as the lowest rung of the investment grade (BBB-/Baa3) in sovereign credit ratings:

- Reflecting the economic size and thereby the ability to repay debt, the fifth largest economy has been predominantly rated AAA
- China and India are the only exceptions to this rule – China was rated A-/A2 in 2005 and now India is rated BBB-/Baa3

## Inequality and Growth: Conflict or Convergence?

The relationship between inequality and socio-economic outcomes vis-à-vis economic growth and socio-economic outcomes, is different in India from that in advanced economies.

- Both inequality and per-capita income (growth) have similar relationships with socio-economic indicators in India, unlike in advanced economies
- **Economic growth has a greater impact on poverty alleviation than inequality**
- India must continue to focus on **economic growth to lift the poor out of poverty**
- **Expanding the overall pie**– redistribution in a developing economy is feasible only if the size of the economic pie grows

## Healthcare takes centre stage, finally!

COVID-19 pandemic emphasized the importance of healthcare sector and its inter-linkages with other sectors – showcased how a health crisis transformed into an economic and social crisis

- India's **health infrastructure must be agile** so as to respond to pandemics – healthcare policy must not become beholden to 'saliency bias'.
- **National Health Mission (NHM)** played a critical role in mitigating inequity as the access of the poorest to pre-natal/post-natal care and institutional deliveries increased significantly.
- Emphasis on NHM in conjunction with **Ayushman Bharat** should continue.
- An **increase in public healthcare spending from 1% to 2.5-3% of GDP** can decrease the **out-of-pocket expenditure from 65% to 35%** of overall healthcare spending.
- A **regulator for the healthcare sector** must be considered given the market failures stemming from information asymmetry.

## Process Reforms

- India over-regulates the economy resulting in regulations being ineffective even with relatively good compliance with process
- The root cause of the problem of overregulation is an approach that attempts to account for every possible outcome
- Increase in complexity of regulations, intended to reduce discretion, results in even more non-transparent discretion
- The solution is to **simplify regulations** and **invest in greater supervision** which, by definition, implies greater discretion
- Discretion, however, needs to be balanced with **transparency**, systems of ex-ante accountability and ex-post resolution mechanisms
- The above intellectual framework has already informed reforms ranging from labour codes to removal of onerous regulations on the BPO sector

### **Regulatory Forbearance an emergency medicine, not staple diet!**

During the Global Financial Crisis, regulatory **forbearance** helped borrowers tide over temporary hardship.

- To promote judgement amidst uncertainty, **ex-post inquests must recognize the role of hindsight bias** and not equate unfavourable outcomes to bad judgement or malafide intent.
- An **Asset Quality Review** exercise must be conducted immediately after the forbearance is withdrawn.
- The **legal infrastructure** for the recovery of loans needs to be strengthened de facto.

### **Innovation: Trending Up but Needs Thrust, Especially from the Private Sector**

India entered the top-50 innovating countries for the first time in 2020 since the inception of the Global Innovation Index in 2007, ranking **first in Central and South Asia**, and **third amongst lower middle-income group** economies.

- India's gross domestic expenditure on R&D (GERD) is lowest amongst top ten economies
- **India's aspiration must be to compete on innovation with the top ten economies**
- The **government sector contributes a disproportionately large share in total GERD** at three times the average of top ten economies.
- **India's business sector needs to significantly ramp up investments in R&D.**
- Indian resident's share in total patents filed in the country must rise from the current 36% which is much below the average of 62% in top ten economies.
- For achieving higher improvement in innovation output, India must focus on **improving its performance on institutions and business sophistication innovation inputs.**

### **JAY Ho! PM'JAY' Adoption and Health outcomes**

**Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)** – the ambitious program launched by Government of India in 2018 to provide healthcare access to the most vulnerable sections demonstrates **strong positive effects on healthcare outcomes in a short time.**

**Causal impact of PM-JAY on health outcomes** by undertaking a Difference-in-Difference analysis based on National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-4 (2015-16) and NFHS-5 (2019-20) is following:

- **Enhanced health insurance coverage:** The proportion of households that had health insurance increased in Bihar, Assam and Sikkim from 2015-16 to 2019-20 by 89% while it decreased by 12% over the same period in West Bengal.
- **Decline in Infant Mortality rate:** from 2015-16 to 2019-20, infant mortality rates declined by 20% for West Bengal and by 28% for the three neighbouring states.
- **Decline in under-5 mortality rate:** Bengal saw a fall of 20% while, the neighbours witnessed a 27% reduction.
- **Modern methods of contraception, female sterilization and pill usage** went up by 36%, 22% and 28% respectively in the three neighbouring states while the respective changes for West Bengal were negligible.
- While West Bengal did not witness any significant decline in unmet need for spacing between consecutive kids, the neighbouring three states recorded a 37% fall.
- Overall, the comparison reflects **significant improvements in several health outcomes in states that implemented PM-JAY versus those that did not.**

## **Bare Necessities**

Access to the 'bare necessities' has improved across all States in the country in 2018 as compared to 2012.

- It is highest in States such as **Kerala, Punjab, Haryana and Gujarat while lowest in Odisha, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Tripura.**
- **Improvement in each of the five dimensions**, access to water, housing, sanitation, micro-environment and other facilities.
- Inter-State disparities declined across rural and urban areas as the laggard states have gained relatively more between 2012 and 2018.
- Improved disproportionately more for the poorest households when compared to the richest households across rural and urban areas.

## **Fiscal Developments**

India adopted a **calibrated approach** best suited for a resilient recovery of its economy from COVID-19 pandemic impact, in contrast with a front-loaded large stimulus package adopted by many countries.

- **Expenditure policy** in 2020-21 initially aimed at supporting the vulnerable sections but was re-oriented to boost overall demand and capital spending, once the lockdown was unwound
- **Monthly GST collections** have crossed the **1 lakh crore** mark consecutively for the last 3 months, reaching its **highest levels in December 2020 ever since the introduction of GST**
- **Reforms in tax administration** have begun a process of transparency and accountability and have incentivized tax compliance by enhancing honest tax-payers' experience



## External Sector

COVID-19 pandemic led to a sharp decline in global trade, lower commodity prices and tighter external financing conditions with implications for current account balances and currencies of different countries

- India's **forex reserves at an all-time high of US\$ 586.1 billion as on January 08, 2021**, covering about 18 months' worth of imports.
- India experiencing a Current Account Surplus along with robust capital inflows leading to a **BoP surplus since Q4 of FY2019-20**.
- **India to end with an Annual Current Account Surplus after a period of 17 years**.
- India's **merchandise trade deficit was lower** at US\$ 57.5 billion in April-December, 2020 as compared to US\$ 125.9 billion in the corresponding period last year.
- Total **merchandise imports** declined by (-) 29.1% to US\$ 258.3 billion during April-December, 2020 from US\$ 364.2 billion during the same period last year.
- **Trade balance with China and the US improved as imports slowed**.

### Initiatives undertaken to promote exports:

1. Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme
2. Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP)
3. Improvement in logistics infrastructure and digital initiatives

## Money Management and Financial Intermediation

**Accommodative monetary policy** during 2020: repo rate cut by 115 bps since March 2020.

**Systemic liquidity** in FY2020-21 has remained in surplus so far. RBI undertook various conventional and unconventional measures like:

- Open Market Operations
- Long Term Repo Operations
- Targeted Long Term Repo Operations

## Prices and Inflation

### Headline CPI inflation:

- Averaged 6.6% during April-December, 2020 and stood at 4.6% in December, 2020, **mainly driven by rise in food inflation** (from 6.7% in 2019-20 to 9.1% during April-December, 2020, owing to build up in vegetable prices).
- CPI headline and its sub groups witnessed inflation during April-October 2020, driven by substantial increase in price momentum – due to the **initial disruptions caused by COVID-19 lockdown**.

**Rural-urban difference in CPI inflation** saw a decline in 2020:

- Since November 2019, CPI-Urban inflation has closed the gap with CPI-Rural inflation.
- Food inflation has almost converged now.
- During April-December, 2019 as well as April-December, 2020-21, the major driver of CPI-C inflation was the **food and beverages**
- **Thali cost increased** between June 2020 and November 2020, however a sharp fall in the month of December reflecting the fall in the prices of many essential food commodities.



## Sustainable Development and Climate Change

India has taken several proactive steps to **mainstream the SDGs** into the policies, schemes and programmes.

- **Voluntary National Review (VNR)** presented to the United Nations High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development.
- **Localisation of SDGs** is crucial to any strategy aimed at achieving the goals under the 2030 Agenda.
- Eight National Missions under **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)** focussed on the objectives of adaptation, mitigation and preparedness on climate risks.
- **India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)** states that finance is a critical enabler of climate change action.
- **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** launched two new initiatives – ‘**World Solar Bank**’ and ‘**One Sun One World One Grid Initiative**’ – poised to bring about solar energy revolution globally.

## Agriculture and Food Management

- India's **Agricultural (and Allied Activities) sector** has shown its resilience amid the adversities of COVID-19 induced lockdowns with a **growth of 3.4% at constant prices during 2020-21 (first advance estimate)**
- The share of Agriculture and Allied Sectors in Gross Value Added (GVA) of the country at current prices is **8%** for the year 2019-20 (CSO-Provisional Estimates of National Income, 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2020)
- **Gross Capital Formation (GCF)** relative to GVA showing a fluctuating trend from 17.7 % in 2013-14 to 16.4 % in 2018-19, with a dip to 14.7 % in 2015-16
- **Total food grain production** in the country in the agriculture year 2019-20 (as per Fourth Advance Estimates), is **44 million tonnes** more than during 2018-19
- The **actual agricultural credit flow** was **₹13,92,469.81** crores against the target of ₹13,50,000 crores in 2019-20. The target for 2020-21 was ₹15,00,000 crores and a sum of ₹ 9,73,517.80 crores was disbursed till 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2020:

## Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana:

- 96 crore beneficiaries were provided foodgrains above NFSA mandated requirement free of cost till November, 2020.
- Over 200 LMT of food grains were provided amounting to a fiscal outgo of over Rs. 75000 Crores.

## AatmaNirbhar Bharat Package:

5 kg per person per month for four months (May to August) to approximately 8 crores migrants (excluded under NFSA or state ration card) entailing subsidy of Rs. 3109 crores approximately.

## Industry and Infrastructure

- A strong **V-shaped recovery** of economic activity further confirmed by IIP data.

- The **IIP& eight-core index** further inched up to pre-COVID levels.
- The broad-based recovery in the IIP resulted in a growth of (-) 1.9 % in Nov-2020 as compared to a growth of 2.1 % in Nov-2019 and a nadir of (-) 57.3 % in Apr-2020.
- Further improvement and firming up in industrial activities are foreseen with the Government enhancing capital expenditure, the vaccination drive and the resolute push forward on long pending reform measures.
- **AatmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyan** with a stimulus package worth **15 % of India's GDP**
- India's rank in the **Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) Index** for 2019 has moved upwards to the **63<sup>rd</sup> position in 2020** from 77<sup>th</sup> in 2018 as per the Doing Business Report (DBR).

## FDI equity inflows:

**FDI equity inflows were US\$49.98 billion in FY20** as compared to US\$44.37 billion during FY19.

- It is US\$30.0 billion for FY21 (up to September-2020).
- The bulk of FDI equity flow is in the non-manufacturing sector.
- Within the manufacturing sector, industries like automobile, telecommunication, metallurgical, non-conventional energy, chemical (other than fertilizers), food processing, petroleum & natural gas got the bulk of FDI.
- Government has announced a **Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme** in the 10 key sectors under the aegis of **AatmaNirbhar Bharat** for enhancing India's manufacturing capabilities and exports.

## Services Sector

India's services sector contracted by nearly 16 % during H1: FY2020-21, during the COVID-19 pandemic mandated lockdown, owing to its **contact-intensive nature**.

- **Key indicators** such as Services Purchasing Managers' Index, rail freight traffic, and port traffic, are all displaying a V-shaped recovery after a sharp decline during the lockdown
- Despite the disruptions being witnessed globally, **FDI inflows** into India's services sector grew robustly by 34% Y-o-Y during April-September 2020 to reach US\$ 23.6 billion
- The services sector accounts for over **54 % of India's GVA** and nearly **four-fifths of total FDI inflow into India**
- The sector's share in GVA exceeds 50% in 15 out of 33 States and UTs, and is particularly more pronounced (greater than 85%) in Delhi and Chandigarh
- Services sector accounts for **48% of total exports**, outperforming goods exports in the recent years
- The **shipping turnaround time** at ports has almost halved from 4.67 days in 2010-11 to **62 days** in 2019-20
- The Indian **start-up ecosystem** has been progressing well amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, being home to **38 unicorns** – adding a record number of 12 start-ups to the unicorn list last year
- India's **space sector** has grown exponentially in the past six decades.

## Social Infrastructure, Employment and Human Development

The combined (Centre and States) **social sector expenditure** as % of GDP has increased in 2020-21 compared to last year.

- **India's rank in HDI 2019** was recorded at 131, out of a total 189 countries.
- India's **GNI per capital** (2017 PPP \$) has increased from US\$ 6,427 in 2018 to US\$ 6,681 in 2019.
- **Life expectancy at birth** improved from 69.4 years in 2018 to 69.7 years in 2019.
- The access to data network, electronic devices such as computer, laptop, smart phone etc. gained importance due to **online learning** and **remote working** during the pandemic.
- Government's incentive to boost employment through **AatmaNirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana** and rationalization and simplification of existing labour codes into 4 codes.
- Under **PMGKP** announced in March, 2020, **cash transfers of upto Rs.1000** to existing old aged, widowed and disabled beneficiaries under the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP).
- An amount of Rs. 500 each was transferred for three months digitally into bank accounts of the women beneficiaries under **PM Jan Dhan Yojana**, totalling about **20.64 crores**.
- **Free distribution of gas cylinders** to about **8 crore** families for three months.
- Limit of collateral free lending increased from Rs. 10 lakhs to Rs. 20 lakhs for **63 lakh women SHGs** which would support 6.85 crore households.
- **Wages under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA** increased by Rs.20 from Rs.182 to Rs.202 w.e.f. 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2020.

## India's fight against COVID-19:

- Initial measures of lockdown, social distancing, travel advisories, practicing hand wash, wearing masks reduced the spread of the disease.
- Country also acquired **self-reliance in essential medicines**, hand sanitizers, protective equipment including masks, PPE Kits, ventilators, COVID-19 testing and treatment facilities.
- **World's largest COVID-19 vaccination drive** commenced on 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2021 using two indigenously manufactured vaccines.



## CHROME IAS

*Giving Wings To Your Dreams !!!*

### IAS 2019 - FINAL SELECTIONS



**RAVI JAIN**  
**RANK 9**



**VISHAL TEJRAO**  
**RANK 91**



**NAKUL RAJENDRA**  
**RANK 489**



**AKSHAY DINKAR**  
**RANK 704**



**SHRENIK LODHA**  
**RANK 221**



**AMIT KUMAR**  
**RANK 295**



**MRIDUL SINGH**  
**RANK 401**



**ANANYA KIRTI**  
**RANK 736**



**B RAHUL**  
**RANK 272**



**VIKRAM SINGH**  
**RANK 354**



**PRAVEEN PUSHKAR**  
**RANK 454**



**SHUBHAM ASHOK**  
**RANK 749**

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**GS Mains  
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