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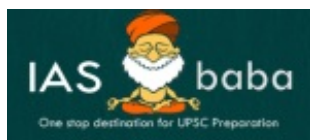
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PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU (PIB) IAS UPSC – 28th September to 3rd October – 2020



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GS-1

International Day of Older Persons

(Topic: Population, Demographic Dividend)

Celebrated on 1st October

Declared by United Nations, to recognize, enable and expand the contributions of older people in their families, communities and societies at large and to raise awareness towards issues of ageing.

**National Programme for the Health Care for the Elderly (NPHCE):
Aimed to deliver comprehensive, affordable and quality geriatric care
services at primary and secondary levels**

- Outpatient services from district hospital to health & wellness centres
- Minimum 10 bedded geriatric wards at all district hospitals
- Rehabilitation services down to CHC and HWC level
- Developing mechanisms for providing home based care to needy elderly

1st October, 2020: Launch year of Decade of Healthy Ageing (2020-2030)

- The broad aims of the Decade of Healthy Ageing will include evolving convergence within various national health programs and also promoting inter-sectoral coordination with other line Departments/Ministries.
- Community based organisations, NGOs and multinational agencies will also be involved for developing an implementation framework for multi-sectoral engagement on healthy aging.

Longitudinal Aging Study in India (LASI): In order to generate comprehensive data on social, economic and health conditions of the elderly, India conducted the first nationwide study and world's largest study on older adults which will provide evidence base for national and state level programs and policies for elderly population

GS-2

India at UN Biodiversity Summit

(Topic: International forums and organisations)

Representing India at the United Nations(UN) Biodiversity Summit on the occasion of 75th anniversary of the UN General Assembly, Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Prakash Javadekar, said that as we are approaching the end of the UN Decade on Biodiversity 2011-2020 there is an urgent need to accelerate action to conserve biodiversity. The summit is first of its kind ever taken place on Biodiversity in the United Nations General Assembly.

The emergence of COVID-19 has emphasized the fact that un-regulated exploitation of natural resources coupled with un-sustainable food habits and consumption pattern lead to destruction of system that supports human life. However, COVID-19 has also shown that Nature can still be conserved, restored and used sustainably.

- As enshrined in our Vedic scripts “PrakritiRakshatiRakshita” that is if you protect nature, nature will protect you. Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, the ethos of non-violence and protection of animals and nature have been suitably enshrined in the Constitution of India and is reflected in several laws and legislations.
- India aims to restore 26 million hectares of degraded and deforested land, and achieve land-degradation neutrality by 2030.
- India has already set aside extensive area for meeting the conservation objectives, contributing to Aichi Biodiversity Target-11 and the SDG -15.
- India has established a comprehensive institutional and legal system to realize the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
- India has operationalized a system for access and benefit-sharing provisions of the CBD through a national network of 0.25 million Biodiversity Management Committees across the country involving local people and 0.17 million Peoples Biodiversity Registers for documentation of biodiversity.

Facts:

- India, with only 2.4% of the earth’s land area hosts around 8% of the world’s recorded species.
- In the course of last decade, India has enhanced the combined forest and tree cover to 24.56% of the total geographical area of the country.
- India has the highest number of tigers in the wild and have doubled its numbers ahead of the deadline of 2022 and recently announced the launch of Project Lion and Project Dolphin.

NITI Aayog and Embassy of the Netherlands sign Statement of Intent on ‘Decarbonization and Energy Transition Agenda’

(Topic: Agreements/Partnerships with other countries)

Objective: To support the decarbonization and energy transition agenda for accommodating cleaner and more energy.

Through this collaboration, NITI Aayog and the Dutch Embassy seek a strategic partnership to create a platform that enables a comprehensive collaboration among stakeholders and influencers, including policymakers, industry bodies, OEMs, private enterprises, and sector experts.

The focus of the partnership is on co-creating innovative technological solutions by leveraging the expertise of the two entities. This will be achieved through an exchange of knowledge and collaborative activities. Key elements include:

1. Lowering the net carbon footprint in industrial and transport sectors
2. Realise the target potential of natural gas and promote bio-energy technologies
3. Adopt clean air technologies from monitoring to reducing actual particulates

4. Adopt next-generation technologies, such as hydrogen, carbon capture utilization, and storage for sectoral energy efficiency
5. Financial frameworks to deliver and adopt climate change finance.

With the focus on carbon intensity of products sold across the world, low carbon industrialization is the next huge opportunity for India. Apart from the ongoing emphasis on renewable energy, India stands committed on the rapid adoption of electric vehicles. Given the enormous potential the partnership holds, the thematic areas within the broad topic of energy transition and climate change, the partnership with the Netherlands in the spirit and action, will help both the countries derive natural synergies to achieve sustainable development goals.

The Netherlands and India share a long history of trade and investment. It is India's sixth largest EU trading partner—as much as 20% of India's exports to the European continent goes through the Netherlands, making it India's 'gateway to Europe'—and one of the top five investors in the country. It is also the third largest source of Foreign Direct Investment for India.

India and Australia further Strengthens their Partnership on Skilling Agenda

(Topic: Agreements/Partnerships with other countries)

A Joint Statement for Comprehensive Strategic Partnership document between both the countries was announced including the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training between the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and the Department of Education, Skills.

In the post-COVID era, the skill priorities of India will be mapping of job roles in the health sector and better migration and mobility. These are high priority areas for India as per the New Education policy in enhancing Vocational education in School education and the collaboration with Australia shall be crucial in this aspect.

- The MoU will establish new pathways between the two countries to share information and best practice between the respective VET systems.
- The agreement will help identify new ways of working together and areas of possible collaboration that include mutual priority areas of industry engagement, quality assurance models, and teaching standards.
- So far, MSDE has signed MOUs with eight countries including Japan, UAE, Sweden, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Finland and Morocco for cooperation in the field of vocational education and training.
- The partnership will help foster closer ties between the governments and training providers, and ultimately, open up new areas of opportunity for millions of VET learners in both countries.

Scientists uncover clue of how first extreme-UV light appeared

(Topic: Science and Technology)

Scientists have uncovered an important clue on how the dark ages of the Universe ended and how the first extreme-UV light appeared.

- India's first multi-wavelength satellite, AstroSat, has detected extreme-UV (EUV) light from a galaxy, called AUDFs01, 9.3 billion light-years away from Earth.
 - At the time, our universe was forming stars at its peak rate.
 - Such EUV radiation has enough energy to ionize a hydrogen atom by liberating its electron from the nucleus's influence.
 - The EUV photons emitted by galaxies like AUDFs01 could play a crucial role in reionizing the early universe soon after the Cosmic Dark Age and emitting the first light.
-

A new study by ARIES of DST suggests new formula to help estimate the mass of Black Hole

(Topic: Space)

A new study has suggested a formula that can help probe black holes. Black holes (BH) cannot be observed directly, but their presence can be detected by the huge amount of energy that is liberated through temporary accumulation of matter outside the BH, before it dives into the BH, a process called accretion.

Scientists have found the formula that can assess the spectrum emitted from the accretion discs around black holes. Spectra of accretion discs can help estimate the mass of the black hole.

Accretion flow around BH is composed of ionised plasma, which is a soup of bare electrons and protons. Since electrons are more prone to radiative losses than the protons, it is expected that around a BH, electrons and protons would settle down into two separate temperature distributions. Therefore, the two-temperature equations are generally solved to obtain the emitted spectrum from the electron temperature distribution. This is known as two-temperature modeling of accretion flows.

Scientists from Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES), an autonomous institute under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Govt. of India, investigated the nature of these two-temperature flows.

Prelims oriented News

RAISE 2020:

- A first of its kind, global meeting of minds on Artificial Intelligence to drive India's vision and roadmap for social transformation, inclusion and empowerment through responsible AI.
- Organized by Government of India along with Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and NITI Aayog

Inauguration of the 'Atal Tunnel'

- As the longest highway tunnel in the world, 'Atal Tunnel' will reduce the travel time between Leh and Manali by 4 – 5 hours.
- Being an all-weather tunnel, it will also connect Lahaul-Spiti valley with the rest of the country throughout the year which used to be cut off for months earlier.
- Atal Tunnel will prove to be a major boon for the entire region. People will now have access to better healthcare facilities, business opportunities and essential items"
- It will also strengthen our defence preparedness and generate employment by giving impetus to the tourism sector

Launch of Tribal Entrepreneurship Development Programme

Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), an apex industry body have embarked upon a new three-year initiative jointly for Tribal Entrepreneurship Development.

- In a bid to promote and support entrepreneurship across Indian tribal communities, efforts are underway in connecting agriculture and forest produce with markets using technology, creation of self-help groups, empowering women, and creating self-sustainable enterprises. The partnership will strive to explore avenues of promotion to create a robust tribal brand identity and in the process – build and enhance the entrepreneurial capabilities of the tribal artisans.
- Would optimize the contribution of tribal population to the growing economy of our country and support India's vision of becoming Atmanirbhar.
- 1000 tribal artisans would be identified under this initiative and would be helped to create a unique brand identity with a differentiated value proposition and connect with the potential customer base through exhibitions,

VAIBHAV Summit:

- A global virtual summit of overseas and resident Indian Researchers and Academicians, and is being organized from 2nd October to 31st October 2020.
- The aim of the summit is to bring Indian origin luminaries in academic institutes and R&D organizations across the world and resident counterparts on a single platform to debate upon collaboration mechanisms to strengthen academic and S&T base in India for global development.

Defence Acquisition Procedure – 2020

- The first Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) was promulgated in the year 2002
- Objective: to provide impetus to the growing domestic industry and achieve enhanced self-reliance in defence manufacturing
- Aligned with the vision of the Government of Atmanirbhar Bharat and empowering Indian domestic industry through Make in India initiative with the ultimate aim of turning India into a global manufacturing hub.
- With the new Foreign Direct Investment policy announced, DAP 2020 has adequately included provisions to encourage FDI to establish manufacturing hubs both for import substitution and exports while protecting interests of Indian domestic industry.
- DAP 2020 emphasises the need to conduct trials with an objective to nurture competition based on the principles of transparency, fairness and equal opportunities to all and not as a process of elimination.
- To implement 'Ease of Doing Business' with emphasis on simplification, delegation and making the process industry friendly with certain specific provisions

One Nation-one Ration Card scheme

Through this system, the migratory NFSA beneficiaries who frequently change their place of dwelling in search of temporary employments, etc. are now enabled with an option to lift their entitled quota of foodgrains from any Fair Price Shop (FPS) of their choice anywhere in the 28 States/UTs by using their same/existing ration card with biometric/Aadhaar based authentication on an electronic Point of Sale (ePoS) device installed at the FPSs.

- Families who have food security cards can buy subsidized rice and wheat from any ration shop in these states.
- Their ration cards should be linked with Aadhar Number to avail this service.
- The Centre is intended to extend the programme to all states by August next year so that the portability of the food security card implemented.
- The national portability of ration cards will ensure all beneficiaries especially the migrants in getting access to PDS across the nation from any PDS shop of their own choice

The Challenges:

- First, the fiscal implications: ON-ORC will affect how the financial burden is shared between states.
- Second, the larger issues of federalism and inter-state coordination: Many states are not convinced about a "one size fits all" regime.
- This is because States have customised the PDS through higher subsidies, higher entitlement limits, and supply of additional items.

- Third, the technology aspect: ON-ORC requires a complex technology backbone that brings over 750 million beneficiaries, 5,33,000 ration shops and 54 million tonnes of food-grain annually on a single platform.

BrahMos Missile Featuring Indigenous Booster Successfully Flight Tested

- BrahMos surface-to-surface supersonic cruise missile featuring indigenous Booster and Airframe Section along with many other 'Made in India' sub-systems was successfully flight tested for designated range.
- **Carried out by:** Defence Research and Development Organisation, DRDO from Balasore in Odisha.
- The BrahMos Land-Attack Cruise Missile was cruising at a top speed of Mach 2.8.
- It is one more major step in enhancing the indigenous content.
- This successful launch has paved the way for the serial production of the indigenous booster and other indigenous components of the powerful BrahMos Weapon System.

Himalayan Chandra Telescope:

- In the cold, dry desert of Ladakh, 4500 meters above the mean sea level, for two decades, the 2-m diameter optical-infrared Himalayan Chandra Telescope (HCT) at the Indian Astronomical Observatory (IAO) has been scanning the night sky in search of stellar explosions, comets, asteroids, and exo-planets.
- Himalayan Chandra Telescope has been used in many coordinated international campaigns to monitor stellar explosions, comets, and exo-planets, and has contributed significantly to these studies

Garib Kalyan Roqwjgar Abhiyaan: The major objectives of the initiative include:

- Provide livelihood opportunity to returning migrants and similarly affected rural citizens
- Saturate villages with public infrastructure and create livelihood opportunities viz. Roads, Housing, Anganwadis, Panchayat Bhavans, various livelihood assets and Community Complexes among others
- The basket of a wide variety of works will ensure that each migrant worker is able to get an opportunity of employment according to his skill, in the coming 125 days. The Program will also prepare for expansion and development of livelihoods over a longer term

The Ministry of Rural Development is the nodal Ministry for this campaign and the campaign will be implemented in close coordination with the State Governments.

- About 30 crore mandays employment provided and more than Rs 27,000 crore spent so far in the pursuit of objectives of the Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan

- More than 1.14 lakh water conservation structures, about 3.65 lakh rural houses and nearly 10,500 community sanitary complexes among the assets created under the Abhiyaan

Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana

Launched in 2018.

- The scheme is run by the Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED).
- It is an initiative targeting **livelihood generation** for **tribals** by harnessing the wealth of forest i.e. Van Dhan.
- The programme aims to tap into traditional knowledge & skill sets of tribals by adding technology & IT to upgrade it at each stage.
- The initiative shall provide enhanced livelihood to about 45 lakhs tribal gatherers in one year.
- Tribal community owned Minor Forest Produce (MFP)-centric multi-purpose **Van Dhan Vikas Kendras** (the Kendra) are set up.
- Essential Features of the PMVDY:
 - The State Nodal Department will have the flexibility to appoint any State Implementing Agency / District Implementing Unit for implementation of the PMVDY in the State and District levels.
 - The Kendras would act as common facility centres for procurement cum value addition to locally available MFPs.
 - A typical Van Dhan Vikas Kendra shall constitute of 15 tribal Van Dhan Self Help Groups (SHG)

Personality in News

Shaheed Bhagat Singh

He along with Rajguru and Sukhdev laid down their lives for larger purpose of our nation His idea of nationalism continues to fascinate youth for generations. In this article we will see Bhagat singhs idea of Nationalism and how relevant it is today.

Nationalism is the strong belief that the interests of a particular nation-state are of primary importance. Also, the belief that a people who share a common language, history, and culture should constitute an independent nation, free of foreign domination. However Bhagat singh idea of nationalism is beyond the interest of nation state. He was not what he is appropriate today; Bhagat singh was an atheist, Marxist influenced by former Soviet Union., and a rationalist who sought social justice trying in his own ways to get rid of injustices created and followed in Indian society and by colonialists.

Nationalism is a not a fixed reality. It is a phenomenon that changes with time. It is necessary to understand the kind of nationalism Bhagat singh followed or understood. Bhagat Singh said about the society he wished for. It is evident that he found fulfilment

through serving humanity and liberating it from sufferings and distress. He equated that cause to that of India's freedom. Working towards building an India where poverty, socio-economic disparity and exploitation did not exist, rather than achieving freedom from the British alone, was his goal.

Bhagat Singh saw his fight for India's freedom as well as his life's fulfilment in selflessly working towards the goal of removing these inequalities, injustices and absence of opportunities faced by his fellow citizens. This was his 'nationalism' and this was his 'patriotism.' It was universal and not confined by boundaries of religion, caste, race, creed or even nation.

It is unfortunate that stalwarts like him are equated in a narrow perspective to gain political mileage. It is necessary to truly understand the concept of Bhagat Singh's nationalism and try to emulate it at individual level to uproot certain inequalities that are present even after his 85th martyrdom.

Mahatma Gandhi: Born on October 2, 1869, in Porbandar, Gujarat

Gandhi's favourite hymn: "Vaishnava Jana To," which says that a true human is one, who feels the pain of others, removes misery and is never arrogant.

Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSPs): Inspired by Gandhian philosophy; Co-operative societies, women participation and empowerment, socio-economic equality etc.,.

Decentralization: Keeping Mahatma Gandhi's principle of 'Swarajya' in mind to strengthen grass root administration.

Do or Die Speech by Gandhiji: In 1942, Mahatma Gandhi gave the clarion call of 'Do or Die' from Gowalia Tank Maidan to end the British rule and launched the Quit India Movement.

Who gave the title of 'Mahatma' to the 'Father of the Nation': Gurudev – Rabindranath Tagore

Majoor Mahajan Sangh: Gandhi formed the Majoor Mahajan Sangh, an association for workers' rights. During those days, "Mahajan" was used as a title of respect for elites. Gandhi inverted the social structure by attaching the name "Mahajan" to "Majoor," or laborers. With that linguistic choice, Gandhi enhanced the pride of workers.

Dyerism: In 1919, the Rowlatt Act enacted by the British government took away the civil rights of Indians. Those who protested peacefully in Jallianwala Bagh faced merciless police firing on the orders of General R Dyer. That cold-blooded assault was described by Mahatma Gandhi as Dyerism. He employed the concept to denote practices of exclusion, including the ostracisation of the Dalits from all spheres of social life in 1919.

Pietermaritzburg: A railway station in South Africa where a young Mahatma Gandhi was thrown out of a “Whites-only” compartment 125 years ago

- On the night of June 7, 1893, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, then a young lawyer, was thrown off the train’s first class compartment at Pietermaritzburg station after he refused to give up his seat as ordered by racially prejudiced officials
- The incident led him to develop his Satyagraha principles of peaceful resistance and mobilize people in South Africa and in India against the discriminatory rules of the British

In 1925, Gandhi wrote in “Young India”: It is impossible for one to be internationalist without being a nationalist. Internationalism is possible only when nationalism becomes a fact, i.e., when peoples belonging to different countries have organized themselves and are able to act as one man.” He envisioned Indian nationalism as one that was never narrow or exclusive but one that worked for the service of humanity.

First World Youth Conference on Kindness

- Organised by the UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development and Ministry of Human Resource Development on the theme ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: Gandhi for the Contemporary World: Celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi’ at the VigyanBhavan in New Delhi.
- Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, the conference aimed to provide global youth and policymakers an innovative, engaging and inspiring platform to come together and strive to discover ground-breaking pathways to achieve the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention

- 116 foreign delegates including sanitation ministers visited select sites related to the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi on the “Gandhi Trail”. The “Gandhi Trail” is a trip to Gujarat, where the delegates will visit the Sabarmati Ashram and see Swachh Bharat at work on the ground in Punsari village.
- The MGISC is a four-day convention which includes more than 160 international representatives from 68 countries. It aims to share sanitation success stories and lessons from the participating countries.

After Mahatma Gandhi’s return to India, he joined Gokhale’s group before going on to lead the independence movement. Gandhi regarded Gokhale as his political mentor, and wrote a book in Gujarati dedicated to the leader titled ‘**Dharmatma Gokhale**’.

Poona Pact: In 1932, British announced the formation of a separate electorate for “Depressed Classes” in the Communal Award.

- Gandhi fiercely opposed a separate electorate for untouchables, saying he feared that such an arrangement would divide the Hindu community. Gandhi protested by fasting while imprisoned in the Yerwada Central Jail of Poona. Following the fast, Congress politicians and activists such as Madan Mohan Malaviya and Palwankar Baloo organised joint meetings with Ambedkar and his supporters at Yerwada.
- On 25 September 1932, the agreement known as Poona Pact was signed between Ambedkar (on behalf of the depressed classes among Hindus) and Madan Mohan Malaviya (on behalf of the other Hindus). The agreement gave reserved seats for the depressed classes in the Provisional legislatures, within the general electorate.
- Due to the pact, the depressed class received 148 seats in the legislature, instead of the 71 as allocated in the Communal Award earlier proposed by British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald. The text uses the term “Depressed Classes” to denote Untouchables among Hindus who were later called Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under India Act 1935, and the later Indian Constitution of 1950. In the Poona Pact, a unified electorate was in principle formed, but primary and secondary elections allowed Untouchables in practice to choose their own candidates.

Gandhi called it “the prince among the political sections of the IPC designed to suppress the liberty of the citizen”: Section 124A of the IPC

- The section deals with the offence of sedition, a term that covers speech or writing, or any form of visible representation, which brings the government into hatred or contempt, or excites disaffection towards the government, or attempts to do so.
- It is punishable with three years in prison or a life term.
- “Disaffection”, it says, includes disloyalty and feelings of enmity.
- However, it also says expressing disapproval of government measures or actions, with a view to getting them changed by lawful means, without promoting hatred or disaffection or contempt towards the government will not come under this section.

Origin:

- Sedition was introduced in the penal code in 1870, a decade after the Indian Penal Code came into force.
- It was a colonial law directed against strong criticism of the British administration.
- Its most famous victims included Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi.

The Story of Indian Flag

- Pingali Venkayya was a freedom fighter and the designer of the Indian National Tricolour who went on to become synonymous with the spirit of free and independent India. Venkayya earlier served as a soldier in the British Army in South Africa during the Anglo Boer war in Africa.
- Acknowledging the need for a national flag, Gandhi then asked Venkayya to design a fresh one at the national congress meeting in 1921. Initially, Venkayya came up with saffron and green colours, but it later evolved with a spinning wheel at the centre and a third colour-white.
- The flag was officially adopted by the Indian National Congress in 1931.

Gandhi & Indian National Congress (INC) had launched 3 major mass movements against British during the freedom struggle:

(i) 1920-22: Non-cooperation Movement (NCM) – Nagpur session (1920)

Jallianwala Bagh Massacre: Gandhi launched a nationwide protest against the Rowlatt Acts with the strongest level of protest in the Punjab.

The situation worsened in Amritsar in April 1919, when General Dyer ordered his troops to open fire on demonstrators hemmed into a tight square, resulting in the deaths of 379 civilians.

Montagu ordered an inquiry into the events at Amritsar by Lord Hunter. The Hunter Inquiry recommended that General Dyer, who commanded the troops, be dismissed, leading to Dyer's sacking.

The Amritsar massacre further inflamed Indian nationalist sentiment ending the initial response of reluctant co-operation. At the Indian National Congress annual session in September 1920, delegates supported Gandhi's proposal of swaraj or self-rule – preferably within the British Empire or out of it if necessary. The proposal was to be implemented through a policy of non-cooperation with British rule meaning that Congress did not field candidates in the first elections held under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms in 1921.

(ii) 1930-34: Civil Disobedience movement (CDM) – Lahore session (1929)

Dandi March

On March 12, 1930, Gandhi along with 80 satyagrahis started out from Sabarmati Ashram and marched over 390 km to reach the coastal village of Dandi.

The march, a protest against the coercive salt tax imposed by the British, was the most significant organised challenge to British authority after the Non-Cooperation Movement of the early 1920s.

The march sparked a series of acts of civil disobedience across India against the salt laws.

Over 60,000 people were arrested across the country. Soon after, the Congress planned a Satyagraha at the Dharasana Salt Works, 25 miles south of Dandi.

However, the plan was shelved after Gandhi was arrested days before the beginning of the movement.

(iii) 1942-44: Quit India movement (QIM) – Bombay on 8th August 1942

After the failure of Cripps Mission, Mahatma Gandhi decided to launch his third major campaign against the British rule – ‘Quit India Movement’ (QIM) in August 1942. And on 8th and 9th August, all senior leaders were arrested. Leaders of younger generation carried on with the plan.

Prevalence of violence & underground activities – Parallel governments were setup in many parts of countries. Removal of railway tracks, Looting of treasury, Blowing up bridges, Burning post-office and police stations, Cutting telephone lines, etc.

Despite the lack of centralized planning and coordination, Indians actively participated in large numbers. Lord Linlithgow had to use the help of army and arrest over 90,000 Indians to crush this movement.

But we understand that Quit India movement was more of a spontaneous revolt than a planned one.

Global Success of Satyagraha

Gandhi applied his experiments with truth and practice of non-violence, not only at an individual level but also in the process of the global affairs. In Gandhi’s model of national and international politics, truth (satya) and non-violence (ahimsa) were brought into a mutually interacting and reinforcing relation. Therefore, as in the case of means and ends, truth and non-violence were, for Gandhi, interchangeable entities beyond cultural borders and mental ghettos.

By Gandhi in India

Champaran Satyagraha – 1917

- Persuaded by Raj Kumar Shukla to study the conditions of the Indigo Plantation workers in Champaran, a district in Bihar
- The system prevalent in the Indigo Plantations was the *Tinkathia System*, in which, the peasants were required to mandatorily cultivate indigo in 3/20th of their land holdings.
- Govt. had appointed a Commission of Inquiry to go into the whole issue and nominated Gandhiji as one of its members > found the planters guilty of exploitation. A compromise was reached and planters were ordered to refund 25% of the amount they had illegally taken.

There were two main systems of indigo cultivation – nij and ryoti.

Ahmedabad Satyagraha – 1918

- Due to plague, the mill owners had increased the pay to 75% to attract workers. However, once the plague conditions subsided, the mill owners wanted to bring down the pay to 20%. The workers didn't agree with this reduction and wanted 50% of the pay to remain.
- The logic they cited was that WW1 had increased the prices. Gandhiji didn't want the interest of the industrialist class to be hurt. He tried hard to persuade Ambalal Sarabhai who was his friend but failed.
- Left with no option, he asked workers to go on a strike. When Gandhiji saw the strike subsiding, he went on a fast. This put pressure on the mill owners who agreed for the 35% increment.

Kheda Satyagraha – 1918

- Teamed up with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to help the cause of peasants. The peasants were in extreme distress as their crop produce had been 1/4th of the original. As per the revenue code, they were entitled for a full concession. However, the Govt. wasn't willing to let go of their revenues and kept pressurizing the peasants.
- Gandhiji urged all farmers to fight unto death against this injustice of the British. He appealed the rich farmers to support the poor farmers by not paying revenues despite having the capability.
- Later the British came out with a policy asking the rich farmers to pay their due voluntarily. (Which backfired as no rich farmer willingly wanted to pay revenue)

Rowlatt Satyagraha – 1919

- British, in the name of curbing terrorist violence, had introduced a Bill that severely curtailed the liberties of the Indians. It had provisions for *arrest without warrant* and *detention for 2 years*.
- Gandhiji called for a nation-wide *hartal* accompanied by fasting and praying. The Movement went in a different direction than what was expected – events of violent outbreaks. The Rowlatt Satyagraha was withdrawn on 18th April, 1919 because of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre that happened on 13th April 1919.

National Salt Satyagraha Memorial: In Dandi, Gujarat; Dandi memorial encapsulates the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi- Agrah for Swadeshi, Swatchagrah and Satyagraha

- One can view statues of Mahatma Gandhi and 80 Satyagrahis who had marched with him during the historic Dandi Salt March in 1930 to make salt from sea water against the British law.
- The memorial also has 24-narrative murals depicting various events and stories from the historic 1930 Salt March.
- Solar trees are installed to meet the energy requirements of the memorial complex.

Prelims-centric Questions

A. With reference to the British colonial rule in India, consider the following statements:

1. Mahatma Gandhi was instrumental in the abolition of the system of ‘indentured labour’.
2. In Lord Chelmsford’s ‘War Conference’, Mahatma Gandhi did not support the resolution on recruiting Indians for World War.
3. Consequent upon the breaking of Salt Law by Indian people, the Indian National Congress was declared illegal by the colonial rulers.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Solution (b)

Explanation: Lord Chelmsford, the then Viceroy of India, invited Gandhi to Delhi at a War Conference. In order to gain the trust of the empire, Gandhi agreed to move people to enlist in the army for World War I.

Hence Statement 2 is wrong. Statement 1 and 3 are correct.

B. Movement leader of All India Anti-Untouchability League: Mahatma Gandhi – While in jail, Gandhi set up the All India Anti-Untouchability League in September 1932

C. In 1932, Mahatma Gandhi began a fast unto death in Yerwada Jail against:

1. Communal award of Ramsay Mac Donald
2. **Violation of Gandhi-Irwin Pact**
3. British repression of Satyagrahis
4. Communal riots in Calcutta

D. Harijan Sevak Sangh born out of the historic Poona Pact between: Dr.BR Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi

E. Gandhiji relinquished his title ‘Kaiser-e-hind’ bestowed on him by the British for his services during the **Boer War in South Africa.**

F. Mahatma Gandhi undertook fast unto death in 1932, mainly because:

1. Round Table Conference failed to satisfy Indian political aspirations
2. Congress and Muslim League had differences of opinion
3. **Ramsay Macdonald announced the Communal Award**
4. None of the statements (a), (b) and (c) given above is correct in this context

Explanation: Gandhi took fast unto death on the announcement of communal award and Poona pact was signed after that with agreement of Gandhiji and Ambedkar

G. Mahatma Gandhi said that some of his deepest convictions were reflected in a book titled, “Unto this Last” and the book transformed his life. What was the message from the book that transformed Mahatma Gandhi?

1. Uplifting the oppressed and poor is the moral responsibility of an educated man
2. **The good of individual is contained in the good of all**
3. The life of celibacy and spiritual pursuit are essential for a noble life
4. All the statements (a), (b) and (c) are correct in this context

H. Reason for Mahatma Gandhi to organize a satyagraha on behalf of the peasants of Kheda?

1. The Administration did not suspend the land revenue collection in spite of a drought.
2. The Administration proposed to introduce Permanent Settlement in Gujarat.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a.) 1 only

(b.) 2 only

(c.) Both 1 and 2

(d.) Neither 1 nor 2

Lal Bahadur Shastri

- The 2nd Prime Minister of India
- Deeply impressed and influenced by Mahatma Gandhi
- Joined the Indian independence movement in the 1920s
- Led the country during the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965
- In 1961, he was appointed as Home Minister, and he appointed the *Committee on Prevention of Corruption*. He created the famous “*Shastri Formula*” which consisted of the language agitations in Assam and Punjab.
- In 1964, he signed an agreement with the Sri Lankan Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike, in concern with the status of Indian Tamils in Ceylon. This agreement is known as Srimavo-Shastri Pact.
- His slogan of “Jai Jawan Jai Kisan” (“Hail the soldier, Hail the farmer”) became very popular during the war. The war formally ended with the Tashkent Agreement on 10 January 1966. Many years later, former Prime Minister A B Vajpayee added “Jai Vigyan” to Shastri’s slogan in order to hail achievements of Indian scientists.
- His vision for self-sufficiency in foodgrains led to sowing the seeds of the Green Revolution, and promotion of the White Revolution.
- Following a train accident at Ariyalur in Tamil Nadu, in which more than 140 people were killed, he resigned as railway minister taking moral responsibility for the incident. Lauding him for his integrity, the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru said that he was accepting his resignation because it would set an example in constitutional propriety, although Shastri was in no way responsible for it.

Mystery Surrounding Shastri’s death

Shastri’s sudden death immediately after signing the Tashkent Pact with Pakistan raised many suspicions. His wife, Lalita Devi, alleged that Shastri was poisoned and the Russian butler serving the Prime Minister was arrested. But he was released later as doctors certified that Shastri died of cardiac arrest. The media circulated a possible conspiracy theory hinting at the involvement of CIA in the death of Shastri. The RTI query posted by author Anuj Dhar was declined by the Prime Minister Office citing a possible souring of diplomatic relations with the US.

Life-lessons from his Life

Protested against the caste system: Since he didn't believe in the caste system (he was a Kayastha from birth), he gave up his surname as a young schoolboy. The title "Shastri" was bestowed on him upon graduating from Kashi Vidyapeeth, as a mark of scholarly achievement.

Patriotic from a young age: As a patriotic young boy, he was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi and his call to join the Non-Cooperation Movement at the young age of 16. In his maiden Independence Day speech in 1964, Shastri told the youth to strive for moral strength and character, "I appeal to our young men to inculcate discipline in themselves discipline and work for the unity and advancement of the nation."

Simple living, high thinking: When he married in 1928, at the insistence of his in-laws to accept dowry, he took a charkha (spinning wheel) and some khadi cloth. Even when he passed away, he reportedly had no property in his name and left behind a few books and a dhoti-kurta. As a child, Shastri is known to have swum across the river to reach school to save his impoverished family money to pay for a boat ride.

A compassionate, forward-thinking leader: He had many pioneering initiatives to his credit, such as using water jets to disperse crowds instead of a lathi-charge and making it possible for women to be appointed as conductors in public transport facilities. He also raised the slogan of "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan" during the Indo-Pakistan war in 1965 and paved the way for India's food self-sufficiency.

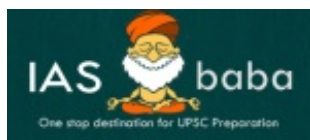
During the short Tenure of Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, India faced two major challenges, the Indo-Pak war which has been discussed above and failed monsoon and drought.

Honesty was always the best policy: Since the children were rarely allowed to use the official car to go to school when their father was Prime Minister, the family decided to buy a Fiat car for Rs. 12,000. A bank loan for Rs. 5,000 was taken, which Shastri's widow had to clear after his sudden death, from his pension. On a visit to a textile mill as Prime Minister, when the owner offered to gift him expensive sarees, Shastri insisted on buying and paying for only those he could afford. He also had an undue promotion for his son overturned.

Quotes (For Ethics paper)

1. The economic issues are most vital for us and it is of the highest importance that we should fight our biggest enemies – Poverty, unemployment
2. India will have to hang down her head in shame if even one person is left who is said in any way to be untouchable.
3. I had always been feeling uncomfortable in my mind about giving advice to others and not acting upon it myself.
4. There has no doubt to be fundamental research in science, but applied research is equally important for new improvements and changes in our techniques.
5. We must fight for peace bravely as we fought in war.

6. There comes a time in the life of every nation when it stands at the crossroads of history and must choose which way to go.
7. We can win respect in the world only if we are strong internally and can banish poverty and unemployment from our country. Above all, we need national unity. Communal, provincial and linguistic conflicts weaken the country. Therefore, we have to forge national unity. I appeal to all to work for national unity and usher in a social revolution to make our country strong. In the ultimate analysis, the strength of the country does not lie in its material wealth alone. It requires people like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Rabindranath Tagore. It requires the force of character and moral strength. I appeal to our young men to inculcate discipline in themselves discipline and work for the unity and advancement of the nation.
8. We must inject new elements in the services. Let us introduce professors, economists, teachers, engineers and others, even outsiders, so that there is some freshness, a real exchange of views, a meeting of different approaches



PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU (PIB) IAS UPSC – 4th October to 11th October – 2020

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ARCHIVES

GS-2

Three Farm Reform Laws Will Change the Fortune of Agriculture In the Country

(Topic: Government schemes and policies to ensure food security)

Context: Three Bills on agriculture reforms were introduced in the Parliament to replace the ordinances issued during the lockdown

- The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020
- The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020
- The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020

What do the ordinances entail?

The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance has following provisions

Opens up agricultural sale and marketing outside the notified Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) mandis for farmers

Removes barriers to inter-State trade

Provides a framework for electronic trading of agricultural produce.

Prohibits State governments from collecting market fee, cess or levy for trade outside the APMC markets.

The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance relates to contract farming. It has following provisions

- Provides framework on trade agreements for the sale and purchase of farm produce.
- The **mutually agreed remunerative price framework** envisaged in the legislation is touted as one that would protect and empower farmers.
- The written farming agreement, entered into prior to the production or rearing of any farm produce, lists the terms and conditions for supply, quality, grade, standards and price of farm produce and services.

The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Ordinance

1. Removes cereals, pulses, oilseeds, edible oils, onion and potatoes from the list of essential commodities. The amendment will **deregulate the production, storage**, movement and distribution of these food commodities.
2. The central government is allowed regulation of supply during war, famine, extraordinary price rise and natural calamity, while providing exemptions for exporters and processors at such times as well.
3. **Imposition of any stock limit on agricultural produce** must be based on price rise. A stock limit may be imposed only if there is a 100% increase in retail price of horticultural produce; and a 50% increase in the retail price of non-perishable agricultural food items

Why are these bills being opposed?

1. Against the Spirit of Cooperative federalism

- Since agriculture and markets are **State** subjects – entry 14 and 28 respectively in List II – the ordinances are being seen as a direct encroachment upon the functions of the States
- The provisions are viewed as against the spirit of cooperative federalism enshrined in the Constitution.
- **Justification by Centre:** The Centre, however, argues that trade and commerce in food items is part of the concurrent list, thus giving it constitutional propriety.

2. End of MSP

- Critics view the dismantling of the monopoly of the APMCs as a sign of ending the assured procurement of food grains at minimum support prices (MSP).
- To the Centre's 'one nation, one market' call, critics have sought 'one nation, one MSP'.
- Critics argue that ensuring a larger number of farmers get the MSP for their produce and addressing weakness in the APMCs, instead of making these State mechanisms redundant is the need of the hour.
- **Justification:**
 - This law nowhere states that the current system of minimum support price (MSP)-based procurement of foodgrains (essentially wheat and paddy) by government agencies would end. Such purchases in state-regulated APMC (agricultural produce market committee) mandis will continue as before. The APMCs wouldn't stop functioning either; nothing prevents farmers from selling their produce or traders and processors from buying in these mandis.
 - All the law does is provide farmers an alternative platform to sell. This could be a factory premise/processing plant, produce collection centre, cold storage, warehouse, silo or even the farmgate. Transactions in such "trade areas" will not be charged APMC market fee or cess. These levies shall apply only in trades that take place within the boundaries of the regulated market yards or mandis set up under the respective state APMC acts.

3. No mechanism for price fixation

- The Price Assurance Bill, while offering protection to farmers against price exploitation, does not prescribe the mechanism for price fixation.
- There is apprehension that the free hand given to private corporate houses could **lead to farmer exploitation**.
- Critics are apprehensive about formal contractual obligations owing to the unorganised nature of the farm sector and **lack of resources for a legal battle** with private corporate entities.

4. Food security undermined

- Easing of regulation of food items would lead to exporters, processors and traders **hoarding farm produce** during the harvest season, when prices are generally lower, and releasing it later when prices increase.
- This could undermine food security since the States would have no information about the availability of stocks within the State.
- Critics anticipate irrational volatility in the prices of essentials and **increased black marketing**.

5. No consultation = Mistrust

- Several reforms at the level of the central government as well as at the State level have been introduced and welcomed by farmers. However, in this particular case, the issue is not about the Bills; it is also about the process of their introduction.
- The government has failed to have or hold any discussion with the various stakeholders including farmers and middlemen.
- This is also true when it comes to consultation with State governments even though the subject of trade and agriculture are part of subjects on the State list. The attempt to pass the Bills without proper consultation adds to the mistrust among various stakeholders including State governments.

6. Entry of two of the biggest corporate groups (Adani and Reliance) in food and agricultural retail

What are the farmers' concerns?

Farmers are apprehensive about getting Minimum Support Price for their produce. Other concerns include the upper hand of agri-businesses and big retailers in negotiations, thus putting farmers at a disadvantage. The benefits for small farmers from companies are likely to reduce the engagement of sponsors with them. The farmers also fear that the companies may dictate prices of the commodities.

What farmers need and are asking for is legally guaranteed remunerative prices, that the government should commit within the same legislation to maximum procurement of various commodities tied with local food schemes, market intervention from the state, agri-credit reforms to benefit small and marginal holders and particular neglected regions, as well as reforms in crop insurance and disaster compensation. It is also important to empower FPOs as enabled players in the market and keep them out of the purview of overzealous regulation.

Cabinet Approves

A. Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of Cybersecurity between India and Japan

- Enhance cooperation in areas of mutual interest, which include inter-alia, capacity building in the area of cyberspace; protection of critical infrastructure; cooperation in emerging technologies; sharing information on cyber security threats/incidents and malicious cyber activities, as well as best practices to counter them; Developing joint mechanisms for practical cooperation to mitigate cyber threats to the security of Information Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure etc.

- India and Japan commit to an open, interoperable, free, fair, secure and reliable cyberspace environment and to promote the Internet as an engine of innovation, economic growth, and trade and commerce that would be consistent with their respective domestic laws and international obligations, and with their wide-ranging strategic partnership.
- Both sides, through the MoC, affirm cooperation in the international arena including in the United Nations; Discussing and sharing strategies and best practices to promote the integrity of the supply chain of ICT products; Strengthening the security of ICT infrastructure through Government-to-Government and Business-to-Business cooperation; Continuing dialogue and engagement in Internet governance fora, and to support active participation by all the stakeholders of the two countries in these fora.

B. Ratification of seven Persistent Organic Pollutants listed under Stockholm Convention and delegate its powers for future ratifications for streamlining the procedure

The Stockholm Convention is a global treaty to protect human health and environment from POPs, which are identified chemical substances that persist in the environment, bio-accumulate in living organisms, adversely affect human health/ environment and have the property of long-range environmental transport (LRET). Exposure to POPs can lead to cancer, damage to central & peripheral nervous systems, diseases of immune system, reproductive disorders and interference with normal infant and child development.

India had ratified the Stockholm Convention on January 13, 2006 as per Article 25(4), which enabled it to keep itself in a default “opt-out” position such that amendments in various Annexes of the convention cannot be enforced on it unless an instrument of ratification/ acceptance/ approval or accession is explicitly deposited with UN depositary.

Considering its commitment towards providing safe environment and addressing human health risks, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) had notified the ‘Regulation of Persistent Organic Pollutants Rules, on March 5, 2018 under the provisions of **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**. The regulation inter alia prohibited the manufacture, trade, use, import and export seven chemicals namely (i) Chlordane, (ii) Hexabromobiphenyl, (iii) Hexabromodiphenyl ether and Heptabromodiphenylether (Commercial octa-BDE), (iv) Tetrabromodiphenyl ether and Pentabromodiphenyl ether (Commercial penta-BDE), (v) Pentachlorobenzene, (vi) Hexabromocyclododecane, and (vii) Hexachlorobutadiene, which were already listed as POPs under Stockholm Convention.

The Cabinet’s approval for ratification of POPs demonstrates India’s commitment to meet its international obligations with regard to protection of environment and human health. It also indicates the resolve of the Government to take action on POPs by implementing control measures, develop and implement action plans for

unintentionally produced chemicals, develop inventories of the chemicals' stockpiles and review as well as update its National Implementation Plan (NIP). The ratification process would enable India to access Global Environment Facility (GEF) financial resources in updating the NIP.

C. Memorandum of Understanding between Zoological Survey of India and International Barcode of Life, a Canadian not-for-profit corporation

- ZSI and iBOL have come together for further efforts in DNA barcoding, a methodology for rapidly and accurately identifying species by sequencing a short segment of standardized gene regions and comparing individual sequences to a reference database.
- iBOL is a research alliance involving nations that have committed both human and financial resources to enable expansion of the global reference database, the development of informatics platforms, and/or the analytical protocols needed to use the reference library to inventory, assess, and describe biodiversity.
- The MoU will enable ZSI to participate at the Global level programmes like Bioscan and Planetary Biodiversity Mission.

D. Natural Gas Marketing Reforms

Objective: to prescribe standard procedure to discover market price of gas to be sold in the market by gas producers, through a transparent and competitive process, permit Affiliates to participate in bidding process for sale of gas and allow marketing freedom to certain Field Development Plans (FDPs) where Production Sharing Contracts already provide pricing **freedom**.

Aim: The policy aims to provide standard procedure for sale of natural gas in a transparent and competitive manner to discover market price by issuing guidelines for sale by contractor through e-bidding. This will bring uniformity in the bidding process across the various contractual regimes and policies to avoid ambiguity and contribute towards ease of doing business.

- The policy has also permitted Affiliate companies to participate in the bidding process in view of the open, transparent and electronic bidding. This will facilitate and promote more competition in marketing of gas. However, rebidding will have to be done in case only affiliates participate, and there are no other bidders.
- The policy will also grant marketing freedom to the Field Development Plans (FDPs) of those Blocks in which Production Sharing Contracts already provide pricing freedom.

These reforms in gas sector will further deepen and spur the economic activities in the following areas:

- The whole eco-system of policies relating to production, infrastructure and marketing of natural gas has been made more transparent with a focus on ease of doing business.

- These reforms will prove very significant for Atmanirbhar Bharat by encouraging investments in the domestic production of natural gas and reducing import dependence.
 - These reforms will prove to be another milestone in moving towards a gas based economy by encouraging investments.
 - The increased gas production consumption will help in improvement of environment.
 - These reforms will also help in creating employment opportunities in the gas consuming sectors including MSMEs.
 - The domestic production will further help in increasing investment in the downstream industries such as City Gas Distribution and related industries.
-

GS-3

New Labour Codes

(Topic: Economy)

Context: The government has introduced new versions of three labour codes in Lok Sabha which are

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

Do You Know?

- These three bills have been re-introduced after incorporating 174 out of 233 recommendations given by Standing Committees
- These three bills are part of four labour code envisaged incorporating 29 labour laws. First code on wages has already been enacted.

What are the key proposals?

In the Industrial Relations Code Bill, 2020, the government has proposed to

- New conditions for legal strike – no person employed in an industrial establishment shall go on strike without a 60-day notice and during the pendency of proceedings before a Tribunal and sixty days after the conclusion of such proceedings. Earlier such restrictions applied only to public utility services.
- Raised the threshold for requirement of a standing order – rules of conduct for workmen employed in industrial establishments – from the existing 100 to 300 workers

- Reskilling Fund – To set up a re-skilling fund for training of retrenched workers with contribution of the employer of an amount equal to 15 days last drawn by the worker.

The Social Security Code has following provisions

- National Social Security Board which shall recommend to the central government for formulating suitable schemes for different sections of unorganised workers, gig workers and platform workers
- No more ambiguities: The bill has defined various terms like “career centre”, “aggregator”, “gig worker”, “platform worker”, “wage ceiling”, etc.
- Social security for gig workers: Also, aggregators employing gig workers will have to contribute 1-2 per cent of their annual turnover for social security of workers

The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code has the following objectives

- To employ women in all establishments for all types of work. They can also work at night, that is, beyond 7 PM and before 6 AM subject to the conditions relating to safety, holiday, working hours and their consent
- To Promote Formalisation: Issuing of appointment letter mandatorily by the employer of an establishment to promote formalisation in employment
- Inclusion of inter-state migrant workers in the definition of worker: Inter-state migrant workers are defined as the worker who has come on his own from one state and obtained employment in another state, earning up to Rs 18,000 a month.
- The proposed definition makes a distinction from the present definition of only contractual employment.
- Portability Benefits: An Inter-State Migrant Worker has been provided with the portability to avail benefits in the destination State in respect of ration and availing benefits of building and other construction worker cess
- However, the Code has dropped the earlier provision for temporary accommodation for workers near worksites.
- It has though proposed a journey allowance — a lump sum amount of fare to be paid by the employer for to and fro journey of the worker to his/her native place from the place of his/her employment

What are the concerns raised over the new labour codes?

Dilutes rights of Workers: Workers in small establishments (with up to 300 workers) will have their rights watered down with no protection of trade unions, labour laws.

Workers safety safeguards diluted: The new rules will enable companies to introduce arbitrary service conditions for workers.

- **Corporate Friendly:** The new rules provides more flexibility to employers for hiring and firing workers without government permission
- **Restricts Freedom of Speech:** Restrictions on strikes and demonstrations is akin to assault on the freedom of industrial actions.
- **Ambiguity about reskilling Fund:** The Code lacks clarity on the substantive and procedural aspects of reskilling Fund which will fizzle out like the National Renewal Fund in the 1990s
- **Women's Safety:** Allowing women to work during night time inspite of various safeguards imposed may increase their vulnerability to sexual abuse.

India and its Solar Capacity

(Topic: Infrastructure, Energy)

India has become the third-largest solar capacity country in the world and set an ambitious target of 450 GW of renewable capacity by 2030, comprising 300 GW of solar capacity.

The major factor behind the rise of solar deployment is –

- Giga-scale solar manufacturing
- Continuous adoption of innovations to reduce prices

Hence, solar PV manufacturing is one of the strategic sectors announced by the Indian government as part of the post-Covid *Aatmanirbhar* Bharat recovery initiative.

- Efforts are underway to make India a global hub for solar PV manufacturing, and significant giga-factory announcements are being made by local and global firms.
- The Indian government is also coming up with innovative initiatives to promote cutting-edge solar manufacturing in India.

Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Ltd (RUMSL) solar plant

- The plant consists of three solar power generating units that are located on a 500-hectare plot of land inside a 1,500-hectare solar park
- The solar plant was set up by the Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Limited, a joint venture between Madhya Pradesh Urja Vikas Nigam Limited and the Centre's Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI).
- This project will reduce carbon emission equivalent to approx. 15 lakh ton of CO₂ per year, which is equivalent to planting 26 million trees.

World's largest solar tree developed

- Indian Council of Scientific and Industrial Research – Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute (CSIR-CMERI) has developed the World's Largest Solar Tree.

- It is installed at CSIR-CMERI Residential Colony, Durgapur, West Bengal.

Key takeaways

- The installed capacity of the Solar Tree is above 11.5 kilowatts peak (kWp).
- It has the annual capacity to generate 12,000-14,000 units of Clean and Green Power.
- There are a total of 35 Solar PV Panels in each tree with a capacity of 330 wp each.
- The inclination of the arms holding the Solar PV Panels are flexible and can be adjusted as per requirement.
- This feature is not available in Roof-Mounted Solar facilities.
- Each Solar Tree will cost Rs 7.5 lakhs.
- The interested MSMEs can align their Business Model with the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evem Utthan Mahabhiyan (PM KUSUM) Scheme for farmers, for developing a Renewable Energy based Energy Grid.

PM-KUSUM Scheme

- Ministry- Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE).
- The scheme aims to add solar and other renewable capacity of 25,750 MW by 2022.
- It provides for installation of solar pumps, grid connected renewable power plants and solarization of existing grid-connected agricultural pumps.
- The Scheme is being implemented through State Government Agencies.
- The PM KUSUM scheme has three components.
- Component-A- 10,000 megawatts (MW) of decentralised ground mounted grid-connected renewable power plants.
- Component-B- installation of 17.50 lakh standalone solar powered agriculture pumps and
- Component-C- solarisation of 10 lakh grid-connected solar powered agriculture pumps.

India's Solar Energy Push

- **Energy Security:** India energy demands is largely fulfilled by non-renewable source of energy
- **Environmental Sustainability:** India's large part of energy demand is fulfilled by thermal energy largely dependent on fossil fuels which causes pollution. Solar energy is clean form of energy resource, which can be a substitute.
- India being **Tropical Country**, there is abundance of free solar energy in almost all parts of country.
- **Changed Developmental Strategy:** Solar energy is being viewed as a path for self-reliant industrialisation

- **Green energy in rural area** - This is crucial for agri – business in farms for running irrigation, greenhouses, and crop and hay dryers, making agriculture risk – free.

Challenges w.r.t developing Solar Energy

- Low domestic cell manufacturing capacity at 3.1 GW last year
- Heavy reliance on China for importing of photovoltaic cells, modules and associated equipment
- Projected addition of capacity in a COVID-19 affected future could fall short of stated goals (100 GW by 2022)
- India's domestic content requirement clause is facing legal challenge at WTO.
- Land availability in India for solar plant is less due to high population density.
- India's solar waste is estimated to be around 1.8 million by 2050 also needs to be tackled.
- Challenges with respect to importing critical raw materials such as polysilicon

Major Initiatives

A. 'One Sun One World One Grid' (OSOWOG) initiative proposed by India

OSOWOG initiative was recently proposed by India to set up a framework for facilitating global cooperation which aims at building a global ecosystem of interconnected renewable energy resources that can be easily shared.

Key takeaways

- Parent Body: The Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)
- Objective: To build global consensus about sharing solar resources among more than 140 countries of West Asia and South-East Asia.
- This grid shall be interconnected with the African power pools also at the later stage.
- Proposals are invited from consulting firms for making a long-term OSOWOG road map, and identify two or three cross-border projects that can be initiated within one or two years.

Phase I: The first phase deals with the Middle East—South Asia—South East Asia (MESASEA) interconnection for sharing green energy sources such as solar for meeting electricity needs including peak demand.

- Fostering cross-border energy trade is an important part of Modi's South Asia-focused neighbourhood-first policy.
- India has been supplying power to Bangladesh and Nepal and has been championing a South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) electricity grid minus Pakistan to meet electricity demand in the region.
- The initial plans also involve setting up an under-sea link to connect with Oman in the West.

Phase II: MESASEA grid getting interconnected with the African power pools

Phase III: Global interconnection

Benefits

- Creation of regional and international interconnected green grids can enable sharing of renewable energy across international borders and also balancing. Such grids should work in tandem with the existing grids and will not require parallel grid infrastructure, thus requiring only incremental investment.
- An interconnected grid would help all the participating entities in attracting investments in renewable energy sources as well as utilizing skills, technology and finances.
- Resulting economic benefits would positively impact poverty alleviation and support in mitigating water, sanitation, food and other socioeconomic challenges.
- The proposed integration would lead to reduced project costs, higher efficiencies and increased asset utilization for all the participating entities

B. International Solar Alliance (ISA)

- It is a treaty-based inter-governmental Organisation.
- It aims to deploy over 1,000 GW of solar generation capacity globally.
- It aims to mobilise investment of over \$1 trillion by 2030.
- Headquartered: Gurgaon.
- It was established following the Paris Declaration as an alliance dedicated to the promotion of solar energy among its member countries.

Attempt the Essay: The Sun Never Sets

What does the Sun, the primary source of energy that sustains life on earth, hold for our future?

(Topic: Space, Science and Technology)

Scientists may soon be able to study the future magnetic activity of the sun with the understanding of its behaviour in the past. A magnetic field map corresponding to the first half of the last century has been developed recently that can immensely improve that understanding.

Just like in case of climate studies, astronomers need information of the behaviour of the Sun in the past to predict how it will behave in the future. A critical parameter of the behaviour is the magnetic field which keeps varying and governs the long-time changes in the Sun.

Technology today has enabled direct observations of magnetic field, but there are no direct observations of magnetic field recorded before 1960s.

- Recently, Indian researchers have digitised the films and photographs of the sun taken at multiple wavelengths and corresponding to the past century
- Scientists from the Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES) used this digitised data which they called the proxy data to develop the first magnetic field map of the Sun for the period 1915-1965.
- The map of this period corresponding to the solar cycles 15 -19 will help us understand the magnetic variability and predict changes in the Sun in the future.

Why is it important?

- The digital data from KoSO is unique because this is the only observatory in the globe which provides the long-term uniform observations of the Sun in terms of the location and strength of its magnetic field as well as polarity through Ca II K and H alpha lines for more than a century. More than 15,000 digitised images of the Sun has helped develop the magnetic field map of the period.
- The map will also help study with precision polar reversal, a unique feature of the Sun, which occurs every 11 years and shows distinct pattern that repeats over time.

Prelims oriented News

International Day of the Girl: 11th October, 2020; Theme: My voice, our equal future

2nd World Cotton Day: 7th October, 2020

- Now India's premium Cotton would be known as 'Kasturi Cotton' in the world cotton Trade. The Kasturi Cotton brand will represent Whiteness, Brightness, Softness, Purity, Luster, Uniqueness and Indianness.
- Cotton is one of the principal commercial crops of India and it provides livelihood to about 6.00 million cotton farmers. India is the 2nd largest cotton producer and the largest consumer of cotton in the world. India produces about 6.00 Million tons of cotton every year which is about 23% of the world cotton. India produces about 51% of the total organic cotton production of the world, which demonstrates India's effort towards sustainability.
- To ensure sustainability, integrity and end-to-end traceability of the organic products, a certification system based on comparable international standards verified through internationally acceptable institutional system is required to be put in place. Accordingly, Ministry of Textiles through APEDA under Ministry of Commerce and Industry has prescribed a certification system for organic Cotton which will be introduced in phases in the entire textile value chain. Similarly, prescribing a certification system for non-organic Cotton has also been taken up with APEDA so that usages of cotton can be suitably augmented.

SVAMITVA Scheme: Launch of physical distribution of Property Cards; the beneficiaries will have a right, a legal document of owning their houses. The scheme is going to bring historical changes to the villages in the country.

- It is a collaborative effort of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, State Panchayati Raj Departments, State Revenue Departments and Survey of India.
- It is currently being implemented in six states –
 - Haryana
 - Karnataka
 - Madhya Pradesh
 - Maharashtra
 - Uttar Pradesh
 - Uttarakhand.
- It aims to provide an integrated property validation solution for rural India for setting the boundaries of the rural lands.
- Latest drone survey technology shall be used for mapping of rural housing land.
- This scheme will help in streamlining planning and revenue collection in rural areas.
- This will also help in resolving property related disputes.
- **The scheme will enable creation of better-quality Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDs).**

Nana ji Deshmukh – “*when the people of the village remain trapped in disputes, neither they will be able to develop themselves nor the society*”.

Prime Minister of Israel: H.E. Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu

- PM Modi and PM Benjamin assessed the progress in bilateral cooperation in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, especially in the fields of research, field trials of diagnostic tools and vaccine development.
- They agreed on the importance of close cooperation in these important areas not only for the benefit of the people of the two countries but also for the greater good of humanity.
- They also reviewed ongoing cooperation in the areas of water and agriculture, health, trade, and start-up and innovation, and discussed further deepening of these ties.

Must Read: Relations Between UAE and Israel

India Wildlife Week

- Wildlife Week is annually celebrated across India between 2nd to 8th October with an aim to protect and preserve the flora and fauna of India.
- The first Wildlife Week was observed in 1957.

- Theme of 2020: RoaR (Roar and Revive) – Exploring Human-Animal Relationships

Successful Flight Test of SMART

- Supersonic Missile Assisted Release of Torpedo (SMART) has been successfully flight tested.
- A missile assisted release of lightweight Anti-Submarine Torpedo System for Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) operations far beyond Torpedo range. This launch and demonstration is significant in establishing Anti-Submarine warfare capabilities.
- The tracking stations (Radars, Electro Optical Systems) along the coast and the telemetry stations including down range ships monitored all the events. All the mission objectives including missile flight upto the range and altitude, separation of the nose cone, release of Torpedo and deployment of Velocity Reduction Mechanism (VRM) have been met perfectly.

Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Scheme

- API integration between PM SVANidhi and SBI portal launched – to ease process of receiving and processing loan applications
- More than 20.50 Lakh Loan Applications received so far under PM SVANidhi Scheme – Over 7.85 Lakh Loans Sanctioned

About:

- Launched for providing affordable working capital loan to street vendors to resume their livelihoods that have been adversely affected due to Covid-19 lockdown. This scheme targets to benefit over 50 lakh Street Vendors who had been vending on or before 24 March, 2020, in urban areas including those from surrounding peri-urban/rural areas.
- Under the Scheme, the vendors can avail a working capital loan of up to Rs. 10,000, which is repayable in monthly instalments in the tenure of one year.
- On timely/ early repayment of the loan, an interest subsidy @ 7% per annum will be credited to the bank accounts of beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer on quarterly basis.
- There will be no penalty on early repayment of loan.
- The scheme promotes digital transactions through cash-back incentives up to an amount of Rs. 100 per month. The vendors can achieve their ambition of going up the economic ladder by availing the facility of enhancement of the credit limit on timely/ early repayment of loan.

International Blue Flag Certification

- 8 beaches of India, spread across five states and two union territories, have been awarded the “BLUE FLAG” by an International Jury comprising of eminent members viz UNEP, UNWTO, FEE, IUCN.

- The beaches that have been awarded the ‘BLUE FLAG’ are Shivrajpur (Dwarka-Gujarat), Ghoghla (Diu), Kasarkod and Padubidri (Karnataka), Kappad (Kerala), Rushikonda (AP), Golden (Puri-Odisha) and Radhanagar (A&N Islands).
- India has also been awarded a 3rd Prize by the International Jury under the “International Best Practices” for pollution control in coastal regions.

Launch of Report by CZA-TERI: Economic valuation of ecosystem services

- The report highlights the importance of habitats such as zoos to human wellbeing and the need of replication across India.
- The study first of its kind in India and perhaps the entire World, pegs the total annual economic value of the ecosystem services (biodiversity conservation, employment generation, carbon sequestration, education and research, recreational and cultural) at around 423 crore (2019-20) whereas, the total value of the one-time cost of services such as carbon storage and land value provided by the zoo is estimated to be around 55,000 crore.

Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)

- In August, 2019, Government of India launched Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM).
- JJM aims at providing potable water at service level of 55 litre per capita per day (lpcd) to every rural household through Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) by 2024.
- The fund sharing pattern between the Centre and states is 90:10 for Himalayan and North-Eastern States, 50:50 for other states, and 100% for Union Territories.
- Jal Jeevan Mission adopts a bottom to top approach, where the users and Paani Samitis (Water Committees) in the villages envision the whole project from its implementation to maintenance and operation.
- The mission has also ensured that at least 50% of the members of the water committee would be women.

‘Margadarshika for Gram Panchayats and Paani Samitis under Jal Jeevan Mission’ (Guidelines for the Village Panchayats and Water Committees)

- Referring to the Margadarshika, it was highlighted that they are equally important for the Gram Panchayats, people living in rural areas and for the Government machinery.
- The Mardarshika Guidelines will guide the members of the Water Committee and Gram Panchayats in taking the right decisions.
- A special 100-day campaign is being launched on 2nd Oct this year under Jal Jeevan Mission to ensure drinking water connection to every school and Anganwadi in the country.

Do you know?

A.BIS Draft Standard for Drinking Water: ‘Drinking water supply quality management system — requirements for piped drinking water supply service’.

- It outlines the process of water supply, from raw water sources to household taps.
- The draft standard is expected to make the process of piped water supply more uniform.
- It has been developed keeping in view the Centre's Jal Jeevan Mission.

The Bureau of Indian Standards

- It is the national Standards Body of India.
- Ministry: Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution
- Act: Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 1986

B. Every village will prepare a Village Action Plan (VAP) which will have three components:

- Water source and its maintenance
- Water supply and
- Grey-water (domestic wastewater) management

RAISE 2020

A global meeting of minds to exchange ideas and chart a course for using AI for social transformation, inclusion and empowerment in areas like Healthcare, Agriculture, Education and Smart Mobility, among other sectors.

- AI will dominate the core of the next exponential enterprises, rewriting the fundamentals of the establishment and this is the opportunity to capture. We are seeing that AI-first businesses are becoming monopolies
- Financial services have been rule-based till date. However, financial institutions are using AI based technologies as 'Decision Making Support', which is helping us to really fast-pace the whole process.
- UIDAI is developing a face authentication system which will be available to all the Aadhaar holders. The goal is to make it extremely secure and make it available for all smartphone users in the country. The system can then be used by other financial service providers to strengthen their own AI ecosystem.
- From a data standpoint, the key aspects for developing a robust AI framework are: Legality, efficiency and transparency of data sourcing, ensuring integrity, privacy and confidentiality of the data collected, responsible and accountable data access, and putting in place an organized data monetization framework.
- AI research is dominated almost entirely by men. Globally, only 22% of AI professionals are women. Now, after COVID 19 has led to rapid digitization, the need to focus on digital inclusion has never been clearer
- Disabilities can be permanent, temporary or situational. By innovating for people with disabilities, we are innovating for us all. By ensuring that technology fulfils its promise to address the broadest societal needs, we can empower everyone – not just individuals with disabilities – to achieve more.

- We need to focus our efforts on developing AI that makes this world more inclusive, accessible and affordable for the especially-abled
- The combination of AI and Data can deliver 10% of our USD 10 trillion economy aspiration, or USD 500 billion in value over the next 4-5 years. India is perhaps the only country in the world where the opportunity for AI in agriculture is as large as it is in banking

According to independent studies, AI has the potential to raise India's annual growth rate by 1.3% and add USD 957 billion to the country's economy by 2035. At a global level, AI is expected to unlock USD 15.7 trillion in productivity by 2030.

National Artificial Intelligence Portal

- It has been jointly developed by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM).
- It will work as a one stop digital platform for sharing of resources such as articles, startups, investment funds in AI etc.

Responsible Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Youth:

- By the Ministry of Electronics and IT
- It is designed to reach out to students from **Government schools** pan India and provide them with an opportunity to become part of the **skilled workforce** in an **inclusive manner**.
- It aims to help **reduce the skill gap**, while enabling youth to **create** meaningful **social impact solutions**.
- It also intends to provide a **platform** for relevant **AI skill-sets** and **access** to required **AI tool-sets** to make youth digitally ready for the future.
- It is open to students of class 8th to class 12th from Central and State government-run schools (including KVS, NVS, JNV) from across the country.
- It will be implemented in a **phase-wise manner**.
- In its first phase, each State will nominate 10 teachers as per the eligibility criteria.

India joins Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI)

- India joined the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI or Gee-Pay) as a founding member to support the responsible and human-centric development and use of Artificial
- It is an international and multi-stakeholder initiative to guide the responsible development and use of AI taking into account human rights, inclusion, diversity, innovation, and economic growth.

- This is also a first initiative of its type which involves better understanding of the challenges and opportunities around AI using the experience and diversity of participating countries.
- It will be supported by a Secretariat.
- It will be hosted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris, as well as by two Centers of Expertise- one each in Montreal and Paris.

Must Read:

Regulating Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence: The Way Ahead

SOLVE:

1. How can artificial intelligence and machine learning techniques help in improving e-governance? Illustrate with the help of suitable examples.
2. What is Artificial Intelligence (AI)? What are its applications? Is it a potential threat to humanity? Examine.

Person in News

Jayaprakash Narayan

Part of the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS)

Jayaprakash Narayan (JP), whose 117th birth anniversary falls on October 11, was among the twelve apostles of the Mahatma and had been a front-soldier during the Indian freedom struggle. In this fight, JP imbibed a combination of ahimsa and aggression.

His call for ‘sampoorna kranti’ or total revolution to fight against rampant corruption, unemployment and systematic weakening of democratic institutions back in 1974, and the subsequent events, led to the imposition of the infamous Emergency. It eventually paved the way for a realignment of political forces in the country and gave a new direction to the politics of the country, with far-reaching ramifications.

He firmly believed that youngsters should be in the forefront of changing the system. Those entrenched in power, the status quoists, would naturally resist any change, but only the energy and force of youth can bring about revolutionary transformation – this was his firm belief.

And that’s precisely what happened in the seventies. After blessing the Nav Nirman Andolan in Gujarat, where people had risen against the corrupt state government, JP mobilised students in Bihar to fight against authoritarianism and corruption. He had such a mesmerising influence on the political scene that under his mentorship a host of splinter parties of the Congress, like Congress (O), Jana Sangh and Swatantra Party,

and other socialists came together to form the Janata Party. He could have easily occupied the top post during the Janata regime. Although people clamoured for his leadership, he said that power was not his aim.

He participated in the freedom struggle and led the Quit India movement in 1942 in the absence of senior leaders. He remained detached from electoral politics after Independence, but as such was not indifferent to politics. He also took active part in Vinoba Bhave's Bhoodan movement.

The legacy of JP is akin to that of the Mahatma and echoes him on issues that have cropped up in the post-Gandhi era. All of them are topical and in JP's own words:

Freedom

"Freedom became one of the beacon lights of my life and it has remained so ever since... Above all it meant freedom of the human personality, freedom of the mind, freedom of the spirit. This freedom has become a passion of my life and I shall not see it compromised for food, for security, for prosperity, for the glory of the state or for anything else."

Democracy

"India's democracy is to rise storey by storey from the foundation, consisting of self-governing, self-sufficient, agro-industrial, urbo-rural local communities — gram sabha, panchayat samiti and zilla parishad—that would form the base of Vidhan Sabhas and the Lok Sabha. These politico-economic institutions will regulate the use of natural resources for the good of the community and the nation.

Development

"Idea of development envisages independent India as sui generis, a society unlike any other, in a class of its own that would not follow the western pattern of mega industrialisation, urbanisation and individuation. India's would be agro-based people's economy that would chart out a distinct course in economic growth, which would be need-based, human-scale and balanced while conserving nature and livelihoods.

Such a 'development' process would be democratic and decentralised. The best development model for India is diversified, democratic decentralised and value-added agriculture as the root, manufacturing small/medium industries as trunk and branches and widespread service sector as a canopy. The almost universal tendency for a centralised political, economic model, and social system that is associated with both of them should be abandoned."

Communalism

“Although almost every religious community had its own brand of communalism, Hindu communalism was more pernicious than the others because Hindu communalism can easily masquerade as Indian nationalism and denounce all opposition to it as being anti-national.”

Hindutva

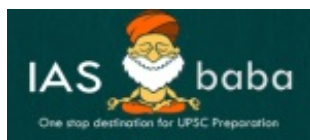
“Those who attempt to equate India with Hindus and Indian history with Hindu history are only detracting from the greatness of India and the glory of Indian history and civilisation. Such person, paradoxical though this may seem, are in reality the enemies of Hinduism itself and the Hindus. Not only do they degrade the noble religion and destroy its catholicity and spirit of tolerance and harmony, but they also weaken and sunder the fabric of the nation, of which Hindus form such a vast majority.”

Hindu Rashtra

“In ‘the long struggle for national freedom there emerged a clear enough concept of a single, composite, non-sectarian Indian nationhood’. All those who spoke about divisive and sectarian nationalism were therefore outside the pale of this nationalism, evolved during the freedom struggle. The hostile and alienating nationalism we hear about today is antithetical to the ethos of freedom struggle and against the belief of all those who helped it evolve.”

Questions

1. “JP was an embodiment of freedom, quest for human dignity and the expression of true democracy.” Explain the role of JP in the nation building.
2. What are the events/causes that led to the JP Movement? Highlight the role played by JP during the movement.
3. “Despite being a huge mass movement that virtually shook the roots of the constitutional principles, JP movement is considered as a flawed movement.” Critically examine the JP movement and its flaws.
4. “Emergency imposed during the 1975 is seen as a dark period in the history of post-independent India.” Give a critical account on the outcomes of emergency and what are the lessons that we have learnt from the 40 years of emergency.



PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU (PIB) IAS UPSC – 12th October to 18th October – 2020



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Date October 23, 2020

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ARCHIVES

GS-2

Announcement of measures of Rs 73,000 crore to stimulate consumer spending in the economy in an effort to fight the slowdown due to COVID-19 pandemic

(Topic: Government schemes and policies to boost the economy)

The understanding-

- Indications are that savings of government and organised sector employees have increased and we want to incentivise such people to boost demand for the benefit of the less fortunate.
- If demand goes up based on the stimulus measures announced today, it will have an impact on those people who have been affected by COVID-19 and are desperately looking for demand to keep their business going.

- Today's solution should not cause tomorrow's problem. The Government does not want to burden the common citizen with future inflation and also not put the Government debt on an unsustainable path.

The proposals presented by the Finance Minister are designed to stimulate spending in a fiscally prudent manner as some of the proposals are for advancing or front-loading of expenditure with offsetting changes later while others are directly linked to increase in GDP.

Consumer Spending

Leave Travel Concession (LTC) Cash Voucher Scheme: The biggest incentive for employees to avail the LTC Cash Voucher Scheme is that in a four-year block ending in 2021, the LTC not availed will lapse, instead, this will encourage employees to avail of this facility to buy goods which can help their families.

Special Festival Advance Scheme: A Special Festival Advance Scheme for non-gazetted employees, as well as for gazetted employees too, is being revived as a one-time measure to stimulate demand.

Capital Expenditure

- **Special Assistance to the States:** Money spent on infrastructure and asset creation has a multiplier effect on the economy. It not only improves current GDP but also future GDP. The Government wants to give a new thrust to Capital Expenditure of both States and Centre.
- **Enhanced Budget Provisions:** Additional budget of Rs. 25,000 crore, in addition to Rs. 4.13 lakh crore given in Union Budget 2020, is being provided for Capital Expenditure on roads, defence, water supply, urban development and domestically produced capital equipment.

NITI Aayog Announces Governing Structure of India Energy Modelling Forum

(Topic: International organisations)

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.

Part of the Sustainable Growth pillar of the US–India Strategic Energy Partnership (SEP), IEMF 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 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, and comprise senior officials from the ministries of petroleum and natural gas; power; new and renewable energy; coal; environment, forest and climate change; and department of science and technology. This committee will review the studies/modelling activities and provide directions and new areas of research.
- The steering committee will shortlist policy issues to be taken up for study and might form various taskforces depending on the specific studies/modelling exercises to be carried out.

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.

5th Meeting of the India-Mexico Bilateral High Level Group on Trade, Investment and Cooperation

(Topic: India and other countries)

Both sides discussed a number of bilateral ongoing and outstanding issues, ranging from Audio-visual Co-production, Bilateral Investment Treaty, market access for agricultural products, a cooperation framework on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) & Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) measures between the two countries, co-operation in the Intellectual Property Rights, and exploring ways to promote tourism and people-to-people contact between India and Mexico.

Two business to business MoUs were signed, to foster the cooperation in the respective domains.

- A Memorandum of Understanding between the Electronics & Computer Software Export Promotion Council (ESC) of India and the Mexican Chamber of Electronics, Telecommunications and Information Technologies (CANIETI) was signed.
- A Memorandum of Understanding between the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and the Mexican Business Council of Foreign Trade, Investment and Technology (COMCE) for promoting the development of business relations between India and Mexico was also signed.

They also agreed to expand and diversify the bilateral trade relationship to tap the potential of the complementarities between India and Mexico through enhanced cooperation in pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, healthcare, agro-products, fisheries, food processing and aerospace industry etc. A 'Joint Statement' after the successful conclusion of the meeting was issued.

Cabinet approves Rs. 5718 crore World Bank aided project STARS

(Topic International organization and India)

The STARS project seeks to support the states in developing, implementing, evaluating and improving interventions with direct linkages to improved education outcomes and school to work transition strategies for improved labour market outcomes. The overall focus and components of the STARS project are aligned with the objectives of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 of Quality Based Learning Outcomes.

About the project

- Implementation of the **Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States** (STARS) project with a total project cost of Rs 5718 crore with the financial support of World Bank amounting to US \$ 500 million (approximately Rs. 3700 crore).
- STARS project would be implemented as a new Centrally Sponsored Scheme under Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education. (MOE)
- Setting up and support to the National Assessment Centre, PARAKH as an independent and autonomous institution under Department of School Education and Literacy, MOE.
- The project covers 6 States namely Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala and Odisha.

The Project envisions improving the overall monitoring and measurement activities in the Indian School Education System through interventions in selected states. The project shifts focus from the provision of inputs and maintaining of outputs to actual outcomes by linking the receipt and disbursement of funds to these outcomes.

The STARS Project has two major components:

1) At the national level, the project envisages the following interventions which will benefit all states and UTs:

- To strengthen MOE's national data systems to capture robust and authentic data on retention, transition and completion rates of students.
- To support MOE in improving states PGI scores by incentivizing states governance reform agenda through SIG (State Incentive Grants).

- To support the strengthening of learning assessment systems.
- To support MOE's efforts, establish a National Assessment Center (PARAKH) – to leverage the experiences of states selected for the operation by collecting, curating and sharing these experiences with other states through online portals (e.g. Shagun and DIKSHA), social and other media engagement, technical workshops, state visits and conferences.
- Further, the STARS project includes a Contingency Emergency Response Component (CERC) under the National Component which would enable it to be more responsive to any natural, man-made and health disasters. It will help the government respond to situations leading to loss of learning such as school closures/infrastructure damage, inadequate facilities and use technology for facilitating remote learning etc. The CERC component would facilitate the rapid re-categorization of financing and the utilization of streamlined financing request procedures.

2) At the State level, the project envisages:

- Strengthening Early Childhood Education and Foundational Learning
- Improving Learning Assessment Systems
- Strengthening classroom instruction and remediation through teacher development and school leadership
- Governance and Decentralized Management for Improved Service Delivery.
- Strengthening Vocational education in schools through mainstreaming, career guidance and counselling, internships and coverage of out of school children

The STARS project also aims to focus on initiatives of PM e-Vidya, Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Mission and National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education as part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.

Some of the measurable outcomes of the project are –

- Increase in students achieving minimum proficiency in grade 3 language in selected states,
- Improvement in secondary school completion rate,
- Improvement in governance index scores,
- Strengthened learning assessment systems,
- Partnerships developed to facilitate cross-learning between states
- Improvement in the State level service delivery such as Strengthening planning and management capacities for decentralized management by training of BRCs and CRCs, Strengthened school management by training of Head Teachers and Principals for improved education service delivery.

Prelims-oriented News

Prime Minister of New Zealand: Jacinda Ardern

Zozila Tunnel – the longest tunnel road in Asia

13th October: Philately Day; marks the collection, appreciation and research activities on stamps and other philatelic products. Philately is the study of postage stamps and postal history.

15th October: Mahila Kisan Diwas

Kamdhenu Deepawali Abhiyan – Promoting extensive use of cow-dung/Panchgavya products this Diwali Festival

SLINEX-20: Indian Navy – Sri Lanka Navy Maritime Exercise

BrahMos Supersonic Cruise Missile Successfully Test Fired

- BrahMos, the supersonic cruise missile was successfully test fired, hitting a target in the Arabian Sea. The missile hit the target successfully with pin-point accuracy after performing high-level and extremely complex manoeuvres.
- BrahMos as 'prime strike weapon' will ensure the warship's invincibility by engaging naval surface targets at long ranges, thus making the destroyer another lethal platform of Indian Navy. The highly versatile BrahMos has been jointly designed, developed and produced by India and Russia.
- In the last few weeks, India has test fired a number of missiles including a new version of the surface-to-surface supersonic cruise missile BrahMos and anti-radiation missile Rudram-1.
- The original 290-km range BrahMos has already been deployed in Ladakh as well as Arunachal Pradesh during the ongoing military confrontation with China.

Exercise Suraksha Kavach- Joint Anti-Terrorist Exercise By Army and Maharashtra Police

The aim of the exercise was to harmonize the drills and procedures of both Army and Police for activating anti-terrorist Quick Reaction Teams (QRTs) to counter any terrorist actions in Pune.

Launch of 'KAPILA' Kalam Program for Intellectual Property Literacy and Awareness campaign:

- On the 89th birth anniversary of former President and Scientist Late Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam
- India has a proud history of Nalanda and Takshila Universities so we already had the intellectual property inherited within our culture. India has to again lead the world as Vishwaguru in the field of patents
- For India to become a \$5 trillion economy, we have to be more aware of protecting intellectual property.

Buldhana Pattern of water conservation gets national recognition

- NITI Aayog is formulating National Policy on water conservation under 'Buldhana Pattern'
- Synchronization of national highway construction and water conservation was achieved for the first time in Buldhana district, by using soil from the water bodies, nallas and rivers. This consequently lead to the increase in capacity of water storage across the water-bodies in Buldhana district and it came to be known as 'Buldhana Pattern'.
- 'Tamswada Pattern' of water conservation project taken up in Nagpur and Wardha district in which rain water harvesting, conservation and groundwater recharge works were done in order to increase the water storage capacity of natural water bodies situated in these two districts of Eastern Vidarbha.

Aquaponics – Type of Agriculture: An emerging technique in which both fishes as well as the plants are grown in an integrated manner. The fish waste provides fertilizer for growing plants. The plants absorb nutrients and filter the water. This filtered water is used to replenish the fish tank.

- This is an environment friendly technique.
- Help the farmer in increasing the productivity of his land and also augment his income

Nirbadh initiative of EPFO: To further enhance ease of living experience for its members, EPFO has recently launched WhatsApp based helpline-cum-grievance redressal mechanism, under its series of Nirbadh initiatives aimed at ensuring seamless and un-interrupted service delivery to subscribers during COVID-19 pandemic.

Dust can reduce the effect of nuclear weapons: Dr Meera Chadha from Netaji Subhas Institute of Technology, New Delhi – Her recent study published in the 'Proceedings of Royal Society A, London' illustrates the reduction in energy released and damage radius from an intense explosion (nuclear explosion in particular) by introduction of dust particles. She has shown how the blast waves from the explosion decayed in the process.

7th Justice Ministers' Meeting of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO): To be hosted by Union Law Minister Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad

- To deliberate on areas of cooperation
- Creating favourable conditions for resolving disputes
- Implementation of the Action Plan of the Working Groups of Experts on Forensic Activities and Legal Service

ADB, India sign

1. **\$270 million loan** to develop water supply and integrated storm water and sewage management infrastructure and strengthen capacities of urban local bodies (ULBs) for improved service delivery in the state of Madhya Pradesh.

2. **\$300 Million Loan to Develop Rajasthan's Secondary Towns** – to finance inclusive and sustainable water supply, sanitation infrastructure and services, and strengthen the institutional capacity of the local governments

Cabinet approves MoU between India and Australia: For collaboration in capacity building, research and development and making impact for sustainable groundwater management

National Supercomputing Mission has been set up to provide necessary computational power to the Academia, Industry, Scientific and Research Community, MSME and the Start-ups to solve India specific grand challenges and complex real life problems in Science and Engineering.

- India set to achieve self-reliance in supercomputing with manufacturing critical components in India
- C-DAC and National Supercomputing Mission Host Institutes sign MOU for establishing Supercomputing Infrastructure in various premier institutions across India
- C-DAC accelerating pace of research and innovation using computational science techniques with manufacturing Critical Supercomputing components in India, is a step towards Atmanirbhar Bharat

India designated Vice-Chair of OECD Working Group on Good Laboratory Practice (GLP)

Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) is a quality system, which has been evolved by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to ensure that safety data generated on various chemicals like industrial chemicals, pharmaceuticals (Human and Veterinary), agrochemicals, cosmetic products, food/ feed additives, and medical devices, etc., can be relied upon by regulatory authorities.

The Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, established the **National GLP Compliance Monitoring Authority (NGCMA)** with the approval of the Union Cabinet on April 24, 2002. NGCMA is the National body which **grants GLP certification to test facilities (TFs)** conducting safety studies on new chemicals of the above-mentioned categories in accordance with OECD Principles of GLP and OECD Council norms. The Grant of the first GLP certificate by NGCMA in 2004 was a milestone.

The non-hazardous nature of chemicals needs to be established through studies and data, which is examined by the regulators of the concerned countries to certify that the use of these chemicals does not pose any hazards to human health and the environment.

On March 3, 2011, India became full adherent to the **Mutual Acceptance of Data (MAD)** in the OECD, which was a historical event. The MAD status has given global recognition to India's non-clinical safety data by tremendously augmenting its credibility and acceptability across the globe. This has not only boosted the confidence

of Indian GLP TFs but also led to removal of technical barriers to trade.

Haryana Government comes up with an innovative solution for Water testing; Launches State of the Art Mobile Water Testing Laboratory Van

The supply of clean and safe water is essential for public health therefore, ensuring supply of water along with regular testing is imperative. The Jal Jeevan Mission of the Ministry of Jal Shakti aims to provide tap water connection to every rural home by 2024. The work under this mission is being done on war footing and the mission gives a lot of emphasis on water quality surveillance and monitoring.

Govt. of Haryana has launched a State of the Art Mobile Water Testing Laboratory Van, fully equipped with multi-parameter system containing analyzers/ sensor/ probes/ instruments meant for water testing. Water Quality in State of Haryana is mainly affected by constituents like total dissolved solids (TDS), Fluoride, nitrate, iron and alkalinity.

- GPS enabled for location tracking and the analyzed sample data can be transmitted to a centralized PHED server via GPRS/ 3G connectivity with power backup.
- It also provides On-site recording and reporting of results through a smart phone or similar device with the ability to send results direct to a web based secure central server.
- This mobile van also has a fully automated sensor-based analysis controlled by centrally commanded software.
- The LED display unit in the mobile lab gives an instant display of the results immediately after analysis.

PM to release commemorative coin of Rs 75 denomination to mark the 75th Anniversary of FAO

India and FAO: The journey of FAO in making the vulnerable classes and masses stronger, economically and nutritionally, has been unparalleled. India has had a historic association with FAO.

- Indian Civil Service Officer Dr. Binay Ranjan Sen was the Director General of FAO during 1956-1967. The World Food Programme, which has won the Nobel Peace Prize 2020, was established during his time.
- India's proposals for the International Year of Pulses in 2016 and the International Year of Millets 2023 have also been endorsed by FAO.

Combating malnutrition

India has rolled out an ambitious POSHAN Abhiyaan targeting over 100 million people with the aim to reduce stunting, undernutrition, anaemia, and low birth weight. Malnutrition is a global problem with two billion people suffering from micronutrient

deficiency. Nearly 45% of deaths among children are linked to malnutrition. Appropriately, it is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the UN.

Aligning with the international priority, the development of nutritionally rich varieties of crops with elevated levels of micronutrients iron, zinc, calcium, total protein, quality of protein with high lysine and tryptophan, anthocyanin, provitamin A, and oleic acid, and reduced level of anti-nutritional factors etc. has been accorded top priority by the government. The National Agricultural Research System under the leadership of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) developed 53 such varieties during the last five years. There was only one biofortified variety developed prior to 2014.

Transforming Indian thali into nutri-thali

The 17 recently developed biofortified varieties of 8 crops to be dedicated to the nation by the Prime Minister will have up to 3.0-fold increase in nutritional value.

- These varieties, along with other food ingredients, will transform the normal Indian thali into nutri-thali. These varieties have been developed by utilizing the local landraces and farmer's varieties. The high zinc rice has been developed from landraces of Assam rice collected from Garo hills and those of finger millets from Gujarat collections of Dang district.
- ICAR has started Nutri-Sensitive Agricultural Resources and Innovations (NARI) programme for promoting family farming linking agriculture to nutrition, nutri-smart villages for enhancing nutritional security and location specific nutrition garden models are being developed and promoted by KVKs to ensure access to locally available, healthy and diversified diet with adequate macro and micronutrients.
- The production of bio-fortified crop varieties will be upscaled and linked with government programmes of mid-day meal, Anganwadi etc. to reduce malnutrition and make India Kuposhan Mukta through naturally enriched food ingredients. This will also usher in higher income of farmers and will open new avenues of entrepreneurship development.

India and France re-elected as President and Co- President of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) at the third assembly of the ISA

New wheat variety helping farmers in a village in Maharashtra double their yield: MACS 6478; The newly developed common wheat or bread wheat, also called high yielding Aestivum, matures in 110 days and is resistant to most races of leaf and stem rust

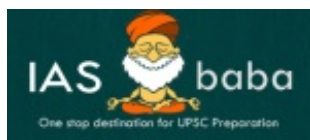
Hydrogen Fuel

- Hydrogen **does not occur free** in nature in useful quantities.
- It can be **made from natural gas** or it can be made **by passing electric current** through water.

- When hydrogen is burned, it only emits water vapour and **carbon dioxide (CO₂) is not produced.**
- It is more efficient than internal combustion engine.
- However, manufacturing hydrogen fuel based vehicle is still expensive.

Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia

- An activist for the Indian independence movement and a socialist political leader
- One of the founders of the Congress Socialist Party and editor of its mouthpiece Congress Socialist
- Wrote his PhD thesis paper on the topic of Salt Taxation in India, focusing on Gandhi's socio-economic theory.
- Also wrote – 'Marx, Gandhi and Socialism', 'Guilty Men of India's Partition', etc.



PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU (PIB) IAS UPSC – 19th October to 25th October – 2020

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Date October 27, 2020

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ARCHIVES

GS-2

Preparation framework for Block and District development plans

(Topic: Cooperative Federalism)

The preparation framework for Block and District development plans has been unveiled. This framework is a step-by-step guide for Block and District Panchayats to formulate plans and will assist planners, concerned stakeholders at appropriate level.

- Promote inclusive development at the block and district levels by focusing on locally available resources, local people's aspirations and priority areas
- Serve as an important tool for all resource persons, stakeholders associated with decentralized planning in intermediate / block and district panchayats
- Play an important role in transforming rural India by providing accelerated, participatory and inclusive growth

The 73rd amendment to the Constitution of India formalized the three-tier Panchayati Raj system –

1. Gram Panchayat at village level
2. Intermediate Panchayat at Block 7a / taluka / mandapal level
3. District Panchayat at district level.

The grants of the 15th Finance Commission are also being distributed to Intermediate and District Panchayats from 2020-21.

- A total of Rs 60750 crore is to be distributed to the Panchayats in the year 2020-21.
- Out of which Rs 45774.20 crore is for Gram Panchayats, Rs 8750.95 crore for intermediate Panchayats and Rs 6224.85 crore for District Panchayats.
- These institutions need to be assisted to in formulation of comprehensive Block Development and District Development Plans for rural areas.

National Deworming Day

(Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health)

According to the World Health Organisation, about 241 million children in India in the ages of 1-14 years are at a risk of parasitic intestinal worms or STH. This means, India accounts for approximately 28 per cent of the total number of children globally estimated to be at-risk of STH infections.

National Deworming Day

The objective of the National Deworming Day is at eradicating intestinal worms also known as Soil-Transmitted Helminths (STH), among preschool and school-age children (enrolled and non-enrolled) between the ages of 1-19 years through the platform of schools and anganwadi centers in order to improve their overall health, nutritional status, access to education and quality of life, reads the operational guidelines issued for NDD by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

- The deworming activity is carried out in all government and government aided schools and anganwadi centers.

- On this day, Albendazole tablet (deworming drug) is administered to children. The day is followed by a Mop-Up Day (MUD) with the intent of deworming children who missed the dose on the NDD.
- According to the government data, in the first round of deworming, 8.9 crore children (1-19 years) were covered. With each round, the coverage of NDD has increased and in February 2019, the programme reached out to 22.12 crore children.

The **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare**, Government of India is the nodal agency for providing all States/UTs with guidelines related to National Deworming Day (NDD) implementation at all levels. The programme is being implemented through the combined efforts of Department of School Education and Literacy under Ministry of Human Resource and Development, Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation. Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Urban Development, and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) also provide support to deworming program.

What Are Intestinal Worms?

Intestinal worms are parasites that live in the human intestines and consume nutrients and vitamins that a child consumes. There are three main types of STH that infect people

1. Roundworm (*Ascaris lumbricoides*)
2. Whipworm (*Trichuris trichiura*)
3. Hookworms (*Necator americanus* and *Ancylostoma duodenale*)

These worms depend on the human body for their food and survival and while being there, they lay thousands of eggs each day.

STH transmission:

Soil-transmitted helminths are transmitted by eggs that are passed in the faeces of infected people. Adult worms live in the intestine where they produce thousands of eggs each day. In areas that lack adequate sanitation, these eggs contaminate the soil. This can happen in several ways:

- Eggs that are attached to vegetables are ingested when the vegetables are not carefully cooked, washed or peeled;
- Eggs are ingested from contaminated water sources;
- Eggs are ingested by children who play in the contaminated soil and then put their hands in their mouths without washing them.

In addition, hookworm eggs hatch in the soil, releasing larvae that mature into a form that can actively penetrate the skin. People become infected with hookworm primarily by walking barefoot on the contaminated soil.

There is no direct person-to-person transmission, or infection from fresh faeces, because eggs passed in faeces need about 3 weeks to mature in the soil before they become infective. Since these worms do not multiply in the human host, re-infection occurs only as a result of contact with infective stages in the environment.

The Symptoms

Some of the common and visible signs of intestinal worm infection include unexplained weight loss, fatigue, abdominal pain, diarrhoea, and dysentery. Also, heavy infections often make children too sick or too tired to concentrate at or even attend school. If untreated or undiagnosed, worms can have a long term effect on a child's health and development.

What is the impact?

Often children consume enough calories but they still suffer from undernutrition largely because their diets are deficient in the essential vitamins and minerals necessary for proper physical and mental development. In addition to this, suffering from intestinal worms' infection aggravate and intensify the loss of nutrients, especially vitamin A and Iron. This co-existence of micronutrient deficiencies and worm infestation result in impaired growth and development of our young ones.

Soil-transmitted helminths impair the nutritional status of the people they infect in multiple ways.

- The worms feed on host tissues, including blood, which leads to a loss of iron and protein.
- Hookworms in addition cause chronic intestinal blood loss that can result in anaemia.
- The worms increase malabsorption of nutrients. In addition, roundworm may possibly compete for vitamin A in the intestine.
- Some soil-transmitted helminths also cause loss of appetite and, therefore, a reduction of nutritional intake and physical fitness. In particular, *T. trichiura* can cause diarrhoea and dysentery.

Morbidity is related to the number of worms harboured. People with infections of light intensity (few worms) usually do not suffer from the infection. Heavier infections can cause a range of symptoms including intestinal manifestations (diarrhoea and abdominal pain), malnutrition, general malaise and weakness, and impaired growth and physical development. Infections of very high intensity can cause intestinal obstruction that should be treated surgically.

The Treatment

Albendazole tablet is the suggested deworming drug and its dosage depends on how young a child is. According to experts, Albendazole is an effective drug and doesn't have any significant adverse effects.

Prevention is better than Cure

Two main areas for prevention of worm infestation include

- Ensuring improved access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene and overall clean surroundings to children so that chances of any infection are minimised
- Improving the quality of food consumed (by optimal processing and cooking techniques like washing raw fruits and vegetables with clean water)

To not let the worms breathe

- Promote the integration of deworming activities within existing public health programs and inter-sectoral platforms in order to optimise coverage
- Plan optimal delivery strategies for deworming activities that are responsive to local conditions

Cabinet approves

Memorandum of Understanding between India and Nigeria on Cooperation in the Exploration and uses of outer space for peaceful purposes

- The MoU has been signed between Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) of India and by National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA) of Nigeria at Abuja.
- Enable potential interest areas of cooperation such as, Remote sensing of the earth; Satellite communication and satellite-based navigation; Space science and planetary exploration; Use of spacecraft, launch vehicles, space systems and ground systems; Practical applications of space technology including geospatial tools and techniques
- This MoU would lead to set up a Joint Working Group, drawing members from Department of Space (DOS)/ISRO and National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA) of Nigeria, which will further work out the plan of action including the time-frame and the means of implementation.

MoU between ICAI, India and CPA, Papua New Guinea

- To hold and conduct technical events, seminars and conferences in PNG,
- Establishing possible cooperation and collaboration in areas of Corporate Governance, technical research and advice, quality assurance, forensic accounting, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and other subjects of mutual interest.
- Share available unrestricted information concerning the accountancy profession in India and PNG and internationally when required, develop the modules for specific subjects for CPA, PNG Examination.
- To have students and faculty exchange programs.
- Offer short term professional courses in the domain of accounting, finance and audit in PNG.

ADB, India sign \$177 million loan for state road improvements in Maharashtra

(Topic: India and international forums and agreements)

- Will improve connectivity between rural areas and urban centres in the state enabling rural communities to better access markets, employment opportunities and services. Improved mobility will expand development and livelihood opportunities outside of the state's major urban centers to second-tier cities and towns thus reducing income disparities.
- Will also strengthen road safety measures by developing a road safety audit framework that will protect vulnerable groups such as the elderly, women, and children, following the international best practice.
- Update road maintenance system by encouraging 5-year performance-based maintenance obligations to contractors to sustain asset quality and service levels.
- Focus on training the Maharashtra Public Works Department project staff to build their capacity in climate change adaptation and disaster resilient features in road design, road maintenance planning and road safety.

World Bank- IMF annual meeting 2020

(Topic: India and international forums and agreements)

Theme 1: “Unleashing the South Asian Century through Human Capital for All “ and “Investing in Covid-19 Vaccines and Primary Healthcare Delivery System”

- India has been following a pre-emptive, proactive, and graded response characterised by a “Whole of Society, Whole of Government” approach to manage the challenges posed by the global pandemic.
- Innovation, ability and agility of the private sector has supported the efforts to fight COVID in a big way. PPEs, N95 masks, Oxygen, ventilators and diagnostic tests kits were developed at a jet pace to ensure self-sufficiency.
- Medical infrastructure saw an exponential growth, from having one lab in March, 2020 to around 2000 laboratories as on date with nearly half of the labs from the private sector. The same is true for dedicated ICU facilities and isolation centers.
- India is making use of Information Technology in virtually every aspect of COVID management- AarogyaSetu app and ITIHAS, a cellular based tracking technology has been used for surveillance and identification of potential clusters, RT-PCR app for testing, facility app for managing information on admitted patients, all integrated with a single COVID portal.

- Rolled out a special economic and comprehensive package of 272 US Billion Dollars – equivalent to 10% of India's GDP under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan (Self Reliance India Programme) which includes a component of increasing investments in public health and health reforms to prepare India for future pandemics.
-

1st ever Ministerial Meeting of G-20 Anti-Corruption Working Group

(Topic: India and international forums and agreements)

India is committed to the policy of zero tolerance against corruption and unaccounted money

- The India's Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 got amended after 30 years in 2018 to introduce a number of new provisions including criminalizing the act of giving bribe also in addition to taking bribe and at the same time putting in place an effective deterrence for such actions by individuals as well as corporate entities. It aims at checking corruption in big places and striking hard against corporate bribery. It seeks to establish a vicarious liability so that the actual bribe giver is also exposed.
- The aim is to bring in more transparency, more citizen centricity and more accountability in governance and is indicated by its decisive initiatives to operationalize the institution of the Lokpal in the country to check corruption at high places.
- The world is presently combating serious emerging challenges of Fugitive Economic Offenders and Assets which flee across national jurisdiction. India's Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 empowers authorities for non-conviction based attachments and confiscation of proceeds of crime and properties as well as assets of a Fugitive Economic Offender.

India has ceased the issue of the accused taking shelter in the foreign country and concealing the proceeds of crime.

After 35 years, India assumes the Chairmanship of the Governing Body of International Labour Organization

(Topic: India and international forums and agreements)

After 35 years, India has assumed the Chairmanship of the Governing Body of International Labour Organization, marking a new chapter in the 100 years of productive relationship between India and ILO.

The Governing Body (GB) is the apex executive body of the ILO which decides policies, programmes, agenda, budget and elects the Director-General. At present ILO has 187 members.

It will also provide a platform to appraise participants of the transformational initiatives taken by Government in removing the rigidities of labour market besides making its intention clear about universalization of social security to all workers whether in organised or unorganised sector.

GS-3

Final trial of anti-tank guided missile 'Nag' successful, ready for induction in Army

(Topic: Defence)

- In a major boost for the indigenisation in defence sector, India today successfully carried out the final trial of the Nag anti-tank guided missile after which the weapon system is now ready for induction into the Indian Army.
- Indian Army has been looking for such a missile system to take down the enemy tanks and other armoured vehicles.
- The Nag Missile system fired from a Nag Missile Carrier (NAMICA) can take out targets at ranges of 4 to 7 kilometres and is fitted with an advanced seeker to home on to its target.

Details

- A third-generation anti-tank guided missile, which has top attack capabilities that can effectively engage and destroy all known enemy tanks during day and night
- The Army needs third-generation ATGMs with a strike range of over 2.5km with fire and forget capabilities. It needs them to equip its mechanised infantry units to carry them on their Russian BMP vehicles.
- The army is currently using second-generation Milan 2T and Konkur ATGMs and has been looking for about third-generation missiles, which are important for stopping advancing enemy tanks.
- The Defence Ministry in 2018 had cleared the acquisition of 300 Nag missiles and 25 NAMICAs for the Indian Army.

India's first Multi-modal Logistic Park

(Topic: Transport)

Location: At Jogighopa in Assam

- The Rs 693.97 crore park will provide direct air, road, rail and waterways connectivity to the people.
- It will be developed under the ambitious Bharatmala Pariyojana of the Government of India
- Cost effective mode of transport will be cheaper option for trade, business and transportation and will boost the trade across the borders especially with our eastern neighbours by leaps and bounds

Bharatmala Pariyojana

- It is an umbrella program for the highways sector.
- Initiated by: Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

Status:

- A total of 322 projects in a length of 12,413 km have been awarded and 2921 km has been constructed under Bharatmala Pariyojana till August 2020.
- Phase-I of Bharatmala Pariyojana: Implementation of 34,800 km of national highways in 5 years (from 2017 to 2022) has been approved (Rs. 5,35,000 crore).
- Phase-II: Around 48,000 km of road network across India by 2024.

Objectives:

- To optimise the efficiency of freight and passenger movement across India by bridging critical infrastructure gaps through effective interventions
- To generate a large number of direct and indirect employment opportunities in the construction and infrastructure sector
- To connect 550 districts in the country through national highway linkages.
- Effective measures: Development of economic corridors, inter corridors and feeder routes, national corridor efficiency improvement, border and international connectivity roads, coastal and port connectivity roads and Greenfield expressways.

Features:

- (1) Improvement in the efficiency of existing corridors through the development of Multimodal Logistics Parks and elimination of chokepoint
- (2) Improving connectivity in North East and increasing harmony with Inland Waterways
- (3) Emphasis on the use of scientific and technological planning
- (4) Satellite mapping of corridor
- (5) Delegation of powers for successful completion of Phase I by 2022.

Do you know?

Economic Corridors: These are integrated networks of infrastructure within a geographical area designed to stimulate economic development.

Greenfield Projects: They lack constraints imposed by prior work on the site. Typically, it entails development on a completely vacant site and architects start completely from scratch.

Brownfield Projects: They carry constraints related to the current state of the site and might be contaminated or have existing structures that architects have to tear down or modify in some way before the project can move forward.

- **Multimodal Logistics Parks:** These are a key policy initiative of the Government of India to improve the country's logistics sector by lowering overall freight costs, reducing vehicular pollution and congestion, and cutting warehousing costs.
- **Chokepoint:** It is a single point through which all incoming and outgoing network traffic is funnelled and hence, leads to congestion and traffic.

Development of Indigenous Software solution for VTS and VTMS

(Topic: Technology)

- Vessel traffic services (VTS) and Vessels Traffic Monitoring Systems (VTMS) is a software for determining vessel positions, position of other traffic or meteorological hazard warnings and extensively manages the traffic within a port or waterway.
- Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) contribute to safety of life at sea, safety and efficiency of navigation and protection of the marine environment, adjacent shore areas, work sites and offshore installations from possible adverse effects of maritime traffic.
- Vessels Traffic Management Systems are installed in some of the busiest waters in the world, and are making valuable contribution to safer navigation, more efficient traffic flow, and protection of the environment.
- Traffic flow in busy approach routes, access channels, and harbours can be coordinated safely, in the best interest of port and its users. Incidents and emergency situations can be dealt with quickly.
- Data from traffic movements can be stored and used as reference information for port administration, port authorities, coastguards and search and rescue services.

Development of the indigenous VTS software will reduce the expenditure of foreign exchange on this issue and also minimize the dependence on foreign support for VTS software. Accordingly, indigenous development of VTS software will benefit with respect to:

- Saving of foreign exchange for various VTSs in India
- VTS Software can be provided to Indian trade friendly nations viz. Maldives, Mauritius, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Bangladesh and Gulf countries.
- Will also minimize the cost for future upgradations of software.
- Shall be easier to interconnect with MIS/ERP softwares of ports.
- Availability of Indian VTS software shall make Indian companies to be competitive commercially in global bids.

Government committed to landscape restoration for snow leopard habitat conservation

(Topic: Animal Conservation; Environment and Biodiversity)

International Snow Leopard Day is observed on 23rd October.

- International Snow Leopard Day came into being on 23rd October, 2013 when Bishkek Declaration was adopted by 12 countries on the conservation of snow leopards.
- The 12 countries included: India, Nepal, Bhutan, China, Mongolia, Russia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

Government of India has been conserving snow leopard and its habitat through the Project Snow Leopard (PSL). The PSL was launched in 2009.

India has identified three large landscapes, namely,

1. Hemis-Spiti across Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh
2. Nanda Devi – Gangotri in Uttarakhand
3. Khangchendzonga – Tawang across Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh

In India, their geographical range encompasses a large part of the western Himalayas including the states and UTs of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.

Protecting the snow leopard and its habitat ensures protection of the major Himalayan rivers that support the teeming millions downstream. It also ensures that the ecological balance is maintained in these fragile ecosystems.

- India is also party to the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection (GSLEP) Programme since 2013.
- India has also launched a community volunteer programme “HimalSanrakshak”
- The Government of India has identified the snow leopard as a flagship species for the high-altitude Himalayas. Snow Leopard is in the list of **21 critically endangered species** for the recovery programme of the Ministry of Environment Forest & Climate Change.

- **SECURE Himalaya:** Global Environment Facility (GEF)-UNDP funded project on conservation of high altitude biodiversity
- “New Delhi Statement” of strengthening the resolve of the snow leopard range countries towards conservation of the mountain ecosystems of Central and South Asia.
- First National Protocol was also launched last year on Snow Leopard Population Assessment which has been very useful for monitoring populations. In line with other projects, this initiative exclusively focuses on developing landscape-based management plans, habitat restoration plans, livelihoods improvement, mitigation of wildlife crime and illegal trade in wildlife, human-wildlife conflict mitigation strategies, improving awareness and communications strategies.
- The project also encourages the States and UTs to adopt innovative strategies to resolve issues related to multi-stakeholder landscape management, human-wildlife conflicts, wildlife crime and trade in wildlife parts and products, capacity building, climate-smart energy solutions etc.

Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection (GSLEP) Programme: This multi-lateral programme comprises of 12 snow leopard range countries and they have developed national priorities and identified large landscapes to support viable populations of snow leopards.

Snow Leopard

- It is also known as Ghost of the mountains.
- They are positioned as the top predator in the food web.
- It acts as an indicator of the health of the mountain ecosystem in which they live.
- **Habitat:** Higher Himalayan and trans-Himalayan landscape in J&K, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh.
- India is home to 5 big cats: Snow Leopard, Lion, Tiger, Common Leopard, and Clouded Leopard.
- **Snow Leopard capital of the world:** Hemis, Ladakh.
- **Threat:** Reduction in prey populations, illegal poaching and increased human population infiltration into the species habitat and illegal trade of wildlife parts and products
- **IUCN Red List:** Vulnerable
- **CITES:** Appendix I
- **Convention on Migratory Species (CMS):** Appendix I
- **Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972:** Schedule I
- Hemis National Park is the biggest national park of India and also has a good presence of Snow Leopard.

Waste Management in India

(Topic: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation)

Years of neglect, lack of foresight and complete absence of urban planning has left India with mountains of waste-landfills, waste-choked drains, water bodies and rivers. This is called “legacy waste”, a cumulative consequence of decades of neglect and lack of foresight.

India faces a challenge of treating and **getting rid of the legacy waste**, with simultaneous and **continuous accumulation of fresh everyday waste**.

How staggering is the issue?

- India generates the most waste globally, about 275 million tonnes of waste per year.
- With current waste treatment rates of about 20-25%, the majority of waste remains untreated, in a heap, on landfills, and an equal amount in drains and river bodies.
- Drains and water bodies, emptying out into Indian rivers, also carry with them an unimaginable amount of waste. The Ganga is among the top 10 polluted rivers in the world, together accounting for 90% of the total ocean plastic pollution.
- Central, state, city and municipal governments, over decades, have not been able to prevent the situation, nor deal with its scale.
- Out of a total 92 large WTE(Waste-to-Energy) plants only a small fraction is operational. The plants that are operational, run at suboptimal capacity.

Suggested solutions:

India needs affordable, decentralised, customised solutions:

- Municipalities need to have access to affordable technology.
- Local situations needs local solutions:
Today most of the technology/equipment needed for waste management is imported, expensive and often not suited in our varied local situations. Amphibian equipment to clean water bodies is imported and can work well for large water bodies. Indigenisation of design and manufacturing of such equipment for smaller drains and water bodies is essential.
- *Atmanirbhar Bharat* (self-reliant India) needs to kick in immediately.

Ease of procurement of technology and equipment:

Evolving a less cumbersome process for the procurement of technology and equipment is imperative.

State governments are hit by a double whammy due to lack of technology and a rigid procurement system.

Policy change:

Policy which provides a direction to accelerate the removal of waste exponentially is needed.

- One way, used internationally, is to **unlock the land value under landfills**. Allowing agencies, companies or industry that clear waste, to own the land can fund the clean-up.
- **Development of skilled and trained professional personnel** to operate and maintain the waste management chain, right from collection, operation and maintenance of waste-handling plants.
- Moving to a **zero-waste society**.
- Central, and integral to success, is design. Design in the collection, of centralised and decentralised waste treatment plants, and of the equipment used.
Design of waste management should be the bedrock of a well-planned smart city, town or village.

What are the sustainable strategies to address the problem of solid waste?

A multi-pronged approach, including Technical, organisational and financial strategies for sustainable waste and resource management, is required.

Waste-to-energy technologies

In recent years, waste disposal companies have increasingly been offering partners in developing and emerging countries technologies for recovering energy from waste, based in part on their potential for climate change mitigation.

Avoidance of marine litter

Various national policy instruments are being examined to determine their effectiveness in reducing marine litter; models are generated to demonstrate their economic, environmental and social impact.

Electronic waste

Extended Producer Responsibility and “Reduce, Re-use and Recycle” are the best of available sustainable strategies for handling of Electronic waste.

Economic instruments

For local and national administrations, the costs associated with waste management are considerable. In addition to the traditional approaches to financing, economic incentive systems can be developed to avoid or recycle waste. The focus here is on concepts such as product taxation, deposit systems or user charges.

India’s Solid waste management rules, 2016 and E-waste management rules, 2016 are good examples of sustainable strategies to problems of waste management.

Solid Waste treatment and disposal utilizing plasma arc gasification

process is an option for eco-friendly solid waste management in which large volume reduction of waste up to 95% is possible. The plasma gasification process uses electricity to generate high temperature plasma arc (above 3000°C) inside the plasma reactor

which converts the waste into **syngas**. The produced syngas when passed through a series of gas purification system comprising of catalytic converter, redox reactor, cyclone separator, scrubber and condenser is ready for use in gas engines for generation of electricity. The residual ash can be mixed with cement for preparation of recycled bricks for usage in construction. Thus, Science helps in the creation of 'Wealth from Waste'.

Some of the salient features of SWM Rules, 2016 include: –

- The source segregation of waste and Responsibilities of Generators has been mandated.
- Integration of waste pickers/ rag-pickers and waste dealers/ Kabadiwalas in the formal system
- Generator will have to pay 'User Fee' to waste collector and for 'Spot Fine' for Littering and Non-segregation
- New townships and Group Housing Societies have been made responsible to develop in-house waste handling, and processing arrangements for bio-degradable waste.
- Problems of construction and demolition waste, horticulture waste and garden waste and strategies to resolve them are also mentioned briefly in rules.

Some of the salient features of the E-waste (Management) Amendment Rules, 2018 are as follows:

- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), which put the onus on the producer for the management of the final stages of the life of its product, in an eco-friendly way.
- The Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is the global best practice to ensure the take-back of the end-of-life products.
- A new arrangement entitled, 'Producer Responsibility Organisation' (PRO) has been introduced to strengthen EPR further.

Prelims-oriented News

Malabar 2020 Naval Exercise: A bilateral Indian Navy-US Navy exercise

Highest number of COVID- 19 recoveries: India

Introducing asafoetida (Heeng) cultivation in Indian Himalayan region

- Farmers of the remote Lahaul valley in Himachal Pradesh takes up cultivation of asafoetida (Heeng) to utilize vast expanses of waste land in the cold desert conditions of the region
- Asafoetida is one of the top condiments and is a high value spice crop in India.
- India imports about 1200 tonnes of raw asafoetida annually from Afghanistan, Iran and Uzbekistan and spends approximately 100 million USD per year.

- Lack of planting material of *Ferula assa-foetida* plants in India was a major bottleneck in cultivation of this crop.
- Raw asafoetida is extracted from the fleshy roots of *Ferula assa-foetida* as an oleo-gum resin. Although, there are about 130 species of *Ferula* found in the world, but only *Ferula assa-foetida* is the economically important species used for the production of asafoetida.
- In India, we do not have *Ferula assa-foetida*, but other species *Ferula jaeschkeana* is reported from the western Himalaya (Chamba, HP), and *Ferula narthex* from Kashmir and Ladakh, which are not the species that yield asafoetida.

Ayushman Sahakar Fund: For creation of healthcare infrastructure by cooperatives

- Cooperatives utilizing the scheme would be able to bring revolution in comprehensive health care services in rural areas
- Formulated by the apex autonomous development finance institution under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC)
- NCDC's scheme aligns itself with the focus of the National Health Policy, 2017, covering the health systems in all their dimensions- investments in health, organization of healthcare services, access to technologies, development of human resources, encouragement of medical pluralism, affordable health care to farmers etc. It has a comprehensive approach-hospitals, healthcare, medical education, nursing education, paramedical education, health insurance and holistic health systems such as AYUSH. Ayushman Sahakar scheme fund would also assist cooperative hospitals take up medical / Ayush education.
- The scheme also provides working capital and margin money to meet operational requirements. The scheme provides interest subvention of one percent to women majority cooperatives.

Navy Operationalizes First Batch of Women Pilots: The first batch of women pilots of Indian Navy have been operationalized on Dornier Aircraft by the Southern Naval Command (SNC) at Kochi. The three women pilots were part of the six pilots of the 27th Dornier Operational Flying Training (DOFT) Course, who graduated as 'Fully operational Maritime Reconnaissance (MR) Pilots' at a passing out ceremony held at INS Garuda, Kochi in 2020.

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