CURRENT AFFAIRS
NOVEMBER 2015
16 – 30 November
**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

- ‘Streedhan’ ................................................................................................................................. 5
- Freedom of Press ............................................................................................................................ 5
- E-Governance .............................................................................................................................. 6
- Virtual Police Station (VPS) for Public ......................................................................................... 7
- Tribal Rights and Issues ............................................................................................................... 7
- Marine Fisheries ........................................................................................................................... 8
- Constitution Day .......................................................................................................................... 10
- Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana ............................................................................................ 10
- Interlinking of Rivers ................................................................................................................... 11
- Green Revolution in India ........................................................................................................... 12
- Second Green Revolution ........................................................................................................... 13
- Also in news ............................................................................................................................... 14
- Swachh Delhi APP ....................................................................................................................... 14
- Judicial Independence .................................................................................................................. 14
- Menace of Tray Dogs ................................................................................................................... 16
- 10 Years of RTI Act-Successes .................................................................................................... 17

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

- India and IBSA ............................................................................................................................ 18
- India re-elected as Member of International Maritime Council ................................................... 18
- India, Australia nuclear deal to come into force .......................................................................... 18
- India and Kuwait .......................................................................................................................... 19
- India and Singapore enter into strategic partnership .................................................................... 19
- Latest in India and Japan relations ................................................................................................ 19
- Military reforms in China ............................................................................................................. 20
- India, China to Exchange Information on Terror Activities ......................................................... 21
- APEC Summit, 2015 .................................................................................................................... 22
- India SAARC relations ................................................................................................................ 23
- India – Malaysia relations ............................................................................................................ 23
- Prime minister Modi Visit to UK .................................................................................................. 23
- Global Solar Alliance .................................................................................................................... 24
- G-20 Summit 2015 ....................................................................................................................... 24
- Paris attack .................................................................................................................................... 25
- UN Resolution against ISIS ......................................................................................................... 26

**ECONOMY** ................................................................................................................................. 27
SECURITY

Paris Attacks why France? 47
Mega city Security conference – Mumbai 48
India- US Cooperation on Internal Security 48
Mumbai to Share Techniques with Global Cities on Terror Fight 48
Relief and Rehabilitations of Migrants in Jammu and Kashmir 49
Extension of CCTNS Project 48
POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

‘STREEDHAN’

Recently the Supreme Court held that abused women judicially separated from their husbands had every right to invoke the domestic violence law to get back their ‘streedhan.’

What is ‘Streedhan’?
- A gift in gold valuables given to a woman by her family is ‘streedhan’
- It is her exclusive and absolute property.

Background
- Earlier in a case Tripura High Court confirmed a magisterial court’s order rejecting a women’s application for return of “streedhan”.
- Both courts held that the petitioner could not be termed an “aggrieved person” under the “Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005” to seek any relief as she was judicially separated from her husband.

Judicial Separation
- Judicial separation is a period of suspension of marriage granted by the court.
- This time may be used by the couple to explore the possibilities of reviving their broken marriage. If the result is negative, the court annuls their marriage with a decree of divorce.

The Supreme Court Verdict
- The SC said that a husband had only a qualified right over a woman’s ‘streedhan’ — the right to use it in times of distress.
- The court ruled that the woman, who had suffered domestic and economic abuse at her matrimonial home, continued to be a victim or an “aggrieved person” under the domestic violence law even after her judicial separation. The court said the legal relationship of a husband and wife continued during the period of judicial separation.

FREEDOM OF PRESS

Why in news?
On November 16, when the country celebrated the National Press Freedom Day, three newspapers in Nagaland were published with blank editorials to protest a notification from Assam Rifles that had the effect of muzzling the press freedom.

- The papers were instructed to refrain from publishing news related to Naga insurgent group NSCN-Khaplang [NSCN-K].
- The notice said that “any article which projects the demands of NSCN-K and gives it publicity is a violation under the Unlawful Activities [Prevention] Act, 1967 and should not be published by your newspaper.”

Concerns:
- Such notifications have implications for the freedom of the press.
- India ranks at 136 among 190 nations on the World Press Freedom Index published by Reporters without Borders.
This incident draws attention to the problems faced by the press in conflict zones, trapped as media persons between the state armed with the law to enforce varying degrees of censorship, and militant groups who use methods of intimidation to have their versions published.

Role of Press Council of India (PCI):

- PCI has taken *suo motu* note of the case and served notices to the paramilitary force and the State government.
- The PCI has the power to review any development likely to restrict the supply and dissemination of news of public interest and importance.

**CCI IMPOSES PENALTIES UPON AIRLINES:**

Recently the Competition Commission of India (CCI) imposed penalties upon 3 airlines for concerted action in fixing and revising Fuel Surcharge (FSC) for transporting cargo.

**CCI’s Decision**

- CCI has ruled that Jet Airways (India) Ltd, InterGlobe Aviation Ltd, Spice Jet Ltd, Air India Ltd and Go Airlines (India) Ltd. acted in parallel in collusion in fixing FSC rates.
- Penalties were imposed upon Jet Airways (India) Ltd., InterGlobe Aviation Limited and Spice Jet Limited respectively for the impugned conduct which was found to be in contravention of the provisions of *section 3(1)* read with *section 3(3)(a)* of the Act.
- While imposing penalties, the Commission noted that such conduct in the air cargo industry undermines economic development of the country and ultimately acts to the detriment of end-consumers.
- Such conduct was found to have resulted in indirectly determining the rates of air cargo transport and thereby in contravention of the provisions of the Act.
- The penalty was imposed at 1 per cent of the average turnover of the last three financial years.

**E-GOVERNANCE**

**E-tendering of Railway Contracts**

Recently Union Railway Minister has said that all Indian Railway contracts will be tendered online from early next year on an e-tendering platform.

**Why e-tendering?**

- Earlier tendering in the railways used to take even six years.
- To bring in transparency in the processes and to cut-down the time lag.
- Efforts are being made to reduce time gap between announcement of projects and their actual implementation, which has been reduced to six months.
Modernisation - Railways is also pushing for a rollout of new, modern coaches which would change the way a typical journey by Indian Railways is often perceived.

- First few modern railway coaches designed by the National Institute of Design have already been rolled out by Railways.
- All these tenders will be put on the e-platform in the next two months.

**VIRTUAL POLICE STATION (VPS) FOR PUBLIC**

- **VPS** is being launched in the Capital to make functioning of a police station comprehensible for the public.
- International NGO Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) has developed the VPS.
- The VPS is a first-of-its kind training tool to acquaint the public with the functioning of a police station through the click of a mouse.
- It allows the police and public to enter every room of a computerised police station to explore and learn the key procedures such as arrest, registration of complaints of sexual assault, registration of FIRs and more.
- “**VPS is a step towards humanising the functioning of the police** as it demystifies the police station by exposing citizens to the layers of work – management, administration, investigation, going to court, forensics — that the personnel in the police station perform.
- This tool will empower women afraid to report rapes.
- The goal is to transform India’s police “from a police force to a police service.”

**TRIBAL RIGHTS AND ISSUES**

Even 68 years after Independence, the problems of tribal communities are about access to basic needs. These include, but are not restricted to, elementary education, community healthcare, sustainable livelihood support, the public distribution system, food security, drinking water and sanitation, debt, and infrastructure. For them, equality of opportunity remains largely unfulfilled.

**Tribals are being denied their rights under FRA**

- Allegations that 60 per cent of the claims of tribals under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) have been rejected by the government.
- Systematic undermining of the implementation of the forest rights act.
- Diversion of forest land for industrial purpose by displacing tribals.
- Bypassing of the consent of gram sabha clause to expedite development projects.
- Alienation of tribals from forestland is one of the major reasons for fuelling **Left Wing Extremism** in the country.
- The report of the High Level Committee on Socio-Economic, Health and educational status of tribal communities has also blamed policies of the governments for violating tribal rights.
- Under the Constitutional scheme, non-tribals are not entitled to property ownership in the tribal areas but **mining in the tribal areas is exploitative** in nature as benefits do not reach to tribal people of the region.

**Tribal children ill-served by government schools**

- Standards abysmally low in State-run tribal schools.
- Most of the tribal children in govt. Schools **lack basic literacy skills**.
- A crucial issue is the **lack of trained teachers** especially after 2001, when the government had decided to recruit only teachers from the tribal community.
The disconnect between the unique tribal way of life - distinct languages and dialects, culture and food habits - and what is **enforced at the Ashram schools** has led to a **loss of identity** and sense of belonging among the tribal children.

Students from Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) are losing out on their native culture in the schools.

The teachers, who mostly hail from the more integrated tribes, do not have an understanding of the culture of the PVTGs.

**Way forward**

- There is urgent need to focus on the **capacity building of teachers**.
- The teachers have to catch on with the present-day education system – for that adequate skill training should be provided.

**Tribal healthcare issue and policy intervention**

- Infant mortality rate, child mortality rate, poor maternal health, child sex ratio, malnutrition, high prevalence of anaemia, malaria and fluorosis are some of the biggest barriers to tribal health.
- Considerable cut in budgetary allocations for health care and programmes for tribal development poses a challenge to ensure basic health care to tribal people.
- Sickle cell disease among tribal people

**Way forward**

- The Health Ministry decided to hold the workshop on “Best Practices in Tribal Health” in tribal heartland at Shodhgram village in Maharashtra’s Gadchiroli district.
- This step is government’s recognition of the differential and unique health needs of tribal communities.
- ICMR has started the **screening programmes for sickle cell disease** in 18 states and at the end of the programme lakhs of tribal people will know that they carry the disease or the gene for it.
- The State needs to ensure that carriers of sickle cell disease, particularly girls, do not face discrimination.
- There is an **urgent need of community-based action and research** for and on the health of India’s neonates and tribal people.

(Refer our January material for recommendations of Xaxa committee on tribal rights)

---

**MARINE FISHERIES**

**Why in news?**

Recently an expert committee was constituted to revise the National Marine Fisheries Policy.

**Why revision of the policy?**

- The government has decided to go in for a revised policy after the Meena Kumari Committee report on Marine Fisheries triggered a wave of protest across the country.
- The policy will ensure all-round development of fisheries in the country.
- Marine fishery in India, the world’s second biggest fish producer from aquaculture, has great potential to meet the nutritional security of the population.

**Fishing Sector: a perspective**

- India is the second largest producer of fish in the world contributing to 5.43% of global fish production.
- India is also a major producer of fish through aquaculture and ranks second in the world after China.
• Fisheries being one of the promising sectors of agriculture and allied activities in India. It occupies a very important place in the socio-economic development of the country.
• It has been recognized as a powerful income and employment generator as it stimulates growth of a number of subsidiary industries, and is a source of cheap and nutritious food besides being a foreign exchange earner.
• It is the source of livelihood for a large section of economically backward population of the country. It supports livelihood of almost 1.5 million people in our country.
• After Independence, fish production has been increased from 7.5 lakh tonnes in 1950-51 to 100.70 lakh tonnes during 2014-15, while the export earnings of 33,441 crore in 2014-15 (US$ 5.51 billion), equalled about 18% of the export earnings from the agriculture sector.

Key issues affecting the marine fisheries sector

• Fishing communities in Kerala and other coastal states are up in arms against the constitution of expert committee as it doesn’t ensure the representation of stakeholders.
• Policies have failed to address the livelihood concerns of the fishermen.
• Climate change and sea level rise poses great challenge
• Operation of foreign trawlers in Indian waters
• Destructive methods of fishing
• Encroachment of coastal areas for non-fishing activities
• Ban on fishing by motorized boats in sea during mating and nesting season of Olive Ridley turtles has been a major worry for fishermen in Odisha. Around 3000 families of fishermen are affected by this ban.
• Migration of the fishermen to earn their livelihood through other means
• Reduced catch impact marine fish processing units adversely
• Lack of accurate data on assessment of fishery resources and their potential in terms of fish production
• Lack of technological innovation – urgent need for development of sustainable technologies for fin and shell fish culture, yield optimization, harvest and post-harvest operations.
• Infrastructure challenge – inadequate landing and berthing facilities for fishing vessels

Way forward

Recently the government has formulated an umbrella scheme ‘Blue Revolution: Integrated Development and Management of Fisheries’ by merging all the existing schemes.

• This umbrella scheme will cover inland fisheries, aquaculture and marine fisheries including deep sea fishing, mari-culture and all activities undertaken by the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB).
• Development of new technologies to enhance production.

Dr. B. Meena Kumari Commission on deep sea fishing

Earlier an expert committee was constituted under the chairpersonship of Dr. B. Meena Kumari for comprehensive review of deep-sea fishing policy. Recommendations of the committee were opposed by the traditional fishing communities, some of the issues with the recommendations are as following:

• The fresh guidelines issued recently for fishing in the EEZ - between 22 km and 370 km beyond territorial waters - allow vessels with a length of 15 metres or more to operate in this zone by getting a "letter of permission" from the Centre.
• These ships can be owned or acquired by Indian entrepreneurs or by joint ventures with up to 49 per cent foreign investment.
• Traditional fishermen feared that such fishing ventures will threaten their livelihood by encroaching into some of the areas, which are now within their reach.
• One of the most controversial recommendations is the creation of a buffer zone between the near-shore and offshore regions (waters between 200 m and 500 m in depth) along the coast and to regulate fishing there "in order to augment resources in the near-shore areas as well as the deep-sea regions in the EEZ".

Blue Revolution

It visualizes "Creating an enabling environment for an integrated and holistic development and management of fisheries keeping in view the sustainability, bio-security and environmental concerns".
• Need for value addition, processing, hygienic handling and promotion of domestic fish marketing.
• Capacity building of fishers, fish farmers and fishery professionals and strengthening of infrastructure including transport, storage and processing.
• Creation of marketing facilities with forward and backward linkages
• Adequate infrastructure in the form of fishing harbours and fish landing centres.
• Increasing employment generating ability of fisheries sector.
• Diversification of fishing towards the under exploited deep sea and oceanic resources like tuna, shark, sail fish and allied species.
• Open sea cage culture of high value fin fishes and shell fishes involving fisher folk as an innovative system.
• Adoption of culture based capture fisheries in reservoirs and under-utilized water bodies.
• Networking of all line Departments/organizations dealing with fisheries under a single agency.
• Revamping of FFDAs and involvement of Cooperative Societies and Self Help Groups (SHGs) and ensuring the Socio economic welfare and empowerment of fisher folk.

CONSTITUTION DAY

• The first constitution day was celebrated on 26th November, 2015.
• The 'Constitution Day' will be a part of year-long nationwide celebrations for 125th birth Anniversary of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.
• Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is the Nodal Ministry for celebration of Constitution Day.

Why celebrate Constitution Day:

• At a time when there are so many ideological clashes, growing inequality, suppression of women’s rights, it is the Constitution of our country that can bind everyone together.
• The move would not only help resurrect memories of some of the tallest leaders who helped draft the document but also hopefully instill once again the spirit in which it was adopted.
• Constitution Day once again reaffirms our faith in the ideals of the Constitution.

Way Ahead

Ideals of constitution are needed to be incorporated in ways of living of citizens of India and also they should be made a part of learning process in schools so as the future citizens display these ideals in their day-to-day lives.

PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA

• The Government has brought forward the target date by three years from 2022 to 2019 to achieve complete rural connectivity through all-weather roads under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana.
• This accelerated implementation will be achieved by providing enhanced financial allocation of by Rs. 5,000 crore for year 2015-16 and through a modified funding pattern.
• fund sharing pattern will be in the ratio of 60:40 between the Centre and States for all States except for 8 North Eastern and 3 Himalayan States for which it will be 90:10.
• This has been done as a consequence of recommendations of 14th Finance Commission for higher devolution of funds to states.
• The decision to allocate higher amount of funds to the scheme will give a big boost to public investment in the rural sector particularly rural infrastructure.
• To financially incentivize the States who achieve the targets allocated to them, within the prescribed time frame, funds for periodic maintenance expenditure is being proposed.
Facts about the scheme:

- **PMGSY** was launched in year 2000 as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with the objective to provide single all-weather road connectivity to all eligible unconnected rural habitations.
- **Ministry of Rural Development** is the nodal ministry and the scheme is managed by **National Rural Roads Development Agency (NRRDA)**.
- Under PMGSY-I, 1,78,184 unconnected habitations were identified. However, in 15 years of implementation so far, 1,12,550 habitations (63%) have been connected with PMGSY roads.
- In February, 2015 government had modified the guidelines for PMGSY to provide rural roads to the model villages adopted by the Members of Parliament under the Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) on priority basis.

**INTERLINKING OF RIVERS**

**Why in news:**

Government has taken up Interlinking of River (ILR) programme under National Perspective Plan (NPP) on a high priority and the Detailed Project Reports (DPR) of Ken – Betwa Link Project, Damanganga – Pinjal Link Project and Par-Tapi-Narmada link project have been completed.

**National River Linking Project (NRLP):**

The National River Linking Project (NRLP) formally known as the National Perspective Plan, envisages the transfer of water from water ‘surplus’ basins where there is flooding to water ‘deficit’ basins where there is drought/scarcity, through inter-basin water transfer projects.

It will comprise of 30 links to connect 37 rivers across the nation through a network of nearly 3000 storage dams to form a gigantic South Asian Water Grid. It includes two components – Himalayan and Peninsular.

**Benefits of the Project:**

- **Hydropower generation:** It claims to generate total power of 34 GW.
- **Irrigation benefits:** To provide additional irrigation to 35 million hectares (m ha) in the water-scarce western and peninsular regions, which includes 25 m ha through surface irrigation and 10 m ha through groundwater. This will further create employment, boost crop outputs and farm incomes and multiply benefits through backward (farm equipment and input supplies) and forward linkages (agro-processing industries).
- **Flood prevention:** With network of rivers this problem can be greatly avoided by channeling excess water to areas that are facing drought.
**Navigation:** Newly created network of canals opens up new routes and ways and routes of water navigation, which is generally more efficient and cheaper compared to road transport.

India has four per cent of the world's total renewable water resources, the seventh largest. Of this amount, only 58% is the potentially usable water resource (PUWR). Despite India's generous water resources, its per capita storage is staggeringly low at a mere 200 m$^3$ per person whereas it is 2,486 m$^3$ in China. The NRLP, when complete, will boost per capita PUWR storage.

**Concerns:**

- The irreversible damage to the country and water resources by altering natural drainage, leading to flooding and water logging, and vast tracts will submerge leading to displacement of innumerable people.
- There are also concerns that surplus water should not be diverted from a river on such a large scale as excess water is necessary to keep river basins healthy—it percolates down the soil and recharges groundwater.
- Interlinking a toxic river with a non-toxic one will have a devastating impact on rivers, humans and wildlife.
- The project could also create many water conflicts both at the state and international level. The country is already reeling due to many inter-state water conflicts like
  - Ravi-Beas Water Dispute between Punjab-Haryana-Rajasthan
  - Cauvery Water Dispute between Kerala-Karnataka-Tamil Nadu-Puduchery,
- At the international level
  - with Bangladesh over the Teesta’s water,
  - with China over the Brahmaputra’s water and
  - with Nepal over the Mahakali’s water.

---

**GREEN REVOLUTION IN INDIA**

**Why in news?**

The Golden Jubilee of Green Revolution celebrations to commemorate the advent of Green Revolution in India

**Background of Green Revolution**

- In the initial years of planning heavy industrialisation under state ownership was the mainstay of development policy and a symbol of modernisation. For food, however, India relied on supplies from the United States under Public Law 480 (PL-480) against rupee payments, as India did not have much foreign exchange to buy large quantities of food in international markets.
- The folly of this set-up became apparent in the mid-1960s, when the US suspended wheat supplies temporarily (due to some political differences) at a time when India was facing back-to-back droughts and the country was literally living from “ship to mouth”.
- India was quick to learn from its PL-480 mistake and neglect of agriculture. It realised that its political freedom could be imperiled if it was not self-reliant in basic food production.
- India imported 18,000 tonnes of high yielding varieties (HYV) of wheat from Mexico in 1966, and ushered in the Green Revolution.

Some of the important components of the green revolution in India are as follows:

- High Yielding Varieties (HYV) of seeds.
- Irrigation (a) surface and (b) ground.
- Use of fertilizers (chemical), Insecticides and Pesticides.
- Command Area Development (CAD).
- Land reforms and Consolidation of holdings.
• Supply of agricultural credit.
• Rural electrification.
• Rural Roads and Marketing.
• Farm Mechanisation.
• Agricultural Universities.

Impact of Green Revolution:

• **Increase in food production**: Since 1967-68,
  - Our wheat production has increased by almost 15 times.
  - Rice production has gone up by more than five times.
  - India is not only self-sufficient, but also a net exporter of agri-produce. In 2014-15, agri-exports were $38 billion against imports of less than $20 billion. India is the largest exporter of rice in the world.

• **Prosperity of Farmers**: This has, especially, been the case with big farmers having more than 10 hectares of land.

• **Industrial Growth**: Green Revolution brought about large scale farm mechanisation which created demand for machines like tractors, harvestors, threshers, combines, diesel engines, electric motors, pumping sets, etc. Besides, demand for chemical fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides, weedicides, etc. also increased considerably. Consequently, industries producing these items progressed by leaps and bounds. Moreover, several agricultural products are used as raw materials in agro based industries.

• **Rural Employment**: While on one hand, large scale unemployment was feared due to mechanization of farming, there was an appreciable increase in the demand for labour force due to multiple cropping.

• **Change in the Attitude of Farmers**: The way farmers readily adopted the Green Revolution technology has exploded the myth that the Indian farmer is tradition bound and does not use new methods and techniques.

Shortcomings of Green Revolution:

• Adoption of new agricultural strategy through IADP and HYVP was very much restricted among the big farmers, necessitating a heavy amount of investment.
• The new agricultural strategy failed to recognize the need for institutional reforms
• New agricultural strategy along with increased mechanization of agriculture has created a problem of labour displacement.
• Green revolution widened the inter-regional disparities in farm production and income.
• Green revolution has certain undesirable social consequences arising from incapacitation due to accidents and acute poisoning from the use of pesticides.

After the green revolution years today once again Indian agriculture is on cross roads with new challenges of development. Our major challenges are depletion and degradation of natural resources, drop in the water table, reduction in flow of water in rivers, lakes, biotic and abiotic stresses, climatic change etc. Today we need to develop such strategies that will lead to sustainable productivity gains and also profitability of farming.

**SECOND GREEN REVOLUTION**

We must try and absorb some of the lessons from the past experience while paying adequate attention to long-term concerns such as sustainable use of natural resources, soil health and adaptation to climate change along with short-term priorities such as accelerating growth.

• It is use of sustainable agriculture by way of using eco-friendly means.
• Keep in view the local geographical and climatic position, soil fertility and productivity and nature, water, human resource and infrastructure availability and cost of production.
• Use of bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides
• Practices followed in organic farming which includes conservation of water among others - ‘more crop with per drop’
• It also includes use of genetically modified crops.
• Bouquet of new technologies such as Information Technology, Nanotechnology, Biotechnology, precision agriculture, biodynamic farming.
• Massive crop diversification and multiple cropping along with achieving self-sufficiency in pulses and oilseeds and doubling horticulture and floriculture output.
• In India, it exists as both- a concept and a program.
• In 2004, the Government announced a program named – “Second Green Revolution”.
• The Government, from time to time, also launched many other programs in furtherance of Second Green Revolution - “Bringing Green Revolution in Eastern India” (BGREI) program in 2010-11 as a sub scheme of Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana.
• (BGREI) program with objective of enhancing agricultural production in seven states of Eastern India - Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal and eastern Uttar Pradesh.
• Recently, PM of India has also spoken about bringing Second Green Revolution to India.
• Unlike Green Revolution which focused on only five food grains- wheat, rice, jowar, bajra, maize- the Second Green Revolution includes whole agricultural sector within its ambit. Hence, it is also called the Rainbow Revolution.
• Due to its potential, it is also known as Evergreen Revolution, a name popularized by M.S. Swaminathan, the architect of India’s first green revolution.

Q. Why did the Green Revolution in India virtually by-pass the eastern region despite fertile soil and good availability of water? (Q.22, Paper-I, UPSC, 2014)

ALSO IN NEWS

SWACHH DELHI APP

• The Delhi Government and municipalities launched ‘Swachh Delhi’ mobile app it is a citizen-centric app.
• Delhites can now take a picture of any heap of garbage or debris lying around the city and upload it to a centralised app for the government or municipal corporations to clean it.
• Photos will automatically include the GPS coordinates of the spots, the work of clearing will be assigned to an agency.
• The Delhi Government’s Public Works’ Department will clear malba and the three corporations, the New Delhi Municipal Council and the Delhi Cantonment Board will lift garbage in their jurisdictions.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE

(We had covered NJAC in October Current affairs as well. This is some additional material)

Background

• Recently the Supreme Court struck down the National Judicial appointments Commission Act and the 99th Constitution (Amendment) Act as unconstitutional stating it violates the basic structure of the constitution by compromising judicial independence.
• The Supreme Court, then, undertook to reform the 21 year old collegium system.
Issues

- The procedures adopted for appointment to the higher judiciary are still unsatisfactory to preserve the independence of judiciary.
- The present collegium system lacks transparency, accountability and objectivity. The trust deficit has affected the credibility of the collegium system.
- How far the appointment procedure secures the personal independence of judges?

What is Judicial Independence?

- The other organs of the government like the executive and legislature must not restrain the functioning of the judiciary in such a way that it is unable to do justice.
- It is about freedom from all pressures in the exercise of the adjudicative function.

Why it is important to be ensured?

- It is central to democracy because it is the judiciary which helps the realisation of the rule of law and protection of human rights.
- It is the independence of the judiciary that leads to confidence in the mind of public that it will come to their aid and rescue if any wrong is committed by executive.

Why personal independence of judges is important?

- To ensure judicial independence, personal independence of the judges is as important as the institutional independence.
- Impartiality, integrity, propriety, equality, competence etc. are pillars on which personal independence is dependent. Thus by ensuring these qualities judicial independence can be ensured.

Challenges to Judicial Independence

- No clarity on the eligibility criteria for appointment of judges – Even though the pool of eligible candidates for judicial selection is partly determined by the constitution but it does not speak about standards of integrity, propriety, competence, independence etc. as qualifications essential for judicial selection.
- Qualifications essential for judicial selection are taken for granted and left to the selectors to assess them by whatever means available to them.
- Collegiums judges are unable to justify the wrong appointments made in the past.
- Growing anxieties about vacancies touching 40 percent in the High Courts.
- Opaque collegium system with almost no transparency
- There is no complaint redressal mechanism in the existing appointment mechanism.
- Corruption in judiciary
- Massive burden of pending cases

Way to judicial independence – Some Suggestions to establish an efficient procedure for the appointment of judges

- There should be verifiable method to create a pool of eligible persons for judicial appointments.
- A transparent procedure should be established to prescribe the norms and standards expected of candidates seeking to be appointed as judges and invite applications from them.
- Nominations can be made by retired judges, senior advocates, bar council or bar associations, etc., after testifying the essential qualifications required.
- On receipt of the applications, a system of short-listing based on competitive merit can be performed.
- Names of all the candidates short-listed can be posted on the website of the court for a reasonable period to elicit objections.
There can be a technical committee of retired judges to shortlist the applications and to respond to objections/grievance in the initial stage of the selection. And this part of the procedure should be **open to Right to Information Act**.

Then the collegium can interview the short listed candidates to prepare the final list.

**Psychological tests** should be part of the selection process to measure the extent of integrity, independence, sense of equality and other values essential for adjudicative independence.

**Need of a permanent secretariat** - As the process is long, time-consuming and technical, so the judges who are too busy with the cases cannot devote much time for the screening of candidates. There should be a permanent secretariat to undertake it. A secretariat would bolster efforts towards an “open-ended” selection process.

Need to streamline and digitize procedures to expedite process.

A **databank** of all judges and aspirants to judicial posts can be prepared by the collegium secretariat to handle the transfers and promotions under the guidance of the Chief Justice and collegium of judges.

The membership of the collegium in each High Court and Supreme Court should be enlarged. Such enlarged body can be inclusive of women, minorities, Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes to promote the **constitutional goal of social justice** in judicial appointment.

Institutionalized education and training can be provided to advocates to become competent judges.

There should be a mechanism to receive and deal with complaints against judges without compromising on judicial independence.

The principle of the judicial independence is the one of the core values of the justice system. Administration of the justice should be inspired by such principles and there is an urgent need for efforts to translate such principles into reality.

---

**MENACE OF STRAY DOGS**

Recently the Supreme Court directed municipal authorities to stop indiscriminate killing of stray dogs even while ensuring that the canines do not become a threat to society.

**Issue:**

- Increasing incidents of children being bitten by stray dogs, series of such incidents in Kerala.
- The increase in stray dog population in public places such as hospitals, railway stations, bus stands is causing panic to the public.
- Every year more than one lakh incidents of stray dog bites are reported in the country and 11 people died due to rabies in the first six months in 2015.

**Supreme Court’s Observation:**

- Authorities need to strike a balance between compassion to stray dogs and lives of human beings.
- Humans should not suffer due to dog bite because of administrative lapses.
- Municipal authorities to follow the law under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960 and stop public lynching of stray dogs.

**Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960** allows the **Animal Welfare Board** to take all such steps as the Board may think fit to ensure that unwanted animals are eliminated by the local authorities. **Section 9(f)** empowers the Board to kill stray animals either instantaneously or after being rendered insensible to pain or suffering.

**Section 11(3)(b)(c)** provides for “destruction of stray dogs in lethal chambers” and “extermination or destruction of any animal under the authority of any law for the time being in force”.

**Way Forward**

The government must provide adequate number of dog vans with ramps for the capture and transportation of street dogs.

Authorities must provide ambulance-cum-clinical van as mobile centre for sterilisation and immunisation.
The government needed to frame a policy to protect children from stray dogs.
The bench also sought response on how to implement effective vaccination and sterilization for stray dogs for controlling their population.

10 YEARS OF RTI ACT-SUCESSES

(In May issue we had covered hindrances and failures of the act)Key facts

- The Right to Information (RTI) Act has completed 10 years of implementation. It has changed the thinking and the style of functioning of government machinery in the last 10 years.
- According to the Information Commission’s annual reports, there are at least 50 lakh RTI applications filed in India every year.
- Over the last decade, at least 2 per cent of the Indian population has used the law.

How RTI Act has spawned a new breed of activism and citizenship?

- Despite various challenges to implementation of RTI act, people have used it fiercely and owned the law like no other. People have defended it against every attack and put it to sustained use.
- In the unequal battle of trying to hold power to account, it offers sense of hope for the human desire for dignity, equality, public ethics, and the capacity to enforce these even to some extent.
- In a democracy like India people struggle every day to establish some reason in dealings in public life with assertions of citizenship, entitlements, and ethics. RTI addresses the issue of constitutional rights and empowers people to demand answers.
- RTI enthusiasts are often ordinary people, who not only file applications but also spend countless hours debating sections, cases, applications, and answers. Thus, encourage a culture of asking questions.
- The RTI provides a platform for each view to engage with the other on the basis of a shared logic. It can help us escape from policy paralysis, and build a more informed, equitable and robust decision-making process.
- RTI helps change the mindsets of those asking the questions as well, because the same standards must obviously apply.

The RTI act has ushered in a paradigm of transparency in the functioning of government institutions. It has empowered ordinary people to hold those holding political power accountable.
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

INDIA AND IBSA

Recently the cabinet approved the signing of the Tripartite Agreement among India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA), on the IBSA Fund for the Alleviation of Poverty and Hunger.

IBSA Fund:

- The IBSA Fund was set up in 2004 as one of the three pillars of cooperation under the IBSA Dialogue Forum.
- The other two pillars are consultation and coordination on global political issues and trilateral collaboration in concrete areas and projects.
- The IBSA Fund undertakes development projects in third countries. The first project to be financed by the IBSA Fund was in support of agriculture and livestock development.
- The IBSA countries contribute US$ 1 million each annually to the Fund.

INDIA RE-ELECTED AS MEMBER OF INTERNATIONAL MARITIME COUNCIL

India has been re-elected unopposed to the Council of the International Maritime Organization [IMO] under Category “B” at the 29th session of the Assembly of the IMO held in London.

About IMO:

- IMO is the United Nations specialized agency with responsibility for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships.
- Headquarters in London, United Kingdom, the IMO has 171 Member States and three Associate Members.
- The IMO Council consists of 40 member countries who are elected by the IMO Assembly.
- India has been one of the earliest members of the IMO, having ratified its Convention and had the privilege of being elected to and serving the Council of the IMO, ever since it started functioning.

INDIA, AUSTRALIA NUCLEAR DEAL TO COME INTO FORCE

India and Australia announced completion of procedures for India Australia Civil Nuclear Agreement. With the completion of procedures, including administrative arrangements, the India Australia Civil Nuclear Agreement will enter into force.

Background:

- India faced Western sanctions after testing nuclear weapons in 1998 but the restrictions eroded after a deal with the US in 2008 as well as safeguards against diversion of civilian fuel for military purposes.
- India and Australia had launched talks on uranium sales in 2012 after Australia lifted a long-time ban on exporting uranium to Delhi.
- In 2014, India and Australia signed a civil nuclear agreement which allows the export of uranium to India. The agreement allows supply of uranium for peaceful generation of power for civil use in India.
- This is a step of India achieving international acceptability for its nuclear programme despite not ratifying the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT).
Significance:

- Australia can play the role of a long-term reliable supply of uranium to India. Australia has about a third of the world’s recoverable uranium resources and exports nearly 7,000 tonnes of it a year.
- The agreement recognizes India’s commitment to and use of nuclear energy with a view to achieving sustainable development and strengthening energy security.
- The pact underlines the deepening strategic ties with Australia.

**INDIA AND KUWAIT**

Recently the Union Cabinet gave its approval for the protocol amending the Agreement between India and Kuwait for the avoidance of double taxation.

- The information received from Kuwait in respect of a resident of India can be shared with law enforcement agencies with authorization of the competent authority of Kuwait and vice versa.
- India and Kuwait signed the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) for the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income, through the Protocol.

**INDIA AND SINGAPORE ENTER INTO STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**

India and Singapore signed a joint declaration envisaging a “Strategic Partnership.” It aims to catalyze new areas of cooperation ranging from political, defence and security cooperation to economic, cultural and people-to-people contacts. Various agreements were signed during Prime Minister’s recent visit:

- **Defence cooperation:** Establishment of a regular Defence Ministers’ dialogue, joint exercises between the armed forces and cooperation between defence industries to identify areas of co-production and co-development.
- Memoranda of understanding were signed for curtailing drug trafficking and improving cyber security, enabling Singapore and India to collaborate on technology and research.
- Agreements were signed for collaboration in urban planning and wastewater management and for cooperation in the fields of arts, museums, archives and monuments.
- A MoU was signed for cooperation in a number of mutually agreed areas of civil aviation services and airport management beginning with Jaipur and Ahmedabad airports.
- India had sought Singapore’s expertise in skills development, development of tourism, particularly the Buddhist circuit and smart cities. In this connection, India is looking at the northeast for setting up a skill development institute by Singapore.

**LATEST IN INDIA AND JAPAN RELATIONS**

Japanese Prime Minister’s Upcoming Visit:

- An agreement to jointly produce amphibious military aircraft is expected to be signed during the upcoming visit of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.
  - This could be the first defence deal between the two countries.
  - It reflects Japan’s desire to have closer ties with India over maritime security to counter China’s growing assertiveness at sea.
- The civil nuclear agreement between India and Japan is expected to be inked next month when Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visits India.
  - India and Japan started the negotiations on civil nuclear agreement in 2010. However, the negotiations were stuck for long as Japan felt uncomfortable with India’s status as a non-
signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT).

- India’s Civil Liability for Nuclear Damages Act (CLND) 2010, which holds nuclear plant manufacturers partly liable in the event of nuclear accidents, was another major concern of Japan.
- However, India and Japan are expected to reach an agreement with conditions similar to the deal that India and the US signed for such matters as the management of nuclear technologies and liability for damages.
- For the energy-starved India, an agreement with Japan is important because Japanese companies have a virtual monopoly over the supply of reactor vessels, a critical component of civil nuclear plants.
- Without an agreement between the two countries, these firms cannot supply to French and American companies that have won orders to install nuclear plants in India.

- India and Japan have inked an agreement official development assistance for Chennai and Ahmedabad metros.
- In October this year, Japan had offered to finance India’s first bullet train, estimated to cost $15 billion, at an interest rate of less than 1%.
- Tokyo was also picked to assess the feasibility of building the 505-kilometer corridor linking Mumbai with Ahmedabad.
- Japan’s decision to finance projects in India is part of its broader push back against China’s involvement in infrastructure development in South Asia over the past several years.

India’s relations with Japan have undergone a significant transformation since the establishment of the India-Japan Global partnership for the 21st Century in Aug 2000 and the enhancement of its status to a ‘Special Strategic and Global Partnership’ during the PM’s visit to Japan in Sep 2014.

MILITARY REFORMS IN CHINA

China on announced a major overhaul of its military to make it more agile and combat-ready, and capable of taking the battle to its adversaries far beyond its borders and shores. Chinese President Xi Jinping announced that the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) will be cut by 300,000 personnel from its 2.3m-strong military force.

- The re-structuring will see all armed forces come under a joint operational military command to build, as President Xi Jinping put it, “an elite combat force” by 2020.
- China wants to transform its rapidly-modernizing PLA from its existing Soviet Union-style of functioning to a modern, unified military on the lines of the US forces capable of projecting power all around.
- It will also involve regrouping China’s existing seven military area commands of Beijing, Nanjing, Chengdu, Jinan, Shenyang, Lanzhou and Guangzhou into four strategic zones.
- The reforms involve strengthening the Central Military Commission (CMC) command structure over the PLA.
- China also officially admitted that it is in talks with Djibouti for an overseas logistics facility for its ongoing anti-piracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden, which many fear may convert into the country's first military base in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) in the years ahead.
Reasons behind the reforms:

- China is involved in multiple territorial disputes with other Asian countries. This means that it is at least theoretically possible that China’s military might one day face two enemies simultaneously, possibly in the East China Sea and the South China Sea. But China’s Navy is not yet mature enough to fight two wars simultaneously.
- There is still the lingering problem of corruption. Before these reforms were announced, the PLA’s Discipline Commission was relatively weak, unable to bring in its own members for justice. Now the Commission directly reports to Xi, which should, in theory, greatly enhance the Party’s ability to fight corruption nationwide.

Implications for India:

- With merging of military commands on the eastern and western part of India, the Chinese forces will now have better command and control all along the LAC. It indicates that China will continue to apply sustained pressure and maintain an 'offensive' posture towards India.
- India needs to carefully watch the ongoing military reforms in China. They are certain to lead to increase in capabilities of the PLA, especially the Navy which has now been assigned with an expanded role – i.e. carrying out the task of 'open seas protection'.
- It should recognize that tensions in the contentious South China Sea and East China Sea are certain to rise, which may have negative implications of its Act East policy.
- China’s move to have a base in Djibouti threatens India’s role as security provider in Indian Ocean Region. Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC), which could have counter-balanced China’s naval forays into the IOR, has largely failed to live up to its initial promise of a robust theatre command due to turf wars among the three Services.
- India has really not gone in for major military reforms till now to inject the much-required synergy among the Army, Navy and IAF, reduce their poor teeth-to-tail combat ratio and better utilise scarce resources to systematically build military capabilities in a cost-effective holistic manner.

INDIA, CHINA TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION ON TERROR ACTIVITIES

- In a major boost to bilateral security cooperation, China and India agreed to actively exchange intelligence on terror groups and their activities through a dedicated communication channel.
- Both India and China are facing terrorism problems, India in J&K and China from Uyghur terrorist in Xinxiang.
- It will help in cracking down on various militant groups in India's northeastern states.
- The dialogue with the Chinese authorities also covered discussions on Afghanistan and Pakistan-two countries with strong connections with global terrorism.
APEC SUMMIT, 2015

The 2015 Economic Leaders’ Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit took place between November 18 and 19 in Manila, the Philippines. The summit concluded with the Leader’s Declaration from the 21 countries represented at the summit outlining six key commitments:

Issue of India’s membership:

Background:

- India has long sought membership in the APEC forum, for strategic, diplomatic, and economic reasons.
- India doesn’t sit on the Pacific Ocean has led the grouping to see New Delhi’s participation as antithetical to the geographic logic of the organization.
- Beyond geography, the question of India’s membership hadn’t come up seriously for some time due to a moratorium on APEC membership that was established in 1997 for a ten year period and extended again in 2007 for an additional three years.
- Since 2010, with no moratorium currently in place, some APEC members have expressed concerns that India’s inclusion could offset the “balance” of the grouping away from its Pacific Rim focused given India’s clout.
- Beyond the balance issue, opponents of India’s accession to the group cite New Delhi’s tendency to drive a hard bargain in trade negotiations (at the Doha round of the WTO, for instance).

Developments at 2015 summit:

- A policy task force led by former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and the Asia Society Policy Institute (ASPI) recommended that APEC should consider India’s request for membership.
- However, the issue of India’s membership was not kept on the agenda of 2015 summit.

Why APEC needs India:

- India is the region's third largest and now fastest growing major economy. APEC economies, which account for 60 percent of global GDP, are experiencing sluggish growth and must look for opportunities to bring new markets
- India is also projected to be the world’s third largest economy by 2030 and will need well over $1 trillion of investment in infrastructure over the next decade.
- With Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement becoming into a reality APEC needs to reinvent itself.
- On the supply side, India’s labor force, which will be the largest in the world by 2030, will help offset the impact of aging populations and shrinking work forces in APEC economies.
- India’s trade with APEC economies, which has grown rapidly over the last fifteen years will grow further once it joins APEC.
- A forward-looking commitment to India’s economic future is precisely the kind of bold initiative needed to boost stubbornly sluggish regional and global growth.

Advantages for India:

- India’s inclusion in APEC will give a boost to its ‘Act East Policy’ and will further integrate the Indian economy into the Asia-Pacific economic milieu.
- Apart from facilitating greater regional economic integration, APEC promotes the development of small and medium enterprises in the member countries by ‘removing hurdles to starting a business, getting credit, dealing with permits, enforcing contracts and trading across borders.
- Inclusion of India in APEC will act as catalyst for further economic reforms in the country.
INDIA SAARC RELATIONS

Framework on Currency Swap Arrangement for SAARC Member Countries:

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister has given approval for the proposal to provide a two-year extension with amendments to the ‘Framework on Currency Swap Arrangement for SAARC Member Countries’ up to November 14, 2017.

Background:

- The Framework was formulated with the intention to provide a line of funding for short term foreign exchange requirements or to meet balance of payments crises till longer term arrangements are made or the issue is resolved in the short-term itself.
- Under the facility, RBI offers swaps of varying sizes to each SAARC Member countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) depending on their two months import requirement and not exceeding US$ 2 billion in total, in USD, Euro or INR.
- Interest would be paid by the Receiving Party on the USD/Euro/INR amount although no interest will be received on the domestic currency given in exchange thereof to the Providing Party.
- The arrangement will further financial stability in the region, besides improving the standing and credibility of India among the SAARC countries.

INDIA – MALAYSIA RELATIONS

During Prime Ministers recent visit to Malaysia, India and Malaysia signed one Agreement on Cultural Exchange Programme for 2015-2020 and two Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation in Project Delivery and Monitoring, and Cooperation on Cyber Security.

Background:

- The Parliament of India has constituted an India-Malaysia Parliamentary Friendship Group since October 2011.
- Several Agreements and MoUs have been signed between the two countries, including in the field of Commerce, Avoidance of Double Taxation, Customs matters, Higher Education, Extradition, Tourism, Traditional medicine, IT and services, Cultural Exchange, Governance, to name a few.
- India-Malaysia defence relations have steadily grown over the years. Both countries regularly hold joint army exercise called Harimau Shakti.
- Economic and commercial relations are the mainstay of the bilateral relationship. Malaysia is the third largest trading partner for India within ASEAN, and India is the largest trading partner for Malaysia from among the countries of the South, excluding China.
- India is the sixth largest source country for inbound tourism for Malaysia, on the other hand, Malaysia is the tenth largest source country for foreign tourists into India.
- There are over 130,000 Indian expats legally employed in Malaysia in professional as well as skilled and semi-skilled category.
- Malaysia has one of the largest communities of Persons of Indian Origin in the world, numbering close of 2 million (about 7 to 8% of Malaysia’s population).
- Malaysia has been sending the largest contingent to the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas.

PRIME MINISTER MODI VISIT TO UK

On 12th November 2015, prime minister Modi arrived in UK where different deals were signed between India and Britain. British and Indian companies agreed on 9 billion pounds ($13 billion) of deals as Narendra Modi became the first Indian prime minister to visit the UK in almost a decade.
The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to working together to build such an enhanced and transformative partnership for the betterment of their two countries and the world.

**£9.2 Billion of commercial deals** between the UK and India announced during the visit and listed in the annex.

The UK has accounted for 8.56% of total foreign direct investment in India during the last 15 years. Indian companies employ 110,000 people in the UK.

Both countries announced three **UK-India city partnerships** with Indore, Pune and Amravati to support India’s ambitious urban development goals through technical assistance, expertise sharing and business engagement.

Both countries have launched a new **Thames/Ganga partnership** for healthy river systems. This partnership will consist of a collaborative programme of research and innovation to enable the sustainable management of water resources in the Ganga basin and a policy expert exchange in 2016 supported by the UK Water Partnership.

Announcement of setting up of joint **India-UK Vaccine Development collaboration** between the Department of Biotechnology and Research Councils, UK.

**GLOBAL SOLAR ALLIANCE**

India continues in struggle to meet power generation goals, and conventional sources, such as coal, cannot keep up with country’s ever increasing demand. As a result, interest has shifted to renewable sources of energy.

So in this direction India’s prime minister has launched an international solar alliance of over 120 countries with the French president, at the Paris COP21 climate summit

 Ahead of this crucial climate talks, Prime Minister invited China to join the International Solar Alliance.

This new body, which has invited all countries of the world to join, is to function from the National Institute of Solar Energy in India, Gurgaon. The Centre will provide land and $30 million to form a secretariat for the Alliance, and also support it for five years.

**G-20 SUMMIT 2015**

About G-20 summit:

- G20 is a forum of the Heads of Governments of the 19 major economies and the EU for global cooperation on international economic and financial issues.
- Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, South Africa and Turkey, UK, USA and the EU, are the members of G20.
- **G-20 summit 2015:** G20 leaders met in Antalya, Turkey, on 15-16 November 2015.

India’s role in G-20:

- India has increasingly integrated with the rest of the world and plays an important role in maintaining global economic balance.
- India has voiced concerns regarding rebalancing global governance by reforming global financial institutions, checking global macroeconomic imbalances, checking protectionist measures, widening of G20 agenda to include development issues etc.
- Various officials take part in G20 Working Group meetings and voice India's concerns on those issues.
India’s concern:

- India’s main concerns are over terrorism, climate change, economic growth among others.
- Delay in implementation of quota reform of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), aimed at giving more voice and voting power to emerging economies as well as providing a pitch for cutting transaction cost for transferring money from abroad.
- The G20 leaders on 16th November backed India on the issue of quota reforms of the IMF and called for early reforms, and expressed disappointment with the delay.

PARIS ATTACK

On 13th November 2015, a series of coordinated terrorist attacks occurred in Paris. Around 130 people killed in this attack. Islamic state claimed the responsibility of this attack.

- Since Paris has been a soft target for extremists. When jihadist gunmen killed journalists at the offices of the publication, Charlie Hebdo, in January 2015, it was the press and freedom of expression that were the targets. The motivations of the gunmen, however distorted, appeared to be clear.
- The terror attacks this month, believed to be the worst ever in Europe, were however different.
- The do-and-die conspiracy was made outside France, it involved intellectual planning and sophisticated resources (like the suicide jackets that the terrorists used), and it engaged assassins of nationalities other than French as well.
- The targets-the Stade de France where a football match was on, some popular bars in central Paris, and the famous Bataclan concert hall- were all venues of culture and recreation, preoccupations that lie at the heart of French life.
- Comparing Paris attack with 26/11 attack: The terrorist attacks in Paris and prior to that in Mumbai (26/11) demonstrate that terrorists are not concentrating on Critical Infrastructure as a target of choice. Instead, they are targeting places where they can cause maximum damage to human life as well as gain wide publicity.
  (For detailed comparison, see security section of this issue)
- According to security analysts, the Paris attack didn’t require much resource and they fear more such attacks in future.
- Due to Paris attack, a rare solidarity was shown among the permanent members of UN as they unanimously ratified to fight against ISIS.
UN RESOLUTION AGAINST ISIS

The UN Security Council authorized countries around the world to “take all necessary measures” to fight the Islamic State in a resolution that won unanimous backing.

- This does not constitute an authorization for military action.
- Introduced by France, the Security Council resolution was an attempt to show international unity in the wake of the Paris attacks.

Should India join the fight against ISIS?

Arguments in favour:
- The Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Indian Army have been fighting extremists in Kashmir and eastern India for decades. India also stamped out separatism in Punjab. Such immense counter terror experience could be very valuable in the war against ISIS.
- India’s armed forces will gain invaluable experience of fighting on foreign soil.
- India has rarely intervened outside the scope of the United Nations. The country is known as the reluctant superpower because it rarely ventures into global hot spots. Its entry into war against ISIS will propel its image as a global force.

Arguments against:
- A foreign mission in Iraq and Syria will cost the Indian exchequer massively. At a time when India’s financial situation is not positive, engaging in a war against ISIS will be a financial debacle.
- Sending troops to Iraq and Syria might further cause resentment among the minorities and it can also increase the possibility of Jihadi attacks in India.
ECONOMY

THE SEVENTH PAY COMMISSION

- The Seventh Pay Commission submitted its report to Finance Minister. The commission is headed by Justice Ashok Kumar Mathur.
- The recommendations of the commission, when accepted, would provide benefit to 47 lakh serving govt employees, 52 lakh pensioners, including defence personnel.

What is a Pay Commission?

- Pay Commission is set up intermittently by government of India, and gives its recommendations regarding changes in salary structure of all civil and military divisions of the Government of India.
- The First Pay Commission was established in 1956, and since then, every decade has seen the birth of a commission.

Highlights of 7th Pay Commission:

- **23.55 per cent increase in pay** and allowances recommended
- Recommendations to be implemented from January 1, 2016
- **Minimum pay fixed at Rs 18,000 per month; maximum pay at Rs 2.25 lakh**
- The rate of annual increment retained at 3 per cent
- 24 per cent hike in pensions
- One Rank One Pension proposed for civilian government employees on line of OROP for armed forces
- **Ceiling of gratuity enhanced from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 20 lakh**: ceiling on gratuity to be raised by 25 per cent whenever DA rises by 50 per cent
- Cabinet Secretary to get Rs 2.5 lakh as against Rs 90,000 per month pay band currently
- Military Service Pay (MSP), which is a compensation for the various aspects of military service, will be admissible to the defence forces personnel only
- Short service commissioned officers will be allowed to exit the armed forces at any point in time between 7 to 10 years of service
- **Commission recommends abolishing 52 allowances**: another 36 allowances subsumed in existing allowances or in newly proposed allowances.

Financial Implications:

- Financial impact of implementing recommendations of Pay Commission on salaries will be Rs 1.02 lakh crore – Rs 73,650 crore to be borne by Central Budget and Rs 28,450 crore by Railway Budget.
- Total impact of Commission’s recommendation to raise the ratio of expenditure on salary and wages to GDP by 0.65 percentage points to 0.7 per cent
- Apart from this, One Rank One Pension payout is also to be added to this.

Opportunities:

- Tax revenue will be higher.
- Income tax alone is expected to bring back a fifth of the payouts back.
- Indirect tax collection will also increase due to consumers spending more on consumer durables, homes, financial products, everyday necessities and travel.
- Increased corporate profits would also result in increased corporate tax collections.
- It would help stimulate the economy, especially manufacturing and service industry.

Other Implications:

- But in spite of above opportunities, there remains a threat of inflationary pressure due to further pay hikes revision in states and at local levels causing much money to be following in the economy. However, the impact of 7th Pay Commission is not seen as inflationary as 6th Pay Commission implementation.
• In any case, this may force the pace of rate cut to be slowed down by the RBI to fight inflation.
• Credit rating agency Fitch said that the government may miss the fiscal consolidation roadmap and further delay the targeted rate of 3% of GDP and that it may adversely affect country’s credit rating.

**Way forward:**
Nonetheless, fortuitous combination of circumstance of low inflation, low commodity prices, excess capacity in industry, moderate inflation, etc., is just the right economic environment for the Seventh Pay Commission’s recommendations.

### YUAN IN SDR

- IMF decided to include Chinese renminbi (RMB) in the basket of currencies that make up Special Drawing Right (SDR) with effect from October 1, 2016.
- To be included as an SDR a currency must be "freely usable," "widely used," and "widely traded".
- The existing currencies in the basket are - the U.S. dollar, the euro, the Japanese yen and the British pound.

**What are SDRs?**
- Artificial currency (but is neither a currency, nor a claim on the IMF) created as international reserve asset by the IMF in 1969.
- Created in response to concerns about the limitations of gold and dollars as the sole means of settling international accounts.
- Operates as a supplement to existing reserves of member countries and augments international liquidity.
- SDRs can be exchanged for freely usable currencies.
- As of November 2015, 204 billion SDRs had been created and allocated to members (equivalent to about $285 billion).

**What does this inclusion mean?**
This inclusion has very little effect in the short term but some of its important aspects are:
- The inclusion of the RMB will enhance the attractiveness of the SDR by diversifying the basket and making it more representative of the world’s major currencies.
- This is an important milestone in the process of China’s global financial integration.
- Recognizes and reinforces China’s continuing reform progress.
- Recognizes a significant increase in the internationalization of the Chinese RMB in recent years, underpinning China’s transition to an increasingly open and market-based economy.
- Inclusion will also support the already increasing use and trading of the RMB internationally.

### MEGA FOOD PARK

**Why in news?**
Recently foundation stone of the first Mega Food Park in Telangana was laid.

**Details of the Park:**
- It will be set up with the project cost of Rs. 109 crores in an area of 78 acres.
- It will have strong backward linkage and three Primary Processing Centres (PPCs) will be set up at Medchal, Medak and Nalgonda.
- It will have facilities of Multi Commodity Cold Storage, Raw Material Warehouse, Finished Good Warehouse, Grain Silos, Deep Freeze, Turmeric Processing Facility and modern food testing lab.
• It is expected to provide direct and indirect employment to about 6000 people and benefit about 30,000 farmers in its catchment area.

What is a Mega Food Park?

A mega food park is a hub and spoke architecture comprising Collection Centres (CCs) and Primary Processing Centres (PPCs) as spokes linked to a Central Processing Centre as hub.

Collection Centres (CCs): They work as points of aggregation of the produce from individual farmers, farmer’s groups and Self Help Groups.

Primary Processing Centres (PPCs): They work as primary handling centres which use the raw materials to be processed further in CPC. A PPC serves a number of CCs in proximity. Some PPCs have inhouse facilities such as pulping, juicing etc. They have facilities such as refrigerated vans, trucks etc. to transport material to CPC in shortest possible time.

Significance of Mega Food Park:

• Major boost to the Food Processing Sector by facilitating creation of modern infrastructure for food processing with strong forward and backward linkages through a cluster based approach.
• Mechanism to link agricultural production to the market by bringing together farmers, processors and retailers.
• It ensures maximizing value addition, minimizing wastages, increasing farmers’ income and creating employment opportunities particularly in rural sector.

Issues with the Mega Food Park Scheme:

• Land acquisition - It is very difficult to get 50 acre of land, particularly in small and hilly states.
• Since most agri-business in our country happens through cooperatives, their integration into food parks is critical.
• Though the scheme gives a grant to the SPV, the SPV finds itself unable to attract the PPCs and CCs. Here, the National Mission on Food Processing could play a major role by providing the Rs. 50 Lakh grant to units within the MFPs. But the scheme is now delinked from central support and states will decide if they want to continue. State governments can, in a case-by-case basis, provide attractions to these units as well.
• The MFP scheme provides maximum grant of Rs.50 crores for setting up a MFP in minimum 50 acres of contiguous land with 50 percent contribution to the total project cost from the SPV. This “one size fits all” approach has not been able to attract the investors having more or less requirements.

Prelims 2011
Q. With what purpose is the Government of India promoting the concept of “Mega Food Parks”?
1. To provide good infrastructure facilities for the food processing industry.
2. To increase the processing of perishable items and reduce wastage.
3. To provide emerging and eco-friendly food processing technologies to entrepreneurs.
Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
(a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 only (c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Mains 2007 GS PAPER II
Q. Explain Mega Food Park Scheme of Government, of India.
GLOBAL FINANCIAL SECURITY INDEX

The Global Financial Secrecy Index ranks jurisdictions according to their secrecy and the scale of their offshore financial activities. A politically neutral ranking, it is a tool for understanding global financial secrecy, tax havens or secrecy jurisdictions, and illicit financial flows or capital flight. It is brought out by Tax Justice Network.

What is the significance of this index?

FSI directly confronts offshore secrecy and the global infrastructure that creates it by identifying as accurately as possible the jurisdictions that make it their business to provide offshore secrecy.

Highlights of 2015 Financial Secrecy Index (FSI):

- It focuses on 93 jurisdictions, including several that are not traditionally considered to be tax havens, such as China, France, Germany and Japan.
- It brings out to notice that world’s most important providers of financial secrecy harbouring assets are mostly not small islands as many suppose, but some of the world’s biggest and wealthiest countries.
- Rich OECD member countries and their satellites are the main recipients of or conduits for these illicit flows.
- Singapore’s ranking moved to fourth from the fifth place it held in the organization’s previous index in 2013, when Hong Kong placed third.

ICEGATE

Why in News?

India’s intelligence agencies and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) are considering a proposal to integrate Indian Customs Electronic Commerce and Electronic Data Interchange Gateway (ICEGATE) and the banking system to prevent illegal forex remittances and money laundering.

ICEGATE is the customs electronic repository of bills of entry, shipping bills and other import-export documents.

Background:

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate booked a series of cases involving illegal forex remittance by banks, the latest being the Rs 6,000 crore outward foreign remittance scam involving Bank of Baroda and a clutch of other banks.

Objective of the move:

The integration of ICEGATE and the banking system will help banks check the genuineness of what is Tax Justice Network?

- It is an independent body dedicated to high-level research, analysis and advocacy in the area of international tax and the international aspects of financial regulation.
- It maps, analyses and explains the role of tax and the harmful impacts of tax evasion, tax avoidance, tax competition and tax havens.

What are secrecy Jurisdiction/tax havens?

A state, country, or territory where certain taxes are levied at a very low rate or not at all and financial secrecy is used to attract illicit and illegitimate financial flows.

Bank of Baroda Scam

It is alleged that Rs 6,172 crore black money was remitted from Bank of Baroda to Hong Kong camouflaged as payments for non-existent imports like cashew, pulses and rice. The amount was allegedly deposited in 59 accounts in cash as advance for imports that never existed. The scam involved two types of transactions -

Transaction one – Duty Drawback

A company exports goods at a higher price to their own fake companies in order to take benefit of duty drawback scheme of the government.

What is Duty drawback scheme?

It is a refund given by the government to recoup the amount paid by way of custom and excise duties on the raw materials used and service tax on input services used for the manufacture of exported goods. It is used to promote exports.

Transaction two – advance remittances for imports

These funds are part payment that an importer makes to confirm his imports. Generally, after the initial advance is paid, an exporter sends the remaining amount either on receipt of the goods or after a lag, depending on the negotiation. Banks on their part have to check if the remaining amount is sent and the goods have landed by confirming it with import documentation.
bills produced by importers and exporters before remitting money. It is a positive development and will aid in addressing the risks involving export/import transactions.

**REGULATORY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**Why in news?**

New efforts to reform regulatory architecture to attract investments from abroad for the success of ‘MAKE IN INDIA’

**Background:**

In August 2012, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs set up the Committee for Reforming the Regulatory Environment for Doing Business in India. The Committee Observations Regarding RIA:

- Mindless explosion of regulations impact seriously on management time and cost and has created a negative perception of the regulatory environment.
- It recommended a formal system of regulatory impact assessment (RIA) in order to determine whether the effort involved and costs required to be incurred are commensurate with the results sought to be achieved.
- It cautioned against regulatory overreach.
- A regulatory impact assessment of every proposed regulation should precede the public consultation process.

**What is Regulatory Impact Assessment?**

Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) examines and measures the likely benefits, costs and effects of new or changed regulations. It provides decision-makers with valuable empirical data and a comprehensive framework in which they can assess their options and the consequences, their decisions may have.

**The benefits of RIA:**

- Improving the quality and efficiency of government interventions.
- Enhancing competitiveness.
- Increasing transparency and accountability.
- Reducing opportunities for corruption.
- A tool for policy monitoring and evaluation.
- In countries similar to India the annual cost of government regulation accounts for 10-20 per cent of GDP. This means even small improvements in regulatory efficiency can have large payoffs in national income.
- The returns on investment for RIA in reducing regulatory costs are increasingly well documented. The US Office of Management and Budget reports that each dollar spent on complying with regulations produces more benefits.

**RIA: A consumer’s perspective**

The compliance cost ultimately passes on to consumers whose interest is sought to be protected through these regulations.

**JUTE PRICE RISE**

**Background:**

Recently prices of certain grades of raw jute have gone up over 50 percent which has raised serious concerns among jute mill owners.
Reasons for the price rise:
- Crop damage in Nadia and Murshidabad districts of Bengal on account of flood.
- Bangladesh’s ban on export of raw jute.
- Hoarding by traders which has created artificial supply shortage.

Government’s Steps:
Stock limits, De-hoarding Operation -
- Appropriate measures for notifying stock limits for raw jute for balers, traders and millers.
- To undertake de-hoarding measures with the help of State Government.
- To make available jute produced during off-season.

Lifting of export ban by Bangladesh - Department of Commerce and Ministry of External Affairs have been requested to take up the matter with their counterparts in Bangladesh for lifting the ban on export of raw jute

Promoting Jute Cultivation - Long-term measures shall be taken by the State Government and Department of Agriculture

KELKAR PANEL TO REVITALIZE PPP

Why in news: Recently report of the Kelkar Committee on Revisiting & Revitalizing the PPP model of Infrastructure Development was submitted. In Budget Speech 2015-16, the Union Finance Minister had announced that the PPP mode of infrastructure development has to be revisited, and revitalized.

The Terms of Reference of the Committee were as follows:
- Review of the experience of PPP Policy.
- Analysis of risks involved in PPP projects and existing framework of sharing of such risks between the project developer and the Government.
- Suggest optimal risk sharing mechanism.
- Propose design modifications to the contractual arrangements of the PPP.
- Measure to improve capacity building in Government for effective implementation of the PPP projects.

Why PPP needs a review?
India has emerged as the largest PPP market in the world with over 900 projects in various stages of development. But there has been significant downward trend in the infrastructure investment during the first three years of the Twelfth Plan which has been due to sharp decline in the private sector investment. The leading reason for slowdown in the investment in the last few years has been “stalling of projects” particularly the rate is much higher in the private sector projects.

Major weaknesses in the present PPP contract framework are:
1. The rigidities in contractual arrangements.
2. Existing contracts focus more on fiscal benefits than on efficient service provision.
3. It neglects principles of allocating risk to the entity best able to manage it.
4. There are no ex-ante structures for renegotiation and ineffective dispute redressal mechanism.
5. Contracts are over-dependent on market wisdom.
6. Enforcement and monitoring of terms of Concession Agreement has been weak.
7. A more robust regulatory environment, with an independent regulator, is essential.
8. The PPP program lacks a comprehensive database regarding the projects/studies to be awarded under PPP.
9. The project development activities such as detailed feasibility study, land acquisition, environmental/forest clearances, etc., are not given adequate importance.
10. The limited institutional capacity to undertake large and complex projects at various Central ministries and especially at state and local bodies’ level hinder the translation of targets into projects.
11. In several cases aggressive bidding has been the main reason for failure.
Issues related to contract financing:
1. A large number of projects are struck or delayed turning many bank loans into NPAs and constraining further bank lending to infrastructure projects.
2. Stranded and stressed project have led to shrinking of equity in PPP projects.
3. Slowdown in fresh equity inflows have led to over-leveraged balance sheets of developers, constraining several domestic players from making further investments.
4. The current practice of financing large infrastructure projects based on revenue streams spread over 20 to 30 years, but with project debt having tenure of 10 to 15 years, is unsustainable.
5. In the absence of long-term financing instruments, it is becoming increasingly difficult to finance the growing requirements of infrastructure.

What is 3P India?
- As announced in the Union Budget 2014-15, the Government is in the process of setting up 3P India with a corpus of Rs 500 crore to provide support to mainstreaming PPPs and to enable focussed attention on accelerating the delivery of efficient PPPs.
- It is suggested that the task for restructuring of the PPP contracts may be entrusted to this body that may house specialized skills in the area.
- The institution may have experts from a wide background including industry, financial institutions, lenders, etc. with the requisite skill sets.
- It may also evolve PPP models to enable attracting private investments in sectors like Railways, Airports and also “social” sectors.
- This entity could also assist project promoters (public agencies) in identification, structuring and hand holding for a designated fee.

TECHNOLOGY ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT FUND UNDER NMP

Why in News?
Recently, Technology Acquisition and Development Fund (TADF) was launched under National Manufacturing Policy being implemented by Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP).

What is TADF?
It is a new scheme to facilitate acquisition of Clean, Green & Energy Efficient Technologies available in India or globally, by Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

Under the Scheme which would be implemented through Global Innovation and Technology Alliance (GITA), a joint venture company, support to MSME units is envisaged by the following:
I. Direct Support for Technology Acquisition
II. In-direct Support for Technology Acquisition through Patent Pool
III. Technology / Equipment Manufacturing Subsidies
IV. The scheme will give boost to green manufacturing by facilitating resource conservation activities in industries located in NIMZ.

Significance of TADF:
- Technology development and upgradation is critical to attaining the objectives of the National Manufacturing Policy.
- Going up the technology ladder is the quickest way to become globally competitive and ensure sustained growth of the manufacturing sector.
- It will help in development of indigenous technological expertise
- It will also help to make crucial technology acquisitions in the global market.
- Through facilitating green technology it will give an impetus for sustainable development.
- It will catalyse the manufacturing growth in MSME sector to contribute to the national focus of “Make in India”.

**Mains 2012**

List the main objectives of the National Manufacturing Policy (NMP), 2011

**Prelims 2012**

What is/are the recent policy initiative(s) of Government of India to promote the growth manufacturing sector?

1. Setting up of National Investment and Manufacturing Zones.
2. Providing the benefit of ‘single window clearance’.
3. Establishing the Technology Acquisition and Development Fund.

Select the correct answer using codes given below:

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

**ALSO IN NEWS**

**RISE IN PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS’S NPA**

**Why in news?**

Banks have reported a 26.8 per cent rise in Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) over the 12 month period ending September 2015.

As per CARE, overall NPAs now amounts to Rs 3,35,685 crore with rise in last 12 months being Rs. 71,000 crore rupees.

Major sectors causing NPAs include - infrastructure, metals, textiles, chemicals, engineering and mining that together constitute about 36 % of overall bad assets.
Way Forward

A proper credit risk management should be ensured. Proper structuring of various credit facilities based on proper analysis of cash flows of the borrowers should be done which would result into realistic payment schedules. A ‘one size fits all’ approach may not work for all the borrowers.

MANUFACTURING SECTOR: HOW TO ATTRACT BEST TALENT

Why in news?
To deal with lack of talented professionals in manufacturing sector, the Government reportedly tried to get the first slot of placement season in a premium institute reserved for engineering firms rather than consultancy and financial sector firms.

However, the above approach is misguided, because

- Professionals choose industry on the market forces of pricing. Services sector pays more salary, hence top talent leave manufacturing sector.
- Manufacturing firms in India are not involved in much R&D related work unlike China and hence do not require many professionals to solve new problems.
- It also results in routine nature of work and lower salaries which are not competitive.
- India lags in advanced manufacturing like microelectronics, materials or aircraft manufacture.

Way Forward:

Only manufacturing sector can provide jobs to ever-increasing population of India and as such to attract and retain the best talent and to grow the sector, following steps need to be taken -

- The sector needs to move beyond maintenance engineers towards R & D.
- Government must develop a framework to support firms doing indigenous R&D. China’s Huawei and ZTE who developed standards and equipment for 5G mobile technologies received substantial state support
- India needs to spend more money on R & D as currently a paltry 0.95 % of its GDP as compared to 2.8 % by US and 1.98 % by China.

IMF REFORMS

Why in news?
The G20 communique backed India on the issue of quota reforms of the International Monetary Fund and called for early reforms, and expressed disappointment with the delay in these reforms.

Why IMF Quota and Governance Reforms:

- Borrowing rights and voting in IMF is based upon the quota a country has.
- Currently, G7 countries hold more than 40 per cent of quota with US owning approximately 18 per cent quota.
- This scheme does not reflect the present world economic order and so emerging countries, BRICS and G20 often demand for reforms in the present system.
- The reforms required 70 per cent votes but due to tilting of voting system in favour of USA and other developed nations, reforms process is very slow.
- As of November 2015, 166 members having 80.40 per cent of total quota (above 70 per cent required) had consented for quota reforms.
- In 2010, quota of developing countries were increased but at the cost of quota of poor countries.
- On the front of governance reforms, currently 5 out of 24 directors are permanently decided by five largest quota holders.
- For the governance reforms to go through, it requires 85 per cent votes, so making it even more challenging.
Benefits for India:

- India’s quota will rise from 2.445 per cent to 2.75 per cent.
- India will become 8th largest quota holder from current 11th largest.
- More voting rights and borrowing capacity for India.
- India will have more say in decision making.

SPECIAL AGENCY FOR CORPORATE FRAUD

Background:

First suggested in the aftermath of the Satyam fraud, in which the auditor was also implicated, the Companies Act 2013 requires the constitution of National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA), which has been bestowed with significant powers not only in issuing the authoritative pronouncements, but also in regulating the audit profession.

At present, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) has authority to investigate and take disciplinary action in cases in which an auditor is involved. Any fraud below the threshold set by the government could still be investigated by the professional association.

Details of the proposed body:

- It will be formed under the Companies Act 2013 provisions.
- The agency will be mandated to investigate auditing and accounting frauds certain classes of listed companies or those of Rs 500 crore and more, either suo motu or on referral by the Centre.
- It will have forensic auditors on its panel.
- It will have an overarching role to regulate chartered accountants.

What is Forensic Audit?

A forensic audit is the process of reviewing a person’s or companies financial statements to determine if they are accurate and lawful. It is used to detect corporate accounting frauds.

Mains 2014:

Q. With a consideration towards the strategy of inclusive growth, the new companies bill, 2013 has indirectly made CSR a mandatory obligation. Discuss the challenges expected in its implementation in right earnest. Also discuss other provisions in the bill and their implications.

RBI RELAXES ECB NORMS

- The limit for Indian companies for raising funds - with minimum average maturity of 3 years - increased to $50 million from $20 million.
- Companies can take ECB route for raising 10-year funds which is capped at five years now.
- The list of overseas lenders expanded to include long term lenders like sovereign wealth funds, pension funds and insurance companies.

Why important?

- This step will help in raising loans overseas for Indian companies.
- This is also a step towards fuller capital account convertibility.
SOCIAL ISSUES

TRANSGENDER POLICY

Why in news?
Kerala has become the first state to have a policy for transgenders.

Kerala’s Transgender Policy

- The policy envisages to end the societal stigma towards the sexual minority group and ensure them non-discriminatory treatment.
- The policy aims to enforce the constitutional rights of transgenders (TGs), taking into account the Supreme Court judgement (2014) and the findings of the recent Kerala State TG Survey.
- The policy covers all the categories of TGs, including male to female TGs and intersex people.
- It emphasises the right of the minority group to self-identify themselves as man, woman or TG as stated in the Supreme Court judgement.
- It also ensures them equal access to social and economic opportunities, resources and services, right to equal treatment under the law, right to live life without violence and equitable right in all decision making bodies.
- It also recommends the setting up of a TG Justice Board with state Minister for Social Justice as its chairperson.

GENDER INEQUALITY – TERRITORIAL ARMY

Recently the Delhi High Court issued notices to the Defence Ministry and the Territorial Army on a petition challenging a provision in the law governing the Territorial Army that prohibits recruitment of gainfully employed women.

Concerns:

- Not allowing women to join amounts to “institutional discrimination,” which violates fundamental freedoms and human rights.
- Discrimination on grounds of gender went against the spirit of the Constitution.
- At present, TA recruits only males (gainfully employed).
- The country ranks 127th on gender inequality index and 114th on gender gap in the world.

Way forward:

Gender equality is of vital importance for growth of the country. Achieving gender equality in the country should be seen as a long-time war and not a one-time battle. Time has come when India should begin a meaningful conversation on gender equality and do away with such institutional discrimination against women.

Territorial Army

- The Territorial Army is the country’s second line of defence, after the regular army. It comprises volunteers who receive military training for mobilisation in emergency situations.
- The Territorial Army is not an occupation or a source of employment. Gainful employment or self-employment in a civil profession was a pre-requisite for joining the Territorial Army.
- It also helps in maintenance of essential services in situations where life is affected or the security of the country is threatened.
- Under the provisions of the Territorial Army Act women are not eligible to join the organization.
**OBESITY**

India is the third most obese country in the world according to an independent research body. Obesity has emerged as the new killer disease making the young vulnerable to long-term chronic diseases like cardiovascular issues, diabetes and blood pressure fluctuations.

**Concerns:**

- Obesity is plaguing children, who often become overweight due to factors like lack of physical activity, unhealthy eating habits, increasing reliance on convenience foods and hormonal issues.
- Globally, in 2013, the number of overweight children under the age of five, is estimated to be over 42 million.
- Childhood obesity puts them at the risk of developing non-communicable diseases like diabetes and cardiovascular diseases at a younger age.
- With 13 per cent Indians found to be suffering from obesity, the country faces a major risk of a heart disease epidemic.
- Obesity in young people is leading to premature heart attacks - People in their late 20s and early 30s are being diagnosed with heart diseases.

**SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RAMLILA**

- It was a seven-day long festival organised by Indira Gandhi National Center for Arts under Ministry of Culture at Delhi.
- The First International Conference on Ramlila was held in Trinidad & Tobago in 2013.
- Ramlila tradition of India has been inscribed in “Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity” by the UNESCO in 2005.
- Organising such festivals with international participation helps India in communicating its “Soft power”

**WORLD INDOLOGY CONFERENCE**

- The Rashtrapati Bhavan hosted for the first time a World Indology Conference in collaboration with Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)
- Indologists from across the world along with senior scholars from India deliberated on various topics related to Indian culture and philosophy.
- A ‘Distinguished Indologist’ Award was presented by President Mukherjee to Prof. Stietencron from Germany. This award includes US$ 20000 and a Citation.

**Benefits:**

- Indology has a global pool of scholars who can project India’s core civilizational values effectively on the global stage.
- Inclusiveness and universality that are found in the Vedanta and the Upanishads are the prime features of Indology which are particularly relevant to the violent world affairs of the twenty-first century.
- This conference showcases the importance that the government attaches to Indology as it sheds light on Indian civilizational achievements.
- The high values, written and unwritten culture, duties and the way of life that is the essence of India will help in reinforcing civilizational values that will bind together the complex diversity of modern day India.

**What is Indology?**

It is the academic study of the history and cultures, languages, and literature of the Indian subcontinent.

Prof. Stietencron is also one of the founding members of Orissa Project, which focuses on history and socio-cultural significance of Jagannath cult in Orissa. He was also awarded Padma Shri in 2004.
SOCIAL INNOVATION

It refers to “new Solutions to social challenges that have the intent and effect of equality, justice and empowerment”

Examples of Social Innovation in India: Self-help groups, Co-operatives, Micro credit societies, Distance learning, community courts - new ideas that work to meet pressing unmet needs and improve peoples’ lives.

Importance:

- Provides a unique opportunity to step back from a narrow way of thinking about social enterprises, business engagement, and philanthropy and to recognize instead the interconnectedness of various factors and stakeholders.
- Helps in changing social power structure
- Important for sustainable economic growth by helping in developing alternative models of economic growth that enhance rather than damage human relationships and well-being.
- Opens up new markets that require social solutions.
- Integrates marginalized populations into the formal economy and involves citizens in public decision-making.
- Finally, it not only contributes to the mobilization of people in the innovation process but also provides the impetus for economic growth and social equality.

Way forward:

- Need to focus on proper coordination and integration of these activities in national and regional socio-economic planning.
- Education and research in science, technology, and innovation must go beyond focusing on elite science and begin to support science that is focused more directly on meeting diverse social needs.
- Rejuvenating the social base through a heavy investment in capacity building and creating a platform conducive to interaction and collaboration are prerequisites for social innovators to prosper.
- Need to strengthen Public-private partnerships since they play an important role in supporting social innovations.

CHANGING GENDER DYNAMICS IN FAMILY

- Among families with one to four children, more boys are born than girls.
- Among families with more than four children, a sudden reversal begins to take place, as girls become more common than boys.
- Families that are unable to practice sex selection, or choose not to, are likely to continue with more pregnancies in the hope of a male child.
- So large families are more likely to have more girls, as the desire for a male child is what is spurring the size of the family.
- As family sizes got smaller over the last decade, these processes have only intensified.
- The magnitude of disparity between small families with more boys than girls and large families with more girls than boys has sharpened between 2001 and 2011.

Why sons?

- Economic Utility: which is in the form of assistance in agricultural production, wage earning and old age security
- Social Utility: From the kinship pattern and descent system, having a male child strengthens the status and power of the family, and also that the family receives premium in the form of dowry
- Religious Utility: The importance of male only who can light the funeral pyre and perform pind daan of his parents providing salvation to their souls.

New data from census reveals that the desire for a male child in India still
3G IN INDIA

- India will have over half a billion unique mobile subscribers, accounting for 13 per cent of the world’s mobile population by the end of 2015.
- However, only 11 per cent of mobile connections were on 3G, majority of the mobile population is still on 2G.

Challenges for telecom industries in future:
- 3G is the fundamental platform for delivery of services, the people still on 2G will not be able to participate in this economy.
- Ensuring high-quality, widely available and affordable mobile broadband will be critical.
- Requirement of regulatory framework and approach to spectrum that encourages investment and innovation.

REQUIREMENT FOR NATIONAL POLICY FOR OPTICAL FIBRE

Why Optical fibre cable (OFC) is important?
- Mobile spectrum is limited.
- With the help of OFC, wi-fi hotspot can be created and internet coverage can be improved upto 90%.
- Better speed and data transfer as compared to spectrum.

Hurdles:
- Digging trenches in cities to lay fibre is time consuming task.
- Delays in Grant of permissions for digging.

Policies that can adopted by Government:
- Government should mandate every new building to have provision for OFC in design plan like it is required in case of other amenities - electricity, water pipeline.
- Industry and the government will have to work together in increasing supply of bandwidth in the country.
- Government should open with private players for rolling out OFC across country.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF SIR CHANDRASEKHARA VENKATA RAMAN

Notable works:
- Raman Effect: Explained the scattering of light passing through a transparent material. He won the 1930 Nobel Prize in Physics for this discovery.
- Worked on the vibrations in musical instruments & nature of the sound of the Indian drums such as the tabla, mridangam & violin.
- Experimental and theoretical studies on the diffraction of light by waves of ultrasonic and hypersonic frequencies.

Contributions of telecom industry in India:
- About 6.1% of the total GDP.
- Created 4 million in jobs directly and indirectly.
- One of the pillars of JAM Trinity. Mobile phones allowing direct transfers of funds into beneficiary's accounts, cutting out all the intermediaries.

His 45th death anniversary on 21st November 2015 and 128th birth anniversary on 7th November 2015.
Honors and awards

- He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of London early in his career (1924) and knighted in 1929.
- In 1930 he won the Nobel Prize in Physics.
- In 1954 he was awarded the Bharat Ratna
- India celebrates National Science Day on 28 February of every year to commemorate the discovery of the Raman effect in 1928.
- He was the first Asian and first non-white to receive any Nobel Prize in the sciences. Before him Rabindranath Tagore (also Indian) had received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913.

NANOTECHNOLOGY TO RECREATE BONES

Scientists at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru suggest that ‘3D Blocks’ of graphene composites can be used for bone tissue regeneration as they mimic the environment of the bone.

- Graphene will be used for strengthening Polycaprolactone (PCL) — a biodegradable polymer which will be used for bone support
- The purpose of the PCL is to provide only a temporary home for the regenerating cells & allowing for healthy tissue to eventually replace the scaffold.
- Nanotechnology will be used to create 3D structure of Graphene

What is Graphene?

Graphene form of carbon consisting of planar sheets (2D structure) which are one atom thick, with the atoms arranged in a honeycomb-shaped lattice.

Graphene is frequently in news recently. What is its importance?

1. It is a two-dimensional material and has good electrical conductivity.
2. It is one of the thinnest but strongest materials tested so far.
3. It is entirely made of silicon and has high optical transparency.
4. It can be used as ‘conducting electrodes’ required for touch screens, LCDs and organic LEDs.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only     (b) 3 and 4 only     (c) 1, 2 and 4 only     (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

NEW INFLUENZA VIRUSES LIKELY TO INFECT INDIANS

- India should be prepared for the invasion of new influenza viruses H9N2 and H7N9, which is currently very active in poultry markets in Bangladesh and China
- Earlier Indians were infected by H5N1 virus in 2006 that came from China.
What does H and N stands for in Influenza virus

- Influenza viruses are divided into subtypes based on two proteins on the surface of the virus:
  - the hemagglutinin (H) and
  - the neuraminidase (N).
- There are 18 different hemagglutinin subtypes and 11 different neuraminidase subtypes.

**NISAR MISSION COLLABORATION OF ISRO AND NASA**

- The NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) mission will be the biggest collaboration between these two space organizations.
- The mission is to build a 2,600 kg satellite for detailed view of Earth by using advanced radar imaging.
- It is expected launched from Indian launch vehicle by 2020.
- **Payload**
  - L-band (24-centimeter wavelength): To be produced by NASA.
  - S-band (12-centimeter wavelength): To be produced by ISRO.

**Functions of NISAR:**

- Observe and take measurements of some of the planet’s most complex processes, including ecosystem disturbances, ice-sheet collapse, and natural hazards such as earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes and landslides.
- To predict changes in Earth’s topography.
- To create the world’s largest freely available remote sensing data set.

**Earlier collaborations between NASA and ISRO:**

- **2005 Chandrayaan-I** mission where Moon Mineralogy mapper from NASA accompanied the mission, resulting in “joint-discovery” of water on moon.
- **2014 Mars Orbiter Mission (Mangalyaan)** where NASA’s navigational expertise in deep space trajectory and maneuverability aided the mission.

**'LI-FI' LED LIGHT BULBS TO TRANSMIT GIGABIT-LEVEL WIRELESS DATA**

- Until now, wireless data was facilitated by Bluetooth (for low-speed, short distance wireless communication,) cellular signals (wide range 3G, and soon 4G etc.) or WiFi (broadband wireless within rooms, buildings and open areas).
- Recent developments are pointing to a new-generation technology that uses LED light to transmit data known as **Li-Fi** (loosely expanding to Light-Fidelity).
- Using precisely controlled light modulation, data can be transmitted using regular, visible light.
- Its speeds will be between 10 and
100 times faster than current-generation WiFi.

- Transmission range of this technology is limited compared to a radio frequency based technologies like Wi-Fi.
  - Range is inversely proportional to frequency

**Current applications:**

- Used in enabling of household appliances and devices communication
- Used in high-speed point-to-point networking devices that deliver backbone network support.
- Data-laden lights can continue to function for regular illumination, lighting up rooms while continuing to transmit ultra-broadband data.
ENVIRONMENT

DOYANG LAKE, NAGALAND ATTRACTS AMUR FALCON

- Amur Falcons are the migratory bird that stay every year at Doyang lake during their flight from Mongolia to South Africa
- Pangti village in Nagaland is considered as the world’s Amur Falcon capital
- Centre will soon develop the Doyang Lake (Nagaland) area as an eco-tourism spot for bird-watchers across the world.
- Until recently, Amur falcons were hunted by Naga tribesmen for meat.
- Now tribal groups are working for its conservation, owing to proper motivation, training and mindset changes effected by various wildlife conservation bodies, activists.

INDIA AND SENDAI AGREEMENT FOR DISASTER REDUCTION

- India has been designated as the Champion for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) for its efforts to facilitate regional support towards enabling community resilience in the Asia-Pacific region.
- United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), has declared India first regional champion after the Sendai Agreement.

What is Sendai Agreement?

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 was adopted at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in March 2015 in Sendai (Miyagi, Japan).

- It is a 15-year non-binding agreement
- It says that state has the primary role to reduce disaster risk but that responsibility should be shared with other stakeholders including local government and the private sector.
- It is improved version of the existing Hyogo Framework.

AIM- The substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries.

The Sendai Framework Priorities:

1. Understanding disaster risk;
2. Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk;
3. Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience;
4. Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response, and to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Sendai Framework’s seven global targets:

1. Substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2030, aiming to lower average per 100,000 global mortalities between 2020-2030 compared to 2005-2015;
2. Substantially reduce the number of affected people globally by 2030, aiming to lower the average global figure per 100,000 between 2020-2030 compared to 2005-2015;
3. Reduce direct disaster economic loss in relation to global gross domestic product by 2030;
4. Substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, among them health and educational facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030;
5. Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020;
6. Substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of the framework by 2030;

7. Substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments to the people by 2030.

NGT ASKS CENTRE & STATES TO PROTECT WETLANDS

The National Green Tribunal has asked centre and the various states for identification and protection of wetlands.

Prevailing Problems:

- Restoration and conservation of wetlands becomes impossible once they are destroyed, as these are neither identified nor categorized.
- States, in coordination with the central government, failed to performed their statutory duty of identifying all wetlands in their respective jurisdiction as per the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules
- Centre had violated sections of the Environment Protection Act 1986 which has increased the risk of losing the wetlands.
- Govt. has failed to prevent activity in and around the wetlands, as inventoried by ISRO in 2007 and 2011

Importance of Wetlands:

- Vital part of the hydrological cycle, are highly productive, support exceptionally large biological diversity
- Provides services such as waste assimilation, water purification, flood mitigation, erosion control, ground water recharge, micro climate regulation.
- supporting many significant recreational, social and cultural activities besides being a part of the cultural heritage

CSE 2009: Discuss the wetlands and their role in ecological conservation in India.

CSE 2010: List any eight ‘Ramsar’ wetland sites located in India. What is the ‘Montreux Record’ and what Indian sites are included in this Record?

CSE Prelims 2012:

With reference to the wetlands of India, consider the following statements:

1. The country’s total geographical area under the category of wetlands is recorded more in Gujarat as compared to other States.

2. In India, the total geographical area of coastal wetlands is larger than that of inland wetlands. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only  (b) 2 only  (c) Both 1 and 2  (B) Neither 1 nor 2

POOR URBAN PLANNING CAUSED FLOODS IN CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu and parts of Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka receive winter monsoon, also known as ‘retreat’ of the monsoon. Apart from heavy rainfall poor urban planning has aggravated the situation.
Fault in planning

- The trend of reckless illegal construction that has shut outlets for water
- At least 300 water bodies have been converted into residential areas
- Most waterways, tanks and reservoirs are choked with silt, and their flow channels and banks have been encroached upon.
- Disconnected storm water drains preventing overflow from lakes and reservoirs to go straight into the sea thereby causing flooding on roads.
- Such disasters could have been prevented through planning, curbs on occupation of water bodies, and pre-monsoon desilting of drains and water channels.
- A key factor that should be taken into account is that the city needs an intricate drainage system to match its tremendous development.

It is a must task for the government to implement the real solution-keeping water bodies free of construction and habitation.

**FROM CBDR TO INDC**

- Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR–RC) is a principle within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that acknowledges the different capabilities and differing responsibilities of individual countries in addressing climate change.
- The principle of CBDR–RC is enshrined in the 1992 UNFCCC treaty, which was ratified by all participating countries.
- CBDR-RC has served as a guiding principle as well as a source of contention in the UN climate negotiations. Reflecting CBDR-RC, the Convention divided countries into “Annex I” and “non-Annex I,” the former generally referring to developed countries and the latter to developing countries. Under the Convention Annex I countries have a greater mitigation role than non-Annex-I countries.

**Reasons behind collapse of CBDR-RC:**

- **Starting of discomfort among Annex-I countries:** Many western countries were not ready to put constraints on their economies for a global cause that had no direct and immediate returns.
- **Growth of China:** The rapid growth of China from the 1990s too had started to hurt the interests of the West. Stricter emission standards for their industries would have made their products even more non-competitive against Chinese goods. It helped their case that China’s emissions had overtaken the US as the world’s leading emitter of GHGs.
- **U.S role:** The US refused to ratify the Kyoto Protocol and, for the first time since the birth of UNFCCC, started playing a proactive role in shaping the global architecture on climate change. The argument was that without restraining the emissions of China-and India, Brazil, South Africa, Mexico, etc.-no effective fight against global warming could be launched.
- **Some of these countries, including Japan, Australia and Canada, walked out of the Kyoto Protocol.**
- **After several rounds of bargaining, persuasion and threats, the current formulation—on the basis of which a new agreement is to be finalized in Paris next month—was decided in Durban in 2013.**

Emission cut as INDCs: Now every country needed to take demonstrable action, the quantum and extent of which was to be decided by the country itself.

(For Details of INDC refer October Notes)
SECURITY

PARIS ATTACKS WHY FRANCE?

- France has been at the forefront of the ongoing operations against the ISIS (Daesh) in Syria.
- France has one of the largest Muslim populations in Europe, and its Muslim minority remains less integrated into the national mainstream and has grievances against the French government’s not-so-friendly way of mainstreaming them.

A Comparative Analysis of Paris vis-à-vis Mumbai Terror Attack

Similarities:
- To target the economy and tourism by generating shock and a searing impact
- Popular eating joints and restaurants in urban area
- Suicide attackers with “no expectation of survival”
- Precise, multiple-coordinated, unexpected manner in which terrorists executed their plan.
- Multiple teams simultaneously hitting different places
- Armed with AK-47’s and sprayed bullets indiscriminately
- Took hostages at the Le Bataclan concert hall and Taj Mahal hotel respectively.
- Low-cost resources
- Large-scale killing, targeted against the general public; citizens being targeted within the safety of their own countries
- Lack of precise intelligence

Differences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role of Non State actors</th>
<th>Paris attacks seem to have been self-directed</th>
<th>Planned and directed by the LeT leadership based in Pakistan. It was monitored and micromanaged by professional handlers from the moment it was conceived till the last jihadi was killed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Sense of stigmatisation</td>
<td>Motivated by money and hope for a better life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio- Economic Conditions of attackers</td>
<td>Europeans of Arab descent. Five were French and the rest Belgian nationals, born in their respective countries, and their act had a lot to do with their local circumstances</td>
<td>Youth belonging to the lower strata who joined the jihad for money and hope of a better life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern means of communication</td>
<td>No, Mostly avoided</td>
<td>Yes, GPS coordinated, Satellite communication, Live telecasted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response of other stakeholders - Hospital</td>
<td>Well equipped state-of-art facility</td>
<td>Our hospitals were not equipped to deal with such massive massacre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Response</td>
<td>Volunteered with open Heart</td>
<td>We had no volunteers to reach out or find out the relatives of the victims, which we later did through proper network</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indian Scenario:

ISIS is a clear and present danger to India. We need to address this threat before it acts.
While Indian agencies are ruling out any immediate threat, it is clear that a new version of the IS style of attacks, **very low cost, but high impact**, is a high possibility in the country.

The political establishment needs to wake up to the possibility of local grievances finding global echo and refuge in IS propaganda.

**Indian Preparedness Level:**

- Our technological, material and human resource preparedness to deal with terror continues to be abysmal.
- Despite 26/11, the Indian intelligence agencies continue to be ill-equipped to prevent future attacks.

India should therefore, check extremism of all kinds, equip and constantly monitor the agencies, preferably by a joint parliamentary committee.

---

### MEGA CITY SECURITY CONFERENCE – MUMBAI

**About The Conference**

- Organised by the **US Consulate General**.
- Conference featured policymakers, law enforcement officials, security experts, and leading thinkers representing eight different countries.
- They shared **first-hand experience dealing with security policy** in some of the world's largest megacities such as Mumbai, New York, Istanbul, Chicago, Manila, Dhaka, Nairobi, and Mexico City.
- Security experts of four mega cities of the world – Mumbai, London, Manila and New York, emphasised on **better networking among stakeholders** in their bid to prevent terror attacks.
- They also raised the crucial **issue of funding of terrorist organisations** and advocated stopping the terror groups funding as it involves huge money to train operatives, getting sophisticated equipment, weapons and other logistics.

---

### INDIA- US COOPERATION ON INTERNAL SECURITY

- In 2011, US-India Homeland Security Dialogue was created, which was the first **comprehensive bilateral dialogue** on homeland security issues between our two countries.
- The dialogue covers a **wide range of activities** linked to enhancing homeland security coordinated by Department of Homeland Security US and Ministry of Home Affairs.
- It has enhanced **operational cooperation** in investigations, capacity building, and countering threats.
- The US Department of State Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) programme, operated by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, provided training to over 250 Indian law enforcement officers over the past year, both at courses in India and the United States.
- Each year, on average 10 ATA training courses named “trains the trainer” for Indian law enforcement officials in areas such as Senior Crisis Management, investigative techniques, explosive incident counter measures, and community policing are being held by US to enhances the capability of thousands of police officers across India.

---

### MUMBAI IN GLOBAL NETWORK OF CITIES ON TERROR FIGHT

- Mumbai has now become part of a **network of international cities** that will **exchange techniques and develop infrastructure** to combat extremism and strengthen their cyber security system.
- The network, formed at the **UN level**, has promised Maharashtra government to help in developing infrastructure to tackle extremism and fortify cyber security mechanism.
- Mumbai is the **only city from Asia** to be part of the network of 25 international cities, which are badly affected by terrorist activities in recent times.
- The group will serve as a common platform among these cities to exchange techniques and develop infrastructure to combat terrorism.
- The first meeting of representatives of these 25 cities was held in New York last week. At the conclave, they decided to set up a corpus.
- New York, London, Paris, Denver, Oslo, Stockholm, Montreal and Copenhagen are the other prominent cities included in the network.
- The **only criterion for the selection** was that the city should be the **financial hub** of its respective country and affected by terrorism.

**RELIEF AND REHABILITATIONS OF MIGRANTS IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR**

1. In Kashmir Division
   - The proposal provides for additional 3000 state government jobs to the Kashmiri migrants with financial assistance from the Government of India and
   - To construct transit accommodations in the Kashmir Valley for the Kashmiri migrants to whom state government jobs will be provided.
   - **Why?**
     - Terrorist violence/militancy in Jammu & Kashmir, particularly in its early phases, had led to large scale forced migration of members of the Kashmiri Pandit community along with some Sikh and Muslim families from the Kashmir Valley.

2. In Jammu Division
   - Provision of relief to the migrants of the Hilly areas of Jammu division at par with the relief being provided to the Kashmiri migrants involving a total estimated expenditure of Rs. 13.45 Crore per annum.
   - **What Is New?**
     - Earlier relief in terms of cash and ration to the migrants of the Hilly areas of Jammu division was provided by State Government which was not at par with Kashmiri Migrants.
     - The expenditure incurred by the state Government in this regard would now be reimbursed by the Government of India.

**EXTENSION OF CCTNS PROJECT**

- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved a proposal for major revamp of Crime and Criminals Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) Project.
- It has decided to implement **Integrated Criminal Justice System** (ICJS) by integrating CCTNS with E-Courts-E-prisons, Forensics and Prosecution- the key components of the criminal Justice System.
- This will ensure quick data transfer among different pillars of criminal justice system, which **enhances transparency** and reduce processing time.
- **Police-Citizen interface** will undergo a major shift with implementation, as number of services will be enabled through citizen portal.
- Government decided to **fast track** the implementation and completion of CCTNS project by **March 2017** including implementation of ICJS.