

9pm

Compilation

June, 2020

General Studies - 1

General Studies – 1

Topic Geophysical Phenomena

1. On IMD's weather forecasts

Topic: Indian Society

1. What will be the impact of reverse migration?
2. Drug abuse amidst pandemic

Topic Geophysical Phenomena: Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone etc., geographical features and their location-changes in critical geographical features (including water-bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes.

1. On IMD's weather forecasts

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS-1-Geography

Context: The monsoon has set over Kerala on 1st June as forecasted by the Indian Meteorological Department on May 28th.

Monsoon Forecast in India

The IMD issues operational forecast for the southwest monsoon seasonal (June to September) rainfall for the country in two stages. The first stage forecast is issued in April and the second stage forecast is issued in June.

Criteria for Declaring Onset of Monsoon:

There are three criteria which must be met for declaring the onset of Monsoon:

- **Rainfall:** 8 of 14 designated meteorological stations in Kerala and Karnataka must register 2.5mm rain for two consecutive days.
- **Wind field:** Depth of westerlies should be maintained up to 600 hPa, in the area between Lat. 10°N and Long. 55°E to 80°E. The zonal wind speed over the area bounded by Lat. 5-10°N, long. 70-80°E should be of the order of 15 – 20 Kts. at 925 hPa.
- **Outgoing Longwave Radiation (OLR):** INSAT derived OLR value should be below 200 wm^{-2} in the area between Lat. 5-10°N and Long. 70-75°E.

These forecasts are prepared using state-of-the-art Statistical Ensemble Forecasting system (SEFS) and using the dynamic coupled Ocean-Atmosphere global Climate Forecasting System (CFS) model known as the Monsoon Mission Coupled Forecasting System (MMCFS).

Statistical Ensemble Forecasting system (SEFS): It relies on arriving at a prediction based on historical monsoon data coupled with data on sea-surface temperatures and winds.

Monsoon Mission Coupled Forecasting System (MMCFS):

- It is a coupled ocean-atmosphere modelling system that combine data from ocean, atmosphere and land for providing long range forecasting.
- It has been developed by the National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) and NOAA National Weather Service, USA. As part of the Monsoon Mission project, the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) has developed the indigenous strategy of the model under National Monsoon Mission.

National Monsoon Mission:

Launched in 2012, it aims to develop a state-of-the-art dynamical prediction system for monsoon rainfall on different time scales. The responsibility of execution and coordination of the mission is bestowed upon the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune.

Challenge before IMD in weather forecast:

- The IMD has been facing tough competition from domestic and international companies in providing weather-related services especially crop insurance, power distribution and short-range forecasts.
- In 2019, Monsoon Mission Coupled Forecast Model, failed to accurately forecast the excess rainfall in August-September 2019. This year accurate monsoon prediction is crucial given excess rainfall might accentuate locust plague in India which can affect the kharif crop.

Indian Meteorological Department

- It was established in 1875. It is an agency of the Ministry of Earth Sciences of the Government of India.
- It is the principal agency responsible for meteorological observations, weather forecasting and seismology.

Way Forward: It's high time that IMD with improved science and forecasting, disseminates more precise localized weather forecasts for the wider population.

Topic: Indian Society: Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India. Role of women and women's organization, population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues, urbanization, their problems and their remedies. Effects of globalization on Indian society. Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism.

1. What will be the impact of reverse migration?

Source: [Livemint](https://www.livemint.com)

Syllabus: GS-1-population and associated issues

Context: Millions of migrant workers have returned home amidst the Covid-19 lockdown. This has led to reverse migration.

Brief Overview of Internal Migration in India

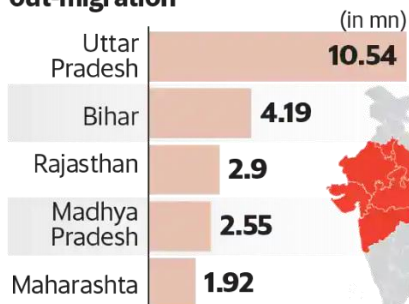
According to the Census 2011 migration data:

- There over 45.58 crore Indians were found to be migrants as against 31.45 crore during 2001 Census.
- UP, Bihar, Rajasthan and MP had the highest 'outmigration'. Maharashtra, Delhi and Gujarat had the largest 'in-migration'

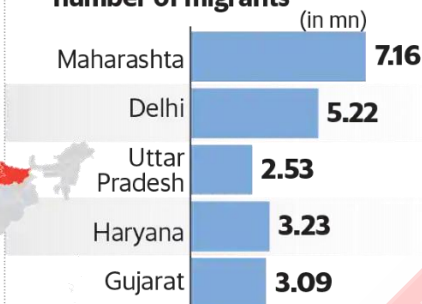
Back to base

States that see high rates of out-migration to urban areas are also the ones that have high unemployment rates. It may be difficult for states with high rural poverty rates like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar to absorb the returning migrants.

Top 5 states experiencing out-migration



Top 5 states receiving highest number of migrants



Source: Inter-State Migration India (Census 2011)

Reason for recent reverse migration: Most migrant workers are employed in the informal sector of the urban areas. The Covid-19 lockdown has hit the informal economy the most. Fear of losing sources of livelihood and shelter in urban areas during the lockdown forced migrant labourers to return home.

Impact of Reverse Migration

- **Impact of Rural Economy:** Rural India's economy is entirely dependent on agriculture and is already crippled with underemployed working population. Reverse migration would further aggravate the issue and lead to disguised unemployment in the agricultural sector.
- **Impact on Urban Economy:** Reverse migration has already led to labor shortage in urban areas. This has serious implications and can delay economic recovery in post-Covid times, which can affect social stability.

Conclusion: The reverse migration will have serious implications for both rural and urban economy. However, it is likely that the reverse migration is temporary and will return to normal after the threat of Covid-19 has subsided.

2. Drug abuse amidst pandemic

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS-1- Society

Context: The Covid-19 pandemic may leave people vulnerable to use and trafficking of illicit drugs.

Status of Drug Abuse:

Global:

- Around 269 million people used drugs in 2018, up 30% from 2009, with adolescents and young adults accounting for the largest share of users.
- Nearly 35.6 million people suffer from drug use disorders globally however, only one out of eight people who need drug-related treatment receive it.

India:

- According to the NDDTC 2019 report “Magnitude of Substance Use in India”, at the national level, about 14.6% of the people the ages of 10 and 75 are current users of alcohol and there are about 8.5 lakh people who inject drugs (PWID).
- According to NCRB 2019 report, drug overdose claims every one life in 12 hrs, more than 5% of which are minors.

GROWING CONCERN

STATE	2018	2017	2016	Total
Rajasthan	153	125	64	342
Karnataka	91	88	33	212
Uttar Pradesh	88	88	21	197
Punjab	78	71	138	287
Other states	465	373	522	1,360
Total	875	745	778	2,398



Covid-19 Impact on Drug abuse:

- **Threat to the vulnerable and marginalised:** The socio-economic crisis due to the pandemic might disproportionately affect the vulnerable and marginalised groups, youth, women and the poor. Socially and economically disadvantaged are more likely to develop drug use disorders but receive no treatment for the same.
- **Drug Trafficking:** According to UN, Covid-19 has prompted traffickers to find new routes and methods. Illicit activities via the so-called ‘darknet’ and shipments of drugs by mail, may increase.
- **Alternative drugs and addiction:** The Covid-19 pandemic has led to shortages of highly addictive opioid and therapeutics for pain management. This may lead people to seek out more readily available substances, including alcohol, sedatives or intravenous injections of drugs.

International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking:

- It is observed annually on 26 June.
- The theme for the 2020 International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking is “Better Knowledge for Better Care”.

Consequences of Drug abuse:



Steps taken by Indian Government

- **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985:** It envisages stringent provisions for the control and regulation of operations relating to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.
- **National Policy on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS), 2012:** It seeks to combat drug abuse in a holistic manner. It was drafted by the Ministry of Finance, Department of Revenue.
- **Central Sector Scheme of Assistance for Prevention of Alcoholism and Substance (Drug) Abuse:** Under the scheme, financial assistance is provided to eligible Non-Governmental Organizations for running Integrated Rehabilitation Centres for Addicts.
- **National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR), 2018-2025:** It aims to reduce the adverse consequences of drug abuse in India through a) education, b) de-addiction and c) rehabilitation of affected individuals and their families.

Suggested Reforms:

- Greater investment in evidence-based prevention. This should include awareness on drug related harm, specially health and social effects
- treatment and other services for drug use disorders, HIV, hepatitis C and other infections
- international cooperation to increase access to controlled drugs for medical purposes and preventing diversion and abuse,
- strengthen law enforcement action to curb the transnational organised crime networks.
- India can consider experiences from European and Latin American countries while formulating and implementing legislation to stop drug abuse. In Europe and Latin American countries, it was found that non-punitive measures improved health and wellbeing of drug addicts.

General Studies - 2

General Studies – 2

Topic 1: Indian Constitution — historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

1. Need of an anti-discrimination law

Topic 2: Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

2. Importance of Local governance during pandemics
3. Fiscal relations in times of COVID
4. On Jammu and Kashmir Domicile Law
5. Legitimate concern: on law and order in Nagaland

Topic 5: Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

6. The role of Parliament in handling COVID-19 Pandemic
7. Message from the Political disruption in Rajasthan
8. Battle of the Rajya Sabha
9. The working of Rajya Sabha

Topic 6: Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary— Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

10. For a strong and vibrant Bar
11. Importance of technology for Judicial reforms
12. Role of Judiciary in handling Migrant crisis.
13. Need of addressing asymmetries of justice by Judiciary
14. The gross abuse of the Manipur mandate

Topic 9: Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.

15. Drug approval in India and associated issues

Topic 10: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

16. Labour Reforms
17. Jammu and Kashmir
18. Why suspension of MPLADS is not a good idea?
19. Leader or institution – Who is dealing with Pandemic?
20. Cash or in kind – The Food Security dilemma
21. Making Data a Public Good

Topic 11: Development processes and the development industry —the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders.

22. How to achieve better conditions of work for migrant workers?
23. Migrant Worker Crisis- What is the Way Forward?
24. Promoting People's participation during Covid-19

Topic 12: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

25. Universal Basic Income- The need of the hour
26. Labour Reforms
27. Maternal health crises in Pandemic
28. Fighting a double pandemic: On Rising Domestic Violence Cases
29. Importance of Transparency during a crisis

Topic 13: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

30. The Private Sector in India's Healthcare System
31. Problems with Online higher education
32. Public- Private Partnership In Healthcare
33. Nurses refusing to offer services in Covid crises
34. Wake up call to Mental Health issues
35. Transforming Indian Education System
36. Online education – New shift in post corona India
37. STARS project – Improving quality and governance of school education

Topic 16: Role of civil services in a democracy.

38. Public trust in police increases over the years
39. The use of arbitrary power by State

Topic 17: India and its neighbourhood- relations.

40. Boundary issues between India and China
41. The reason behind the growing transgressions by China along LAC
42. India –China relations – Win-win or zero sum game
43. What is the way forward in India-Nepal relations?
44. Setbacks in relations of India and Nepal
45. Role of Quiet Diplomacy in easing tensions with China
46. Territorial Issue– India and Nepal
47. Setbacks in relations of India and Nepal
48. Need to build trust: India-Pakistan relations
49. Unique relationship between Nepal and India.
50. Dealing with China
51. What changed in India-Nepal ties?
52. Understanding China 's strategic objectives regarding India
53. Bad to worse: On India-Pakistan ties
54. Making sense of China's calculations
55. Understanding China's actions in Ladakh

Topic 18: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

56. Strengthening the India-Australia bilateral ties
57. On Trump's proposal to expand G-7
58. Importance of the Persian Gulf
59. Importance of E-Diplomacy in the time of COVID-19.
60. Failure of G7 in handling world issues
61. Significance of West Asia for India

62. India –China relations – Non-Alignment is the key
63. India needs a new China policy
64. Importance of our Sea lanes
65. Why China is being aggressive along the LAC?
66. The Peace process in Afghanistan
67. Resolving border disputes in South Asia
68. The existential threat to Palestine

Topic 19: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

69. What is the difference between India and China's approach with Africa?
70. Importance of impartial judging of Foreign Policy

Topic 20: Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

71. The Future of Multilateralism
72. What should be India's Approach at WHO Executive Board?
73. Multilateralism post COVID-19 India's quest for UNSC reforms

Topic 1: Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

1. Need of an anti-discrimination law

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

Context: Recent revelations made by the former West Indies cricketer Darren Sammy about racist remarks must awaken us to a problem of a society replete with racism.

Prejudice established in society:

- The former Indian cricketer Irfan Pathan pointed to how players from South India routinely faced abuse from crowds in the north.
- Mr. Pathan said that racism in our country goes beyond the colour of our skins as it enforces people seeking to buy houses based on their faith. He faced abuses and a cricketer who had represented India on the world stage was asked to prove his loyalty all over again simply on account of his faith.

Blow against race-neutrality:

- **Indirect discrimination:** These damages pervade every aspect of life from access to basic goods to education and employment.
- **U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in Griggs vs. Duke Power Co. (1971):** It held that an energy company had fallen foul of the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964 which made racial discrimination in private workplaces illegal by insisting on a superfluous written test by applicants for its better entry-level jobs. In practice, it allowed the company to victimise African-Americans.

Our Constitution has dealt with discrimination in public and private spheres.

Discrimination by the state:

- Both direct and indirect forms of discrimination are against India's constitutional vision of equality.

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- **Such as the Delhi High Court in Madhu vs. Northern Railway (2018):** The Railways had denied free medical treatment to the wife and daughter of an employee as it contended that the employee had “disowned” his family and had had their names struck off his medical card.
- The court held that to make essential benefits such as medical services subject to a declaration by an employee might be “facially neutral” but it produced a disparate impact particularly on women and children.

Discrimination in Private sphere:

- Such as entry barriers to goods such as housing, schools and employment.
- **Constitutional basis:** Article 15(2) stipulates that citizens shall not on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth be denied access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment.
- **Conflict:** This right comes into conflict with the rights of persons to associate with others often to the exclusion of certain groups.
- **Zoroastrian Cooperative Housing Society vs District Registrar Co-operative Societies (Urban) and Others (2005):** The SC ruled in favour of a bye-law of a Parsi housing society that prohibited the sale of property to non-Parsis.
- The judgment conflated the freedom to contract with the constitutional freedom to associate and also overlooked altogether Article 15(2).
- **The scope in Article 15(2):** The word “shops” used in it is meant to be read widely. A study of the Constituent Assembly’s debates on the clause’s framing shows us that the founders explicitly intended to place restrictions on any economic activity that sought to exclude specific groups. For example, when a person refuses to lease her property to another based on the customer’s faith, such a refusal would run directly counter to the guarantee of equality.

Our civil liberties are capable of being threatened by acts of private individuals as well as the state. Our rule of law must subsume an understanding that discrimination partakes different forms.

Attempts to end discrimination:

- **Private members bill:** It was introduced by Shashi Tharoor in 2017.
- **Equality Bill:** It was drafted and released by the Centre for Law & Policy Research.

Way Forward

To end discrimination, there is a need of enacting a law that will help reverse our deep-rooted culture of discrimination.

Topic 2: Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

2. Importance of Local governance during pandemics

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein

Context: The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the critical role of local governments and decentralised responses.

Advantage for Local governments: In terms of information, monitoring and immediate action which can meet any disaster such as COVID-19.

Core issues: COVID-19 has raised four major challenges:

- **Economic:** The economic activities are not sufficient to handle such large workforce.
- **Health:** There are lack of health infrastructures to handle such large populations.
- **Welfare/livelihood:** The livelihoods of the people hampered due to low economic activities which led to reverse migrations.
- **Resource mobilisation:** There are inadequate resource availability for the local bodies to handle such crisis.

Challenges for local governance:

- **Paradigm shift:** The COVID-19 demands a shift in the delivery of health care with advanced technology.
- **No clarity:** In the assignment of functions, functionaries and financial responsibilities to local governments.
- **Low recognition:** The critical role of local governments needs to be recognised by all. Such as Kerala through a 'big bang' approach implemented a significant fiscal decentralization program and then built the capacity of its local governments.

These challenges have to be addressed by all tiers of government in the federal polity. The local government's own revenue is critical for their empowerment.

Suggestions for Resource mobilisation:

- **Local finance:**
 - Property tax collection with appropriate exemptions should be a compulsory levy and preferably must cover land.

Facts:

- The Economic Survey 2017-18 points out that urban local governments, or ULGs, generate about 44% of their revenue from their own sources as against only 5% by rural local governments, or RLGs.
- Per capita own revenue collected by ULGs is about 3% of urban per capita income while the corresponding figure is only 0.1% for RLGs.

- **Fiscal illusion:** There is a big gap between tax potential and actual collection which results in underperformance. In States such as UP, Bihar and Jharkhand, local tax collection at the panchayat level is almost nil.
- All States should take steps to enhance and rationalise the property tax regime.

Facts:

- A recent study shows that the share of property tax in GDP has been declining since 2002-03.
- The share of property tax in India in 2017-18 is only 0.14% of GDP as against 2.1% in the OECD.

- Land monetisation and betterment levy may be tried in the context of COVID-19 in India.
- **Issuance of Bonds:** Municipalities and suburban panchayats can issue a corona containment bond for a period of say 10 years on a coupon rate below market rate but significantly above the reverse repo rate to attract banks.

- **MPLAD fund scheme:**
 - MPLADs were earmarked for local area development and must be assigned to local governments like to panchayats on the basis of well-defined criteria.
- **The Fifteenth Finance Commission (FFC):**
 - **A special COVID-19 containment grant to the LGs:** By the FFC to be distributed on the basis of SFC-laid criteria.
 - **Low increase:** The local government grant of ₹90,000 crore for 2020-2021 by the FFC is only 3% higher than that recommended by the Fourteenth Finance Commission. It should be increased to an appropriate level.
 - The Building health infrastructure and disease control strategies at the local level should find mention in tranches of the packages announced by the government.

Way Forward

Strategies in tackling the COVID-19 crisis must include local governments being equipped and fiscally empowered.

3. Fiscal relations in times of COVID

Source – [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus – GS-2 Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

Context – Covid exposes limits of centralized approach of government where Finance Commission must reset the balance in fiscal federalism.

The 15th Finance Commission is expected to submit its report in about four months from now and amid the pandemic has to deal with the following issues:

1. **Increased debt to GDP ratio** - Factoring in the additional borrowings, the debt-to-GDP ratio may well be over 80 per cent this year. Thus the fiscal consolidation roadmap will have to be reworked, and as per its terms of reference, the Finance Commission will lay out the new path to be followed by both Centre and states.
2. **State borrowings** - Recently, the Centre eased the states' budget constraint, allowing them to borrow more this year, conditional upon them implementing reforms in line with the Centre's priorities. Finance Commission, in line with its terms of reference, can go along with the Centre's stance and recommend imposing conditions on additional borrowing and formalize this arrangement.
3. **GST compensation cess** - The GST council, in which the Centre effectively has a veto, is yet to clearly spell out its views on the extension of the compensation cess to offset states losses beyond the five-year period. At a time when the Centre is struggling to fulfill its promise of assuring states their GST revenues, will the Commission argue in favour of extending the compensation period, as states desire is another major challenge.
4. **Tax devolution to states** - The fiscal multiplier of central government capital spending is greater than that by the states. Also, Centralization of political power may well lead to demands for centralization of resources. Thus, centre would want reduced share of tax devolution.

Way Forward - Any attempt to shift the uneasy balance in favour of the Centre will strengthen the argument that the government's talk of cooperative federalism serves as a useful mask to hide its centralizing tendencies. As a neutral arbiter of Centre-state

relations, the Finance Commission should seek to maintain the delicate balance in deciding on contesting claims.

4. On Jammu and Kashmir Domicile Law

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS-2- Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

Context: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had issued the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Adaptation of State Laws) Order, 2020 which defines Domicile Criteria for UT of J&K.

Permanent Residents of Jammu and Kashmir

- Article 35A of the Indian Constitution empowered Jammu and Kashmir legislature to define state's permanent residents and their special rights and privileges. The law was inserted in the Constitution through a Presidential order of 1954.
- J&K defined its permanent residents as all persons born or settled within the state before 1911 or after having lawfully acquired immovable property and residence in the state for not less than 10 years or prior to that date. All emigrants from Jammu and Kashmir, including those who migrated to Pakistan are considered state subjects. The descendants of emigrants are considered state subjects for two generations.
- Further, the law prohibited non-permanent residents from settling permanently in the state, acquiring immovable property, government jobs, scholarships and aid.
- Article 35A was scrapped in August 2019. In March 2020, the concept of "permanent resident of the State" was discontinued in J&K.

What is the new J&K domicile rule?

Under the new rules, a person has to fulfil the following conditions to be deemed to be a domicile of the Union Territory (UT) of J&K:

- The person has resided in J&K for 15 years or has studied in the state for seven years and appeared in either the Class 10 or the Class 12 examination in J&K (or)
- The person is registered as a migrant by the Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (Migrants) in the UT of J&K (or)
- They are children of Central Government Officials, Officials of PSUs and among others who have served in J&K for a total period of ten years (or)
- The children of residents of J&K who reside outside the Union Territory in connection with employment or business but whose parents fulfil any of the above conditions will also be entitled to domicile status.

Positive Implication of the new Domicile Rule: Refugees from Pakistan, sanitary workers resettled from other parts of India and Gorkhas who arrived as soldiers before Independence were not given permanent resident status leading to a denial of opportunities to them in education, employment and politics. The new domicile rules will give employment and educational rights to the marginalised.

Concerns over new Domicile Rules:

- The amended domicile law was made in exercise of power under the J&K Reorganization Act 2019 that has been challenged in a number of petitions before the Supreme Court of India
- According to two main political parties in J&K, the new domicile rule will change the demography of J&K by allowing immigrants.

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- Further, there are concerns that there could be dispossession of land and a shrinking of economic opportunities for local people.

5. Legitimate concern: on law and order in Nagaland

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS-2 Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein

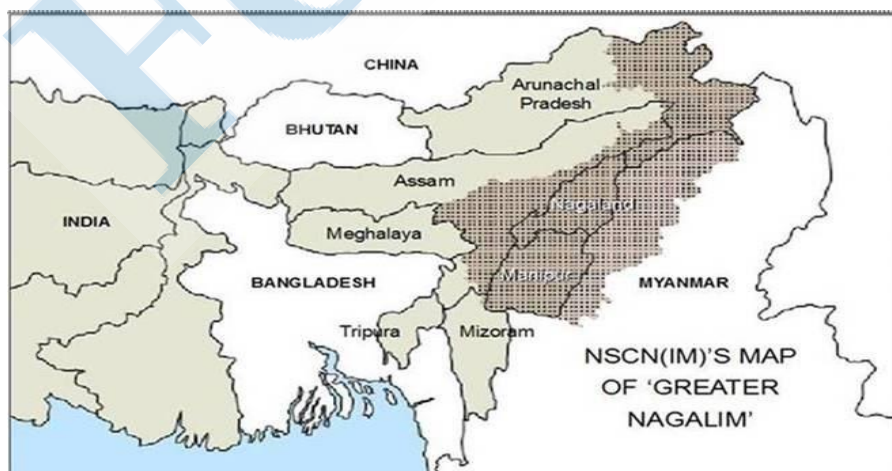
Context: The Governor R.N. Ravi of Nagaland has written a letter to its CM alleging that law and order has collapsed in the State.

Background:

- **Concern over law and order:** The Governor have written a strong letter that armed gangs who question the sovereignty and integrity of the nation had challenged its authority by engaging in blatant extortion and siphoning off funds meant for development work.
- The Governor writes that functions such as transfer and posting of officials who are in charge of law and order above the district level will be done with his approval as proposed under Article 371A(1)(b) of the Constitution.
- **Response of NSCN-IM:** The insurgent National Socialist Council of Nagalim-Isak Muivah (NSCN-IM) has been observing a ceasefire with the government for the last 23 years. They said that the group was only engaged in collecting “taxes”.

Naga Peace Talks:

- The talks seek to settle disputes that date back to colonial rule.
- **Nagas:** They are not a single tribe but an ethnic community that comprises several tribes who live in the state of Nagaland and its neighbourhood.
- **Demand of Naga groups:** It has been a Greater Nagalim that would cover not only the state of Nagaland but parts of neighbouring states and even of Myanmar.
- The British had annexed Assam in 1826 and subsequently created the Naga Hills district and went on to extend its boundaries.
- **Assertion of Naga nationalism:** It began during British rule and has continued after Independence and even after Nagaland became a state.
- The unresolved issues gave rise to decades of insurgency that claimed thousands of lives, including of civilians.



Issues in Naga Peace Accord:

- The peace accord with the insurgent groups is yet to be achieved despite the Centre's push to conclude it last year.
- Mr Ravi has been the center's interlocutor since 2015 and remained at the position even after becoming the State Governor in August 2019.
- **Peace Accord not finalised:** Due to the NSCN-IM's obstinacy such as its insistence on retaining a separate flag and a Constitution for the State of Nagaland and its unwillingness to dismantle its parallel administrative and paramilitary structure.
- **Distrust among Naga Organisations:** The NSCN-IM has created distrust among other Naga organisations besides other north-eastern governments due to its core ideology of a "greater Nagalim". The other insurgent actors are not coming on board due to inherent difficulties.

Way Forward

- The Centre has to find a way to address this complex issue by refocusing on the peace process and not by usurping the authority of the State government in governance matters.

Topic 5: Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

6. The role of Parliament in handling COVID-19 Pandemic

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: **GS 2 - Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.**

Context: Indian Parliament has not met and questioned the government on their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Parliaments questioning their governments over Pandemic around the world:

- **Through video conference:** The Canadian Parliament held its first lockdown meeting towards the end of April with MPs attending through video conference.
- **Hybrid Model:** The British Parliament adopted a hybrid model of in-person and video attendance.
- **Combination:** Several other countries held sessions either with physical distancing (fewer MPs attend with agreement across parties) or video conferencing or a combination of the two. These include France, Italy, Argentina, Brazil, Australia and New Zealand.

Role of Parliament in our system of governance:

	Expected role	During Pandemic
Checks and challenges the government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accountability: It helps in holding the government accountable on a daily basis through questions, motions and debates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Absence of Scrutiny of government actions: As the Parliament and its committees have not met for over two months.
Highest Law-making body	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Passing an appropriate Law: Parliament passes appropriate laws by taking the opposition views	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Handling the pandemic under the Disaster Management Act, 2005: It was not designed to handle epidemics.

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	<p>in mind.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is done by most democratic countries through an Act with suitable checks and an expiry date, which could be renewed by Parliament. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reasoning is that the central government had no choice as there was no other law that provide it with powers to impose a national lockdown across the country.
Expenditure of government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Constitution requires all expenditure by the government to be approved by Parliament. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Parliamentary scrutiny or approval: To the measures announced by the government to address the economic crisis sparked by the health crisis and the lockdown.
Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent the people: MPs have a duty to shape policy, guide the government and raise issues in national interest in Parliament. • Forum to raise important issues: Important issues are discussed and a plan of action is agreed upon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges due to pandemic: These include addressing questions on how to stall the epidemic from spreading, how to treat people who are infected and how to minimise the loss of life to the virus. • Humanitarian issues: Mitigating the impact on the most vulnerable sections of the population which include the mistreatment of migrants. • But without Parliament all these questions remain unanswered.

How to hold a Parliamentary session during Pandemic?

- **Rules to hold sessions:**
 - The President summon the Parliament.
 - The Rules of Procedure of both Houses require the Secretary-General to issue summons to each member specifying the “date and place for a session” of the House.
- **Hybrid meetings:** These enabling clauses can be used to hold hybrid meetings or remote meetings. The Rules require parliamentary committees to sit within the “precincts” of the House but the Speaker may permit meetings to be held outside. Thus, there is no prior parliamentary action required to permit meetings through videoconferencing.
- **Use of technology:**
- **Using Fiber optics:** All district headquarters are linked with fiber optic lines and these can be used to connect the constituency office of MPs.

Way Forward

Parliament should harness the power of technology and should be convened soon to fulfill the aspirations of the people.

7. Message from the Political disruption in Rajasthan

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

Context: The ruling party has accused the opposition of trying to unsettle the government in Rajasthan.

Background:

- **Internal tussle:** The BJP has said that it is an outcome of an internal tussle in the Congress. There are talks of struggle for power between the Deputy CM and the CM.
- **Rajya Sabha elections:** The BJP has fielded a second candidate for elections to three Rajya Sabha seats on June 19 of which it can win only one with its current strength.

Recent examples of Political disruptions:

- The government was formed in Goa and Manipur through questionable means. The single largest party was not invited to form the government by the governor.
- Within the last year the elected government fell in Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh through a pattern of engineering resignations of MLAs.
- **Against the spirit of democracy:** As every party has its share of disenchantment within its ranks but it should not be used as a front to dismantle a popular mandate. To deal with “the evil of political defections”, an anti-defection law was introduced.

Anti-Defection Law:

- It was included as the Tenth Schedule in the Constitution in 1985 via the 52nd Amendment Act, 1985.
- The law sets the provisions for disqualification of elected members on the grounds of defection to another political party.

How anti-defection law deal with Current pattern of resignations of MLAs?

- The 1960s and 1970s political arena was marked by ‘Aya Rams and Gaya Rams’ and 52nd amendment was introduced.
- The Anti-defection law is silent on this new resignation formula to destabilise governments.
- **Kihoto Hollohon judgement:** One of the judges had said that the Tenure of the Speaker is dependent on the continuous support of the majority in the House. Therefore, he does not satisfy the requirement of such an independent adjudicatory authority.
- **Solution:** An independent authority can be created to deal with disqualification of MPs and MLAs under the Tenth Schedule.

Way Forward

The political uncertainty at this moment of pandemic could leads to devastating results.

8. Battle of the Rajya Sabha

Source: [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these

9 PM Compilation for the Month of June, 2020

Context: Rajya Sabha (RS) elections are to be held in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

Background:

- Generally, a party's candidate wins unopposed in Rajya Sabha as parties know their strength in the assembly.
- **Accusation of Horse trading:**
- In Gujarat, eight Congress MLAs resigned before the election.
- In Rajasthan, Congress CM has accused the BJP of trying to poach the MLAs.
- In Madhya Pradesh, there is continuing political uncertainty following the resignation of 22 MLAs which led to the unseating of the Congress government.

Rajya Sabha elections in Constitution:

- **Strength of the house:** Article 80 of the Constitution lays down the maximum strength of RS as 250 out of which 12 members are nominated by the President and 238 are representatives of the States and of the two Union Territories.
- **Voting:**
- It specifies that only the elected MLAs of a state assembly can vote in a Rajya Sabha election.
- Elections take place using a single transferable vote where a voter ranks all candidates according to his preference.
- Voting only takes place when there are more candidates than the vacant seats. This happens to take the advantage of the views of the opposition for betterment of democracy.

The problems in RS elections are not new and certain changes are introduced to correct it.

Dealing with the issues of Rajya Sabha elections:

- **Rajya Sabha S B Chavan Committee (1999):** It mooted the idea of voting by open ballots in the elections to the upper house to prevent big money and other considerations to play a role in the electoral process.
- **Parliament passed a law in 2003:** It required MLAs to show their votes to their party man before voting in a RS election.
- **Supreme Court in 2006:** It decided that crossvoting would not attract the penalty under the anti-defection law. The blatant use of money became evident in the 2016 RS elections in Karnataka where an MLA was caught for purportedly asking money on tape.
- **The open ballot provides legal and technical grounds for invalidating votes:**
- In the 2017 Gujarat RS election two Congress MLAs were suspected by their party of voting for the BJP candidate as they had shown their votes to the BJP's election agent. As a result, their votes were held invalid.
- In 2016 Haryana, 12 Congress MLA's votes were held invalid after using an unofficial violet pen for voting.

Way Forward

The Probity in RS polls can be ensured by internal change in parties along with stricter laws.

9. The working of Rajya Sabha

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

Context: Another round of Rajya Sabha (RS) elections were held for 19 seats across several States.

Background:

- **Defection:** Eight Congress MLAs left the party in Gujarat after the announcement of RS elections. This enabled the victory of an extra BJP candidate to the RS.
- **Poaching of MLAs:** In Rajasthan, the BJP had strength to elect one member but it fielded two which led to speculation of poaching.
- **Change in numbers:** The ruling BJP now has 86 members in the Rajya Sabha which is the highest number for the party in the Upper House while the Congress now has 41.

Importance of Rajya Sabha:

- **Power sharing:** The upper house works as a Council of States. It represents the interests of the states. It institutionalises the sharing of power between the Centre and the State under India's federal structure. There are certain exclusive powers of Rajya Sabha such as power to transfer a subject from the State List to Union List for a specified period.
- **Forum:** The House of the Elders is considered an exalted forum of scholarship and statesmanship as it has some nominated members too.
- **Deliberations:** They are critical for a vast and diverse country like India.
- **Reviewing house:** Its function is to improve legislation passed by the Lower House and is not one of obstruction.
- **Checks and balances:** It is supposed to act as a check on the legislation. It is a body to check and scrutinise the laws.
- **Permanent house:** The Rajya Sabha doesn't dissolve like the Lok Sabha.

But it is losing its value in the last few years.

Losing sheen of Rajya Sabha:

- The steady entry of celebrities and business tycoons has not made a serious contribution to the RS's working.
- **Reduction in Deliberations:** There has been reduction in deliberations of Rajya Sabha. For example- the government has arbitrarily labelled bills as money bills to bypass scrutiny.

Way Forward

There should not be any pushing of legislation through both houses as certain have some far-reaching effects on the country. It is imperative that members work across party lines to uphold Parliament's constitutional role.

Topic 6: Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary— Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

10. For a strong and vibrant Bar

Source: [The Hindu](#)

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Syllabus: GS 2 - Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary—Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

Context: A showcause notice has been issued by the Bar Council of India (BCI) to Dushyant Dave and other members of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA).

Bar Council of India:

- It is a statutory body created by Parliament under the Advocates Act, 1961.
- It prescribes standards of professional conduct, etiquettes and exercises disciplinary jurisdiction over the bar.

Whether this is an attempt to curb the independent functioning of lawyers and lawyers' associations? Notice was issued to them for not having obeyed the BCI's May 10 resolution to stay SCBA's decision to suspend its Secretary and for having made derogatory remarks against the resolution.

How the problem unfolded?

- **Origin of problem:** Justice Arun Mishra described the PM, at an international judicial conference in February 2020, as an “internationally acclaimed visionary” and a “versatile genius”.
- **Condemnation:** These statements drew severe condemnation from various quarters, including the SCBA as it felt that such a statement reflects poorly on the independence of the judiciary. It can unintentionally show the closeness of Judiciary to the Executive.
- **Misuse for political purposes:** The Secretary of the SCBA called for a general body meeting for the removal of Mr. Dave as President and from the primary membership of the SCBA alleging misuse of the body for political purposes. However, the SCBA's Executive Committee suspended the secretary saying his actions were against the interests of the association.

Remedy of the problem:

- **Own functioning:** Working out within the SCBA is the only proper course as it is an independent body that functions within its own laws.
- **Show cause notice:** The BCI strangely assumed powers and passed a resolution reinstating the secretary. Criticism by Mr. Dave resulted in the issuance of the show cause notice.
- **BCI powers to interfere in a Bar Association's internal matter:** There is no such provision under the Advocates Act of 1961 and the BCI rules. The BCI appears to be relying on the provisions of Section 7 of the Advocates Act, which lays down the functioning of the BCI. However, Section 7 does not justify such intrusion by the BCI into an independent Bar Association affairs.

How it is dangerous incursions upon Bar council's functioning?

- **Bar Association Lahar v. State Bar Council of M.P. and Another (2018):** There is no provision of statute or any Rule that has been conferring power to the State Bar Council to interfere with the election process and internal affairs of the Bar Associations.
- **Playing a supervisory role over the SCBA:** The BCI is encroaching upon the SCBA's internal functioning. BCI role has been confining to maintaining professional standards of lawyers towards clients. But it is now playing a supervisory role over the SCBA which is not provided for in the statutes.

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- **Problem with BCI interference:** It has a deep and pervasive effect on the independent functioning of the Bar Associations not only in the SC but throughout the country. With a strong executive, the importance of an independent judiciary becomes all the more important.

Way Forward

The BCI should not intrude into the affairs of an independent Bar Association. A strong and vibrant Bar is an essential condition for a fair and fearless judiciary.

11. Importance of technology for Judicial reforms

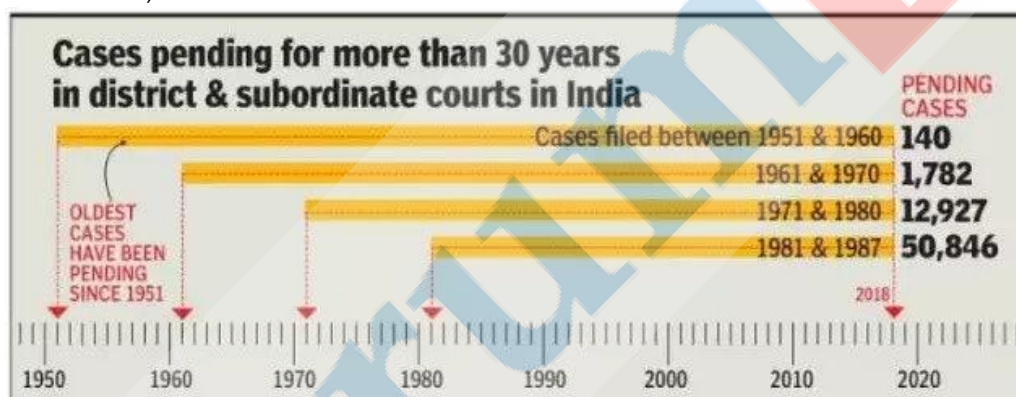
Source: [Live Mint](#)

Syllabus: **GS 2** - Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary—Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

Context: Analysing the urgent need to radically transform the Indian judicial system to remove the problems that affect the delivery of justice using technology.

Background:

- **Pendency of cases:** There are more than 3.5 crore pending cases in courts of which 87.54 per cent of the total pendency of cases is in the district courts. (As of November 2019)



Source: TOI

- **Effects of COVID-19 on courts:** The courts were shut down for all except the most urgent matters to reduce the risk of infection of litigants and judges.

Issue in design of courts: Our judicial system is simply not designed for contactless operations as most court processes—the submission of pleadings, the payment of court fees, the conduct of arguments—require person-to-person interaction.

To tackle effects of COVID-19, some of these issues were dealt.

Adaptations of courts due to COVID-19 using technologies:

- **Video conferencing facilities:** They were set up to allow judges and lawyers to hear urgent matters virtually.
- **E-filing of documents:** Written pleadings could be submitted without any need to be physically present.
- **Digital payment systems:** It includes court-approved virtual wallets to let court fees be paid remotely.

These changes were introduced due to COVID-19 but we need permanent reforms in Judiciary.

- **Discussion on Judicial reforms:** Niti Aayog meeting and the Multi-stakeholder webinar talked about the importance of technology in judicial use.
- **Online Dispute Resolution:** It can be made mandatory for some cases.
- **Complementing Private Online Dispute Resolution:** To ensure that online resolution can reach different industries, locations and parts of the country.
- **Shifting towards written advocacy:** When we take our disputes online, we should consider adopting the online medium of communication such as chats, emails and the exchange of electronic messages.
- **Incorporating cognitive technologies directly into the dispute resolution workflow:** This does not have to mean using artificial intelligence to decide our disputes. It could be as simple as offering better ways of making informed decisions about litigation strategies.
- For example- The biggest litigant in India is the State. The many cognitive technologies offer us the ability to generate data-driven reports on the chances of success of each appeal that the government is thinking of pursuing, based on an analysis of previous judgments.

Way Forward

Justice delivery should harness the full potential of technology to transform the judicial system of the country.

12. Role of Judiciary in handling Migrant crisis.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary—Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

Context: Analysing the role of the Supreme Court for fixing the lapses that led to the migrant labour crisis due to COVID-19.

Background:

- **According to the Census 2011 migration data:** Over 45.58 crore Indians were found to be migrants as against 31.45 crore during 2001 Census.
- With no work, many returned home. As per official claims by the Centre, about 57.22 lakh migrant workers have returned to their hometowns.
- **Inadequate facilities:** In terms of registering and identifying those who wished to travel and the scarcity of timely information and effective communication relating to the movement of trains and their destinations.

The COVID-19 lockdown has hit the workers very badly with the fear of losing sources of livelihood and forcing them to return home. The Judiciary was expected to take their cases for doing complete justice.

Criticism of Supreme Court:

- Initially the SC said it could not be expected to stop migrants from taking the hard option of trekking thousands of miles to their villages amid the lockdown.
- It put onus on the government to draw migrants away from the long walk home and wait for government-arranged inter-State transport.

It was criticized by former members of the higher judiciary as well as many senior lawyers and jurists. Now the SC has sought to redeem its stature by a series of directions and indicating its willingness to go into all pending issues.

Intervention of Supreme Court for migrants:

- **Transporting all inter-state workers to their homes:** The SC has fixed a 15-day deadline for the completion of the process.
- **Dropping Criminal cases:** The SC has asked state governments to drop criminal cases against them for violating the lockdown since it was imposed at short notice. It feels that pursuing the lockdown violation charge would affect them badly which have already their source of livelihoods.
- **Facilitating returns of workers:** It had made all State governments to file comprehensive affidavits on the action they had taken to provide them with immediate relief and the arrangements made for food and water for them during train journeys.
- **Future of workers:** It has asked the States about their plans for registering all the workers, their skills, their areas of employment and the different welfare and employment schemes meant for them.

Way Forward

Both the authorities and the courts have to make an effort to improve the conditions of workers.

13. Need of addressing asymmetries of justice by Judiciary

Source: [The Express Express](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary—Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

Context: Some recent events have demonstrated the need to introspect judiciary.

Recent events:

- **Press conference by four distinguished judges of the SC:** They expressed doubts about the Court's functioning. They expressed concern about the threat to democracy from within the system.
- **Migrants issue:** The court did not take notice of the mass migration of workers' misery of those walking hundreds of kilometers and those sequestered in ill-equipped shelter homes without adequate facilities in the first instance. This was a matter of national concern.

Role of Judiciary:

- **Undamaged integrity** -- If the public loses confidence in the courts, democracy will be under threat.
- **Bar community:** The criticism of the bar community is not to diminish the dignity of the court. The real threat to the judiciary is posed by an assertive executive that seeks to dominate the court.
- **Impartial decision making:**
 - **Last resort:** In normal circumstances, Litigants move the court as a matter of last resort because litigation costs are burdensome and the resolution of disputes takes years.

- **Purity of judicial process:** The legal fraternity depends on it for its survival. If the litigant public loses faith in judicial processes, it threaten the profession.
- **Lack of consistent judicial ideology:** Judges speak in too many different voices. A bench of two or more speaks for the entire Court. The same statutory provisions are viewed differently depending on the judges on the bench.

Some issues to the Legal processes of courts:

- **Inconsistent listing of matters:**
- **Inconsistent administrative structure:** Such as a litigant granted a hearing overnight without any apparent urgency while another with papers in order and facing imminent threat of arrest refused a hearing.
- **Departure from settled practices in hearing matters:** It is well-settled that habeas corpus petitions are heard the day after they are filed. It should not be changed as done in the case of leaders of the Opposition being in custody for months. Also, highly controversial unique procedures like handing over documents in sealed covers to the Court have gained credibility in recent times.
- **Matters having national effect not listed for long time:**
 - Such as the matters relating to the elevation and transfer of judges have become concerning because of the manner in which they have taken place. Also, refusal of SC in first instance to migrant crisis had far reaching consequences.

Way Forward

It is in the interest of the democracy that our judges decide cases in the highest traditions of decision-making.

14. The gross abuse of the Manipur mandate

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2- Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary—Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

Context: The BJP-led government in Manipur is in danger after losing the support of nine MLAs.

Background:

- **Hung Assembly:** In the March 2017 Assembly election, the Congress emerged as the single largest party with 28 seats in the 60-member House and BJP came second with 21.
- **Decision of Governor:** The Governor with inadequately unexplained reasons gave preference to the post-poll alliance led by the BJP rather than the Congress.
- **Problems of coalition:** The BJP managed to forge an alliance and form the government. The 10th schedule put a ceiling on the Manipur cabinet to 12 including the CM. The BJP kept only three cabinet berths for itself.
- **Crisis of democracy:** In a sudden turn of events three BJP MLAs joined Congress and four NPP MLAs, an independent MLA and Trinamool Congress MLA withdrew support to the BJP led government and expressed desire to support Congress.

The Manipur crisis reflects the state of Indian democracy where the mandate of the people decided at periodic elections is increasingly being allowed to be twisted by turncoat-elected representatives.

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Laws to remove problems of turncoats:

- **The Anti-defection law:** 10th Schedule was introduced in 1985 by the 52nd amendment of the Constitution.
- **91st amendment of the Constitution (2003):** The total number of ministers, including the CM, in the council of ministers in a state shall not exceed 15 % of the total strength of the state's legislative assembly.

Despite the laws, the people in power are still changing sides to their own advantage.

The Manipur case reflects the overturning of the rule of law by those in power:

Partisan politics:

- **Internal friction within the ruling Party:** Many BJP MLAs are now concerned with the reduced prospect of re-election from their constituencies if they went to the polls as mere camp followers.
- **Changing sides:** Three of their MLAs decided to quit the party to align with the Congress.
- **Defection:** After forming of government, Seven Congress MLAs defected to the ruling side as they were hoping for some official position to share the spoils of power.
- **Role of speaker:** Petitions for the disqualification of the eight were left unheeded by the Speaker for more than three years.
- **Role of Judiciary:** After the intervention of the SC, the first defector was disqualified on March 28 this year. The Congress moved the Manipur HC for other defectors which took the cue from the earlier SC ruling to direct the Speaker to dispose of the case at the earliest.

Changing Sides by Partners:

- **Losing coalition partners:** The BJP is beginning to lose its partners. Such as the NPP which has four MLAs in the Assembly walked out of the BJP-led alliance and pledged support to the Opposition Congress on June 17.
- **Return of defectors:** Four of the seven Congress defectors also decided to return to the Congress camp.

Way Forward

The politics in Manipur is a fine example of the law being made a subordinate function of power. There is a need for strong laws and internal politics of the parties to reduce such subordination.

Topic 9: Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.

15. Drug approval in India and associated issues

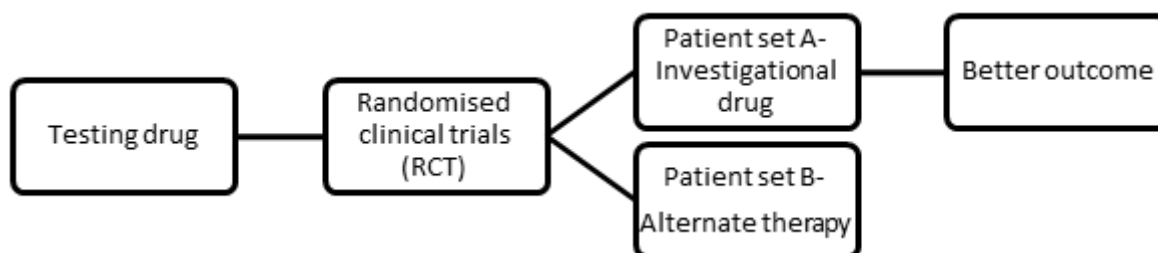
Source – [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus – GS 2- Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.

Context – Controversy is brewing in India due to the opacity surrounding the regulatory approval granted to Favipiravir for the treatment of COVID-19 patients with mild or moderate symptoms.

Process for demonstrating the efficacy of a drug in treating a particular disease:

1. Testing drug and getting the outcome



• Figure 1 – Process of Randomised clinical trials

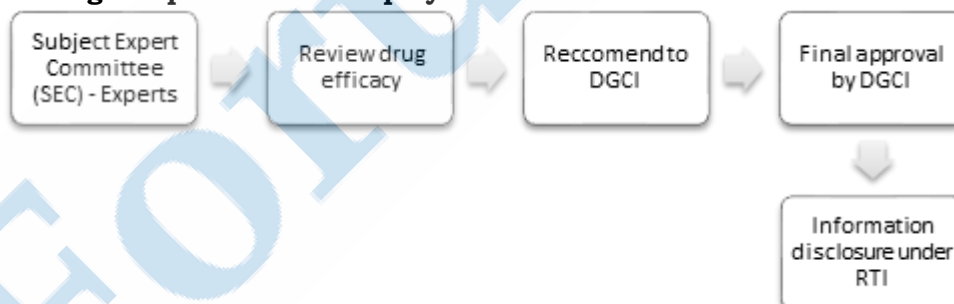
2. **Peer reviewing** - The data collected from such clinical trials are usually published in a peer-reviewed journal where they are subject to scientific scrutiny.

Issues associated with Glenmark's Favipiravir's trial and data:

1. **Treating COVID patients** - The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has approved Glenmark Pharmaceuticals, an Indian pharmaceutical company, to sell generic versions of Favipiravir for the treatment of COVID-19. This has been done without scientific consensus on the efficacy of the drug.
2. **Tested patients with "mild" COVID-19 for RCT** - The decision to enroll patients with "mild" COVID-19 is confusing given that virtually all these "mild" cases often resolve themselves without any intervention.
3. **Absence of "standard care"** - Clinical Trials Registry of India (CTRI) does not explain the nature of the "standard care" being provided to the patients which is necessary for comparison of Favipiravir and its therapeutic value.
4. **Culture of secrecy** - In this case, the minutes of the meetings, the composition of the Subject Expert Committee and the clinical trial results submitted to the SEC/DCGI are not available on the DCGI's website.

Suggested Solution

1. Following the procedure set up by DGCI :



Way Forward - The pandemic has not only exposed the dire situation of the public health infrastructure, but also the opacity with which drug/medical device approvals are granted in India. This needs to be resolved at the earliest to restore public confidence in regulator as regulator is supposed to protect interests of general public rather than jeopardising them. Drug approval in India and associated issues

Topic 10: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

16. Labour Reforms

Source – [Livemint](#)

Syllabus – GS 2 - Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors

Context – Recently many state governments have brought changes in labour reforms which have been criticised widely

Changes in labour reforms

Since labor is a concurrent subject under the Constitution of India, states can frame their own laws but need the approval of the Centre for making amendments to central laws.

1. **Uttar Pradesh Temporary Exemption from Certain Labour law Ordinance, 2020** – It proposes that all factories and establishments engaged in manufacturing process will be exempt from “the operation of all labour laws for a period of three years”, provided they fulfil certain conditions.

The industry has been exempted from labor laws, except the following:

- Building and other Construction Workers' Act of 1996
- Workmen Compensation Act of 1923
- Bonded Labor (Abolition) System Act of 1976

2. **Gujarat ordinance** - In Gujarat, the new industrial establishments are exempted from all labor laws except the following:

- Minimum Wages Act
- Industrial Safety Rules
- Employees' Compensation Act
- Ordinance to roll out benefits that would be available for 1,200 days
- 100 per cent online approvals within 15 days

Challenges associated with these changes

- a. **Three year sunset clause** - These lax labour rules have a three-year sunset clause which is likely to deter serious investors as after three years when they would start making profit resumption of old labour laws will hurt their profit.
- b. **Affects democratic credibility** - Attempts to make these changes via the ordinance route and absence of participation of stakeholders erodes democratic credibility of such steps.
- c. **Discourage genuine labor reforms** – Such changes by the state draws criticism from all segments even if they are introduced for 3years with intention of promoting more industries (domestic and foreign) in country. In future also, when any genuine changes will be introduced they will be discouraged in garb of these reforms.

Way Forward – Legitimate attempts to reform labor laws need to be encouraged by the centre. However, any haste to promote economic benefit which has the potential to jeopardize welfare of workers need to be stalled as holistic reforms are the only way forward for all the stakeholders.

Labour Reforms

17. Jammu and Kashmir

Source – [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus – GS 2 - Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Context – Until August 2019, J&K enjoyed a special status (Article 370) under the Constitution, which restricted its jobs, property for natives. This has now changed with new domicile rules.

New Definition of domicile - The central government introduced a new definition of domicile in the union territory through the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization (Adaptation of State Laws) Order, 2020.

The new definition allows all Indian citizens to apply for government jobs in J&K if they fulfill certain conditions.

Certain conditions one should fulfill to qualify as a domicile applicant —

1. Applicants should have resided in J&K for 15 years, or studied in the state for seven years and appeared in either the Class 10 or the Class 12 examination there.
2. Children of central government officers (Army, paramilitary forces, IAS, IPS), and employees of public sector undertakings and banks, central universities etc who have served in Jammu & Kashmir for 10 years will also be eligible to apply for gazette and non-gazette government jobs. These included those who work outside the state.
3. Migrants registered by the Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner need not fulfill the aforementioned requirements and will automatically be eligible for a domicile certificate.

Implications

1. **Change in administrative set-up** - The domicile rule makes all local government jobs available to non-natives, including those in police and administration, which means they will now be able to serve in all such positions. As a result, the immediate implication of this change will most likely be reflected by the administrative set-up, which has so far been dominated by J&K natives.
2. **More divisive politics** - Parties across the political spectrum has criticized these rules which will prepare the ground for more divisive politics and mobilization of local people on lines of hatred against non-natives.
3. **Invite more investment in region** - With non-natives being welcomed in the union territory though these rules, there will be surge in investment in state. This holds truer for Jammu which already has vibrant economy and peaceful environment as compared to Kashmir.
4. **Upsets the local demography** - New domicile rules will pave way for more competition in the state for resources and job and will change the social composition in region. This can prove detrimental to the local youth who then would be easy targets of radicalization for militants.

Way Forward - The new rules pave for better integration of the region with India where people to people ties will enhance the socio-economic aspects of Union Territory.

18. Why suspension of MPLADS is not a good idea?

Source- [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS-2- Government policies and interventions aimed at development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Context: The Union government suspended the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) for two years in order to divert these funds for strengthening the government's effort in tackling the Covid-19 pandemic and its adverse effects.

Members of Parliament Local Area Development (MPLAD) Scheme

- It is central sector scheme.
- Launched in 1993
- **Aim:** to provide funds to MPs to execute certain developmental projects to meet the urgent needs of their constituents.
- **Implementing Agency:** Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

Salient Features of MPLADS

1. **Role of MP:**

- The role of the MP is only recommendatory in nature.
- Elected Members of Rajya Sabha can recommend works in the state from where they have been elected.
- Nominated Members of both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha can recommend works anywhere in the country.

2. **Allocation of Funds:** An MP is entitled to Rs. 5 crore per annum to identify and fund developmental projects.

3. **Release of Funds:** Funds are released in the form of grants in-aid directly to the district authorities in two equal instalments of Rs 2.5 crore each. The funds released under the scheme are non-lapsable.

4. **Works permitted:** Education, Drinking Water, Electricity, Non-conventional Energy Sources, Health and Family Welfare, Sanitation and Public Health, Irrigation, Sports, Animal Care, roads, pathways and bridges.

5. **Implementation of the Work:** Following the recommendation of the MP, the district authority is responsible for sanctioning the eligible works, and implementation of the sanctioned ones

Why suspension of MPLADS is problematic?

- **Undermines the role of MP:** The MPLADS enables the MPs to play a leadership role in the developmental process of his constituency and sort out its day-to-day problems. The suspension has done away with this vital role of MPs
- **Regional Equality:** The pork barrel policy of State and Union Governments often leads to skewed development and regional imbalance with one region getting favored more than others. The MPLADS provide opposition MPs chance to cater to the developmental needs of their constituency. The suspension has taken away this opportunity.
- **Developmental needs of marginalized:** Of the MPLADS corpus, 15% has been earmarked for the development of Scheduled Castes and 7.5% for the Scheduled Tribes. Around ₹20 lakh of the MPLADS fund per annum has been allotted for the welfare of differently abled people. Suspension of MPLADS will hinder the developmental aspirations of the marginalized in the society.
- **Corruption in the scheme is unfounded:** Critics have demanded the scrapping of the scheme citing reasons that remain unfounded. For example, the nature of the scheme leads to corruption cannot be supported by empirical data.

Conclusion: The MPLAD scheme empower the MPs to directly address the issues of his/her constituency. It not only facilitates creation of durable assets but also generates local employment. It is important to restore the scheme at the earliest.

19. Leader or institution – Who is dealing with Pandemic?

Source – [The Hindu](#)

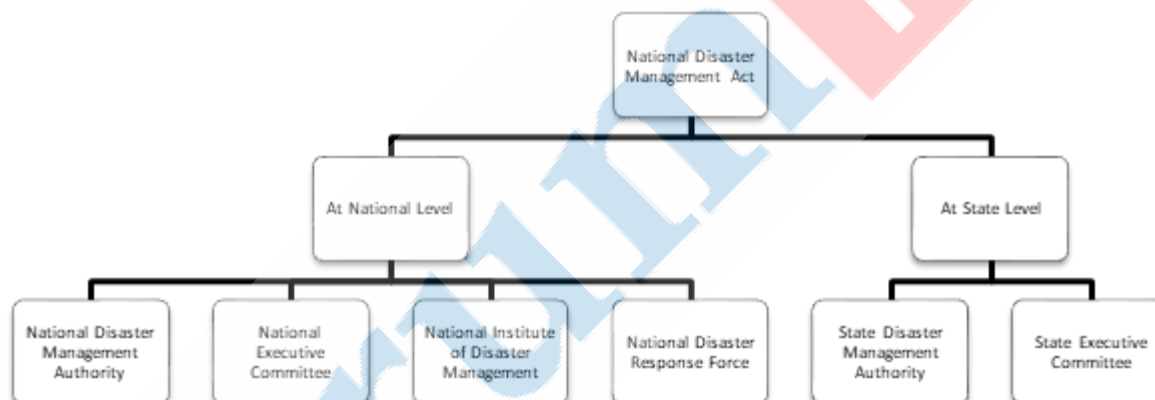
Syllabus – GS 2 - Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Context – For the thinking Indian, the management of the pandemic, is both unsatisfactory and misguided due to lack of National Plan to fight the COVID 19.

Institution versus Individual leader - B.R. Ambedkar said to all who are interested in the maintenance of democracy, not ‘to lay their liberties at the feet of even a great man, or to trust him with power which enable him to subvert their institutions.’

Following are the challenges associated with absence of holistic approach to deal with pandemic:

1. **Failure of Institution building under National Disaster Management Act, 2005 –** Failure of successive governments to empower the institutions to deal with disasters effectively has made concentration of power in hands of individual leaders to lead the fight in pandemic.



2. **Focus on the ad-hoc approach** – Instead of using National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP) to fight COVID, government has relied on thousands of government orders to tackle the pandemic which has brought chaos and confusion in administration as well as public.
3. **National Disaster Response Fund vs PM CARES** – Currently the NDRF is inactive and PM CARES Fund has been set up to receive grants made by persons and institutions out of the NDRF, in violation of Section 46 of the National Disaster Management Act.
 - PM CARES is not even audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India.

Way Forward - André Gide, the French writer, once said, “Everything has been said before, but since nobody listens, we have to keep going back and begin all over again.” Thus, we need the implementation of National Disaster Management Act, 2005 in spirit as well as letter instead of following a leader’s command and ad-hoc mechanisms.

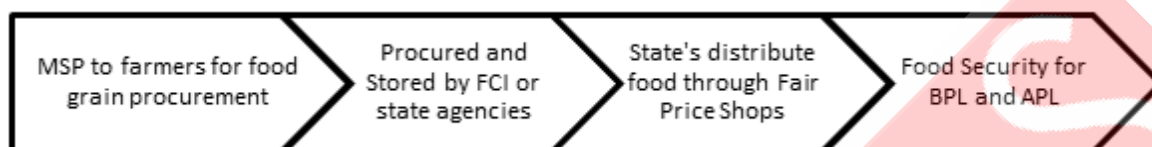
20. Cash or in kind – The Food Security dilemma

Source – [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus – GS 2 - Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation

Context – The current pandemic has reignited the debate – which is better for ensuring food security under National Food Security Act – Cash transfer or in kind (food distribution via PDS).

Current mechanism under Public Distribution System



Arguments for In-Kind distribution of Food via PDS

1. **Farm income ensured** – Since food for distribution under PDS is procured from farmers under Minimum Support Price, in-kind food distribution to citizens ensure assured farm income for farmers.
2. **No transaction cost for individuals** – Government procures, stores and distributes food which makes transaction cost for individual almost negligible. Whereas cash transfer would involve going to bank, getting operational account, then going to market etc which adds to transaction cost of individuals.
3. **Under-developed Rural Market** – Lack of infrastructure, transport and high physical distance between villages and markets creates barriers for rural population deriving benefit from Fair Price Shops.
4. **No inflationary pressure** – In kind distribution does not create inflation in market which is done by cash transfer.
5. **No misuse of cash** – Individual's may always not act in their best interest and getting cash would mean it can be misused by householders given the social situations. Example – In patriarchal society, man exercises more power over women and children in terms of resource use. So it can be used for alcohol or drug abuse rather than getting food.
6. **Food availability in pandemics** – In current lockdown, when markets have remain closed for more than a month, fair prices shops have proved to be a boon in ensuring food availability for vulnerable sections.

Arguments against in-kind food distribution and for cash transfer

1. **PDS has inherent issues** – Corruption, leakage of grain in open market, exclusion-inclusion errors have been pointed out by Shanta Kumar Committee in current PDS system. Thus, transfer will be a permanent solution for such unethical acts.
2. **Cash gives autonomy** – Cash transfers gives more autonomy to individuals who can buy food based on their need and nutritional requirement unlike current regime in which only cereals and coarse grains are provided based on quantity prescribed under NFSA.
3. **Reduced fiscal burden** – Government's fiscal burden has highest share from food subsidy which involves procurement, storage (excessive storage also) and distribution cost. Cash transfers will reduce the fiscal burden which then can be utilized for improving rural markets, strengthening infrastructure and for other capital expenditures.

Way Forward – An evidence based policy is required to solve this dilemma which should focus on making individuals - agency for their own welfare rather than making them dependent on state.

21. Making Data a Public Good

Source: The Hindu

Syllabus: GS-2 Government policies and interventions aimed at development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Context: The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed the unsatisfactory state of India's data collection and processing system.

Importance of Data Sharing:

- **Optimal Use:** Easy access to government data will encourage more extensive use of a valuable public resource for the benefit of the community.
- **Avoiding duplication:** By sharing data the need for separate bodies to collect the same data will be avoided resulting in significant cost savings in data collection.
- **Better Decision making:** Ready access to quality information will help in better decision making, evidence-based policy and better targeting of welfare programmes.
- **Accountability in public services:** Sharing non-sensitive government data with public will ensure accountability in public services.

Government Initiatives for Data Sharing:

1. **National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP):** Launched in 2012, it aims to promote data sharing and enable access to Government of India owned data for national planning, development and awareness.
2. **Open Government Data (OGD) initiative:** launched in 2012, allows citizens to access a range of government data in machine-readable form in one place. The portal allows union ministries and departments to publish datasets, documents, services, tools and applications collected by them for public use.

Issues with Covid-19 data sharing by Indian government:

- The Indian government did not release district-wise, demographic-wise case statistics and anonymous contact traces in the public domain. This hindered reliable model forecasts of disease spread and targeted regional lockdown protocols.
- Further, violating the NDSAP guidelines, OGD portal provides COVID-19 data only as a graphic image unsuitable for any analysis.
- Other government sources such as Indian Council of Medical Research and mygov.in, have also not provided district-wise statistics, and the available data are not in usable formats. Lack of accessible data has obstructed data-driven research, innovation and useful outcomes.

Suggested Reforms:

- The government should share unreleased Census and socio-economic data, publicly funded research data, and scientific data to foster data-driven research and innovation
- While making data a public good, the government must consider the privacy implications and inherent fairness of data being used.

Gathering data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Digitize existing paper-based data•Initiate digital data collection at source
Storing data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Initiate real-time storage for select data•Reduce time lag between collection and data entry
Processing data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Build capacities of govt. bodies to analyse data•Involve private sector in analysis and insight generation
Disseminating data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Create scheme dashboards•Open district-level dashboard to the public•Open data from third party studies to the public

Conclusion: As the Economic Survey 2018-19 suggested, since data of societal interest are generated by the people, it should be “of the people, by the people, for the people”.

Topic 11: Development processes and the development industry —the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders.

22. How to achieve better conditions of work for migrant workers?

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - Development processes and the development industry —the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders

Context: After the lockdown, thousands of migrant workers have returned to their villages. This is an opportunity to provide security to workers and improve their living conditions in rural areas.

Role of cooperative societies to improve conditions of workers:

- **Formation of cooperatives:** Many migrant workers worked as tailors, plumbers, cooks and construction workers in cities. They can form cooperative societies in rural areas.
- **Purpose of these cooperatives:**
- With expansion and forming hubs, they could start developing their services or products that can be sold with better terms and conditions. For example, many tailors can come together in a village and come together to form a cooperative society of tailoring. They could attract contracts from garment manufacturers in their state.
- **Institutional strength:** There are many government agencies and cooperative banks to help such societies.
- **Whose skills or products do not have enough marketing in a local area:** They can re-enter the city as labour cooperatives or unions with demands that they get housing and other support systems that help them have a decent living.
- **Role of NGOs and cooperative federations:** Agencies such as the National Cooperative Union of India and labour unions can intervene as many workers do not have work in the village but they also do not want to move elsewhere.

- **Fair models:** The AMUL project is a model of one kind but there are other lesser-known models which are not as fair in terms of wages and other terms as AMUL but offer solutions. India has examples of putting-out work in several industries. Such as the women are paid poorly with no benefits in some industries. Cooperatives can get the same process done without the middleman.
- **Better shaping MGNREGA:** MGNREGA is being used as a way of alleviating migrant workers' distress. This is a short term and vulnerable wage-earning occupation as sites cannot be opened during the monsoon season. Also, there may not be enough sites to engage many people. Another possibility is to give MGNREGA better shape so that MGNREGA funds can be used to enable women or artisans to market their products.
- **Protecting from exploitation by middlemen:** Successful unionisation of workers can protect them from exploitation. It is possible to have dispersed production to start a supply chain to markets such as local markets or capital city markets or export markets.

State has an opportunity to build new kinds of economic structures in India such as a pyramid of group economic activity going from the rural areas through collective marketing to fill the demand from the cities.

Way Forward

This is an opportunity to rebuild economic production through different institutional arrangements for providing an optimal solution to the workers.

23. Migrant Worker Crisis- What is the Way Forward?

Source: [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS 2-Development processes and the development industry —the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders.

Context: The economic and social distress caused due to the lockdown has led to reverse migration whereby lakhs of migrants have moved back to their villages. The plight of migrant workers has evoked widespread debate in the development discourse in India.

Migration in India -Brief Overview

- According to the Census 2011 migration data, over 45.58 crore Indians were found to be migrants as against 31.45 crore during 2001 Census. UP, Bihar, Rajasthan and MP had the highest 'outmigration'. Maharashtra, Delhi and Gujarat had the largest 'in-migration'.

Challenges faced by migrant workers:

1. **Employment in informal economy:** Migrants dominate the urban informal economy which is marked by high poverty and vulnerabilities. The common issues they face are non-payment of wages, physical abuse, accidents and even death at work. Out of the total labor force of 465 million workers, around 91% (422 million) were informal workers in 2017-18. The Economic Survey (2017) estimated 139 million seasonal or circular migrants.
2. **Issue of Identification documents:** There is no central registry of migrant workers, despite the existence of The Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act of 1979. This has led to lack of access to entitlements and social services

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3. **Housing:** Lack of affordable housing in Indian cities force migrants to live in slums.
4. **Financial Access:** Migrant workers have limited access to formal financial services and remain unbanked
5. **Education of children:** UNESCO's 2019 Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM Report) shows that children left behind by migrating parents and seasonal migrants face fewer educational opportunities overall.
6. **Social exclusion:** There is often hostility of urban governments, as well as citizens, towards the urban poor, especially migrants to the cities.

Recent Steps by Government to alleviate problems faced by migrant workers

- **Affordable rental housing:** The central government, in May 2020, announced to create affordable rental housing for the urban poor and migrants. The scheme will be launched under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY). The existing government housing which lie vacant will be converted into rental units.
- **One Nation One Ration Card:** It would address the problem of ration-card portability and benefit nearly 670 million people and by March 2021.
- **Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code of 2019:** It seeks to merge 13 labour laws, including the Inter-state Migrant Workmen Act, 1979 into a single law. It will promote the welfare of migrant workers and legal protection for their rights.
- **Public Distribution of food:** The Centre has decided to transfer 8 lakh metric tonnes of grain and 50,000 metric tonnes of chana to state governments to provide 5 kg of grain (wheat or rice) per labourer and 1kg of chana per family per month for two months free. This is expected to benefit up to eight crore migrant workers.

Steps to be taken:

- Review national legal, regulatory and institutional concerns in resettlement and rehabilitation of migrant labourers and adopt a humanistic approach to deal with socio-legal issues
- Expand the outreach of the Integrated Child Development Services–Anganwadi (ICDS-AW) and auxiliary nurse midwives (ANMs) to include migrant women and children. Further, migrant children should be included in the annual work plans of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.
- Strengthen the resilience of the financial system and skill workers.
- A comprehensive national strategy that ensures access to entitlements and basic work conditions is necessary to address the plight of migrant workers. Access to legal aid, grievance redressal should be ensured.

24. Promoting People's participation during Covid-19

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS-2- Development processes and the development industry – the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, institutional and other stakeholders.

Context: The government has released the results of population surveys, employing antibody tests in different parts of the country.

Status of Covid-19 cases in India

- Total Confirmed cases: 440K
- Total Recoveries: 248K
- Total Deaths: 14,011

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- In the recent government survey, data presented on 63 of the 83 districts reveal an antibody prevalence of 0.73% in the population. This is far away from the 70% threshold of herd immunity.

Herd Immunity: It is the indirect protection from a contagious infectious disease that happens when a population is immune either through vaccination or immunity developed through previous infection.

Steps to be taken to fight Covid-19 and strengthened community participation

1. A larger part of India remains untouched by the virus and this offer an opportunity to immobilize the virus even as the country moves out of lockdown. It is high time to change track from a government-led but people-disconnected strategy of planning and implementation and promote people's participation.
2. Engage community resources to ensure that different components of response viz. testing and isolation, public awareness and personal protection, are successfully delivered at a greater scale.

Examples:

- Panchayats have played a vital role in local community response in Kerala and Odisha.
- Andhra Pradesh has deployed village and ward volunteers for symptom-based syndromic surveillance of rural and urban households and contact tracing
3. Detect all likely cases, with influenza-like illness and other COVID-19 symptoms, early in their illness and arrange for testing at home by a school-educated community volunteer.
4. National Cadet Corps, member of National Service Scheme should be mobilized for Covid-19 volunteering
5. Volunteers can be trained by experienced NGO trainers for providing special attention and customized service to elderly, people with comorbidities and persons with disabilities.
6. To address shortages in skilled healthcare providers, the government can create a year-long short service commission under the National Health Mission to recruit doctors who have recently graduated and attract private practitioners.
7. Boost up health awareness campaigns through mass media and community leaders and local influencers.
8. Increase efforts for micro-surveillance to curb spread of Covid-19 in hotspots
9. To combat spread of Covid-19 in slum areas, each family in a slum can be daily provided a bucket of soap solution for hand cleansing.

Conclusion: To fight Covid-19, government should be more welcoming of NGO and volunteer participation and create a platform for a new model of PPP: People Partnered Public Health.

Topic 12: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

25. Universal Basic Income- The need of the hour

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS-2- Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and the States and the performance of these schemes

Context: Providing Universal Basic Income amid economic crisis due to Covid-19 pandemic is the need of the hour.

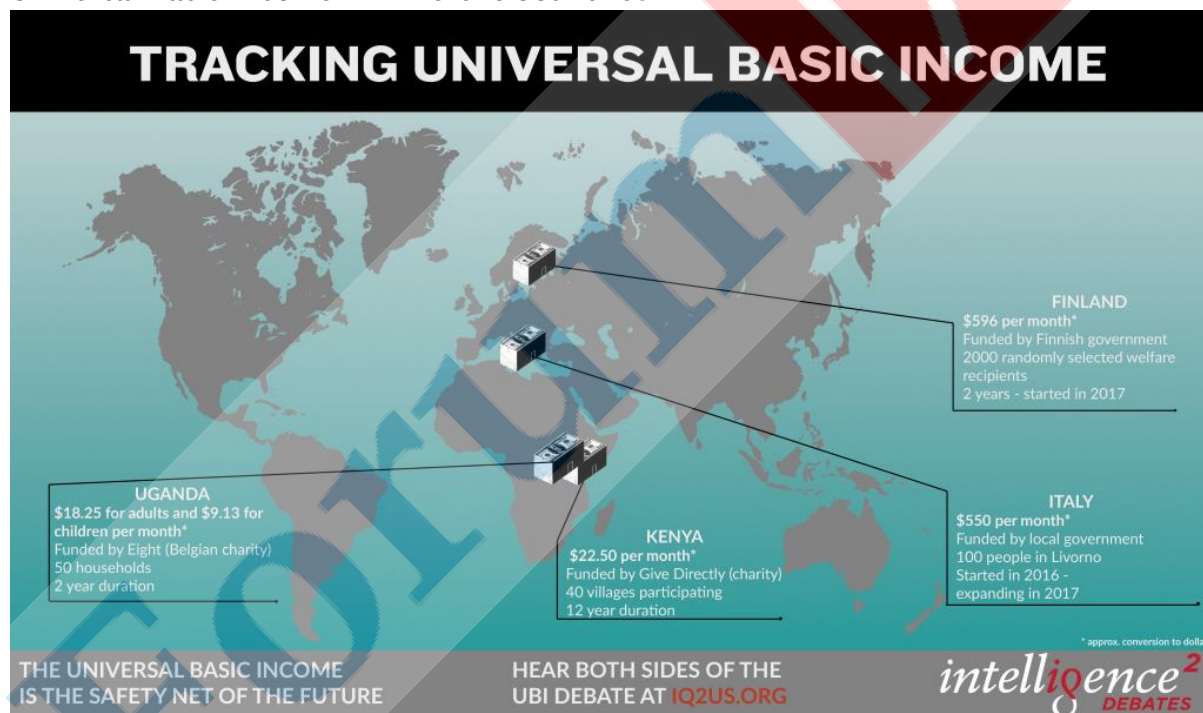
Concept of Universal Basic Income (UBI):

UBI is a minimum income (direct cash transfers) guaranteed by the state to every individual every month. It is premised on the belief that every person should have a right to a basic income to cover their needs, just by virtue of being citizens.

UBI has three underlying principles:

- **Unconditionality:** a fixed amount of cash will be transferred in beneficiary's bank account unconditionally.
- **Universality:** same amount will be transferred, and it will be transferred in accounts of all beneficiaries.
- **Agency:** UBI treats poor as agents, not subjects. Thus, poor can utilize the money in their own customized way to alleviate their condition.

Universal Basic Income in Different Countries



Arguments in favor of Universal Basic Income:

- **Poverty Reduction:** Universal Basic Income would lead to poverty reduction. the 2016–17 Economic survey argued that an annual bank transfer of Rs. 7620 (to everyone except the top 25% of India's income pyramid) would reduce national poverty from 22% to 0.5%.
- **Employment:** UBI will create flexibility in labor markets by allowing for individuals to have partial or calibrated engagements with the labor market without fear of losing benefits.
- **Promotes constitutional ideals:** UBI promotes following ideals:
 - Equality: UBI seeks to reduce poverty thereby it promotes equality among all sections.

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- Liberty: It promotes liberty because it is anti-paternalistic, as it brings flexibility in labor markets.
- Dignity: UBI protects individual's dignity and gives choice to individuals in spending money based on individual circumstances
- **Promotes efficiency in government spending and better targeting:** UBI seeks to replace the existing subsidies given by the government under its social welfare schemes. These schemes are riddled with misallocation, leakages and exclusion of the poor. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) suggested that if subsidies were eliminated, the government could provide all Indians with ₹2,600 (in 2011-12 prices) every month.
- **Insurance against shocks:** Poor households often face shocks such as bad health, crop losses, natural disasters use personal savings to cope from these shocks. UBI provides insurance against these shocks. The Covid-19 pandemic and consequent economic crisis is a classic example of shock which highlights the importance of UBI.

Case Studies

SEWA Project in Delhi, 2011:

As part of a United Nations Development Program–Government of Delhi partnership, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and the state government carried out a randomized controlled trial where a group of 100 households in New Delhi were given 1,000 rupees per month.

The experiment observed an increase in expenditures on nutritious non-cereal items like pulses, fish, eggs, and meat increased.

Arguments against Universal Basic Income:

- **Financially unviable:** Government must provide some basic essential services like education, health etc. in all circumstances and provisioning money for funding UBI, while providing these basic services may not be financially viable. According to Economic Survey 2016-17, even a quasi UBI would cost the Indian government around 4.5% of GDP (2019 prices).
- **Reduces the incentive to work:** A free cash transfer to working individuals would reduce the need and incentive to work as it would take care of their basic needs.
- **Exposure to market risks (cash vs. food):** Unlike food subsidies that are not subject to fluctuating market prices, a cash transfer's purchasing power may severely be curtailed by market fluctuations.
- **Gender Disparity induced by cash:** Men are likely to exercise control over spending of the UBI. This may not always be the case with other in-kind transfers like specific benefits to women, elderly etc. otherwise provided by state through targeted schemes.

Alternatives to Universal Basic Income:

- **Quasi-Basic Income schemes:** Quasi basic income scheme as suggested by Economic Survey (2016-17). This would leave out 25% of the richest population in India.
- **Quasi-universal basic rural income (QUBRI):** It seeks to target only poorer people in the rural areas and does not cover the masses of urban poor working for low and uncertain wages.
- **UBI for women only:** Women are the worst hit almost every aspect of their daily lives – employment opportunities, education, health or financial inclusion. UBI only for women will help in women empowerment and have multiplier effects on the household.

- **Rationalization of subsidies, better targeting and operational efficiency:** In absence of UBI, it is of utmost necessary to successfully implement the social welfare schemes to increase the standard of living of the citizens.

Conclusion: IMF has projected global growth in 2020 to be -3.0% and India's growth at 1.9%. With a looming economic crisis and high rates of unemployment, providing universal basic income, at least till the economy normalizes, is the need of the hour

26. Labour Reforms

Source – [Livemint](#)

Syllabus – GS 2 - Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors

Context – Recently many state governments have brought changes in labour reforms which have been criticised widely

Changes in labour reforms

Since labor is a concurrent subject under the Constitution of India, states can frame their own laws but need the approval of the Centre for making amendments to central laws.

2. **Uttar Pradesh Temporary Exemption from Certain Labour law Ordinance, 2020** – It proposes that all factories and establishments engaged in manufacturing process will be exempt from “the operation of all labour laws for a period of three years”, provided they fulfil certain conditions.

The industry has been exempted from labor laws, except the following:

- Building and other Construction Workers' Act of 1996
- Workmen Compensation Act of 1923
- Bonded Labor (Abolition) System Act of 1976

3. **Gujarat ordinance** - In Gujarat, the new industrial establishments are exempted from all labor laws except the following:

- Minimum Wages Act
- Industrial Safety Rules
- Employees' Compensation Act
- Ordinance to roll out benefits that would be available for 1,200 days
- 100 per cent online approvals within 15 days

Challenges associated with these changes

- b. **Three year sunset clause** - These lax labour rules have a three-year sunset clause which is likely to deter serious investors as after three years when they would start making profit resumption of old labour laws will hurt their profit.
- c. **Affects democratic credibility** - Attempts to make these changes via the ordinance route and absence of participation of stakeholders erodes democratic credibility of such steps.
- d. **Discourage genuine labor reforms** – Such changes by the state draws criticism from all segments even if they are introduced for 3years with intention of promoting more industries (domestic and foreign) in country. In future also, when any genuine changes will be introduced they will be discouraged in garb of these reforms.

Way Forward – Legitimate attempts to reform labor laws need to be encouraged by the centre. However, any haste to promote economic benefit which has the potential to jeopardize welfare of workers need to be stalled as holistic reforms are the only way forward for all the stakeholders.

27. Maternal health crises in Pandemic

Source – [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus – GS 2 - Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes.

Context – The lockdown period saw the state abdicating its responsibilities towards the welfare of pregnant women who were deprived of the basic maternal healthcare services.

1. **India's Maternal Mortality Ratio** – The Maternal Mortality Ratio is a key performance indicator for efforts to improve the health and safety of mothers before, during, and after childbirth per country worldwide. It came down to 122 deaths per 1,00,000 live births from 167 per 1,00,000 births in 2011-13.
2. Much effort and investment over many years have led to this decrease. The **schemes and policies to reduce Maternal Mortality Ratio**:
 - a. **Janani Suraksha Yojana** - It aims to reduce maternal mortality among pregnant women and infant mortality by encouraging women to deliver in an institutionalized set-up such as hospitals.
 - b. **The Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA)**- It provides fixed-day assured, comprehensive and quality antenatal care universally to all pregnant women on the ninth of every month.
3. As India struggles to manage the COVID-19 pandemic, the hard-won gains of the last 15 years can be erased with one stroke. The **challenges** associated with ensuring maternal health in the crises are:
 - a. **The Stigma and paranoia regarding the virus and its fallout upon pregnant women and infants** – This has led to hospitals turning away pregnant women from their premises and thus depriving them of healthcare services they need.
 - For instance -There was the 20-year-old in Telangana with anaemia and high blood pressure, who died after being turned away by six hospitals.
 - b. **Complex guidelines of government** - The government belatedly issued a set of guidelines a month after lockdown started which only compounded the confusion. Recent guidelines require Pregnant women to be tested and certified COVID-19-negative to enter a 'general hospital'. It was not clear how this can happen once they are in labour, as the test results need a day's turnaround at the very least.
 - c. **Overstretched and under-resourced healthcare system** – Public healthcare is overloaded with COVID cases in cities which make such women to seek services in private sector, which makes maternal services expensive.
 - d. **Role of Private Sector** - 80% doctors and 64% beds are in the private sector. The clinics have closed down and private hospitals have stepped back fearing infections, while larger hospitals have begun charging exorbitant amounts. The role of the private sector therefore needs to be scrutinised.

Way Forward – United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal 3 is aimed at "Good health and well-being" for all which involves reducing the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100 000 live births by 2030. State, thus, need to fulfil its duty of protecting the vulnerable, in this case pregnant women, from any challenge in coming months by initiating public-private partnership in maternal healthcare.

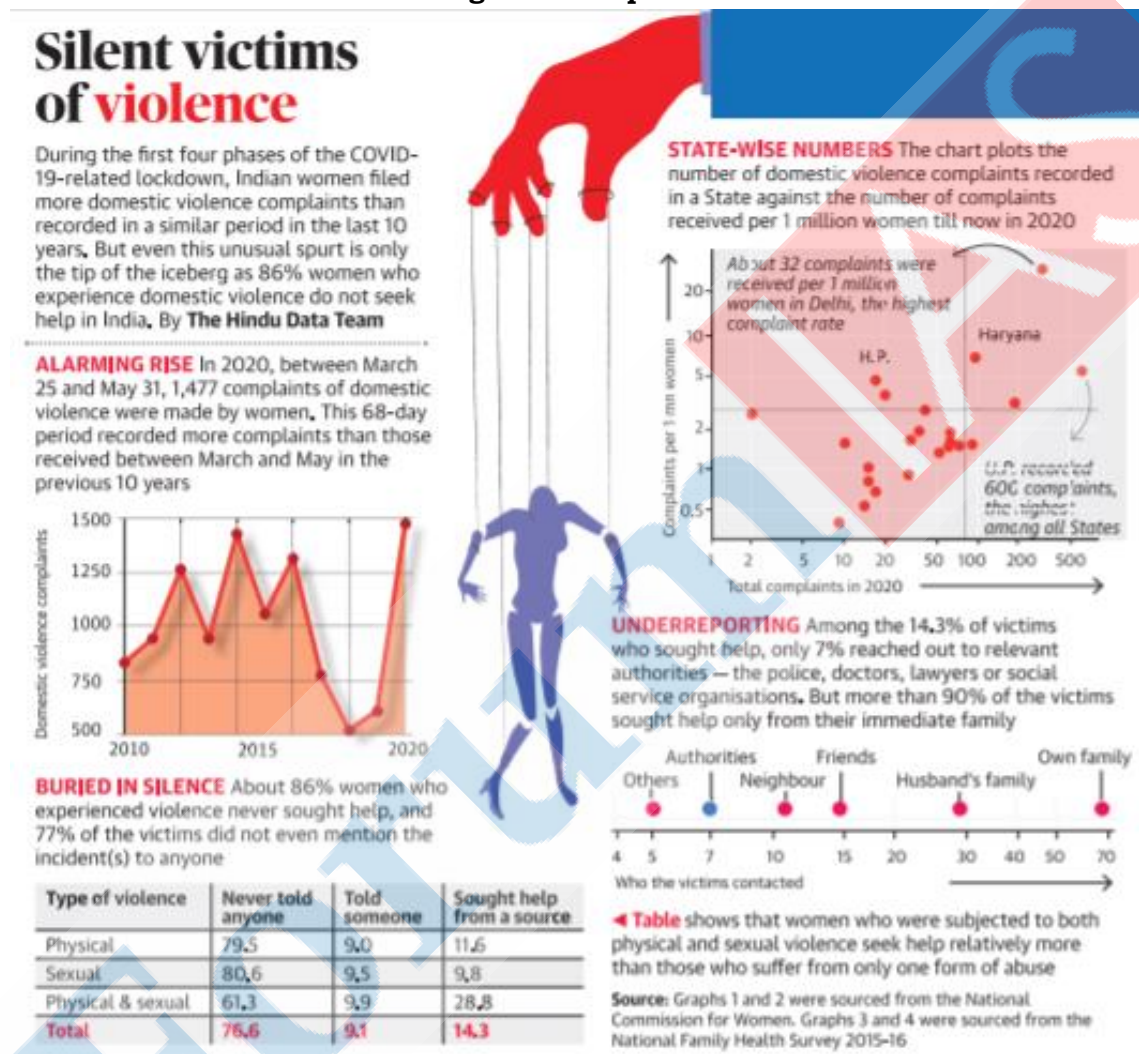
28. Fighting a double pandemic: On Rising Domestic Violence Cases

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and the States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Context: In response to the exponential increase in domestic violence cases during Covid-19 pandemic, the Commonwealth Secretariat is working alongside partner organizations on measures which will help its 54 member countries to combat the menace.

Domestic Violence in India during Covid-19 pandemic



Reasons for Increased domestic violence during the pandemic lockdown

The issue of domestic violence is rooted in the very nature of the patriarchal society. Often referred to as “intimate terrorism”, domestic violence is an expression the very desire to gain and maintain power and control over women.

The major reasons for increasing domestic violence during Covid-19 lockdown are as follows:

- Tension and strain created by security, health, and financial worries
- Confinement and lack of access to alcohol leading to interpersonal violence and abuse.
- Domestic labor becomes taxing during a lockdown if not distributed equally. The woman is expected to bear the load and violence increase if she fails to do so.

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- Lack of institutional support, inability to complain during lockdown aggravates the problem.

Women in Crisis Situations

- In West Africa, 60% of total deaths in the 2014 Ebola virus outbreak were women.
- Following the Canterbury earthquake in New Zealand, there was a 53% rise in domestic violence.

Steps taken to address rising domestic violence during lockdown

- NCW launched a WhatsApp number – 7217735372 to report domestic violence during lockdown
- ‘Suppress Corona, not your voice’: It is an initiative launched by Uttar Pradesh government. Under the initiative, a female police officer visits house to register the complaint and warn the perpetrator.
- Kerala government announced a WhatsApp number – 9400080292 to report domestic violence during the lockdown.
- “Red dot” initiative by non-profit WEFT (Women’s Entrepreneurs for Transformation): Under this, domestic violence victims are asked to draw a red dot on their palm to seek help and alert their neighbors and authorities.

Suggested Measures:

- Urgent action to ensure that during this COVID-19 pandemic, victims of abuse can access the health care they need, including mental health services.
- Psychosocial support and online counselling should be boosted using technology-based solutions.
- Provide emergency transportation to women seeking refuge from domestic violence
- Ensure access to police assistance, and justice services.
- Initiate campaigns to raise awareness and enhance support system
- Media outreach to alert to the facts and the dangers of domestic violence and encouraging positive steps like sharing care responsibilities at home
- To ensure financial independence, post COVID-19 strategies should include dedicated funding and support for micro, small and medium sized businesses and the informal sector, which are predominantly led by women.

Conclusion: The Commonwealth has decided to hold a virtual follow-up session to the Women Affairs Ministerial Meeting that was held in September 2019, to set out an action plan to support women and girls during the COVID-19 crisis and also extend its support to the planned UN Declaration on Women and COVID-19

29. Importance of Transparency during a crisis

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2- Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Context: The information about PM CARES Fund was denied under the Right to Information applications.

PM CARES Fund:

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- It is a public charitable trust for a dedicated national fund with the primary objective of providing relief to the affected with any kind of emergency or distress situation like posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are reports which suggest that donations of over \$1 billion have been made including contributions from foreign sources.

Lack of transparency in PM CARES:

- No information exists on the official website of the Fund about the amount collected, names of donors, expenditure incurred or details of beneficiaries.
- The trust deed of the fund chaired by the Prime Minister is not available for public scrutiny.

This violation of peoples' RTI is particularly concerning given the unprecedented crisis gripping the nation.

Why is Access to information crucial?

For obtaining benefits of the government scheme:

- Millions have lost their income earning opportunities during the lockdown. The relevant information is crucial for the poor affected by the public health emergency to take benefits from the welfare programmes.

Affect the role of citizens:

- Citizen's participation is important in democracy for ensuring their access to their rights. People's ability to perform their role reduces due to lack of information.

For proper implementation of laws:

- It is important for the right information about the relief measures to be circulated among public for ensuring accountability.
- For example- the central and state governments have put in schemes to provide subsidized rations for ensuring food security. Without information, it is impossible for intended beneficiaries to get their due like ration shopkeepers siphon food grains and keep their shops closed on the pretext that they have no stocks.

To prevent controversies:

- For example- numerous instances have been reported of COVID-19-positive patients requiring treatment in ICU being shunted from one hospital to another. This could be prevented if hospitals and health centres publicly provide real-time information about availability of beds and other facilities.

Functioning of watchdogs during COVID-19:

- Though, it is reasonable to expect delays in processing information requests during COVID-19 but public authorities must not be allowed to interpret the crisis as a justification for not complying with the RTI Act.
- An assessment of the functioning of the transparency watchdogs revealed that 21 out of 29 commissions in the country did not hold a single hearing during the first three stages of the lockdown.
- Most commissions did not make provision for hearing even urgent matters.

Way Forward

It is critical to create a culture of openness to empower people to participate meaningfully in the decisions that have profound effects on their lives and livelihoods for which strong RTI is required.

Topic 13: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

30. The Private Sector in India's Healthcare System

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS-2- Health

Context: The recent news of private hospitals levying fees in excess when COVID-19 patients went to them for care, highlights the need to regulate private healthcare in India.

Contribution of Private Sector in India's Healthcare:

- The private sector provides approximately 70% of the healthcare services in India.
- Private sector's share in hospitals and hospital beds is estimated at 74% and 40%, respectively.

Reasons for dominance of Private healthcare in India:

1. Lack of adequate public health care: This has two dimensions:

- Inadequate human resource:
 - India has a doctor-to-population ratio of 1:1,445. World health Organization recommends a ratio of 1:1000
 - There is uneven distribution of health workers in private and public health sector with more than 80% of doctors and 70% of nurses and midwives being employed in the private sector.
- Quality of Public Health services: hospital beds and specialized facilities are less by the public sector and middle class often resort to private hospitals for health services.

2. Lack of adequate investment in public health: India spends only 1.3% of its gross domestic product (GDP), compared to 3% in China and 8.3% in the United States.

Issue with dominance of Private Healthcare in India

1. High Cost and Access:

- Private healthcare often charge high and are not affordable by large portion of India's population.
- Further, the dominance and dependence on private healthcare leads to high out-of-pocket expenditure on health. WHO's health financing profile for 2017 shows that 67.78% of total health expenditure in India was out of pocket while the world average is just 18.2%

2. Malpractices: Private players in healthcare often engage in malpractices by selling substandard and counterfeit medicines, prescribing unnecessary drugs and tests, requiring unnecessary hospital admissions and manipulating the length of stay.

What needs to be done?

- **Increase in Healthcare spending:** The National Health Policy 2017 proposes raising public health expenditure to 2.5% of the GDP in a time bound manner. Health-care spending by the government must be appropriate, based on evidence, and transparent and accountable.
- **Health workers:** The government should ensure proper training of doctors and health-care workers. Recent reforms in the selection of medical students need to be evaluated to see if they yield desired result.
- **Regulating Private Sector:** Private hospitals and institutions should be regulated. Costing and auditing of care and procedures need to be done by independent bodies.

31. Problems with Online higher education

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS-2- Education

Context: The University Grants Commission had issued a circular to universities encouraging them to adopt massive open online courses (MOOCs) offered on its SWAYAM platform for credit transfers in the coming semesters.

SWAYAM

- Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM) is an integrated platform for offering online courses, covering school (9th to 12th) to Postgraduate Level.
- The objective of the platform is to bridge the digital divide for students and make best teaching learning resources available to all.
- It is considered an instrument to achieve India's target Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education, envisioned to be 30% by 2021.
- The portal has been developed by Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and NPTEL, IIT Madras with the help of Google Inc. and Persistent Systems Ltd.

Issues with Imparting higher education through SWAYAM Portal

1. **Dumping of knowledge:** MOOC-based e-learning platforms like SWAYAM tend to reinforce a top-down teacher-to-student directionality of learning. In such a scenario, the teacher creates study materials and then the knowledge is dumped on students.
2. **Exclusion of many courses:** The SWAYAM platform have left out courses in engineering, medicine, dental, pharmacy, nursing, architecture, agriculture, and physiotherapy on the grounds that they involve laboratory and practical work.
3. **Limited social interaction:** A major issue with online education is limited social interaction. This hinders development of social skills.
4. **Lack of personal contact:** A major criticism of MOOC platforms is that there is no personal contact and there cannot be a proper classroom discussion, debates and counterarguments.
5. **Poor Digital Infrastructure:** Many students, especially in rural areas do not have access to laptops, desktops and internet connection. Further, the digital infrastructure is poor in most parts of the country, with lack of high-speed internet and stable power supply.

Way Forward: The Covid-19 lockdown has led to many higher educational institutions opting for online classes. However, in India, where digital infrastructure is inadequate, online education has a long way to go. Further, MOOC platforms can help us during lockdowns but is no permanent replacement for classroom teaching.

32. Public- Private Partnership In Healthcare

Source - [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus – GS 2 - Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Context – In handling the pandemic, there is a clear need to get the public and private sectors into a functioning partnership.

Current Status of Private Sector in tackling Pandemic

- **Lack of policy** - No clear policy guidelines to use private sector resources that could complement public sector efforts, and how the payments for their services made.

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Reasons for their non-participation

1. **Employee reluctance** – This is due to pay cuts, the fear of sealing, the future consequences to brand value of hospitals identified with the pandemic, the lack of established protocols and protective gear.
2. **Bureaucratic hurdles** – Example in Telangana, administration instructed private sector hospitals to refer viral patients to government facilities
3. **Cost of treatment** – The high cost of treatment (includes testing kits, hospitalisation and quarantine care) reduces demand of private healthcare. This also affects their business viability.
4. **Nationwide lockdown** – This has led to falling revenues and footfalls, accompanied by new expenses and risk.

Contribution of Private Sector:

- The private sector provides approximately 70% of the healthcare services in India.
- Private sector's share in hospitals and hospital beds is estimated at 74% and 40%, respectively.

Reasons for public-private participation in tackling COVID –

1. **Removing stigma** – Because of the labelling and stigmatisation of those diagnosed with COVID-19, the public are reluctant to come to hospital and may come late or die at home. The public needs to be ensured that hospitals will provide good quality care for COVID-19, at affordable cost and ensuring confidentiality.
2. **Burden on public healthcare system** – Private enterprise owns almost three out of every four hospital beds in India, and almost eight out of 10 ventilators, but they are handling less than 10 per cent of those critically ill with virus, thus all burden falls on public health institutions. To ease the burden on fellow doctors and paramedics, they need to join the battle.

Steps to ensure for public-private participation in tackling COVID –

1. **Incentivise participation** – All private hospitals which have the potential should take care of COVID-19. They should be given requisite incentives and subsidies to that end.
2. **Access to all patients** – Every patient should be able to access medical care for COVID-19 from a private or public hospital and only patients with moderate to severe COVID-19 pneumonia should be admitted.
3. **Focussing on less -critical cases** – ICU care should be prioritised for COVID-19 patients who have potentially reversible illness. Also city hospitals should pool their ICU resources for the care of COVID-19 pneumonia.
4. **Ensuring privacy** – The confidentiality of the patient should be protected by adequate law.
5. **Affordability of services** – The government should support the basic cost of COVID-19 care in private hospitals as well.
6. **Taking care of the warriors** – The staff providing COVID-19 care, should receive adequate training and be provided appropriate PPE, and families of staff who die due to COVID-19 should receive appropriate compensation.

Way Forward - Since 1991, LPG reforms government has helped private sector to grow in India. Thus, in the times like coronavirus pandemic private sector needs to adopt policy of compassionate capitalism to serve the citizens and lend helping hand to government.

33. Nurses refusing to offer services in Covid crises

Source – [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus – GS 2 - Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources

Context – Nurses abandoning their posts are contributing to the health crisis, but they must be treated with compassion by the state.

Nurses are refusing to offer their services because of the following reasons:

- a. Shortage of PPE kits** - Personal protection equipment has been in chronically short supply, especially in Delhi and has put the lives of both doctors and nurses at risk.
- b. Long shifts** - Shifts are punishingly long, nurses in PPEs cannot take breaks even to go to the toilet.
- c. Lockdown effect** - Many nurses who were not able to go to work when public transport was suspended had their pay docked.
- d. Lack of family support** - Nurses living alone in Delhi are themselves insecure because they do not have social security or family networks that they can fall back on in hard times.
- e. Care for own family** - Those who have family in the capital are concerned because they are generally not able to quarantine themselves in the workplace and could carry the infection home.
- f. No support of Resident Welfare Associations** – Many RWA's are turning away doctors as well as nurses living in such colonies and working to battle the covid because of fear of spread in their colonies. This discriminatory practice is affecting the morale of nurses and their families.

Consequences of nurses refusing to work:

- a. Burdened Doctors** - Burden of COVID patients on healthcare system, especially doctors will rise manifold.
- b. Lack of care service** - It might deprive the patients of all the urgent services they need to recover soon.

Suggested solutions to retain the warriors-

- a. Hardship allowance** - To offset the multiple risks that they are facing, some nurses are demanding better financial terms, on the lines of the "hardship allowance" which is commonly offered to servicemen at difficult postings.
- b. Supply of PPE kits** – The safety gears need to be made available as per demand for physical safety of nurses as well as their family members.
- c. Rationalizing working hours** – The long shifts need to be transformed based on rotational duty of few hours, so that nurses can get adequate rest for their own health.

Way Forward – In private hospitals, state should commit to provide complete care of nurses from allowances to safety gears as it has commandeered their facilities because of the failure of its own health system.

34. Wake up call to Mental Health issues

Source: [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources

Context: The actor Sushant Singh Rajput was found dead in his home due to suicide.

There is now an open and thoughtful manner with which the mental health subject is being discussed. It is crucial to understand the nature of mental health distress and what we must do to address it in these troubled times of COVID-19.

The Mental health consequences of the pandemic:

- **“Pandemic of fear”:**
- **Profound uncertainties:** They have overwhelmed all our lives such as from our personal risk to be infected to why the country is facing a surging epidemic despite the most stringent lockdown in the world or when life will return to a normal or to what our economic prospects might look like.
- **Widespread Mental Health issues:** This may be due to general causes such as experiences of anxiety, fearfulness, sleep problems, irritability and hopelessness.
- **“Deaths of despair”:**
- This term was coined by the Nobel prize winning economist, Angus Deaton. This has been documented as the reason for the reduction in the life expectancy of working-age Americans following the economic recession in 2008.
- **Reasons of deaths:** They were driven by growing inequality, the weakening position of labour, deep polarisation of society and the lack of prospects for the future.
- **Economic recession in India:** India also faces some of these problems of American society. Also, it has to face large numbers of people who are absolutely impoverished.

Before the pandemic, the mental health problems were already a major contributor to the burden of illness in India with a third of all female and a quarter of all male suicide deaths in the world occurring in this country. But most of this illness and death goes unnoticed.

Lack of importance to mental health problem:

- Celebrity suicides attract our attention to the issue because it is the only explanation we can invoke for people who are so privileged.
- **Greatest burden of mental health problems:** This is on the poor, dispossessed and marginalised but we have historically dismissed their suffering as a natural extension of their social and economic conditions.

There have been many initiatives to address the rising tide of mental health problems.

Solutions to mental health:

- **Telemedicine platforms:** They have the feasibility of remote delivery and the value of psychological therapies. They rely heavily on mental health specialist providers who are very scarce in number and often unaffordable.
- **Deployment of community health workers with appropriate training:** It effectively delivers psychosocial interventions for conditions ranging from autism and depression to drinking problems and psychoses.

Though there is no one-size-fits-all prescription for experiences which are intimately intertwined with our unique and personal life stories.

Some general principles to manage health:

- **Awareness:** We should be aware and acknowledge our mental health just like our physical health. For example- Feeling irritable for no reason is as important as chest pain.
- **Speaking your problem:** Creating a cordial environment for the patients to share their stories can be effective strategy to reduce stigma.
- **Do something for others:** Science has shown that care-giving and community service makes our life more rewarding and longer.

- **Reminding oneself that all are suffering with the same problem:** Though some of us may be in a better position but at last mostly will pass through these tough times.
- **Seeking help from a professional:** If our distress is persistent and not allowed to do things.

Way Forward

Mental health care must embrace the diversity of experiences and strategies which work well beyond the narrow confines of traditional biomedicine with its emphasis on “doctors, diagnoses and drugs”.

35. Transforming Indian Education System

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS-2- Education

Context: The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted how people, places and non-human entities and processes are connected and this should be reflected in the education system also.

Issues with Indian Education system

Problems with current school education system

- **Access to Education:** The RTE Act provides for free and compulsory education to all children from the age of six to 14 years. Despite advances in expanding access to education, participation rates are still not universal, particularly in rural regions and among lower castes and other disadvantaged groups
- **Rote learning:** The Kasturi Ranjan committee observed that the current education system solely focuses on rote learning of facts and procedures. According to Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), 2018, only 16% of children in Class 1 in rural areas can read the text at the prescribed level, while almost 40% cannot even recognize letters.
- **Incoherence in curriculum:** the school curriculum in India remain incoherent and does not focus on interconnectedness of the natural world with our everyday lives. This hampers the learning process of students.
- **Marks based evaluation system:** Marks play the most important role in deciding the future of children and this often comes down upon students as a burdening factor and often leads to students underperforming.
- **Quality of Teachers:** The school education system faces issues of low teacher to student ratio and quality of teachers. Teachers are often unequipped with modern pedagogical methods of teaching.

Problems with current higher education system:

- **Access:** According to the All India Survey on Higher Education, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education in India is 25.8% in 2017-18. The Kasturi Ranjan Committee identified lack of access as a major reason behind low intake in higher education. It is much behind that of USA (85.8%) and China (43.39%)
- **Poor investment in research and innovation:** According to Economic Survey 2017-18, only 0.6-0.7% of GDP has been spent on research in India in the last two decades. This is very low as compared to 2.4% of USA, China-2.1%, Japan-3.58% and South Korea-4.29%
- **Curriculum and Employability:** The curriculum remains outdated, theoretical in nature with low scope for creativity. There is a gap between industry requirements

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and curriculum leading to low employability of graduates. The government noted in 2017 that 60% of engineering graduates remain unemployed, while a 2013 study of 60,000 university graduates in different disciplines found that 47% of them were unemployable in any skilled occupation.

Government Initiatives:

School Education:

- **Samagra Shiksha:** A comprehensive program subsuming Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rastriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE).
- **UDISE+ :** It is an updated online real time version of UDISE (Unified District Information on School Education)
- **70-point Performance Grading Index (PGI)** to assess areas of deficiency in each state's school education system so that targeted interventions can be made at every level from pedagogy to teacher training.
- **ICT driven initiatives:** Shaala Sidhi (to enable all schools to self-evaluate their performance), e-Pathshala (providing digital resources such as textbooks, audio, video, periodicals etc.) and Saransh (an initiative of CBSE for schools to conduct self-review exercises).

Higher Education:

- **Revitalizing Infrastructure and Systems in Education (RISE):** It aims to increase investments in research and related infrastructure in premier educational institutions.
- **IMPRINT India:** It is a joint initiative of IITs and IISc to address major and science and technology challenges in India.
- **Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM):** E-education platform
- **Ucchatar Aavishkar Abhiyaan:** To promote industry-specific need-based research
- **Institution of Eminence:** It aims to develop 20 world-class teaching and research institutions

Suggested Reforms:

Curriculum:

- School education curriculum should focus on interconnectedness of the natural world with everyday lives in order to equip students with rising environmental challenges including climate change.
- The higher education curriculum should focus on industrial demands and skill development to increase the employability of Indian graduates.

Learning: Schools and colleges should introduce conceptual learning rather than focusing on rote learning.

Evaluation system: The focus of evaluation should be classroom participation by a student, projects, communication and leadership skills and extra-curricular activities.

Teacher's Training: The recommendations of National educational Policy 2019 should be followed-

- The practice of 'para-teachers' (unqualified, contract teachers) should be stopped across the country by 2022.
- All teachers should be able to move into either educational administration or teacher education after a minimum number of years of teaching experience.

- Merit-based scholarships to be instituted to undertake the four-year integrated B.Ed. program

Investment in research and innovation: A National Research Foundation (NRF) should be set up as an autonomous body of the Government of India to boost investment in research and innovation.

36. Online education – New shift in post corona India

Source – [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus –GS 2 - Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources

Context – To ensure that students do not miss out on their studies in lockdown and afterwards, educational institutions moved classes online, making students to attend lectures via their gadgets.

Online education is a boon in pandemic when social distancing is the new norm and schools, colleges will remain closed for a long time. However, it has many drawbacks as well which has led to the debate of its efficiency and usefulness.

Disadvantages of Online learning

1. **Online student feedback is limited** - In traditional classrooms, teachers can give students immediate face-to-face feedback. Students who are experiencing problems in the curriculum can resolve them quickly and directly either during the lecture or during the dedicated office hours.
2. **Social Isolation and lack of communication skills development**- The E-Learning methods currently practiced in education tend to make participating students undergo contemplation, remoteness and a lack of interaction. As a result, many of the students and teachers who inevitably spend much of their time online can start experiencing signs of social isolation, due to the lack of human communication in their lives.
3. **Self-motivation and time management skills** - Lack of self-motivation among students continues to be one of the primary reasons why students fail to complete online courses.
4. **Cheating prevention during online assessments is complicated** - Compared to on-campus students, online students can cheat on assessments more easily as they take assessments in their own environment and while using their personal computer. This affects their learning and overall development.
5. **Not suitable for all courses** - Courses that traditionally need a laboratory or practical component are an obvious example where online classes cannot offer an alternative.
6. **Digital Divide** - The adoption or integration of technology in education also depends on the specific institution and its location: there is a huge digital divide in the country in terms of bandwidth and reliable connectivity, as well as very unequal access to funding.
7. **Hinders Research and Development** - Beyond classroom lectures and courses, there has been a serious impact on academic research in all disciplines. There is need for close personal interaction and discussion in research supervision, and it is not clear when and how doctoral research and supervision can resume.

Suggested solutions

Integration of Artificial Intelligence – Digital tools such as artificial intelligence (AI) can be adapted to deliver personalized instruction based on the learning needs for each student. The use of AI can improve learning outcomes; in particular, this can be a boon for teaching students who are differently-abled.

1. **Decentralization in education** - Pedagogic material must be made available in our other national languages; this will extend access, and can help overcome staff shortages that plague remote institutions. The state will have to bear much of the responsibility, both to improve digital infrastructure and to ensure that every needy student has access to a laptop or smart phone

Way Forward – Online education being an emergent domain to develop human resources requires policy guidelines for all stakeholders including schools, colleges, non-profit organizations, parents and children which can facilitate tele-education for all by 2030.

37. STARS project – Improving quality and governance of school education

Source – [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus – GS 2- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources

Context – Instead of building state capability, the World Bank education project gives a larger role to non-state actors.

Objective of STARS

1. **Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States Program (STARS)** aims to improve the quality and governance of school education in six Indian states.
2. It will also help –
 - Improve learning assessment systems;
 - Strengthen classroom instruction and remediation;
 - Facilitate school-to-work transition; and
 - Strengthen governance and decentralized management.
3. **Funding** - World Bank's contribution to the project is only 15%, with central and state governments contributing the remaining 85%. World bank is contributing \$3 billion towards this goal.

Flawed Approach under STARS

1. **Capacity issues** - Major vacancies across the education system from District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), district and block education offices, to teachers in schools, remain unaddressed.
2. **Empowering with decision making power** - Decentralising decision-making requires the devolution of funds and real decision-making power to functionaries. Greater decentralisation can allow accountability to flow to the people.
3. **Including non-state players** - Outsourcing basic governance functions by “expanding private initiatives” and “reducing government tasks” will not make education “more relevant to local needs” rather will shift problems to a new entity.

Solutions for effective governance

1. **Adequate physical, financial and human resources** - An overburdened bureaucracy with vacancies and without basic equipment cannot be expected to be effective. A critical minimum level of resources is a precondition. For better functioning of systems.

- 2. Decentralization of decision-making** - Administrative or governance reforms must give greater discretion to the front-line bureaucracy to address local issues and innovate if required. For reforms to be successful, public sector entities need to be able to try new things, and at times, to fail.
- 3. Trust factor** - There needs to be trust within the administration among peers and across different levels within the administration. If suspicion is the guiding principle, institutional arrangements will be geared to monitoring and surveillance, not support and improvement. The goal must be to improve, not to judge and punish.

Way Forward - Atmanirbhar Bharat calls for an India that is able to produce and deliver local goods and services to its citizens. This applies equally to education for all children. Delivering a service, like education, requires a capable state which is able to design and conduct reforms when needed.

Topic 16: Role of civil services in a democracy.

38. Public trust in police increases over the years

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS-2- Role of civil services in a democracy

Context: IANS-C voter tracking survey showed, public trust in the police has increased from around 30% to almost 70% between 2018 and 2020.

Role of Police during Covid-19 pandemic:

The Indian police has played a multifaceted role during the Covid-19 lockdown which has increased public trust on the institution. The functions played by police during Covid-19 lockdown are as follows:

- guarding containment zones,
- monitoring thousands of home quarantines,
- door-to-door help to elderly and isolated,
- distribute food to women's shelters,
- ferry medication and essential commodities to remote tribal communities,
- assist stranded workers or facilitate their safe passage home.
- Launch helplines and conduct awareness programs

Police and Public trust issues:

- **Police misconduct:** The lack of effective accountability mechanisms and periodic review of performance has misplaced the public's confidence in the police.
- **Lack of proper justice:** Due to corruption in the police system and poor criminal investigation process, people tend to lose trust on police system.
- **Police Brutality:** In the recent years, there have instances of police brutality. For example, Faizan case during the Delhi riots, 2020.

Other issues in the Police system:

- **Archaic Police Act:** Police is an exclusive subject under the State List (List II, Schedule 7 of the Indian Constitution). Most of the states follow the archaic Indian Police Act 1861 with a few alterations.
- **Low police-to-population ratio:** The global average ratio of police-population is 270 to 100,000, where it's 120 in India. The police system is thus highly understaffed and overburdened.

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- **Modernization:** The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) in its report “Compendium on Performance Audit Reviews on Modernisation of Police Force” highlighted that the police force continues to depend on outdated and unserviceable weapons.

Supreme Court directions in Prakash Singh vs Union of India 2006

The Supreme Court had put forward a slew of recommendations as follows:

- Constitute a State Security Commission in every state to lay down policy for police functioning, evaluate police performance, and ensure that state governments do not excessively influence on the police.
- Constitute a Police Establishment Board in every state to decide postings, transfers and promotions of officers below rank of DSP.
- Constitute Police Complaints Authorities to inquire allegations of police misconduct
- minimum tenure of at least two years for the DGP
- Separate the investigating police from the law and order police

Way Forward: The challenges faced by the police system requires immediate attention from the government and reforms should be initiated at the earliest. The concept of Strict and Sensitive, Modern and Mobile, Alert and Accountable, Reliable and Responsive; Techno-savvy and Trained (SMART) policing introduced in 2014 is a step-in right direction.

39. The use of arbitrary power by State

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures.

Context: The accusation that state has used arbitrary power which has corroded our democratic structure.

Background: Bail was denied to a pregnant student-activist who was arrested for creating disorder on an ‘unprecedented scale’ when she actively participated in a protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019. There are questions on Whether the offence committed by a pregnant student-activist so grave that bail could not be granted until June 23 on her 4th attempt?

The arbitrary use of power is deeply troublesome especially when this is exercised by the government.

The negative aspect of arbitrariness of laws:

- **Loss of freedom:**
- Individuals, communities or citizens cannot function freely without a stable set of expectations. Frequent arbitrariness in the political domain leads to exploitation. It compresses upon the basic freedoms and blocks freedom.
- Laws enable significant freedoms and stabilize expectations. Laws enable our actions to become broadly predictable.
- **For example-** A person knows that he is legally restricted to drive only on the left. He will drive with greater freedom as he knows that chance of headlong collision is very sparse.
- **The arbitrariness puts someone at mercy of someone else:**

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- The person in a powerful position can do much greater harm to the people which is unjust.
- **For example-** In the traffic example, suppose that two vehicles stop at the traffic light but just beyond the zebra crossing. The policeman issues a challan to one but not the other. Infact he seizes the driving license of a careful driver, who has stopped a good meter behind the crossing merely because he dislikes the make of his car.
- A person is made to act in accordance with the pleasure of state officials in case of power exercised arbitrarily by the state. For example- the political enslavement where an entire people are colonized and subjected to the will of the colonizers.

There should not be use of arbitrariness in laws for upholding democratic rights. For example- in the emergency (1975-77), opposition leaders were thrown in jail on the false charge of conspiring against the state.

The Current charges of Emergency by critics:

- There are rises in the number of FIRs filed at the behest of random persons on unsubstantiated complaints and little explanation.
- **Upending rights:** Consider the arrest of activists.
- **Non reasonable grounds of arrest and detention:** Article 22 requires that anyone arrested and detained must be informed of the ground for such an arrest. Even the grounds of preventive detention must assume that the suspicion of offence is well-grounded based on available evidence which should satisfy any objective observer. It should not be based on mischievous allegations.
- **Arbitrary curtailment of liberty:** There is an increase in its frequency and brazen partisanship. Participants in the anti-corruption movement of 2011-12 were not thrown in jail.

Way Forward

There should not be whimsical curtailment of liberty and rights of the people by the government.

Topic 17: India and its neighbourhood- relations.

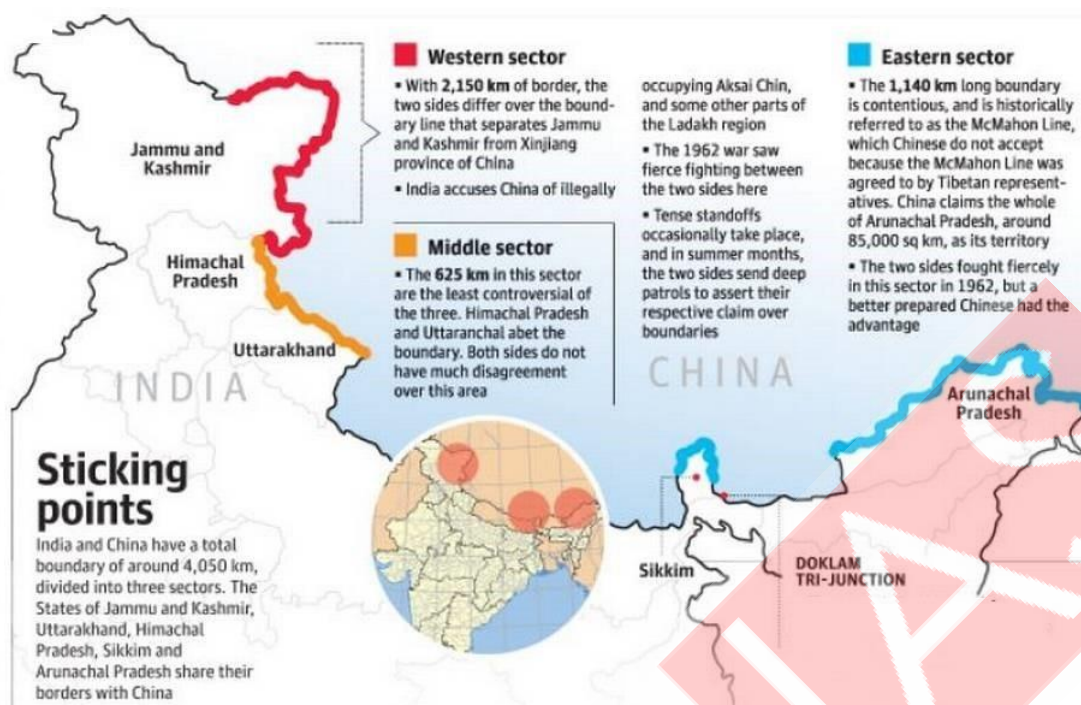
40. Boundary issues between India and China

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - India and its neighbourhood- relations.

Context: Indian and Chinese troops are at loggerheads in Eastern Ladakh and Sikkim.

Background: There are four agreements that have signed between India and China for meaningful progress on the boundary issue. But the absence of a definition of the LAC allows new and secret advances on the ground.



Source: The Hindu

How Boundaries are observed?

- **In Eastern sector:** The Chinese have not accepted the loosely defined McMahon line which follows the principle of watershed.
- **The Western sector:** The LAC is two hypothetical lines based on different military considerations of both sides.

What agreements says?

- **The 1993 agreement (On the maintenance of peace and tranquility along the Line of Actual Control (LAC)):** Before the final solution, the two sides shall strictly respect and observe the LAC between the two sides and No activities of either side shall overstep the LAC.
- **Both the 1993 and the 1996 agreement (on confidence-building measures in the military field along the LAC):** Both sides will reduce or limit their respective military forces within mutually agreed geographical zones along the LAC.

Why are these deeply flawed agreements?

- **No bearing on ground reality:** Many of the articles in agreements have no effect on ground. Such as Article XII of the 1996 agreement talks about agreement being subject to ratification and shall enter into force on the date of exchange of instruments of ratification. It is not clear if and when that happened.
- **No clarity to recognise the existing lines of deployment of the respective armies as they were in 1993:** The agreement does not reflect any attempt to have each side recognising the other's line of deployment of troops. If both armies are to respect the LAC, they should have clarity of line.
- **Rather than the LAC, they could have used existing deployment term in 1993 agreement:** In such a case there would have been two existing lines of control on the map — one for the physical deployment of the Chinese troops and the other for the physical deployment of the Indian troops. This would have rendered the areas between the two lines as no man's land.

- **Para 4 in Article II of the 2013 agreement (on border defence cooperation):** It urge both sides to work with each other in combating natural disasters or infectious diseases that may affect or spread to the other side. But in current crisis, the standoff could have exposed some of the Indian soldiers to a local Chinese mutation of COVID-19.

How Exchange of maps exercise failed for clearing perceptions of LAC?

- With military absurdness in the background, both sides have attempted to exchange the maps in western sector in the past.
- **Idea was to superimpose the maps:** To see where the perceptions converged and where they diverged.
- The Chinese side did not accept the maps because they felt that it is not in Chinese interests. If they had accepted them then the Chinese would have with them, India's claim with regard to the LAC in the western sector.

Way Forward

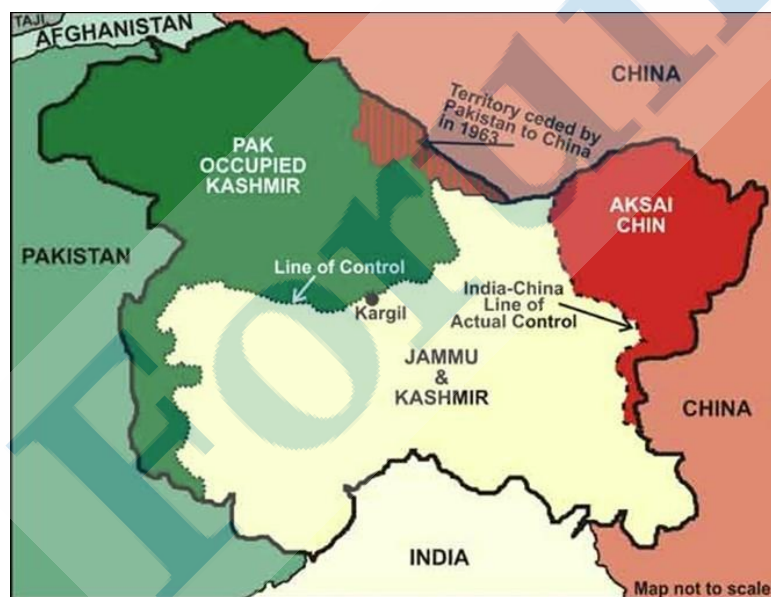
Both sides should work for early settling the boundary issues and refrain from violating the agreements signed between them.

41. The reason behind the growing transgressions by China along LAC

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: **GS 2 - India and its neighbourhood- relations.**

Context: There are growing numbers of reports about Chinese troops crossing the disputed Line of Actual Control (LAC) with India in the Ladakh region.



Source: **Observer Research Foundation**

Background:

- There are around 400 transgressions/faceoffs each year on an average along the LAC.
- **Doklam (2017):** The 2017 standoff between India and China at the Doklam trijunction was the first major military standoff between the two sides in a long time in which New Delhi demonstrated it was not a military pushover despite China's conventional superiority over India.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of June, 2020

- **Mounting territorial aggression by China:** Chinese troops are yet to withdraw from the transgressed territories which are traditionally considered by both sides to be on the Indian side of the LAC.
- **Two options for India:**
 - Accept territorial loss.
 - Force or negotiate a reversal to the status quo unless the PLA unilaterally withdraws.

Explaining the China's growing territorial aggression?

- **New Delhi's pointed statements about Aksai Chin following the Jammu and Kashmir reorganisation:** The Indian Home Minister's statement that PoK and Aksai Chin are also part of Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019 have been viewed by China of India upping the ante.
- **Construction of infrastructure projects along the LAC:** China's border aggressions in Sikkim and Ladakh may be attributed to India's infrastructure enhancements at borders.
- **The Chinese angle to the J&K conundrum:**
 - **China's China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC):** India is critical of CPEC which passes through the Karakoram and has the reported presence of PLA troops in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK).
- **Larger Chinese strategic calculations:** China has given up its traditional slogan of 'peaceful rise' and is beginning to assert itself as the next superpower. China wants to give a clear message to India and its smaller neighbours about its rising power.
- **Political messaging in Beijing's LAC aggression:**
 - China could use the military aggression to show political resolve. It will also help to divert attention from other issues like problems in Hong Kong and failures in its handling of COVID-19.

Why an all-out confrontation or nuclear use is not possible between China and India?

- **Undesirable military escalation:** A direct fight with India does not suit Beijing's interests. Infact carrying out minor military expeditions with the objective of inflicting small-scale military defeats on India precisely suits the Chinese political and military leadership as they are cost effective, less escalatory and the message gets conveyed.
- **Political constraints:** It affects India's military response by acknowledging such territorial losses. If New Delhi acknowledges loss of territory, it would have to regain it but doing so using the conventionally superior power would not be easy.

Limits of Chinese adventurism:

- **Tit for tat tactics by India:** There are several places along the several thousand kilometres long LAC where the PLA is militarily weak. The Indian Army can retaliate back along those places.
- **Maritime domain:** China enjoys continental superiority over India but maritime domain is China's weak spot particularly Beijing's commercial and energy interest to which the maritime space is crucial.
- **Economic front:** Beijing's interest does not lie in damaging the \$100 billion trade with India with its military adventurism.

Way Forward

The time has come for India to checkmate China's aggression even in the backdrop of maintaining robust economic ties.

42. India –China relations – Win-win or zero sum game

Source – [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus – GS 2 – Bilateral Relations

Context – Recently Chinese soldiers have moved into Indian territory across the Line of Actual Control (LAC)

India-China Border



India-China border is divided into three sectors:

1. **Western Sector** – The LAC in the western sector falls in the union territory of Ladakh and is 1570 km long
2. **Middle sector** - The middle sector of 545 km length falls in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.
3. **Eastern sector** – The 1325 km long eastern sector falls in the states of Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.

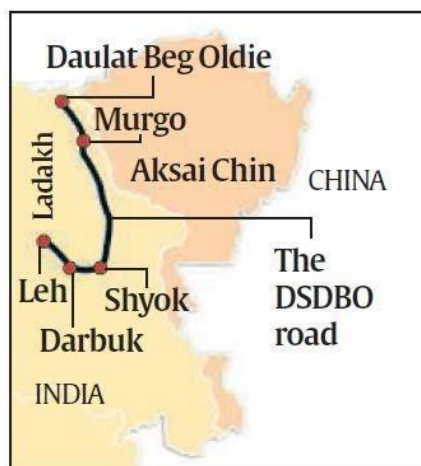
The middle sector is the least disputed sector, while the western sector witnesses the highest transgressions between the two sides.

Line of Actual control

1. **LAC is only a concept** - The border is not fully demarcated and the LAC is neither clarified nor confirmed by the two countries. India considers the LAC to be 3,488 km long, while the Chinese consider it to be only around 2,000 km.
2. **Patrolling based on perception** - This has led to different perceptions of the LAC for the two sides, and soldiers from either side try to patrol the area up to their perception of the LAC.
3. **Chinese assertiveness** - A higher number of transgressions indicates that the Chinese soldiers are coming to the Indian side more often, and their movements are being observed and recorded by the Indian soldiers. This can be seen as an indicator of increased Chinese assertiveness.

Reasons for large scale movement by China:

1. **Infrastructure building by India** - China is responding to India's efforts to bolster border infrastructure in Ladakh after the completion of the Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldie (DSDBO) road (near the confluence of Shyok and Galwan rivers).



2. **Pre-emptive step** – Chinese army is physically changing the ground position and preventing our troops from undertaking regular patrolling in the area.
3. **Diverting attention** - The need for China to show strength amid the pandemic that originated in Wuhan, which has harmed the Chinese economy and worsened relations with many countries. The ongoing transgressions will shift world's attention from this to border issue.
4. **Discouraging Investment in India** – Due to disruption in supply-chain amid the COVID pandemic and the flight of MNC's from China has increased possibility of these companies to settle in India. Such border disruptions usually discourage the investors as there will be lack of stability and peace in country

Implications of the transgressions

1. **Updation in Standard Operating Procedure** - The established SOPs and drills have not worked this time and new drills will be required as the situation on the ground has changed.
2. **Unreasonable concessions by India** – Due to increased Chinese pressure, India might resolve the border issue by going soft on China in international institutions like World Health Assembly.

Way Forward – The Panchsheel principle holds the key to resolve the current crisis. When followed in spirit and letter it will pave way for settled border dispute and amicable ties between the two.

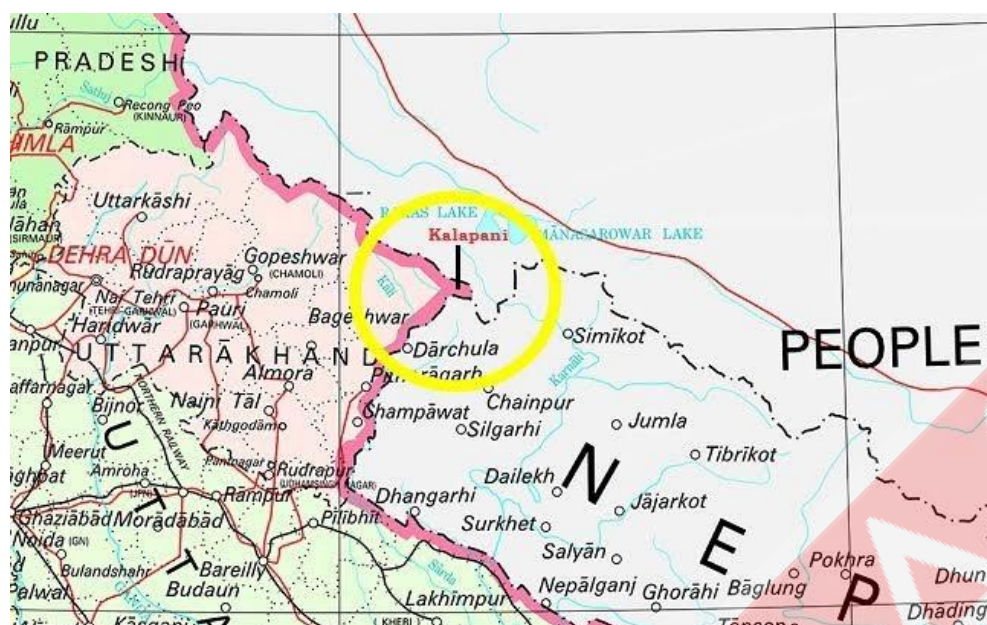
43. What is the way forward in India-Nepal relations?

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS-2- International Relations

Context: Recently, Nepal published a new political map showing the areas of Lipulekh, Kalapani, and Limpiyadhura as part of its territory.

Background: Nepal's move to publish a new map came after India published a map in November 2019 which included the Lipulekh and Kalapani areas in its claimed territory. The border dispute between the countries aggravated after recently India inaugurated a road linking Dharchula in Uttarakhand state to Lipulekh, as part of the Kailash-Mansarovar pilgrimage route.



The Challenges in India-Nepal Ties

Challenge	
Territorial/Border Disputes	The Treaty of Sugauli signed by the Kingdom of Nepal and British India in 1816 located the Kali River as Nepal's western boundary with India. However, the discrepancy in locating the source of the river led to boundary disputes between India and Nepal.
Internal Security	There is an open border between India and Nepal which leads to illegal migration and human trafficking
Peace and friendship treaty	India-Nepal Friendship Treaty, 1950 has been criticized by the Nepali political elite as an unequal one. For example, the treaty obliged Nepal to inform India and seek its consent for the purchases of military hardware from third countries
India's Dominance	There is a widespread perception in Nepal that India does not respect the country's sovereignty and that it often intervenes in Nepal's domestic affairs.
Nepal's growing proximity to China	China has become one of the most important trading partners of Nepal. It has also provided liberal aid for building infrastructure in Nepal and undertaken many infrastructure projects. For Example, China's freight train to Nepal
Trade	Nepal's trade deficit with India has surged in recent years with continuously rising imports and sluggish exports. Indo-Nepal trade continues to remain massively in India's favor.

What should be done to improve India-Nepal ties?

- **Strengthening Diplomatic dialogue:** Diplomatic dialogue between India and Nepal should be resumed at the earliest possible. Further, embassies on both sides should be allowed to function freely.
- **Respecting Nepal's Sovereignty:** India must respect Nepal's sovereignty and should not meddle in the internal political affairs of Nepal.
- **Neighborhood First Policy:** Through neighborhood first policy, India need to build the trust and show that Nepali nationalism and anti-Indianism are not the two sides of the same coin.

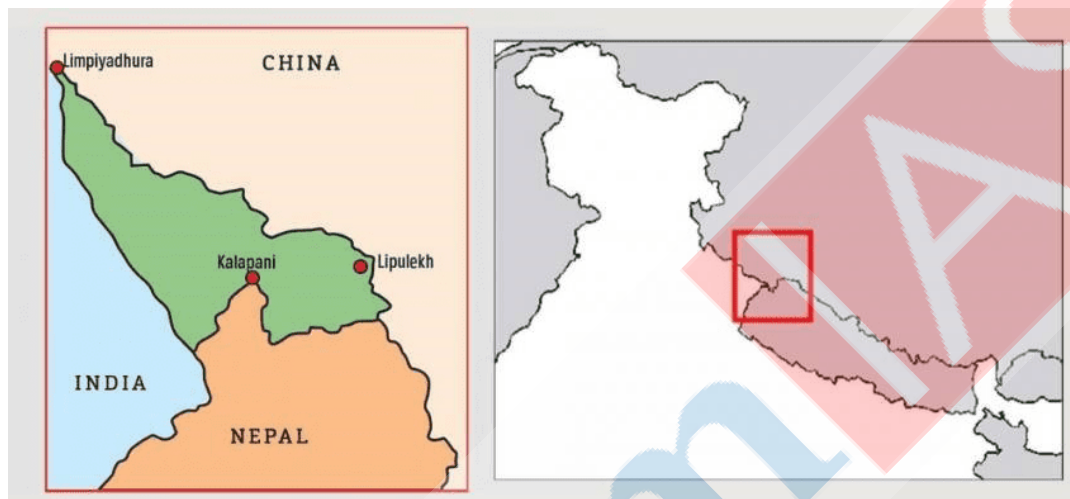
- **Tackling China:** India need to counter China's more assertive foreign policy through soft power and should emphasize on its historically close cultural, religious, and people-to-people relations with Nepal.

44. Setbacks in relations of India and Nepal

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - India and its neighbourhood- relations

Context: The lower house of Nepal passed the constitutional amendment ratifying a change in its maps that include Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura.



Issue of contention:

- The territories of Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura is controlled by India.
- **Resurfacing of issue:**
 - In 2000 and 2014, India and Nepal agreed to hold talks about Kalapani and Susta, without much success.
 - **Nepal objected to the depiction of disputed territory:** The issue resurfaced in 2019 when New Delhi published new political maps to reflect the changes after the decision to reorganize the State of Jammu and Kashmir.
 - The India's Defence Minister inaugurated Lipulekh pass to which Nepal protested strongly.
 - **Role of China:** The Indian Army Chief suggested it was at the "behest" of China. Nepal's purposeful manner in pursuing the amendment at the same time as the India-China border stand-off further bolsters the belief.
 - **Diplomatic failure:** India contends that it was willing to discuss matters at a mutually convenient date but Nepal says the MEA has rejected two dates suggested by Nepal and has routinely dismissed requests from the Nepal Ambassador for a meeting with the Foreign Secretary. It was further enraged by the MEA who said Kalapani talks could wait until both countries had dealt with the coronavirus pandemic first.

Need to Resolve issue:

- Two nations must resolve their issues through dialogue before facing serious consequences.

- **Security issue for India:** The deteriorating relations could cause a security nightmare for India if it opens up other parts of their long boundary and reverses old commitments on open and unsecured border posts.

Way Forward

India and Nepal need to move quickly to reverse the recent setback to ties.

45. Role of Quiet Diplomacy in easing tensions with China

Source: [The Hindu](#), [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - India and its neighborhood- relations.

Context: On June 6, India and China had reached an agreement for a partial disengagement of troops from some of the points of stand-off along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).



Background:

- China had multiple incursions in the last one month. China's moves may be motivated by its insecurities at India's recent improvements in infrastructure on the Indian side of the LAC.
- **Agreed by Corps Commander-level talks:** Both sides identified five locations of conflict in the western sector in Ladakh. A separate ongoing stand-off in Naku La in Sikkim was not on the agenda.
- The five spots include Patrolling Points 14, 15 and 17, Chushul and the north bank of Pangong Lake.
- A broad plan has been agreed to hold a series of talks at lower ranks of Colonel, Brigadier and Major General at four of those points in the coming week to take forward the disengagement process.
- **Problem with Pangong Lake:** There appear to be serious differences which may require another round of higher level talks at the Corps Commander level.
- **Changing status quo:** The Fingers 1 to 8, running from west to east, refer to mountain spurs on the north bank. The Chinese troops have dug in at the Finger 4 area on the lake's northern bank and still remain present on India's side of the LAC which runs at Finger 8.

China is an assertive power and dealing with it is not easy. India needs quiet diplomacy along with strong military resistance.

Strategy in dealing with China:

- **Quiet diplomacy coupled with strong military posture:** Previous governments have followed this approach along with allowing the adversary a way out at the same time.
- **Depsang incursion 2013:**
- The Indian government had privately conveyed to China that an upcoming visit by China's Premier would be off if the stand-off didn't end.
- The key to arriving at a successful outcome was keeping public rhetoric calm and steady and displaying strength and giving the adversary a way out.
- **Chunar stand-off 2014:**
- India quietly but forcefully stopped the Chinese road-building and deployed 2,500 soldiers which outnumber the People's Liberation Army (PLA). As a result, PLA withdrew.
- Both sides disengaged and followed a moratorium on patrolling into contested areas for months.
- **Doklam crisis 2017:**
- Indian troops crossed over into Bhutan to stop a Chinese road construction on territory India sees as Bhutanese and accused China of unilaterally altering the India-Bhutan-China trijunction.
- **Restoring status quo:** Beijing demanded an unconditional withdrawal. Both sides disengaged without divulging the terms. It later emerged that the deal struck resulted in India withdrawing first and then China stopped construction.

There is a 24/7 demand on social media for information and unprecedented capacity for disinformation.

Role of government during such times:

- **Opposition in confidence:** It needs to keep the Opposition informed.
- **Engaging with media:** It needs to proactively engage with the media even if that may be through low-key engagement that does not escalate into a public war of words. It is in the government's own interests to ensure what's reported is well-informed and not speculative or exaggerated.
- **Idea of public debate:** The expectations of having a public debate about the difficulty of every border stand-off or for the PM to weigh in when negotiations are ongoing — need to be tempered. This will only risk inflaming tensions and reduce the free hand for both sides.
- **The broader objective shouldn't get lost in political debates:** The objective is to ensure India's security interests remain protected and the status quo on India's borders isn't changed by force.

Way Forward

There is the urgent need for better communication to address the strategic mistrust that prevails on both sides of the LAC.

46. Territorial Issue- India and Nepal

Source – [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus – GS 2 - Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Context – Nepal’s House of Representatives unanimously approved the tabling of an amendment to the country’s constitution which will now formally depict nearly 400 sq km of Indian territory extending west from the Lipulekh Pass, and including it, as part of Nepal’s sovereign territory.



Map- Disputed Border Region

Historical facts related to the disputed border region

PHASE 1 – 1816 to 1950

1. **Anglo-Nepal Treaty of Sugauli of 1816** - It determined the Kali river as the western boundary between British India and Nepal. According to the treaty, the British rulers recognised Nepal’s right to the region that fell to the east of the river Kali.
2. **Origin of river** - According to Nepal, the east of the Kali River should begin at the source of the river. The source according to them is in the mountains near Limpiyadhura, which is higher in altitude than the rest of the river’s flow.
 - India claims, Kali River originates from a natural spring at Kalapani, where it is joined by a rivulet flowing down from Lipulekh Pass. This was not challenged then nor at any time subsequently until after 1990.
 - Nepal’s claim of the territory east of Kali is based on the Limpiyadhura origin, India says the river actually takes the name Kali near Kalapani.

PHASE 2 - 1950 to 1969

1. **Chinese occupation of Tibet** - India had, in the early 1950s, set up, with the consent of Nepal, a string of military-cum-police posts along the Nepal-China border after the Chinese occupied Tibet.
2. **India- China trade agreement**- India and China concluded an agreement in 1954 for trade and transit between India and Tibet and among the six border passes listed for the purpose, Lipulekh was included. There was no protest from the Nepali side.
3. **Nepal China Agreement** - China and Nepal reached a border agreement in 1961. Article 1 in the agreement describes the western extremity of the China-Nepal border and this conforms to the alignment claimed by India.
4. **Withdrawal in 1969** – Nepal asked India to withdraw all these posts from Nepali territory. This was done but the Indian post at Kalapani was not in the Nepali list.

PHASE 3 – 2015 TO 2020

1. **2015** - The first time that Nepal protested formally was in 2015 when India and China signed a Memorandum of Understanding for conducting border trade between the two countries through Lipulekh Pass.
2. **2019** – Nepal raised concerns again when India in its new political map, realised in November 2019, depicted the region as its own part.

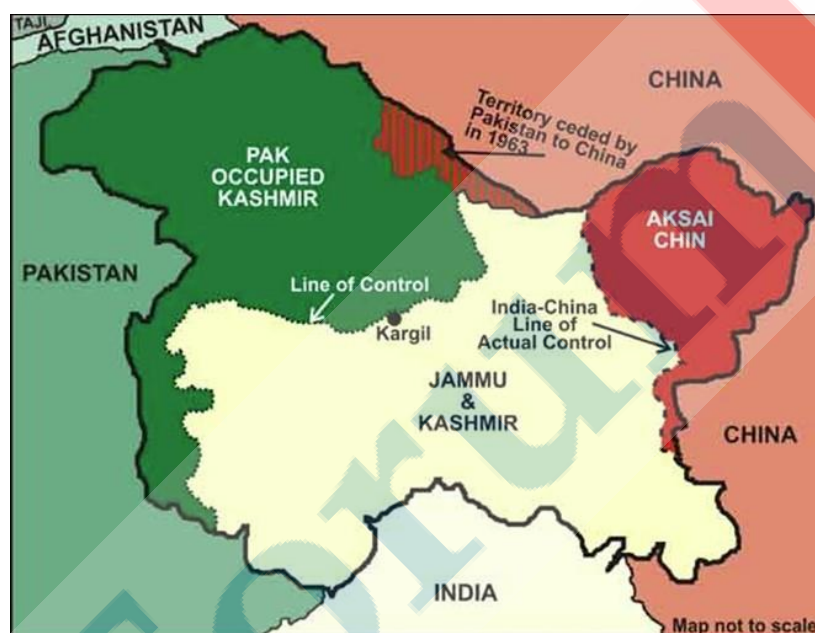
Way Forward – Since all the historical facts support India, Indian leaders need to engage with Nepal based on these facts and documents to ensure objectivity in talks. As part of a peaceful solution, Nepal may have privileged access to the Kalapani area for trade or pilgrimage. Nepali citizens may be permitted to use any infrastructure created in this or other border areas for easier access from one part of Nepal to another.

47. Need to build trust: India-Pakistan relations

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - India and its neighbourhood- relations

Context: There has been increased shelling and retaliation along the Line of Control.



Worsening relations between India and Pakistan:

- **Increased ceasefire violation:** Ceasefire with Pakistan along the Line of Control is not working.
- Three soldiers have died due to shelling in the Poonch sector in the recent past.
- In May, there were small arms firing across the Pir Panjal range (which fronts the Kashmir Valley)
- **Problems regarding staff posted in missions:**
- **Both are unable to adhere to reciprocal protocols regarding staff:** The two personnel from the Indian mission are missing from Islamabad.
- India expelled two Pakistan High Commission officials on charges of espionage.

These disruption along with the dilution of Article 370 and the COVID-19 lockdown should be addressed with urgency.

Need of the hour by India:

- **Safety of civilians:** The government needs to build bomb shelters for civilians until normalcy returns.
- **Ensuring safety of diplomatic personnel:** India must take steps to ensure its diplomatic personnel are spared from such harassment.
- **Serious engagement with Pakistan:** To ensure safety of staffs, working in Pakistan.
- **Temporarily maintaining essential missions:** India need to reduce its number of personnel in such missions as there are travel curbs and less face to face requirement.

Way Forward

India needs to re-engage with Pakistan and end the ceasefire violations along the border.

48. Unique relationship between Nepal and India.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - India and its neighbourhood- relations

Context: Analysing the change in Nepal's policy of dealing with India.

Relations between India and Nepal:

- **Special relationship:** India-Nepal has open borders and Nepalis are allowed to live and work freely.
- **Benaras as a keystone of India-Nepal ties:** Many in the bureaucracy and politics of Nepal had studied at BHU and Varanasi. Even Nepal's intellectual software was largely coded here.
- **Burgeoning colony of Nepali programmers:** One of the most profitable sectors for Nepal Airlines is Kathmandu-Bengaluru as Nepali programmers work for storied Indian tech companies.
- **Ignoring India's concerns:** In 2015, the Nepal government adopted the new Constitution ignoring India's concerns.
- **Lack of progress on Indian projects:** Such as the game-changing 5,000 MW Pancheshwar hydroelectric project. Nepal generates only 1,000 MW and import 600 MW from India.

Changes in Nepal:

- **Change in Geography:** Chinese now have the potential to bore through the Himalayas and exhibit their presence in Kathmandu in economics and politics.
- **Change in polity:** It is now a democratic republic after nearly 250 years of monarchy.
- **Nationalism as a mask for anti-India sentiment:** Politicians use it for personal gain and it is deeply ingrained in the bureaucracy, academia and the media.
- The current PM is cementing his legacy as a nationalist by extending Nepal's map into Indian territory.
- **Identity politics with India:** It is visible within the country where Nepali citizens from the Terai (Madhesis) feel discriminated against as being "Indian".
- **Exposure of Globalisation:**
- **Trend of migration:** Due to security uncertainties with the Maoist insurgency, students and skilled personnel began moving to Europe, the US, Australia, etc. As of 2019, nearly a fifth of Nepal's population were reportedly overseas.
- Global remittances account for nearly 30% of Nepal's nominal GDP.

- **Leftist ideology and presence of international NGO:** They are present to resolve conflict and alleviate poverty in Nepal. They have added to Nepal's exposure to the world.
- **Long-standing efforts of Nepal for options beyond India:**
- Multilateral development banks are by far the biggest lenders to the country's developmental needs.
- Major investments in the telecom sector are coming from Malaysia and the largest international carrier in Nepal is Qatar Airways.

Despite all these changes, Nepal continues to have a unique relationship with India.

Robust linkage of Nepal with India:

- **Trade:** Nepal's trade with India continues to account for more than two-thirds of Nepal's external trade of around \$12 billion annually.
- **India continues to be the largest aggregate investor in Nepal:** The massive under-construction Arun-III 900 MW hydro-electric project is slated to singly produce much as much power as Nepal produces today.
- **Stability for economy:** The peg with the Indian Rupee provides unique stability to the Nepali Rupee.

India should focus on developing its border areas with Nepal with better roads and amenities of interest (such as shopping malls) to the burgeoning Nepali middle class. This would keep ties strong at the people's level.

Way Forward

The Special relationship of India-Nepal is particularly important today with COVID-19-caused global contraction. India needs a new prism to view its relationship with Nepal by keeping in mind the past and the future.

49. Dealing with China

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - India and its neighbourhood- relations

Context: Many Indian soldiers were killed in Galwan Valley's violent face-off between India and China.

India's own reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir has affected threat parameters for India. Beijing issued a statement calling it an attempt to undermine China's territorial sovereignty by unilaterally changing its domestic law. These changes are part of wider strategic thinking of China.

Wider conflict of "five fingers of the Tibetan palm"

- According to the strategic thinking by China, Tibet was China's right palm and it was its responsibility to "liberate" the five fingers defined as Ladakh, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA, or Arunachal Pradesh).
- **China's territorial claims:** The government of India was worried over China's claim of Indian territories even after signing the Panchsheel agreement in 1954
- **Propaganda war against India:** Launched by Chinese press and radio especially after the flight of the Dalai Lama to India in 1959. China began to demand "self-determination in Kashmir". The Chinese government allowed refuge and training to Naga and Mizo dissidents.

India need to bring some changes in its policy to provide an effective counter to China's five finger policy.

How should India manage China by changing its foreign policy?

Push for building border infrastructure and governance:

- In the mid-1950s the government piloted a project to build the Indian Frontier Administrative Services (IFAS) for overseeing NEFA and other areas along the India-China frontier.
- A special desk was created in the MEA for officers who would tour all the regions from NEFA to Ladakh in order to make suggestions for the rapid development of these areas.
- Though India's border infrastructure is now catching up with the infrastructure of China, its base was made during the brief period the IFAS existed before it was wound up in 1968.
- **Revisiting the IFAS idea:** Especially as areas along the frontier continue to complain of neglect and a lack of focus from the Centre.

Outreach and treaties:

- India signed treaties with Nepal and Bhutan which built unique relationship with them. Over time, the treaties have outlived their utility.
- **Renegotiation of treaties:** China has been able to make inroads into Nepal but not with Bhutan as the government renegotiated its 1949 Treaty of Perpetual Peace and Friendship of 1949 with the India-Bhutan Friendship Treaty in 2007 dropping an article that had committed Bhutan "to be guided" by India on its external affairs policy. Same has not done with Kathmandu.

The Tibet issue:

- Though India has sheltered the Dalai Lama and lakhs of his followers since 1959, there is a need to look into the future of its relationship with the Tibetan refugee community in India as well as with its future leadership.
- **Future of political leadership of Tibetan:** After the current Dalai Lama which has the loyalty of Tibetans worldwide currently.
- China will try to force its own choice on the community given that it is home to so many Tibetans. India must chart a more prominent role in this discourse.

Way Forward

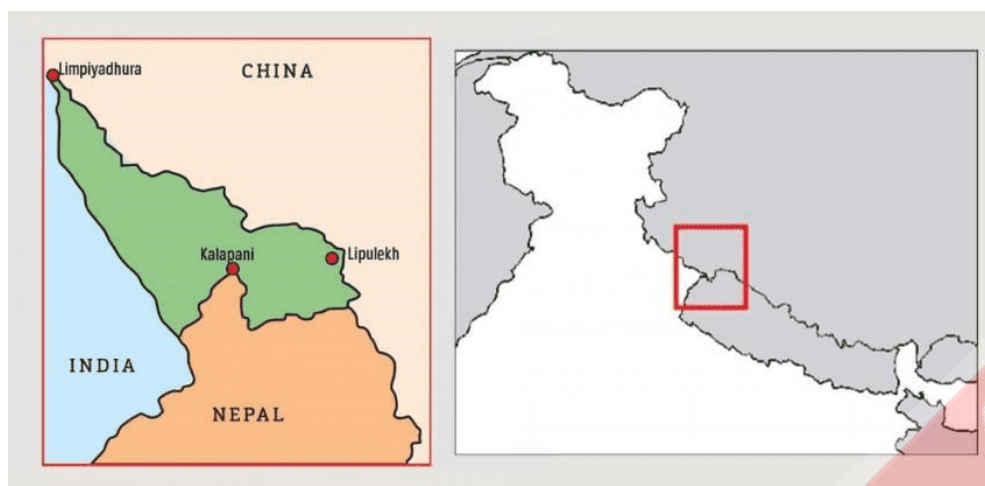
As India grapples with its next steps at the Line of Actual Control (LAC), it must cast a grand strategy to renew its compact with each of those areas today.

50. What changed in India-Nepal ties?

Source: [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - India and its neighbourhood- relations

Context: Nepal's Parliament has cleared a map that includes territories with India — Limpiadhura, Lipulek and Kalapani.



Special ties between India and Nepal:

Resolving standoffs:

- Previous standoffs such as the economic blockade of 2015 were effectively resolved through direct negotiations, back-channel diplomacy and an accommodative spirit on both sides.
- The Backchannels were used during major trade embargos since the 1970s such as Indian royalty.

Favouring India:

- In 1960's, Nepal convincingly assured India that a road built to connect Nepal with Tibet had only developmental and no strategic significance.
- In the 1980s, Nepal annulled a contract with China to build the 210-km Kohalpur Banbasa Road closer to the Indian border after India raised security concerns.
- **Close association of India with Nepal army:** The chief of each national army has enjoyed the status of Honorary General of the other side on a reciprocal basis since 1950.

The influence of India in Nepal has reduced over the years.

Troubled phase in Nepal-India relations:

- **Ouster of monarchy:** The turning point in relations came with the 12-point understanding among Nepal's eight political parties in November 2005 in Delhi which led to the ouster of monarchy. The crucial issues such as the abolition of monarchy, declaration of Nepal as a secular country etc. then were not discussed sufficiently in the Parliament of Nepal.
- **Losing of allies in Nepal:**
- India took the lead role in transforming Nepal into a secular republic which set off events leading to India losing its clout and allies.
- For example-the Nepali Congress was often branded "pro-India" by Communists for their close ties with Indian National Congress and socialists. However, following the 12-point agreement, the Nepali Congress was forced to accept the lead role of Maoists (Communists) in the impending political change.
- **Imposed secularism:** The EU took a very open stance that secularism will have no meaning without the right to conversion being incorporated as a fundamental right in the new Constitution. This led to resentment among the majority population about this "imposed secularism".
- **Change in perception:** Over the years, India's focus on Nepal appears driven more by security concerns and threat perception than by promoting a soft power-based approach.

- **Influence of China:** China has increased its presence and investment in Nepal by targeting tourism, post-earthquake reconstruction, trade and energy etc.

Way Forward

India must again begin 'valuing' common civilisational, cultural, historic and people to people ties to resolve the current dispute.

51. Understanding China 's strategic objectives regarding India

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - India and its neighbourhood- relations

Context: A violent face-off happened between India and China in Galwan Valley.



Background:

- **1962 War:**
 - Nehru's thinking was influenced by his idealistic notion of Afro-Asian solidarity and his suspicion of America's strategic designs.
 - **War debacle:** It was blamed on the government's military unpreparedness and its inability to understand China's larger strategic objectives.
- **Current situation:** The China took India's decision to separate Ladakh from Jammu and Kashmir as an India's attempt to change the status quo in Aksai Chin.

Though, India is now much better prepared to face China's challenge on the ground but we need to understand China's objectives.

China's strategic objectives:

- **Ensuring Its dominance:** China doesn't want India to be in the same league and it try to achieve it with periodic localised assaults across the Line of Actual Control (LAC) if India tries to assume a position of equality.
- **Warning against Containing China:** China doesn't want India to actively oppose its interests in the Indo-Pacific region. It want to maintain its dominance by warning India not to align with the U.S. and its allies such as Japan and Australia.
- **Engaging India with problems in its immediate neighbourhood:** China doesn't want India to act as an alternative pole of power to China in the broader Asian region.
- **Neutralising India's conventional power superiority over Pakistan:** It achieve this by supporting Pakistan economically and militarily including the sharing of nuclear weapons designs.

These objectives are essential for a realistic Indian response to China's aggressive policies along the LAC.

India's response and Way Forward

India's main strategic goal should be the adoption of carefully calculated policies that neutralise China's diplomatic and military power in the Asia-Pacific region without making India appear as a surrogate for other powers.

52. Bad to worse: On India-Pakistan ties

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - India and its neighbourhood- relations

Context: India, followed by Pakistan, has decided to halve the strength of diplomatic missions in each other's capital.

India Downgrading ties with Pakistan:

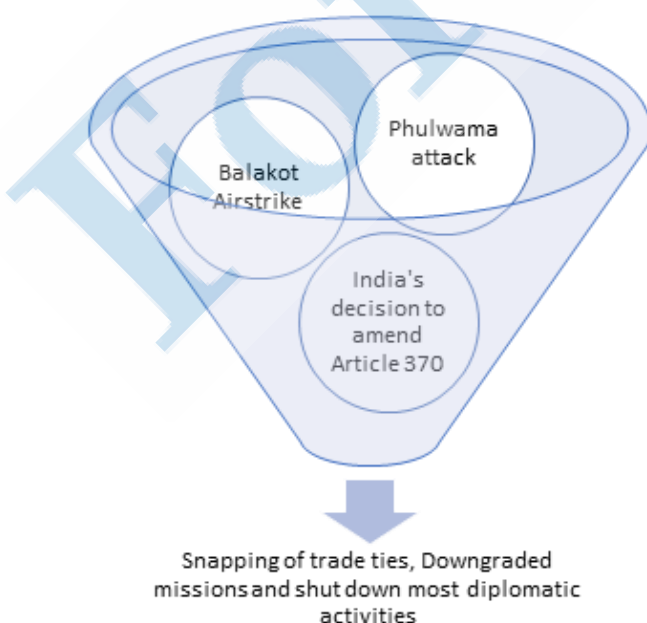
- **Diplomatic feud:** It is due to ill-treatment and torture of Indian personnel posted in Islamabad which is clear violation of their diplomatic rights under Vienna Convention.
- Pakistan claimed that the two men arrested were carrying fake currency, but it is more likely a response to arrests and the expulsion of two Pakistani High Commission officials accused of espionage.
- **Terror links of Pakistan:** New Delhi also accused Pakistan High Commission officials of maintaining "links to terror organisations" as a reason for its decision.

Diplomatic expulsions are not uncommon but this is the first such measure at this scale taken by India since 2001.

Similar diplomatic feuds:

- **Parliament attack December 2001:** The diplomatic expulsions were triggered by the largest military mobilization of the time along the India-Pakistan border named Operation Parakram.
- **Thaw in relations:** The move was reversed after PM's visit to Pakistan for the SAARC summit in 2004 and diplomats were gradually taken back to a full strength of over a 100 in each High Commission.

Recent Downslide in relations between India and Pakistan:



9 PM Compilation for the Month of June, 2020

- **No talks:** India and Pakistan had no talks since 2015 when Indian PM visited Lahore and the External Affairs Ministers met a few months later.
- All sporting and cultural exchanges are at standstill and visas are rarely granted apart from the rare exception being made for the Kartarpur corridor.
- **Ceasefire violations along LoC:** They continue to claim lives of soldiers and civilians on both sides.
- **Non-cooperation on non-contentious issues:** They are unable to find common cause in issues such as cooperating on the coronavirus pandemic as a part of the SAARC grouping or collaborating against the recent locust invasion that affected the region.

Conclusion

The relations between India and Pakistan are getting worse and even the future doesn't augur well in the backdrop of India-China tensions. Ties between them seem strained beyond immediate repair.

53. Making sense of China's calculations

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS-2 India and its neighbourhood- relations.

Context: A direct confrontation between India and China has resulted in the number of casualties in Galwan Valley.

Background:

- On June 22-23, the Corps Commanders of India and China appeared to reach a mutual consensus to disengage and embark on lowering tensions through a gradual and verifiable disengagement.
- The Chinese posts in the Galwan area are being restored in bigger size than before.

It would be judicious to view Galwan faceoff as signifying a new and fractious phase in China-India relations.

Appearing of new Normal in India-China relations:

- **The debate on the Indian side:** It has been limited to betrayal of China in its violation of the status quo. For example- Former PM accused China of brazenly and illegally seeking to claim parts of Indian Territory such as the Galwan Valley and Pangong Tso.
- **Reaction of China:** It has been consistent that India must move out of Galwan. The incident at Galwan cannot be viewed as a mere replay of what took place in Depsang (2013), Chumar (2014) and Doklam (2017).
- **New and Different situation:**
 - China's assertion of its claims needs careful analysis. For example- Point 14 in LAC gives China a virtual stranglehold over the newly completed and strategically significant, Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldie Road, which leads on to the Karakoram Pass.
 - **Changing status quo:** By keeping the whole of Galwan Valley by China.
- **Existence of Ambiguity regarding the LAC in this sector:**
 - The Chinese claim line is that of November 1959 while for India the LAC is that of September 1962.
 - By its unilateral declaration, China is seeking to settle the matter in its favour.

India is not able to fully understand the Chinese actions.

Shortcomings in dealing of India with China:

- **Importance of Aksai Chin:**
 - **Charge against Indian administration:** While China has consistently asserted its claims over the whole of Aksai Chin, India has chosen to overlook China's more recent postures in this region.
 - **Strategic importance:** Aksai Chin provides direct connectivity between two of the most troubled regions of China, viz., Xinjiang and Tibet which does not seem to have been adequately factored into our calculations.
 - **Overlooking China's reservations:** Indian policy makers overlooked the fact that for China's military planners, the carving out of Ladakh into a UT posed a threat to China's peace and tranquility.
- **On intelligence assessment:**
 - **Timing and nature of China's actions:** It should have aroused keen interest in intelligence circles about China's strategic calculations. The Chinese build-up in the area did not require any great intelligence effort as there was little attempt at concealment by the Chinese.
 - India also possesses high quality imagery intelligence (IMINT) and signals intelligence (SIGINT) capabilities, distributed between the National Technical Research Organisation, the Directorate of Signals Intelligence of the Ministry of Defence and other agencies, which made it possible to track Chinese movement.
 - **Weakness in interpretations of available intelligence:** It failed to provide a coherent assessment of China's real intentions. While India's technological capabilities for intelligence collection have vastly increased in recent years, the capacity for interpretation and analysis has not kept pace with this.
 - **China preoccupation:** The analyst should also consider that for China, India is feeling emboldened because of its growing strategic alignment with the US.
 - **Weakening of intelligence assessment system:** Due to the decision of the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) to dismantle the Joint Intelligence Committee which has the principal responsibility for intelligence assessment and analysis concerning China.
- **Limitations of summit meets:**
 - The preference given recently to Summit diplomacy over traditional foreign policy making structures does not prove to be beneficial.
 - India's Summit diplomacy has tended to marginalise the MEA with regard to policy making.
 - The general tilt towards the US has resulted in an imbalance in the way the MEA perceives problems and situations.

Way Forward

The Indian Policy makers should consider all the relevant intelligence gathering to understand the actions of China.

54. Understanding China's actions in Ladakh

Source: [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - India and its neighbourhood- relations

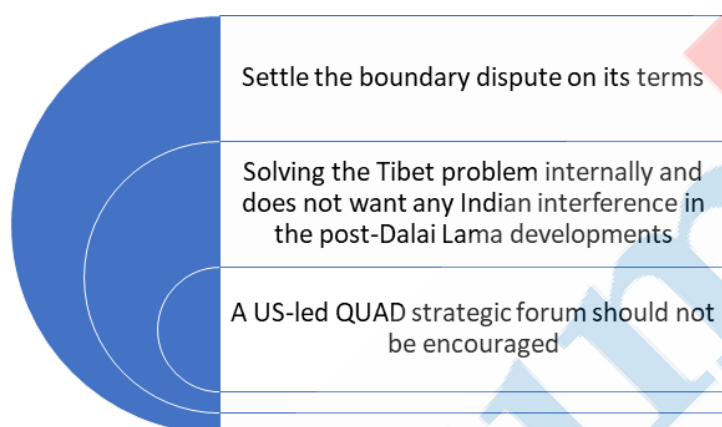
Context: The motive behind China's incursion in Ladakh is to push India to settle the boundary issue and cede Aksai Chin to China.

Pattern of China's experiments of settling borders:

- The Chinese border negotiation tactics are generally blended “incentives with coercion”.
- **With Kazakhstan:** China settled for a third of territories it claimed and Kazakhs admitted that they had gained. Also, Kazakhstan denounced Uyghur separatism and curb anti-China activities.
- **With Kyrgyzstan:** Kyrgyzstan ceded 1,20,000 hectares in a dubious exchange for Chinese assistance.
- **With Tajikistan:** China claimed some 28,000 sq km and Tajikistan surrendered 1,100 square miles in 2010.
- China ultimately gained a bit of land, nixed the Uyghur issue and pushed its economic agenda by making Xinjiang a pivotal link to the Eurasian markets.

China's tactics are fuelling tensions and resentments across Asia. China's past border tactics offer some examples to Chinese strategy.

Conveying message by China through Ladakh incursions:

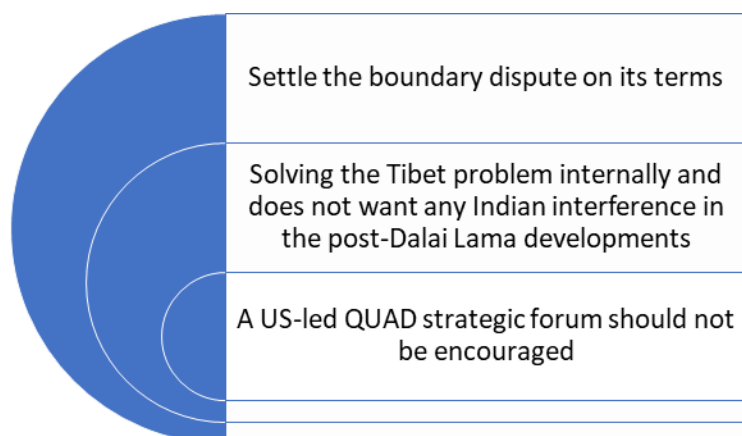


Dealing of boundary issues between India-China:

- **India-China agreement in 2005:**
 - They agreed on a new set of guiding principles to settle the vexed boundary dispute through the Special Representative (SR) level talks.
 - China has been seeking a substantive adjustment concession especially on Tawang.
 - India probably prefers having a marginal modification in the current alignment of the boundary.
- **China push for a settlement (March 2013):**
 - **Motive behind China's 19-km intrusion in Depsang in April 2013:** To press India to show urgency and redouble efforts to settle the boundary issue.
- Despite 22 rounds of special representative-level talks, a framework agreement still eludes these talks.

China's recent actions in Ladakh are also related to its growing domestic uncertainties and about future plans in Xinjiang and Tibet that border Ladakh.

Conveying message by China through Ladakh incursions:



Problems for India:

- China seems to be pushing for a formal settlement along the LAC in Ladakh where they have nothing to lose.
- It may not involve swapping India's claims over Aksai Chin for China's claims over Arunachal Pradesh which is thought to be a pragmatic thing to accept.
- Chinese may be making a tricky move to let India forego its claim over Aksai Chin and de-linking Ladakh from the overall boundary dispute.
- Then, India will have to give up not only Aksai Chin but also cede its notional claim over the Skyasgam valley and the Menser Enclave (five villages) near the Mansarovar Lake.
- China's "minimal demand" that Tawang is non-negotiable had been aired through Chinese academics.

Way Forward

- Ceding Aksai Chin would fundamentally alter the status of J&K and Ladakh. By implication, India would have to forget about PoK and Gilgit-Baltistan as well.
- India should tread carefully unless both sides are willing to make a move for grand bargaining.

Topic 18: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

55. Strengthening the India-Australia bilateral ties

Source – [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus – GS 2 - Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Context – The virtual summit between India and Australia presents the opportunity for both to plug the gaps in their ties

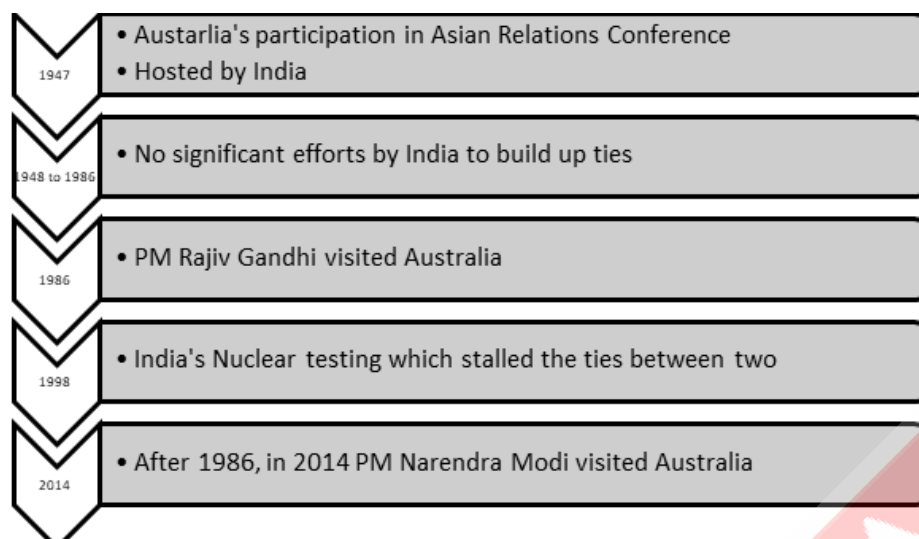


Figure 1 – Timeline of the stalled ties between two
Priority areas to enhance the ties in post-corona world

- 1. Reforming the international institutions** – The issues regarding WHO's handling of the pandemic has led to demand of reformations in international governance structures. India and Australia both can participate together for a consensus based transformation of such structures.
- 2. Fighting climate change** – Both can strengthen together the international solar alliance to building resilience against climate change and disasters like Australian bushfire and Indian cyclone Amphan.
- 3. Security cooperation in Indo-Pacific** – The cooperation in Indo-pacific included a wide range of activities which will ensure better security of the region
 - Both can initiate a full range of joint activities, including on maritime domain awareness, development of strategically located islands and marine scientific research.
 - India's engagement in Five Power Defence arrangement along with Australia and other member

Way Forward – India need to build its ties with not only great power but also middle ranged countries like Australia which is necessary for resolving global as well as regional issues with better partnership among concerned nations.

56. On Trump's proposal to expand G-7

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS-2- International Relations

Context: US President Donald Trump has proposed to expand G7 into a G11 or G12.

G-7 countries:

- The G-7 or 'Group of Seven' is an intergovernmental organization comprising of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- It was formed in 1975 by the top economies of the time as an informal forum to discuss pressing world issues.
- The G-7 does not have a formal constitution or a fixed headquarters. The decisions taken by leaders during annual summits are non-binding.



Proposed G-11/G-12 countries: The proposed G-11 will include Australia, India, South Korea and Russia. It could be made G-12 by adding Indonesia.

Need for G-7 to expand to G-11

- **Fall in GDP:** The share of G-7's share in global GDP has fallen to around 40%.
- **Reduced Relevance:** The rise of India, China, and Brazil over the past few decades has reduced the G-7's relevance.
- **Does not represent world:** According to Donald Trump, the G-7 grouping has become outdated and does not represent the world.
- **Does not Address Emerging needs:** The G7 only focuses on economic issues and does not address the emerging needs such climate change and human rights.
- **Containing China:** An alliance of powerful democracies is an ideological challenge to China and will contain China's expansionary moves.

What should the G-11/G-12 focus upon?

1. It should formulate a strategy to deal with disruptions such as protectionism, mercantilism and the global economic slowdown amid Covid-19 pandemic
2. It should widen agenda and go beyond economic issues and include climate change and health care.
3. Must issue a new charter of respect for human rights, adherence to international law and multilateralism in trade and security

57. Importance of the Persian Gulf

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Context: Analyzing the geopolitical significance of the Persian Gulf which is characterized by the political relations.

Persian Gulf:

- It is a shallow marginal sea of Indian Ocean that lies between the Arabian Peninsula and southwest Iran.
- **Shared by:** Eight countries (Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates).

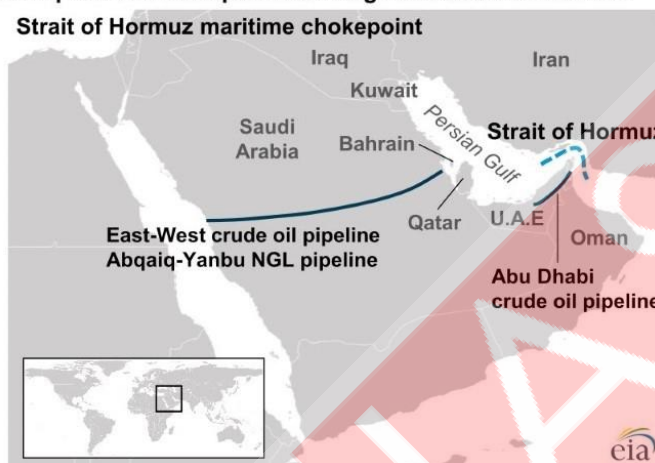
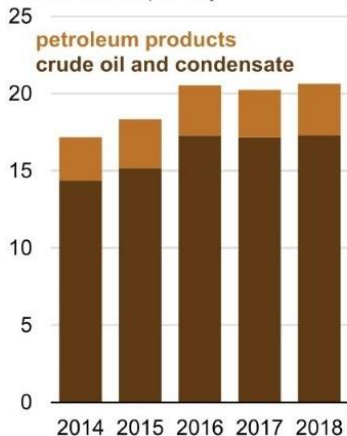
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- **Geo-political importance:** They are the major producers of crude oil and natural gas.

History of the region:

Crude oil, condensate, and petroleum products transported through the Strait of Hormuz

million barrels per day



- **Prior to 1970:**
 - This body was a closely guarded British lake for eight decades which was administered by imperial civil servants from India.
- **After 1970:**
 - Regional players started asserting themselves. According to US State Department report (1973) the main problem is the Saudi-Iranian cooperation is being undercut by psychological, nationalistic and prestige factors.
 - **American Hegemony:** It was ensured by Nixon and the Carter Doctrines.
 - **Collective Security:** It was attempted in a conference in Muscat in 1975 which was thwarted by Baathist Iraq.
 - **The Iranian Revolution (1979):** It put an end to the Twin Pillar approach and disturbed the strategic balance.
 - **The Iraq-Iran War:** It enhanced U.S. interests and role.
 - **Security Council through Resolution 598 (1987):** It has to explore 'measures to enhance the security and stability in the region'.

Contemporary situation in Persian Gulf:

- **The fault lines between the GCC and the US:**
 - **Containing Iran:** The US has been cooperated by the Arab states of the region (except Iraq) to contain Iran.
 - **Aggravation of geopolitical factors:** The other conflicts in the West Asian region — Yemen, Syria, Libya has aggravated global and regional relationships and hampered the relations between the U.S.-Iran. It was based on the multilateral agreement on Iran's nuclear programme agreed to by western powers and the Obama Administration.
 - **Armed conflict:** The region has been subject to armed conflict due to changed policies of the Trump administrations. Such as cancelling nuclear agreement with Iran.
 - **Changing priorities:** The US commitment to sub regional security has declined which have caused disquiet in some members of the GCC. As the GCC security concern is based on an American insurance to deter it.

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- **An evolving transformation in GCC:**

- **Common Threat Perception:**

- It has been hampered by the emergence of conflicting tactical and strategic interests of different nations. Such as the problems in the OPEC and the decline in oil prices.

- **Emerging shape of the region:**

- Saudi Arabia is a fading power, UAE, Qatar and Iran are emerging as the new regional leaders and Oman and Iraq will have to struggle to retain their independent identities.

- **Individual arrangements:**

- **Pragmatic approach:** Oman has lines of communication with Iran openly; Kuwait and Qatar had done same and now the UAE has initiated pragmatic arrangements.

- **Costly alternatives:** The Record has shown that the alternative of exclusive security arrangements promotes armament drives, enhances insecurity and aggravates regional tensions.

All framework for the region should aims at ensuring:

- Conditions of peace and stability in individual littoral states.
- Freedom to all states of the Gulf littoral to exploit their hydrocarbon and other natural resources and export them.
- Freedom of commercial shipping in international waters of the Persian Gulf.
- Freedom of access to, and outlet from, Gulf waters through the Strait of Hormuz.

India's Relation with the Persian Gulf:

- **Geographical and historical:**

- The governments in the Gulf are India-friendly.
- **Trade:** The bilateral trade between India and GCC is of around \$121 billion and remittances of \$49 billion from a workforce of over nine million.
- **Import for India:** GCC suppliers account for around 34% of our crude imports and national oil companies in Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi are partners in a \$44 billion investment in the giant Ratnagiri oil refinery.
- Saudi Aramco is reported to take a 20% stake in Reliance oil-to-chemicals business.

- **Importance of Iran:**

- **Complex India-Iran relationship:** Particularly due to overt American pressure.
- **Resources:** Iran neighbours Turkey and some countries of Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea region. Its size, politico-technological potential and economic resources can be useful for India.

Way Forward

Indian interests lie in the totality, peace and regional stability and access to the region's markets in terms of trade, technology and manpower resources.

58. Importance of E-Diplomacy in the time of COVID-19.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Context: The first India-Australia virtual leaders' summit held on June 4 and discussed issues ranging from military interoperability to jointly tackling COVID-19.

E-Diplomacy:

- **Migration to online mediums:** The Nations have shifted to online mediums with video conference calls due to the dangers posed by COVID-19. It has compelled the traditionally glad-handing, backslapping and tourism-promoting art of summit diplomacy to online summits.

Advantages of E-summits:	Disadvantages of E-summits:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physically safer for leaders.• Time saving.• Low economic costs on events with less spent on physical journeys.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doubts: Without all the protocols and structured dialogues of summits, it is doubtful if major breakthroughs or deals requiring direct intervention of leaders can happen.• Less productive: In terms of deliverables, especially where crucial sticking points such as India-China issues on borders.• Broader political goals: Online summits may not satisfy the broader political goals and bigger objectives that heads of state carry with them.

In pre-COVID-19 times: Summit venues used to be thoroughly sanitised and debugged to prevent sensitive foreign policy content from being spied upon or leaked. Now with many countries moving towards digital summits and E-diplomacy, it will bring the technological challenge for them.

Cyber Security Challenge to E-Diplomacy:

- **Hacking:** It is riskier and could be subject to hacking of classified content.
- This could reduce the spontaneity of their conversations.
- **Important issues:** It is arguable whether new ideas or proposals which require geo-strategic alignments can be discussed in e-summits.

India's efforts at E-Diplomacy:

- **India's multilateral 'e-diplomacy' since the COVID-19 outbreak:**
 - The PM convened the SAARC leaders' video conference.
 - Joined the Extraordinary G20 Leaders' Summit via video link.
 - Made his maiden appearance at the NAM virtual summit.
- **Elaborate summit with Australia:**
 - It involved the exchange of multiple agreements such as the two countries upgrading their relations to a 'comprehensive strategic partnership'.

Way Forward

Despite the Cyber security and productivity concerns e-summits must go on as diplomacy.

59. Failure of G7 in handling world issues

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS-2: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Context: The next G7 summit scheduled in Washington DC has been postponed by the U.S. President.

What is G7?

- It is an informal group of advanced economies to discuss world issues.

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- **Emergence:** As a restricted club of the rich democracies in the early 1970s.
- After the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, the OPEC imposed embargo against Canada, Japan, the Netherlands, and the United States by the OPEC which led to the quadrupling of oil prices.
- **Informal discussion:** The OPEC actions shocked the economies around the world. The French President invited the Finance Ministers of five of the most developed members of the OECD- the US, Germany, Japan, Italy and the UK for an informal discussion on global issues.
- **Transformation into G7 Summit:** In the next year by the heads of government with the inclusion of Canada (1976) and the European Commission/Community (later Union) attending as a non-enumerated member.
- **G7 TO G8:** With the inclusion of Russia on the initiative of the U.S. President and British PM in 1998. This ended with Russia's expulsion following the annexation of Crimea in 2014.

The limitations of G7:

- **Failure to address global challenges:** The G7 failed to address the economic crisis of 2007-08 which led to the rise of the G20. Infact, the G20 has provided a degree of confidence by promoting open markets and stimulus
- **Failure in dealing with contemporary issues:** It failed in dealing with issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, the challenge of the Daesh.
- **Failure to reach a consensus:** Though, it had announced its members would phase out all fossil fuels and subsidies but has not announced any plan of action to do so.

Fact: The G7 countries account for 59% of historic global CO2 emissions (“from 1850 to 2010”) and their coal fired plants emit “twice more CO2 than those of the entire African continent”.

- **Rise of IS:** Three of the G7 countries were among the top 10 countries contributing volunteers to Daesh, which had between 22,000-30,000 foreign fighters just two years ago.

With the failures of G7, there are certain economic circumstances which have changed in the current world.

Changed Economic circumstances:

- **Share in global GDP:**
 - When constituted, the G7 countries accounted for close to two-thirds of global GDP.
 - But, according to the 2017 report of the accountancy firm, PwC, “The World in 2050”, they now account for less than a third of global GDP on a purchasing power parity (PPP) basis and less than half on market exchange rates (MER) basis.
- **Emerging economies:**
 - The seven largest emerging economies (E7, or “Emerging 7”) comprising Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Russia and Turkey account for over a third of global GDP on PPP terms and over a quarter on MER basis.
 - India's economy is already the third largest in the world in PPP terms.
- **Future of economies:**

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- By 2050, the PwC Report predicts, six of the seven of the world's best performing economies will be China, India, the US, Indonesia, Brazil and Russia.
- It projects that India's GDP will increase to \$17 trillion in 2030 and \$42 trillion in 2050 in PPP terms, in second place after China.

With changed economic circumstances, there are talks of expansion of G7.

Talks of expansion of G7:

- **Outdated:** The US President declared that the G7 is a no longer properly represented the current world.
- **Alternative:** He asked for a G10 or G11 instead with the inclusion of India, South Korea, Australia and possibly Russia or including the Five Eyes countries (an intelligence alliance comprising Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the US).
- **Future of China:** The US is involved in a crisis with China over COVID-19. India has attended several G7 summits earlier as a special invitee for its outreach sessions.

The COVID-19 once again shows the limitations of G7 in handling core world issues. So, there is a need for a new institution to tackle world issues.

Need for a new institution:

- **The world is in a state of disorder:** The global economy has stalled over the COVID-19. Nations need ability and resilience to cope with the current crisis with the revival of multilateralism. Existing international institutions have proven themselves unequal to world issues.
- **Need of new mechanism:** It would be ideal to include in it the seven future leading economies. Such as the 2005 ad hoc experiment by the UK PM in bringing together the G7 and the BRICS countries.
- **Observing international law:** The new mechanism should focus more on it and prevent the retreat from liberal values on which public goods are established.
- **Immediate Challenge:**
 - Global public health and the revival of growth and trade in a sustainable way.
 - To ensure effective implementation of the 1975 Biological Weapons Convention and the prevention of any possible cheating by its state parties by the possible creation of new microorganisms or viruses by using recombinant technologies.

Way Forward

With the world in disorder, a new mechanism will have value only if it focuses on key global issues.

60. Significance of West Asia for India

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Context: Analysing the importance of the West Asia/Gulf region for India and its foreign policy.



Importance of West Asia:

- **Indian Diaspora:** An estimated figure of close to nine million Indians work in West Asia.
- **Remittances:**
- It send back more than 56% of India's annual infusion of \$80 billion in remittances.
- The UAE alone is responsible for \$19 billion in remittances, being the third largest trade partner of India after the United States and China.

Energy Security:

- India gets around 60% of its hydrocarbon from West Asia.
- On an annualised basis, India saves up to \$1.35 billion for each \$1 drop in oil prices.
- The softening oil prices have helped cushion the impact of the national lockdown on the balance of payments.
- India has also taken advantage of the low prices to build up its strategic reserves.

The COVID-19 has caused stress to all economies of the world including West Asia and India.

Effect of COVID-19 on India-West Asia:

- **Repatriation of Indians:** India had repatriated a large number of its citizens under Vande Bharat Mission, a majority of whom are expected to be from the West Asia region.
- **Crash of Oil prices:**
- It was triggered by expectations of oversupply following a dispute on output caps between Saudi Arabia and Russia.
- It was further worsened by the crash in demand due to COVID-19 which will carry massive costs to the West Asian economies and to foreign workers employed there.
- According to a 2019 U.S.-U.A.E. Business Council report, the UAE's hospitality sector itself contributes 4.6% of the country's GDP, making nearly 600,000 jobs that are mostly fulfilled by foreign workers. Some reports suggest that up to 30% of these jobs could be lost.

- **Reverse migration of Indian blue-collar workers:**
 - **Reason:** The infrastructure development projects in oil-rich States are stalled due to COVID-19.
 - India will share the brunt in terms of loss of trade revenue and remittances.
 - The return of semi-skilled and skilled workers into an economy may become a point of worry as India is already suffering from huge unemployment.
- **Shrunk in investments of West Asia:**
 - The major sovereign wealth funds and other financial institutions in West Asia have been hit hard by COVID-19.
 - **Example of Saudi Arabia:** The COVID-19 has affected its major projects such as the \$500 billion mega-city of Neom planned on the coast of the Red Sea.

India has taken some steps to reduce effects of such problems.

Steps by India to improve economy:

- **Positive message to West Asian investors:** India is well-placed to attract a significant amount of capital from West Asia such as reports of investment by UAE's Mubadala and Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF).
- **Mitigating Reverse migration:** The government has launched the Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support (SWADES) to capture the skills profile of returning workers and house them in a central portal that can be accessed by Indian and foreign companies.
- **Attracting long term capital:** The government has set up an empowered group headed by Cabinet Secretary to take necessary steps to attract FDI into India.
- **Example:** The \$50 billion mega-refinery project in Maharashtra. Saudi Aramco and the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company have committed to investing \$25 billion in the project. There is a need for Fast-track resolution of endless litigation that has been bothering the sale of a major stake of Mumbai airport by GVK to a consortium that includes the UAE sovereign fund and Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA).

Way Forward

A strong and positive message by New Delhi is crucial to the region's investors for addressing the distress caused by the COVID-19.

61. India -China relations - Non-Alignment is the key

Source - [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus - GS 2 - Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Context - Recently Chinese soldiers have moved into Indian territory across the Line of Actual Control (LAC) which demands analysis of this situation from all perspectives.

India-China Border



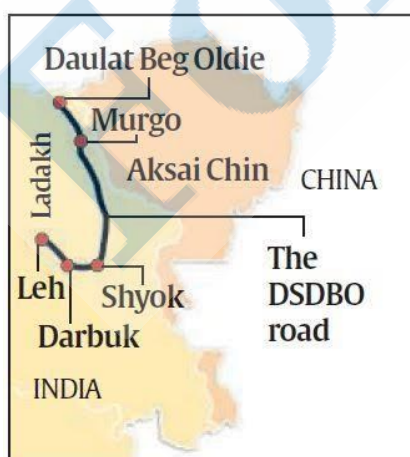
India-China border is divided into three sectors- The middle sector is the least disputed sector, while the western sector witnesses the highest transgressions between the two sides.

Line of Actual control

1. **LAC is only a concept** - The border is not fully demarcated, and the LAC is neither clarified nor confirmed by the two countries. This has led to different perceptions of the LAC for the two sides, and soldiers from either side try to patrol the area up to their perception of the LAC.
2. **Chinese assertiveness** - A higher number of transgressions in Ladakh and Sikkim in May, 2020 indicates that the Chinese soldiers are coming to the Indian side more often now, and their movements are being observed and recorded by the Indian soldiers which is escalating the situation on border.

Reasons for large scale movement by China in Ladakh and Naku la of Sikkim:

1. **Infrastructure building by India** - China is responding to India's efforts to bolster border infrastructure in Ladakh after the completion of the Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldie (DSDBO) road (near the confluence of Shyok and Galwan rivers).



2. **Pre-emptive step** - Chinese army is physically changing the ground position and preventing our troops from undertaking regular patrolling in the area.

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3. **Diverting attention from Internal dynamics** – The political pressure from all the countries regarding China's effort to contain COVID has led to disturbance in internal politics as well. The Hong Kong protests have also questioned the central authority.
4. **Discouraging Investment in India** – Due to disruption in supply-chain amid the COVID pandemic and the flight of MNC's from China has increased possibility of these companies to settle in India. Such border disruptions usually discourage the investors as there will be lack of stability and peace in country.
5. **India's alignment with USA** – A few instances could be highlighted to confirm the perception that India tends to side with the U.S. and against China whenever there is a conflict of interest between the two.
 - India is today a member of the Quad (the U.S., Japan, Australia and India) which has a definite anti-China connotation.
 - U.S. President Donald Trump's latest step of redesigning the G-7, including countries such as India (India has conveyed its acceptance), but excluding China, provides China yet another instance of India and China being in opposite camps.
6. **India- China relationship** – Following instances prove that relations between the two countries have been steadily deteriorating.
 - India is against China's Belt Road Initiative (BRI). India also loses no opportunity to declaim against the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). China further views India's assertions regarding Gilgit-Baltistan, as an implicit attack on the CPEC, China's flagship programme.
 - Amid COVID crises, India was one of the earliest countries to put curbs and restrictions on the Chinese foreign direct investment.

Implications of the transgressions

1. **Updation in the Standard Operating Procedure** - The established SOPs and drills have not worked this time and new drills will be required as the situation on the ground has changed.
2. **Unreasonable concessions by India** – Due to increased Chinese pressure, India might resolve the border issue by going soft on China in international institutions like World Health Assembly.
3. **Wider confrontation or possibility of war** - Faced with the disaster of the Great Leap Forward in 1960's, and increasing isolation globally, Mao in 1962 chose to strike at India rather than confront Russia or the West. History can repeat itself in 2020 also.

Way Forward –India has consistently followed a different policy in the past, and it is advisable that it remains truly non-aligned and not become part of any coalition that would not be in India's long-term interest.

62. India needs a new China policy

Source – [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus – GS 2 - Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and affecting India's interests.

Context – China has never hidden its goals and national interests; but India has refused to see what is in plain sight and that has led to a Chinese conundrum in India.

India's current policy is a failure as:

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1. **No focus on realpolitik** - It is based on persistent political fantasies like India's vision of Asian unity rather than practical ground situation where China only promotes its own national interests.
 - For Instance - While India never stopped arguing with the West in 1970's, China developed a sustained engagement with the US, Europe and Japan. This was for better economic cooperation which can help China rise as global power.
2. **No learning from past mistakes** – Consistent refusal to learn from past mistakes like done in Nehruvian Era which led to war of 1962.
 - India had consistently misread China's interests and ambitions which initiated with its occupation of Tibet and then considerable force building in India-China border.
3. **Shifting the blame on West** – There is a general belief that the US and the West are at the source of India's problems with China. The belief is that they are using India as a pawn for their interest in region which is not liked by China.
 - America is not dividing India and China because our respective territorial nationalisms and irreconcilable conflicts of interest do that job rather well.

Table 1 - Timeline of failed Indian attempts to build Asian and anti-Western solidarity with China:

Rabindranath Tagore	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aimed to develop shared Asian spiritual civilisation with China.• Chinese blamed him to thwart their attempts of modernisation.
JawaharLal Nehru	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aimed to defeat imperialism in Asia with the help of China but failed as Congress denied to join China in defeating Japanese Imperialism.• Supported China when West isolated it which was followed by war of 1962.
PV Narsimha Rao	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Political Cooperation with China and Russia to build multipolar world in Post Cold war era.• China went on to become unipolar in Asia and Bipolar in World.

Suggested solutions to devise new Policy:

1. **Enhancing internal political coherence** – All the political parties and other stakeholders need to have one voice for issues of national importance which would strong signals to outsiders regarding our national interest and domestic compulsions to achieve same.
2. **Accelerating economic modernisation** – India needs to develop its manufacturing sector to reduce trade deficit with China as we have become heavily depended on them for import of raw material as well as final goods in sector like pharmaceuticals, chemicals and electronics.
3. **Expanding India's national power** – India needs to exercise strategic autonomy while framing its relation with other powers. This implies that for our national interest we need to align with West even if that is not liked by China.

Way Forward - China, like the great powers before it, wants to redeem its territorial claims, has the ambition to bend the neighbourhood to its will, reshape the global order to suit its interests and India needs to acknowledge this to carve a new Chinese Policy.

63. Importance of our Sea lanes

Source: The Indian Express

Syllabus: GS 2 - Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Context: Analysing the importance of securing seas at the time of violent standoff going on between India and China.

Background:

- **Laws for seas:** India has legislation that requires foreign marine scientific vessels to seek licence prior to undertaking activities in Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and Continental Shelf (CS).
- Our navy forbade Chinese maritime research and survey vessels that entered our EEZ and CS without our prior consent in 2018 and 2019.
- **Claims of Chinese:** They are serving the interests of global scientific research but it is well-known that China uses civilian research vessels to gather crucial oceanographic data for military purposes.

The Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (CSIS) survey shows that China deployed 25 maritime survey missions in the Indo-Pacific between April 2019 and March 2020. This is only marginally less than the 27 missions mounted by the next six countries taken cumulatively.

Global concerns about the Chinese vessels:

- China has mounted at least six survey missions covering the waters between Indonesia and Sri Lanka in 2019-2020. For example- the Australians voiced concern over the activities of the Chinese vessel in international waters between the Australian mainland and Christmas Island.

Military expansion overseas:

- Critics argue that China follows a “pattern of denial and obfuscation” in its military expansion overseas. For example- Beijing initially denied its intention to militarise the Spratly Islands but eventually acknowledged that they serve a military purpose.
- **Intelligence gathering:** It is believed that PLA Navy (PLAN) intelligence-gathering ships have sailed our coastline to gather information on naval facilities and ships. China may well take the position that their activities are legitimate under international law.

Laws regarding seas:

- The Law of the Sea Convention says that military vessels have “right to innocent passage” to pass through the territorial sea of a coastal state without entering internal waters till they are not against the peace, good order and security of the coastal state.
- **Different interpretations of laws on the question of scientific surveys in the EEZ of coastal states:**
- For example- the US maintains that hydrographical surveys without prior notice or consent are lawful in line with centuries of state practice, customary and international laws.

The collection of vital hydrographical data is critical to China's understanding of the sub-surface environment.

China could step up their efforts to significantly improved data in the seas between the Malacca Straits and Djibouti through:

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- **By sending survey vessel without our permission into our EEZ:** For example in May, the Chinese survey vessel accompanied by two Chinese coast guard ships and several fishing vessels entered the Malaysian EEZ in the South China Sea for over a month despite Malaysian protests.
- **By deploying unmanned underwater drones in our EEZ:** While the mother vessel remains just outside the EEZ. A recent Forbes report claims that Sea-Wing underwater and unmanned drones were launched in mid-December 2019.
- **Sailing PLAN intelligence-gathering ships:** Either along our coasts or in the waters off our island territories on grounds that this is “innocent passage” by naval vessels permissible under the laws.

Though we have the necessary capacity to monitor and interdict survey vessels well before they enter our EEZ, we need a comprehensive strategy to tackle future challenges.

Need of Comprehensive Underwater Domain Awareness (UDA) strategy:

- **Coordination:** Between our national security agencies, the navy and the government departments responsible for the marine environment and disaster management.
- **Collaboration:** With like-minded countries who share our concerns. Such cooperation includes deepening of real-time information exchange, co-development and deployment of UDA monitoring devices and closer coordination in the patrolling of sea lanes to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Way Forward

High priority should be given to building a Maritime Domain Awareness Especially Underwater Domain Awareness (UDA) capabilities.

64. Why China is being aggressive along the LAC?

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2- India and its neighbourhood- relations

Context: Analysing the national security challenge to India posed by the ongoing tensions along the LAC.



Background:

- In a first incident of fatalities on the India-China border in 45 years, 20 Indian soldiers were martyred in Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh.
- **Claims on the entire Galwan Valley:** China has revived its claim and has asked India to pull back from the areas.
- Satellite images suggest that China has set up defence positions in the valley as well as the disputed “Fingers” of Pangong Tso.

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- Both sides are engaged in a face-off at Hot Springs.

India has been very careful with China. Overall, India has stayed away from criticizing China on controversial topics such as its “de-radicalisation” camps in Xinjiang, Hong Kong protests etc. Still tensions are increased along the LAC.

Reasons for increasing tensions along the LAC:

Ambitious power:

- China is now an ambitious rising power which wants to reorient the global order. China is not just an ideological state that intends to export communism to other countries like Soviet Union of the Cold War.

Peaceful rise phase of China is over:

- China had adopted different tactical positions such as hide your capacity and bide your time or peaceful development during its rise. Now China believes that the global order is at a breaking point as seen in the bad shape of the global economy, crisis in globalisation etc.

Salami slice strategy:

- China is fighting back through “salami tactics” — where a dominant power attempts to establish its hegemony piece by piece. It denotes China’s strategy of territorial expansion in the South China Sea and the Himalayan regions and India is one slice.

China sees India as an ally in progress of US:

- China doesn’t see India as a ‘swing state’ anymore. Many in the West called India the “counterweight” to China’s rise and this increased tension is Beijing’s definite message that it is not deterred by the counterweight.

Pandemic factor:

- China has room for geopolitical manoeuvring in the world grappled with the pandemic such as Europe has been devastated by the virus.

Problems of India:

- The Indian economy was in trouble even before COVID-19. There was Social upheaval over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019 and the NRC.
- **Tensions in the neighbourhood:** Tensions with Pakistan have been high, boundary issues with Nepal and Sri Lanka diversified its foreign policy and China is making deep inroads into that region.

Way Forward

- India needs a national security strategy that’s decoupled from the compulsions of domestic politics and anchored in neighbourhood realism.
- It should stand up to China’s bullying on the border with a long-term focus on enhancing capacities and winning back its friendly neighbours.

65. The Peace process in Afghanistan

Source: The Indian Express

Syllabus: GS 2 - Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests

Context: The “shock and awe” mission of the US Special Envoy for Afghan Reconciliation has created polarizing waves in India.

The US special Envoy especially called for India’s direct engagement with the Taliban. The proposal is being debated between proponents and opponents.

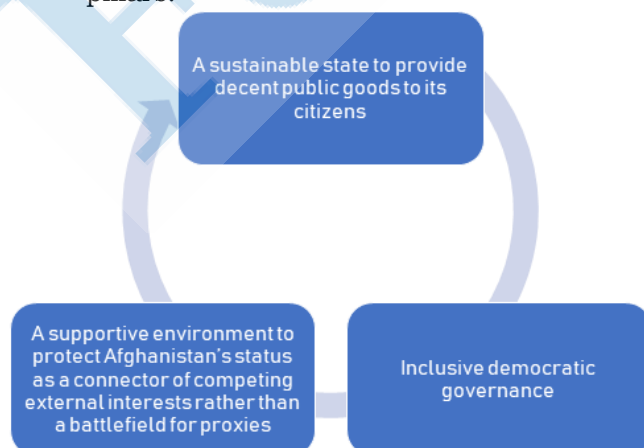
Supporters of suggestion	Opponent to suggestion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel that the takeover by Taliban is inevitable and hence it's important to appease the new victors. • There is deterrence to western authority among some segments of Indian policy-makers who want to engage directly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature of Afghan conflict is complex and exhausting and there is need for Delhi to stand its ground in supporting the post-2001 constitutional order (an order that can accommodate the Taliban as a non-violent political stakeholder). • The critics see little value in engaging with a group that remains fully under the control of Pakistan. • In line with Delhi's stated policy of supporting an Afghan-led process, the critics recommend following the Afghan government's lead in engaging with the Taliban.

Evaluating the suggestion within a historical context:

- **Doha agreement 2020:**
 - This agreement between the Taliban and the US has effectively changed the status of the post-2001 constitutional order from "at the table" to an "on the table" new reality.
- **US priorities:**
 - US has capacity to manufacture a new reality to suit its interests. Pakistan has been the center piece of the US's South Asia engagement despite occasional rhetorical admonition and half-baked sanctions.
 - **Before Soviet invasions in 1979:** The US joined Pakistan in supporting the Mujahideen in toppling the Afghan government through Operation Cyclone.
 - **After the collapse of the Taliban regime in late 2001:** In 2004, the US recognized Pakistan as "major non-Nato ally".
 - **US steps to appease Pakistan's concerns:** The US made some major Afghanistan-related political, security and defence decisions such as:
 - Downsizing the Afghan National Security and Defense Forces.
 - Promoting pro-Pakistan officials within the Afghan government.
 - Limiting India's role to just a large NGO.
 - Projecting the Taliban as an independent nationalistic insurgency.

How to achieve Peace in Afghanistan:

- Afghanistan will be at peace if and when there are a set of three mutually reinforcing pillars:



- **A coherent peace process should be based on the four pillars:**



- Inclusivity has to be recognised as a cross-cutting principle, coupled with a primary role for Afghan ownership and ensuing Afghan responsibility.
- Despite its structural flaws, the post-2001 constitutional order has the capacity and legitimacy to become the basis for an inclusive peace process.

Role of India and Way Forward:

- India must come up with ideas and structures in the fields of development, politics, security and diplomacy.
- Similar to Iran's tenacity and resolve in supporting the UN-recognised Syrian government, India can and should champion an inclusive, multifaceted and Kabul-centric peace process.
- Despite an adventurist temptation, "Afghanistan in pieces" is a nightmarish outcome for many stakeholders and even the Pakistan military establishment.

66. Resolving border disputes in South Asia

Source – [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus – GS 2 - India and its neighborhood- relations

Context – In the backdrop of troublesome territorial assertions, the South Asian region needs to be rethought of as a region of regions.

Ongoing territorial assertions:

1. Kalapani dispute between India and Nepal
2. Ladakh – Galwan valley dispute between India and China

Issues witnessed in solving the territorial dispute

1. **State-centrism** - State-centrism, within the assumption of a South Asia, has given the state structure the propriety to be the sole arbiter of disputes, if any, among communities and regions falling within the territorial limits of nation states. This means that territorial boundaries are valued more than lives, livelihoods and the well-being of the people located at the edges of nation states.
2. **Region is contested idea** - The term "region" seems to be a contested idea in a South Asian context as none of the South Asian states has ever recognized and respected the idea of regional identity or regional politics. South Asia needs to be rethought, not as a region of states, but as a region of regions.

Reason for equating South Asia as region of region:

1. **Lifestyle of people** - The people living at the edges of nation states within South Asia does not actually belong to any of the two nation states. Or in other words, they belong to both the states at the same time as they frequently move from one nation to other for economic livelihood, to meet their ethnic relatives etc.

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2. **Success of regional groupings** – The state centric view of nations and mere rhetoric of regional cooperation is going to endanger the future of other regional experiments such as the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) or the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) sub-regional initiative.

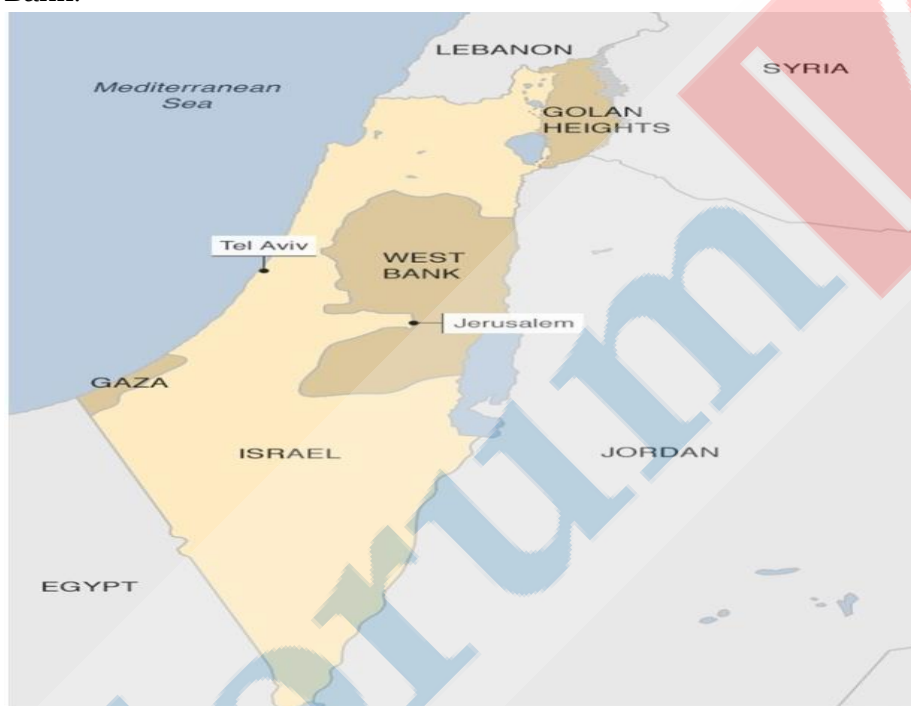
Way Forward- Both India and Nepal as well as other South Asian countries need to rethink South Asia as a region of regions before they submit to the enticements of a new language of “regional cooperation” to solve existing issues and for peace in region.

67. The existential threat to Palestine.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Context: There are reports that the PM of Israel is planning to annex 30% of the West Bank.



Background:

- It will include annexation of all the existing (post-1967) settlements in addition to areas surrounding them and access roads.
- The UN Secretary General called upon Israel to abandon its annexation plans and asked the Middle East Quartet (the US, Russia, the European Union and the UN) to resume its mandated mediatory role.

Whether the annexation is a violation of International law?

- **Annexation:** It is forcible acquisition of territory by one state at the expense of another state as per international law.
- **Violation of inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force:** It will be illegal if such an act is sanctified by Israel and according to some experts is the accepted position of all international legal bodies including the International Court of Justice.

- **Position by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN Human Rights):**
 - It described the annexation of occupied territory as a serious violation of the Charter of the UN and the Geneva Conventions and contrary to the fundamental rule affirmed many times by the UNSC and the General Assembly that acquisition of territory war or by force is inadmissible.
 - **Human rights violation:** It pointed out that the 53-year-old Israeli occupation is a source of profound human rights violations of the Palestinian people and these would only intensify after annexation.
 - It would lead to a separate territory for Palestinian with islands of disconnected land completely surrounded by Israel and no territorial connection with the outside world.
 - **21st century Apartheid:** The annexation would solidify an already unjust reality: two peoples living in the same space ruled by the same state but with profoundly unequal rights.

The effect of the plan:

- **Consequences:** There are no fixed understandings about the effect of plan on the status of private property owned by Palestinians (owns 23% of its land), rights to Palestinians with respect to Israeli Arabs of Palestinian origin (Muslim, Christian and Druze) who together constitute about 20% of Israel's population etc.
- **Effect on self-determination:** There are question marks whether it will take away from the Palestinians right to have their own state under the right of national self-determination recognised at times without number by the international community.
- **Demographic consequences:** By its foundation, Israel is not a Jewish state only because most of its inhabitants are Jews but It is a state for the Jews wherever they may be and for any Jew who wishes to be there. The plan will have effect on non-Jews peoples.
- **Changing ground realities:** Since the 1967 war, the Israeli effort has been to procrastinate a settlement. Now, Israel is a member of the international community and succeeded in normalising its relations with a wide range of countries. It also includes observance of globally accepted norms of state conduct. Israel did not fulfill it with the support of powerful friends and imperatives of geopolitics.

India and Way Forward

- India's amity with the Palestinian people and its principled support to their cause predates India's own independence.
- India needs to ask itself whether it supports the Israeli annexation plan that is in contravention of international legality.

Topic 19: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

68. What is the difference between India and China's approach with Africa?

Source: The Hindu

Syllabus: GS 2 - Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

Context: India and China have increased their outreach to Africa to help them fight the COVID-19 by providing medical assistance.

Economic and public health conditions are extremely vulnerable in Africa:

- **ill-equipped:** They have shortages of masks, ventilators, and even basic necessities such as soap and water.
- **Dependence:** Africa's cycle of chronic external aid dependence continues even in medical needs.

Critical aspects for China and India:

China	India
Money, political influence and elite level wealth creation.	An equal partnership with Africans and not merely with African elites concerned.
Strong state-to-state relations as opposed to people to people ties.	More people to people relations
Hard infrastructure projects and resource extraction.	Building local capacities

Beijing's donation diplomacy approach:

- **To raise Beijing's profile as a leading provider of "public goods" in the global public health sector:** China, being Africa's largest trading partner, dispatched medical protective equipment, testing kits, ventilators and medical masks to several African countries.
- **China's billionaire philanthropy:**
 - Tech founder Jack Ma donated three rounds of anti-coronavirus supplies.
 - Chinese embassies across Africa have taken the lead by coordinating both public and private donations to local stakeholders.
- **Controlling Guangzhou narrative:** For the most part, it succeeded in achieving these ends until China faced widespread backlash over the ill-treatment of African nationals in Guangzhou city. China has been successful in controlling the Guangzhou narrative due to the depth of its political influence in Africa.
- **Relying heavily on diplomatic support and cooperation from African countries in multilateral forum:** Beijing used African support for securing a win for Chinese candidates as the head of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and in the World Health Organization (WHO).

New Delhi's approach:

- **Opportunity to demonstrate its willingness to shoulder more responsibility:** Even with limited resources, India fighting the virus at home and reaching out to developing countries in need is a proof to India's status as a responsible and reliable global stakeholder.
- **Development assistance:** Africa has been the focus of India's development assistance and diplomatic outreach as seen in plans to open 18 new embassies.
- **India's role as 'the pharmacy of the world':** India is a supplier of low-cost, generic medicines.
- Pharmaceutical products along with refined petroleum products account for 40% of India's total exports to African markets.
- India is sending consignments of essential medicines, including hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) and paracetamol, to 25 African countries in addition to doctors and paramedics at a total cost of around ₹600 million (\$7.9 million) on a commercial and grant basis.
- The initial beneficiaries were the African Indian Ocean island nations of Mauritius, the Seychelles, Comoros, and Madagascar under India's 'Mission Sagar'.

- **e-ITEC COVID-19 management strategies training webinars:** It is a timely initiative exclusively aimed at training health-care professionals from Africa and the SAARC nations and sharing of best practices by Indian health experts. Nigeria, Kenya, Mauritius, and Namibia have been beneficiaries.
- **Health care partnership:** A few African countries such as Mauritius are pushing for health-care partnerships in traditional medicines and Ayurveda for boosting immunity.
- **Role of Indian Diaspora:**
 - The Indian community, especially in East African countries, has also been playing a crucial role in helping spread awareness.
 - Prominent Indian businessmen and companies in Nigeria and Kenya have donated money to the respective national emergency response funds.
 - Country-specific gurdwaras and temples have fed thousands of families by setting up community kitchens, helplines for seniors and distributing disinfectants and sanitisers.

Way Forward

Both New Delhi and Beijing need to adapt to the rising aspirations of the African continent.

69. Importance of impartial judging of Foreign Policy

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests.

Context: Analysing that judging history through the prism of the present can be very damaging to foreign policy formulation.

Biased judging of Past actors and their actions:

Accusation on handling Siachen Glacier to Pakistan:

- **Disengagement:** The disengagement of Indian and Pakistan forces from Siachen had been on the agenda of India-Pakistan talks for several years.
- **The sticking point:** It had been Pakistan's refusal to agree upon an Actual Ground Position Line from which forces of the two sides would withdraw to new positions.
- Pakistan finally conceded and it was decided that the disengagement would be done in phases with less risky areas in the first phase.
- This proposed agreement could not be pursued because the Cabinet Committee on Security failed to approve it. It was not a surrender but a worthwhile initiative due to the unfortunate and hostile trajectory of India-Pakistan relations.

Other instances of accusations:

- The former PM undertook the bus ride to Lahore in 1999 in the light of what we now know of Pakistani coincidental plans to capture the heights over Kargil.
- Critics questions the PM's unscheduled visit to Lahore in 2015 or the Pathankot and Uri terrorist incidents thereafter. Whether we should accuse him of endangering India's security because we were lulled into trusting Pakistani's goodwill.

There should not be a biased prism to judge past actors and their actions affecting the nation's interests.

Importance of historical perspective for formulating foreign policy:

- To learn from what turned out to be correct decisions and what turned out to be errors of judgement. The fear of being proved wrong may paralyze diplomacy.

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- **Assessing in the light of historical circumstances:** To understand success or failure using then regional and international environment.
- **For example:**
- Due to Western support for Pakistan on Kashmir issue and China's hostility to India, the Indo-Soviet partnership between 1960 and 1990 was a good strategic move.
- During the Cold War, particularly after China and the U.S. became virtual allies, Indo-Soviet partnership acquired great significance and played a role in the birth of Bangladesh in 1971.
- Similarly, the India-US partnership today doesn't negate the earlier partnership with the Soviet Union.
- **National consensus:** There has been general acknowledgement that irrespective of their ideological or political persuasion, successive governments have upheld India's interests firmly and judiciously.

The foreign policy should not be criticized on the basis of domestic political factors only.

Way Forward:

- Foreign policy should not be fallen victim to very narrow and cynical fighting in domestic politics.
- **Upholding nation's larger interests:** Policymakers must not have their eye on how something will play out domestically. For example- Pakistan has become a domestic political issue which prevents any kind of sober and well-considered posture towards that neighbouring country. We thus limit our room for manoeuvre.

Topic 20: Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

70. The Future of Multilateralism

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2- Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

Context: The world is witnessing a growing rivalry between US and China and is moving towards a new Cold War.

Background:

- **Vulnerabilities of current system:** The pandemic has exposed the weaknesses of the current world order. The failure of institutions like WHO in timely response to pandemic has urged a need for changes in the world order.
- **Need of new Agenda setting:** There is a need of new agendas in the global institutions. India can help in raising those important changes through the help of the chair of the Executive Board of the World Health Assembly (it is the decision-making body of the WHO) or by being a non-permanent member of UN Security Council in 2021.
- **New international system:** The new globalisation model should be based on humanity, fairness and equality.

Requirements to benefit from Changing Global order:

- **To have a bold vision.** Such as American policy towards globalisation after world war 2.
- **Make the right strategic choice.** Such as Britain quickly built the largest military in the Subcontinent using the land revenue of Bengal and over time conquered India.

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Changes in current world order:

- **Changing dynamics at world institutions:** The clash between China and the U.S. at the just concluded World Health Assembly in May marks the end of the multilateralism of the past 70 years. The donor-recipient relationship between developed and developing countries has ended with China's pledge of \$2-billion. It has shown the reduction in hegemony of US. The agenda-setting role of the G7 over UN institutions has also been effectively challenged by WHO ignoring the reform diktat of the U.S. leading to its withdrawal.
- **Shift in UN:** After World War II, the newly independent states were not consulted when the U.S. imposed global institutions fostering trade, capital and technology dependence and ignoring socio-economic development. The UN is not affectively dealing with the aspirations of the contemporary world.
- **New Multidimensional institution:** The U.S. faces a tough task in seeking to lead as China's re-emergence is based on technology, innovation and trade balancing U.S. military superiority. The superiority of the west is now under question with the failure of west in dealing with the disease.
- **Shift towards Asia:** The pandemic has accelerated the shift of global wealth to Asia which is suggesting an inclusive global order based on principles drawn from ancient Asian civilisations. The global wealth for long has been concentrated in the US and Europe. The COVID-19 has worst hit them which has provided more opportunities to better placed Asian economies.
- **For India:** The strategic issue is neither adjustment to China's power nor deference to U.S. leadership.

Requirements in New World Order:

1. **Asian Century should be defined in terms of peaceful co-existence rather than post-colonial sovereignty:** Non-interference in the internal affairs of others is a key lesson from the decline of the U.S. and the rise of China. Massive arms imports resources should be used to enhance internal capacity and mould the global digital economy between state-centric (China), firm-centric (the U.S.) and public-centric (India) systems.
2. **New principles for trade:** It is required by a global community at comparable levels of well-being. For example, rejecting the 25-year-old trade rule creating intellectual property monopolies.
3. **Restructuring the order:** There is a need to restructure both the economic order and societal behaviour for equitable sustainable development especially for developing countries and vulnerable countries.

The shift in power has the potential for India to move towards friendly and effective multilateralism which can be achieved by the NAM-Plus and BRICS.

This new multilateralism should rely on:

- Outcomes and not rules.
- 'Security' downplayed for 'comparable levels of wellbeing'
- A new P-5 that is not based on the G7.

Way Forward

India can set the world response, also using the opportunity to recover its global thought leadership

71. What should be India's Approach at WHO Executive Board?

Source – [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus – GS 2 - Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate

Context – In the ongoing tussle between USA and China which includes war of words regarding role of WHO's response in Pandemic, India needs to act tacitly with wisdom

WHO – World Health Organisation

The World Health Organization is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for international public health.

Executive Board

- a. The Executive Board is composed of 34 technically qualified members elected for three-year terms. In annual Board meeting the members agree upon the agenda for the World Health Assembly and the resolutions to be considered by the Health Assembly.
- b. The main functions of the Board are to implement the decisions and policies of the Health Assembly, and advise and generally to facilitate its work.
- c. Recently, Minister of Health and Family Welfare, was elected the Chair of the World Health Organization's (WHO) executive board. The elevation affords India an important platform to steer the global public health response to COVID-19.

Suggested policy approach being the leader of Executive Board

1. **Focusing on prevention of zoonotic diseases not tussles** - As the virus' chain of transmission is broken, the focus should shift to identifying the animal-to-human transmission origins of SARS-CoV-2 not on the ongoing tussle. Wuhan and other previously infected zones could yet be susceptible to the risk of viral reintroduction.
2. **Transparent Review of WHO's and China response** - India need to steer WHO secretariat to fast-track the impartial and holistic review of the WHO's – and China's – early response to the outbreak. The review's findings should illuminate best practice and highlight areas for improvement, both in the WHO's leadership and capacity as well as member states' implementation of the International Health Regulations
3. **Affordable vaccine** - India has to promote the establishment of an appropriate multilateral governance mechanism for ensuring equitable access to COVID-19 therapeutics and vaccines for all countries.
4. **Exercising strategic autonomy** - India must maintain distance from the West's campaign to re-seat Taiwan as an observer at the WHA as it is more of domestic political maneuvering for West and Taiwan than Chinese or international ostracism.
5. **Eco-centrism and sustainable development** - India needs to lead the call for a permanent global ban on the consumption and trade of wild animals, with limited exceptions built-in for scientific research, species protection and traditional livelihood interests.

Way Forward – India has the opportunity to present the world that as a leader we can steer the world towards fair treatment and inclusive development of all as we regard the world as **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam** which means "the world is one family".

72. Multilateralism post COVID-19

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 - Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

Context: The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the desire for greater global cooperation amongst most states.

The COVID-19 outbreak has placed all international institutions under a magnifying glass. Most have not performed as per expectation.

Issues in current Model of Multilateralism:

- **Belied the ability to update swiftly:** This happened even when there was great power cooperation rather than great power rivalry like now. For example, Resolution 50/52 adopted unanimously by the UN to amend the Charter for deleting the 'enemy State' clauses from some articles has still not seen action even after 25 years.
- **Underperformance of such institutions:** Such as the General Assembly now passes resolutions through no objection procedure.
- **Reverted to multilateralism 0.1:** Though they require reforms and adapt to new realities, the pursuit of change by threatening to leave multilateral institutions is a phenomenon that was witnessed only during the period of the League of Nations which ultimately failed it.

There has been growing stress over the influence of China in such institutions.

Whether there is Over influence of China in such institutions?

- **No over representation:** China is not over represented in terms of staff positions as claimed by critics though China contributes nearly 10% of the UN's budget.
- **Peacekeeping:** If the head count of senior staff from UN regular and peacekeeping budgets is taken together, the staff percentage falls dramatically, although China contributes 14% of the peacekeeping budget.
- **Voluntary contributions by China:** They usually encompass all contributions like bilateral and multilateral. But by other indices, many contribute much more.
- **Better promoting its interests:** China has warded off attacks against it in multilateral fora even with the aid of the heads of these organisations. But it is yet to display an ability to set the multilateral agenda and dominate the discourse on an array of issues like that of U.S.

Capture of the existing multilateral order by a new hegemon is antithetical to the ethos of multilateralism.

Changes Required in Multilateralism:

- **Global Norm setting:** Multilateral institutions must work towards norms which are inclusive rather than working for particular countries.
- **Better multilateral architecture:** They should place more importance to functions rather than on processes.
- **Enhanced engagement:** COVID-19 crisis has increased emphasis on sovereign decision of states. There will be a need for more cooperation between states in issues having global effects.
- **Global acceptance of norms:** There should not be coalitions for own benefits in such institutions. Their norms must be accepted by all.

Way Forward

India visualises the world as Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and should neither permit capsizing of the order nor allow it to be captured by any superpower.

General Studies - 3

General Studies - 3

Topic 1: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

1. Fiscal stimulus under Atma Nirbhar
2. Economic slowdown
3. Judicial intervention in the economy
4. Rethinking the old ways - Pharma Sector
5. Private Sector – Non-participation in combating Pandemic
6. Fiscal Deficit – Direct Monetization as possible solution
7. COVID 19 Causing Contractual Disputes
8. The upcoming era of gig economy

Topic 2: Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

9. Wave of Pandemic in Rural India
10. Ease or doing business versus Ease of living

Topic 3: Government Budgeting.

11. Getting out of the 'guns, germs and steel' crisis

Topic 4: Major crops-cropping patterns in various parts of the country, – different types of irrigation and irrigation systems storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints; e-technology in the aid of farmers.

12. Need to shift from subsidies to Cash Transfers to double farmers income.
13. Ordinances introduced to bring changes in agriculture
14. Unrestrained Sale of agricultural land
15. Food security and farmer welfare

Topic 5: Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security; Technology missions; economics of animal-rearing.

16. Subsidies in Agriculture
17. Will the recent Agri-reforms help farmers?
18. Mobilising resources with FCI Reforms
19. One nation one ration card

Topic 8: Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

20. Atma nirbhar Mission – Local is synonymous to Import Substitution
21. Can India decouple itself from Chinese manufacturing?
22. On Government e-Marketplace

Topic 9: Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

23. Civil Aviation
24. Telecom sector and Policy Uncertainty
25. COVID-19 and public transport

Topic 11: Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

26. On India's coronavirus numbers
27. On ICMR antibody test study
28. Digital media redefining political communication

Topic 14: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

29. Why is the Draft EIA Notification flawed?
30. Understanding Human-Animal Conflict
31. Solving the Human-animal conflict

Topic 15: Disaster and disaster management.

32. Earthquakes in India
33. How negligence and violations led to Vishakhapatnam Gas leak case?
34. Climate-Change – The looming crises
35. What happened in Baghjan? - The Baghjan oilfield blast case

Topic 17: Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security.

36. How to handle China and Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir?

Topic 18: Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security; money-laundering and its prevention.

37. Law enforcement agencies in controlling COVID-19 and Issues of Law Enforcement

Topic 19: Security challenges and their management in border areas – linkages of organized crime with terrorism.

38. The question of Kashmir

Topic 20: Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate.

39. Understanding Swiss Cheese Model in Indian context
40. Importance of a strong Air Force in LAC
41. Indian Navy – The Third Pillar in our security establishment

Topic 1: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

1. Fiscal stimulus under Atma Nirbhar

Source – [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus – GS 3 - Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Context –IMF's report –Policy Tracker has appreciated India's fiscal stimulus measures taken under Atma Nirbhar mission

Following are the arguments based on which India's fiscal stimulus has been applauded:

1. Fiscal measures adopted by other countries - Among developing nations, India has one of the highest fiscal stimulus for reviving the economy.

Developed Nations	Developing Nations
a. Japan – 21.1 of GDP	a. India – 5% of GDP
b. USA – 13% OF GDP	b. China – 2.5 % of GDP
c. European Union – 4% of GDP	c. Brazil - 8% of GDP

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2. Decoding India's Fiscal measures – India's fiscal stimulus is wide ranging and covers all the major sectors of economy.



3. Components of Fiscal stimulus

- a. **Above the line component** - “Above the line” measures refer to increases in government expenditures and reductions in tax revenues—directly impacting economic activity via fiscal multipliers.
- b. **Below the line component** - “Below the line” measures (loans and equity stakes) as well as guarantees (to firms and banks)—the economic impact of these measures depends how much they are taken up and spent by the targeted recipients.
- c. **Primarily credit** – The guarantees of various forms (primarily credit).

4. Monetary Policy - The repo rate has been reduced now which stands at 4 per cent, with inflation well contained. Transmission of monetary policy will benefit the industries to get loan at minimum rate which will give them impetus to restart the operations again.

Way Forward - Present government has, thus, used the Covid crisis to re-orient India towards its long-awaited destiny.

2. Economic slowdown

Source – [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus – GS 3 - Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Context – Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released the data for the fourth quarter (January to March) of the last financial year (2019-20) as well as the provisional estimates of the full-year GDP growth rate.

Estimates presented by MOSPI




TABLE 1: DECELERATING GROWTH SINCE 2016-17

YEAR	GDP GROWTH RATE
2012-13	5.5%
2013-14	6.4%
2014-15	7.4%
2015-16	8%
2016-17	8.3%
2017-18	7%
2018-19	6.1%
2019-20	4.2%
2020-21	-5% to -10%*

* Unofficial estimates

TABLE 2: TOO MUCH BACK & FORTH

QUARTERLY GDP GROWTH RATE IN 2019-20

Quarter	1st Advance Estimate (January 7, 2020)	2nd Advance Estimate (February 28, 2020)	Provisional Estimate (May 29, 2020)
Q1	5.0%	5.6%	5.2%
Q2	4.5%	5.1%	4.4%
Q3	--	4.7%	4.1%
Q4	--	--	3.1%

Source: MoSPI

TABLE 3: INDIAN MANUFACTURING HAS LOST ITS WAY

QUARTERLY GDP GROWTH RATE

Sector	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Agriculture	3%	3.5%	3.6%	5.9%
Manufacturing	3%	-0.6%	-0.8%	-1.4%
Construction	5.2%	2.6%	-0.04%	-2.2%

Source: MoSPI

1. GDP Growth rate

- Real GDP growth in FY20- 4.2%
- Nominal GDP growth in FY20 – 7.2%

2. Frequent and significant revisions in quarterly GDP

3. Poor Performance of manufacturing growth

Implications

1. **Slowdown before COVID induced crises** - This sharp deceleration in nominal GDP growth, shows the continued weakening of India's growth momentum even before it was hit by the Covid 19 induced lockdown in the last week of March
2. **Affects all other economic calculations** - The nominal GDP growth rate is the base of all fiscal calculations in the country. The government bases its calculations — the amount revenues it will raise and the amount of money it will be able to spend — on this initial assumption. For instance, a sharp fall means the government does not get the revenues it had hoped for and it can't spend as much as it wanted to.
3. **Poor fiscal marksmanship of government** – Poor fiscal marksmanship, in turn, leads to inaccurate policy making because a government could end up making policies for an economy that doesn't exist on the ground.
4. **Undermines Government's credibility** – The Frequent and significant revisions in quarterly GDP undermines government's credibility which in turn impacts the rating by credit rating agencies.
5. **Manufacturing slowdown** – The demographic dividend can only be reaped if the youth enters the manufacturing sector as agriculture already has disguised employment and there are structural barriers in service sector which need high skills. Slowing of manufacturing is thus not a good sign for policy makers and Indian labour force.

Way Forward – Data is the new oil for economies. This holds true for the macro-economic data required in the policy framing and investments in any financial year. Government need to be transparent regarding data projection for effective policies and for reviving economy

3. Judicial intervention in the economy

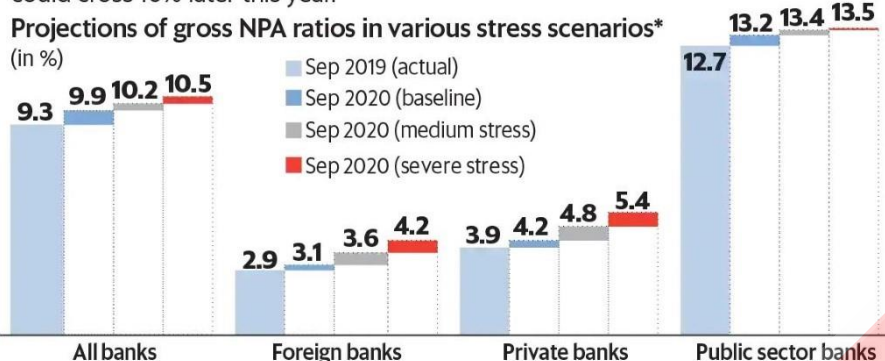
Source: [Live Mint](#)

Syllabus: GS 3 - Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Context: The Supreme Court has sought the response of the finance ministry on demands by debtors for an interest waiver during the moratorium until 31 August.

The looming NPA risk

Gross NPA ratio of all banks in India taken together was under 10% as of September. However, in both medium and severe stress scenarios, the ratio could cross 10% later this year.



*These stress scenarios are stringent and the results are derived from conservative assessments under hypothetical and severely adverse economic conditions

Source: RBI's Financial Stability Report, December 2019

Why moratorium?

Relief from COVID: Till 31 August, the borrowers can defer their payment of loans without being called defaulters.

Challenges to the banking sector due to recent measures:

- **For borrowers:**
 - **Credit charges not pardoned:** The Credit charges are temporarily deferred.
 - **Burden of interests:** The burden will pile up month after month with the interest charged on unpaid repayments.
 - **Postponement of problem:** With an uncertain future due to COVID-19, it is not clear how the borrowers would meet their obligations. They may need another loan to pay their deferred dues.
- **For lenders:**
 - **Threaten financial viability:** The RBI is opposed to any waiver of interest charges. It would also jeopardize the interests of depositors. Indian lenders cannot afford to forget their dues.

Example: By its calculations, the banks would lose ₹2 trillion if just 65% of outstanding term loans (a total put at ₹59 trillion at the end of 2019) were to go interest-free for six months.

- **Already poor condition of the banking sector:** The bad loans have accumulated over the years. Large-scale write-off could threaten the stability of our banking sector.
- **Suspension of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC):** The Code has briefly been suspended as an additional support measure for borrowers. The lenders uneasiness with the quality of assets of borrowers will further increase.
- **Problem to capital buffers of the Bank:** The economy is in a dismal state. The capital buffers of banks may soon be at risk of getting exhausted.
- **Losing confidence in the system:** The depositors need the constant assurance about the safety of money for maintaining economic stability.

Way Forward

For a stable economy, the Borrowers may need actual debt relief as well as banks need to stay afloat. The burden of Covid relief can't be thrust upon lenders beyond a point. The Centre must balance the requirements of both.

4. Private Sector – Non-participation in combating Pandemic

Source - [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus – GS 3 – Mobilisation of Resources

Context - The pandemic offers a chance to policy makers to bring in structural changes in the health sector and rejuvenate private partnerships.

Current Status of Private Sector in tackling Pandemic

- **Lack of policy** - No clear policy guidelines to use private sector resources that could complement public sector efforts, and how the payments for their services made.

Policy options to leverage private sector resources

1. **Extending Laboratory services – Given the size of Indian population, government needs to scale up the testing services. This can be done by:**

- **Engaging in PPP** - An accredited private laboratory can be contracted to be co-located in a public health facility preferably in tier-II/tier-III public hospitals. The government may procure test kits and the private sector could charge a service fee from the government.
- **Issuing E-vouchers** - Suspect cases can be issued vouchers for testing at any empanelled private laboratories. E-vouchers generated by tele-health call centres can subsequently be reimbursed by the government.
- **Purchase contract** - A mobile sample collection and testing facility can be operated by a private entity in high density clusters. The cost of tests, key performance indicators and payment system should be worked out in the purchase contract.

2. **Up scaling hospital infrastructure – The dilapidated public hospitals, especially in tier II and tier III cities need to be complemented with services of private sector by:**

- **Preparing ICU** -A private contractor could be hired to refurbish an existing ward in a public hospital into an intensive care unit (ICU) ward with additional beds and equipment and handover the refurbished ward to the public authority.
- **Utilising PMJAY** - The government can refer patients to empanelled private COVID-19 hospitals, at a fixed package rate under Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.

3. **Central intelligence system (CIA)** - An IT system with artificial intelligence capability should be the backbone of supporting all public and private sector efforts in combating COVID.

The intelligence system should seamlessly help in:

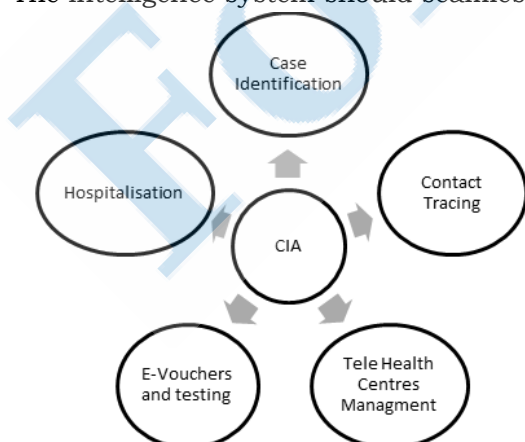


Figure 1 – Importance of Digital Central Intelligence System

Way Forward – Private sector has the needed potential to combat COVID along with government. All it needs is policy guidelines which also balances interest of private sector.

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5. Fiscal Deficit – Direct Monetization as possible solution

Source – [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus – GS 3 – Mobilization of resources for growth

Context – Recently rating agency Moody downgraded India from Baa2 rating to Baa3 rating

Reason for Downgrading – Moody has cited **slowing growth, financial sector weakness and rising debt** as the main reasons for downgrading the ratings.

- Moody's estimation of Public debt to GDP ratio is 72% in 2020-2021.
- Non-Performing Assets in financial sector are over 9% of loan advances in pre-corona India.
- Growth rate by World Bank has been projected at 3.1% in FY22.

Apart from the reasons cited by Moody's, structural issues have been major contributor in the slowing growth rate.

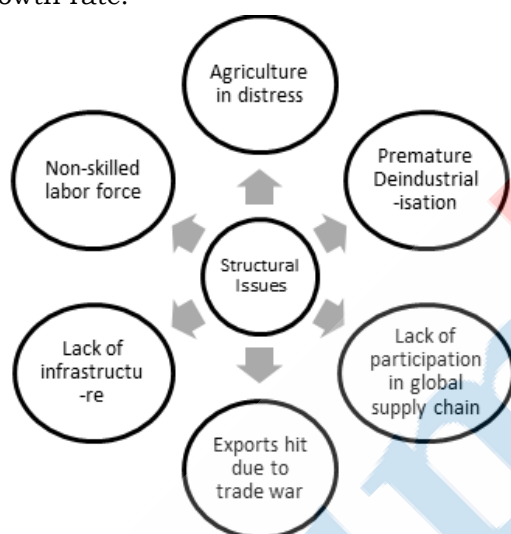


Figure 1 – Structural issues in Indian Economy

Atma Nirbhar Mission – Government has introduced the Self-Reliant Mission to infuse Rs 20 lakhs crore in economy. This mission is aimed at resolving structural issues in all sectors on economy. This infusion can be done either by providing guarantees to bank or via deficit financing.

Need of monetizing the Fiscal Deficit –According to Keynesian economics theory, in any economy, the slowdown can be revived only by financing the fiscal deficit. The governments increased spending in turn leads to a virtuous cycle of growth.

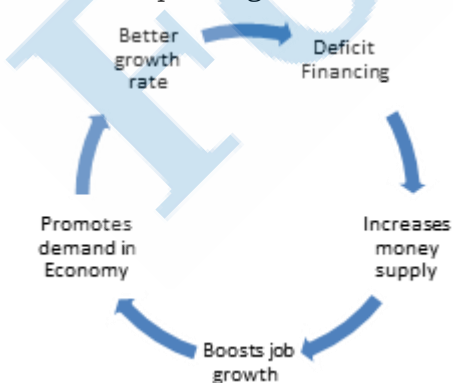


Figure 2 – Virtuous cycle of growth

Methods of financing the deficit

1. **Borrowing by government** - Government can borrow from internal sources as well as from external sources to finance its deficit. This however leads to crowding out effect and thus discourages investment by private sector. It also raises the public debt to GDP ratio which in turn affects the rating done by rating agencies.

2. **Printing Rupees or direct monetization** - Government, can get money printed by RBI in return of bonds issued by government. This although has inflationary effect on economy but a slowdown in economy can be uplifted with the short-term inflationary pressure.

Difference between OMO and direct monetization - Direct monetization is different from the “indirect” monetizing that RBI does when it conducts the Open Market Operations (OMOs). In OMO, RBI purchases bonds in the secondary market and it does not include printing new currency.

Way Forward - Controlling inflation with monetary policy while financing the deficit with direct monetization is the need of the hour to revive the economy hit hard by lockdown as well as structural issues.

6. COVID 19 Causing Contractual Disputes

Source - [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus - GS 3 - Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment

Context - Due to the lockdowns, a large number of firms find their contractual obligations impossible to meet and they have refused the promised employment and suspended supplies of goods or services, triggering legal claims of compensation from the counterparties.

Analyzing the repercussions of COVID-19 on business contracts in India considering “force majeure” and “frustration of a contract”.

1. **Force Majeure** - It is an event or effect that can be neither anticipated nor controlled. From a contractual perspective, a force majeure clause provides temporary reprieve to a party from performing its obligations under a contract upon occurrence of a force majeure event.
2. **Non-exhaustive list of force majeure** - A force majeure clause in a contract would typically include an exhaustive list of events such as acts of God, war, terrorism, earthquakes, hurricanes, acts of government, explosions, fire, plagues or epidemics or a non- exhaustive list wherein the parties simply narrate what generally constitute force majeure events and thereafter add “and such other acts or events that are beyond the control of parties”.
3. **Use of Force majeure** - The clauses can usually be found in various contracts such as power purchase agreements, supply contracts, manufacturing contracts, distribution agreements, project finance agreements, agreements between real estate developers and home buyers, etc.

COVID 19 is not FORCE MAJEURE

1. **COVID-19 is not FM per se** - It is the lockdowns, not the virus that has made it impossible for the airlines, hotels and caterers to deliver as promised and contractors to complete projects on schedule. Under such contexts, it is justified to use the lockdowns as FM for non-performance or delayed performance, as the case may be.
2. **Misuse of the clause** - The clause has been used for dubious reasons. For instance, Discoms have invoked it under power purchase agreements. They have withheld monthly payments and have asked some power producers to stop the

project. However, the virus and the lockdowns have not affected the generation-capacity of power producers, nor have they rendered it impossible for discoms to off-take electricity, an essential service.

In any case, a reduced demand or the agreement becoming commercially onerous does not qualify as a FM event.

3. **Dispute Resolution** - The courts and arbitrators will have to evaluate and decide each dispute on individual merits, which would be based on the terms of the contract, the intent of the parties, steps taken to mitigate.

If the contract does not have a FM clause, parties can seek termination of the contract on grounds of frustration.

1. **Frustration of Contract** - Under the doctrine of frustration, impossibility of a party to perform its obligations under a contract is linked to occurrence of an event/circumstance subsequent to the execution of a contract and which was not contemplated at the time of execution of the contract.
2. List of events when doctrine is applicable - Generally, frustration of contract can be in the following cases:
 - **Death or incapacity of a party:-** Where a party to the contract has died after entering into contract or the party is incapable of performing the contract, in such a situation the contract will be.
 - **Frustration by virtue of legislation:-** Where, a law promulgated after the contract is made, makes the performance of the agreement impossible and thereby the agreement becomes void.
 - **Frustration due to change of circumstances:-** This particular situation deals with those cases where there was no physical impossibility of performance of the contract, but because of the change in circumstances, the main purpose for which the contract was entered has been defeated.
3. **Dispute Resolution** - The courts have to ascertain whether the contract has become impossible to perform and whether the doctrine of frustration of contract could be made applicable to such a contract.

Way Forward - Riskiness of returns is an integral part of most business and commercial activities. The Supreme Court in *Naihati Jute Mills Ltd v. Hyaliram Jagannath* (1967) held that a contractual obligation becoming economically arduous is not a ground for absolving a party of its commitment. Thus, Courts and regulators should encourage litigants to go for negotiations or mediation to settle disputes.

7. The upcoming era of gig economy

Source – [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus – GS 3 - Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment

Context - The current crisis should force a discussion on the levels of social protection which should be available to gig workers including wage protection, health benefits and safety assurance

Gig Economy - A gig economy is a free market system in which temporary positions are common and organizations hire independent workers for short-term commitments.

Examples of gig employees in the workforce could include freelancers, independent contractors, project-based workers and temporary or part-time hires.

Rise in gig workers is attributed to following reasons:

- a. **Use of technology** – Technology enables gig workers to seek work from home or any location. This has been aided by digitization and high skills of workers. For instance, company like Netflix would seek AI experts from India, paid by the hour, to personalise streaming experiences.
- b. **Increased mobility** - The drivers of Uber, the delivery boys of Zomato, the plumbers and electricians of Urban Clap make up the gig world. Mobility connects them with the customer demand in the market for their supply of services.
- c. **COVID induced lay-offs** - Aviation, hospitality, automobile entertainment and retail are the hardest hit sectors and are witnessing large number of lay-offs for cost-cutting of firms. The professionals of these sectors, now in abundant supply in market, are looking for jobs in gig economy.
- d. **Flexibility and independence to workers** -. Ideally, the gig model is powered by independent workers selecting jobs that they're interested in, rather than one in which people are forced into a position where, they pick up whatever temporary gigs they can get.

Challenges associated with gig-economy:

- a. **Lack of social security** – In absence of policies and regulations for the emerging gig economy, there is lack of social security including wage protection, health benefits and safety assurance for the freelancers working in the new form of market.
- b. **Absence of national database for employers and employees** - The missing link in the talent marketplace is a national database of job seekers and job creators. A prospective employee would need access to a job database, sorted by skill, geography, duration and emoluments. Companies should be able to dip into the data pool of talent, experience, location, qualification and expectation.
- c. **Reforming higher education** - The placement cells of colleges and universities would need to reorient and focus on preparing students for freelancing opportunities, apart from regular campus placements.
- d. **Lack of gender parity** - The low enrolment of girls for higher education in science, technology, engineering and math would constrict their universe of opportunity in the gig world. This would need greater policy attention to ensure gender parity.

Way Forward - The government and the private sector would need to collaborate along with academia to build adequate safeguards in the unfolding eco-system of gig economy.

3. Relation between COVID and Climate Change

Source – [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus – GS 3 – Mobilisation of resources

Context – The COVID pandemic has highlighted the crises of scarcity of essential resources and the demand for better response to Climate Change

COVID – Disease-ravaged present and slowdown in economy

Solution – Focussing on keeping the economy afloat in present and providing resources to vulnerable section

Climate Change – Disease-ravaged future and unprecedented problem

Solution – Structurally on level of society - Directing economic packages to areas that increase our resilience to natural disasters and technologies that reduce our emissions.

Individually - On the individual front, this could be an opportunity to reinforce sustainable behaviour — fewer morning commutes and less air travel, for example.

Fighting climate change is tougher than fighting COVID because of the following reasons:

Reasons

1. **High cost of capital** – The central and state government has raised its borrowing limit and the private sector has seen returns from investments fall dramatically. All three are already heavily indebted; meaning the cost of capital for future borrowing will only grow.
2. **Underdevelopment of knowledge infrastructure** - Thinking about climate change requires a lot of people exploring varied questions simultaneously. That involves funding an ecosystem of thinkers from diverse disciplines. These are inherently long-term investments and only really start paying off over decades. Thus require collective efforts of all stakeholders.

Suggested Solutions

1. **Policies aimed at sustainable development – Formulation of** employment and industrial priorities which focuses on green outcomes for a sustainable future.
2. **Collective efforts** – NGO, Think tanks and universities need to mobilise its resources for creation of knowledge infrastructure.

Way Forward – Climate change, right now seems to be a distant future. However, its impact and consequences are already being witnessed across the world. This requires global leaders and common people to take effective measures to mitigate as well as adapt.

Topic 2: Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

8. Wave of Pandemic in Rural India

Source – [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus – GS 3- Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Context - While the lockdown affected the country in one go, the urban and rural waves of the pandemic are asynchronous

Urban India

Population - In 2017, the population residing in urban areas is ~34%, according to The World Bank.

Features of Urban India – Industrialized, literate population, concentration of health and education services all this making urban cities as engine of national growth.

Rural India

Population - ~66% of the country's population is rural which is characterised by vulnerable people lacking employment opportunities, poor agrarian growth, lack of social infrastructure like healthcare and education services.

Pandemic is now about to reach its peak in rural India because of the following factors:

1. **Limited restoration of the public transport** – This will give more push to migration of rural people from urban towns to their native villages.
2. **Lacks healthcare services** – Indian rural areas are marked with poor health infrastructure, lack of healthcare personnel's, poor incentives to ASHA's and non-affordability of medicines and require tests. This makes rural population more vulnerable to pandemic.

Suggested steps to limit the spread of Pandemic in Rural India:

1. **Administrative synchronisation** – This includes:
 - blocking urban-rural importations,
 - quarantining those who move from red zone to green,
 - diagnosing and managing clinical COVID-19 syndrome with or without positive PCR test results, and
 - providing field hospitals exclusively for isolating and managing COVID-19 cases (manned by younger, and therefore less vulnerable, medical and nursing teams).
2. **Social vaccine** – Through Information, education and communication administering the social vaccine for introducing behavioural changes. Two behavioural changes are critical —
 - Wearing mask - Every man, woman and child must wear a cotton cloth mask when out of the home and observe strict hand hygiene.
 - Reverse Quarantine - All elders and any person with a co-morbidity should be cocooned (by reverse quarantine) — all wearing masks when interacting with others even inside homes.
3. **Using tele-medicine** - Non-communicable diseases and other common diseases should be handled on a tele-medicine platform manned by experienced and older (age more than 55 years) medical personnel; there should be a follow-up over the mobile phone.
4. **Reducing burden from health infrastructure** -Mildly and moderately symptomatic COVID-19 patients should be managed by home isolation, delivering essential and medical supplies at home. Each such patient should be followed up daily by a designated medical professional, who should call over the phone and identify those who need hospitalisation for life-threatening pneumonia.

Way forward – “By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.” This quote applies aptly for preparedness of rural India to tackle the virus. Need of the hour is to take all measures to prevent the pandemic from reaching to the hinterlands of India.

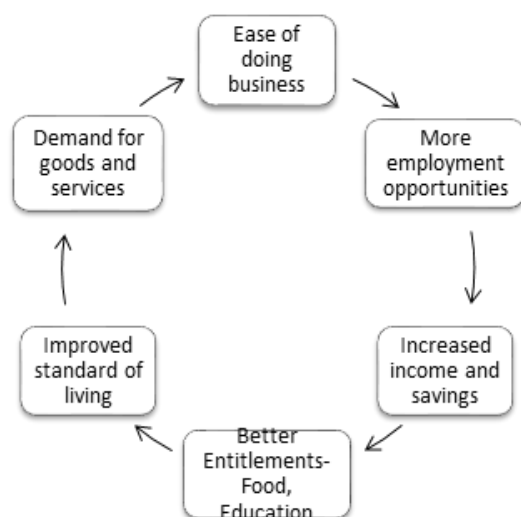
9. Ease of doing business versus Ease of living

Source – [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus – GS 3 - Inclusive growth and issues arising from it

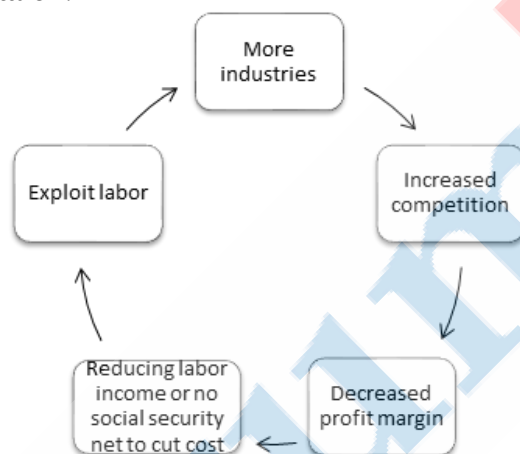
Context – The lockdowns following COVID-19 have caused many people to introspect about the purposes of their lives, and the purposes of the enterprises they serve. It has also provided an opportunity to reset the course of economies.

Importance of ease of doing business – It provides growth of whole society by lifting standard of living for all and thus is directly related to the ease of living.



Issues with Ease of doing business

1. **Exploitation of labor for profit** – More business and industries does not mean the have-nots exploitation will stop and a vicious cycle is created where societal harm is ignored for wealth creation.



2. **Focus on profit not on public service**– The creditors and owners of firm invest capital to gain more profit and in turn they adopt unethical practices to increase revenue and profit margin of the company. For instance - Doctors who prescribe tests and medicines that patients do not really need to increase the revenues of hospitals and sales of pharmaceutical companies (and improve their own bonuses) are placing the needs of business owners above those of the public they serve.

3. **Entrepreneurship** – In India, the tradition of handing business and giving priority to family members and relatives in all deals is still prevalent. This, unethical act called nepotism hinders creation of entrepreneurs at grass-root level.

4. **Environmental cost** – The focus on increasing profit by neglecting the externalities created by industries has led to challenge of global warming and pollution. This particularly impacts the poor most as they are at receiving end whenever disaster occurs, or health cost rises because of environmental pollution.

Suggested solution - All professional institutions including businesses, are built on three fundamental structures— mission, standards, and identity **which needs to be reoriented in post-corona world.**

- 1. Mission** - It is the purpose of the institution in society. The purpose of any organization needs to be overall welfare of society with accruing limited profit based on Gandhian Doctrine of Trusteeship.
- 2. Standards** -The standards can be voluntarily determined and applied by the professionals themselves. Otherwise, they must be imposed on them by the public they claim to serve through government regulations.
- 3. Identity** - Identity, comprises of a person's own values and traits, adding up to "a person's deeply felt convictions about who she is, and what matters most to her existence as a worker, citizen, and a human being". Thus, individuals need to think and rethink about their values and whose interest those values serve – are they selfish or for well-being of all.

Way Forward - In post-Covid world, growth of business must not be at expense of societal well-being. This requires active participation of all stakeholders to reshape the mission, standards and identity of individuals as well as organizations.

Topic 3: Government Budgeting.

10. Getting out of the 'guns, germs and steel' crisis

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 3 - Government Budgeting

Context: India is facing the gravest confluence of military, health and economic crises.

Crisis of "guns, germs and steel": There are Chinese "guns" on the borders, coronavirus "germs" in our bodies and "steel" makers and other businesses are on the verge of bankruptcy.

Economic threats due to these challenges:

Military threats:

○ **Inevitable drain on finances:**

- As we are standing up to a military threat by a superpower neighbour.
- **Example: War against Pakistan in Kargil in 1999:**
- India's defence expenditure in the war year shot up by nearly 20% from the previous year.
- It also forced the government to increase India's defence budget for the next financial year to 2.7% of nominal GDP.

• **The Challenge of China:**

- **Asserting its rights by India necessitates higher expenditure:** India's defence budget has been whittled down to just 2% of GDP for the financial year 2021 while China's defence budget is nearly four times larger. The Chinese conflict will stretch government finances by an additional one to two percentage points of GDP as India staves off the current threat and shores up its defence preparedness.

Health care and economy:

○ **Exposure of India's inadequate health infrastructure by COVID-19:**

- The combined public health expenditure of States and the central government in India is a mere 1.5% of GDP compared to China's at 3% and US's at 9%.
- **Need to ramp up India's health expenditure:** Many public health experts are of the opinion that the government will need additional funds of the equivalent of at least one percentage point of GDP to continue the fight against COVID-19.
- **Disorder of economy due to National lockdown:**

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- India's economy has four major drivers: People's spending on consumption, Government spending, Investment and External trade.
- **Consumer spending:** Spending by people is the largest contributor to India's economic growth every year. For every ₹100 in incremental GDP ₹60 to ₹70 comes from people's consumption spending. The lockdown shut off people from spending for two full months.

Issues of economy prior to COVID-19:

- India's trade levels had fallen from 55% of nominal GDP in 2014 to 40% in 2020.
- As the global economy in tatters, trade is not a viable alternative to offset the loss from consumption.
- Investment is also not a viable option at this stage since the demand for goods and services has fallen dramatically.

The common thread across these is that its resolution requires significant financial resources.

Need of Incremental funds:

- **Options to improve economy:** To either put money in the hands of the needy to stimulate immediate consumption or for the government to embark on a massive spending spree like the "New Deal" which was a series of programmes and projects instituted by the U.S. during the Great Depression of the 1930s.
- **Overall estimation:** India's "guns, germs and steel" crisis will impose a total financial burden of an additional eight percentage points of GDP on the central government exchequer.
- **Higher spending and lower revenues:** The government needs to spend an additional eight percentage points of GDP while revenues will be lower by two percentage points of GDP.

Sources of Funds:

- **Potential new Source of revenue:**
 - The ideas of wealth tax or a large capital gains tax are ideas worth exploring for the medium term but not good for immediate needs.
- **More borrowing:**
 - The only option for the government to finance its needs is to borrow abundantly which will push up debt to high levels.
 - With rising debt levels, international ratings agencies will likely downgrade India's investment rating which will then trigger panic among foreign investors.
- **Print the money as per needs to overcome crisis:**
 - Though it may lead to a massive spike in prices and inflation as per economic theory but this theory has fallen flat in the past decade in developed nations such as the US where the creation of phantom money has not led to inflation.
 - It also counted as government debt and not escape a potential downgrading of rating.

Way Forward

India's choices are clear to be bold and go on a rescue mission or do nothing and hope the situation resolves itself.

Topic 4 : Major crops-cropping patterns in various parts of the country, – different types of irrigation and irrigation systems storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints; e-technology in the aid of farmers.

11. Need to shift from subsidies to Cash Transfers to double farmers income.

Source: [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS 3 - Major crops-cropping patterns in various parts of the country, – different types of irrigation and irrigation systems storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints; e-technology in the aid of farmers.

Context: Analysing the road to the government's ambitious plan to double the farmers income by 2022-23.

Importance of Agriculture for India:

- **During 2019-20:** The gross value added (GVA) in agriculture and allied sectors registered a growth of 4 % whereas the growth of overall GVA of the economy is only at 3.9 % and overall GDP (including net taxes) at 4.2 per cent.
- **Expectation during COVID-19:** In 2020-21, due to impact of COVID-19, the GDP may register a negative growth of as high as -5 per cent, agriculture may still surprise with a positive growth of 2.5 per cent. (as per CRISIL's recent forecast).
- **Labour force:** Almost 44 % is engaged in agriculture.

Comparison with China:

	India	China
Growth rate	Low growth rate	High growth (about 4.5 % over the last 40 years)
Productivity	Low productivity	High productivity
Migration	Due to “push” factor because agriculture cannot support a large percentage of the working population.	Due to “demand-pull” to higher productivity sectors with better skills.

To tackle the issues in agriculture and tackling the effects of COVID-19, the government introduced some changes under Atma Nirbhar package.

Reforms on the Agri-Marketing: Liberalizing the Essential Commodities Act (ECA), APMC Act and contract farming through the ordinance route.

Issue with amended ECA:

- **Clause for stocking limits in case of extraordinary price rise:** This is being defined as a 100 % increase in the price of perishables and a 50 % increase for non-perishables over a 12-month period. It has been done to attract private investment in storage.
- The stocking limits are to be imposed in case of natural calamity, famine, wars, etc. In other case it is only for rent-seeking by the “inspector raj”.

To improve the conditions of farmers, government formed **Ashok Dalwai committee to double farmers' incomes**. It talked about the real income and it required a growth rate of 10.4 % per annum till 2022-23.

Author's Reservations about Doubling farmers income:

- Comparing the data of NSO And NABARD surveys on farmers' incomes in 2002-03, 2012-13, and 2015-16 with Agri-GDP growth over the same period, the trends in Agri-GDP and farmers' incomes follow each other very closely (about 3.6 to 3.7 % per annum).

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- The base year growth rate in 2015-16 was meagre (0.6 per cent) and the average annual growth of Agri-GDP during the next four years (2016-17 to 2019-20) was 4.8 per cent.
- In 2020-21, CRISIL forecasts GVA in agriculture at 2.5 % and even if one assumes Agri-growth to be around 4 % per annum for the next two years, the annual Agri-GVA growth for the seven-year period (from 2016-17 to 2022-23) is around 4.2 %. This cannot double the income of farmers by 2022-23.

Suggestions by author to achieve the target:

- The shortfall from the target can be filled by adding the direct income transfers under PM-Kisan.
- The government can convert food and fertilizer subsidies into direct cash transfers.

Way Forward

There is a need to have paradigm shifts and to transfer real prices on farmers' produce by improving marketing efficiencies and Agri-logistics.

12. Ordinances introduced to bring changes in agriculture

Source: [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS 3 - Major crops-cropping patterns in various parts of the country, – different types of irrigation and irrigation systems storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints; e-technology in the aid of farmers.

Context: The government announced Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance, 2020 to facilitate trade in agricultural produce.

Aim: Providing for barrier-free trade of farmers' produce outside the markets notified under the various state agricultural produce market laws.

Issues in introducing ordinances rather than bills: The Parliament is not in session, so the government used ordinance route.

- **Pressure by PMO:** For instant delivery of achieving outcomes as India could not change the positions of the depressed farmers.
- **Lack of consultations:** Bills would require to be placed in the public domain for comments and consultations would be held with farmers and states whose powers and revenues were being curtailed.
- Due to the unionisation of middlemen, politicians in the states have been reluctant to amend agriculture marketing laws which are exploitative and don't allow farmers to receive a fair price.

The Farming Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance, 2020 will pave the way for creating 'One India, One Agriculture Market'. It will create an ecosystem where farmers and traders will enjoy freedom of choice of sale and purchase of agri-produce.

The recent ordinances bring changes to agricultural laws which have far reaching consequences.

Effect of the ordinances on the Agriculture:

Positive effects	Shortcomings:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase Formalisation: The largest informal sector in the	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not Coaxing the states financially to correct market: An unregulated

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country will begin to get formalised and new business models will develop.	marketplace has been created where 15 crore farmers will be exposed to the exploitations of traders.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A different class of aggregators will create the much-needed competition to the existing monopoly of local traders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited the powers and revenues of the state: States will lose vital revenue to even upgrade and repair rural infrastructure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No commission legally for the sale of produce: When farmers sell agricultural produce outside of APMC market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ambiguity: The recent changes has not curtailed the powers of bureaucracy and leaves space for wrong interpretations as before.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less obstruction: The produce derived from contract farming operations will not be subject to any obstructionist laws. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance 2020” cast a shadow on the legal recourse for the farmers because of tedious legal proceedings. They did not allow farmers to seek legal options.

Way Forward

For a long time, the government's efforts aren't bearing fruit for farmers. There should be increased accountability for the policies made by the government to improve conditions of farmers.

13. Unrestrained Sale of agricultural land

Source - [Livemint](https://www.livemint.com)

Syllabus – GS 3 - Agricultural produce and related constraints


Context – Karnataka government has opened the land market to convert it from thin market to open market.

1. **Changes introduced by the Karnataka government:**

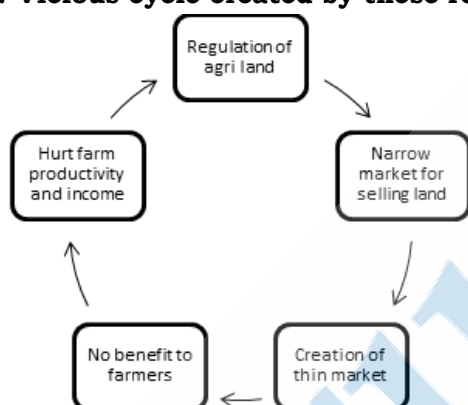
- Allowing non-agriculturists to purchase agricultural land.
- Remove income restrictions imposed on the buyers' non-agricultural income (currently ₹25 lakh).
- Increasing the maximum permissible size of holdings by an individual or family (from 10 to 20 units) and by larger families (from 20 to 40 units).

2. **Land reforms**, foremost policy measures taken at eve of independence, have harmed farmers in long run instead of helping them. Following are the steps taken under land reforms and associated challenges:

Land Reforms	Challenges
1. Restricting the land market based on income <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prevent rich zamindar families from exploiting poor farmers rendered helpless by financial difficulty 	a. Drove out richer agricultural families from the agricultural land market to other opportunities. b. Does not favour sellers and only depresses land prices due to lack of demand base.

<p>2. Restricting the land market based on holding size</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To abolish Zamindari 	
<p>3. Restricting the land market based on occupation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> States prevented non-farmers from buying farm land Only farmers and not-for-profit institutions could buy farm land. 	<p>a. Reduction in the number of potential buyers that depressed land prices.</p> <p>b. Fragmentation of the land market - Separating agricultural land from other land, as determined by regulation and not the land's productivity or market potential.</p>

3. Vicious cycle created by these reforms:



4. Suggested solution: Creation of thick market to demolish thin markets -

Features of thick market are :

- Better regulated by competition within the market.
- High trading volumes.
- Buyers and sellers in the market have different preferences, productive capabilities and individual endowments.
- Move resources from low-productivity to high-productivity uses.

Way Forward – These reforms of Karnataka will help farmers, otherwise trapped in low productivity and poverty, get the best possible price for their largest asset holding. This is one step towards doubling farmer's income which other states can emulate.

14. Food security and farmer welfare

Source – [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus – GS 3 – Agricultural growth and issues arising from it

Context – Current Pandemic has highlighted that food security and farmer welfare are intertwined and can't be treated in silos.

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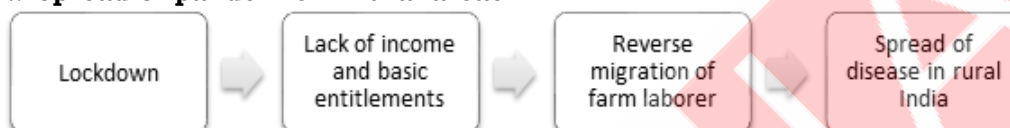
Disguised Unemployment - Agriculture accounts for around 17% of India's GDP but nearly 50% of the country's population depends on farm-based income.

Impact of lockdown - With the announcement of lockdown, migrant farm workers fled the fields en masse, unable to sustain their livelihoods. This has following consequences:

1. Threat to food security



2. Spread of pandemic in rural areas



Challenges in ensuring farm income and food security:

1. **Climate change** - Unseasonal rain and hail arrived at the beginning of the year damaged the Rabi crop.
2. **Locust invasion** - The swarm of locust arrived India in May which has the potential of damaging the crops.
3. **Government policy failures** - The Food Corporation of India's godowns overflowing with grain stock at three times the buffer stock norms.

Suggested solutions:

1. **One nation one card** - Filling the gap between policy prescriptions and implementation with timely release of fixed quantities of free food grains and pulses to the migrants, even to those without ration cards, for the months of June and July.
2. **Remuneration with PM KISAN** - Increasing government allocations to poor farmers through the PM KISAN scheme by including everyone, even those who do not own land.
3. **Availability of farm input** - Ensuring timely availability of seeds and fertilizers for the next season by roping in gram sabhas to verify claimants.
4. **Stakeholder participation** - Involving Farmer Producer Organisations in the process to ensure the safeguarding of farmers' rights via collective bargaining.

Way Forward - Doubling farm income and ensuring food security need better productivity and shifting of disguised farm labour from agricultural fields to industries with Make in India and self-reliant mission.

Topic 5 : Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security; Technology missions; economics of animal-rearing.

15. Subsidies in Agriculture

Source - [The Hindu](#)

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Syllabus – GS 3 - Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices

Context – Recently centre has prescribed that the free power supply scheme should be replaced with the direct benefits transfer (DBT) in all the states

Since 1970s, state governments in India adopted a policy of providing free or subsidized power to farmers to increase agricultural productivity.

Farm subsidy has benefitted the farmers, especially small and marginal. It has also aided the agricultural productivity in nation which has ensured food security for all. However, there are negative implications of power subsidy too which have been discussed below.

Negative Implications of Power Subsidy

1. **Depleted groundwater** due to over extraction of groundwater and the issue of water-stress in India.
2. **Massive waste of power** due to large unmetered connections.
3. **Financial burden** on state governments due to subsidies given to farmers including rich farmers.
4. **Deteriorating financial health** of the electricity distribution companies (DISCOMs).
5. **Increased cross-subsidy burden** on industrial and commercial consumers which affect their total cost of production.
6. **Promotes unsustainable agriculture:** Subsidized electricity to farmers promotes growth of crops not suitable to agro-climatic zones like sugarcane, paddy which are water-intensive also.

Suggestions to Rationalize Farm Sector Subsidies

1. **Adopting Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)** for power subsidy as prescribed by government.
2. IEC – **Information, Education and communication (IEC) campaigns** among farmers regarding judicious use of scarce resources.
3. **Metering** - Large number of unmetered connections for farm irrigation leads to unrestrained usage of electricity for irrigation leading to massive waste of power and groundwater.
4. **Promoting sustainable agriculture** - Disincentivizing water-intensive crops such as rice in areas where groundwater is rapidly depleting like Punjab and use of methods like drip-irrigation.

Way Forward – Reforms in agriculture including subsidy rationalization is must for economic growth and fiscal consolidation and the DBT in power subsidy is a tool to achieve the same.

16. Will the recent Agri-reforms help farmers?

Source: [Livemint](https://www.livemint.com)

Syllabus: GS-3- Agriculture

Context: The government has taken a slew of measures to transform the agriculture sector, as part of the package for Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

Recent Measures taken:

Measure	Details	Expected Benefits
Amendment to Essential Commodities Act	Commodities like cereals, pulses, oilseeds, edible oils, onion and potatoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote private investment in warehousing and storage facilities.• Prevents agri-wastage

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	will be removed from list of essential commodities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide stable income to farmers in bumper crop season and • Less volatile prices for consumers • Increase farm export and promotes surplus in balance in trade
The Farming Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance, 2020	Aims to open agricultural marketing outside notified mandis (APMC market) for farmers and remove barriers to inter-State trade. Lays the foundation for One India, One Agriculture Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • open more choices for the farmer, reduce marketing costs for the farmers and help them in getting better prices • help farmers of regions with surplus produce to get better prices and consumers of regions with shortages, lower prices
The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance, 2020	Aims at facilitating contract farming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transfer the risk of market unpredictability from the farmer to the sponsor • enable the farmer to access modern technology and better inputs. • reduce cost of marketing and improve income of farmers

Will these reforms raise farmers' price realization on their produce?

- Though agricultural marketing reforms are necessary, they are not sufficient because of the limitation in the use of agri-markets. For example: According to NSSO, on an average, less than half of all farmers of most food crops reported selling their produce in markets.
- The prices farmers get is not only determined by their access to markets, but also by domestic demand and supply along with international rates.
- Creating the marketing, storage and logistical infrastructure necessary for market reforms is important. For example, Bihar abolished APMC Act but that did not lead to better price realization for farmers, nor did it result in more investment by the private sector.

Way Forward: At a time, when the economy is slowing down, it is important to revive demand for agri-produce. Any reform in the agriculture sector should be accompanied by fiscal stimulus and investment in market and storage infrastructure

17. Mobilising resources with FCI Reforms

Source – [Indian express](#)

Syllabus – GS 3 - Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security

Context – Fighting the coronavirus on one hand, and defending the borders from Chinese incursions on the other will require mobilising large resources for which FCI can be transformed.

FCI - The Food Corporation of India (FCI) was set up in 1965 under the Food Corporations Act, 1964 with the primary duty to purchase, store, move/transport, distribute and sell food grains and other foodstuffs.

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Objectives and associated issues: The intervention of Government has led to a disconnect between demand and supply of grains in food grain markets in following way:

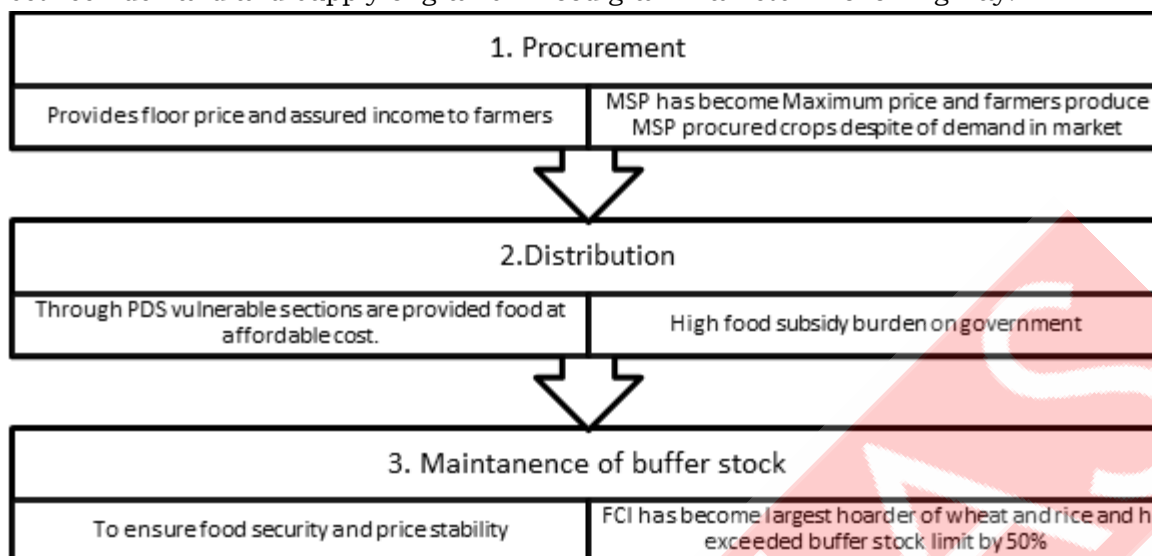


Figure 1 – Objectives along with challenges

Suggested solutions to reform the three functioning stages of FCI:

1. **Procurement** - If food grain markets are opened for active participation of private players with Government as an equal player, competition would lead to more efficiency in the operations and development of adequate infrastructure in storage and warehousing.
 - Example -The recent amendment of the Essential Commodities Act can come handy to instil confidence in the private sector for building large scale storage.
2. **Distribution** – As per Economic Survey 2020, the coverage of NFSA needs to be restricted to the bottom 20 per cent and the issue prices for others could be linked to the procurement prices. A better alternative would be giving income transfers to consumers through **Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT)** to reduce subsidy burden.
3. **Buffer stock** - Liquidating “excess stocks” through open market operations by inviting the private sector in a big way to hold these stocks, at whatever reasonable market price it can get.
By not liquidating it, FCI will keep incurring unnecessary interest costs of about Rs 8,000-10,000 crore per annum.

Way Forward - Given fiscal constraints, there is always a trade-off between allocating money through subsidies and increasing investments. As investments are the crucial input to increase in productivity, the increasing focus on subsidies via FCI is harming the growth of agricultural sector in the long-run. This imbalance between subsidies and investments needs to be urgently corrected for sustainable development of agriculture.

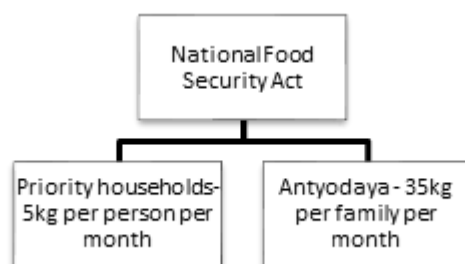
18. One nation one ration card

Source – [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus – GS 3 - Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security

Context – The focus on One Nation One Ration Card is misplaced when what is needed is a universal Public Distribution System.

National Food Security Act - Under the NFSA, 2013, about 81 crore persons are entitled to buy subsidized food grain — rice at Rs 3/kg, wheat at Rs 2/kg, and coarse grains at Re 1/kg — from their designated Fair Price Shops (FPS) of the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).



Measures taken for COVID crises

1. **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY)** - It would provide 5kg of food grains and 1 kg of pulses for free to all those who are beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) for three months.
2. **Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan** – NFSA expanded to cover an additional eight crore individuals for two months to ensure that migrants are included under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan package.

Issues with present system

1. **Exclusion of migrants** - In the present system, a ration cardholder can buy food grains only from an FPS that has been assigned to her in the locality in which she lives.

Solution - Under One Nation, One Ration Card' system, the beneficiary will be able to buy subsidised food grains from any FPS across the country.

Issues with One nation one ration card

1. **Family card vs individual card** - Many urban workers migrate to the cities without their families. In such cases, they are likely to leave their ration card behind for the family to use at home. With family-card based system either one (in the city) or the other (in the village) can use the ration card.
2. **Concern relates to inter-state arrangements** – Many states also give more commodities – for instance, dal and edible oil – at a subsidised price than the central government, which only covers the cost of wheat and rice.
 - For instance, rice is free in Tamil Nadu instead of being given at the central price of Rs 3 per kg. So, if a worker from other state goes to Tamil Nadu to work, would he get free rice, and also get dal and oil? Or will the worker be denied these extra commodities?
3. **Logistics** – Currently, logistics are designed to supply a fixed quantity to each PDS outlet once a month, based on the number of people it serves. “One Nation, One Ration” would mean that the number of people served by a PDS outlet will fluctuate each month, so the supply logistics would have to be redesigned as well.
4. **Biometric authentication** - The experience of biometric authentication using electronic point of sale (ePoS) machines so far suggests that it results in exclusion of some of the most marginalised because of multiple reasons including network issues, authentication failure and so on.

Way Forward– A universal PDS is much better than having an arbitrary cap on coverage at 67% imposed by the NFSA which is based on 2011 census and excluded many.

Topic 8 : Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

19. Atma nirbhar Mission – Local is synonymous to Import Substitution

Source – [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus – GS 3 – changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

Context – The idea of getting vocal about local is being compared to India's tryst with import substitution in post-Independence era

Import substitution-based Industrialisation

1. **Definition** - It refers to period when industrialisation meant production of all the commodities which were hitherto imported.
2. **Reason for introduction** - Need for such policy was the structural imbalance created by Colonial Empire.

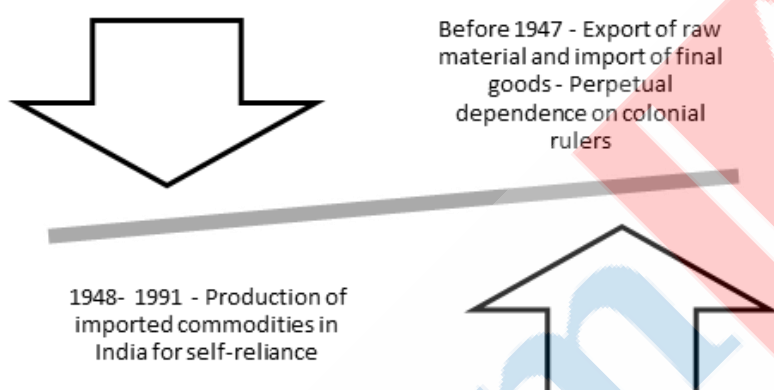


Figure 1 – Structural imbalance created by Colonial Empire

3. **Aim and Objective** - The import substitution policy was, hence, aimed at promoting production of consumer goods and capital goods in country with objective of:
 - Increasing employment opportunities
 - Decreasing loss of foreign exchange which is paid for import of goods
 - Sustainable GDP
 - Self- reliance in Non –Alignment Era
4. **Forms** - The protection from import is done in two forms:
 - Quotas- It specifies the number of goods that can be imported.
 - Tariffs- It is a tax that is imposed on imported products; this tax makes imported products more costly

Getting vocal about local – Atma Nirbhar Mission

1. **Reasons for getting local**
 - a. **Immediate Reason** – The disruption in supply-chain brought by pandemic which deprived India of necessary active pharmaceutical agents needed for production of medicines.
 - b. **Long-term Reason** – Addressing the issue of jobless growth and premature deindustrialisation requires promoting made-in-India goods.
2. **Issues associated with getting local**
 - a. **Against globalisation** – Production of all goods in domestic market is against the principle of competitive advantage and thus goes against the spirit of globalisation.

- b. **Lack of R&D** - India's R&D to GDP ratio is less than ~1% . Investment in R&D is essential for production of high-end technology needed for production of goods at home at cheaper rate.
- c. **Weak Financial sector** – To promote entrepreneurship, financial systems need to be robust so that credit at lower interest rate can be provided. However, the high NPA's in banks has led to slowdown in credit growth.
- d. **Poor performance of states and local bodies** – To promote local goods based on each district's competitive advantage, need is to promote fiscal federalism and empowerment of local bodies.
- e. **Creates inefficiency** - Lack of competition from rest of the world can make the entire industrial sector inefficient, leading to less than desired output and job creation.

Way Forward – India need to promote local production of goods along with better participation in global supply chain to focus on export-led growth and promote forces of globalisation.

20. Can India decouple itself from Chinese manufacturing?

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS-3 Economy: Effects of liberalization on the economy (post 1991 changes), changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

Context: The border clashes with China and the COVID-19 pandemic have again raised questions about India's dependence on Chinese manufacturing.

India's Dependence on Chinese Manufacturing- Brief Overview

- India's imports from China in 2019-2020 reached \$65 billion, out of \$81 billion two-way trade. China accounts for about 14% of India's total imports
- India's main dependence on Chinese imports is regarding capital goods. These include machineries, including electrical machinery, semiconductor driven machinery etc.
- 20% of the auto components and 70% of electronic components come from China. Similarly, 45% of consumer durables, 70% of APIs and 40% of leather goods imported are from China.

China-India bilateral trade -2019

India's overall merchandise imports	\$484 bn	India's overall merchandise exports	\$325 bn
Merchandise import from China	\$85 bn	Merchandise export to China	\$29 bn
	% imports from China		% exports to China
Electrical machinery	34%	Gems/Jewellery	36%
Nuclear reactor	18%	Minerals/Ores	15%
Organic chemicals	10%	Organic chemicals	11%
Gems/Jewellery	6%	Aquaculture	5%
Iron & Steel	4%	Electrical machinery	4%
Plastic goods	4%	Cotton	4%
Fertilisers	2%	Plastic/Polymers	3%
Medical equipments	2%	Nuclear reactor	3%
Auto components	2%	Iron & Steel	3%

Why is China the manufacturing hub of the World?

- China offers the capacity to businesses to develop the supply chains by considerable lengths within itself. This is because of its geography which offers agglomeration

advantages and wide broad basing that it has developed over different sectors and in most products.

- Further, along with being the largest exporter of assembled final products, China has also over the years become a major consumer for final products

Where does India lack?

- **Skill sets:** Skill sets in the manufacturing sector in India remain low which hinders businesses to invest in the sector.
- **Infrastructure:** Sub-standard infrastructure is a major obstacle in attracting investment in India. Due to low infrastructure development, India offers less locational advantages than China.
- **Red tapism:** Bureaucracy, red tapism and unpredictable policies deter investments in India's manufacturing sector.
- **Low Productivity:** Productivity in India remains low which hinders investments despite low wage rates.

What should be India's policy priorities to attract investment amid geo-economic shift post Covid pandemic?

- Skill reform and Labour reform to encash demographic dividend and attract investors
- Infrastructural development to provide locational and agglomeration advantages
- Development of industrial parks to attract FDI
- Favourable policies to promote ease of doing business

Conclusion: The commerce ministry has also identified 12 sectors -- food processing, organic farming, iron, aluminium and copper, agrochemicals, electronics, industrial machinery, sanitisers and masks, auto parts, textiles etc to make India global supplier and cut import bill. India should not only focus on reducing dependency on China but also on other countries to march towards economic nationalization and self-sufficiency.

21. On Government e-Marketplace

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS-3 Economy: Effects of liberalization on the economy (post 1991 changes), changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

Context: Government e-Marketplace has made it mandatory for sellers to mention country of origin on products they wish to sell through the platform

About Government e-Marketplace (GeM)

- Launched in 2016, GeM is an e-marketplace for procurement of common use Goods & Services required by the government. It aims to enhance transparency, efficiency and speed in public procurement.
- Currently, government departments, ministries, public sector units, state governments, and Central Armed Police Forces can carry out transactions through this portal.
- At present, 3,94,461 sellers and service providers are registered with the portal to sell 18,30,688 products and several services
- Directorate General of Supplies and Goods (DGS&D) with technical support of National e- Governance Division (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology) has developed GeM portal.

Recent Changes in GeM

- Mandatory for sellers to enter the country of origin while registering all new products on GeM. This step aims to promote 'Make in India' and 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.
- Make in India filter has been enabled on the portal
- Revised public procurement (Preference to Make in India), Order 2017: It introduced a concept of Class-I, II and non-local suppliers, based on which they will get preference in government purchases of goods and services.
 - Class I local suppliers- suppliers of those goods with more than 50% local content
 - Class II local suppliers- those with more than 20% local content.

Are these changes enough to promote India-made products and self-reliance?

The recent attempt to promote local products by changes in GeM is at best symbolic. India's reliance on imports from China extends beyond smartphones and low-cost electronics to heavy machinery and active pharmaceutical ingredients. Getting rid of this dependency is a long-term process and would require changes such as:

- greater investment in education, skill-building, encash demographic dividend and attract investors
- Infrastructural development to provide locational and agglomeration advantages
- Development of industrial parks to attract FDI
- Favorable policies to promote ease of doing business

Conclusion: India needs major policy changes, skill building, labor law reforms and an overhaul of bureaucratic processes to enhance manufacturing capacities with improved efficiency and reduced cost.

Topic 9: Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

22. Civil Aviation

Source: [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS 3 - Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

Context: After a two-month long shutdown due COVID-19, domestic flights were allowed to resume operations in a staggered manner from May 25.

Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN) philosophy:

Fundamental and paradigmatic shift in civil aviation: Changed from an elitist mode of transportation to one which is within the reach of all Indians.

Reach of Civil Aviation Before COVID-19:

- Pre-COVID India was the third largest domestic aviation market in the world with approximately 140 million passengers travelling annually.
- The country was poised to become the third-largest overall market in three years.
- We were experiencing double-digit growth when the headwinds of the COVID crisis hit us.

Efforts of Civil aviation during COVID-19:

Mission Lifeline Udan

It has covered more than 5.4 lakh kilometres through 584 flights, carrying critical medical related cargo loads of over 935 tonnes to the farthest parts of the country and abroad.

Vande Bharat Mission

It has already evacuated more than 40,000 stranded and distressed Indian citizens from different parts of the world.

Re - commencement of domestic aviation operations

This decision was taken in the spirit of cooperative federalism. All the sensitivities of the states were tried to be accommodated.

The factors which need to be addressed before restarting international flights:

International restrictions

- Many international destinations are not allowing incoming passenger traffic except for their own citizens or diplomats.

Domestic restrictions

- Within India, most international flights operate from the metros where travellers arrive from neighbouring cities and states.
- All metro cities were under various degrees of lockdown which are beginning to be lifted only now.

Way Forward

There is a need to proactively engage and support the aviation sector. The government needs to ensure that the Indian aviation sector comes out from this crisis stronger.

23. Telecom sector and Policy Uncertainty

Source – [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus – GS 3 - Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

Context – Rather than be driven by short-term revenue considerations, the government should consider the long-term implications of its moves on the telecom sector.

From license fee to revenue sharing model

1. **Before 1992** – Department of Telecommunication had monopoly in providing cellular and internet services before economic reforms of 1991.
 2. **After 1992** - The Indian government liberalised the telecom sector as per the National Telecom Policy in 1994, under which licences were given in accordance to the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885.
- Under this law, telcos are required to pay a fixed annual licence fee for licences granted to them. Since fixed licence fee was high, telcos often defaulted on their payments.

3. **After 1999** - The government in 1999 announced the National Telecom Policy, which gave these companies an option to migrate from fixed licence fee to revenue sharing fee.
 - As per the new policy, 15 per cent AGR was fixed as a licence fee under the revenue-sharing model, which was later reduced to 13 per cent and then 8 per cent in 2013.

Defining Adjusted Gross Revenue

1. **2003** - The DoT claimed revenue share from all earnings under the AGR from the telecom companies which included revenue from telecom services as well as non-telecom services like installation charges, value-added services, interest income, dividend, and profit on the sale of assets, insurance claim and forex gain. The operators (telecoms) suggest that it should include only the revenue from core services.
2. **2019** - The Supreme Court widened the definition of AGR to include the government's view.
3. **2020** - The Court has taken cognisance of the telcos' plea of allowing them to repay their dues over a period but on the condition of providing bank guarantees as securities.

Liability on telecom companies

- The total amount due is ~ Rs 1.4 lac crore.

Implication of the Supreme Court Verdict

1. **Effect on other industries** - Given the multiplier impact the (telecom) sector has on the economy and various other industries like as internet service providers, satellite communications providers, cable operators and even companies in power, steel and railways sector, it is of critical importance that the sector remains healthy.
2. **Debt ridden telecom sector and Rising NPA** - Currently the sector is saddled with a massive debt and has almost no appetite to invest in networks and future technologies. Adding further woes to the sector, the recent ruling on the AGR, dues of the telecom service providers will lead to a disastrous collapse of the sector and steep hike in Non -Performing Assets of Banks.
3. **Impacting overall development including Digital India Policy** - The world is witnessing the advent of new possibilities and business opportunities from emerging technologies such as 5G, AI, Internet of Things, etc which will redefine the way businesses and economies will work in the coming decades, it is important that India retains its leadership position in the telecom space. Increased liability will reduce the incentive to invest in new technologies.
4. **High tariff for consumers** - The collapse of any one telecom company will led to end of competition and give scope for cartelization as currently there only three major players - Airtel ,Vodafone Idea and Reliance . The result will be high rise in tariff charged from consumers.

Way Forward - The AGR case is classic example of policy uncertainty in India which tends to dampen the business climate and hurt investments in long run. Amid the slowdown and lockdown induced economic issues, need of the hour is to provide certainty on payment of dues over a period of time to prevent cascading impact on whole economy.

24. COVID-19 and public transport

Source - [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus – GS 3 - Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc

Context - Based on opinion surveys, a significant drop in public transport ridership can be expected for months after easing the lockdown.

India closed its public transport during shutdown which is considered as one of the most lethal public places to promote the community transmission of virus.

Reasons for the apprehensions associated with public transport system are:

- a. **Contact based commutation** - Possibility of viral transmission through tokens, tickets, push buttons on lifts, and handrails at the station elevators are high as contact-less commutation is absent in India.
- b. **Crowding** – The population boom and the non-availability of enough numbers of public vehicle for commutation led to high crowding in the few available transport systems. This makes social distancing a mere rhetoric in public vehicles.
- c. **Indoor-like environment** - Correlation to the effect of air conditioning airflow has also been established based on precise seating locations of those infected at a restaurant and at a call centre which holds true for air conditioned buses and metro rails also.
- d. **Absence of culture of hygiene** – Bathrooms with water availability and other hand sanitizing facilities are not there in majority of bus, railway or metro stations.

All these challenges has the potential that people shift from public to private mode of transport which will have following **implications**:

- a. Increase in fuel consumption and thus, more air pollution.
- b. Heavy traffic, more noise pollution and longer commutation time.
- c. Increase in number of accidents and human lives lost in such accidents.

Suggested solutions to promote culture of hygiene in public transport systems:

- a. **Contact-less commutation** – This involves compulsory use of cards or e-ticketing. The regular sanitization of handrails, handgrips, and buttons on lift by the newly hired staff will create more hygienic public stations. Signs on hand hygiene vis-a-vis touching surfaces are needed.
- b. **Increasing fleet of public transport** – This is a solution which also solves the issue of increasing air pollution on account of use of private vehicles by people. With more buses and more metros the social distancing would be easier to practice.
- c. **Creating outdoor-like environment** – AC buses and metro rail AC systems could be changed to High Efficiency Particulate Air filters with frequent circulation of fresh air.
- d. **Social influence and persuasion** – Leaders need to come forward to persuade people to use all needed measures to prevent the spread of virus through touching, sneezing in public etc.

Way Forward - Actions are needed from both authorities and the public to keep our public transport systems safe. Our buses and trains must be perceived as safe, so it is vital to assure ourselves that public transport is for the public – not the virus.

Topic 11: Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

25. On India's coronavirus numbers

Source: [The Hindu](#) and [Indian Express](#)

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Syllabus: GS-3-Science and Technology

Context: India's Coronavirus numbers has been rising steadily.

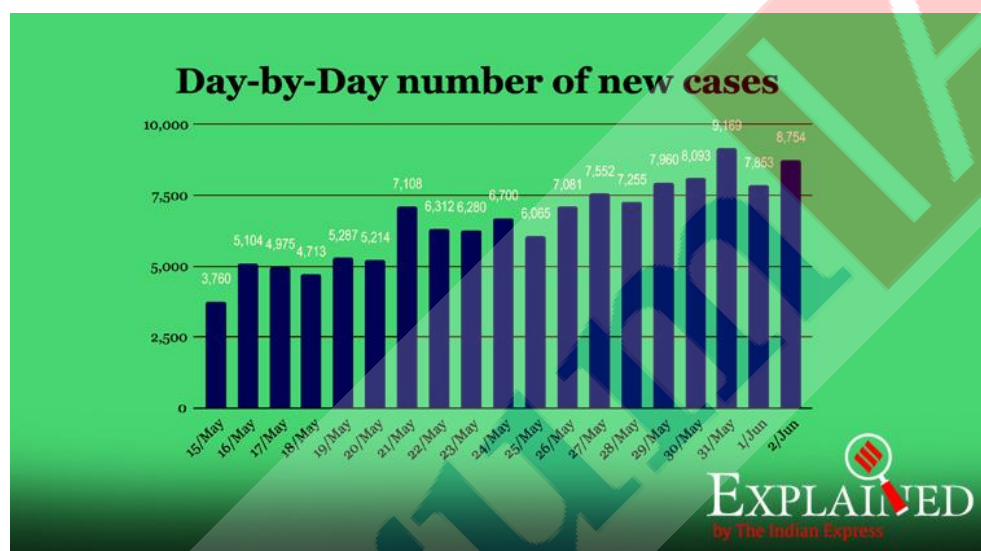
Covid-19 Scenario in India

- **Total confirmed cases:** 207,615
- **Total Number of Deaths:** 5,815
- **Covid-19 Death rate:** 2.79%

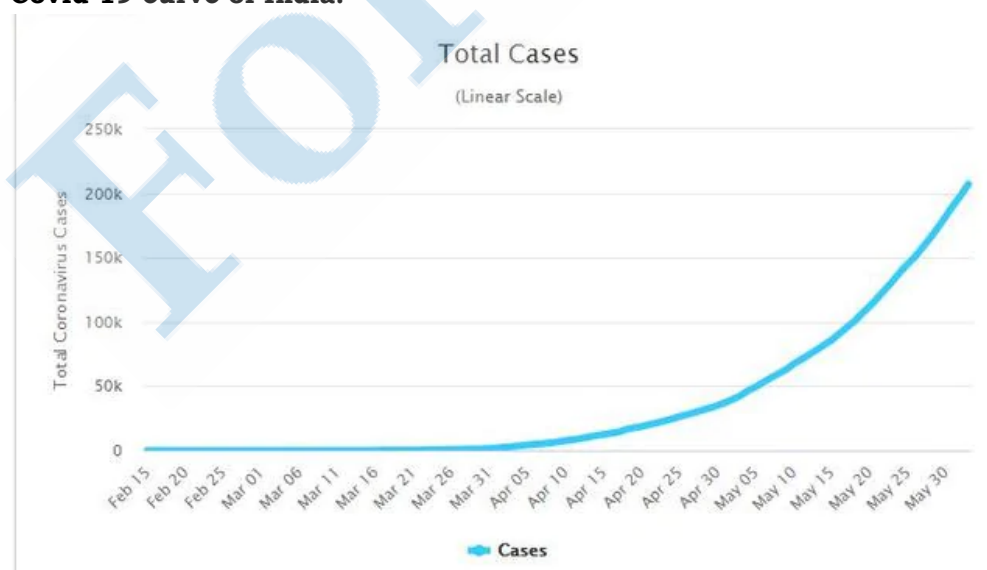
Covid-19 Deaths:

According to WHO, the death of every COVID-19 patient is to be counted as a COVID death unless there is a clear alternative cause of death that cannot be related (e.g. trauma).

- **Recovery Rate** (the rate of transition from a state of infection to recovery from the disease- measured as a percentage of the total cases): 48%
- **States with highest number of cases:** Maharashtra (72,300), Tamil Nadu (24,586), and Delhi (22,132).
- **Daily reported new cases**



Covid-19 curve of India:



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How should India tackle Covid-19 cases?

- Test coronavirus cases more rigorously
- Focus on the sick patients and ensure that others who test positive but remain asymptomatic also have access to healthcare
- Government should attempt to destigmatize COVID-19 infection and have more awareness activities

26. On ICMR antibody test study

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS-3- Science and Technology

Context: The results of a serological test conducted across 69 districts by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) have indicated that the confirmed numbers of COVID-19 infections reported from the RT-PCR tests are likely an undercount. 0.73% of the population, examined for antibodies produced specifically for SARS-CoV-2 via an ELISA test, had evidence of past exposure to the virus.

Different types of Tests used for Covid-19 diagnosis

There are mainly two types of tests being used for Covid-19 diagnosis

- **Genetic test/Molecular Test:** This test is done using the conventional real-time Reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. It is a method of testing by taking a nasal/throat swab from a patient. It involves extracting ribonucleic acid or RNA, which is the genetic material of the virus. If it shares the same genetic sequence as SARS-CoV-2 virus, then it is deemed positive.
- **Serological Test/Antibody Testing:** It is a blood/serum/plasma test to detect the presence of antibodies against a microorganism. In the case of Covid-19 these antibodies are usually IgM (the first antibody that the body makes) and IgG antibodies. These antibodies when detected in the strip give a colored response. The symptomatic individual then can be confirmed using the molecular test.

ELISA Test: ELISA stands for enzyme-linked immunoassay. It is a commonly used laboratory test to detect antibodies in the blood.

Pooled Testing:

It is a procedure where individual specimens (e.g., urine or blood) are combined into a common pool.

- If the pooled test turns out to be positive, individual samples are tested. If there's no positive result, all individual samples in the pool are regarded as negative.
- This type of testing helps to reduce the cost of screening many individuals for infectious diseases and can help in tracing asymptomatic cases of the disease, thereby tracking community transmission.

Comparison between Serological Test and Genetic Test:

- Serological tests help detect and trace past infections while genetic tests can only identify infections that are active.
- Serological tests are relatively cheaper than genetic tests and are portable, administered on-site and provides quick answers.
- Serological or antibody tests are not as accurate as the PCR tests.

India's Response to Covid-19 Pandemic

Testing strategy: India has been testing

- All symptomatic contacts of laboratory-confirmed cases.

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- All asymptomatic individuals who have undertaken international travel in the last 14 days.
- All hospitalized patients with Severe Acute Respiratory Illness

Issues with testing strategy: Testing has been uneven across the states. Some States such as Maharashtra and Gujarat have tested at a higher rate (tests per million population) than many others but have not increased the overall testing to account for the relative rise in the size of the outbreak. In some states like Telangana and West Bengal, testing has been low.

Lockdown: Starting from 24th March, a series of 4 lockdowns were announced (till June) to restrict the movement and prevent the gathering of people. The announced lockdowns, and suspension of public transport, closure of public places and offices were aimed at reducing the growth rate of the virus, and help 'flatten the (transmission) curve'.

Issues with lockdown: In the short-term, the lockdown strategy slowed down the rise in Covid cases. However, it had a detrimental effect on the economy. Further, its uneven implementation in urban areas where physical distancing is a difficult, made it unsuitable for continuation.

Conclusion: The ICMR antibody test study has highlighted the need for more testing, and better contact tracing. More testing will give a clearer the picture is on who is infected and thus who needs to be isolated, and thus help contain the Covid-19 outbreak.

27. Digital media redefining political communication

Source – [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus – GS 3 - Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life

Context – As India enters a technology-driven world, changes in the country's political discourse are natural and communication between parties and people will become simpler.

A one-way process to a two-way process

1. **One-way process** - Before 21st century mode and method of political communication restricted citizen's participation in political processes. For instance – use of political gatherings and print media to disseminate ideas was done by the leaders in Indian Freedom Struggle.



Figure 1- One-way process of political communication

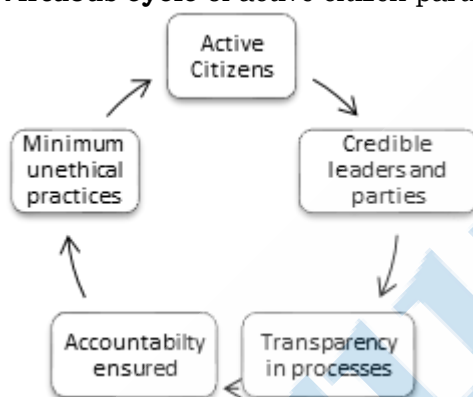
Disadvantages of this process:



2. **Two-way process** – With the emergence of digital media, the process of political engagement has become two-way where citizens actively participate in national and international political events across the world.

Advantages of digital media -

- **Data for mainstream media** -Tweets and Facebook posts are sources of information even for the so-called mainstream communication channels like tv news, radio etc.
- **Virtuous cycle** of active citizen participation and ethical practices of leaders.



- **Environmental cost** - Reduces the need of pamphlets, posters, banners which cost heavily in terms of dumping of waste and cutting of trees.
- **Effective use in pandemics** – For instance, Home Minister Amit Shah’s Bihar jansamvad rally has introduced us to a new experience of digital communication which ensures social distancing while continuing with political discourses in pandemics.

Way Forward – Digital India is the backbone of innovative use of digital media in political sphere. Thus, need of the hour is to increase the availability, accessibility of digital mediums by connecting whole India with optical fibre network.

Topic 13: Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, biotechnology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.

28. Rethinking the old ways - Pharma Sector

Source – [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus – GS 3 - Biotechnology and issues relating to intellectual property rights

Context – Business model of pharma sector needs to change in new post-corona world

Current model of business – Commercial Pharma Companies

Medicines are among humanity's greatest achievements.

- Global market for pharmaceuticals is currently worth Rs. 110 lakh crore annually- 1.7% of the gross world product.
- 55% of this global pharmaceutical spending (Rs.60 lakh crore) is for brand-name products, which are typically under patent.

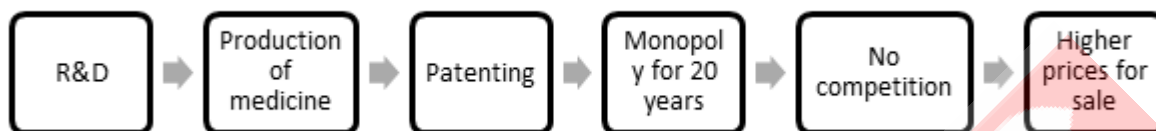


Figure 1 – Production and marketing in Pharma sector

Issues with this model

1. **Monopoly** – Patenting of medicines leads to monopoly of company in market. This enables them to sell their new products without competition at a price far above manufacture and distribution costs.
2. **Unaffordable for poor** – The higher price of patented medicine is harmful for poor people who can't afford to buy them and leads to vicious cycle of poverty for generations.

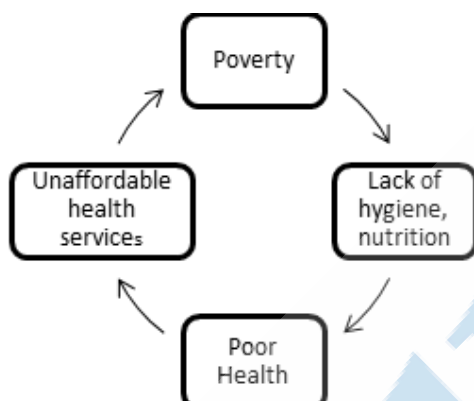


Figure 2 – Vicious cycle of poverty

3. **Neglect of diseases** – Companies motivated by the prospect of profit tend to neglect diseases suffered mainly by poor people, who cannot afford expensive medicines. The 20 World Health Organization-listed neglected tropical diseases together afflict over one billion people but attract only 0.35% of the pharmaceutical industry's R&D. Merely 0.12% of this R&D spending is devoted to tuberculosis and malaria, which kill 1.7 lakh people each year.
4. **Ill-effect of insurance** – Due to presence of a large number of affluent or well-insured patients, companies tend to set high prices of medicines to maximize their profit.

Suggested Solution - Health Impact Fund – It is as an alternative track on which pharmaceutical innovators may choose to be rewarded. Any new medicine registered with the Fund would have to be sold at or below the cost of manufacture and distribution, but would earn ten annual reward payments based on the health gains achieved with it.

Advantages of the Health Impact Fund

1. **Funding from diverse sources** – Government budgeting for health sector and international taxes on carbon emission are few of the sources from which fund can be collected for same.
2. **Favors unprofitable pharmaceutical companies** - The Fund would get pharmaceutical firms interested in certain R&D projects that are unprofitable under the current regime — especially ones expected to produce large health gains among mostly poor people. Such projects would predominantly address communicable diseases.

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3. **R&D in neglected diseases** – This fund will encourage companies to do R&D in neglected tropical diseases. With the Fund in place, there would be much deeper and broader knowledge about such diseases. This will pave way for effective interventions and greater capacities for developing additional, more targeted responses quickly.

4. **Helpful in pandemics** – Government's regulations to use compulsory license system disincentives commercial pharma companies to develop vaccines or medicines to tackle pandemics. This fund will be helpful in situations where the cost of R&D is very high.

Way Forward – In post corona world new methods are needed to resolve the most fundamental challenges humanity is still facing. In public health care, this fund can be a boon as it will invoke conscience of companies about their choice – developing a product and achieving high sales at higher rates or rather developing a product and reducing the overall burden from healthcare.

Topic 14: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

29. Why is the Draft EIA Notification flawed?

Source: [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS-3- Environment

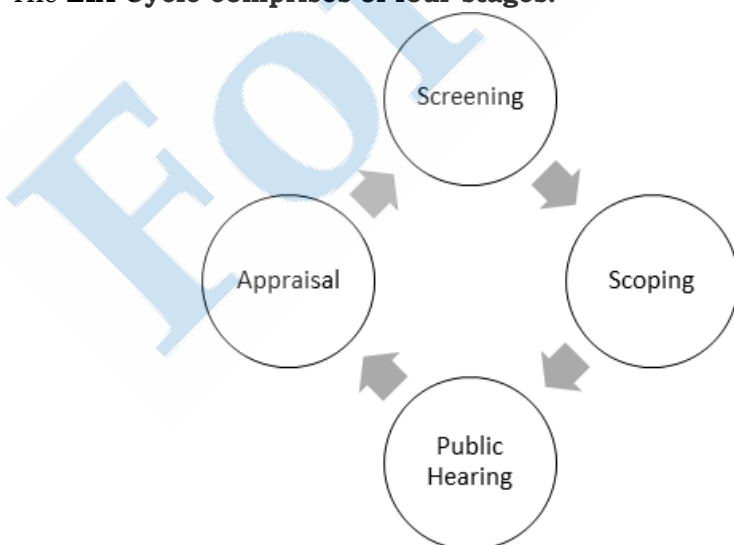
Context: The government has put up for public consideration and comment the Draft Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2020 which seeks to replace Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

- EIA is a process which studies all aspects of the environment and seeks to anticipate the impact (positive and/or negative) of a proposed project or development on the environment.
- EIA is mandatory under the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986 for 29 categories of developmental activities involving investments of Rs. 50 crores and above.

EIA Notification 2006

The **EIA Cycle** comprises of four stages:



EIA Notification 2006 decentralised the environmental clearance projects by **categorizing the developmental projects in two categories:**

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1. Category A: These projects require mandatory environmental clearance and do not go through screening process. They are appraised at the national level by Impact Assessment Agency (IAA) and the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC).
2. Category B: They are appraised at the state level. State Level Environmental Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) and State Level Expert Appraisal Committee (SEAC) are constituted to provide clearance to these projects. Category B projects are further categorised into two:
 - Category B1 projects: They require mandatory EIA
 - Category B2 projects: They do not require EIA

Draft EIA Notification 2020

Changes proposed	Concern
It allows for post facto approval for projects. It has provisions to award clearances for projects even if they have started construction or have been running without securing environmental clearances.	It is in violation of the “precautionary principle”-a principle of environmental sustainability. Further, any environmental damage caused by the project is likely to be waived off by only as the violations get legitimised.
It has omitted prior screening requirements for Category B projects and expanded the list of projects categorised under B2	It has eased process for many industries which might have socio-environmental consequences. Compromising appraisal in such cases will result in further environmental damage.
It proposes to classify inland waterways as Category B2 projects and will not require public consultations irrespective of whether these projects are located in notified ecologically sensitive areas.	It might have significant impact on the marine ecosystem and long-term survival of India’s rivers
It proposes to expand the list of projects that do not require public consultation before receiving Prior-EC. It confers absolute power to the central government to categorise projects as “strategic” and information related to these projects will not be put in public domain.	The provision has completely diluted public consultation process and there is a risk of states taking up development initiatives at the risk of environmental degradation
New construction projects up to 1,50,000 square metres (instead of the existing 20,000 square metres) will not require detailed scrutiny by the Expert Committee, EIA studies and public consultation.	The building and construction sector is among the largest greenhouse gas emitters however, the proposed notification gives leeway to the sector
It proposes an eased monitoring mechanism Under the draft, project owners are to submit environmental compliance reports (after getting clearance) every year in contrast to present 6 months.	It dilutes the backbone of environment clearance rules i.e. monitoring the conditions on which projects are cleared and ensuring compliance.

Conclusion: The recent Vishakhapatnam Gas leak case, and massive fire that erupted at an Oil India Limited (OIL) production well in Baghjan, Assam highlights the importance of

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stringent environmental safeguards. Dilution of EIA to boost economic growth is a flawed idea and its high time for the government to address the increasing socio-economic and environmental challenges.

30. Understanding Human-Animal Conflict

Source – [The Hindu](#)

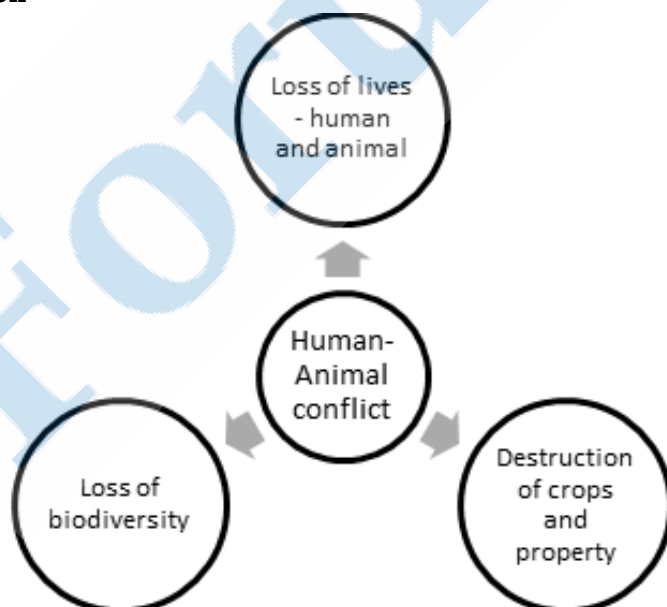
Syllabus –GS 3 - Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

Context – Killing of a pregnant elephant using food bomb in Kerala demands for urgent need of sustainable development.

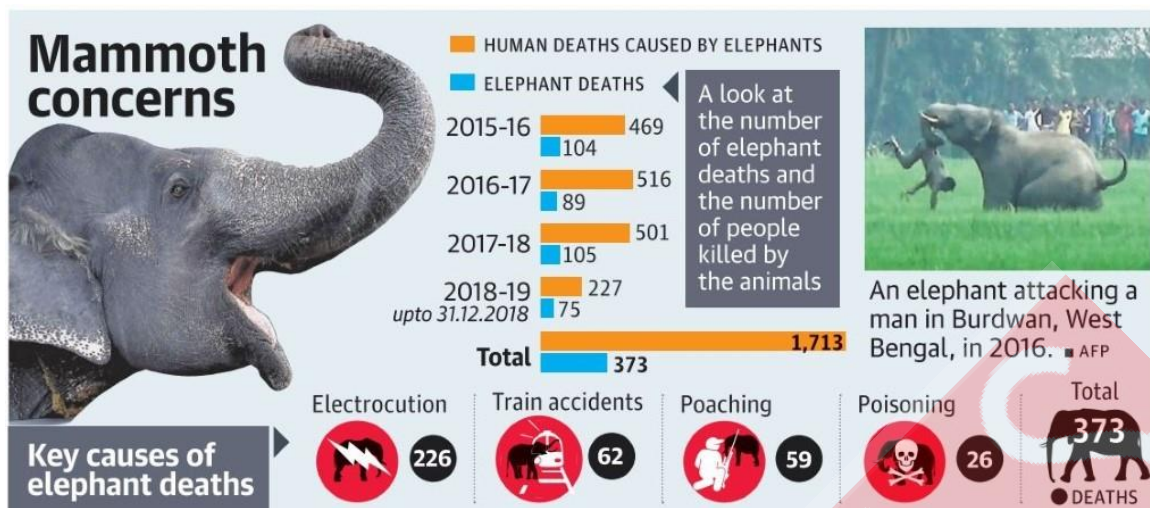
Reasons for human – animal conflict

1. **Deforestation** - The natural and anthropogenic destruction of forests across India for agriculture, industrialisation and urbanisation has deprived animals of their natural habitats.
2. **Unscientific planning and development** – Faster clearances without proper assessment of project's impact on forests and wildlife has created issues like lack of migration corridor for animals.
3. **Disasters and Climate Change** – Disasters like drought and floods puts stress on natural resources like food, water which force the animals to venture into human landscape - agricultural fields which lead to conflict between the two.
4. **Increasing livestock population** - Domestic livestock has become an important source of prey for wild animals when the forest based food resources are disappearing fast.
5. **Human population explosion** – India is the second most populated in world and the needs of 1.3 billion people for survival and comfort has put excruciating pressure on the forest resources.

Implication



1. ~ 1700 people in India were killed by elephants while tigers claimed over 200 lives in from 2015 to 2019.



Source – The Hindu

Suggested solutions

1. **Use of technology** – By using GPS and GIS tools researchers can identify hot spots where human-wildlife conflict is more frequent and such data can help in forming policies and plans for development.
2. **Strict implementation of existing laws** – Forest Conservation Act, Environment Protection Act provides for wildlife conservation in India and prescribes punishment for the same.
3. **Promoting traditional methods** – Biofencing includes growing chilly based plants in the outer boundary to prevent animals from destroying crops. Other methods like pits and walls can be promoted which are cost effective and safe for both man and animal.

Way Forward - The solutions are simple: Inclusive development with a long-term vision that cares for the environment. Need of the hour is willingness to walk the path of conservation.

31. Solving the Human-animal conflict

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS-3- Environment

Context: The recent death of a pregnant elephant in Kerala has caused outrage on social media. The explosive laden pineapple which killed the elephant was a trap for wild boars.

Brief Overview of Wildlife Protection in India

Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: The aim of the Act is to ensure the ecological and environmental security of India.

- **Protected Areas:** It contains provisions for setting up and managing national parks, sanctuaries and other protected areas
- **Scheduled Species:** It also consists of 6 schedules which provide a varying degree of protection to animals. Animals listed under Schedule V are called vermin which can be hunted. Example: Rats

In this editorial, the author points out certain issues regarding human-animal conflict and provides solutions for the same:

Issues	Solutions
Modern conservation aims to separate	It is important to reorient the forest

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human and wildlife spaces as overlap leads to conflict. However, this does not hold true for India. In India, most of the animal range is outside protected areas. For example, in case of elephants only about 25% of their range is within protected areas.	department to do away with the wildlife-territorial dichotomy of management that currently exists. Humans and animals have always coexisted and mostly peacefully interacted in India.
Due to habitat fragmentation and shrinking of habitat due to encroachment in forest lands, people and animals are increasingly coming into conflict over living space and food.	Addressing habitat loss, destruction and fragmentation to provide long-term solution to conflict
With the absence of large predators outside forests and the huge availability of easily accessible food crops, deer, monkeys, boar occupy fringe areas. These animals lead to huge destruction of croplands.	Farmers should be empowered and subsidized to better protect their land and not entirely depend on compensation after damage is done.
In other countries, vermin are kept in control, so they don't destroy large crop areas. However, in India, though government has the provision to declare overabundant animals' "vermin", and cull them under the Wildlife Protection Act, it very rarely does this.	It is important to control the population of wild boar to minimize the impact they have on farmers. However, it should be ensured that there is no over-hunting and local extinction in some areas that have governance or enforcement problems.

Conclusion: Education and training activities at different levels should be taken up for disseminating innovative techniques, building local capacity in conflict resolution and increasing public understanding of man-animal conflicts

Topic 15: Disaster and disaster management.

32. Earthquakes in India

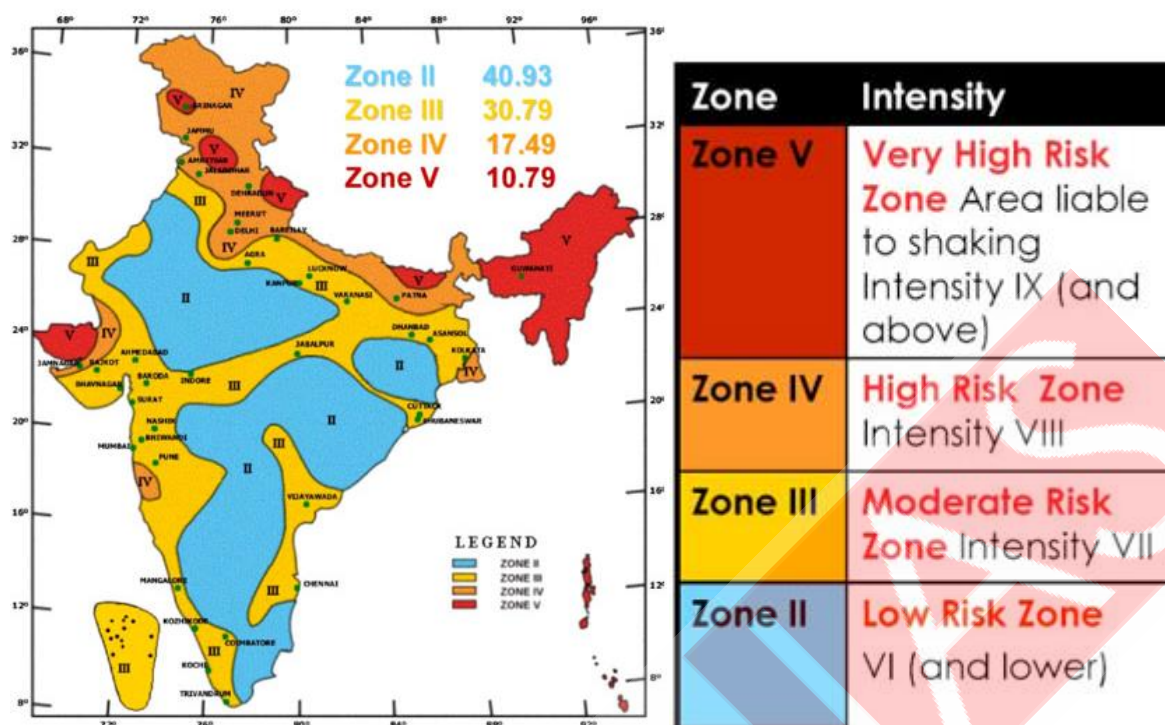
Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS-3: Disaster Management

Context: Recently, Delhi experienced its seventh earthquake in two months.

Earthquakes: Earthquakes are vibrations of the earth, caused by the rupture and sudden movement of rocks that have been strained beyond their elastic limits.

Earthquakes in India: The Bureau of Indian Standards with the help of Indian Meteorological Department has grouped the country into four seismic zones, based on modified Mercalli scale.



Why are some regions in India prone to Earthquake?

- **North-East India:** Most earthquakes occurring in the region are related to subduction of the India-Burma tectonic plate under the Java-Sumatra tectonic plate.
- **North India:** This region is prone to earthquakes as it is located near the boundary between the Eurasian and Indo-Australian Plate
- **Andaman and Nicobar Islands:** Sea floor displacement and underwater volcanoes disturb the equilibrium of earth's surface
- **Peninsular India:** Due to the presence of rifts, shear zones and old orogenic belts, the ancient zones of weak crust get reactivated from time to time and rupture.

Earthquake Prevention and Mitigation in India: National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Guidelines: The NDMA has listed down pre-disaster and post-disaster preventive measures.

Pre-Disaster Prevention Measures:

Long-term

- Re-framing buildings' codes, guidelines, manuals and byelaws and their strict implementation- Tougher legislation for highly seismic areas
- Incorporating earthquake resistant features in all buildings in high-risk areas.
- Making all public utilities like water supply systems, communication networks, electricity lines etc. earthquake-proof.

Medium -Term

- Retrofitting of weak structures in highly seismic zones
- Getting communities involved in the process of disaster mitigation through education and awareness.

Post Disaster Measures: These include maintenance of law and order, rescue and evacuation, ensuring supply of supply of food and drinking water etc.

Initiatives taken:

1. National earthquake Risk Mitigation Project: The project aims at strengthening the structural and non-structural earthquake mitigation efforts and reducing the vulnerability in the high-risk districts prone to earthquakes.
2. National Building Code (NBC): The salient features of the NBC 2005 include meeting the challenges posed by natural calamities and reflecting the state-of-the-art and contemporary applicable international practices.
3. Seismic retrofitting: It is the modification of existing structures to make them more resistant to seismic activity, ground motion, or soil failure due to earthquakes

Conclusion: According to seismologists, minor earthquakes indicate that a major earthquake could hit the city of Delhi. It's high time that the government should make earthquake proof architecture mandatory. Also, in the long term, the government should take measures to de-congest cities.

33. How negligence and violations led to Vishakhapatnam Gas leak case?

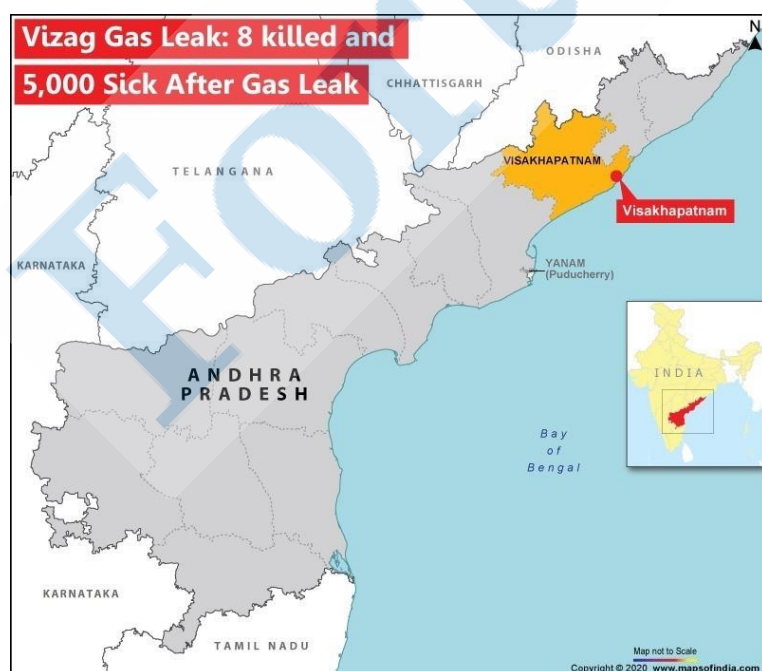
Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS-3 Disaster Management

Context: Styrene gas leakage at LG Polymers plant in Visakhapatnam killed several people and forced the evacuation of thousands of people.

What is Styrene Gas?

- It is a derivative of benzene and is a colourless, inflammable liquid that evaporates easily.
- It is used in the manufacturing of polystyrene plastics, fiberglass, rubber, and latex. It is also found in vehicle exhaust, cigarette smoke, and in natural foods like fruits and vegetables.
- It is included in the schedule of the Manufacture, Storage and Import of Hazardous Chemical Rules, 1989



Government Intervention after Gas Leak incident:

After the gas leak incident, National Green Tribunal (NGT) took up the case suo motu and constituted a five-member joint monitoring committee to conduct a probe. The NGT imposed a fine of ₹50 crore on the plant under the liability clause.

The findings of the NGT Committee are as follows:

Cause of the Gas Leak: The leak occurred due to self-polymerisation of styrene monomer. The malfunctioning of a tank's refrigerating unit led to an increase in temperature which caused styrene to evaporate and leak.

Absence of safety protocols:

- the company did not have enough tertiary butyl catechol (TBC), which is used as an inhibitor to avoid self-polymerisation
- there was no system to monitor dissolved oxygen in the vapour space.
- Equipments were old and lacked maintenance.

Role of Urban Planning in the Vishakhapatnam Gas Leak:

According to environmentalists, poor urban planning makes Vishakhapatnam more prone to effects of industrial disasters. Generally, when cities are planned, industries are located on one side and the city expands towards the other. But in the case of Visakhapatnam, industrial growth is scattered in all directions.

How should have been industrial expansion planned?

Visakhapatnam is shaped like a bowl, with the Bay of Bengal on one side and mountains surrounding it on all three sides. According to urban planners, industries should have been planned outside the hills.

No environmental Clearance: The company had been operating the plant from 1997 to 2019 without obtaining the necessary environment clearances.

Effects of the Gas Leak:

- **Short-term Health effects:** Respiratory problems, irritation in the eyes, irritation in the mucous membrane, and gastrointestinal issues.
- **Long-term Health effects:** It can affect the central nervous system and lead to other related problems like peripheral neuropathy. It could also lead to cancer.
- **Effect on Livelihood:** Agriculture is the main source of income for around 400 families in the affected area. The farmers have lost their crops as they were directed by the Dept of agriculture to destroy the standing crop not to undertake sowing till further clearance is given.

Conclusion: The toxic gas leak in Visakhapatnam is grim reminder to the importance of prevention and response to industrial disasters.

34. Climate-Change – The looming crises

Source – [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus – GS 3 - Disaster and disaster management

Context – Like COVID response, Climate Change also needs coordinated and unprecedented response from all countries

1. **Climate Change** - Climate change refers to the increasing changes in the measures of climate over a long period of time – including precipitation, temperature, and wind patterns.

Global warming - Global warming is just one aspect of climate change. In fact, they say that global warming refers to the rise in global temperatures due mainly to the increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

2. **Causes of Global Warming** – The main cause is increase in greenhouse gases which is result of burning of fossil fuels at unprecedented rate and deforestation at faster rate for sake of development.

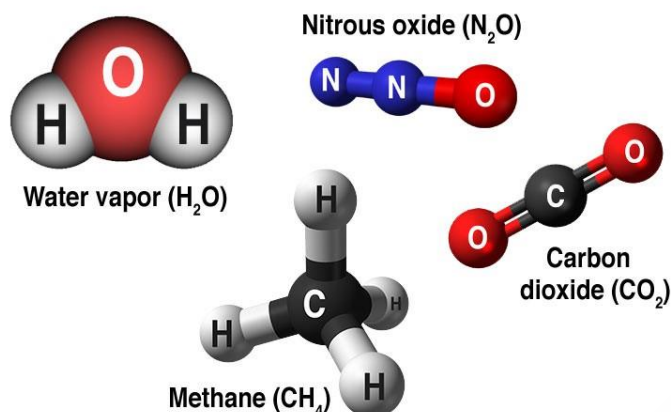


Figure 1 – Major greenhouse gases in atmosphere

Figure 2- Rising level of CO₂ since 800,000 years ago

3. Relevant Facts –

- a. **Level of CO₂** – 408 parts per million in 2018 as compared to 280 parts per million of pre-industrial era
- b. **Increase in Temperature** – 1 degree Celsius increase by 2015 as compared to past 100 years.

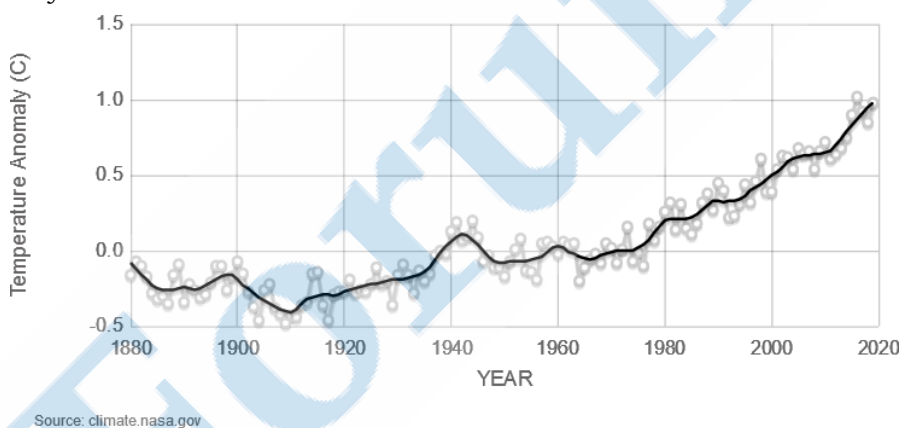


Figure 3- Global temperature increase

4. Effects of Climate Change

1. **sDrought and floods in excess** - Warmer conditions will probably lead to more evaporation and precipitation overall, but individual regions will vary, some becoming wetter and others dryer.
2. **Rise in sea level** - A stronger greenhouse effect will warm the oceans and partially melt glaciers and other ice, increasing sea level. Ocean water also will expand if it warms, contributing further to sea level rise.
3. **Change in Crop cycle** - Some crops and other plants may respond favorably to increased atmospheric CO₂, growing more vigorously and using water more efficiently.

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At the same time, higher temperatures and shifting climate patterns may change the areas where crops grow best and affect the makeup of natural plant communities.

4. **Extinction of biodiversity** – Animals, based on water as well as land are already facing 6th mass extinction due to the same.

5. Issues associated with steps taken

- **Financial constraint** – At the UN Climate Conference in 2009, the developed nations had pledged to provide \$100 billion in aid each year by 2020 to the poorer countries for climate change mitigation and adaptation. In 2017, for which data are available, only \$71 billion had been provided to poorer nations.
- **More focus on mitigation rather than adaptation** – Mitigation is reducing climate change which involves reducing the flow of heat-trapping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Steps across nations, like reducing deforestation and substituting fossils with zero carbon based technology, are focussed on this only. Adaptation measures do not account for major steps taken.
- **Withdrawal of USA from its obligations under Paris Agreement** – It has led to debates and counter-arguments on role of developed nation in fighting the climate change with principle of common but shared responsibility.

Way Forward - Technologists, economists and social scientists need to plan for a sustainable planet based on the principles of equity and climate justice within and across nations.

35. What happened in Baghjan? - The Baghjan oilfield blast case

Source: [The Indian express](#)

Syllabus: GS-3- Disaster Management

Context: Two fire service officers of state-owned Oil India Ltd (OIL) lost their lives when a gas well at Baghjan in Tinsukia district of Assam caught fire.

Baghjan Oil Field: The Baghjan oilfield is owned by the Oil India Limited (OIL). It is a part of the Greater Chandmari Fields. It is engaged in active oil production since 2003.



Baghjan Oil filed Blast

A gas leak was first reported on May 27 from a well that was under renovation. A fire broke out on June 9th. According to experts, lack of adequate safety and disaster management plan led to the industrial disaster.

Major Industrial/Chemical Disasters in India

According to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), over 130 significant industrial/ chemical accidents have been reported in India in the recent past.

Major incidents:

- 1984: Bhopal Gas Tragedy caused by accidental release of toxic gas Methyl Iso Cyanate (MIC).
- 2011- Chlorine Gas Leak in an effluent treatment plant in Chinchwad, Pune
- 2014: Poisonous Gas Leak from Bhilai Steel Plant in Durg, Chhattisgarh
- 2017- blast in the boiler area of state-run NTPC Ltd's Unchahar power plant in Raebareli, Uttar Pradesh
- 2018: Ammonia Gas leak from a plant in Ratnagiri, Mumbai
- 2010- Styrene Gas Leak, Visakhapatnam

Suggested Reforms:

Role of Industry

1. **Identification of hazardous activities:**
 - Good knowledge about the safety aspects of the industrial operations would enable prevention and mitigation
 - Use of appropriate hazard identification tools such as checklists analysis, safety audit would help in mitigating the hazards.
2. **Maintenance of plant facility and equipment**
 - Proper maintenance of all the equipment and machinery at regular intervals
 - Regular site safety and health inspection

Role of government

3. **Accident investigation board and chemical accident database:** An accident investigation board should be set up in India to investigate the chemical disasters and bring out guidelines based on lessons learnt in each incident.
4. **Awareness Campaigns:** This would help workers in reducing unsafe acts and in tackling the disaster if it were to happen.
5. **Research and development:** Research into new methods of producing the product with less toxicity can to a large extent reduce the adverse effect if any accident were to happen.
6. **Offsite Emergency Planning:** This would ensure that the local authority adequately discharges his duty to minimize the consequences of major accident to people and environment.
7. **Ensure Accountability:** The government should ensure accountability by proper implementation of laws.

Conclusion: The toxic gas leak in Visakhapatnam is grim reminder to the importance of prevention and response to chemical disasters. It also highlights that there is an urgent need to strengthen occupational safety in India.

Topic 17: Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security.

36. How to handle China and Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir?

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 3 - Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security.

Context: In the past few weeks Beijing and Islamabad are making coordinated efforts to challenge India in the Kashmir-Ladakh region.

Background:

- Pakistan has increased the infiltration of terrorists in the Valley.
- China has increased assertiveness to control over disputed areas around the LAC.



• Reasons for Pakistan’s aggression:

- The intensification in its terrorist activities is related to the dilution of Article 370. It sees it as a reduction of its claim on Kashmir.

• Reasons for China’s aggression:

- Experts feel that China seems to have calculated that the division of Ladakh from Jammu and Kashmir allows India a freer hand in contesting China’s claims in the region.
- It is further augmented by the Increasing road-building activity on India’s part close to the LAC.
- **Threatening CPEC project:** Beijing has also alarmed over our External Affairs Minister’s remark that India expects to have physical jurisdiction over (POK) one day.
- **Overlapping interests of Pakistan and China:** Both wanted India to be more concerned in the region so as to be busy in taking defensive measures in Kashmir and Ladakh and have little time and energy left to attempt to alter the status quo in POK or in Aksai Chin.

But both countries have different objectives with respect to India.

Different objectives of China and Pakistan:

For China	For Pakistan
• Territorial dispute: China sees	• Ideological dispute: Its territorial claim on

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Ladakh as primarily a territorial dispute with strategic ramifications.	Kashmir is based on an immutable ideological conviction that it is the unfinished business of partition and as a Muslim-majority state should be part of Pakistan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pushing India within its limits: As China also believes it is superior to the Indian militarily.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weaker to India: Islamabad realises that it is the weaker power in conventional terms and therefore has to use unconventional means such as terrorist infiltration.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintaining Status quo: China is a power in Ladakh having occupied Aksai Chin and wants to keep up the pressure on New Delhi to prevent the latter from trying to change the situation on the ground. It wants to prevent any Indian move from threatening the CPEC project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changing status quo: It has been trying to do the same since Partition by terrorist infiltration as well as by engaging in conventional warfare.

Therefore, it is possible to negotiate the territorial dispute with China on a give-and-take basis but not with Pakistan which considers Kashmir a zero-sum game.

Way Forward

India should distinguish the different objectives on the part of Beijing and Islamabad and tailor its responses accordingly without uniting the two threats to its security.

Topic 18: Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security; money-laundering and its prevention.

37. Law enforcement agencies in controlling COVID-19 and Issues of Law Enforcement

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 3 - Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security; money-laundering and its prevention.

Context: Strict maintenance of public order is essential to look after and give the best medical care to COVID-19 affected persons.

Role of Law Enforcement Agencies in Enforcing lockdown:

- **Strict observance:** The police have taken enormous risks during the lockdown to ensure strict observance of guidelines, including physical distancing.
- **Importance of Lessons learnt in COVID-19 handling for law enforcement agencies:** They need to introspect on its recent experience and draft a comprehensive Standard Operating Procedure that will educate all police persons in the country.
- **Managing resources in enforcing lockdown:** There were less complaints of lack of manpower and mobility. They had the public cooperation to avoid chaos. The bulk of the population was indoor. So, the police could bring in equipment and manpower to handle this unusual situation.
- **Use of Social Media:** They skillfully used social media to disseminate all relevant information to a majority of the population.

Overall drop in crime:

- **Reduction in crime:** Roads were empty and there was nearly zero traffic on major highways. This ensured a sharp reduction in traffic accidents and fatalities caused by such accidents. With anti-social elements confined to their homes, trespass and burglary were reduced.

Global pattern on crime: The police force managed to keep the peace during these times.

- Crime was reduced in major cities that generally report a high number of crimes.
- The New York Police Department reported an uptick in murders and burglaries during the pandemic.
- London reported a decline in non-violent crime, especially stabbings.

In India:

- The Delhi Police reported a 70% fall in heinous crimes (murders and rapes) between April 1 and 15 compared to the same period last year.
- In Chennai, the total number of crimes dropped by 79% following the implementation of national lockdown compared to previous month.

Challenges for law enforcement agencies:

Rise in Domestic violence:

- This period saw a worrying surge in domestic violence cases. For example- The Tamil Nadu Police reportedly received 2,963 calls on domestic violence in April alone.

Reasons for rise:

- **Unemployment:** Most men were at home, either without work or in fear of losing their jobs. Data show that domestic violence increases when there is greater unemployment because of the fear and insecurity of these men.
- **Non-availability of liquor:** It caused frustration among those men who are habituated to drinking daily. There was a similar increase in sexual and gender-based violence in West Africa during the 2013-16 Ebola outbreak.

Organised crime especially illicit drug trade:

- It can get benefitted from the pandemic according to few members of the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, a network of prominent law-enforcement, governance and development practitioners based in Geneva.
- **Innovation in crime methods:** Travel restrictions across borders have made international trade in drugs difficult. Gangs are therefore working to innovate and adapt to the changing nature of the illicit market. The Global Initiative believes that organised gangs will infiltrate health services and make profits through the sale of prescription drugs that are not otherwise easily available to the public.

Rise in cybercrime:

- New portals have been launched to get people to donate money for the cause of combating COVID-19. Experts say that many fraudulent sites are designed so well that a large number of people are easily conned.

Keeping prisons free of the virus:

- Many prisons have taken steps to insulate prisoners who reported positive for the virus from the rest of the inmates.

- **Premature release:** A number of human rights activists want law agencies to consider the premature and temporary release of prisoners. But such a move will make a mockery of the criminal justice system and expose society to many unrepentant violent offenders.
- The Supreme Court had directed the States and Union Territories to constitute high-powered committees to consider releasing convicts who have been jailed up to seven years on parole, in order to decongest prisons.

Way Forward

The police will have to think of ways of dealing with new challenges in maintaining law and order.

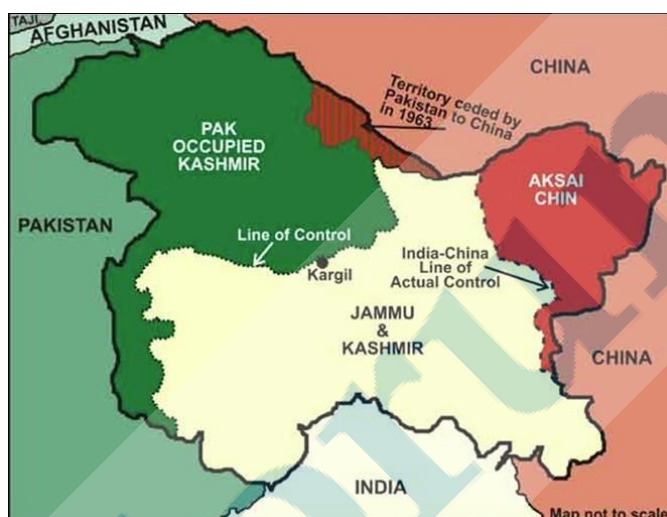
Topic 19: Security challenges and their management in border areas – linkages of organized crime with terrorism.

38. The question of Kashmir

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 3 - Security challenges and their management in border areas – linkages of organized crime with terrorism.

Context: Analyzing the impact of India's decision on reorganization of Jammu and Kashmir in 2019 on the LAC and LoC.



The impact of reorganisation of J&K:

On Pakistan	On China
<p>Effect on Simla Agreement of 1972:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pakistan argues that this Agreement which forms a key basis of bilateral relations including the management of the LoC is not valid anymore as India's decision goes against the spirit of the Agreement. • The agreement states that neither side should alter the situation unilaterally till a final settlement is reached. <p>Serious implications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governing of India-Pakistan borders in J&K: If this agreement is void then the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beijing became uneasy due to India's strong official claim about Aksai Chin that has been under the Chinese control. • Boundary disputes: From Beijing's perspective, this complicated the ongoing boundary talks between the two sides. For example- bringing Ladakh under India's central rule annoyed China since it

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agreement governing their borders would have to be the one signed in Karachi in 1949 at the end of their first war in 1948.

- **Territorial adjustments could become null and void:** As the Simla Agreement formalised several territorial changes which took place until December 1971.

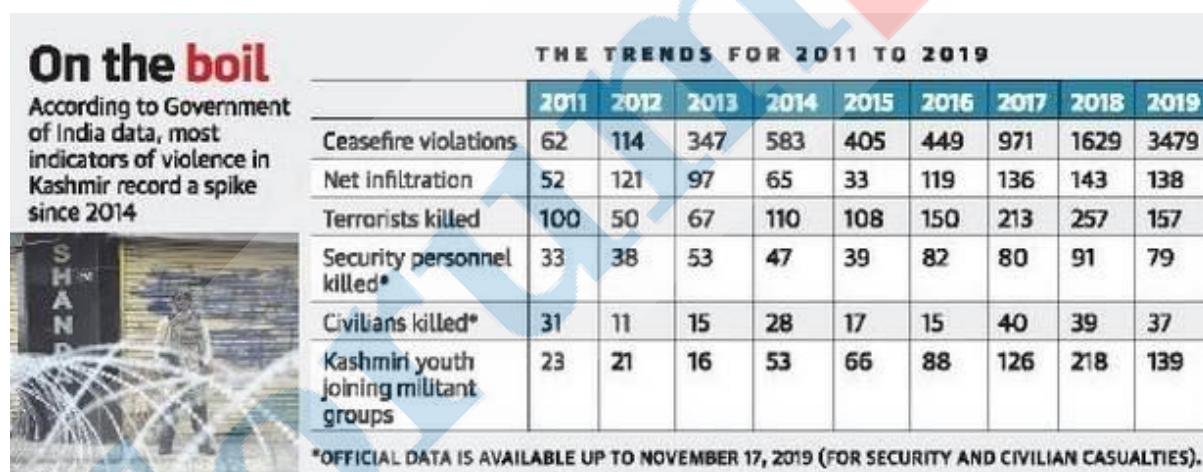
This raises two specific issues:

- **End to existing ceasefire agreements between them:** Since the current ceasefire agreement between them (declared in 2003) is essentially a reiteration of the ceasefire agreement declared at the end of the 1971 war.
- **Effect on LoC:** The LoC came into being (replacing the ceasefire Line in 1971) after Simla agreement. If the agreement is nullified, its effects on LoC are not clear.

considers Ladakh's borders to be disputed between them.

- **Changing status quo:** Like Pakistan, China argues that India changed the status of a territory (J&K) whose borders were still being negotiated.

Official data show a steady rise in violence in Kashmir since 2014 and early trends on violence in 2020 show that the levels of violence will indeed cross those of 2019.



Consequences for India:

- **Emboldening China:** After an all-party meeting, the Indian PM stated that Neither is anyone inside the Indian territory nor any of our border posts are captured. China is using this statement to justify its position on the LAC. It could now further embolden China to undertake more border raids and land capture attempts.
- **Strategic importance:**
- **For India:** Chinese aggression close to Eastern Ladakh could frustrate its hold over Siachen glacier and compromise its security in the western frontier given the close partnership between Islamabad and Beijing.
- **For China:** The region is important for the CPEC and its access to Central Asia which are part of its "Belt and Road" grand strategy.
- **Bringing Pakistan and China closer than ever on the Kashmir question:**

- China has changed its position from somewhat neutral on the Kashmir question in the 1990s and 2000s to now when it claims to be an aggrieved party. China is now a much more powerful third party in Kashmir conflict.

Way Forward

- Our strategy should have been to weaken the China-Pakistan alliance by engaging China economically, multilaterally and regionally.
- India's decisions should not be based on tactical and political considerations but on cold and clear-headed strategic assessment.

Topic 20: Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate.

39. Understanding Swiss Cheese Model in Indian context

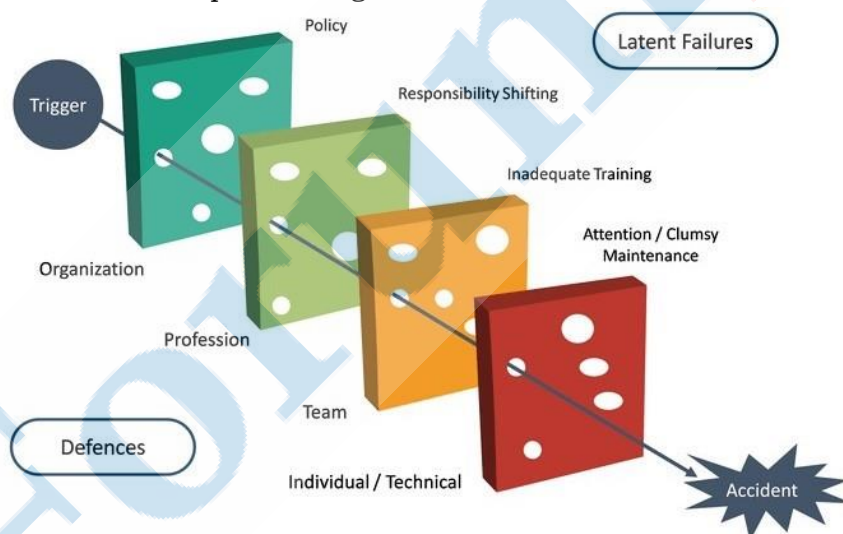
Source – [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus – GS 3 – Indian Security forces and their mandate

Context – Analysing the Indian Defence system with Swiss cheese model

Swiss cheese model

1. Swiss cheese model is associated with accident investigation in an organisation or a system.
2. A system consists of multiple domains or layers. These layers are visualised in the model as slices of Swiss cheese, with the holes in them being the imperfections.
3. Generally holes in cheese slices are ignored unless when all holes in each slice align and let an accident pass through it.



Swiss cheese Model and defence system

1. **Relation between two** - In Defence System, the Swiss cheese slice works the reverse way.
 - The slices represent the major constituents in a nation's war-making potential, while the holes are pathways through which the domains interact.
 - At the structural level, there are only three slices with holes in each. These must align to ensure that a nation's defence posture is in tune with its political objectives; any mismatch may turn out to be detrimental to the national interest.
2. **Slices in Indian Defence system –**
 - **Policy Apparatus** – It comprises of the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) and Ministry of Defence (MoD).

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- The defence **research and development (R&D) establishment and domestic manufacturing industry.**
- The three services – **Army, Navy and Air Force.**

Challenges and associated areas of reforms with respect to the Model

1. **China-Pakistan nexus** – The increasingly threatening posture of the country's two adversaries, terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir, ongoing incidents along the northern border with China pose greater challenge to Indian defence forces in neighbourhood.
2. **Indo-pacific security** – The ongoing great game in Indo-pacific between USA and China along with the threat of pirates and terrorism emanating from the ocean demands strengthened defence forces.
3. **Lack of R&D** - Swiss cheese slice representing indigenous R&D and a manufacturing supply chain that ensures quality war-fighting equipment, at the right time and in required quantities, is still not a possibility for India.
4. **Absence of theatre commands** – Indian deadline for creation of theatre commands is three years from now however the Chinese announced their 'theaterisation' concept in 2015 and it is still work in progress. So a clear perspective is required for what and how of the theaterisation concept in India

Way Forward - The political, civil and military leadership need to ensure that the holes in their Swiss cheese continue to stay aligned which also involves shunning publicity and building capability first for an enhanced defence system.

40. Importance of a strong Air Force in LAC.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 3 - Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate

Context: Analyzing the importance of a strong Air Force in the backdrop of India-China faceoff.

Background:

1962 War:

- The People's Liberation Army (PLA) entered Ladakh and down the Sela Pass into Bomdila because of uninformed leadership, dominant Army brass and unsure Air Force leadership.
- The government resisted the use of IAF to stem China and IAF fighter pilots posted at air bases that could impact operations in Ladakh and the Tawang Sector (Pathankot and Tezpur) never called for action.

1986-87 Confrontation:

Defensive strategy:

- After the establishment of camp at Sumdorong Chu Valley, the defense forces put together a logistically viable envelopment strategy that terrified the Chinese with numbers, firepower and aggression without needless confrontation.
- An important element of this strategy was the use of helicopters and transport aircraft.

Offensive Strategy:

- India took the battle to the most forward PLA base in the sector.
- There was close coordination between 4 Corps in Tezpur and the closest fighter base.

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- India wanted the capability to gain and maintain a favourable air situation for limited periods of time and carry out interdiction to back shallow multi-pronged thrusts across road-less terrain to outflank the Chinese build-up.

The ground situation across the LAC is largely one of parity and the Indian Army needs a numerical superiority of at least 5:1 for any tangible gains or tactical advantage. For gaining advantage, air power will prove to be decisive in depleting the PLA's combat potential.

The advantages of IAF:

- **Superiority:**
- The IAF currently enjoys both a qualitative and quantitative advantage over the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) across the LAC.
- It's fighter fleet of 4th Generation Aircraft (Su-30 MKIs, Mirage-2000s and MiG-29s) are superior in almost every respect to the PLAAF's J-10s, J-11s and SU-30 MKKs.
- The IAF has more operational bases than the PLAAF close to the LAC.
- **Advantage by the IAF in the aerial mobility department:**
- The IAF transport fleet of C-17s, Il-76s, An-32s and C-130s are as proficient in diverse roles as the best air forces in the world.
- The Indian Army has gained confidence through rapid troop induction into major bases or at Advance Landing Grounds like DBO or Nyoma or inter-valley transfer and insertion of special forces with helicopters like Chinooks.
- The IAF's Apaches would add significant firepower in Ladakh.

Areas of concern for IAF:

- **A strong ground-based air defence network by PLAAF in Tibet:** It comprises the S-300, S-400 and HQ-9 systems that will prove a contest for IAF.
- **The advantage of PLAAF in long-range air delivered cruise missiles (500-3,000 km):** It has H-6 bomber as compared to the IAF's Su-30 MKI who has just been cleared to carry the BrahMos land attack cruise missile with a range of 300 km.
- **Area of surveillance:** China possesses a large complement of the Yaogan series of low earth orbit surveillance satellites that offer it an almost persistent stare capability over areas of interest.

In the next decade or so, the IAF will lose its competitive advantage with the PLAAF as the latter has invested heavily in modernization.

Way Forward

There is a need for clear vision and an acceptance of the importance of air power along the LAC to tackle the challenge of China.

41. Indian Navy – The Third Pillar in our security establishment

Sources – [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus – GS 3 - Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate

Context – Uncertainty regarding construction and commissioning of third aircraft carrier in Indian Navy

Aircraft carrier in India and other countries

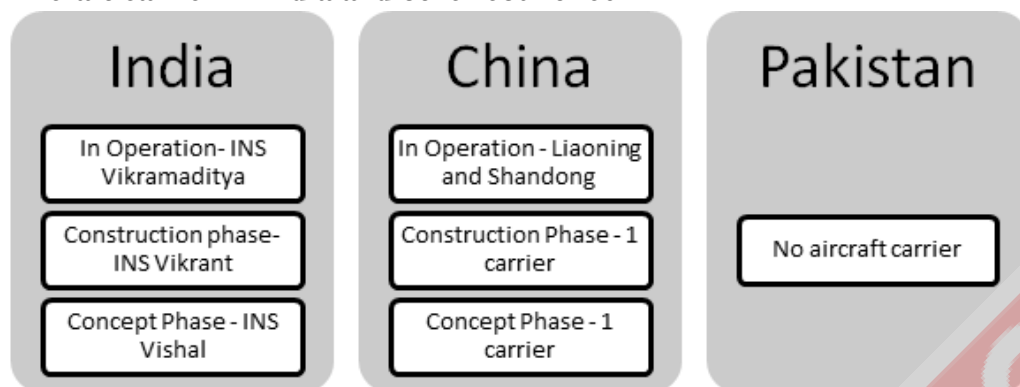


Figure 1- Comparison chart of number of aircraft carriers India, China and Pakistan have

Need of third aircraft carrier in India:

1. **Changing geopolitics in Indian Ocean** – Indian Ocean region is deemed to become heartland of world's geopolitics in 21st century. This would require early preparedness which includes strengthening Indian Navy for better power projection.
2. **Long gestation period** – Aircraft carriers need around 10 years from concept phase to commissioning phase. This requires foresight and strategic policy making which includes estimation of needs and wants of a future global power like India.
3. **China expanding its naval power** – By 2030, the Chinese Navy will have around 6 aircraft carriers which are required for its objective of becoming global hegemony both in military and economy.
4. **Trade via Sea Line of Communications** – 97% of Trade in India happens via Sea line of communications which require better protection from conventional threats like Piracy and terrorism.
5. **Long coastline** – India has coastline of around ~7500km which is important source of country's economy in terms of trade, tourism, aquaculture, conservation of maritime biodiversity. This underlines the importance of better equipped Navy to tackle unforeseen crises.
6. **Role played in previous wars** – The Bangladesh War of 1971 was a strategic victory for India which was won because of combined efforts of three forces. It was Navy, however, which played predominant role to create blockade for Pakistan with its prowess of powerful systems.

Despite of the advantages third aircraft carrier offers to regional power like India, there has been argument against need of such carriers.

Argument against Aircraft Carrier

1. **Budget Constraint** – Due to Corona pandemic and the slowdown in economic sectors, resource mobilisation for securing livelihood and strengthening health infrastructure is needed. This puts budgetary constraint on defence bill and construction of projects like INS Vishal will need to be postponed for now.
2. **Limited role of Navy in historical wars** – Among the major wars India has fought in its neighbourhood in 1948, 1962, 1965 and 1971 Navy played a limited role as all were predominantly land border based wars. This requires strengthening the Army and Air Force on urgent basis.
3. **Border disputes** – India has land border based disputes with Pakistan along LOC and with China along LAC. Budgetary resources are, hence, needed for Land border management and modernisation of related ammunition and forces.

4. **Aircraft Carriers need Aircrafts and helicopters** – Indian Air force does not have required squadron strength to fight a two-front war. It currently has 33 squadrons when requires number is 42 squadron. This indicates lack of fighter aircrafts, helicopters needed for strong Air Force. Navy, if will have third aircraft carrier, will need more such aircrafts to be deployed on the upcoming carriers.

Way Forward – The increasing significance of Indian Ocean Region in this century demands a strong Indian Navy which can provide not only regional security to its littoral neighbours but also participate with other global power in securing the peace.

ForumIAS

General Studies - 4

General Studies - 4

Topic 1: Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in-human actions; dimensions of ethics; ethics – in private and public relationships. Human Values – lessons from the lives and teachings of great leaders, reformers and administrators; role of family society and educational institutions in inculcating values.

1. Relation between Leader and leadership

Topic 2: Attitude: content, structure, function; its influence and relation with thought and behaviour; moral and political attitudes; social influence and persuasion.

2. Social Influence through Social Vaccine

Topic 3 : Aptitude and foundational values for Civil Service, integrity, impartiality and non-partisanship, objectivity, dedication to public service, empathy, tolerance and compassion towards the weaker-sections.

3. A time for empathy

Topic 6 : Public/Civil service values and Ethics in Public administration: Status and problems; ethical concerns and dilemmas in government and private institutions; laws, rules, regulations and conscience as sources of ethical guidance; accountability and ethical governance; strengthening of ethical and moral values in governance; ethical issues in international relations and funding; corporate governance.

4. Structural racism and other issues – Police Reforms

1. Relation between Leader and leadership

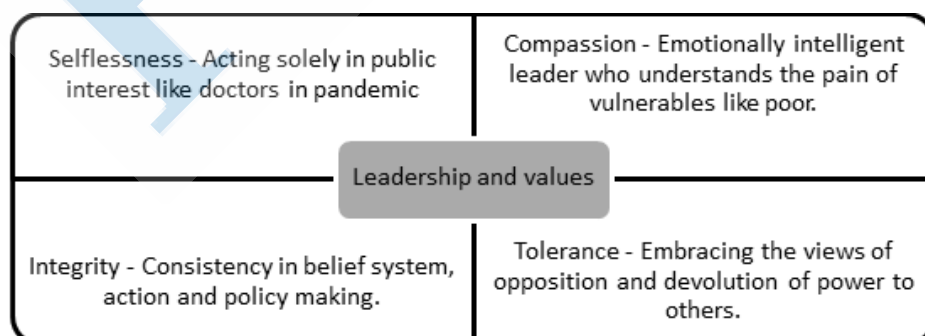
Source – [Livemint](#)

Syllabus – GS 4 – Ethics and Human Interface

Context – The current pandemic and the policies adopted by leaders across the world has shown the difference between leader and leadership.

Leader – A leader is a person who holds high position as well as power in political, economic and social organisation and leads the people to attain goals. He may or may not have leadership qualities which are innate as well as nurtured by people themselves.

Leadership – It comprises of the skills and qualities with which leaders rally people towards the goal. The qualities and foundational values required in a leader are:



Relation between the two is explained below:

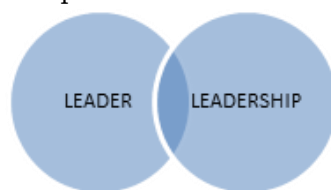


Figure 1 – The Venn diagram depicting the relation between the two

1. **Leaders having the leadership qualities:** History has many examples of such leaders who have inspired people through their values and actions. Example – Mahatma Gandhi had the support of masses in all his movements against the British Empire.
- **COVID** – The strong leaders having leadership qualities have tackled pandemic with following approach:

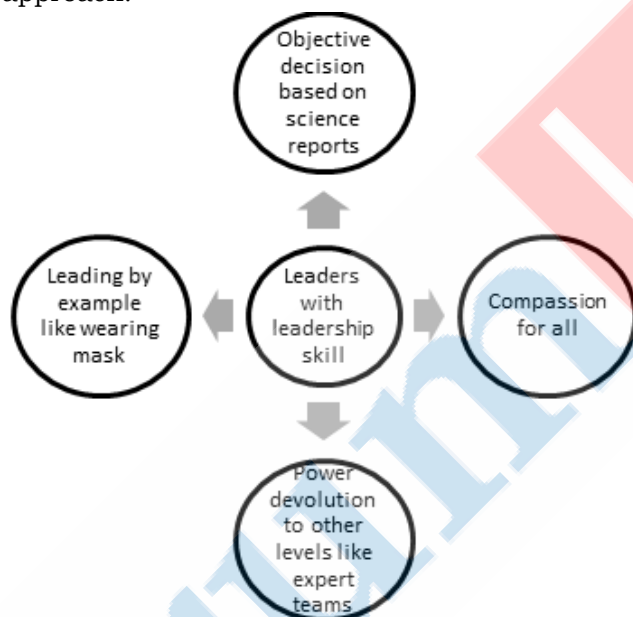


Figure 2 – Leadership qualities exhibited in pandemic

2. **Not all leaders have leadership qualities:** Consider, Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990), who came to power on the back of a US-supported coup and he left behind a legacy of human rights abuse. Thus, not all strong leaders necessarily have the leadership qualities to promote well-being of all. Same is true with leaders who have acquired power and position because of dynastic rule.
- **COVID** - In some countries with so-called strong leaders, the response to the pandemic has been unilateral, arbitrary, whimsical, chaotic and non-scientific. In some cases, the leaders have provided undue primacy to the economy and business over individual lives. Thus, they have used the covid opportunity to appropriate additional power and deepen social divides.
3. **Not all those who have leadership qualities are leaders:** There are many in the society who have the potential to become leaders, but the structure of society is such that it prevents new leaders from rising up the ladder. For Example, communist nations have single party rule with power concentrated in a single leader and it prevents others from exercising their leadership skills.

Way Forward – Leader is one who knows the way, shows the way and walks the way. COVID has created the perfect opportunity for true leaders to exhibit leadership and it also has highlighted the leaders who just have power without any sense of how to use it.

2. Social Influence through Social Vaccine

Source– [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus – GS 4 – Social influence and persuasion

Context – In epidemics like COVID as in war - underestimating the enemy is a costly mistake

Social Vaccine

- A social vaccine is a metaphor for a series of social and behavioural measures that governments can use to raise public consciousness about unhealthy situations through social mobilisation.
- This promotes better understanding of the disease among the general public.
- Social mobilisation can empower populations to resist unhealthy practices, increase resilience, and foster advocacy for change

Importance of social vaccine

Nudging people - Until a cure or vaccine for COVID is found, the only way to prevent the spread of the disease is by changing people's behaviour through COVID education programmes. This was the strategy adopted in AIDS infection control too.

Uganda and Thailand used these strategies effectively during the HIV/AIDS pandemic to bring down the incidence of HIV infection, before highly active antiretroviral treatment (HAART) was introduced in 1995.

Flouting laws is easier - Coercive or punitive methods are invariably counter-productive, as was seen with HIV/AIDS.

Promotes reverse quarantine – People then take extra precautions to save those who are most vulnerable like elderly and children. The norm in urban middle class and rural families is to protect old parents and vulnerable family members and this part of traditional practices also.

Suppress social toxins – Social vaccine is a powerful tool against the misinformation and disinformation about the pandemic.

Simple solution – Social vaccine in COVID includes promoting mask wearing among people. Although it is simplest solution for containing the pandemic but it saves the exchequer from heavy burden of testing cost.

Way Forward – Formation of district development committee with representation from civil administration, health management professionals, industry, businesses, educational institutions, major non-governmental organisations to identify and evolve local social vaccines is the need of the hour.

3. A time for empathy

Source – [Indian express](#)

Syllabus – GS 4 - Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in-human actions

Context – Pandemic has given us a critical moment for reflection, for re-examining our way of life, and striving to emerge from this with hope.

Things we did wrong in pre-Corona world:

1. **Lack of care for vulnerable section** – There was lack of social security for vulnerable sections and with the sudden lockdown; we left labourers, poor migrants, women and children stranded without work and pay. They walked hundreds of miles to get to their families and homes, with many of them collapsing on the way. This is, thus, a matter of collective shame for all of us.
2. **Economic slowdown** – With oil prices being low, India still witnessed the growth rate of 4.2 per cent, the lowest growth seen in the last 11 years. This could have been averted with better economic policies focussing on structural reforms in manufacturing, agriculture and financial sector.
3. **Over-exploitation of resources** – To meet the economic needs, we over-exploited the resources and environment which led to degradation of environment and contributes in global warming phenomena.

Lack of empathy for vulnerable as well as environment **resulted** into rising poverty and unemployment despite abundance, rising intolerance and violence, and environmental catastrophe.

1. **Rising poverty and unemployment** - After the lockdown, India's unemployment rate shot up to a record high of 23.8 per cent in April. Most of the unemployed being labourers as industries were closed during the lockdown. This deprived them of wages and forced them to walk to their villages to escape poverty.
2. **Rising intolerance and violence** - There has been a steep rise in crime against women across the country amid restrictions imposed due to the corona virus outbreak which is termed as shadow pandemic.
3. **Environmental catastrophe** – Cyclone Amphan and Nisarga amidst the lockdown highlighted the vulnerability of our systems when it comes to environmental, health and economic issues. Despite of the better standard of living that development has provided in many nations, there are concerns emerging all around the world regarding this model of development which is consumption orientated.

Suggested solutions to overcome these challenges in post-Corona world:

1. **Gandhiji's Talisman** - This is time to “recall the face of the poorest and weakest man you have seen and ask yourself if this step you contemplate is going to be any use to him” as this will make us think for the poor, labours and migrants whom we left stranded amidst the pandemic. Only then actions can be taken for their care and justice will be ensured for them.
2. **Consequentialism needs contemplation** - Our economic and political policies must not be ends in themselves, but instruments for building a society that is secular, inclusive and nurturing, where people of all religions, caste, race and gender feel wanted and at home.
3. **Following Categorical Imperative** – It refer to duties which are absolute in nature and must apply in all circumstances. Categorical imperatives are objective and unconditional principles that originate out of rationality and free will. Any action to be morally upright must conform to CI. It is obeyed purely out of sense of duty and not due to emotions, feeling or desire which is must for protection of rights of vulnerable.
4. **Embracing Eco-centrism** - Ecocentrism is the broadest term for worldviews that recognize intrinsic value in all life forms and ecosystems themselves, including their abiotic components. Thus, in longer run we need to be compassionate for not only poor but also other living beings irrespective of their economical value for humans.

Way Forward - There is a lot in the nation's culture and wisdom that we can draw on and try to lead a life that nurtures the soil and creates an environment which sustains future generations. We should, thus, strive to create a society that respects knowledge, science and technology, and culture.

4. Structural racism and other issues – Police Reforms

Source – [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus – GS 4 - Ethical concerns and dilemmas in government

Context – The Black Lives matter movement has highlighted the continuing racism in America against the African-Americans.

Black lives matter movement

1. **Aim** – It is against the structural racism practiced by Police departments of USA which has led to death of many African-Americans. For instance, Eric Garner (2014), Corey Jones (2015) and George Floyd (2020).
2. **Demand** – Dismantling of the Police Departments
3. **Significance** – Participation of white people in protest in UK and USA against the practice of racism and police excess.

Ethical dilemma faced by Police

1. **Stern and effective maintenance of order without violating human rights** – When police takes heavy handed action to control crime it is termed as inhuman. On the other hand, if it goes soft for effective management of law and order they are termed as inefficient.

This requires an ethical solution which includes reforming not only police but also other institutions and national leadership.

Suggested reforms

1. **Ethical behaviour of leaders** - If an Inspector General of Police or Director General of Police encourages violence in a discreet manner, the message goes down the ranks leading to the torture of innocent citizens. This is what the leadership should not practice and they need set the right precedent.
2. **Indoctrination of individual police officers** - The continuous indoctrination of policemen at the grassroots level is needed. It will convince them of the urgency to avoid high-handedness in dealing with members of the civil society as well as crime suspects.

Way Forward – Reforming an institution is a long process and needs to be done gradually in phased manner. One-time reforms followed by public pressure are short lived and needs to be avoided.