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1. POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1.1. CENTER-STATE RELATIONS

1.1.1. ARTICLE 370

Background:

- Jammu and Kashmir High Court (on 12 Oct 2015) has ruled that Article 370 has assumed place of permanence in the Constitution and the feature is beyond amendment, repeal or abrogation.
- The High Court also said that Article 35A gives "protection" to existing laws in force in the State. "Article 370 though titled as 'Temporary Provision' and included in Para XXI titled 'Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions' has assumed place of permanence in the Constitution,"
- The Supreme Court on 31 Oct 2015 said that only Parliament can take a call on scrapping Article 370 that accords special autonomous status to Jammu and Kashmir.

About Article 370:

- Article 370 of the Indian Constitution is a 'temporary provision' which grants special autonomous status to Jammu and Kashmir.
- Except for defence, foreign affairs, finance and communications, the Parliament needs the state government's concurrence for applying all other laws.

Special Status to State:

- Legislative powers: The state's residents live under a separate set of laws, including those related to citizenship, ownership of property, and fundamental rights, as compared to other Indians.
- Territory: Indian Parliament cannot increase or reduce the borders of the state and Indian citizens from other states cannot purchase land or property in Jammu & Kashmir.
- Emergency Provisions:
  - The Union government cannot declare emergency on grounds of internal disturbance or imminent danger unless it is made at the request or with the concurrence of the state government.
  - Centre can declare emergency in the state only in case of war or external aggression.
  - The Center has no power to declare financial emergency under Article 360 in the state.
- Constitutional Amendment: a Constitution amendment becomes applicable to J&K only after the President issues an order.

Can Article 370 be Revoked Unilaterally?

- According to the clause 3 of Article 370, “The President may, by public notification, declare that this article shall cease to be operative, provided that he receives the “recommendation of the Constituent Assembly of the State (Kashmir).”
- Thus, Article 370 can be revoked only if a new Constituent Assembly of Kashmir recommends revocation.
- Since the last Constituent Assembly was dissolved in January 1957 after it completed the task of framing the state’s Constitution, so if the parliament agrees to scrap Article 370, a fresh constituent Assembly will have to be formed.
- The constituent Assembly will consist of the same MLAs elected to the State Assembly. Simply put, the Centre cannot repeal Article 370 without the nod of J&K State.
1.2. DEFENCE

1.2.1. PIRACY HIGH RISK AREA (HRA)

- Contact Group of Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) recently announced the exclusion of India's west coast from piracy High Risk Area (HRA) after revision of the limits of the piracy High Risk Area (HRA) with effect from 1st December 15.
- It is likely to address some of India’s maritime security concerns, which have been highlighted by the Government of India in various forums since 2012.
- Background: Consequent to the spread of piracy to the East Arabian Sea, the international shipping industry extended the eastern limit of piracy HRA in June 2010 to 78°E longitude, thereby including the west coast of India within the HRA.
- India’s concerns: The extension of the eastern limit of the HRA from 65°E to 78°E led to security concerns on account of the presence of private security personnel onboard merchant vessels transiting the piracy HRA, and the presence of floating armouries off the Indian coast.
- The shipping industry also incurred additional costs for insurance and implementation of various recommendations for transit through the piracy HRA.

**Indian Efforts:** Affirmative action and increased surveillance by India contributed towards the decline of piracy incidents in the East Arabian Sea.

**Note:** You should also know about UNCLOS, EEZ etc.

**CGPCS:**

The Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, commonly abbreviated as CGPCS, is an international governance mechanism established in New York on January 14, 2009 to facilitate the discussion and coordination of actions among states and organizations to suppress Somali piracy.

To date, more than 60 countries and international organizations have become part of this forum, all of which are working towards the prevention of piracy off the Somali coast.

**CSE Mains 2014:**

In 2012, the longitudinal marking of the high-risk areas for piracy was moved from 65° East to 78° east in the Arabian Sea by International Maritime organisation. What impact does this have on India’s maritime security concerns?
1.3. FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS/ DPSP/ FUNDAMENTAL DUTIES

1.3.1. UNIFORM CIVIL CODE

Article 44 of the Constitution, which is one of the Directive Principles of State Policy, says: “The State shall endeavor to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India.”

What it is and present condition:

- A Uniform Civil Code essentially means a common set of laws governing personal matters for all citizens of the country, irrespective of religion.
- Currently, different laws regulate these aspects for adherents of different religions. For example: A Christian man has questioned a provision that requires a Christian couple to be judicially separated for two years before getting a divorce, whereas this period is one year for Hindus and other non-Christians.

The role of article 14 and 25 in Uniform Civil Code:

- By the 42nd Amendment of 1976, India was declared a secular nation. As a result of this, and the understanding of Article 25, the State and its institutions have not interfered with religious practices, including in relation to various personal laws.
- There is a view that this principle runs contradictory to the idea of secularism which requires the State to be inert to religious considerations and not tacitly support them by following a practice of non-interference, no matter what.
- Clause (2) of Article 25 empowers the State to frame any law to regulate or restrict “secular activity which may be associated with religious practice”-therefore, it is argued, Article 25 is no bar to having a Uniform Civil Code.
- The inconsistency in personal laws has been challenged on the touchstone of Article 14, which ensures the right to equality. Litigants have contended that their right to equality is endangered by personal laws that put them at a disadvantage.

Why in news:

- On 12 October 2015, A Supreme Court bench questioned the government about its mandate on framing the Uniform Civil Code so that unvarying standards are ushered in and all religions are regulated by the same yardsticks in matters of law.

Benefits of Uniform Civil Code:

- All the laws related to marriage, inheritance, family, land etc. would be equal for all Indians.
- It will help in improving the condition of women in India. Indian society is patriarchal and by allowing old religious rules to continue to govern the family life, condemns all Indian women to subjugation and mistreatment.
- It will help the society move forward and take India towards its goal of becoming a developed nation where women are treated fairly and given equal rights.
- The various personal laws have loop holes exploited by those who have the power. Informal bodies like Panchayats continue to give judgments that are against our constitution. Human rights are violated through honor killings and female feticide throughout our country.
- It will also help in reducing vote bank politics. If all religions are covered under the same laws, the politicians will have less to offer to communities in exchange of their vote.
- It will help in integration of India - A lot of the animosity is caused by preferential treatment by the law of certain religious communities.
- This could in time induce custodians of faith to look inwards and seek to codify and reform age-old personal laws in conformity with current modernizing and integrative tendencies or risk losing their flock.
Challenges in implementing Uniform Civil Code:

- India has a strong and long history of personal laws and it cannot be given up easily.
- A broad consensus must be drawn among different communities to facilitate such a landmark step in India’s religious, social, political and most importantly judicial history.
- The biggest obstacle in implementing the UCC, apart from obtaining a consensus, is the drafting. Should UCC be a blend of all the personal laws or should it be a new law adhering to the constitutional mandate? There is a lot of literature churned out on UCC but there is no model law drafted.

Way forward:

Take an evaluation survey of all communities to suggest reforms within personal laws on modern and liberal lines. Communities should be convinced that UCC is to bring reforms not suppress them. There is a need of piecemeal reform rather than a holistic reform starting with what minorities are most comfortable of doing away with.

1.4. GOOD GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

1.4.1. SWACHH BHARAT ABHIYAN (SBA)

- Launched on 2 October 2014 at Rajghat, New Delhi.
- Massive mission that seek to create a Clean India by 2019, 150th birth anniversary of Gandhi.
- Covers 4041 statutory towns and rural India.

Objectives of Swachh Bharat Abhiyana:

- Elimination of open defecation
- Conversion of unsanitary toilets to pour flush toilets (a type of pit latrine, usually connected to two pits)
- Eradication of manual scavenging
- 100% collection and processing/disposal/reuse/recycling of municipal solid waste.
- A behavioral change in people regarding healthy sanitation practices.
- Generation of awareness among citizens about sanitation and its linkages with public health.
- Supporting urban local bodies in designing, executing and operating waste disposal systems
- Facilitating private-sector participation in capital expenditure and operation and maintenance costs for sanitary facilities.

Performance of SBA:

- The one-year target for urban areas was to finish constructing.
  - 25 lakh individual toilets,
  - 1 lakh community and public toilets,
  - achieve 100 per cent collection and transportation of waste in 1,000 cities and

Earlier Campaigns aimed at Cleanliness

- Central Rural Sanitation Programme: Started in 1986 to provide sanitation facilities in rural areas and also to provide privacy and dignity to women.
- Total Sanitation Campaign: Launched in 1999, in this program, the concept of sanitation was expanded to include personal hygiene, home sanitation, safe water, garbage disposal, excreta disposal and waste water disposal.
- Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan: Encouraged by the success of NGP, the TSC was renamed as “Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan” (NBA) in 2012. On 2 October 2014 the campaign was relaunched as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Gramin).

Program Components:
1. Swachh Bharat Mission for Urban Areas
2. Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin)
3. Rashtriya Swachhta Kosh
100 per cent processing and disposal of waste in 100 cities.

- Only 20-25 percent of the target in terms of toilet construction has been achieved while on the garbage management front also, performance is abysmally low.
- The government claimed that it has constructed more than 80 lakh toilets in rural India in this period. However, the numbers are not exactly an indicator of the success of the Swachh Bharat Mission alone as it includes toilets constructed under several ongoing schemes such as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and the Indira Awaas Yojana.

Why construction of toilets may not achieve open defecation?

- Evidences from independent researchers all agree that many people in rural India do not want to use the latrines that the government is scaling up to build.
- They defecate in the open even if they have one. This is despite the fact that such latrines are an improvement on the basic design endorsed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and are widely used in countries much poorer than India.
- A range of qualitative and statistical evidence agrees that such latrines do not fit well with the culture of purity and pollution that also underpins the caste system.
- People are reluctant to accumulate faeces in latrine pits near their homes; they believe that latrine pits will fill up more quickly than is actually the case; and they are worried about how latrine pits will be emptied.
- Getting a latrine pit emptied in rural India is seriously complicated due to caste system.

Way Ahead:

- Whether it is solid waste management or open defecation, there needs to be focus on behavioural change along with providing physical infrastructure.
- An independent monitoring survey mechanism should be in place to check cases of corruption. For instance- In some villages, different people were found to pose with the same toilet to inflate number of toilets constructed.
- Focus should not only be on completing numbers of constructed units but the qualitative change needs to be brought into the society.

Mysore Case study - Swachh Street Food

- The Government launched Swachh Bharat Ranking for 476 cities in which Mysore topped the list.
- Mysuru City Corporation under the National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM) has launched a new initiative - Swachh Street Food.
- Under this initiative, two food zones will be developed and street food vendors will be allocated space provided they fulfil certain conditions.
- The food zones will have facilities such as temporary structures for vending food, potable drinking water, seating area, toilets, among others.
- This is perhaps to rehabilitate street food vendors evicted in Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

Few initiatives for Swachh Bharat:

Cities to be rated for sanitation

- The Ministry of Urban Development has commissioned a survey of sanitation scenario to rate 75 major cities and state capitals.
- The survey parameters have been aligned with the objectives of Swachh Bharat Mission with more focus on solid waste management.
- It is considered that poor Solid Waste Management is adversely impacting cleanliness in urban areas.

The survey:

- The proposed survey and subsequent ratings to be completed in January next year
- The initiative is aimed at fostering a spirit of competition among the major cities and state capitals to ensure sanitation in urban areas.
The parameters include
- The Solid waste management is being given 60% weightage
- The availability and use of household individual toilets and public and community toilets
- City level sanitation plans and
- Information, Education and Behaviour Change Communication (IEBC) activities.

New Tariff Policy to support Mission:
- The New Tariff Policy the Government will make it compulsory for the power plants located within the radius of 100 kms of the city to use processed waste water and release clean water for drinking purpose in the vicinity.
- It will make compulsory for the local power distribution companies to buy electricity generated from the waste.

These measures will give a push to Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.
- Awareness programs need to be launched to aware people about the benefits of using toilets and weed out misinformation about use of such toilets and to break traditional practices.
- Rather than monitoring how many toilets have been created, a monitoring mechanism should be developed which reports the level of open defecation gone down; how many toilets constructed are being put to use; amount of solid municipal waste reduced; percentage of cleanliness achieved etc.

CSE 2006

With reference to the Government of India’s various programmes, what is Nirmal Gram Puraskar?

(a) It is an incentive scheme of scholarships for the single girl child in families in villages.
(b) It is an incentive scheme of scholarships for female sportspersons from villages who represents their states in any game.
(c) It is an incentive scheme for schools in the villages for computer education.
(d) It is an incentive scheme for Panchayati Raj institutions.

1.4.2. AADHAAR: VARIOUS DIMENSIONS

Background:
- Supreme Court on 15th Oct allowed use of Aadhaar cards also for MNREGA, Jan Dhan Yojana, pension and provident fund schemes. The government and its various regulators such as RBI, IRDA, SEBI, and TRAI moved the court, requesting it to lift the restraint so that Aadhaar can be used to linking other services as well.
- In another interim order on 11 August 2015, the Supreme Court of India ruled that "UIDAI/Aadhaar will not be used for any other purposes except PDS, kerosene and LPG distribution system" and made it clear that even for availing these facilities Aadhaar card will not be mandatory.

About Aadhaar:
- The ambitious scheme of providing unique identity number to the citizens of the country.
- Under the Aadhaar scheme, a 12-digit unique number is to be provided to every citizen of the country.
Function of Aadhar scheme:

- Currently there are a plethora of identity documents in India including passports, permanent account numbers (PANs), driving licenses and ration cards.
- The Aadhaar card / UID will not replace these identification documents but can be used as the sole identification proof when applying for other things.
- It will also serve as the basis for Know Your Customer (KYC) norms used by banks, financial institutions, telecom firms and industry and other businesses that maintain customer profiles.

How Aadhaar can be useful in Election process of India:

- The scope of duplication is nil because it uses biometric parameters - fingerprint, iris scan - for creation of identity.
- The verification process is easy as election officials require only Aadhaar number for verifying identity.
- By using Aadhaar, Photo ID card can be phased out, saving cost.
- It is possible to enroll a person in a constituency and simultaneously remove his name from different constituency, thus avoiding duplication and making voter enrollment simpler.
- Since Aadhaar card can be issued to minors, their incorporation in voter list becomes seamless once they turn 18 years. It will improve enumerations of 18-25 age group, which is woefully under-enumerated.
- In future, it has potential to facilitate e-voting.

Aadhaar and Right to Privacy:

Background:

- There are several instances when Aadhaar card was made mandatory to avail benefits such as opening account under Jan Dhan Yojana, Passport verification, Provident Fund transactions, LPG benefits, PDS benefits. However, the orders had to be retracted after protests.
- In September 2013, the apex court had ordered that no citizen should be denied government benefits for not having the Aadhar card.
- Recently, the Apex Court has permitted voluntary use of Aadhaar card for schemes such as MGNREGA, all types of pension schemes, PM’s Jan Dhan Yojana and EPF.
- The Supreme Court in 2015 told the government to give wide publicity in media that Aadhar was not mandatory to get benefits which are otherwise due to citizens.

Privacy issues with Aadhaar:

- The largescale collection of biometric data without foolproof security arrangements could result in breaches of confidentiality.
- By asking citizens to part with personal data without any legislative backing for the Aadhar project, the government is infringing upon their right to privacy.
- There are no safeguards or penalties and no legislative backing for obtaining personal information.
- There are no clear norms and legal provisions to protect the misuse and theft of collected data.
- The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), which administers Aadhaar, operate independent of parliamentary oversight.
- On the surface it (Aadhaar) is a simple document of identity, but it has linkages by means of iris scans and biometric details. What happens in case if identity is exchanged or mistaken is not taken care by government.
- **Seeding:** It is the introduction of the Aadhaar number into every data base such as gas agency, the bank, ration card, voter id etc. Once the number is seeded in various data bases, it makes convergence of personal information remarkably simple. It will enable state and its agencies ‘see’ the citizen at will.
- The Orwellian-type Central Monitoring System (CMS) of Indian government fans suspicion that the state will use composite Aadhaar data to surveil and profile individuals and groups.
Government’s argument:

- **Poor renounce their Privacy rights**: The Attorney-General argued that the poor, who rely on government for social benefits, must be prepared to surrender their right of privacy, if any, in order to continue receiving benefits.
- **Abandoning Project**: It is too late to stop implementation as huge money had been already spent on Aadhaar and it has accessed 80 crore people.
- **SC restricting benefits**: The restrictions by Supreme Court are coming in the way of crores of Aadhaar holders who wanted easy access to other social benefits schemes and services
- **Purely Voluntary**: An Aadhaar card holder can block his card along with his demographic and biometric information if he wants to opt out of the UID system. It is to make enrollment under Aadhaar purely voluntary.

**Way Forward:**

- The government’s most basic obligation is to protect its citizens’ rights — both their right to sustenance and their right to the privacy that enables freedom — equally.
- Government cannot adopt the posture that only one aspect of government’s protective responsibility matters — that the costs of privacy destruction can be imposed upon the poor in return for social benefit.
- The ultimate resolution of this present controversy must recognise both the need for Aadhaar — in order to provide efficient and honest government services to citizens — and the need for stringent rules concerning access to and security of citizens’ biometric data, in order to preserve their privacy.

**What the country needs is not only a safe means of digitizing citizens’ identity particulars but also a comprehensive law to protect their privacy and personal data from unauthorized surveillance and misuse.** By making it a priority to codify both a right to privacy that explicitly outlines a framework for the operation of data collection agencies and the UIDAI, the government can remove the uncertainty that plagues Aadhaar and enable it to realise its full potential.

**Aadhaar based subsidy transfer for fertilizers in limbo:**

- Government of India had taken decision to give direct cash subsidy for fertilizers in 2012 itself.
- But it has not been implemented till now.
- Identifying the actual beneficiaries: Most of the farming in India is done on contract basis which is also known as tenant farming.
- Problem of absentee landlords has compounded the issue of identifying beneficiaries.
- Land records are not in maintained in a format to facilitate identification process, further causing delay.
- The current system is based on fund transfer once fertilizer moves from plants to whole-sellers and warehouses. The government wants to link subsidy to sales rather than current system. But the government does not have data on how much is actually sold in the market.
- The Supreme Court in its interim order restricted the use of Aadhaar to paying subsidies for the PDS and cooking gas.

### 1.4.3. CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM OF INDIA

**Facts and Figures:**

- According to The National Crime Records Bureau figures for 2014, almost **68 per cent** of the inmates of India’s overflowing prisons are **undertrials**, and 70 per cent of those convicted are **illiterate**.
- **Affluent states** like Goa, Punjab, Gujarat and Haryana top the list of states with the highest percentage of undertrials who have been in prison for more than three months.

**Challenges:**

- The disproportionate number of undertrials shows inefficiency of criminal justice system
• It is highly prejudiced against minorities and vulnerable section given they are over-represented among undertrials in Indian prisons.
• The infrastructural flaws and deficiencies has kept the cost of justice is prohibitively high
• The unreformed mindsets and lack of sensitivity to social issues among public officials contribute to the entrenched prejudices.
• Delays in investigation slow down the trial process. The police force in most states is understaffed, short on equipment, ill-trained in modern investigation methods and all too vulnerable to political interference and control.
• The Muslim representation is at an abysmal 6.5 per cent.

Way Forward:

• In 1987, the Law Commission, recognising that the low judge-to-population ratio is leading to pendency in courts, had recommended that India raise the number of judges from an average of 10 judges for a million people to 50 for a million. In the quarter-century since, the ratio has not improved.
• Physical infrastructure needs to be expanded and the necessary support staff be provided to declog the system.
• The government proposed setting up gram nyayalays\(^1\) to ensure that “opportunities for justice were not denied to any citizen by reason of social, economic or other disabilities”. The implementation need to be sped up.
• To improve investigation system, police reforms need to be properly implemented.
• The police administration need to be provided with more resources - financial and human both for its effective functioning.

1.4.4. DIRECT BENEFIT TRANSFER

Direct benefit transfer is a new mechanism in which subsidies and benefits are transferred to individuals’ bank accounts electronically, minimizing tiers involved in fund flow thereby reducing delay in payment, ensuring accurate targeting of the beneficiary and curbing pilferage and duplication.

Why in News?

• The government said that it has saved Rs. 14,672 crore in a year in LPG subsidy under the direct benefit transfer scheme for LPG subsidy, called PAHAL.
• This saving accrued as a result of blocking of 3.34 crore customers which were either duplicate or fake.

Benefits of Direct Benefit Transfer

• Electronic transfer of benefits to beneficiaries’ bank accounts
• Accurate Targeting
• De-duplication
• Reduction of Fraud
• Process Re-engineering of Schemes for simpler flow of information and funds
• Greater Accountability

Challenges:

• Schemes like MNREGA, IAY etc. have a large number of rural beneficiaries.
• Poor coverage of banks in rural areas and poor performance of banking correspondent model

\(^1\) Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008 was enacted for establishment of Gram Nyayalayas or village courts for speedy and easy access to justice system in the rural areas of India. The Act came into force from 2 October 2009. However, the Act has not been enforced properly, with only 152 functional Gram Nyayalayas in the country against a target of 5000 such courts. The major reasons behind the non-enforcement includes financial constraints, reluctance of lawyers, police and other government officials.
Most of rural beneficiaries have accounts with Post Offices with are still in the process of migrating to core banking solution.

- Every individual to have a bank account and Aadhar number.
- Seeding Bank account details with Aadhar numbers.
- The Supreme Court, though allowed the Government to use Aadhar number for schemes like MNREGA, Jan Dhan Yojana, Pension and Provident fund schemes on voluntary basis, the success of direct benefit transfer hinges a lot on the outcome of ongoing case in the court which has challenged the use of Aadhar for various schemes.
- Centre State coordination as most of the schemes have the state government playing the main role.

Conclusion:

There are challenges, but the benefits offered by Aadhar are enormous. Careful consideration of each of these challenges and coordination between policy and implementation can go a long way in fulfilling these gaps. Lessons learnt from pilot projects need to be incorporated in a careful manner. If implemented as planned, DBT can go a long way in improving governance in India.

1.4.5. RIGHT TO INFORMATION UPDATES

Lowering acceptance of RTI requests at CIC:

Recently, a RTI application revealed the Central Information Commission is accepting very less number of RTI applications as compared to earlier.

- The low acceptance is because of technical deficiencies in RTI applications.
- As a result, the high volume of pending cases before the CIC has begun to shrink.
- In addition to this, the CIC does not maintain a searchable database of all turned down requests for information, along with reasons for rejection or return.

Institutional reforms required:

- **Suspension of Commissioner**: During the period of inquiry, the governor can suspend or even prohibit the state information commissioner from holding office. This issue needs to be addressed as it conclusively transpires that the actual punishing authority is not the governor but the SC, whereas the appointing authority is the governor.
- **Oath to ministers**: The form of oath administered to our ministers, requires them to say they will not divulge any official act unless required in their discharge of official duty. Their oath directly clashes with the RTI Act.
- **Autonomy**: The information commission should become fully autonomous, along the lines of the Election Commission, and thus becomes a constitutional body.

1.4.6. GOVERNMENT ADVERTISEMENTS

The central government sought a review of the Supreme Court judgment which banned the publication of photographs of political leaders and Chief Ministers in government-issued advertisements.

**Government’s views:**

- The government is of the view that people have the right to know about government welfare work in a participative democracy.
• It is contrary to the federal structure of governance to prohibit the publication of the pictures of Chief Ministers and Governors.

Contrary views:

• The advertisement gives mileage to the ruling political party over the political opponents
• Such advertisements have the potential to create partisan politics, favouring party in power and putting Opposition in bad light
• Few people sought even ban over photograph of Prime Minister in government advertisements as it encourages personality cult.

Background:

• In May 2015, the Supreme Court issued guidelines for the publication of government advertisements
• It held that publication of photographs of politicians and government functionaries, including Chief Ministers, defeated the public interest behind advertising welfare schemes and encouraged “personality cults.”

1.5. JUDICIARY

1.5.1. NJAC ACT AS UNCONSTITUTIONAL AND VOID

• The government moved 99th Constitutional Amendment Bill to establish National Judicial Appointment Commission.
• It was envisaged as an independent commission to appoint and transfer judges of High Court and appoint judges of Supreme Court of India.
• It was composed of three senior judges, two eminent outsiders and the Law Minister.
• The constitutional amendment was passed by Parliament and was ratified by 20 states.
• However, before it was notified, it was challenged in Supreme Court as an attempt by government to interfere with the independence of the judiciary.
• The motive behind creation of NJAC was to bring reforms in appointment process of Indian higher judiciary

Supreme Court’s verdict:

• The Court by a 4-1 majority, struck down the 99th Amendment.
• It concluded that NJAC did “not provide an adequate representation, to the judicial component”.
• The new provision in Constitution are insufficient to preserve the primacy of the judiciary in the matter of selection and appointment of Judges”
• It further held that “Article 124A (1) is ultra vires the provisions of the Constitution, because of the inclusion of the Union Minister in charge of Law and Justice as an ex officio Member of the NJAC.”
• It was held that the amendment impinged upon the principles of “independence of the judiciary”, as well as, the “separation of powers”.
• The clause which provided for the inclusion of two “eminent persons” as Members of the NJAC was held ultra vires the provisions of the Constitution, for a variety of reasons.
• The Supreme Court has proposed the hearing in month of November on ways to improve the functioning of the collegium system

Primacy of the judiciary is required as

• Government is major litigant: Since the government is a major litigant, giving it an edge in appointments would amount to fixing the courts.
• Independence of Judiciary: It has been regarded as basic structure of constitution and NJAC was termed as violating the independence of judiciary

To enable Separation of Powers between executive and judiciary as directed by Constitution of India.
Appointment of Judges in India:

The judges of Supreme Court and High Court are appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Collegium. The constitutional provisions related to their appointment are:

- **Article 124** says the President should appoint Supreme Court judges after consultation with such judges of High Courts and the Supreme Court as he/she may deem necessary. The Chief Justice of India is to be consulted in all appointments barring his/her own.
- **Article 217**, which deals with the appointment of High Court judges, says the President should consult the CJI, Governor, and Chief Justice of the High Court concerned.

Neither of them speaks about collegium system.

Evolution of Collegium System:

- **First Judges Case, 1981**: The Supreme Court ruled that the recommendation made by the CJI to the President can be refused for “cogent reasons”, thereby giving greater say to executive.
- **Second Judges Case, 1993**: It is also known as *Supreme Court Advocates-on Record Association vs Union of India*. It led to the creation of the collegium system. The Supreme Court said that the Chief Justice of India should be given the “primal” role in appointments.
- **Third Judges Case, 1998**: The President K. R. Narayanan issued a Presidential Reference to the Supreme Court over the meaning of the term “consultation” under article 124 and 217 of Indian Constitution. In response, the Supreme Court laid down guidelines for the functioning collegium system.

Suggestions for Judicial reforms:

- Vacancies in the Supreme Court and in the High Courts need to be filled up. Most High Courts are functioning with half or one third the sanctioned strength.
- The persons of doubtful integrity who might have been appointed by the mistake of the collegium have to be weeded out. A method like voluntary retirement could be an option.
- The infrastructure in the courts needs improvement - there will not be enough court halls, chambers, or staff, if all the vacancies are filled.
- There needs to be appointment of ad hoc or additional judges to clear pending cases — The collegium is generally reluctant to appoint retiring judges as ad hoc judges.
- The Supreme Court should lay down institutional mechanisms for transparent functioning of the collegium.
- The Collegium should accept applications for appointments as High Court judges. This is followed in the U.K. and can be adopted in India too.
- There must be full and complete disclosure of relationships and affiliations of applicants to sitting and retired judges.
- Minimum eligibility criteria for consideration need to be laid down, including appearances in important cases.
- All the three organs of the state should introspect as to why there has been no or inadequate representation in the higher judiciary from amongst women.
- Provide a uniform retirement age for judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts, so that the present practice of some judges seeking to be in the good books of the members of collegiums is avoided.
- A minimum tenure should be provided to the Chief Justice of India and the Chief Justice of High Courts.
- Court management should not be vested with Judicial Officers but assigned to trained managers.

Venkatachaliah Commission:

The government appointed the Justice M N Venkatachaliah Commission in 2000 to opine whether there was need to change the collegium system.

The commission opined in favour of change, and prescribed a National Judicial Appointment Commission

It has to be consist of the CJI and two senior most judges, the law minister, and an eminent person from the public, to be chosen by the President in consultation with the CJI.
• Permanent Commission may be constituted to scrutinize the credentials of candidates and recommend names to collegium. These Permanent Commissions should also be enabled to scrutinize complaints of dishonesty and lack of integrity of judges.

Way Forward:

The Supreme Court's judgment was received critically by the Executive. However, instead of seeing the NJAC verdict as one that leads to a confrontation between the Parliament and the judiciary, the executive must use this as an opportunity to help the Supreme Court in preparing an institutional design so that appointments are fair and transparent.

1.6. OTHER

1.6.1. LATEST INITIATIVES IN MGNREGS

Training Barefoot technicians in Civil Engineering:

- The Government has decided to train 10,000 young “barefoot” technicians in the basic concepts of civil engineering and involve them in planning, doing layout, measuring and supervising MGNREGA works in 2,500 most backward blocks across India.
- A Bare Foot Technician is an educated person, identified from the local SC/ST MGNREGA worker households and specially trained in civil engineering concepts, using the customized training modules
- Better training and skills development will not only contribute to creation of durable and good quality works but also more sustainable maintenance of assets.
- It will also provide employment and will give horizontal and vertical mobility to these young women and men especially to those from vulnerable sections of society.

1.6.2. INDIAN SKILL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

The Union Cabinet approved the formation of a Group ‘A’ service for skill development. It will be called the Indian Skill Development Service

Indian Skill Development Service:

- It is a dedicated skill development cadre under Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship
- The officers will be recruited by UPSC possibly by next year (2016 - 17)
- The new cadre of officers will run the skill development and entrepreneurship ministry, help implement various skill and apprenticeship schemes conducted by the ministry as well as those by the Directorate General of Training
- The new service will help formulate skill policies, devise a road map for improving the apprenticeship system, revamping ITIs and also help revamp course work for various schemes
- The officers need to be posted in rural India for a couple of years which will enable them to take decisions with enough subject knowledge

Benefits:

- The new service cadre will enhance the capacity and efficiency of the organization
- It will attract the best talent to the skill development administration

CSE 2014

While we found India’s demographic dividend, we ignore the dropping rates of employability. What are we missing while doing so? Where will the jobs that India desperately needs come from? Explain.
1.7. STATE GOVERNMENTS

1.7.1. RIGHT TO PUBLIC SERVICE ACT

Maharashtra government enacted The Right to Public Services Act, 2015 (the RTS Act) which guarantee time bound delivery of notified services rendered by the government to the citizen and provides for the punishment of errant public servants. The Act replaces the earlier promulgated ordinance on the same issue.

Feature of the Bills:

- Statutory guarantee for availing services in fixed time frame
- It will check corruption, red tape and will bring transparency.
- It provides for punishing errant public servants by putting a fine starting from Rs. 500 to Rs. 5000.
- It establishes a system of appeals with Right to Service Commission at top with other two tiers- first appellate and second appellate authorities being occupied by the government of officials- to deal with grievances under this Act.
- It provides for a State Public Service Delivery Committee which will recommend steps to be taken by government agencies for efficient delivery of notified services.

However, the RTS Act is being seen as a conscious effort to water down the provisions of Transfer and Delay Act, 2006 which provides for stricter provisions for dealing with premature transfer of government officials and delay or denial of any services or facilities offered by the government agencies.

Challenges:

The Act has been accused of being passed hurriedly without adequate public hearing. Though, this Act is being compared to the Right to Information Act, it has following concerns-

- Apart from citizens, government officers can also file appeals- first, second and third, which could wear most of the applicants.
- The first and second appellate authority being officers of government itself, there is no justification for allowing the designated officers to go in appeal against his/her own superior officer.
- Unlike, the RTI Act, first and second appellate authority can issue summons. If citizens do not appear before authority, they can also issue arrest warrant. Such wide powers may work against a persistent applicant.
- This Act provides that erring official will pay the penalty amount, and if not paid by the officer, it will be deducted by his or her salary automatically. This will lead to problem of tracking of these fines. The RTI Act provides for automatic deduction from salary.
- Section 5(2) of the Act could be interpreted to mean that mere sanctioning of a service on paper would meet the requirement of the Act, hence this provision needs to be changed appropriately.
- Also, there is an explicit provision of penal action on citizens for availing these services on the basis of wrong or fake documents.
- Another problem is that only those services will be covered under this Act which will be notified for the purpose of this Act.
- Citizen’s Charter under Transfer and Delay Act, 2006 has to cover all the services and facilities. If there is a difference, it would lead to divergence which would be difficult to resolve.

Way Ahead:

In its present form, this Act will be less useful than Transfer and Delays Act, 2006 which provides for stricter accountability of government officials and disciplinary action in case of irregularity. The intent of the RTS Act is good but many provisions as discussed above need to be changed. Otherwise, it would be more beneficial for the citizens to pressure the government to deliver on the provisions of the Transfer and Delays Act, 2006.
State Law asked by UPSC:

Comment on the following in not more than 50 words each:

(c) The Bihar Special Courts Act, 2009 and why it has been in news recently?

1.7.2. THREE MORE STATES ROLL OUT FOOD SECURITY LAW

- **Jharkhand, Telangana and Uttarakhand** rolled out the National Food Security Act (NFSA).
- NFSA aims to provide subsidized food grains to nearly 67% of the country’s population.

Reasons behind delay in implementation of the Act:

- Preconditions for the implementation of the Act to check leakages
  - Identification of beneficiaries
  - Digitization of records of beneficiaries
  - End-to-end computerization of the public distribution system (PDS)
- States have to take a call on whom to include or exclude under the scheme and many have not completed the process of identifying beneficiaries.
- So far, 92% of the records of beneficiaries have been digitized and 18% seeded with the Aadhaar number.
- The **18 states and Union territories that have implemented the act** include Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Delhi, Tripura, Puducherry and Lakswadeep.
- Of these, two Union territories —Puducherry and Chandigarh— have gone a step ahead and implemented direct cash transfer of PDS benefits.
- Some states like Tamil Nadu are not interested as they have a universal PDS and do not want to move towards a targeted system.

1.8. UNION GOVERNMENT

1.8.1. NEERACHAL NATIONAL WATERSHED PROJECT

- The development objective of the **Neeranchal National Watershed Project** for India is to support integrated watershed management program (IWMP) through technical assistance to improve incremental conservation outcomes and agricultural yields for communities in selected sites, and adoption of more effective processes and technologies into the broader IWMP in participating states.
- The Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) was implemented since 2009-10 by the DoLR, for supporting watershed development in 28 States.
- From 2015-16 onwards, the IWMP will be implemented as the Watershed Component of PMKSY.

Why in news:

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), has given its approval to implement the World Bank assisted National Watershed Management Project "Neeranchal" with a total outlay of $357 million (Rs 2142.30 crore).
- The cost of the project is estimated at Rs. 2,142.30 crore of which the Centre will be pitching in with Rs. 889 crore while Rs. 182 crore will be provided by the respective State Governments.
Need:

- Watershed development is critical to India’s development as vast stretches of agricultural land are in rain fed regions, characterized by extensive land degradation, low rainfall, reduced agricultural productivity, and higher rates of poverty.
- The project will be implemented over a six-year period and will provide technical assistance to the Government of India’s national Integrated Watershed Management Program (IWMP), which is the second largest watershed program in the world after China.

Importance of this programme:

- The project will strengthen the capacity of key national and state level institutions currently implementing watershed programs such as the IWMP, including the central Department of Land Resources (DoLR) and the State Level Nodal Agencies (SLNAs) for more effective planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of their programs.
- It will support the preparation of integrated science-based, participatory watershed plans with a greater focus on water management.
- These plans will guide investments to improve more efficient use of water for agriculture, recharge local groundwater, and enhance the convergence of various programs in order to ensure more effective use of public resources.
- The project will help farmers adopt new soil, water and crop management techniques to increase vegetative cover, reduce soil erosion, and improve agricultural yields.
- It will facilitate access to real time weather forecasts and help farmers adopt climate smart agricultural practices to mitigate against climate change impacts.
- It will also improve rural livelihoods through training, better extension services, and strengthened forward linkages to markets.
- The project approved will support IWMP activities in selected sites in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Rajasthan.
- It will cover about 400 sub-watersheds of about 5,000 ha each and reach approximately 482,000 farmer households and 2 million people.

Challenges:

However, despite the successes, a number of challenges remain for watershed development to achieve better outcomes, such as:

- Enhanced participation of communities
- Building stronger capacities and systems to plan
- Implement, monitor and post-project sustainability of local institutions and assets.

These challenges, if not resolved, can result in implementation delays, slow disbursements and benefits.
1.9. MISCELLANEOUS

1.9.1. RBI ALLOWS NRIS TO SUBSCRIBE TO NATIONAL PENSION SYSTEM

- RBI on 29th Oct 2015 allowed NRIs to subscribe to the pension scheme, which is governed and administered by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority.
- To enable Indians living abroad to access old age income security, Reserve Bank allowed non-resident Indians (NRIs) to subscribe to the National Pension System (NPS).
- NRIs may subscribe to the NPS governed and administered by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA), provided such subscriptions are made through normal banking channels and the person is eligible to invest as per the provisions of the PFRDA Act.
- The subscription amounts shall be paid by the NRIs either by inward remittance through normal banking channels or out of funds held in their NRE/FCNR/NRO account.

1.9.2. E-SAHYOG PILOT PROGRAMME

- E-Sahyog is a pilot project designed to eliminate the need of taxpayers physically appearing in front of IT authorities.
- It is aimed at reducing compliance cost, especially for small taxpayers.
- Objective of "e-Sahyog" is to provide an online mechanism to resolve mismatches in Income-tax returns of those assesses whose returns have been selected for scrutiny, without visiting the Income Tax Office.

1.9.3. "GROW SAFE FOOD" CAMPAIGN

- Government has launched "Grow Safe Food" campaign to improve agriculture output without comprising on nutrition and quality of the produce.
- "Grow Safe food" Campaign has been initiated to create awareness about the safe and judicious use of pesticides among the various stakeholders.
- Government uses various steps for proper use of pesticides by farmers on crops for better growth.
- The Ministry of Agriculture has stated in a release that pesticide residue data generated under the “Monitoring of Pesticide Residues at National Level” are shared with State Governments and concerned ministries/organizations to initiate the corrective action for judicious and proper use of pesticides on crops with an integrated pest management approach and to generate awareness amongst farmers.
- The Department of Agriculture, Co-Operation & Farmers Welfare (DAC&FW) emphasizes integrated pest management (IPM) which promotes biological, cultural and mechanical methods of pest and advocates need based, judicious use of pesticides.

1.9.4. MID-DAY MEAL RULES, 2015 UNDER NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY ACT, 2013 NOTIFIED

The following are the silent provision of the rules:

- Every child within the age group of six to fourteen years studying in classes I to VIII who enroll and attend the school, shall be provided hot cooked meal having nutritional standards of 450 calories and 12 gm of protein for primary and 700 calories and 20 gm protein for upper primary free of charge every day except on school holidays.
- The School Management Committee mandated under Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 shall also monitor implementation of the Mid-day meal Scheme and shall oversee quality of meals provided to the children, cleanliness of the place of cooking and maintenance of hygiene in implementation of mid-day meal scheme.
- The Headmaster or Headmistress of the school shall be empowered to utilize any fund available in school for the purpose of continuation of Mid-Day Meal Scheme in the school in case of temporary unavailability of food grains, cooking cost etc.
- Hot cooked meal provided to children shall be evaluated and certified by the Government Food Research Laboratory or any laboratory accredited or recognized by law, so as to ensure that the meal meets with the nutritional standards and quality.
- The Food and Drugs Administration Department of the State may collect samples to ensure the nutritive value and quality of the meals.
- If the Mid-Day Meal is not provided in school on any school day due to non-availability of food grains, cooking cost, fuel or absence of cook-cum-helper or any other reason, the State Government shall pay food security allowance by 15th of the succeeding month.

1.9.5. NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE 2015

- The Nobel Prize 2015 in Literature was awarded to Belarusian author Svetlana Alexievic “for her polyphonic writings, a monument to suffering and courage in our time”.
- Ms. Alexievich is the 14th women Literature Laureate.
- Ms. Alexievich, a journalist writer, used the skills of a journalist to create literature chronicling the great tragedies of the Soviet Union and its collapse- World War II, the Soviet war in Afghanistan, the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster and the suicides that ensued from the death of Communism.
- Last year’s literature award went to French writer Patrick Modiano.
2. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

2.1. KALADAN MULTI-MODAL TRANSIT TRANSPORT PROJECT

Why in news:
- The Cabinet, in October, gave its approval for the revised estimated cost of INR 2904.04 crore for this project. The Cabinet had earlier approved the project at a cost of INR 539.91 crores in 2008. The project was to get completed by 2013, but it is now expected to get completed by 2016.

What it is:
- The Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project is a project that will connect the seaport of Kolkata with Sittwe seaport in Myanmar by sea; it will then link Sittwe seaport to Lashio in Myanmar via Kaladan river boat route and then from Lashio on to Mizoram in India by road transport.

Reasons for cost overrun:
Roadblocks like challenging geographical terrain, protests of local people against land acquisition have caused the project to get delayed and resulted in the cost overrun.

Benefits for India:
- Current route from North East to Kolkata port via chicken neck faces heavy traffic; cargo via this route takes many days to reach a port.
- This project will reduce distance from Kolkata to Mizoram by approximately 1000 km and cut travelling time to 3-4 days for transport of goods.
- Apart from development of North-East region, this route is necessary in case of any conflict with China as the present route, i.e., chicken neck could be blocked by China in conflict situation.

Delay in project:
- Several obstacles have made the execution of the project a tough task.
- Not only is road construction taking place in challenging geographic terrain but also local communities are protesting land acquisition by the government.
- Cost overrun: Due to delay in completion the project cost has increased. To speed up the project execution; government has sanctioned the revised cost estimate.

Its benefits to India:
- The access to the sea that the project provides its Northeastern states could boost their economies.
- It would strengthen India’s trade and transport links with Southeast Asia.
- It not only serves the economic, commercial and strategic interest of India but also contributes to the development of Myanmar and its economic integration with India.
- It will be instrumental for “act-east policy”.
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Apart from development of North-East region, this route is necessary in case of any conflict with China as the present route, i.e., chicken neck could be blocked by China in conflict situation.

### 2.2. CHINESE DAM ON BRAHMAPUTRA

The **dam at Zangmu**, Tibet in the middle of the Brahmaputra, or Yarlung Zangbo as it is known in China, is now fully operational.

China has in its current five-year plan also given the go-ahead to start work on three other dams, one of which is even bigger than the 510 MW Zangmu dam – a 640 MW dam scheduled for construction at Dagu, 18km upstream. Two smaller dams will be built at Jiacha and Jiexu.

**The implications of construction of the dam for India are on several fronts:**

- It reduces water flow in the river. This is not so serious if the dams are RoR (run of river) hydro stations. But if reservoirs are built, or waters diverted, it could affect the river’s ecosystem in the upper stretches.
- Second, it gives China a stronger say in water sharing discussions because it has established claim of use of these waters.
- A huge dam at the Great Bend will devastate the river’s fragile ecosystem — destroying the magnificent biodiversity of the Assam and Arunachal Pradesh regions.
- The dams also raised concerns in India over their ability to release the water in times of conflict which could pose serious risk of flooding.
- India is concerned that if the waters are diverted, then projects on the Brahmaputra, particularly the Upper Siang and Lower Suhansri projects in Arunachal Pradesh, may get affected.

**Agreement between India and China:**

- India and China had signed an agreement to allow Indian hydrological experts to conduct study tours to directly monitor the river’s flow in Tibet and to extend provision of hydrological data in the flood season.
- During Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to China, both sides had also agreed to step up cooperation through an expert-level mechanism on the provision of flood-season hydrological data, emergency management and other transborder river issues.

### 2.3. NAWAZ SHARIF’S FOUR-POINT PEACE PROPOSAL

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif used the United Nations General Assembly platform to propose a four-step peace plan with India.

- To formalize and respect the 2003 understanding for a complete ceasefire on the Line of Control in Kashmir.
- To reaffirm that both sides will not resort to the use or the threat of use of force under any circumstances.
• Steps be taken to demilitarize Kashmir.
• To agree to an unconditional mutual withdrawal from Siachen Glacier, the world’s highest battleground.

**India’s response:**

India rejected Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif’s four-point peace proposal.

• External Affairs Minister told the U.N. General Assembly (UNGA) that Pakistan must “give up terrorism” if it wanted to improve ties.
• Instead of four proposals, India needs only one point: that Pakistan end support to terror groups.
• India believe that four point proposals was delivered not directly to India but to the UN, in yet another attempt to internationalise the issue rather than offering a sincere solution.

2.4. INDIA AND SEYCHELLES

The Union Cabinet gave its ex-post facto approval to the protocol for cooperation in the field of blue economy which was signed between India and Seychelles during the visit of the President of Seychelles to India on August, 2015.

**About protocol:**

The protocol lays down the modalities and mechanism of cooperation between the two parties for ocean studies as well as scientific exploration and exploitation of sea based resources, for sustainable development and economic purposes.

**Importance of protocol:**

The cooperation will enhance India’s strategic cooperation in the field of blue economy;

• Commercial benefits from export of human resources, expertise and technology and it will increase India’s access to ocean-based resources in cooperation with Seychelles.
• Cooperation with Seychelles in blue economy will provide new data on ocean-based resources and also provide for sharing of expertise and technology developed by Indian scientists and research institutes.
• It will also help domestic innovation in the field of ocean research and technology.

**Blue Economy:**

“Blue Economy” is marine-based economic development that leads to improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities.

**It includes:**

• Reframing the oceans as “Development Spaces” that are subject to spatial planning.
• Making use of that planning to integrate “conservation, sustainable use, oil and mineral wealth extraction, bio-prospecting, sustainable energy production and marine transport”
• Incorporating the value of the oceans into economic decision-making.
• Establishing policies that favor low-carbon, resource-efficient, and socially inclusive development (mirroring the Green Economy framework in this regard).
• Prioritizing the use of the seas to benefit people, alleviate poverty, generate employment, and promote equity.
• Improving relevant international law and governance mechanisms.
2.5. NEPAL – CHINA FUEL DEAL

Nepal and China signed an agreement for supply of petroleum products to the Himalayan nation. China has also agreed to grant 1.2 million litres of fuel to Nepal to alleviate immediate energy shortfall.

Immediate cause for agreement:

- Nepal is facing severe crisis of petroleum products since over a month due to Madhesi protesters opposed to the new constitution blocking border points with India.
- Analysts point out that India’s de facto embargo on oil supplies to Nepal had imparted fresh urgency in Kathmandu to seek China as an alternative energy supplier.
- India has dismissed the allegations of blockade, blaming the trade slowdown on anti-constitution protesters from Nepal’s plains hat have blocked or impeded traffic at major border crossings.

Impact on India-Nepal relation:

- Nepal has ended the four-decade-old monopoly of the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) for the supply of petroleum products to Nepal
- Shortage of essential commodities especially petroleum products have sparked anti-India feelings among Nepalis, eroding the goodwill India had garnered earlier this year by offering rapid and extensive assistance to the impoverished nation reeling from earthquakes.
- The souring of ties represents a setback for India’s efforts to forge closer regional relations and reclaim India’s standing in South Asia in the face of a growing Chinese presence.

Chinese strategy:

- The fuel deal with Nepal feeds into China’s broader strategic perspective, with Kathmandu as one of the nodes of the Beijing-led Belt and Road connectivity initiative that would integrate the economies of Eurasia.
- Nepal and China have inked a four-point document endorsing the Belt and Road initiative.

2.6. CRISIS IN MALDIVES

The arrest of Ahmed Adheeb, the Vice-President of the Maldives, has escalated the political crisis in this young democracy, already fragile.

Reason for arrest:

The government said that Adheeb was involved in an explosion on board the presidential boat, and that it was aimed at assassinating President Abdulla Yameen.

Emergency declared in the Maldives:

- The Emergency was declared after the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) and the Maldives Police discovered a large cache of arms in different locations.
- The Emergency was imposed to pre-empt a mass rally by the main Opposition Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP).
- The rally is aimed at pressuring President to release former president Mohamed nasheed.
- The declaration of emergency has raised fears among human rights groups over a fair trial for Mr. Adheeb. Right groups alleged that the Emergency is just another tool in the hands of the Maldivian government to crack down on political opponents.
Sequence of events in Maldives:

- In October 2008 the Maldives held free and fair elections which ended the 30-year rule of autocrat Maumoon Abdul Gayoom.
- President Mohamed Nasheed of Maldivian Democratic party (MDP) came to power after elections in 2008.
- Nasheed’s alleged order to arrest Criminal Court Chief Judge Abdulla Mohamed, whom he accused of political bias and corruption, led to weeks of protests.
- Nasheed was forced to resign in February 2012, and lost a presidential election one year later to Yameen Abdul Gayoom.
- In the 2013 election, held after the country’s first democratically elected President Mohamed Nasheed resigned amid protests, the Supreme Court annulled the first round of voting, in which Mr. Nasheed was leading.
- Mr. Yameen, candidate of Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM), clinched an unexpected victory in the presidential run-off over opposition leader and former president Mohammed Nasheed.
- Abdulla Yameen was sworn in as the sixth President of the Maldives.
- Nasheed was arrested over the detention of a judge in 2012, was charged under the Anti-Terrorism Act 1990. Nasheed had taken shelter at the Indian High Commission in Male to avoid arrest in connection with the same case in February 2013.
- Mr. Nasheed was jailed for 13 years on terrorism charges. A United Nations panel had ruled the jailing illegal and called for his immediate release.

The Yameen Presidency has been criticised widely for its intolerance of dissent and crackdown on the opposition.

Analysis:

Mr. Yameen should be ready to change his authoritarian ways, respect the democratic rights of his people, allow the opposition to operate freely and thereby strengthen the foundations of the young democracy. Only then can he offer a stable government to his people and save the Maldives from this state of flux.

CSE 2013

Discuss the political developments in Maldives in the last two years. Should they be of any cause of concern to India?

2.7. 3RD INDIA-AFRICA FORUM SUMMIT

The 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit took place in New Delhi. 41 heads of state and government from 54 countries in Africa were present at Summit. The summit was the largest gathering of foreign dignitaries in New Delhi since the 1983 Non-Aligned Summit.

Background:

- India had strong political ties with the continent in the first three decades after Independence. Relationship was mainly based on the shared struggle against imperialism, colonialism, racial discrimination and apartheid.
- But India lost some momentum in building a stronger partnership with African countries since the 1990s as the country recalibrated its foreign and economic policies. The idea of the India-Africa summit was first mooted to arrest this slide and reboot the relationship.
- The two previous India-Africa summits were held in 2008 and 2011, in New Delhi and Addis Ababa.
Convergence of interest-India and Africa:

- India and Africa said that the two partners are aligned on the outstanding issues at the **World Trade Organisation (WTO)** and are in favour of multilateral trading systems. At the Bali Ministerial in 2013 too, Africa and India had united in seeking an interim mechanism for safeguarding minimum support prices to farmers against WTO caps till a permanent solution is found and adopted.
- **Cooperation to tackle terrorism:** India strongly advocated stepped-up cooperation through intelligence exchange and training with 54 African countries.
- **Cooperation on climate change** between India and Africa, both who had “contributed the least to global warming.”
- There’s a convergence of interest for **reforming the Security Council.** It is imperative for both sides to speak in “one voice” for Security Council reforms.

Relation between India and Africa:

- **Economic:** Africa is an important trade partner for India. India-Africa trade was worth almost $70 billion in 2014-15, and Indian companies invested some $30-35 billion in the continent over the past decade. While trade has improved in these ten years, it is still much less than Africa’s trade with China, which was $200 billion in 2014-15. Besides, China has invested more than $180 billion in Sub-Saharan Africa alone in areas ranging from energy to infrastructure during the period 2005-2015.
- **People to people contact:** There has been a welcome surge in people-to-people contacts as large numbers of African entrepreneurs, medical tourists, trainees and students have started coming to India and Indian experts and entrepreneurs have headed there.
- **Business-to-business** links between India and several African nations have become increasingly important and are driving the government-to-government relationship.
- India has offered a new line of credit worth $10 billion to strengthen economic cooperation and called for a unified stance for the reform of the UN Security Council.
- Stronger ties with Africa fit into India’s traditional foreign policy milieu.

Conclusion:

- The India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) process has shown the promise of Indo-African partnership. Indeed, the current global economic stagnation only enhances the relevance of a mutual interface between the world’s fastest growing continent and the world’s fastest growing major economy.
- The IAFS process has given a fillip to cultural and informational contacts and mutual awareness.
- We should harness our assets in Africa, such as the Indian diaspora there; a growing acceptance of the quality of our healthcare and educational facilities; relevance of our developmental model; and the greater willingness of our private sector to engage the continent.
- The goodwill India enjoys in the continent is a result of the principled anti-colonial positions the country took in the post-Independence era. India should cash in on that goodwill to build a stronger economic and political partnership with Africa in the new century.

**CSE 2014**

How does India see its place in the economic space of rising natural resource rich Africa?

### 2.8. INDIA-GERMANY RELATION

Bilateral relations between the Republic of India and the Germany have been traditionally strong due to commercial, cultural and technological co-operation. German Chancellor Angela Merkel travelled to India for the **Third Indo-German Inter-Governmental Consultations.**
A total of 18 agreements were signed, which covered a wide range of topics — from skill development to education, science and technology to aviation.

| Promotion of German as a foreign language in India and the promotion of modern Indian languages in Germany. | Summary record of the negotiations on development cooperation. |
| Indo-German solar energy partnership. | Skill development, and vocational education and training. |
| Security cooperation. | Aviation security. |
| Disaster management | Cooperation in agricultural studies |
| Supporting participation of young Indian scientists in natural sciences for the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings. | Extension of the tenure of the Indo-German Science and Technology Centre (IGSTC). |
| Indo-German Partnerships in higher education (IGP). | Plant protection products |
| Development of cooperation in the field of railways. | Cooperation in the field of manufacturing. |
| Setting up a fast-track system for German companies in India. | Cooperation in the field of advanced training of corporate executives and junior executives from India. |
| Cooperation in food safety between the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BFR) and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). | Cooperation in food safety between the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and the Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL). |

Highlights of the visit:

- Germany returned to India a 10th century Durga idol that had gone missing from a temple in Kashmir over two decades ago.
- "Fast-track clearance mechanism":
  - In a bid to attract German investment, India decided to set up a “fast-track clearance mechanism”. The only other such country-specific mechanism is for Japan.
  - The fast-track system for German companies will be taken care of by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), and will become operational by March 2016.
- The two leaders also underlined the importance of freedom of navigation in international waters and the right of passage and other maritime rights in accordance with international law, in an apparent reference to growing Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea.
- Germany has expressed its inability to sign the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) with India, citing its provision for “death penalty” for heinous crimes and terror activities.
- India and Germany agreed to resume talks towards a free trade agreement between Asia’s third-largest economy and the European Union.
- Cooperation in clean energy:
The two countries agreed on the **India Germany Climate and Renewable Energy Alliance** — a comprehensive partnership to harness technology, innovation and finance in order to make affordable, clean and renewable energy accessible to all.

- Germany has committed to providing an assistance of over 1 billion Euros for India’s Green Energy Corridor and a new assistance package of over 1 billion Euros for solar projects in India.

## 2.9. TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

The **Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)** is a proposed trade agreement among twelve Pacific Rim countries concerning a variety of matters of economic policy. Its supporters say the pact would boost growth in the U.S. as well as the Asian economies. The TPP, an ambitious idea pushed hard by President Barack Obama’s administration, would address the "21st century trade issues" such as intellectual property protections, digital trade rights and protections for investors.

- The commercial value of the deal, when it is approved, is immense, tying together as it does almost 40 per cent of the world’s GDP.
- TPP will cover 40 per cent of the global commerce, and will ease trade among the participant countries — Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the U.S. and Vietnam.
- It seeks to eliminate or reduce about 18,000 tariff and non-tariff barriers.
- It also would establish uniform rules on corporations’ intellectual property, open the Internet even in communist Vietnam and **crack down on wildlife trafficking and environmental abuses**.
- TPP seeks to frame a new agenda for global trade, requiring countries to commit beyond their existing multilateral obligations under the WTO as well as the agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).
- Trade in agricultural products among the TPP countries represents $311 billion and the deal is expected to boost agricultural trade among countries within the TPP area.

### Opposition to deal:

- It faces opposition inside and outside the U.S. Several members of Mr. Obama’s Democratic Party oppose the deal, saying it would only **help American companies send jobs abroad**.
- Critics in other countries say it would benefit large corporations, particularly American big pharma, with the common people at the receiving end.
- Health advocacy groups say it would **reduce access to generic medicines** in developing countries; Internet freedom campaigners see it as a big threat.
- Labour unions, environmentalists and liberal activists argued that the agreement favours big business over workers and environmental protection.
- The TPP pushes the envelope on contentious subjects such as intellectual property (IP) rights and the freedom of multinationals to sue governments. Multinational corporations can cramp and even hinder the **sovereign right of governments** to frame regulations in the interest of citizens when they foresee a threat to their profits.
- The Chinese view the TPP as the economic arm of **Washington’s China-containment approach**.

### Implication for India:

India did not attempt to join the TPP for obvious reasons: the possible gains from opening up markets for its merchandise exports would have been nullified by the concessions that the country would have had to grant in the realm of intellectual property rights, especially in the important segment of drugs.

- The TPP has implications for India, too, as experts have predicted the possibility of the proposed pact leading to **trade diversions from India**.
TPP members account for almost 30 per cent of the India’s merchandise exports which could now come under the shadow of the agreement.

There may also be problems for yarn exports to Vietnam and Malaysia if rules of origin kick in under the TPP preventing garment manufacturers from importing yarn from other countries.

The trade-pact could have measures that topple India’s capacity to make inexpensive medicines for itself and patients across the world.

2.10. US-JAPAN-INDIA TRILATERAL MEET

The foreign ministers of India, Japan and the US met in New York in the first such trilateral engagement between the three countries with an eye on China’s growing influence in the world.

The foreign ministers underscored the importance of international law and peaceful settlement of disputes, freedom of navigation and overflight and unimpeded lawful commerce, including in the South China Sea.

The US maintains the South China Sea is international water, and sovereignty in the area should be determined by the UN.

With China getting more assertive, the US is looking to marshal allies in the region to take a strategic role.

- India’s participation in this new trilateral forum along with the US and its most important Asian-Pacific ally marks a new benchmark in India’s integration into the US “Pivot to Asia”—Washington’s drive to militarily-strategically isolate and encircle China.
- The US has long been pressing India to join US-led trilateral and quadrilateral initiatives with Japan and its other key military partner in the region, Australia.
- “The US concept of Asia Pivot revolves around isolating China and creating a block of Regional and Extra Regional 2nd tier powers to strategically suffocate China in the 21st century. These 2nd tier powers include India, Australia and Japan.”

The three Ministers discussed maintaining maritime security through greater collaboration and appreciated Japan’s participation in the 2015 Malabar naval exercise. Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief also featured in the first trilateral ministerial meet.

China had objected to the participation of Japan, Australia and Singapore in Malabar 2007 exercise, which was hosted by India in the Bay of Bengal.

To promote regional economic linkages, the three Ministers launched an expert-level group on regional connectivity to identify collaborative efforts, including between south and southeast Asia.

2.11. INDIA’S NEW STRATEGY TOWARDS PAKISTAN

Prime Minister has made it clear that he intends to stick to his ‘red lines’ on Kashmir. So any talks between the two countries will not be on terms set by Pakistan, which seeks to make Kashmir the central point of such exercises.

- Mr. Sharif’s reference to Kashmir as a land “under foreign occupation”, India brought up the condition of Kashmiris in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), saying it was up to Pakistan to vacate Kashmir and not the other way round.
- India’s decision to highlight the atrocities by Pakistani forces in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) and in Balochistan is a clear departure from past practice.
- The new strategy was seen as the most effective way to counter Pakistan’s attempts at attacking India.
- It remains to be seen whether New Delhi’s new tack will help tone down Pakistan’s position on J&K.
Apprehension with new strategy:

India’s decision to reply to the Pakistani line on Kashmir with counter-allegations on the PoK seems to be a false step.

- Despite all its attempts over the years, Pakistan has been unsuccessful in getting the United Nations or the P-5 Security Council members to consider any reference on Kashmir; the subject was last discussed by the UNSC in 1971.
- As an active aspirant to a permanent seat in the Security Council, India’s stature would be enhanced internationally if it instead sets in motion a bilateral process to resolve issues with its neighbour, with a view to ending the decades-old dispute.
- Critics pointed out that the new policy of highlighting PoK issues could lead to “internationalising” the Kashmir issue, which India has avoided for decades.

2.12. INDIA-SRI LANKA JOINT TRAINING EXERCISE "MITRA SHAKTI-2015"

The third India-Sri Lanka joint training exercise "Mitra Shakti-2015" culminated at Aundh Military Camp, Pune. The 14-day joint training included understanding of transnational terrorism, developing interoperability and conduct of joint tactical operations controlled by a Joint Command Post.

2.13. INDO-CHINA JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE HAND-IN-HAND 2015

- The joint Hand-in-Hand counter-terrorism exercises between India and China was held at Kunming Military Academy in Yunnan province located in southwestern China.
- The aim of the exercise is “to develop joint operating capability, share useful experience in counter-terrorism operations and to promote friendly exchanges between the armies of India and China,”

2.14. INDIA-INDONESIA MARITIME EXERCISE

- India and Indonesia expanded strategic and defence ties by jointly conducting an inaugural maritime exercise in the Andaman Sea.
- This was the first bilateral ex
- Exercise between both the nations embedded with the element of expanded version of coordinated patrol (CORPAT),
- The two navies have been carrying out Coordinated Patrolling (CORPAT) along the International Maritime borderline (IMBL) twice a year since 2002 with the aim of keeping this very important part of the Indian Ocean Region safe and secure for industrial shipping and international trade.
3. ECONOMY

3.1. INDIA CLIMBS 16 PLACES IN WEF’S GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS INDEX

- India has climbed a spectacular 16 places to the 55th position among 140 economies in this year’s World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Competitiveness Index.

Why improved:

- India’s reversal is largely attributable to new government’s pro-business, pro-growth and anti-corruption stance, which has improved the business community’s sentiment toward the government.
- The most notable improvements are in the basic drivers of competitiveness, which is good for the economy, especially the development of the manufacturing sector.
- In terms of competitiveness of its institutions, India is ranked 60th (out of total 140 countries and up 10 positions from last year), while for infrastructure it has gained six places to 81st.
- The inflation also eased to 6 per cent in 2014, due to lower commodity prices, down from near double-digit levels the previous year.

What are the areas of improvement?

India saw improvement in some of the areas like macroeconomic stability, quality if India’s institution, however, other areas also deserve attention. Some of these are:

1. **Technological readiness** - India remains one of the least digitally connected countries in the world. Fewer than one in five Indians access the internet on a regular basis, and fewer than two in five are estimated to own even a basic cell phone.
2. **Labour Market** - In labour market efficiency, India’s position is very low at 103rd, indicating the need for further labour reforms. Restrictive labour regulations, poor work ethics in labour force, inadequately educated workforce are the areas which needs attention to improve India’s competitiveness and the ease of doing business in India.
3. **Restrictions to doing business** - Regressive tax regulations, high tax rates, foreign currency regulations and difficulties in access to financing were also highlighted by the report as the most problematic factors for doing business in India.
4. India’s performance in the macroeconomic stability pillar has improved, although the situation remains worrisome (91st, up 10 places).
5. The government budget deficit has gradually dropped since its 2008 peak, although it still amounted to 7 per cent of GDP in 2014, one of the highest in the world (131st).
6. The quality of its electricity supply is still too low (91st)

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**Global Competitiveness Report (GCR) and Global Competitiveness Index:**

2. Since 2004, the Global Competitiveness Report ranks countries based on the Global Competitiveness Index, developed by Xavier Sala-i-Martin and Elsa V. Artadi.
3. The Global Competitiveness Index measures the set of institutions, policies, and factors that set the sustainable current and medium-term levels of economic prosperity.
Other findings:

- The list was topped by Switzerland, followed by Singapore, the US, Germany and the Netherlands.
- Among the larger emerging markets, South Africa progressed seven places to 49th place, while China held steady at 28, Indonesia was 37th (down three) and Brazil was 75th.

### CSE 2008

India on Global Competitiveness Index-2007

#### 3.2. VODAFONE WINS TRANSFER PRICING TAX DISPUTE CASE

- Vodafone India won its battle against the income-tax department over transfer pricing in the Bombay High Court. The Bombay high court ruled in favour of the Indian arm of Vodafone Group Plc. in a Rs.8,500 crore transfer pricing tax dispute.

**Background:**

- The dispute relates to the sale of the Ahmedabad-based call centre business (Vodafone India Services formerly known as 3 Global Services) for assessment year 2008-09.
- The income tax department issued a notice to the company seeking to add Rs 8,500 crore to the taxable income of 2007-08, saying it has skirted the transfer pricing rules. In December 2013, the department sought a tax of Rs 3,700 crore from the company in this case.
- The company approached the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal against the tax demand, saying it was not an international transaction and did not attract transfer pricing rules.
- But the tribunal ruled in favour of the department on December 10, 2014.

**Impact of Judgment:**

- Verdict is an excellent signal for foreign investors in India.
- The verdict augurs well for other foreign companies locked in similar disputes with the Indian tax department, including Royal Dutch Shell Plc., International Business Machines Corp. and Nokia Oyj.
- Judgment is in line with government’s effort to bring **stability and predictability to the tax regime**.

**Related Info:**

**Transfer Pricing:**

- The price at which divisions of a company transact with each other is called transfer price. Transactions may include the trade of supplies, service or labor between departments. Transfer prices are used when individual entities of a larger multi-entity firm are treated and measured as separately run entities.
Arm’s Length:

- A transaction in which buyers and sellers of any products act independently and have no relationship with each other is known as Arm’s length transaction. The concept of an arm’s length transaction is to ensure that both parties in the deal are acting in their own self-interest and are not subject to any pressure or duress from the other party.

Indian Laws related to Transfer Pricing:

- Income-Tax Act provides that any income arising from an international transaction will be computed having regard to the arm’s length price, which will be determined by Central Board of Direct Taxation (CBDT) using various methods like comparable uncontrolled price method, cost plus method, etc.

Safe Harbour Rules:

- The determination of arm’s length price is subject to safe harbor rules. "Safe harbour" means circumstances in which the income-tax authorities shall accept the transfer price declared by the assessee.
- It is a legal provision to reduce or eliminate liability as long as good faith is demonstrated. Government looking at lowering safe harbour margins to make it attractive for companies to opt for it and make safe harbour definition unambiguous bringing in more clarity.

Advance Pricing Agreement:

The CBDT may enter into an advance pricing agreement with any person, determining the arm’s length price or specifying the manner in which arm’s length price is to be determined, in relation to an international transaction to be entered into by that person.

2011 question on similar lines, transfer pricing can be asked.

"Which one of the following is not a feature of “Value Added Tax”?

(a) It is a multi-point destination-based system of taxation.

(b) It is a tax levied on value addition at each stage of transaction in the production-distribution chain.

(c) It is a tax on the final consumption of goods or services and must ultimately be borne by the consumer.

(d) It is basically subject of the Central Government and the State Governments are only a facilitator for its successful implementation”.

CSE 2010

What is 'Round Tripping' in the context of FDI inflow. and why has it been in the news recently in the case of India?

3.3. GAP BETWEEN RURAL AND URBAN INFLATION:

- As per the inflation report by HSBC while India's underlying inflation momentum at 5.5% but it is higher at 6.5% for rural India while 4.5% for the urban segment.
Reasons for this gap:

- Greater use of non-oil based fuels, where inflation remains higher, is mostly used in rural homes.
- The dramatic fall of oil has pulled down both 'fuel' and 'transportation' prices. However, the pass-through has been lower for rural India. Food and others - In case of food, benefits of cheaper imports are not reaching rural areas as efficiently.
- The main reason is the structural disadvantages in Rural India. Rural India has some structural disadvantages vis-a-vis urban India: insufficient transport networks, limited providers and insufficient competition and distribution channels. Insufficient investment, growing bottlenecks and impact of two successive droughts have contributed to lowering rural India’s potential (or trend) growth and the narrow output gap is keeping core inflation from slowing rapidly in rural areas, despite weak growth.

Way Forward:

Higher investment in rural infrastructure and meaningful agricultural reforms are needed to make growth weather proof and put it on a higher sustainable path to enable the RBI to meet its 4 per cent inflation target sustainably.

3.4. EASE OF DOING BUSINESS: INDIA MOVES UP

- India is ranked 130 among 189 countries; an improvement of four places from last year’s ranking, according to World Bank’s Doing Business Report 2016.
- India has recorded the biggest improvement among the South Asian economy.
- India still last among BRICS in ease of doing business ranking.
- The improvement in the two indicators, ‘starting a business’ and ‘getting electricity’ pushed India up the ladder.
- The number of days it takes to start a new business stood at 29 days this year.

Areas of worry:

- Of the 10 parameters, India does very poorly on two—enforcing contracts and closing a business.
- Access to credit for a business has become marginally more difficult over the past 12 months, resulting in the ranking dropping six places.
- Only Bangladesh fares worse than India among the eight South Asian countries in the 189 nations on the list in resolving commercial disputes.
Cabinet clears two ordinances:

- The Cabinet cleared two ordinances for expeditious settlement of commercial disputes that would improve ease of doing business in the country.
- Government cleared ordinances to amend the Arbitration and Conciliation Act and bring into force the Commercial Courts, Commercial Division and Commercial Appellate Division of High Courts Bill, 2015.
- Under the proposed amendments to the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, an arbitrator will have to settle a case within 18 months. However, after the completion of 12 months, certain restrictions will be put in place to ensure that the arbitration case does not linger on.

### 3.5. WORLD BANK REPORT ON GLOBAL POVERTY

Recently, World Bank has released global Monitoring Report for 2014-15 on the Millennium Development Goals. Some of the findings of the report are-

- The World Bank has released new estimates that show that fewer than one in 10 people are now living in extreme poverty.
- **More than 1.2 billion people have risen above the global poverty line over the past 25 years.** This is the first time in human history that the worst type of poverty looks under control in most parts of the world, except for some parts of Africa. The world seems to be on course to ending extreme poverty by 2030.
- The sharp decline in extreme poverty since 1990 is most clearly linked to the increase in global growth following the liberalization of most economies.
- The spectacular economic success in China is obviously one big reason why global poverty has come down so rapidly. No country in history has managed to pull so many people out of poverty in such a short period of time.

Indian perspective:

- India has been the biggest contributor to poverty reduction between 2008 and 2011, with around 140 million or so lifted out of absolute poverty.
- However, even this remarkable feat is not enough—the report says that in 2011, India accounted for 30% of those living in extreme poverty in the world.
- Sri Lanka, Nepal and even Pakistan have done a better job of reducing poverty headcount as seen from below figure.

#### POVERTY CHECK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>GDP per capita in 2003 (PPP constant 2011 international dollars)</th>
<th>Poverty headcount ratio PPP at $1.25/day at 2010 international prices (% of population)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>9,283</td>
<td>23.6% (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>1,827</td>
<td>6.3% (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>5,580</td>
<td>32.8% (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Congo</td>
<td>2,172</td>
<td>16.5% (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>4,419</td>
<td>5.1% (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyz Republic</td>
<td>1,110</td>
<td>23.4% (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>2246</td>
<td>25.1% (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>5,429</td>
<td>62% (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>4,519</td>
<td>11.9% (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>4,748</td>
<td>12.7% (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>6,825</td>
<td>19% (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>4,549</td>
<td>4.1% (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>1,827</td>
<td>19.8% (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>5,129</td>
<td>2.4% (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>3,385</td>
<td>5.12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Bank indicators
Poverty Line:

- The bank uses an updated international poverty line of $1.9 a day, which incorporates new information on differences in the cost of living across countries.
- The new line preserves the real purchasing power of the previous line (of $1.25 a day in 2005 prices) in the world’s poorest countries.

Challenges:

There are three big issues that need to be addressed to achieve the target of stamping out mass poverty by 2030.

- Slower economic growth
- The rise in inequality in most countries.
- More attention should be paid on to poverty in all its dimensions, from education to health to social mobility.

3.6. BASE EROSION AND PROFIT SHIFTING (BEPS) PROJECT- IMPACT ON INDIA

Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) refers to tax planning strategies that exploit gaps and mismatches in tax rules to make profit ‘disappear’ for tax purposes or to shift locations where there is little or no real activity but the taxes are low, resulting in little or no overall corporate tax being paid. BEPS can be achieved through the use of transfer pricing mechanism. The BEPS project is led by the OECD and the Group of 20 (G20) countries and it is a response to the 2008 global financial crisis, and is meant to lay the foundations of sustainable and long-term economic growth by avoiding policies that promote growth at the expense of other countries.

Background:

It has been estimated that multinational businesses have often used a complex transaction structure to artificially reduce their outgo on corporate taxes by shifting to jurisdictions with lower taxation. According to OECD estimates, such tax avoidance has led to a global revenue loss of $100-240 billion every year - as significantly large as four to 10 per cent of global corporate income-tax revenues.

Recent Action:

Recently, OECD has unveiled 15 action plans under its Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) project. It will undoubtedly create new and formidable challenges for many companies operating in India and abroad.

The 15 action plans approved under the BEPS project will help improve transparency for both businesses and governments by introducing commonly agreed minimum standards for tax administration across countries.

Impact:

- Companies will have to adhere to the country-by-country reporting standards for their operations in different tax jurisdictions.
- Indian companies expected to come under the purview of BEPS will have to increase their awareness of the new regime and start preparing to comply with the new regulations that are likely to be in place from 2017.
- They have to bring their accounting systems up to date, improve their compliance mechanisms, particularly with regard to country-by-country reporting standards and transfer pricing rules, and upgrade the manner in which they report data.
3.7. NOBEL PRIZE IN ECONOMICS

- The Nobel Prize Committee has awarded the 2015 Nobel in Economic Sciences to **Angus Deaton of Princeton University**, for his analysis of “*consumption, poverty, and welfare.*"
- **Angus Deaton**, was born in 1945 in Edinburgh, Scotland. He holds both U.S. and British citizenship.

**About his work:**

- His work has relied on **household consumption surveys rather than income data**. By emphasizing the links between individual consumption decisions and outcomes for the whole economy, his work has helped transform modern microeconomics, macroeconomics and development economics. In his work, he has tried to answer three questions:
  - How do consumers distribute their spending among different goods?
  - How much of society’s income is spent and how much is saved?
  - How do we best measure and analyze welfare and poverty?

**Importance of data:**

Angus Deaton has questioned the quality of data collected in large surveys and suggested ways of improving the surveys. He has also thought very hard about how these data could or could not be used, how to reduce measurement errors, and what inferences one can, or cannot, draw from data that might suffer from measurement errors. For him-

- Good data is fundamental to good economics.
- It helps in verifying government’s statistics, and so that the democratic debate within any country can be informed by the different interpretations of different scholars.
- High quality, open, transparent and uncensored data are needed to support democracy.

**India Connect:**

India has been one of Deaton’s laboratories. His work has greatly influenced how India maps its disadvantaged population. For instance, he pointed out how in the 55th Round of the NSS (1999-2000) there were measurement flaws — *such as inconsistencies in the recall of consumption expenditure — while collecting data*. Incorrectly collected data led to overestimates of consumption and underestimates of poverty, and vice-versa. Similarly, his work on price indices and measuring poverty was central to the poverty line drawn by the Suresh Tendulkar Committee.

**Lessons for India:**

- The central message emanating from Deaton’s work is *that inequalities are often a consequence of economic growth.*
- The great escape from poverty and ill-health does not happen without many being left behind.
- There are also terrible dangers of inequality. Those who have escaped from destitution use their wealth to block those who are still imprisoned by it.
- **Decent education, available and effective healthcare, and functioning sanitation are goods that benefit everyone**, and the new middle class should be more than happy to pay the taxes that help others share their good fortune.

**About Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences:**

- The Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences, officially called the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, was established in 1968. It was not part of the original group of awards set out in dynamite tycoon Nobel’s 1895 will.
3.8. DOMESTIC NATURAL GAS PRICING

The government has reduced the domestic natural gas price to $3.82 per million metric British thermal unit (mmBtu) for the period between October 2015 and March 2016.

- According to the new formula, prices are to be revised every six months based on a weighted average of domestic prices in the US, UK, Canada and Russia.
- Sectors such as fertiliser and power generation, which receive domestic gas on priority, will benefit from the cheaper input.
- There are gains on the consumer side but there are growing concerns about the business prospects of oil and gas exploration and production in India. Lower gas prices are a dampener for investments in the sector. Lower domestic gas price disincentivises domestic upstream exploration and increases dependency on expensive LNG imports.
- India imports close to 80 per cent of its oil and gas requirement, which, in turn, accounts for almost a third of India’s overall imports.
- One of the key reasons for linking domestic natural gas prices to global prices last year was to incentivise investment in exploration and production along the Indian coastline and bring down dependence on imports.

Reasons of depressed gas price:

- A shale production boom in the US,
- A slide in Russia’s ruble,
- A tumble in crude oil,
- A common index for gas rates.

3.9. PULSE PRICE RISE

This year pulses’ prices, which are significant sources of protein to the Indian population, are going through the roof. Tur/arhar (pigeon pea) prices in September-October hovered between Rs 132 per kg to Rs 200 per kg. In the last five years, retail tur prices were ruling in the range of Rs. 74-85 per kg.

Reasons for rise in prices:

Due to fall in domestic output by about 2 million tonnes (mt) to 17.20 mt in 2014-15 crop year owing to deficient monsoon and unseasonal rains.

Steps already taken:

The government has tried out various policy instruments-

- Restrict/ban exports of these commodities and open up imports at zero duty.
- Invoke the Essential Commodities Act (ECA) to impose stocking limits- forcing private trade to liquidate stocks immediately.
- Suspend/ ban forward and futures trading.
- Increase in the MSP prices for pulses.
- State owned MMTC has imported 5,000 tonnes of tur dal and floated revised tenders for import of 2,000 tonnes of chipeas and is planning to float fresh bid for overseas purchase of tur dal to boost supply and make them available to states at subsidized prices.
Way Forward:

- **Changes in Trade Policy**: To incentivize the peasantry to produce more pulses abolish all export controls on pulses.
- **Better Management of Supply Gap to fight price volatility**: Abolish stock limits under the ECA. It will encourage and incentivize the farmers to store not sell off immediately. It will help in building the buffer stock and most importantly the benefits of this buffer stock will go to farmers not to the hoarders which will encourage farmers to grow more pulses.
- **Procurement by Government**: There is a procurement arrangement for wheat and rice and not for pulses and oilseeds. On similar lines, to increase domestic output, government should also put in place a proper mechanism to procure.
- **Subsidies**: Much of the subsidies on fertilisers, power, and irrigation go to sugarcane, wheat and rice. These subsidies amount to more than Rs 10,000/ hectare.
- **Create a buffer stock**: Given that domestic consumption of pulses is around 23 million tonnes, buffer stock of around two to three million is the minimum that is needed to release it whenever pulse prices and hence stabilise prices spike.
- **The role of commodity exchanges**: A robust commodity exchange should facilitate price discovery and spot prices/ premiums should be reflective of future volatilities. With regulations through the SEBI, the exchange can act as a messenger of short- to medium-run future prices.
- **Innovative solutions**: Soya flour, along with rice, wheat and other pulse flours, can be re-constituted into pulses. We are surplus in soya, and soya flour has a very high protein content — more than 40 per cent compared to 20-25 per cent for most other pulses. Technology to do this exists and can be tailored to Indian tastes.

### 3.10. ALSO IN NEWS

#### 3.10.1. CHINA YUAN OVERTAKES YEN IN GLOBAL PAYMENTS RANKINGS:

- China's yuan has overtaken the Japanese yen and moved into fourth place among the world's payments currencies. Yuan held a **2.79 percent share** in world payments based on value in August whereas the yen’s share was 2.76 per cent.

#### 3.10.2. RBI ALLOWS 90% LOAN TO VALUE RATIO ON HOME LOANS:

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) increased the amount banks can advance for a property purchase and also reduced the risk weights attached to some categories of home loans.

**New Provisions:**
- RBI allowed a loan-to-value ratio (LTV) of up to 90% for home loans of Rs.30 lakh or less. Earlier, 90% LTV was allowed only for loans up to Rs.20 lakh.
- If the LTV is between 80% and 90%, the risk weight, attached to such loans will be 50%. If the LTV is below 80% for loans of Rs.30 lakh, the risk weight falls to 35%.

**Impact of this decision:**
- At present, property sector is battling to emerge from a prolonged slowdown, with tepid sales and rising inventory. The slowdown followed a larger economic downturn.
- This move will likely make more credit available to borrowers and improve sentiment in a struggling real estate market.
3.10.3. MOBILE MANUFACTURING FACILITY IN TIRUPATI

- Part of initiatives by Fast Track Task Force (FTTF), set up by the central government to promote mobile handset manufacturing eco-system in India.
- Foxconn has already started operations in Andhra Pradesh for manufacturing brands like Xiomi, Gionee.
- Now, four Indian mobile manufacturing companies — Micromax, Celkon, Karbonn and Lava — have come forward to set up their units.
- The facility/hub will be spread over 60 acres of land and is expected to create more than 10,000 jobs within a year and contribute at least 5 percent of all-India target of 15 lakh jobs by the year 2019.

3.10.4. AMRAVATI – LAND ACQUISITION MODEL

Unique “pooling” model for land acquisition –

- Instead of a one-off deal, the farmers would get about 30 per cent of the developed land. For every acre or 4,840 square yards that a farmer gives, he will get a developed residential plot of 1,250 square yards and a commercial plot of another 200 square yards.
- The price of the developed land would compensate for the loss of ownership.
- Also, farmers will receive Rs 50,000 per acre per year for 10 years for parting with their land. This would cover the annual income from cultivation, which they have foregone.
- The model is being dubbed as fair and participative for farmers and its success can be replicated elsewhere.
4. SOCIAL ISSUES

CHILD

4.1. SDG AND CHILD

4.1.1. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- The Sustainable Development Goals are the set of 17 goals and 169 targets adopted by member countries of United Nations at the UN Sustainable Development Summit.
- The goals are to be achieved by all member countries within next fifteen years i.e. by year 2030.
- These goals intend to achieve sustainable development and are more comprehensive than earlier Millennium Development Goals.

4.1.2. SDGS RELATED TO CHILDREN

Target 2: Zero Hunger

- End hunger and ensure access by infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round
- End all forms of malnutrition, stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age
- Address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls

Target 3: Good Health and Well being

- End preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age,
- Reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births.

Target 4: Quality Education

- Complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes
- Access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education
- Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive
- Provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all
- Equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the children in vulnerable situations

Target 5: Gender Equality

- Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation

Target 8: Decent work and Economic growth

- Prohibit and eliminate of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers,
- End child labour in all its forms by 2025

Target 11: Sustainable cities and Communities:

- Special attention to the needs children in building sustainable transport systems
- Universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces
**Target 16: Peace Justice and Strong institutions**

- Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere
- End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children

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**CSE 2013**

Identify the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that are related to health. Discuss the success of the actions taken by the Government for achieving the same.

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### 4.2. BETI BACHAO BETI PADHАО

**New initiative to spread awareness about Scheme:**

- The initiative has been launched to generate awareness among 100 million mobile users in India about the scheme
- The private company Celltick uses its patented Live Screen platform to send interactive message on mobile phones.
- The mobile user can interact with messages on the homescreen of their device
- It will enable ease of use in accessing information about scheme
- The technology enables to reach users based on their location as well as their language of preference.

**Beti Bachao Beti Padhao:**

- It is aimed at promoting gender equality and the significance of educating girls.
- There has been a steady decline in the Child Sex Ratio across India, with 918 females born per 1000 males as per the Census of 2011.
- It is implementing jointly with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Human Resource Development.
- The Scheme is targeted at improving the Child Sex Ratio through multi sectoral interventions including prevention of gender biased sex selection and promoting girls’ education and her holistic empowerment.

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**CSE 2008**

“Decline in the sex ratio in India is an alarming sign for India’s future social development.” Discuss.
4.3. GUIDELINES GOVERNING ADOPTION OF CHILDREN 2015

Salient feature of the guidelines 2015 are:

- The Main reason being retrograde nature of religion specific adoption laws. It reinforced practices that were unjust to children and hindered the formation of a Uniform Civil Code.
- **Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAP):** Prospective adoptive parents should be physically, mentally and emotionally stable, financially capable and should not have any life threatening medical condition. Marital status or a biological child is not a bar, though a single male cannot adopt a girl child.
- Clear and transparent procedure for registration of resident Indians and provision for uploading required documents online.
- PAPs have an option to select an adoption agency of their choice for conducting Home Study Report (HSR) and preferred State also.
- The maximum age of the couple or single parent will depend on the age of the child, but no couple whose cumulative age is more than 110 years can adopt, nor can a single parent aged 55 years or more.
- The minimum age difference between the child and either of the adoptive parents should not be less than 25 years.
- A child has to be declared legally free by the Child Welfare Committee to be adopted before he/she is shown to a couple for adoption.

HEALTH

4.4. MENTAL HEALTH

Need for National Mental Health Policy:

- Mental health care should be extended beyond institutional care.
- The perils of institutional care is evident in the American mental health system where many persons in need of mental health are often consigned to prison-like establishment.
- Persons with a mental illness need personal attention, security, and psychological care, all of which can be provided in a range of settings including homes, community facilities and even humane, well regulated small sized psychiatric hospitals.
- The social mixing of mentally challenged people can demonstrate many gains but it has its own challenges, particularly with respect to society.
- **Social Challenges:**
  - Discrimination, exclusion and abuse
  - Communities and its people segregate, alienate and precipitate a sense of dyadic otherness
- These challenges are at social level and can best be tackled by society. It need to nurture tolerance, embrace differences, and inspire human connection and create inclusive ecosystem for mental health.

World Mental Health Day 2015

- World Mental Health Day (10 October) is a day for global mental health education, awareness and advocacy. It was first celebrated in 1992 at the initiative of the World Federation for Mental Health.
- The theme for this year’s World Mental Health Day, is "Dignity in mental health".
- This year, WHO will be raising awareness of what can be done to ensure that people with mental health conditions can continue to live with dignity, through human rights oriented policy and law, training of health professionals, respect for informed consent to treatment, inclusion in decision-making processes, and public information campaigns.
Mental Health Policy in India:

- The Union Health minister on 10th October 2014 launched India's first-ever National Mental Health Policy to provide universal psychiatric care to the population.
- The vision of the policy is to promote mental health, prevent mental illness, enable recovery from mental illness, promote de-stigmatization and desegregation and ensure socio-economic inclusion of person affected by mental illness by providing accessible, affordable and quality health and social care to all such persons through their life-span within a rights-based framework.

Objectives:

- To provide universal access to mental health care.
- To increase access to and utilization of comprehensive mental health services (including prevention services, treatment and care and support services) by persons with mental health problems.
- To increase access to mental health care especially to vulnerable groups including homeless persons, persons in remote areas, educationally, socially and deprived sections.
- To reduce prevalence and impact of risk factors associated with mental health problems.
- To reduce risk and incidence of suicide and attempted suicide.
- To ensure respect for rights and protection from harms of persons with mental health problems.
- To reduce stigma associated with the mental health problems.
- To enhance availability and equitable distribution of skilled human resources for mental health.

4.5. MISSION INDRADHANUSH

Government launched Mission Indradhanush phase-2:

The Union Health Ministry has launched the second phase of Mission Indradhanush. In this phase, 352 districts have been selected including 279 mid priority districts, 33 from the North East states and 40 districts from phase one where large number of missed out children were detected.

Mission Indradhanush:

- It aims to achieve more than 90% full immunization in the country by 2020
- The vaccines covered under the mission are
  - Diphtheria
  - Pertussis (Whooping cough)
  - Polio
  - Tuberculosis
  - Hepatitis B
  - Measles
  - Tetanus
- In addition to these, vaccines for Japanese Encephalitis and Haemophilus Influenza are also provided in selected districts

Achievements of Mission Indradhanush - Phase 1:

- About 2 crore vaccines were administered to the children and pregnant women.
- About 75.5 lakh children were vaccinated and about 20 lakh children were fully vaccinated.
- More than 20 lakh pregnant women were vaccinated with tetanus toxoid vaccine
- To combat the problem of diarrhoea, zinc tablets and ORS packets were freely distributed to all the children
4.6. PM SWASTHYA SURAKSHA YOJANA

Three more AIIMS-like institutions to be set up:

- The Union Cabinet approved setting up of three more AIIMS-like institutions at Nagpur in Maharashtra, at Mangalagiri in Andhra Pradesh and at Kalyani in West Bengal.
- It will take the number of AIIMS-like institutions to eleven.
- These institutions are set up under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojna (PMSSY)

Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojna (PMSSY) - Salient Features:

- It aims at correcting the imbalances in the availability of affordable healthcare facilities in the different parts of the country in general, and augmenting facilities for quality medical education in the under-served States in particular.
- The scheme was approved in March 2006.
- The first phase in the PMSSY has two components - setting up of six institutions in the line of AIIMS; and upgradation of 13 existing Government medical college institutions.
- In the second phase of PMSSY, the Government has approved the setting up of two more AIIMS-like institutions, and upgradation of six medical college institutions.
- In the third phase of PMSSY, it is proposed to upgrade more medical college institutions.
- It is hoped that consequent to the successful implementation of PMSSY, better and affordable healthcare facilities will be easily accessible to one and all in the country.

4.7. IT SOLUTIONS TO COMBAT DISEASE

IT-based initiative to control malaria:

- A first-of-its-kind initiative by the Mangaluru City Corporation to track and control malaria.
- It uses software developed under a public-private partnership following the guidelines of the National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme.
- The software connects the field workers (who visit households), clinics and laboratories and the officials in City Corporation.
- The clinics, laboratories and hospitals would have to compulsorily feed data on malaria cases reported following blood tests.
- Multi-purpose health workers would have access to this data and they, in turn, will visit houses and areas from where the cases have been reported.
- At present, the reports from field workers and clinics and laboratories reached the civic body a week or a month after the case is diagnosed. However, this software will help bridge this gap and also in reporting malaria within 48 hours.

4.8. INFECTION CONTROL

Controlling Hospital-based infection:

- Recently, Telangana government recognized hospital-based infection as real danger and directed hospitals to implement measures for controlling healthcare associated infections.
- It has been observed that unlike corporate hospitals with national accreditation, government hospitals have fallen behind in implementing such good practices.
- The government hospital in state would have to constitute a Hospital Infection Control Team and set up Infection Control Committees.
• A dedicated Infection Control Officer (ICO), a microbiologist or epidemiologist will be in-charge of infection control practices.
• The hospitals to have an exclusive biomedical waste management committee that would be in charge of implementing good practices in management of hospital waste.

National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare:
• It is an organisation to establish and operate accreditation and allied programs for healthcare organizations
• Participation in NABH accreditation program is on a voluntary basis
• The board while being supported by all stakeholders including industry, consumers, government, have full functional autonomy in its operation.

4.9. RASHTRIYA SWASTHYA BIMA YOJANA (RSBY)

An evaluation of the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) has concluded that the scheme had little or no impact on medical impoverishment in India.

Findings of report:
• Despite high enrollment in RSBY, the proportion of out-of-pocket expenses have steadily increased. Between 2004-05 and 2011-12, hospitalization expenses have increased at high rate.
• There is a serious concern of rampant systemic leakage of resources.
• The report pointed out that a “major design flaw in RSBY and other such state health insurance programmes is their narrow focus on secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation.
• The study concluded that RSBY was being used mostly by those who already had better access (to healthcare services) and the most marginalized sections were being excluded further.

Government proposes changes:
• Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) will be restructured to make its coverage wider, intensive and IT driven.
• The restructured scheme, to be coordinated by the Union Health Ministry, will bring together several disjointed schemes coordinated by different agencies under one umbrella with more benefits and beneficiaries.
• Those states which want to extend the services to people above poverty line (APL) and provide secondary and tertiary benefits could do so as a top up of the scheme.
• An important feature of the new scheme was the strong IT platform which would be created for facilitating operation of the scheme.
• A large database is being created that would detail facilities at every hospitals, disease profile and other details and would help immensely every stakeholder.
• The restructured RSBY would cover around 8 to 10 crore BPL people and there will be enhancement of cash limits for treatment.

2 In the starting RSBY is a project under the Ministry of Labour and Employment. Now it is transferred to Ministry of Health and family welfare from April 1, 2015.
• Improved quality, universal coverage, affordability would be the hallmark of the new scheme, which will also lay stress on preventive medical care
• The scheme envisages free medical check-ups once in every three years for the age group vulnerable to cardiac diseases and diabetes

4.10. RASHTRIYA AROGYA NIDHI

• Set up in 1997, it provides financial assistance to patients living below poverty line and are suffering from major life threatening diseases related to heart, liver, kidney and cancer cases, etc.
• It enables to receive medical treatment at any of the super specialty Government hospitals / institutes or other Government hospitals.
• In cases for financial assistance beyond prescribed limit, it is required to be approved by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Why in News?
The Union Government has enhanced the limit of financial assistance under Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi from Rs. 2 lakh to Rs. 5 lakh. It will ease access to financial assistance in cases where emergency surgery is to be conducted.

4.11. COLLEGE DEGREE IN COMMUNITY HEALTH

• Recently, the Union Health Ministry brought a plan to create a “specialised cadre of health care workers for rural areas” by instituting a Bachelor of Science in Community Health -- in State universities. The initiative is aimed to facilitate basic health care for rural population.
• Community Health Officers: These community health officers are to be posted at sub-centres functioning under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
• B.Sc (Community Heath) course: It will be a three years course in state universities. The emphasis will be on conducting normal deliveries, pre-and anti-natal care, handling diarrhoea, pneumonia, vaccination, providing tuberculosis treatment and treatment of fevers and skin infections.
• An estimated 600 million people in India, many of them in rural locations, have little or no access to health care.

Criticism by Indian Medical Association:
• The Indian Medical Association is the country’s largest non-government organisation for allopathic doctors
• The staff at sub-centres currently work under the supervision of a medical officer posted at primary health centres. For this purpose, there is no need for a more qualified workforce.
• At sub-centre level a more suitable workforce would be an Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) worker with basic primary education and training.
• The policy proposal is not based on ground reality and is conceptually wrong.
• The Association has also argued that entrusting newly proposed BSc (community health) graduates to manage very sensitive areas like child health may even worsen the situation.
• They warned that these graduates will be ill-equipped and to leave the health of children and adolescents in their hands is detrimental


• The report is published by Centre for Disease Dynamics, Economics & Policy: Washington, D.C. It focused on the greater risk posed by the growing antibiotic resistance all over the world.
- The report indicates that around the world there has been an overall decline in the total stock of antibiotic effectiveness: resistance to all first-line and last-resort antibiotics is rising.
- The patterns of which bacteria are resistant to specific antibiotics differ regionally and by country, mirroring patterns of infectious disease and antibiotic use.

**What are Antibiotics?**

- Antibiotics or antibacterial are a type of antimicrobial used in the treatment and prevention of bacterial infection.
- Since their introduction into medicine in the 1940s, antibiotics have been central to modern healthcare. Their role has expanded from treating serious infections to preventing infections in surgical patients, protecting cancer patients and people with compromised immune systems.

**How Antibiotic resistance is developed?**

- Antibiotic resistance is a direct result of antibiotic use. The greater the volume of antibiotics used, the greater the chances that antibiotic-resistant populations of bacteria will prevail in the contest for survival of the fittest at the bacterial level. For instance: Escherichia coli (E. coli) and related bacteria have become resistant to newer third-generation cephalosporins, indicating that they are difficult-to-treat.
- Due to indiscriminate use of antibiotics, the bacteria is generating resistance against most available antibiotics and consequently once-treatable infections are becoming difficult to cure, raising costs to healthcare facilities, and patient mortality is rising, with costs to both individuals and society.

**CSE 2014**

Can overuse and the availability of antibiotics without doctor’s prescription, the contributors to the emergence of drug-resistant diseases in India? What are the available mechanisms for monitoring and control? Critically discuss the various issues involved.

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**HUMAN RESOURCE**

**4.13 SCHOOL EDUCATION IN INDIA**

**Poor performance of government schools:**

- Government schools are mainly attended by those belong to socially and economically marginalized sections.
- The affluent and middle class which used to hold teachers and official accountable for standards in government school has migrated to private schools.

**Measures required:**

- The state government should establish affordable residential schools in each districts on the model of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalas. It will increase competition and result in better performance.
- The salary of government teachers should have two components - fixed and variable. The variable component should depend upon the performance of school and teacher.

**Survey in UP: NGO Buniyad**

- Performance of private schools was relatively better than government schools.
- Parents are willingness to pay more for better performing schools.
- The incentive for performing well has created competition among schools resulting in significant improvement in quality of education.
Use of Information Technology and Learning Outcomes:

OECD Report

- Computers in schools do not necessarily contribute to higher learning achievement levels by children.
- In some East Asian Countries like Japan, South Korea and Singapore where classroom use of computers and the Internet is relatively limited or minimal, students have achieved consistently high scores over the recent years.
- These countries have better school management system.

Indian scenario:

- Since the 1990s, State governments have promoted the use of computers in teaching assuming that computers enhance children’s academic achievement.
- Equipping schools with computers is treated as a reliable short cut to higher quality.
- The states like U.P. distributed free laptops to students and later discontinued the practice.
- The computer-equipped classrooms requires even more competent teachers to guide students how to find reliable sources when a variety of sources are available, to develop skills of mindful reading to spot important points.
- The digital environment requires a greater engagement between the teacher and students over any subject matter. This necessity arises out of the nature of tools involved in the new information and communication technologies (ICTs).
- Children are significantly vulnerable to the cognitive and emotional problems that easy access to the Internet create. The use of new digital tools for teaching children should be exercised with caution.

Way Forward:

- Instead of e-fixture in education sector as a short cut route, better-management systems and more focused policies are required.
- The curriculum policies and examination reforms need to reviewed and aligned with the best international practices.
- The use ICT technology in school will not bring higher learning in itself, it need to integrated with better teaching staff, more awareness and proper guidance to students of its usage.

OTHER

4.14. HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- As per report of the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime, South Asia reported more than 1.5 lakh victims of human trafficking in a single year.
- The Home Ministry will create a national database of persons involved in human trafficking.
- The Home Ministry has been asked to establish an exclusive, specialized agency on the lines of the National Investigation Agency to probe organized human trafficking cases with jurisdiction across the country.
- Funding for the dedicated agency will be initially drawn from the Nirbhaya Fund

4.15. CAUGHT IN A VICIOUS CYCLE OF BONDED LABOUR

- Debt bondage, though banned by law in 1976, has reinvented itself to adapt to modern agriculture and the burgeoning informal sector in the new economy.
A committee headed by a journalist Sivaji Ganesan, submitted its report to Karnataka government which pointed out the practice of bonded labour being still prevalent in the state, though in a new form where passing of debt from one generation to the next has declined.

In the agrarian sector, the labourer is not necessarily confined physically but is bound by a high-interest debt bond to the landlord.

The report also said that while bonded labour was earlier confined to the agricultural sector, a large number of workers have been forced to work now in coffee plantations, fast-food chains, carpet-making units, brick kilns, stone quarries, agarbatti units, the construction industry and in beedi-making units.

**Observations of the Committee:**

- Characteristics of the practice have changed over the years
- Expensive weddings, medical expenses, acute poverty, lack of job opportunities are major reasons for bondage
- Most prevalent among Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes, with people of all age groups in the net
- District, taluk administration are often indifferent to issue; in denial mode
- Inordinate delay in disposing of petitions related to bonded labour
- Periodic survey not being conducted
- Vigilance committees not active
- No instances of initiating criminal proceedings against those involved
- Rehabilitation in many places not satisfactory.

## POVERTY AND EXCLUSION

### 4.16 ROLE OF METHODOLOGY ON POVERTY ESTIMATION: WORLD BANK REPORT

Latest World Bank report said India may have been overestimating the number of its poor. It depends on the way consumption expenditure is recorded.

- According to report, the poverty rate can change if data recording is based on the modified mixed reference period (MMRP) instead of the uniform reference period (URP). It has advocated use of MMRP for poverty estimation.
- The World Bank estimated that Indians in absolute poverty or those who are on the brink of survival (at Rs. 3,170 per month) are now **12.4 per cent** of its population using a new measurement scale.

**Global Poverty line revised by World Bank:**

- The World Bank has revised the global poverty line, previously pegged at $1.25 a day to $1.90 a day.
- This has been arrived at based on an average of the national poverty lines of **15 poorest** economies of the world.
- The poverty lines were converted from local currency into U.S. dollars using the new 2011 Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) data.
- The latest headline estimate for 2012 based on the new data suggests that close to **900 million people** (12.8 per cent of the global population) lived in extreme poverty.
- On the other hand, The **2015 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)** counts **1.6 billion** people as multidimensionally poor, with the largest global share in South Asia and the highest intensity in Sub-Saharan Africa.
Commission on Global Poverty:
The recently-established Commission on Global Poverty is currently assessing how we measure and understand poverty and how to improve this going forward. According to a WB spokesperson, the CGP recommendations are expected in April 2016.

Sustainable Development Goals and Poverty:
- The Sustainable Development Goals adopted in September, seeks to end all forms of poverty world over
- The World Bank Group has set itself the target of bringing down the number of people living in extreme poverty to less than 3 per cent of the world population by 2030.

What is Uniform Reference Rate (URP)?
- Under the URP, data is collected on the “30-day recall for consumption of both food and nonfood items to measure expenditures”. It is used in the National Sample Surveys since the 1950s,

What is Modified Mixed Reference Period (MMRP)?
- Under the MMRP, there is a 7-day recall is used for some food items and to a 1-year recall for low-frequency nonfood consumption items. It was first introduced in NSS (alongside URP) in 2009-10. The MMRP is a more accurate reflection of consumption expenditures.

Why MMRP is better than URP?
- Under MMRP, there is shorter recall period for food items. Thus MMRP-based consumption expenditures in both rural and urban areas are 10-12 per cent larger than URP-based aggregates.
- These higher expenditures, combined with a high population density around the poverty line, translates to a significantly lower poverty rate.

4.17. NUTRITION MONITORING IN INDIA
- In countries such as India where nutrition has a cultural significance, nutrition monitoring provide a good understanding of what people eat and what, therefore, can be culturally accepted nutritional interventions.
- Our child malnutrition numbers are the highest in the world. This is a real emergency and the nutrition monitoring plays a very important role in projecting data in terms of what people are eating.
- The data gathered informs the policy intervention to address under-nutrition.
- In the absence of any dedicated organization engaged in this task, the government’s solutions are neither culturally acceptable nor effective to meet our health challenges
- There is proposal to develop nutrition-monitoring stations network across the country

Why in News?
- The National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau has been shut down by the Union Health Ministry.
- The bureau was responsible for periodic assessments of nutrient deficiency among tribal communities, pregnant women, adolescents and “at-risk” elderly population in India.
- It was the only organisation involved in continuous collection of data on actual dietary intakes of households as a whole as well as by individuals belonging to different age and physiological groups in different States.

CSE 2009
The Last National Family Health Survey (NFHS) displayed a very dismal picture of nutrition as regards several indicators for average Indians. Highlights the salient aspects of this problem.
4.18. FIRST PROJECT UNDER HOUSING FOR ALL MISSION CLEARED

- The central government has granted approval to Chhattisgarh for taking up affordable housing projects in urban areas under Prime Minister’s Awas Yojana (PMAY)
- The state government proposed to build affordable houses in 11 cities and towns in the state. The beneficiaries belong to Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and Low Income Group (LIG).
- The 35% of the houses proposed to be built shall be reserved for EWS.

4.19. 2015 GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX AND INDIA

Global Hunger Index:

- Calculated annually by International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the GHI highlights successes and failures in hunger reduction and provides insights into the drivers of hunger.
- By raising awareness and understanding of regional and country differences in hunger, the GHI aims to trigger actions to reduce hunger.
- The GHI ranks countries on a 100-point scale. Zero is the best score (no hunger), and 100 is the worst, although neither of these extremes is reached in practice.
- To reflect the multidimensional nature of hunger, the GHI combines the following four indicators components in one index number:
  1. **Undernourishment**: the proportion of undernourished as a percentage of the population (reflecting the share of the population with insufficient calorie intake)\( \text{weight} = 1/3 \text{rd} \);
  2. **Child wasting**: the proportion of children under the age of five who suffer from wasting (that is, low weight for their height, reflecting acute undernutrition)\( \text{weight} = 1/6 \text{th} \);
  3. **Child stunting**: the proportion of children under the age of five who suffer from stunting (that is, low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition)\( \text{weight} = 1/6 \text{th} \); and
  4. **Child mortality**: the mortality rate of children younger than the age of five (partially reflecting the fatal synergy of inadequate dietary intake and unhealthy environments)\( \text{weight} = 1/3 \text{rd} \).
- India has moved up to 55 from 63 in The Global Hunger Index, but fighting hunger remains a challenge. Undernourishment and mortality among children remain alarmingly high.

Why fighting Malnutrition is Important?

- Malnutrition affects men, women and children.
- Poor nutrition in early life, often invisible to most, shows up in the daily travails of adults in later life — lower work productivity, higher diabetes, greater risk of heart disease, high blood pressure.
Nutrition also affects the wealth of nations; the costs of poor nutrition are numerous, but on a positive note, the returns to investment in nutrition are impressive.

For every rupee spent on effective nutrition programmes, Rs16 can come back through improved productivity in the labour force.

**Reasons for Hunger in India:**

- 40% of all fruits and vegetables, 20% of all food grains produced rot due to inefficient supply chains and never reach consumer markets.
- BPL households spend 70% of their income on food.
- APL households spend 50% of their income on food.
- Urban working class spends 30% of their income on food.
- Agriculture contributed 13.7% to the GDP in 2013.
- 50% of India is employed in agricultural sector.

**Global Facts:**

- 64% of world’s extreme poor live in 5 countries- Nigeria, Congo, India, Bangladesh, and China.
- 805 million people globally do not have enough to eat.
- Hunger kills more people annually than AIDS, malaria & TB combined.
- One in nine people globally go to bed hungry each night.

**SC/ST/OBC/MINORITIES**

**4.20. CRIMES AGAINST DALITS**

**Why in News?**

- Recently, the murder of two children of a dalit family in Faridabad, Haryana was highlighted in the national media.
- The Haryana has often been in the news for caste-related incidents.
- The National Crime Records Bureau data put the number of incidents of crimes against Dalits in Haryana in 2014 at 830. The corresponding figure for 2013 was 493; for 2012 it was 252.
- However, Haryana isn’t the lone culprit where violence against Dalits is concerned. NCRB data show high incidence of such atrocities in States such as Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, among others.

**Social Causes:**

- At the root of the conflict is the unwillingness of the socially and economically powerful upper castes to share power and resources with Dalits.
- **Dalit Empowerment**: Legislative interventions, including reservations in education, employment and panchayati raj institutions, have triggered incremental changes in the rural landscape. The political power is no longer the monopoly of the ruling castes. However, this transfer of power, which invariably impacts the distribution of public funds and upsets the old social hierarchy, is resented by traditional caste elites.
- Sociologists observed that the gradual improvement in their material status may have led to rise in atrocities.
- For, increased Dalit independence and assertion are not to the liking of the dominant castes, especially in the countryside.

**India facts:**

- 1/6th of the Indian population is undernourished.
- 1 in four children in India are malnourished.
- 190 million people in India go hungry daily.
- 3000 children in India die daily from poor diet related illness.
- 30.7% of children in India aged below 5 are underweight.
- 24% of deaths of children aged below five globally is in India.
- 58% of children in India are stunted before they are 2 year-olds.
- 30% of the global neo-natal deaths is in India.
• Political leaders have generally shied away from questioning the regressive aspects of tradition such as honour killing etc.
• **However**, the rise of a middle class among Dalits since Independence — thanks largely to the reservation policy — has made these issues politically sensitive.
• With **Dalits emerging as a pressure group** constituting about 16 per cent of India’s population, any such incident leads to a political outcry.

**Legal protection:**

• There are two crucial laws to deal with crimes against dalits:
  ▪ Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, and
  ▪ Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989
• Despite these laws, there is high incidence of violence against them which shows the social vulnerability of Dalits even after the decades of reservation and dedicated laws meant to uplift and empower them were put in place

**Way Forward:***

• With Dalits organising themselves and awareness about laws like the prevention of atrocities against SCs and STs spreading, much anti-Dalit violence is now reported to the police.
• In this scenario, the **police need to be sensitized** to act with alacrity in cases in which people are denied their right to life with dignity.
• Also, fair policing and the stringent implementation of the law would ensure that Dalits do not have to fight an unequal battle.
• In addition to this, the **egalitarian ideas** vis-à-vis caste within society need to be communicated more effectively.
• A deepening of an egalitarian consciousness could make the democratisation process faster and painless. The political mainstream and civil society should take on the task.

### 4.21. NATIONAL TRIBAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

• Government has decided to set up a National Tribal Advisory Council for effecting monitoring and implementation of various tribal welfare schemes.
• The council will be chaired by the Prime Minister and will meet once or twice in a year.
• It is being established for effective real-time monitoring and implementation of various tribal development programmes and schemes in the country.

### WOMEN

### 4.22. INITIATIVES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

**Panic Button in Mobile Phones:**

• Government is exploring possibilities to have panic button in mobile phones.
• It will be linked to GPS.
• The pressing of panic button will send an SMS to a set of numbers that will also provide location information.
• The emergency response apps could take too long to access when in a rush. On the other hand, using one of the existing buttons on the phone will be much simpler and quicker
Limitations of other devices: The suggestions like special bracelets, rings, necklaces having S-O-S features have certain limitations like accessibility, affordability in rural areas. Further, it will be inconvenient for women to take these devices all time with them.

4.23. SDG AND WOMEN

Sustainable Development Goals

- The Sustainable Development Goals are the set of 17 goals and 169 targets adopted by member countries of United Nations at the UN Sustainable Development Summit. The goals are to be achieved by all member countries within next fifteen years i.e. by year 2030.
- These goals intend to achieve sustainable development and are more comprehensive than earlier Millennium Development Goals.

SDGs related to Women:

**Target 2: Zero Hunger**

- Address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons.

**Target 3: Good Health and Well Being**

- Reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births
- Universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education
- Integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes

**Target 4: Quality Education**

- Equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
- Build and upgrade education facilities that are gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

**Target 5: Gender Equality**

- End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
- Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
- Equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources
- Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women
- Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

**Target 6: Clean Water and Sanitation**

- Access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.
Target 8: Decent work and Economic growth

- Full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men.
- Equal pay for work of equal value
- Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, in particular women migrants

Target 10: Reduce inequalities

- Empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status

Target 11: Sustainable cities and Communities:

- Special attention to the needs women in building sustainable transport systems
- Universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces

Target 13: Climate Action

- Raise capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management focusing on women

Target 16: Peace Justice and Strong institutions

- Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere
- End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children

4.24. CRIME AGAINST WOMEN

Tougher punishment to Juvenile offenders:

Facts and data

- In 2014, the number of reported rapes in Delhi grew to 2,096, but the rate of increase declined sharply, after the spike between 2012 and 2013.
- Of the 2,102 reported victims, 1,008 (around half) were under the age of 18.
- In 2013, the proportion of reported IPC crimes in which the accused was a juvenile was under two per cent, and fell further in 2014.
- An investigation in the 2013 judgments of Delhi’s District Courts revealed that the largest proportion — a full third of all completed cases — involved the parental criminalization of consenting young couples, many of whom had eloped and were often inter-religious or inter-caste relationships.
- The court found that in many cases FIR artificially mentioned the girls as minor which made their consent to sex legally immaterial. This practice enables to charge and incarcerate her partner with abduction and rape.
Criminal Law Amendment 2012:

- It raised the minimum sentence in the case of sexual assault to ten years.
- This took away discretion from judges of deciding the quantum of minimum punishment which was used to reduce the sentence of her partner with whom she confessed to being in love, or had often even married and had a child with.

Possible Impacts of tougher punishments:

- By lowering juvenile’s age to 15 years, hypothetically, a 15-year-old boy who has a consensual sexual relationship with a 17-year-old girl will be eligible for the death penalty.
- Also, by ignoring the socio-economic profile of juvenile offenders — the majority come from extremely poor families, one of the country’s most marginalized groups will be pushed further away from the mainstream.
- Children who punished for jail terms would be exposed to the criminal networks that flourish with impunity behind bars, and will provide criminal community to those whom society seems to have rejected, and set them up in crime for life.
- In addition, lowering the age of majority with respect to criminal law would rekindle the usual related demands, such as the age of consent, the drinking age and the age for driving.

Alternatives to criminalization:

- Preventive measures: Better childcare support for working parents, better street-lighting, more supervised neighbourhood play areas and community centers.
- Police administration:
  - Improve registration system of sexual assault cases;
  - Free the system from practice of bribery at least in these sensitive issues.
  - The establishment of special police stations for registering gender crimes.
- Judiciary: Judges should be more sensitive to the trauma faced by a child during a trial.
- The government should bring proximity clause in the laws protecting children from sexual abuse.
- Juvenile Offenders: The primary need is of the correction and education of juvenile offenders, rather than their incarceration among hardened adult criminals.
- Correction facilities: A government must first regard the child transgressor as corrigible, and improve juvenile homes, which are not without their horror stories.

Way Forward:

- In its report on the death penalty, the Law Commission noted that we as a society must help the families of victims of crime not to see the death penalty as the only or the only fair punishment.
- Further, there are compelling practical reasons to keep juvenile crime a special category, and not to expose child criminals to the full punitive power of the law.
- To create perfect balance between retribution and reformation, the government, with the help of expert opinion, may consider tougher criminal actions in the rarest of rare cases in which, for medical reasons, the perpetrator may indeed be incorrigible and remain a permanent threat to society.
- But otherwise, the state must treat childhood as a sacred space.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contemporary trends in Armed Forces of other nations</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Australia allowed women in combat roles in 2013.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Germany has allowed women in combat since 2001.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Israel: Women have served in combat roles since 1995.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Pakistan inducted women in fighter pilot roles since 2013.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- USA rescinded a rule restricting women from combat role in 2013, and its implementation is likely to start after January 2016.</td>
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4.25. WOMEN IN ARMED FORCES

Women in Combat Roles:

- Reversing its earlier position of not allowing women in combat roles in armed forces, the Ministry of Defence has approved the induction of women into the Fighter (Combat) stream of the IAF.
- The decision was taken after IAF made a formal request to this effect to the Ministry and it is expected that by June 2017 the first batch of women fighter pilots would be serving the Air Force.
- The present progressive decision goes against the recommendations on the Induction of women in combat duties based on the studies carried out by the Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (HQIDS) in 2006 and High Level Tri-Services Committee in 2011.

Present status of women in Armed Forces:

- The Indian Army, the Indian Navy and the IAF allow women in various courses but till recently restricted their entry into combat roles.
- With this decision, women have become eligible for induction in all branches and streams of the IAF.
- After the IAF, the Indian Navy has also taken a decision to allow women in various flying streams but for now they will be shore-based till necessary infrastructural needs are addressed.
- In September 2015, Delhi High Court had granted Permanent Commission for women and had pulled up the Navy and the Defence Ministry for "sexist bias" to block women's progress.

4.26. SEX RATIO

- As per newly released official data, the sex ratio of registered births fell from 909 in 2011 to 908 the next year and 898 in 2013.
- The source of this finding is Civil Registration System (CRS) which is different from the decadal Census.

Civil Registration System (CRS):

- The Civil Registration System comprises all officially registered birth and death data.
- It is administered by the office of the Registrar General of India (RGI)
- It is mandatory to register all births and deaths within 21 days of their occurrence.
- However, the official registration of these events is not absolute but it has been improving across the country.
- In 2013, the RGI estimated that 85.5 per cent of all births are now registered.
- The states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh show poor performance in registrations. The Bihar registers only 57 percent and UP registers 69 percent of all birth and death in their states.

Analysis of New Data:

- Demographers say CRS data is not the correct source to infer because it counts registered births only and since girls are less likely to be officially registered than boys, the sex ratio derived from the CRS is artificially depressed.
- The RGI's Sample Registration System (SRS), which selects a nationally representative
sample to derive data on births and deaths, is considered to be more rigorous than the CRS which relies on local authorities.

- However, the new CRS data too should alert governments to the fact that India’s law against prenatal sex determination-driven terminations (PCPNDT act) is not working.

### 4.27. SURROGACY IN INDIA

- The government told the Supreme Court that it does not support commercial surrogacy in order to protect the rights of surrogate mothers.
- In an affidavit, the government said “altruistic surrogacy to **needy, infertile married Indian couples**” will be allowed after thorough checks are done on the couples.
- New guidelines issued by the department of health research (DHR), **restricted the import of human embryos** to research purposes. **This means foreigners can no longer avail of surrogacy services in India.**
- Earlier, as per a 2013 notification of the commerce ministry, which has since been withdrawn, human embryos could be freely imported, subject to a no-objection certificate from the Indian Council of Medical Research.
- The DHR guidelines suggested that only infertile married Indian couples ought to be allowed to avail of the surrogacy facility and not foreign couples.
- These provisions will be part of **The Assisted Reproductive Techniques (Regulation) Bill, 2014**, which is currently circulating among the States for comments.

**Background:**

- The Supreme Court is already considering a public interest litigation (PIL) against commercial surrogacy, claiming that Indian women from poor and lower middle class households are being **exploited**, especially by foreign couples.
- In this connection, in October, the court expressed concern over “trading of human embryos” and suggested that the government should consider banning commercial surrogacy. It framed 14 queries for the government to answer. The affidavit answers these questions.
- The home ministry is also likely to file an affidavit in the case within two weeks. The ministry’s role in the case relates to the grant of medical visas to foreigners for surrogacy, which the PIL sought a ban on.
- The court will hear the case next on 24 November.

**What is Surrogacy?**

- Surrogacy is when another woman carries and gives birth to a baby for the couple who want to have a child.
- It may be appropriate option for couple when there is a medical condition that makes it impossible or dangerous to get pregnant and to give birth.
- In Commercial Surrogacy, the surrogate mother is paid a fee whereas in altruistic surrogacy, mother is merely reimbursed for the expenses occurred in the process.

**Surrogacy in India: Current scenario:**

- Commercial surrogacy has been legal in India since 2002.
- At global level, India is a sought after destination in surrogacy-related

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fertility tourism, also referred as “reproductive tourism”.

- Surrogacy in India is relatively low cost and the legal environment is favorable.
- At present the Surrogacy Contract between the parties and the Assisted Reproductive Technique (ART) Clinics guidelines are the guiding force.
- In 2008, the Supreme Court of India in the Manji’s case (Japanese Baby) has held that commercial surrogacy is permitted in India with a direction to the Legislature to pass an appropriate Law governing Surrogacy in India.
- Giving due regard to the apex court directions, the Legislature has enacted ART BILL, 2008 which is still pending.

- Exploitation of the women and commodification of children through surrogacy are major worrying factor, which the law has to address.

**Exploitation in absence of law:**

- In the absence of comprehensive laws to prevent exploitation, there have been instances where surrogates have died as a result of complications during pregnancy and the unavailability of good post-natal care.
- Contracts between surrogate mothers, who are often poor, and the intended parents are sometimes structured in a manner that the former assumes all medical, financial and psychological risks, absolving the latter of liability.
- Multiple embryos being implanted in the surrogate’s womb to ensure a higher chance of success.
- There are cases of babies born with disabilities or an unplanned twin being abandoned by the intended parents.

**Law Commission Report on Surrogacy:**

The Law Commission of India has submitted the Report on “**NEED FOR LEGISLATION TO REGULATE ASSISTED REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGY CLINICS AS WELL AS RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF PARTIES TO A SURROGACY.**”

- The Commission has strongly recommended against Commercial Surrogacy.
- One of the intended parents should be a donor as well, because the bond of love and affection with a child primarily emanates from biological relationship.
- Legislation itself should recognize a surrogate child to be the legitimate child of the commissioning parent(s) without there being any need for adoption or even declaration of guardian.
- Right to privacy of donor as well as surrogate mother should be protected.
- Sex-selective surrogacy should be prohibited.
- Cases of abortions should be governed by the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act 1971 only.

**Way forward:**

A complete ban on surrogacy is a welcome step. Surrogacy is a disguised word for child buying and regulation cannot help to protect the rights of women. The ecosystem that feeds on women’s poverty needs to end and along with this the government should also take steps to mitigate poverty.

**CSE 2012:**

In the context of Assisted Reproductive Technologies, India has emerged as a hub of commercial surrogacy. What key biological, legal and ethical issues merit consideration while framing the regulation to govern surrogacy in India?
5. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

DEFENCE

5.1. INS ASTRADHARINI

What it is: India’s first totally indigenously designed (95%) and built torpedo launch and recovery vessel (TLRV).

Features:

- The catamaran hull configuration significantly reduces the power requirement of the ship that is capable of attaining 15 knots.
- It can operate on high sea states and its stability makes it very suitable for carrying passengers.
- It is an advanced replacement for Astravahini.

Significance:

- Need of such ship has been long felt by Indian Navy.
- INS Astradhani reflected the capability of our scientists and manufacturing facilities and would go a long way in the ‘Make in India’ campaign.
- INS Ashtradharini adds thrust to the Nation’s ongoing endeavours at indigenisation and achieving the nation’s goal of self-reliance in underwater weapons development.

5.2. WORLD’S HIGHEST TERRESTRIAL RESEARCH CENTRE

Height: 17,600 feet, Location: Changla near Pengong lake in Ladakh.

Purpose:

- The Centre will serve as a natural cold storage for preserving rare and endangered medical plants for generations to come.
- The Centre will act as an important utility for research work in frontal areas of food and agriculture and biomedical sciences for well-being of the soldiers deployed in high altitude cold desert.
- A large number of scientific activities are proposed to be undertaken in the Centre including designing, testing, validation and demonstration of mobile and portable greenhouses, soil-less micro-farming technologies for fresh food in remote landlocked posts.

Climate conditions:

Temperature goes as low as -40 degrees Celsius during extreme winter months coupled with reduced atmospheric pressure and humidity besides high wind velocity and UV radiation.
5.3. MAKE IN INDIA - LIGHT MILITARY CHOPPERS

- India is set to have three different lines of light military choppers, all of which will be manufactured under the 'Make in India' initiative.
- For one, deal (200 choppers) has been done with the Russian government for Ka 226 helicopters. Two other types of choppers are yet to be selected.

Reason:
- To meet the massive, urgent requirements of the armed forces.
- Indian requirement for light choppers is in excess of 800 with the older Cheetah/Chetak fleet moving towards the end of its service life.

Progress:
- Russian deal has, however, not progressed satisfactorily, as Moscow has not yet responded with full details of technical specifications and production plans in India.

5.4. NIRBHAY MISSILE

Features:
- It is Indigenous, surface-to-surface subsonic cruise missile.
- It is very manoeuvrable and can fly at tree-top level making it difficult to detect on radar.
- It can carry nuclear weapon.
- Range of around 1,000 km, giving India the capability to strike deep into enemy territory.
- India has made ballistic missile and tactical missiles of different capacity, but is yet to master the making of a cruise missile.

Why in news:
Testing failed, with the missile being terminated after launch as it deviated from its flight trajectory

5.5. PROJECT LOON

- What it is: Project Loon is a network of balloons traveling on the edge of space, designed to connect people in rural and remote areas, help fill coverage gaps, and bring people back online after disasters.
- The initiative has already been tried out in Brazil, New Zealand and Australia.
- Around 1,000 Internet balloons have already been deployed worldwide, and had flown nearly 20 million km while some of them had circled the world 20 times.
Significance:

- The system aims to bring Internet access to remote and rural areas poorly served by existing provisions.
- It will improve communication during natural disasters to affected regions.
- Two-thirds of the world’s population does not yet have Internet access. This project will enhance connectivity.
- A recent UN study claimed that a 10 percent rise in internet penetration would mean a 1.4 percent annual increase in a country’s GDP.

5.6. TSUNAMI EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

- **What it is:** The Indian Tsunami Early Warning System (ITEWS) has the responsibility to provide tsunami advisories to Indian Mainland and the Island regions. ITEWS also provide tsunami advisories to the Indian Ocean rim countries along with Australia & Indonesia.
- Managed by the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Earth & Sciences (MoES), Government of India.
Features:
- The Warning Centre is capable of issuing Tsunami bulletins in less than 10 minutes after any major earthquake in the Indian Ocean thus leaving us with a response time of about 10 to 20 minutes for near source regions in the Andaman & Nicobar and a few hours in the case of mainland.
- Near-real time determination of earthquake parameters
- 24 X 7 operational warning centre to detect tsunami genic earthquakes, to monitor tsunamis and provide timely advisories following the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)
- Currently Warning Centre disseminates tsunami bulletins to various stakeholders through multiple dissemination modes simultaneously (Fax, Phone, Emails, GTS and SMS etc.)

5.7. ELECTRICITY FROM PHOTOSYNTHESIS

- Researchers (Canada) have invented and developed micro-photosynthetic cell technology that can harness electrical power from the photosynthesis and respiration of blue-green algae.

Technology:
- Both photosynthesis and respiration, which take place in plants cells, involve electron transfer chains.
- In this technology these electrons are trapped and used to generate electrical energy.
- This photosynthetic power cell consists of an anode (plate having positive charge), cathode (plate having negative charge) and proton exchange membrane.

Features:
- This is a novel, scalable technology.
- It will enable economical ways of generating clean energy.
- It is carbon-free power source for the future of mankind.

OTHER

5.8. WHITEFLY PROBLEM

- There is large-scale crop damage from whitefly infestation this year, especially in northern India.
- There are over 250 Bt cotton hybrids on the shelf in North India. More than 90 per cent of these are susceptible to whitefly and leaf-curl.

Reasons and spread:
- Rains were scarce and intermittent, farmers resorted to excessive irrigation and urea application that promoted fresh vegetative growth and allowed whiteflies to proliferate.
- The problem was worsened by over-spraying of pesticides.
- Other reasons are delayed sowing, persistent drought coupled with hot and cloudy conditions.
- The early-sown crop is less susceptible, as the mature leaves are not preferred by whiteflies.
- The whitefly menace was not witnessed in Maharashtra. Although Telangana did report some incidence, it was much less severe than Punjab.

What is Whitefly?
- It is a small (1-2 mm) white coloured insect affecting cotton, and also occurring on vegetables and other crops in tropical and sub-tropical regions.
The whitefly sucks sap from the phloem or living tissue carrying organic nutrients, causes yellowing and upward curling of the leaves.

**Control measures:**

- The best approach is to select methods causing least disturbance to beneficial insects that can control the whitefly naturally.
- Therefore, broad-spectrum insecticides such as synthetic pyrethroids and mixtures should be strictly avoided.
- It is better to rely initially on water sprays, followed by soap sprays, sprays with preparations of neem oil, castor oil, fish oil and rosin soap.

**SPACE**

**5.9. GAGAN**

**What is it:** It is a global positioning system (GPS) aided geo-augmented navigation system which is intended to provide accurate navigation services.

**Range:** Over the Bay of Bengal, southeast Asia, Indian Ocean, Middle East and African regions.

**Features:**

- Gagan works by augmenting and relaying data from GPS satellites with the help of two augmentation satellites and 15 earth-based reference stations.
- The system corrects any anomalies in the position data and gives accurate routes, landing guidance and time saving information to the pilots.
- Fully approved for use in April 2015.
- AAI and ISRO have jointly established the Rs. 770-crore GAGAN over a decade.

**Significance:**

- It will be able to help pilots to navigate in the Indian airspace by an accuracy of 3 m.
- This will be helpful for landing aircraft in tough weather and terrain like Mangalore and Leh airports.
- Accurate guidance for planning shorter routes and safer landing patterns will reduce fuel cost.
- Will help in improving safety, easing air traffic and airport congestion across the country.
- After completely establishing this system, India reached a select league comprising the US, Europe Union (EU) and Japan which have similar systems.

**Why in news:** AAI is considering incentives and programmes to accelerate GAGAN’s use among commercial airlines and general aviation aircraft.

**CSE 2009**

GAGAN Project
5.10. KISAN (CROP INSURANCE USING SPACE TECHNOLOGY AND GEO-INFORMATICS)

- Under this programme govt. will use satellite and unmanned aerial vehicles to collect crop yield data and to assess damage from natural calamities.
- The scientific data collected by drones and collated with satellites imagery will be matched with traditional crop cutting experiments to arrive at a fool proof data.
- In earlier system, there has always been a problem in getting timely and accurate data, due to which payment of claims to farmers were getting delayed.
- Initially, KISAN programme will be tried out as a pilot study in identified districts in Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.
- **Mobile application to help farmers:** Govt. launched an Android mobile phone application (developed by ISRO) to assess large-scale damage to crops from hail.
- Using this application, farmers can immediately send photos of their crop damage to officials concerned for immediate relief. This will cut the red tape in reaching assistance to farmers.
- **Need of such mobile application:** Hailstorms cause large-scale damage to standing crops. However, there was no comprehensive approach to collect hailstorm data.

5.11. ROAD ASSETS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- NHAI is developing a road assets management system (RAMS) for the entire national highways network. This project is funded by World Bank.
- Under this project satellite mapping of National Highways will be done. For satellite mapping NHAI is planning to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- GAGAN and BHUVAN satellite systems, drones (for difficult terrains) will be used to prepare a 360-degree mapping of all national highways by 2017.

**Significance:**

It will assist in the:

- Accurate and scientific planning and finalising of road projects
- Maintenance of roads
- Monitoring of road progress
- Executing road safety measures
- Development of the national highways network

5.12. TRAI PROPOSAL: MANDATORY GPS IN ALL MOBILES

**Reasons behind TRAI proposal:**

- It will help to find out exact location of the caller in an emergency.
- TRAI also proposed implementation of public safety answering point (PSAP) based integrated emergency communication and response system (IECRS) in the country, which will be accessed through a single emergency number 112 (including the police, fire and ambulance).
- Making GPS necessary in all mobile phones will help in IECRS.
- Introducing a GPS chip in handsets should not be very costly once it is mandated, all manufacturers start making it and ‘economy of scale’ is achieved.
Government Response:

- Earlier this proposal was rejected by the Department of Telecom (DoT), saying there is a major percentage of low-cost handsets with subscribers which do not support GPS and the impact of enabling all mobile phone handsets with GPS may be studied before taking a call on the issue.
- But Sector regulator TRAI stood by its proposal for making GPS mandatory in all handsets.

5.13. NASA’S SPACE LAUNCH SYSTEM (SLS)

- The most powerful rocket ever built.
- The SLS launch vehicle is to be upgraded over time with more powerful versions. Its initial Block 1 has lift capacity of 70 metric tons to low Earth orbit (LEO). The next version Block 2 will be having lift capacity of 130 metric tons.
- The first SLS mission—Exploration Mission 1—in 2017 will launch an uncrewed Orion spacecraft to demonstrate the integrated system performance of the SLS rocket and spacecraft prior to a crewed flight.
- The second SLS mission, Exploration Mission 2, is targeted for 2021 and will launch Orion and a crew of up to four American astronauts.
- It will also be used for explorations on Mars.

5.14. NOBEL PRIZE IN CHEMISTRY FOR 2015

- The Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2015 is awarded to Tomas Lindahl, Paul Modrich and Aziz Sancar for having mapped, how cells repair damaged DNA and safeguard the genetic information.
- They found that a host of molecular systems continuously monitor and repair DNA.
- Aziz Sancar has mapped nucleotide excision repair, the mechanism that cells use to repair UV damage to DNA. People born with defects in this repair system will develop skin cancer if they are exposed to sunlight.

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**NOBEL PRIZE IN CHEMISTRY 2015**

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**DNA DAMAGE**

DNA damage occurs regularly, due to UV radiation, carcinogenic substances, & copying errors. The prize is for the discovery of the mechanisms that repair this damage.

**BASE EXCISION REPAIR**

DNA is an unstable molecule. Lindahl showed that base excision repair prevents its decay. Without this mechanism, development of life would have been impossible.

**NUCLEOTIDE EXCISION REPAIR**

Sancar explained how DNA is repaired after damage from UV and mutagenic substances. People with defects in this repair system are at higher risk of developing cancer.

**MISMATCH REPAIR**

Modrich showed how errors produced when cells divide and DNA is replicated are repaired. This reduces the error rate of DNA replication by a factor of 1000.
Paul Modrich has demonstrated how the cell corrects errors that occur when DNA is replicated during cell division. Congenital defects in this process causes a hereditary variant of colon cancer.

Significance:

- Their work has provided fundamental knowledge of how a living cell functions. This work can be used for the development of new cancer treatments.

How and why DNA changes everyday:

- **External Reasons**: Each day our DNA is damaged by UV radiation, free radicals and other carcinogenic substances.
- **Internal Reasons**: A DNA molecule is inherently unstable. Thousands of spontaneous changes to a cell’s genome occur on a daily basis. Furthermore, defects can also arise when DNA is copied during cell division, a process that occurs several million times every day in the human body.

### 5.15. NOBEL PRIZE IN PHYSICS FOR 2015

The Nobel Prize in Physics 2015 was awarded jointly to Takaaki Kajita (Japan) and Arthur B. McDonald (Canada) for the discovery of neutrino oscillations, which shows neutrinos have mass.

**How they concluded it:**

- By observing that on their route to the earth, the neutrinos undergo a change from one type to the other, through a process called neutrino oscillations. This process cannot take place if the neutrinos had no mass.

**Impact of this discovery:**

- The discovery has changed world’s understanding of the innermost workings of matter and can prove crucial to our view of the universe.
- The Nobel Prize has given a boost to neutrino hunters across the globe as they gear up to pursue these questions.
Neutrino:

- Neutrinos are subatomic particles produced by the decay of radioactive elements and are elementary particles that lack an electric charge.
- Neutrinos are of 3 types - electron neutrino, muon neutrino and tau neutrino.
- Neutrinos do not carry any electric charge.
- Neutrinos can be created in several ways, including in certain types of radioactive decay, in nuclear reactions such as those that take place in the Sun, in nuclear reactors.

Open questions about Neutrino:

- Hierarchy of masses of the three types of Neutrino is still unknown.
- Would neutrino have an antiparticle which is different from itself or is each neutrino its own antiparticle?

5.16. CALL DROP ISSUE: THE PROBLEM OF CALL DROPS WORSENING OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS

Reasons:

- The root of the problem is inadequate spectrum — a telco in India has 12 MHz of spectrum compared to the global average of 40 MHz which reduces the capacity.
- This is due to the hoarding of spectrum by the government — for instance, in this year’s auction, the Centre did not put on the block all the spectrum vacated by the ministry of defence.
- Though the Centre recently approved a spectrum-sharing policy, the rules are too constrictive to bring change.
- Civic authorities have forced about 10,000 towers to shut down across major cities due to various reasons.
- The lack of a uniform national policy on the setting up of these towers is a major problem.

Govt. steps and Solutions:

- To address the scarcity of cell phone towers — there are about 5,50,000 towers in India at present and approximately 1,00,000 more are needed.
- Govt. has agreed to allow them to be set up on top of government buildings dispel some of the misinformation on radiation from them.
- Operational difficulties are tackled in installing towers.
- TRAI raised the penalty on telecom operators to up to Rs. 2 lakh for poor mobile service quality, including call drops.

5.17. NOBEL PRIZE IN PHYSIOLOGY

- To: Satoshi Ōmura, William C. Campbell and Youyou Tu
- For: Exceptional effective treatment against parasitic disease: malaria and Elephentitis.

Contributions:

- Campbell and Ōmura won for their discoveries concerning a novel therapy against infections caused by roundworm parasites.
- Shared the prize with Youyou Tu for her work on a therapy against malaria. Tu discovered one of the most effective treatments for malaria while working on a secret military project during China’s Cultural Revolution.
Lessons for India: Traditional knowledge system

- The Nobel Prize for Chinese scientist Tu Youyou, who turned to traditional herbal medicine to develop novel malaria therapies, should inspire India to focus on scientifically validating and promoting its rich heritage of folk medicine.
- We have a vast repertoire of traditional medicine and these are documented in our ancient texts such as the Vedas.
- But we have to embrace modern science and validate the claims with hard scientific evidence.

5.18. FLYTE LEVITATING LIGHT USING TESLA’S TECHNOLOGY

- **Flyte Levitating light**: Wireless power transfer transmission has been around since the time of Nikola Tesla. Swedish Engineers have combined Tesla’s technology with magnetic levitation. The result has been completely new way of looking at light that came forth in the form of Flyte Levitating Light.
- The wireless power module transmits about 5V and is absolutely safe and harmless.
- Flyte does not need any batteries. **It powers light in the air via induction.**
- The base is made out of sustainably-sourced oak, ash, or walnut, and the light bulb uses LEDs that are energy efficient and are rated at 50,000 hours.
- To turn the unit on or off, one has to touch the surface of the wood base. It has a capacitive touch sensor embedded under the wood surface.
6. INTERNAL SECURITY/LAW AND ORDER

6.1. SPY CAM PROJECT

- **Immediate cause of project:** 21-day face-off with the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) of China at Depsang Valley in the Ladakh region in 2013.
- It was decided that the cameras would be put up at 50 locations in Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Sikkim and Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Range:** 20-25 km range.
- **Reason of failure:** The weather is not favourable there as high-velocity winds and frost tend to blur the images.

6.2. POLICE CITIZEN PORTAL

- Odisha govt. launched a state police-citizen portal.
- All the 531 police stations in the state have been linked through the online portal.
- It will enable tech-savvy people to send their complaints online to the authorities.
- Through the portal, a citizen sitting at home can avail a number of services at a click of the mouse. There is no need to go to any police station.

**Service provided by system:**

- Issue of character certificates
- Permission for taking out processions and rallies
- Issue of an FIR copy
- Permission for holding events and performances
- Tenant verification, employee verification and registration of missing person’s report.
- People can also track the status of the complaints registered by them on the portal.

**Significance:**

- Quick delivery system would benefit the society at large, enhance the image of police,
- It will help police in establishing an effective and efficient communication with the citizens.

**Similar Initiatives:**

**CRIME AND CRIMINAL TRACKING NETWORK & SYSTEM (CCTNS):**

- Provide the Investigating Officers of the Civil Police with tools, technology and information to facilitate investigation of crime and detection of criminals.
- Improve Police functioning in various other areas such as Law & Order, Traffic Management etc.
- Facilitate Interaction and sharing of crime and criminal Information among Police Stations, Districts, State/UT headquarters and other Police Agencies.
- Keep track of the progress of Cases, including in Courts.
- Make the Police functioning citizen friendly and more transparent by automating the functioning of Police Stations.
- Improve delivery of citizen-centric services through effective usage of ICT.
POLNET: Satellite based police telecommunication system:

- POLNET is a satellite based wide area network for the modernization of Police Telecommunication of the country.
- POLNET is an amalgamation of different latest VSAT technologies ie TDM/TDMA, SCPC/DAMA and DVB-S.
- It is a huge network consisting of about 1000 VSATs (Very Small Aperture Terminals at each state capital, District HQrs and selected locations of CPMFs (BSF, ITBP, CISF, CRPF, Assam Rifles, SSB) and CPOs.
- At present POLNET caters to 961 no. of VSATs through a HUB installed in New Delhi with 11 mtr antenna with necessary Outdoor and Indoor equipments to support total VSAT Network of about 1500 locations for VOICE, DATA, FAX facilities.
- The POLNET network is also providing connectivity for interlinking NCRB computers to SCRB and DCRB computers provided to State/District HQrs. for online transaction processing.

6.3. INTERNET SURVEILLANCE

What it is: Computer and network surveillance is the monitoring of computer activity and data stored on a hard drive, or data being transferred over computer networks such as the Internet. The monitoring is often carried out covertly and may be completed by governments, corporations, criminal organizations, or individuals.

Arguments in favour:

- Advent of internet age has given ample opportunities of use and misuse of the liberty granted in the constitution without revealing the identity. Thus there is a need for internet governance and surveillance.
- To snoop into a person’s private space, in the interest of security does not vitiate person’s liberty.
- According to govt. this (CMS) is not scrutiny and access to actual messages. It is only computer analysis of patterns of calls and emails that are being sent. It is not actually snooping specifically on content of anybody’s message or conversation.
- Internet surveillance can be used to prevent dangerous terrorist attacks.
- It helps law and order agencies to solve a case promptly as huge useful information is available on phone, email and other internet websites used by people.

Criticisms:

- The Indian Constitution does not expressly grant a right to privacy. It was only in 1994, in Rajagopal v. State of Tamil Nadu, that the Supreme Court, though its interpretive force, found privacy to be inherent in a person’s right to personal liberty.
- There is no legislative backing to CMS (Central Monitoring System).
- Internet surveillance is threat to govt. itself. For eg. NSA systematically tapped conversations between Indian government officials and elected representatives, whether it be through phone calls, e-mail, texts, chat or Skype videos. India fifth-largest target of U.S. electronic snooping.
- Internet surveillance can be misused for snooping and political mileage.
- Internet surveillance may affect freedom of speech and expression by banning criticism, disclosures, whistleblowing and creative works.
- Global online freedom declined for a fifth consecutive year as more governments stepped up electronic surveillance and clamped down on dissidents using blogs or social media.

India and Internet surveillance:

- India’s cyber security policy, launched in 2013, is characterised by a striking duality of purpose. On the one hand, it seeks to guard, and thus strengthen, the country’s strategic assets and online intelligence infrastructure. On the other, it hopes to secure the transactions of citizens, companies and public services on the web.
- India’s Central Monitoring System (CMS) gives govt. the absolute power to monitor all phone and online communication in the country.
- Examples: Gujarat snooping incident, PRISM, Wikileaks
The power to propose, implement and monitor India’s cyber security regulations has been concentrated in the hands of a few agencies without specifying what participatory role, if any, civil society and industry will play in them.

Privacy protects us from the abuse of those in power. It isn’t a luxury. On the contrary, it is integral to our development as human beings.

Invasions upon one’s privacy lead to mental pain and distress, far greater than could be inflicted by mere bodily injury.

Suggestions:

- It is important to ensure the cyber security policy does not end up institutionalizing the flow of private data to the government’s already vast and unregulated snooping systems.
- Government should now orient its goals towards protecting India’s networked society and economy, not policing them.
- Security measures intended to protect a democracy can end up actually eroding civil liberties like individual privacy and freedom of expression that are at the heart of the democratic setup. So there is a need to struck right balance between national security and civil liberties.
7. ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

7.1. THE PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE (PLI) ACT, 1991

Provisions:

- The act makes it obligatory upon the user industries handling 179 types of chemicals and compounds and other classes of flammable substances to subscribe a special insurance policy to cover the liabilities likely to arise on account of any chemical (industrial) disaster/accident.
- These liabilities are payable to those affected people who are not the workers.
- The Act establishes an Environment Relief Fund (ERF), which is subscribed by all such user industries.

Why in news:

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has issued directions to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to ensure better implementation of Public Liability Insurance (PLI) Act, 1991. All the State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)/Pollution Control Committees (PCCs) for UTs have been advised for including PLI insurance policy as one of the point in the check list before according or renewing CTE (Consent to Establish) or CTO (Consent to Establish) to an industry.

7.2. CLIMATE CHANGE - EFFECT ON ANTARCTIC ICE SHEET

- According to IPCC, in this century sea level will rise to 5cm.
- According to NASA report new modelling of glacier melting indicated that coastal cities could be uninhabitable within 50 years.
- According to a new research. Temperatures rise of just 1.5°C to 2°C above present levels, will result in a catastrophic collapse in Antarctic ice sheets.
- This collapse of Antarctic ice sheets will lead to rise in sea levels for not hundreds of years – but potentially thousands.
- This report is based on new and enhanced system which contradicts with the findings of IPCC.

Reason:

- Around 93 percent of the heat from anthropogenic [pollutant-based] global warming has gone into the ocean, and these warming ocean waters are now coming into contact with the floating margins of the Antarctic ice sheet.
- This will result in melting of ice sheets. If we lose these ice shelves, the Antarctic contribution to sea-level rise by 2100 will be nearer 40 cm.

7.3. NATIONAL MISSION FOR A GREEN INDIA

- This mission is one of the eight Missions outlined under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC).

Mission goals:

- To increase forest/tree cover to the extent of 5 million hectares (mha) and improve quality of forest/tree cover on another 5 mha of forest/non-forest lands.
To enhance eco-system services like carbon sequestration and storage (in forests and other ecosystems), hydrological services and biodiversity; along with provisioning services like fuel, fodder, and timber and non-timber forest produces (NTFPs).

To increase forest based livelihood income of about 3 million households.

Features:

- It envisages a holistic view of greening and focuses on multiple ecosystem services, especially, biodiversity, water, biomass, preserving mangroves, wetlands, critical habitats etc. along with carbon sequestration as a co-benefit.
- This mission has adopted an integrated cross-sectoral approach as it will be implemented on both public as well as private lands with a key role of the local communities in planning, decision making, implementation and monitoring.
- It acknowledges the influence that forests have on environmental amelioration through climate change mitigation, food security, water security, biodiversity conservation and livelihood security of forest dependent communities.
- The mission is based on decentralized participatory approach involving grass root level organizations and community in planning, decision making, and implementation and monitoring.

Mission Organization:

- At National level, an autonomous society under MEF with an inclusive governing council.
- At State and District Levels, State Forest Development Agency (SFDA) and District FDA linked to District Planning Committee will be revamped.
- Gram Sabha and its Committees will work at village Institutions level and in Urban Areas, Ward level Committees /RWAs with support from Municipal organizations and the Forest Departments.
- Monitoring will be done at 4 levels, namely self-monitoring by community and field staff, Remote Sensing and GIS, third party monitoring by key indicators

Why in news:

The National Executive Council (NEC) of the National Mission for a Green India (GIM) approved the Perspective Plans & Annual Plan of Operations (APOs) submitted by four States - Mizoram, Manipur, Jharkhand and Kerala.

7.4. CLIMATE SPECIAL SCIENCE EXPRESS

Objective: To sensitize the masses, especially children and the youth, about the issue of climate change, in the run-up to the global climate summit in Paris slated for December.

Area covered during exhibition inside the train: It would cover specific topics like adaptation, mitigation, India’s action on mitigation, international climate change negotiations, nature conservation, innovations in India, science lab, biotechnology applications in the field of climate change.

Science Express has had successful eight-year run. Last year, its theme was biodiversity.

7.5. US-CHINA CLIMATE DEAL

- US announced a new target to cut net greenhouse gas emissions 26-28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025.
- China announced targets to peak CO₂ emissions around 2030, with the intention to try to peak early, and to increase the non-fossil fuel share of all energy to around 20 percent by 2030.
- Together, the U.S. and China account for over one third of global greenhouse gas emissions.
These actions will also inject momentum into the global climate negotiations on the road to reaching a successful new climate agreement next year in Paris.

### 7.6. IUCN RED LIST

- According to IUCN red list 2015, a total of 180 bird species in India are now threatened, as against 173 last year.
- Five species have been uplisted from the Least Concerned to the Near Threatened category, a sign of increased threat. These are Northern Lapwing (a grassland bird) and four wetland birds, namely Red Knot, Curlew Sandpiper, Eurasian Oystercatcher and Bar-Tailed Godwit.
- Two other wetland birds, Horned Grebe and Common Pochard have been uplisted from Least Concerned to Vulnerable.
- Steppe Eagle (a raptor from grasslands), which is a regular winter visitor to the Indian subcontinent, has been uplisted from Least Concerned to Endangered.
- The list of threatened species keeps on increasing with every assessment.
- Major Reason: Destruction of grasslands, wetlands and forests.
- The other reason for decline of birds like Steppe Eagle, which mostly scavenges on animal carcasses, is the use of veterinary drug diclofenac used to treat livestock.
- This drug causes renal failure in these birds. Three vulture species, namely White-backed, Slender-billed and Long-billed have also been severely affected by diclofenac.

### 7.7. CARBON TAX

- According to IMF chief now the time is right for governments to introduce taxes on carbon emissions and eliminate energy subsidies which will cost the world USD 5.3 trillion this year – 6.5 per cent of the global economy.

**Benefits of carbon tax:**

- It will discourage pollution.
- Carbon taxes offer a potentially cost-effective means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- It could contribute to rich nations funding target of USD 100 billion a year by 2020 to help poorer nations fight the impacts of climate change. The world was still USD 38 billion short of that target last year.

**Criticisms:**

- Imposition of carbon tax in an area/state/country may force the firms to relocate which may lead to decrease in employment.
- It will increase cost of production which may lead to inflation.
- Many large users of carbon resources in electricity generation, such as the United States, Russia, and China, are resisting carbon taxation.

**India and carbon tax:**

- In 2010 India introduced a nationwide carbon tax of 50 rupees per metric tonne of coal both produced and imported into India. In 2014, govt. has increased the Price to 100 rupees per metric tonne. It has been further increased from 100 Rs per tonne to 200 Rs per tonne in the Budget 2015-16.
- A carbon tax will help India to meet their voluntary target to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide
7.8. VULNERABILITY OF TEA INDUSTRY W.R.T. CLIMATE CHANGE

Factors affecting tea cultivation:

- Elevation, precipitation, temperature, soil moisture, temperature and fertility, light duration and intensity, humidity, shelter, shade and CO2 concentration.
- Tea is a rain-fed perennial crop.

Impacts of climate change:

- Climate-risk is high in Assam, ranging from annual flooding of the Brahmaputra river due to intense monsoon rains and soil water-logging, to winter precipitation deficits with seasonal droughts.
- Regional trends indicate annual mean minimum temperatures have increased and annual mean precipitation has decreased in North east particularly in Assam.
- Such impacts will have a significant effect on tea crop productivity and directly affect the livelihoods of dependent communities (producers, laborers, traders, consumers).
- Rainfall has traditionally been plentiful for growing tea, especially in India but with recent changes in the climate, surface and ground water are becoming important irrigation systems.
- Tea quality is suffering and pest-attacks are increasing.

Suggestions:

- Efforts should be made to make tea estates climate-smart so that the industry develops resilience to uncertain and negative climate change impact.
- A project (smartening tea plantation landscapes) has been launched by the Tea Research Association along with Southampton University on climate.

7.9. GREEN BOND MARKET

- **What are Green Bonds**: Green bonds are fixed income, liquid financial instruments that are used to raise funds dedicated to climate-mitigation, adaptation, and other environment-friendly projects.
- **Growth of Green Bonds**: Since 2008, the World Bank has issued about $8.5 billion in green bonds in 18 currencies, and the International Finance Corporation has issued $3.7 billion in green bonds.
- Green bonds were created to increase funding and expanding the investor base for climate-friendly projects worldwide.
- The global green bond market is expected to exceed $40 billion this year, with countries such as India and China offering sizeable growth potential.
- India aims to reduce the emissions intensity of its gross domestic product (GDP) by 33% to 35% by 2030 from 2005 levels, and achieve 40% of its cumulative electric power of around 350-gigawatt installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources. This will lead to increase of India’s share in green bond market.

Concerns regarding expansion of renewable energy sources in India:

- Increasing reluctance of state electricity boards (SEBs) to buy power on account of their poor financial health. With a debt of Rs.3.04 trillion and losses of Rs.2.52 trillion, SEBs are on the brink of financial collapse.
- Such ambitious renewable targets will require multiple sources of funding, particularly given India’s capital-constrained banking system. The average Tier I capital ratio for India’s rated public-sector banks was just 8.2% at end-2014, and asset quality continues to deteriorate.
7.10. NGT ORDER REGARDING BANNING OLD VEHICLES

Background:
- In November 2014, it had prohibited vehicles over 15 years old from plying in Delhi.
- NGT was criticized on the grounds of overreach as it is a tribunal not a court.
- However, lending its support to the National Green Tribunal (NGT), the Supreme Court said the tribunal is empowered to issue directives to the Centre for banning vehicles more than 15 years old from plying on Delhi roads.
- The judgment also ruled that the NGT can exercise the powers of judicial review and examine the validity of notifications passed under different laws.
- **Basis of SC’s judgment:** SC recalled a judgment by the tribunal in July 2014 which declared the NGT to be a “court. This order by the NGT has not been stayed by this court any court and so it holds good.

7.11. INDIA’S COMMITMENT TO CLIMATE CHANGE

**Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC)**

- **What are INDCs:** INDC outlines the post-2020 climate actions they intend to take under a new international agreement.

**India’s INDCs contains the following proposals:**
- To reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 33 to 35 per cent by 2030, from 2005 levels
- To create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by 2030
- Increase the Share of Non Fossil Fuel Based Electricity
- Sustainable Lifestyles
- Cleaner Economic Development
- Technology Transfer and Capacity Building

**India’s achievements towards climate change till now:**
- Many policy measures have been taken to promote low carbon strategies and Renewable Energy have resulted in the decline of emission intensity of our GDP by 12% between 2005 and 2010.
- Currently, renewable energy, nuclear energy and hydropower together contribute about 30 per cent of the overall installed capacity.
- India is running one of the largest renewable capacity expansion programmes in the world. Between 2002 and 2015, the share of renewable grid capacity has increased over 6 times.
- India is one of the few countries where forest and tree cover has increased in recent years and the total forest and tree cover amounts to 24% percent of the geographical area of the country.
Significance of India’s INDC:

- India stated that the national plans given in the INDC depends on the unencumbered availability of clean technologies and financial resource from around the world. Such a position is consistent with the principle of ‘common but differentiated responsibilities’ that guides climate negotiations.
- INDCs announced by India are comprehensive, balanced, equitable and pragmatic and addresses all the elements including Adaptation, Mitigation, Finance, Technology Transfer, Capacity Building and Transparency in Action and Support.
- India has also decided to anchor a global solar alliance, INSPA (International Agency for Solar Policy & Application), of all countries located in between Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn.
- During preparation of INDCs govt. held stakeholder consultations with the specific involvement of the key Ministries and State Governments. Interactions were also held with civil society organisations, thinktanks and technical & academic institutions of eminence.
- India has to put economic growth before committing itself to cut down emissions.

Criticisms:

- The INDC data estimate that between now and 2030, at least $2.5 trillion would be required for the country to meet climate change action requirements. It will be difficult to invest such a huge money without international help.
- Cutting down emission will slow down the economy, therefore needs is a comprehensive strategy.

Steps taken to achieve INDCs:

- A scheme for development of 25 Solar Parks, Ultra Mega Solar Power Projects, canal top solar projects and one hundred thousand solar pumps for farmers is at different stages of implementation.
- The energy efficiency of thermal power plants will be systematically and mandatorily improved.
- The switch from Bharat Stage IV (BS IV) to Bharat Stage V (BS V) and Bharat Stage VI (BS VI) to improve fuel standards across the country is also planned for the near future.
- Urban transport policy will encourage moving people rather than vehicles with a major focus on Mass Rapid Transit Systems.
- Government of India’s long term goal is to increase its forest cover through a planned afforestation drive through initiatives like Green India Mission, green highways policy, financial incentive for forests, plantation along rivers, REDD-Plus and Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority
- India will have 40 per cent of the total installed power capacity in 2030 based on non-fossil fuel-based sources.

India's Expectations from Paris:

- A balanced agreement with all components -mitigation, adaptation, technology, finance and capacity building- consistent with the principles and provisions of the Convention
- New, additional and predictable finances from developed and developing countries
- Provision of technology development, transfer and diffusion
- Paris Agreement must incorporate loss and damage and make operational Warsaw International Mechanism