9pm Compilation

March, 2021(First Week)

General Studies - 1

1. Priya Ramani Case: Significance and Challenges
2. Critical Evaluation of Draft Policy on Migrant workers

General Studies - 2

1. Why New IT Rules, 2021 for Social Media were necessary?
2. India-US relations under Biden administration
3. Relevance of the JCPOA | Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action | Iran Nuclear Deal
4. Pakistan Remains on FATF's Grey list
5. NEP 2020 and children's right to playgrounds
6. Critical Analysis of IT Rules 2021
7. Regional stability in South-Asia depends on India, Pakistan and China
8. NGT and associated challenges
9. India-EU trade relations
10. NEP 2020 and language policy
11. Judiciary's inconsistency in dealing with cases of Personal liberty
12. Indian Diaspora in US and its Impacts on India- US Relations
13. Appointment of Police officers for Prison Management

General Studies - 3

1. Indian legacy and developing Science and Technology in India
2. Issues in the Process of Decarbonization
3. Lessons from Operation Flood for Operation Green
4. Ceasefire agreements between India and Pakistan and their significance
5. Knowledge-Economy in India
6. Issues associated with Government's Disinvestment proposal
7. Solving the issue of Retrospective Taxation
8. An evaluation of India's actions against Climate Change
9. History and significance of Mars Missions
10. Consequences of Yemen Civil war
11. Issues in the Process of Spectrum Auction
12. India's Space Sector: Initiatives and Issues
13. Cyber Attacks in India and Institutional arrangements for Cybersecurity

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.

ForumIAS

General Studies

Paper - 1

ForumIAS

General Studies - 1

1. Priya Ramani Case: Significance and Challenges
Source: Indian Express
Syllabus: GS 1: Salient features of Indian Society – Social Empowerment
Synopsis: Since 2018, women revealing their stories of sexual assault faced many hardships. The verdict in the Priya Ramani Vs MJ Akbar case is new hope for those women.

Background
- In 2018, Priya Ramani made allegations of harassment against MJ Akbar through Tweets and News article.
- In turn, a criminal defamation case was filed in Delhi High Court against the journalist by Union Minister.
- Recently Delhi court has acquitted Priya Ramani in the defamation case filed by a former Union minister.

What are the important observations made by the court in this case?
- **One,** the court accepts the fact that many women do not file complaints due to the social stigma in society.
- **Two,** the court said that the victim has a right to put her grievance even after years and decades.
- **Three**, the judgment also upholds that reputation cannot be protected at the cost of human dignity. The Right of a woman's reputation has been guaranteed under Article 21.

What is the significance of this verdict?
- The verdict upholds women's right to share their experiences of sexual harassment whenever they are comfortable. It also disregards claims to male respectability in a patriarchal society.
- It also approves any future moves by women in support of campaigns similar to #metoo movement.

What are the challenges faced by women while expressing their vulnerable conditions?
- Women who share their experiences of sexual harassment at the workplace are often met with harsh consequences. For example, employers, globally, are expressing an unwillingness to hire more women.
- It also challenges the Patriarchal society's values that a privileged man cannot be punished despite their disreputable actions.

Suggestions to solve the menace of sexual harassment?
- According to an American feminist scholar, Janet Halley, the struggle for affirmative consent shall be fought in the real world and not in the courtrooms.
- According to her, the struggle for sexual consent of women should have the following features,
  - One, promoting individual freedom to decide the course of one's own sexual engagements.
  - Two, affirmative consent has to be realized through legal actions by the engagement with the state.
- Questioning the male privilege and removing the gender inequality in society appears to be the best way forward for feminism in India.

2. Critical Evaluation of Draft Policy on Migrant workers
Source: click here
Syllabus: GS 1
Synopsis: NITI Aayog has released a draft report on migrant workers. Though it is well-intentioned, it fails to address the policy misrepresentations which is at the root of migrant workers' issues.

Introduction
The suffering of migrant workers during the pandemic raised awareness about their scale, vulnerability, and role in the economy. It also led to several measures taken by the central and state governments.

Read more – Draft policy on migrant workers
- Niti Aayog prepared an umbrella policy document for migrant labourers, including informal sector workers.
- The draft policy provides a perspective on recognising the scale and role of migrant workers. It states that a complete policy must be viewed from a "human rights, property rights, economic, social development, and foreign policy lens".

What are the features mentioned in the draft policy?
It states that a rights-based and labour rights perspective built around the core issue of dignity of labour must be the principle of policy. It should meet ILO commitments and the Sustainable Development Goals.
1. **Firstly, the document appreciates the magnitude of the migrants** and their role in the economy. It also finds that the present data fails to capture the growth in their numbers.
2. **Secondly, many sources of vulnerabilities** of migrant labourers have been described in the document. It includes:
   o Their invisibility and political and social exclusion to informal work arrangements.
   o Exploitation and denial of labour rights.
   o Lack of collective voice, exclusion from social protection arrangements.
   o Formal skills, health, education, and housing.
3. **Thirdly, it identifies the transferability of social protection**, voting rights, right to the city. It recognizes health, education and housing facilities as key issues to be dealt with.
4. **Lastly, it proposes a governance structure** with the Ministry of Labour. It will act as a focal point for inter-ministerial and Centre-state coordination. It also proposes mechanisms for coordinating the effort on inter-state migration.

What are the issues missed by the draft policy?
The draft misses recognising and addressing many critical issues.
1. **First, gaps in development and inequalities** have grown constantly in the last 3 decades. It requires corrections in the development strategy without which migration is bound to grow unchecked. The report did not acknowledge this.
2. **Second, the report fails to recognize the root cause** of the uneven urban development strategy. The urban strategy has marginalised the poor and the migrants.
3. **Third, the report has denied approaches that rely on cash transfers** and special allowances. The denial of the first approach has resulted in ignoring the migrants' and informal workers' right to social security.
4. **Fourth, the biggest weakness of the report is its approach towards labour rights** and labour policy. It puts grievance and legal redressal above regulation and enforcement.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

5. **Lastly, the labour codes which are promoting ease of business**, have shifted the balance firmly in favour of capital. This weakens the bargaining power of labour and further weakens an already drained enforcement system.

The way forward

- The draft policy identifies the problems but fails to address the policy distortions. However, if the draft will be opened up for further discussions and feedback, it will enrich and complete what is already a significant beginning.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

ForumIAS

General Studies Paper – 2

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.

ForumIAS

General Studies - 2

1. Why New IT Rules, 2021 for Social Media were necessary?
Source: Indian Express
Syllabus: GS 2: Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation.
Synopsis: Government has released new IT rules 2021 for Social media. This article talks about the need for these rules.

Background:
Recently, the Indian government has announced a number of rules to curb the misuse of social media.

Read More about New Rules: New IT Rules for Social Media and OTT platforms – Explained Pointwise – ForumIAS Blog

Why the Big Tech needs to be regulated?
- **First**, Big techs have grown out of proportion. They have access to billions of dollars as well as the power to control three important resources in modern times. Data, Attention and the popular narrative.
- **The following incidents will better explain the power** these big companies wield in modern times.
  o Twitter's noncompliance to obey orders from a sovereign country like India.
  o Donald Trump, de-platformed from Twitter and Facebook
- **Second,** Self-regulation measures taken by the Big Techs to control misinformation in the infodemic era have been ad hoc, inconsistent and reactive.
- **Third,** Offensive speech in social media has commercial gains for Big techs. Because this content goes viral è attracts more users more data è More advertising revenue.
- **Fourth, in democratic societies** states are the guardians of the public interest. So, curtailing speech or permitting it, is the role of states, not the Big techs.
  o Also, the tech industry is itself deeply flawed. There is a lack of sufficient choice of platforms and there are asymmetries in power between the companies and users. Big Tech is amassing data on the citizens and using this information for its own purposes.
- **Fifth, the** power of Big techs is more compared to states. It gives them better bargaining power to enforce their profit motives over national interests. For example, recently, Google and Facebook threatened to de-platform Australia.

What are the counterarguments from Big techs?
- **First,** the Big techs contend that they have developed better processes to regulate offensive speech content. So, they feel that the government's involvement is not necessary.
- **Second,** even democratically elected governments are far from perfect. So, they do not have the legitimacy to regulate free speech.
  o For instance, according to **The Economist Intelligence** Unit's **Democracy Index**, both India (ranked 53rd) and the US (ranked 25th) are "**flawed democracies**".
  o Also, governments might enforce rules in their personal interest to cut-off dissents against the government.
  o This leads to the opinion that well-functioning markets are superior to flawed democracies in optimizing social welfare.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

2. India-US relations under Biden administration
Source: The Hindu
Syllabus: GS 2: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.
Synopsis: India and US relations under the Biden administration may strengthen in certain areas. But there will be some challenges too.

Areas where India and the US are willing to cooperate?
India and the US are already engaging with each other on a majority of issues, including COVID-19, climate, health care, immigration and restoring America's global standing. For example,
1. Like previous leaderships, the Biden government also want to build closer ties with India. A major focus is on the push for the **Quadrilateral and Indo-Pacific policy.**
2. **Recently,** the US praised India's efforts towards renewable energy and controlling emissions.
3. Also, the US has revealed its plans to enhance health cooperation through a memorandum of understanding (MoU). It is likely to deal with COVID-19 testing, vaccination and critical drug supplies.
4. Biden's decision to lift restrictions and caps on a number of visas and green cards has relieved India.

Areas where US interest will affect India'?
The change in the Presidency in the US will have the following implications over India.
Factoring China:
1. During the Trump presidency, China's aggression at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in early 2020 brought India and the U.S. closer.
2. America provided "moral and material support" to India through greater military cooperation, intelligence sharing etc.,
3. Even, India gave up its hesitancy over holding the Quad. India participated in two Quad ministerial meetings in the past year.
4. However, at present, this cooperation is likely to change. It is because the Biden administration wants to take on China strategically.
5. The Biden administration sees China as a competitor in areas such as defence, trade and technology. However, it is also pushing for cooperation in certain areas such as climate change.
6. Thus, unlike Trump years, India won't have greater support from the US on the China issue.

Impact on India's Pharmaceutical Industry:
- Biden wants to secure America's supply chains. For Instance, he is insisting on localizing the production of pharmaceuticals. It will affect India, as it is a major exporter of pharma.
- This move will also hit the India-Japan-Australia trilateral **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative** (SCRI) to counter their dependence on Chinese goods. Now with the US localizing, the benefits of this initiative will be lesser.

Human rights issue between India and the US:
1. The US has stated that the "shared commitment to democratic values is the bedrock for the U.S.-India relationship".

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

2. Thus, the US has been vocal against crackdowns on freedom of speech in India. For example, the Internet ban in Jammu and Kashmir, farmers' protests and the government's face-off with Twitter.
3. Also, India's actions to shut down international agencies Amnesty, Greenpeace, Compassion International will be dealt with strictly, by the U.S.
4. Further, the U.S. will want India's cooperation in ensuring human rights in South Asia. It is most likely given India's current term in the UN Security Council. However, ensuring cooperation on Human Rights will affect India's neighbourhood relation. For instance,
   o If India takes a hard stance against the coup in Myanmar it will affect India's interests in the region.
   o Similarly, Sri Lanka faces a resolution at the Human Rights Council for alleged wartime excesses in 2009 operations against the LTTE.
5. India's support for its neighbour would place it closer to China than to the U.S.

Impact on India's ties with Russia
- The Biden administration looks at CAATSA act as a powerful tool. It was made clear by him in countering Turkey's S-400 purchase and the Nord Stream2 pipeline project from Russia.
- The purchase of the S-400 missile systems will attract sanctions under Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act.

Trade issues:
- Under Biden, India is hoping that the US will reverse its decision to cancel its GSP status for Indian exports.
- The mega Indian investment plan announced during the "Howdy Modi" visit has ended abruptly. (Petronet India's $2.5 billion stake in U.S. company Tellurian's Driftwood LNG project)

Dealing with Afghanistan and Pakistan:
The US will not see India as part of the Afghan solution, and it will seek more support from Pakistan to facilitate its exit. This is because India firmly supports the Ashraf Ghani government and refusing to engage the Taliban.

3. Relevance of the JCPOA | Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action | Iran Nuclear Deal
Source: The Hindu
Synopsis: Resolution of JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) is the foremost challenge for Biden administration. It is also very important for a peaceful world.
Introduction:
Former US president (Mr Trump) revoked the JCPOA or Iran nuclear deal in 2018. After that Iran also resumed its nuclear program. So the US under the current Biden presidency have to take a proactive step to revive the JCPOA.

What is JCPOA and developments around it so far?
1. After the prolonged talks from 2013 to 2015, the JCPOA, (the Iran nuclear deal) was reached. The negotiations involved Iran and P5+1 countries (Russia, China, France, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union + Germany).
2. While signing the JCPOA, **Iran was estimated to be months away from producing a nuclear device** (it accumulated enough highly enriched uranium (HEU) to produce a nuclear device).

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU): This type of Uranium has at least a 20 percent concentration of Uranium-235. This is a higher concentration comparing to the natural uranium ore (0.7% of U235). This is essential to produce the simplest type of nuclear weapon.

3. According to the Iran nuclear deal, **Iran accepted to restrict its uranium enrichment program. It also agreed** to intense compliance with the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) safeguards. In return, the sanctions on Iran were partially lifted.
4. The Iran nuclear deal was seen as the greatest diplomatic achievement by Former US President Barak Obama. But the **Iran nuclear deal was not ratified in the US Senate.** So, Mr Obama implemented the deal based on periodic executive orders.
5. Under the Trump administration, the Iran nuclear deal was seen as a one-sided deal. So, by May 2018 the US adopted a policy of **putting 'maximum pressure' to force Iran back
to the negotiating table**. Accordingly, the US imposed sanctions on Iran again.

How the other P5+1 members reacted to the US decision on JCPOA?
1. Other parties to the JCPOA criticised the U.S. decision. They also supported Iran as it complied with its obligations and also certified by the IAEA.
2. The E-3 (France, Germany, the U.K.) and the EU promised Iran to find ways to mitigate the U.S. decision on JCPOA.
3. The E-3 countries also created a relief Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX) with Iran in 2019. This is aimed to facilitate limited trade between Iran and the EU.

How Iran reacted to sanctions?
1. After the failure of talks and the INSTEX, Iran shifted to a s**trategy of 'maximum resistance'** in 2019. Iran restarted its nuclear program with the following steps:
   o Accumulating the low enriched Uranium and heavy water to develop HEU
   o Stepping up the research and development on advanced centrifuges.
2. Already tense relationship between US and Iran worsened by many developments, like:
   o Drone strike leading to the **death of IRGC commander** Gen. Qassem Soleimani.
   o The U.S. had imposed nearly 80 rounds of sanctions on Iran.
   o Iran experienced **unexplained fires and blasts in many sensitive places** like the one at the Natanz nuclear facility

Relevance of reviving JCPOA:
1. The Iranian Parliament also passed a bill seeking to enrich the Uranium above 20%. A recent IAEA report has also confirmed that **20% enrichment had begun**.
2. Moreover, **Iranian elections** are due in June. A fundamentalist regime is less likely to agree to any US demand. So, the negotiations might not yield results after the Iranian elections.
3. If there is a collapse of the JCPOA, then the situation in **Iran will be just like North Korea's situation**. It will have major repercussions in the region and beyond.

What can be done to revive the JCPOA?
1. Positive steps and multiple rounds of talks are necessary for creating a conducive atmosphere.
   o To achieve that, Iran can release the European and American nationals currently in custody in Iran.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.

ForumIAS

o Similarly, the US can help to **clear Iran's applications to the International Monetary Fund**. This will help Iran to recover from COVID-19 and aid the supply of vaccines under the international COVAX facility.
2. Similarly, the E-3/EU also needs to **fast track deals** worth a few million euros **stuck in the INSTEX pipeline**.
3. The US on the other hand can **remove sanctions on Iranian political leaders,** it will bring Iran closer to talks.

Conclusion
The revival of JCPOA is essential considering the current political situations in Iran and the new change in the US presidency. But it has to be fast, else Iran will go nuclear like North Korea.

4. Pakistan Remains on FATF's Grey list
Synopsis: Pakistan avoided the blacklist in the recent FATF meeting. However, it has to do more, to come out of the grey list of FATF.
Introduction:
The recent Financial Action Task Force (FATF) meeting has once again decided to keep Pakistan in their grey list of countries under "increased monitoring".
Further, the FATF ruled out the option of placing Pakistan on blacklist like Iran and North Korea. It is because Pakistan made some progress on its commitments to FATF. Further, the FATF also provided a 3-month time limit to Pakistan for fulfilling its remaining commitments.

Pakistan's progress under FATF grey list:
1. Pakistan was removed from the Financial Action Task Force lists in 2015. But in 2018, it was again put on the list. Pakistan was provided with a **27-point action list** to fulfill, to come out of the FATF grey list.
2. **FATF President Marcus Pleyer** acknowledged **Pakistan's "significant progress"**. However, he further mentioned that Pakistan fulfilled 3 points on the list only partially. Notably, 3 of them in the area of curbing terror financing. The FATF mentions the few important areas of non-compliance such as,
   o **Demonstrating terror-funding prosecution is accurate, effective, and dissuasive**
   o **Implementing financial sanctions against all terrorists designated by the UN Security Council**. This includes LeT founder Hafiz Saeed, JeM chief Masood Azhar and those who belong to al-Qaeda.

India's relations with Pakistan
Since 2016, political, trade, cultural ties between Pakistan and India are minimal. But recently the recent decision of Directors General of Military Operations (DGMO's) to strictly observe the ceasefire agreement, is a great first step.
The move indicates more dialogues are possible between both countries. But the success of dialogues also depends upon Pakistan's **compliance with other points in the 27 point action list**. Such as
   o **Successfully prosecuting terrorists and terror financiers**.
   o Addressing **cross-border terror** that emanates from Pakistan.

Conclusion
India Pakistan relations may progress by fulfilling Pakistan's commitment to the FATF action list. Because these actions also address India's main grievance with Pakistan on State-sponsored terrorism.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

5. NEP 2020 and children's right to playgrounds

Synopsis: NEP 2020 (National Education Policy) has disregarded the children's right to playgrounds in the name of efficiency.

Background

- The **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE)** mandates that all school-going children between the ages of 6 and 14 should be guaranteed essential infrastructure including playgrounds.
- However, the New NEP 2020 is going against the RTE requirements of providing mandatory infrastructural facilities.
- This requirement is introduced with the intention to increase efficiency and optimization. It may also lead to an increase in total schools and decrease school fees.
- However, it will deprive children's access to playgrounds. It is also a denial of their right to play in safe and adequate spaces.

What are the changes brought by NEP 2020 with respect to playground provisions?

- **First,** the NEP directs a review of the "practicalities of playgrounds in urban areas", school-area, and room-size requirements. It aims to "ease" school operation by removing RTE playground requirements.
- **Second**, the NEP proposes that by 2025, state governments have to create school complexes. The school complex would be comprised of a mix of schools and anganwadis in a 5-10 kilometre radius. Schools will be encouraged to use shared resources such as playgrounds.

What are the issues involved in it?

1. **First**, according to NEP 2020, neither the government nor private schools need to provide playgrounds. After that, private schools may charge exorbitant fees without providing playgrounds.
2. **Second,** one school complex comprises a 5–10 KM radius, sharing playgrounds among large no. of schools and children of different ages will be difficult. Because children of different ages have different playground needs. For instance, Anganwadi learners have different spatial needs than middle school students.
3. **Third,** this is against the court's directive. In 2019, the Allahabad High Court ruled that playgrounds must be provided within a school's land area to ensure access for all children, including children with disabilities.
4. **Fourth,** there is a growing scarcity of playgrounds due to intensive urbanization. Children's playgrounds have increasingly been appropriated by governments and private parties for development.
   o For instance, in 2019, Gujarat amended its RTE rules to reduce the minimum playground area requirements for urban and rural schools.
5. **Fifth,** NEP provisions are contradictory in nature. Despite removing playground requirements, the NEP advocates sports-integrated education. It fails to explain how sports may be integrated without playgrounds.
6. **Sixth,** it is against the 1989 **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention** recognizes play as an indispensable right of the child as it allows for the free and true expression of one's personality.
7. **Seventh,** Sports is also a minuscule sub-category of the infinite varieties of children's play. It can accommodate only a few children based on "abilities".
   o Even if specific forms of sports infrastructure are provided in well-resourced schools, these cannot substitute for large, open playgrounds.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

The NEP 2020 provision will bring down the minimum standards of quality education, instead of protecting and expanding it. This is also seen as a move to prioritize neoliberal interests that prioritize market demands over **societal good.**

6. Critical Analysis of IT Rules 2021
Source: The Hindu, The Hindu 2
Syllabus: GS 2: Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation
Synopsis: Government released new 'IT (Guidelines for Intermediaries and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021'. There are many flaws in these rules that require urgent attention.

Background
- Recently the Centre introduced the **'Information Technology (Guidelines for Intermediaries and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021**' to regulate all types of digital platforms.
- For framing the new rules, the government has referred to the **2018 Prajjawala case.** Where the Supreme Court had observed that the Government of India may frame necessary guidelines to eliminate child pornography, rape and gangrape imageries, videos and sites in content hosting platforms and other applications.
- The new rules force digital news publishers and video streaming services to adhere to a **three-tier structure of regulation.** It will have a government committee at its apex.
- It is feared that the new rules will have implications for **freedom of expression** and the **right to information**.

What are the issues in the new IT rules 2021?
- **First,** the new rules have increased the **censorship of Internet content.** Moreover, it mandates compliance with government demands regarding user data collection and policing of online services in India.
  - Rules are framed in the **absence of open and public discussio**n and without any **parliamentary study and scrutiny**.
- **Second,** the new rules issued under the Information Technology Act appears to be **unconstitutional**. Instead of taking a legislative route, it was done by expanding the purview of the IT Act, 2000.
- **Third,** the ability to frame **subordinate legislation** is by its nature a limited, constrained power. An executive cannot use its rule-making power to issue primary legislation by itself.
  - But, the government by enacting new **Information Technology rules 2021** has increased the scope of **subordinate legislation.**
- **Fourth**, the new rules will also regulate digital news media, it is a prime source of news. Any government involvement could have a chilling effect on their free speech and conversations.
- **Fifth**, according to the new rules, any person having a grievance regarding the content in relation to the **Code of Ethics** can file his grievance.
  - Literally, it will force a digital platform to take up any issue by anyone. This opens the floodgates for all kinds of interventions considering the fact that many digital news platforms are small entities.
- **Sixth,** the new rules have increased the compliance burden for social media platforms. For instance,
  - Big platforms such as WhatsApp will have to appoint **chief compliance officers.** He/she will ensure the rules and the laws are followed. A nodal officer

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

will also need to be appointed, for coordinating with the law enforcement agencies.

- **Seventh**, the new rules mandate the **retention of user data** by intermediaries for use by government agencies.
  - o The rules require messaging apps such as **WhatsApp and Signal** to trace the origin of the problematic messages based on a judicial order.
  - o It raises uncertainty about adherence to such orders, as their messages are encrypted end-to-end.
- **Eighth**, the new rules provide for the registration of digital news sites with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Further, OTT platforms are required to agree to a government-supervised "self-regulatory system".
  - o However, under the IT Act, digital news service is not required to be registered. Similarly, streaming video content has not been included under the ambit of the **Cinematograph Act.**

What is the way forward?

- Given the new challenges in digital content, some strict policy measures are needed. However, the Centre's decision to involve in the grievance redressal process as an apex body cannot solve these problems**.**
- Also, over-regulation will prove counterproductive in a country where the citizens still do not have a **data privacy law**.
- So, what is needed is the uniform application of laws to combat unlawful content that is already in place.

7. Regional stability in South-Asia depends on India, Pakistan and China
Source: The Indian Express
Syllabus: GS-2: India and neighbourhood relations
Synopsis: If China, Pakistan and India can remain humble, then there is hope for better regional development and stability.
Introduction
Recently India and Pakistan have announced the strict observance of all ceasefire agreements along the Line of Control(LoC). On the other hand, India has also seen a de-escalation along the Line of Actual Control with China.

Lessons from these announcements:

1. India has shown that China's military and economic domination can be resisted.
2. India showed that Pakistan's **ceasefire violations cannot yield any result** on the ground.
3. On the other hand, Pakistan also learned a few significant things.
   - o The **abrogation of Article 370 did not result in a cycle of violence** in the Kashmir Valley that Pakistan wanted to exploit.
   - o Pakistan at present remained on the FATF grey list. So, Pakistan's state funding of terrorism has burdened Pakistan itself.

Challenges in regional stability:

1. There are a few things that can disrupt the de-escalation between India and China.
   - o There is a possibility that some fringe group might try to disrupt the de-escalation.
   - o **Chinese intentions behind de-escalation are still unknown**. There is also not enough trust between both the countries among each other.
2. Similarly, the **ceasefire declaration by Pakistan also cannot be trusted,** considering the past instability in Pakistan's actions.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

3. The **Issue of Kashmir, now seen by the world as a trilateral dispute**. As the LAC with India-China and LoC with India-Pakistan was disputed. If it is true then India will need significant resources to deal with China and Pakistan at the same time.

Suggestions to improve the regional stability:
1. **India** has to realise that the **aggressive use of foreign policy** for domestic political gains has **serious effects on India's international stand.** For example, assuring that India will retake Pakistan occupied Kashmir for gaining votes in elections will harm bilateral relations and India's international credibility.
2. **Pakistan should open up to the South Asian region** instead of depending on China. As it will help Pakistan to realise its full economic potential. Further, it will provide access to the Central Asian region to the South Asian countries. Pakistan can get a large revenue as they are the transit of goods and services.
3. **China has to maintain stable relations in their deals**. China **has to avoid things** such as non-adherence to the principles, frequent violation in the region, etc.

Conclusion
- The pandemic offers an opportunity for greater economic cooperation between the three countries.
- Political establishments of India, Pakistan and China have to rethink their geostrategic interests. Also, they need to analyse what they can offer to their citizens from peaceful relations. Then only regional stability is feasible in South Asia.

8. NGT and associated challenges
Source- **The Indian Express**
Syllabus: GS-2: Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies
Synopsis- The National Green Tribunal(NGT) instead of protecting the environment is facing trouble due to internal issues within the NGT.
Introduction
The National Green Tribunal(NGT) is a dedicated tribunal to deal with matters relating to the environment. The NGT website even mentions that the tribunal has cleared 90% of the cases. But a close look will reveal the tribunal's mandate to protect the environment is not yet fulfilled.

About the National Green Tribunal (NGT):
1. National Green Tribunal (NGT) is a quasi-judicial body established on October 18, 2010. It was established under the National Green Tribunal Act 2010 to handle environment-related disputes.
2. India is the third country following Australia and New Zealand to have such a system.
3. **The Mandate of NGT** is to dispose of the cases related to the environment in an effective and efficient manner. The NGT handles cases related to,
   o Environmental protection
   o Environmental clearances for projects by the government are covered under the jurisdiction of NGT.
   o Conservation of forests and other natural resources.
   o Enforcement of any legal right relating to the environment.
   o Relief and compensation for damages to persons and properties.

Challenges with the working of NGT
1. Since the inception of the NGT Act, the tribunal **never functioned in its full capacity**. According to the NGT Act, the tribunal should have 10 members in the Judicial and 10

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

members in the Expert capacity. At present, the NGT is functioning with three judicial and three expert members only. This is much less than the official requirement under the NGT Act.

2. It has **failed to achieve the Right to a healthy environment** as a part of the Right to Life under Article 21.

3. NGT has invoked the deadline associated with the technical clause and dismissed 11 petitions last year alone. This shows the inability of NGT to solve the cases in a time-bound manner.

4. **Lack of expertise in the functioning of Tribunal**. This is evident by the fact that many decisions of NGT have been challenged and overruled in the Supreme Court. For instance
   o The Supreme Court questioned the expertise of NGT in **the case of the Subansiri Hydropower Project in Arunachal Pradesh 2019.** Further, the court also overruled the ban imposed by NGT on that project.

5. The tribunal also failed to carry out the merits-based review and discharge of adjudicatory function. For example, **In Mopa Airport Case**, the apex court held that the NGT lacks merits-based review on its judgements.

6. **Limited Regional Benches:** The NGT is located only in big cities. But, environmental exploitation is majorly taking place in the tribal areas of dense forest. There is a limited opportunity for these people to come forward and file a case in NGT.

Way Forward

▪ The Government needs to reform the provisions of the NGT Act to include more number of judicial and expert officials.

▪ Apart from that, the government also needs to ensure the filling of Vacancies in a time-bound manner. This will ensure the proper functioning of NGT.

9. India-EU trade relations
Source- The Hindu
Syllabus- GS 2- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.
Synopsis – After Brexit, India can strengthen bilateral trade and investment relations with the EU by signing a Free Trade Agreement(FTA). This will mutually benefit both India and the EU.

Introduction

▪ The EU is India's largest trading partner. It accounts for 11 per cent of total Indian trade in 2019, making it more important than China.

▪ India has an export potential of $39.9 billion to the EU and Western Europe. Apparel, gems and jewellery, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and plastic have high export potential.

▪ So, making stronger ties with the EU will help India to achieve Atmanirbhar Bharat.

▪ Further, the Generalized Scheme of Preferences in the EU also helps India to improve exports.

What is the EU's Generalized Scheme of Preferences?
The EU's Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP) helps developing countries by reducing the tariffs. This makes it easier for countries to export their products to the region.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

Benefits EU's GSP for India:
- **Reduction in tariffs**– The scheme removes import tariffs from the products coming into the EU market.
- **Economic growth-** The lower tariffs will increase exports. This export revenue encourages growth in income, economic growth, and job creation for India.

What is the meaning of graduation under the EU's GSP?
- A developing country can export its products and gain an advantage from the GSP. But there is a limit provided for attaining maximum benefits. Once this limit is reached then that particular product will lose the benefits of GSP. That is called **Graduation**.
- **So, Graduation** means that imports of certain particular groups of products in a given GSP will lose the preferences of GSP.
- Graduation applies when the average imports from a country **exceed 17.5% of GSP imports** of the same products from all GSP beneficiary countries during three years (For textiles and clothing this limit is 14.5%).

Challenges for India in FTA:
1. Many products of India have already graduated or about to graduate under the EU's GSP.
   - **Graduated Indian products-** textiles products, inorganic and organic chemicals, gems and jewelry, iron, steel and their articles, base metals, and automotive.
   - **Products that about to graduate –** Apparel, rubber, electronic items, sports goods and toys.
2. **Lack of agreeing to the terms** in fields such as automotive, dairy, and marine goods by both the EU and India. So, the Broad-based Trade and Investment Agreement [BTIA] commenced in 2007 is yet to take final shape.
3. After 2013, the Free Trade Agreement(FTA) negotiations were suspended between India and the EU. Both India and the EU were not ready to lose some privileges to gain more.
4. **Agreement on investment:** China has negotiated a comprehensive agreement on Investment with the EU. But India didn't. So, there is a huge possibility that the EU companies will start investing in China. The delaying of investment provisions will affect India.
5. **Non-tariff measures (NTMs):** India faces 414 cases against NTMs in the EU. This is covering a wide spectrum of industries. This will also hamper India and EU FTA.

Suggestions to fast pace India-EU FTA:
- India needs to negotiate with the EU on investment-related issues. Further India also has to negotiate the provisions to improve value chains, especially in technology-intensive sectors.
- FTAs often have several institutional arrangements for Non-Tariff Measures(NTMs). India should explore such arrangements to remove the NTMs. This will increase bilateral trade.

In the post-Covid recovery, India needs to increase its exports and increase its manufacturing capability. Signing an FTA with the EU will help India to achieve this objective.

10. NEP 2020 and language policy
Source- The Indian Express
Syllabus- GS 2- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

Synopsis- Since colonial times, efforts to introduce education policy based on mother tongue have failed. The NEP 2020 also fails to uphold a multilingual educational approach.

Introduction
1. Since colonial times, all committees and commissions recognized the importance of education in the mother tongue. Its proponents include Elphinstone's Minute of 1824, Macaulay's Minute of 1835, and Wood's Dispatch of 1854.
2. However, they laid the foundation of India's education system in the English language.
3. UNESCO declared in 1953 to use mother tongue for the conceptual clarity and cognitive growth of students
4. Even NEP 1986, plan of action 1992, NCF 2005, RTE 2009 also highlighted the importance of mother tongue in education. However, they did nothing to fill the quality gap between English-medium schools and non-English medium schools.
5. Now, NEP 2020 also recommends the medium of instruction to be in the home language/mother-tongue/local language or regional language in primary classes. But again words such as "preferably" or "wherever possible" are used, making implementation uncertain.

NEP 2020 sticks to the 'three-language formula' while emphasizing that no language would be imposed on anyone.

What is the issue with NEP 2020 on the language front?–
1. **Multiplicity of languages and dialects in India –** Students are better able to learn to read and write in the language that they are most familiar with. However, in a multilingual country like India, it comes across as a challenge with different states, regional and national languages.
   o Just 47 of the 270 mother tongues identified in the 2011 Census used as mediums of instruction in schools.
   o NEP 2020 speaks a lot about multilingualism. But it fails to recognize that children arrive in school not with "a language" but with a complex verbal repertoire.
2. The NEP 2020 three-language formula is theoretically unsound and has had a disastrous history. NEP, 2020 fails to understand that people only learn another language to integrate with others or when it is an instrument of benefit.
   o For example, people from South India learn Hindi for jobs and increments. People in North India learn Sanskrit because it ensures high marks without much work.

What needs to be done?
- The Government needs to ensure that every child's voice is heard in the classroom according to the child's own understanding.
- The Government needs to initiate an MLE model and identify the problems in implementation and the cost of change of the model. After then prepare an action plan which resolves all of such problems.

11. Judiciary's inconsistency in dealing with cases of Personal liberty
Source: The Hindu
Gs2: Organization and Functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary
Synopsis: The recent rulings of the judiciary have defended the personal liberty of citizens. However, there are many instances where the judiciary failed to uphold liberty.

What are the recent rulings?
The following rulings highlight the role of judiciary as the first line of defence against the deprivation of the liberty of citizens.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

1. **First, in 'Priya Ramani case'** the Delhi high court acquitted her against the charges of **criminal defamation.** Above all, the court made the following significant directives.
   o One, a woman's right to dignity supersedes the right to reputation.
   o Two, survivors of sexual harassment are free to place their grievances at any point in time after the incident. They are free to choose any platform or time as per their comfort.
2. **Second, in Disha Ravi's' tool kit conspiracy case'** the high court has granted anticipatory bail to Disha Ravi. It further observed that in a democracy, the **right to dissent is a fundamental right.**
3. **Third,** the judiciary in many earlier judgments has acted against the arbitrary use of **Sedition laws**. It has stated that free speech can be criminalized only when it is resulting in Public disorder. For instance,
   o **In Arnab Manoranjan Goswami vs State of Maharashtra,** the Court warned against the use of the criminal law as "a ruse for targeted harassment".

What are the views of critics of the Judiciary?
Despite the above rulings, there are many instances where the Judiciary failed to uphold the liberty of individuals.
1. **First,** in **Tandav case** the court has denied anticipatory bail to Ms. Purohit, (head of Amazon Prime Video's India Originals.)
   o Further, the high court allowed the interrogation in custody. It was for running a show (Tandav) that was "bound to hurt the sentiments of the majority community".
   o In doing so, the court upheld that religious beliefs are more important than free speech.
2. **Second,** the court has shown unequal attitude towards '**haves and have-nots'. For example**, in **Arnab Goswami case**, the court granted quick bail by stating that deprivation of liberty even for a single day is one day too many.
   o However, it has done nothing to protect the life and dignity of thousands of **Under trial prisoners.** They continue to suffer in jail for many years. Some have even served half of their jail sentences without conviction.
3. **Third,** the supreme court the guardian of people's rights failed to quash unconstitutional laws. Rather, It allowed the continuance of these laws irrespective of their poor record in protecting personal liberty. **For example, Sedition, Defamation laws etc. (Justification for this statement given below)**
   o **One, criminal defamation** has imposed a chilling effect on legitimate speech. Every democratic nation of the world has decriminalized defamation. But in India, it remains a tool to harass dissenters.
   o **Two,** Sedition laws are colonial remnants. The offence of sedition continues to be weaponized to restrict dissent against government. **For example**, journalists involved in **Hathras rape case and Bhima Koregaon case** booked under sedition.
   o **Three,** India's **blasphemy laws**, are also remnants of colonialism. Section 153A, deals with speech that seeks to promote enmity between different communities. Section 295A criminalizes speech that outrages religious feelings. Even these laws are used to enforce majoritarian views and very little for dealing genuine cases of hate speech. **For example, Tandav case.**

Judicial discretion will lead to arbitrary outcomes. When this uncertainty is coupled with the prevailing distrust in the values of personal liberty, of free thought and expression, it leads to denial of rule of law.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.

ForumIAS

12. Indian Diaspora in US and its Impacts on India- US Relations
Source: The Hindu
Gs2: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.
Synopsis: The stature of the Indian diaspora in the US is growing. It will have a significant impact on India-US relations.

Significance of Indian Diaspora in the US
- Indian-Americans are the second-largest immigrant community in the US(4 million-plus).
- They are considered as one of the most influential groups in the US. and they have played a key role in transforming the relations. For example, the U.S. signing the civil nuclear deal.
- In addition, many American Indians have entered into the administration and the US congress.
- Yet, over the past years, there has been a divergence in the preference of the community especially the second generation of American Indians. They have become more Americanised.

How the attitude changes of Indian-Americans is affecting India-US relations?
1. **First**, the second generation of American Indians has their own assessment of developments in India. **For example**, Government steps on Farmers protest in India was criticized by many American- Indian citizens.
2. **Second,** the India **caucus** (A caucus is a meeting of supporters or members of a specific political party) with the Indian Ambassador to the United States offers an insight into the changing attitude of the **Indian-American community.**
   o **For example,** the caucus with representatives from the Indian-**American community** urged the Government of India to make sure that the norms of democracy are maintained.
   o Also, they stated that protesters shall be allowed to protest peacefully with access to the Internet and journalists.
3. **Third,** notably, the External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar cancelled the engagement with the top leadership of the US House Foreign Affairs Committee congress in December 2019.
   o This was due to the presence of **Ms. Jayapal** (Democrat, **Indian-American**) who voiced against the Indian government clampdown in Kashmir.
- In addition to the above issues, **Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)** might impact India-USA ties. Because India has proceeded to procure the Russian **S-400 missile defence** system which is against the CAATSA act.

Suggestion
India-U.S.-Parliamentary Exchange for formal and reciprocal visits by parliamentarians should be established. It was expressed in the **India-U.S. 2+2 meeting**, in October 2019, it will help to solve the above issues.

13. Appointment of Police officers for Prison Management
Source: Indian Express
Gs2: Separation of Powers between various organs
Synopsis: The appointment of Police officers for Prison management is not right. It is against strengthening the criminal justice system.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

Background
- Recently, the Uttarakhand government issued a notification to post IPS officers as superintendents of Prisons.
- A PIL has been filed against the government's decision before the Uttarakhand High Court.

What are the reasons for Posting police officers to monitor Prisons?
- **First,** it was done for strengthening security and to control corruption.
- **Second,** prison departments have limited strength at the officer level, leading to malpractices. So, the suggested solution is to bring fresh talent from outside, who would not have any long-term stake in the system.

Why appointing police officers to prison is criticised?
Though there are problems in Prison management, the process of appointing police officers is adhoc and short-sighted. Because of the following reasons,
- **First,** the skill requirement for police is different from a prison officer. For instance, police personnel recruited and trained to detect crime and maintain law and order. Whereas, prison officers are recruited and trained to reform and rehabilitate offenders.
- **Second, it is not legal and amounts to a violation of rules and procedures. For example,**
  - The decision contradicts the provisions of the Uttar Pradesh Jail (Group A and B) Service Rules, 1982.
  - Also, appointing police officers in prisons amounts to a violation of the **principle of separation of powers** enshrined in our Constitution.
- **Third**, it is against the philosophy of **correctional administration. It** goes against the Prison reform committee reports like the **Justice Mulla Committee on Prison Reforms Report** (1983), **the Justice Krishna Iyer Committee on Women Prisoners Report** (1987). They advocated;
  - Prisons should be houses of reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners and their families.
  - Creation of a specialised All India Prison Service along the lines of the IPS or IAS.
  - Currently, Bihar is the only state which continues to have an IAS officer heading the prison department.
- **Finally**, posting IPS officers as superintendents of Prisons amounts to police custody. It is because it gives the police direct access to prisoners during "judicial custody".

What is the way forward?
- **First,** we need to invest in the prison system in terms of resources and staff. It can be done in the following ways,
  - Appointing social workers and counselors in sufficient numbers.
  - Conducting regular training in human rights and social reintegration for prison staff.
  - Filling vacancies, which are as high as 30 to 40 percent as per the **India Justice Report 2020.**
- **Second,** institutionalize practices that will promote **upward mobility** for prison officers. For example, rewarding good work with promotions.
- **Third,** need to uniformize their career growth equally across states. It will motivate them for better work performance.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

- o For example, in a few states, a prison officer who starts his career as a deputy superintendent of a central prison can end up as Additional IG or IG Prisons. Whereas in most states, one can only rise to the rank of DIG Prisons.

General Studies
Paper – 3

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.

ForumIAS

General Studies - 3

1. Indian legacy and developing Science and Technology in India
Source: The Hindu
Syllabus: GS-3 Science and Technology- developments and Achievements of Indians in science & technology
Synopsis: India is celebrating National Science Day. This day should be marked by commitments of promoting science, technology, and innovation in India.
Introduction:
National Science Day was celebrated on February 28 for the discovery of the **Raman effect by Indian physicist Sir C. V. Raman** on 28 February 1928. But the celebration has to move forward and Indians have the responsibility of taking forward our legacy of Science.

What is the Indians legacy in the field of Science?
1. Indians have a long tradition of illuminating the world of science. This is evident right from Aryabhata, Bhaskaracarya and Varahamihira to the great scientists of modern India.
2. The **role of women in the field of science** is also unforgettable. Women like Janaki Ammal (botanist), Bibha Chowdhuri (physicist), Asima Chatterjee (chemist), and Gagandeep Kang (medical scientist) have made India proud.
3. The contribution of **C.V Raman** in the field of Physics made him the most visible face of Indian science. He became the first Asian to won a noble price in Physics.
   o Dr Rajinder Singh, a noted historian of science authored six books and 28 essays on Raman.
4. Apart from that, other major contributors like **Jagadish Chandra Bose (**C.V. Raman's senior), **Satyendra Nath Bose and Meghnad Saha**, (both were Raman's juniors) also made major contributions in science and being acclaimed globally.

How India is advancing in Science now?
After Independence, the application of science in fields such as space research, atomic energy, biotechnology, and agriculture has been impressive. Many scientists believe India has the potential to become a hub for world-class scientific and technological innovation.
The draft National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy 2020 (STIP 2020) and National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) are the two recent developments to promote science and research in India.

Few important provisions of National Education Policy 2020:
1. The NEP underlines the **importance of mother languages for science teaching and popularisation**. S.N. Bose and others had also been advocating this from the 1940s.
2. Likewise, the setting up of the **National Research Foundation** to encourage and fund R&D (Research and Development) activities is also a step in the right direction.
3. Greater and intensive involvement of Indian universities in the R&D ecosystem will also improve science and technology among Indians.

Few important provisions of draft STIP 2020
1. Draft STIP focus on developing a **robust system for evidence and stakeholder-driven** Science Technology and Innovation planning and policy research.
2. The STIP draft also aims to **promote science and technology-enabled entrepreneurship** and mainstream innovation at the grassroots level.
3. Further, the draft STIP also focuses on **traditional knowledge systems** (later it will be validated by modern scientific methods).

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

Conclusion:

The government has a key role to play in the development of science and technology. The government has to follow a liberal approach to promote science. The government's recent restriction on online conferences is not an encouraging one for science.

So, for creating a science-enabled and science-respecting nation the government and people have to be forward-looking. Then only the purpose of National Science Day will be fulfilled.

2. Issues in the Process of Decarbonization

Source- The Indian Express

Syllabus- GS 3 – Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

Synopsis- Grid failure in Texas and flash flood in Uttarakhand highlighted issues in the process of decarbonization.

Introduction

Almost every major country has agreed to a time-bound, "net-zero" carbon emissions target. They are also in agreement over the steps required for decarbonization. However, it is not sufficient to just set the targets. There are certain legacy hurdles in the way of decarbonisation, such as:

- o Poorly designed planning systems.
- o Poor regulatory mechanism for the energy ecosystem and lack of decision-making.
- o Lack of investment in energy infrastructure.

2 recent incidents, such as the Nanda Devi flash flood and electricity grid system failure in Texas highlights these issues.

What is decarbonization?

Decorbonisation – It is the process of eliminating or reducing the carbon emissions sent into the atmosphere. Reducing the amount of CO_2 output is essential to meet global temperature standards set by the Paris Agreement [Net zero carbon emissions target by 2050]. The following are **some steps required for decarbonization;**

1. **Reduce**– Reduce greenhouse gases and use renewable energy sources like solar power and wind power.
2. **Use of Electric vehicles** instead of combustion engines.
3. **Energy conservation**- Energy demand should be conserved by reducing wastage and losses and using it more efficiently.

How incidents of grid failure in Texas and flash floods in Uttarakhand highlight the issues in the decarbonization process?

1. **First, lack of preparedness-** The planners had incorporated emergency response procedures for cold waves and floods. However, they didn't prepare for such extremes of weather conditions.
   - o **For example**– **In Texas-** The authorities planned a worst-case scenario based on a 15GW drop in generating power. However, they lost 30GW, which resulted in a total blackout.
   - o One reason for this is experts presume every scenario based on historical data. Thus
2. **Second, poor regulatory and institutional mechanism.** It is evident in both Grid Failure in Texas and Uttarakhand flash flood.
   - o No umbrella authority was present to manage the disaster with responsibility for the entire system.
   - o The recommendations made after the Kedarnath floods about land use and watershed management were not implemented.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

3. **Third, lack of investment in energy infrastructure-**
    o In Texas, the grid was not resilient enough to absorb the surge in the flow of intermittent renewable electrons.
    o India's transmission system is also not capable of managing the energy transition. The Transmission issue slows down the adoption rate of solar power by failing to introduce green energy to the grid.

All of these factors have negative effects on the decarbonization process. They must be resolved in order to reach the Paris Agreement's global temperature goals.

Way forward-
To ensure the sustainability of the decarbonisation process the following steps are required-
    ▪ Policymakers need to create robust mechanisms. It will facilitate inter-ministerial and inter-state collaboration within the country and multilateral cooperation internationally.
    ▪ Poorly designed planning systems, inadequate regulatory frameworks, and a lack of investment are all challenges that policymakers must tackle.

3. Lessons from Operation Flood for Operation Green
Source: click here
Syllabus: GS 3
Synopsis: A closer inspection of the Operation Green scheme shows that the scheme is nowhere near achieving its objectives.
Introduction
The Finance Minister during budget presentations announced the expansion of Operation Green (OG). It will be expanded beyond tomatoes, onions, and potatoes to 22 perishable commodities.
    ▪ Operation Green was launched in 2018 with three basic objectives:
        o **First, it should control the wide price instability** in the three largest vegetables of India (Tomatoes, Onions, and Potatoes).
        o **Second, it should build efficient value chains** so that a larger share of the consumers' money is received by the farmers.
        o **Third, it should reduce the post-harvest losses** by building modern warehouses and cold storage.

How is the operation green performing currently?
The Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) has invited some program management agencies to see the implementation of OG.
    ▪ Rs 500 crore budget was outlined initially. **However, only Rs. 8.45 crore has been actually released.**
    ▪ A closer examination of the scheme reveals that OG **is progressing in slow motion** and is nowhere near achieving its objectives.
        o Research at ICRIER tells that **price instability remains high**. Farmers' share in consumers' money is very low with 26.6 percent for potatoes, 29.1 percent for onions, and 32.4 percent for tomatoes.
        o In cooperatives like AMUL, farmers get almost 75-80 percent of consumers' money.

What can Operation Green learn from the Operation Flood?
Operation Flood (OF) changed India's milk sector and made India the world's largest milk producer. There are some important lessons OG can learn from OF:

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

1. **First, OG will not get any immediate results** and one has to be patient. There should be a separate board to strategize and implement the OG scheme, like the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) for milk.
2. **Second, a respectable leader with commitment and competence** is required to head this new board of OG. The person should be given at least a five-year term, sufficient resources, and should be made accountable for delivering results.
   o The MoFPI can have its evaluation every six months.
3. **Third, at present, the criterion** for the selection of TOP commodity clusters is not transparent. This process should be transparent to keep the politics away.
4. **Fourth, the subsidy scheme will have to be made innovative** with new generation entrepreneurs, startups, and FPOs.
   o For instance, the announcement to create an additional 10,000 FPOs along with the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund and the new farm laws are all promising but need to be implemented fast.

4. Ceasefire agreements between India and Pakistan and their significance
Source: The Hindu
Syllabus: GS-3: Security challenges and Their management in border areas
Synopsis: Recently India and Pakistan issued a joint statement to strictly observe the ceasefire agreements along the LoC and other sectors. This has significant implications for peaceful border management along LoC (J&K) and other sectors.

Background
- There were around 5130 ceasefire violations in 2020 registered on either side of the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).
- In the backdrop of this hostile climate, the two **Director General of Military Operations (DGMOs)** from both India and Pakistan had issued a joint statement on February 24-25, to begin the ceasefire.
- This statement is viewed as a path-breaking initiative from a **conflict management** point of view. It can be attributed to the success of high-level contacts through **back-channel process**.
- It can be understood that both countries have realised that an unsettled border helps no one.

Ceasefire agreements between India and Pakistan:
There are several agreements signed between India and Pakistan to resolve the border dispute. They are,
1. The **Karachi agreement of 1949**
   o This agreement ended the first war between newly formed India and Pakistan.
   o It was the **first ceasefire agreement** between the two countries. It was supervised by the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan. This agreement created a boundary line in Kashmir called the **Ceasefire Line or CFL.**
   o **Accordingly,** the **United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP)** was mandated to monitor the ceasefire along the CFL.
2. **The Tashkent Agreement of 1965**
   o The India-Pakistan war of 1965 also ended in a ceasefire. But, the CFL was unaltered in this agreement also. So similar to the Karachi agreement the status quo was maintained in border areas even after signing the Tashkent agreement.
3. **The Simla Agreement of 1972**
   o This agreement was signed **after the Bangladesh liberation war** of 1971.
   o **But unlike 1965, the status quo** was changed under the Simla Agreement.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

   o The **Suchetgarh Agreement** of 1972 delineated the 'line of control' in Jammu and
     Kashmir. So the Simla Agreement **converted the ceasefire line into a Line of
     Control (LoC)**.
   o Further, under this agreement **both the countries agreed to resolve the disputes
     bilaterally.**
   o This was considered as a **smart move by India** because of two reasons,
       o It changed the nomenclature and the physical alignment of the India-Pakistan
         dividing line in Kashmir.
       o It also made the **UNMOGIP** presence in Kashmir irrelevant. As the UN was not
         even a party to the Simla Agreement.

4. **Ceasefire Agreement of 2003**
   o This agreement came after four years of Kargil and two years after the Indian
     Parliament got attacked.
   o Pakistan PM announced the Ceasefire on LoC on November 26, 2003**.**
   o It is not a formalised document.

Recent developments:
1. The recent announcement by the DGMOs is also seen as the reiteration of the **ceasefire
   agreement of Simla**. As the 2003 agreement was not formalised.
2. **Further, the announcement is also considered as one of the most significant
   military measures by India and Pakistan in over 18 years. The reasons are,**
   o The recent announcement mentions a specific date to begin the ceasefire. (midnight
     of February 24-25).
   o It will help India to avoid **a two-front situation** i.e., Pakistan and China on both
     sides of Indian borders. Dealing with a **two-front situation** is neither easy nor
     practical for India for reasons like,
       o The Indian Army had to redeploy forces from the western border with Pakistan
         to the northern border with China to deal with the situation. It poses serious
         material challenges.
       o By agreeing to February 2021 ceasefire, India has defused the western
         challenge from Pakistan first. Now the army can focus more on the Northern
         borders with China.

Way forward:
1. The rules enshrined in the Simla Agreement has to be rewritten or both the countries
   have to formalise the 2003 ceasefire agreement. Experiences from conflict zones around
   the world show that an unwritten ceasefire tends to break down easily and trigger
   tensions.
2. To create stability in bilateral relations both countries need to progress in other
   domains also.

5. Knowledge-Economy in India
Source: Indian Express
Syllabus: GS 3: Indigenization of Technology and Developing New Technology.
Synopsis: India has lost its leadership in the production of a knowledge economy. But still
India maintaining leaderships in few sectors like space, pharma and information technology.
India as Knowledge economy

Background
   ▪ The global success of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the
     pharmaceutical industry signifies the diplomatic potential of India's **Knowledge**

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

Economy (production of goods and services is based mainly on **knowledge**-intensive activities).

- For instance, recently ISRO launched Brazil's **Amazonia-1 satellite** and India **exported the COVID-19 vaccine to Brazil**, as part of its "**Vaccine Maitri**" diplomacy.
- However, India does not hold its leadership position in the production of **knowledge Economy** like in the 1950s.

What was the reason behind the success of these two sectors?

1. **Sustained state support:** India's current knowledge economy leadership in space and pharmaceuticals is due to 50 years of **sustained state support**.
   - It was Prime Minister **Indira Gandhi** who authorised the creation of ISRO in 1972.
   - Again, it was her decision to enact the **Indian Patents Act, 1970.** The Act **facilitated the growth of the domestic pharmaceuticals sector**.
   - Subsequent governments have all contributed to the development of both industries.
2. The **credit to Indian engineering, scientific and technological talent**. There is large scale development of educational institutions throughout India. This made Indian students pursuing world-class standards at a fraction of the cost compared to developed countries.
3. With these initiatives, India became the leader in the Knowledge Economy in the space and pharma sector**.** Further, India built the capacity to place satellites of several countries at globally competitive rates and also able to supply drugs and vaccines at affordable prices to developing countries.
4. Moreover, it has to be noted that these two sectors were successful even when the western countries created constraints for **indigenous technology development**. For instance,
   - **Unilateral sanctions** were imposed by the US to deny Indian industry access to technology and markets.
   - A multilateral regime for **intellectual property rights** (IPRs) protection was created, under the patronage of the World Trade Organisation.
   - Even today, many developed countries oppose India's Compulsory Licence of medicines.

Proof for India as a Knowledge Economy in the past:

There were many instances in the past that shows India's knowledge is in high demand. They are,

1. Students from across Asia and Africa sought admission to Indian universities for post-graduate courses.
2. Indian expertise was sought by global organisations such as the FAO, UNIDO, etc.
3. The government of South Korea even sent its economists to the Indian Planning Commission till the early 1960s. They got their training in long-term planning.
4. **Rail India Technical and Economic Services** (RITES), had acquired a global profile with business in Africa and Asia.
5. The development of India's dairy and livestock economy also attracted global interest.

Why India lost its leadership in the Knowledge Economy?

Irrespective of the dominant position during the 1950s, India lost its leadership in the production of the knowledge economy. The reasons are,

1. **Flight of Indian talent to other developed countries**. It had accelerated since the 1970s and has sharply increased in recent years.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.

ForumIAS

2. **China has emerged as a major competitor** offering equally good S&T products and services at a lower cost.
3. The a**ppeal of higher education in India for overseas students has decreased**. This is the biggest setback for India trying to become the powerhouse of the knowledge economy. This is because of two reasons,
   o The quality of education offered in most institutions is not up to date. The education institutes in India still teach old technologies instead of new ones.
   o The social environment offered in India is no longer as cosmopolitan as it used to be. There is a significant growth in the narrow-minded ideologies in India.
4. **Lack of political and intellectual support** to the development of India's knowledge base and an inadequate commitment by the government. For example, the Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme (TEQIP) is discontinued without an alternative programme hurts the quality of technical education in India.

The success of the ISRO and Pharma sector is a tribute to public policy, government support, private sector involvement and middle-class talent. This has to spread across the sector to regain India as the leader of the Knowledge Economy.

6. Issues associated with Government's Disinvestment proposal
Source: The Hindu
Syllabus: GS 3 – Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources
Synopsis: Some experts are expressing concern over the government's disinvestment proposal. There is a need for adopting a cautious approach that augments rather than deteriorates public welfare.

Background:
▪ The government has set a target of 1.75 lakh crore rupees from the disinvestment of PSUs in the current financial year. Companies like Air India and BPCL will witness a strategic sale while an IPO (initial public offer) would be rolled out for LIC.
   o Disinvestment of PSUs simply means withdrawal of government's investment in public sector undertakings.
   o **Strategic Disinvestment** involves a sale of 50% or more in a PSU along with transfer of management control.
   o **IPO** means the offering of a company's shares to the public which results in a change of ownership. Post-IPO a company gets listed on a stock exchange.
▪ The small industries and informal workers are already under severe stress post the demonization of 2016 and GST of 2017. The pandemic and rising oil prices have further worsened their position.

Why is the government disinvesting?
▪ **First**, it will help in the generation of additional revenue for the government.
▪ **Second**, it will enhance the efficiency of PSUs with more efficient private management taking the charge.
▪ **Third**, it will allow the government more time to do core and crucial tasks.
▪ **Fourth**, it will reduce the government's burden to consistently support and fund the sick units.

However, some experts are saying that the disinvestment might further increase the hardships of companies and the masses.

Issues with Disinvestment of PSUs:
▪ **First**, the **sale of profitable PSUs** is just like selling the family's silver to pay the grocer's bill. This would give short-term results but long-term losses. Eg – a privatised

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

LIC might be reluctant to meet long-term financing needs for infrastructure projects with long gestation periods.
- **Second**, the government sometimes **undervalues the companies** to favor some industrialists. This was seen in the sale of Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) and is criticised for strengthening crony capitalism.
- **Third**, the **government often fails to achieve huge disinvestment targets**. Last year it received merely 32000 crores out of target sales of 2.1 lakh crore.
- **Fourth**, the **spirit of disinvestment is undermined** when one PSU is purchased by another. The Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India bailed out the Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI).
- **Fifth**, disinvestment **ignores social justice** as private players are not bound to give reservations to vulnerable sections. Further, they fire large numbers of workers and are reluctant to invest in backward regions, unlike PSUs.
- **Sixth, the** privatization of Public sector banks may not yield desired results. However, Private banks are driven by profit motives, and they are also suffering from corruption as seen in the recent Yes Bank case. Further, private players may shut down loss-making rural branches unlike public banks who also work for social welfare.
- **Lastly**, privatisation is not always good if the economic situation is uncertain. This is seen by the lack of tangible results post heavy relaxation in corporate tax cuts since 2019.

Way Forward:
- The government must put the formula of valuing PSUs in the public domain to augment transparency.
- The promise of exiting from all the sectors except the 4 strategic sectors can be changed to selling only the non-strategic and non-core sectors.
- The public banks can be clubbed and recapitalized instead of outrightly selling them.

In a nutshell, the process should be carried on in such a way that it generates resources for the government, sets the right incentives for PSUs management, and rewards the investing public.

7. Solving the issue of Retrospective Taxation
Source: The hindu
Syllabus: GS 3 – Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.
Synopsis:
The two cases of retrospective taxation related to Vodafone and Cairn energy can be solved. It is possible if the government and companies collectively decide to do mutual bargains. Filing more and more cases in international tribunals might not deliver optimum results.

Background:
- Both the companies individually filed a case in the Permanent Court of Arbitration against its retrospective taxation of 2012.
  - Retrospective Taxation means the imposition of tax from a time behind the date on which the law is passed.
- The PCA has given the award in favour of both the companies in 2020. However, India has decided to challenge both of them.

About the Arbitration award:
- PCA in its September 2020 award ruled against the imposition of 27900 crore rupees retrospective tax on Vodafone. It said that taxation was against India-Netherlands BIT

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

(Bilateral Investment Treaty). The court ordered India to pay 45000 crore rupees to Vodafone.

- Similarly, in December 2020, the court held India's action of imposing 10247 crore tax liability on Cairn is a violation of the India-United Kingdom BIT. The court ordered India to pay 90000 to the company.

Post-award Scenario:

- **Cairn has started enforcement proceedings** in the US, UK, Netherlands, Singapore and Canada. The company refrained from initiating any enforcement in India due to uncertainty over public policy and poor track record of courts in enforcing foreign awards.
- India **will now have to defend its position** in foreign jurisdictions of enforcement, primarily on the grounds of sovereign immunity and public policy.
- Parallelly, the Indian Government has decided to challenge the award.

Problems in challenging the Cairn award:

- The government's action of retrospective taxation and subsequent inducement to pay is deemed as a wilful, unfair and inequitable measure. Such measures are not allowed under International Law.
- The act of government is also against the Bilateral Investment Treaties signed by it under International Law. The use of sovereign taxation powers to undermine BITs is not justified under international law.

Way Forward:

- India can definitely **use defence of international public policy** against tax avoidance. Similarly, the defence of **sovereignty of a state** can be used to determine what transactions can or cannot be taxable. This would help in challenging the awards.
- However, an **amicable solution** can be developed if both – companies and government are willing to do mutual bargains.
  - The government gave an offer to Cairn under the **'Vivad se Vishwas scheme'**. The company should pay 50% of the principal amount and remaining other things like interest and penalty would be waived off.
  - Re-computation of tax liability on a long term capital gains basis has also been offered.
  - Further the companies should understand the huge potential of the Indian market that should induce them towards dialogue. This is proved by the fact that India comes to the list of top 12 FDI destinations of the world.

An expeditious solution is desired in order to sustain the investor's trust. It will bring billions of investment in India and show respect towards bilateral commitments. Although the two awards have been challenged, the work on mutual settlement should be carried on in a parallel way.

8. An evaluation of India's actions against Climate Change
Source: The Hindu
Syllabus: GS 3: Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation
Synopsis: Events like Uttarakhand and Texas demand urgent climate action. However, the actions of India against climate change are not sufficient.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.

ForumIAS

How Uttarakhand floods and extreme events in Texas are related to Global warming?

- Natural disasters such as Himalayan glacier flooding and extreme cold wave in Texas (USA) are the consequences of global warming.
- In 2013, **glacial flooding** caused over 6,000 deaths in Uttarakhand. Melting of the Himalayan glaciers due to increased global warming has caused floods and landslides in Uttarakhand.
- Further, the decrease in ice cover reduces the amount of light reflected back (Low Albedo) contributing to an additional rise in temperature.
- Similarly, the extreme cold weather in Texas and the double-digit negative temperatures in Germany this year, are consequences of global warming.
- The warming of the **Arctic-peninsula** at a rate almost twice the global average has damaged the **Polar vortex. (**The "vortex" refers to the counter-clockwise flow of air that helps keep the colder air near the Poles).
- As a result, the cold winds that are restricted to the north poles were able to move south, causing extreme cold weather in **sub tropic countries**.

Why India's response to Global warming is not satisfactory?

India has taken many steps to mitigate climate risks. However, the measures taken are not proportional to the risk posed by climate change, particularly to India.

1. India is the **3ʳᵈ largest carbon emitter** after China and the United States. Also, India is particularly vulnerable to global warming. For instance,
   - HSBC ranks India at the top among 67 nations in climate vulnerability (2018)
   - Whereas, **Germanwatch** ranks India fifth among 181 nations in terms of climate risks (2020).
2. In spite of being highly vulnerable to climate risks, India hasn't committed itself strongly to climate mitigation measures. For example, while China has announced **carbon neutrality** by 2060, India is yet to announce its target.
3. Also, public spending in India to mitigate climate risks does not reflect the urgency to shift towards cleaner and renewable power sources.
4. Further, instead of strengthening climate safeguards the governments both Center and State are diluting it. For example, unsustainable construction of hydroelectric and road projects in Uttarakhand.
5. Similarly, Kerala ignored the **Gadgil and Kasturirangan report on western ghats** which called for regulation of mining, quarrying, and dam construction in ecologically sensitive places. The neglect contributed to the massive floods and landslides in 2018 and 2019.

What needs to be done?

1. **First,** a significant step would be, including policies for climate mitigation explicitly in the government budget, along with energy, roads, health, and education. Moreover, specific growth targets including timelines for switching to cleaner energy will be required.
2. **Second,** the government needs to launch a major campaign to mobilize **climate finance.**
3. **Third,** India's Central and State governments must increase allocations for risk reduction for building **climate-resilient infrastructure**. For example, agricultural innovations to resist droughts.

Sustainable growth depends on timely climate action. For that to happen, policymakers need to understand the connection between carbon emissions, atmospheric warming, melting glaciers, extreme floods, and storms.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

9. History and significance of Mars Missions
Source: The Hindu
Syllabus: Gs3: Awareness in the fields of Space.
Synopsis: Questions related to Mars are still unanswered. However, the hope of finding life on the planet excites humanity for further exploration of Mars.

Background:
- Recently, as a part of Mars mission 2020, NASA launched orbiter **Perseverance** into Mars.
- **Mars 2020** is a Mars rover mission forming part of NASA's **Mars Exploration Program**. It includes the rover **Perseverance** and the small robotic helicopter **Ingenuity**.
- The rover Perseverance will explore **Jezero crater** and look for carbonate rocks that might hosts **Stromatolites**.
- Stromatolites are layered sedimentary formations that are created by photosynthetic **cyanobacteria**. They signify the possibility of life on Mars.
- The predecessor of the Perseverance orbiter is the **Curiosity rover.** It is surveying and testing the Martian surface since 2012.
- The launch of Mars 2020 was the third of three space missions sent toward Mars during July 2020. Other missions include the **Emirates Mars Mission** with the orbiter **Hope** and China's Tianwen-**1 mission.**

Why Mars missions are undertaken?
The possibility of life and water is high on Mars compared to other planets in the solar system. It can be inferred from the following findings:
- During the 19th century, astronomer Giovanni Schiaparelli reported that he had seen water channels on the red planet.
- Later, another astronomer Percival Lowell talked about hundreds of canals on the equatorial region of Mars. He claimed that he was able to notice that through his telescope set up in the desert of Arizona.
- After that, high-resolution cameras confirmed the networks of channels that might have been created by running water.
- Also, in 2005, the **Mars Express satellite** found evidence of clays that may have formed after solid rocks were exposed to water.
- In addition to this, **the Curiosity rover** detected carbon-containing compounds in Martian rocks and shifting levels of methane molecules in the planet's atmosphere.
- Two papers published in the **journal Science in 2018** concluded that these findings support the possibility of the existence of microbial life.

Owing to these developments Humans want to explore Mars for two reasons,
- **One**, the curiosity of humans to look for alien life forms in the solar system.
- **Two**, historically, Mars has always been viewed as a backup site for humanity to migrate. For example, entrepreneurs like Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk are proponents of this concept.

Yet, Mars has not delivered significant findings confirming the presence of life forms, and the quest for discovering potential life forms in Mars continues.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

10. Consequences of Yemen Civil war
Source- The Hindu
Syllabus- GS 3 – Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate.
Synopsis- Joe Biden declared that the US will no longer back the Saudi-led military campaign in Yemen. Yemen Civil war resulted in the loss of thousands of lives and a humanitarian crisis. A reconciliation is urgently required.

Background of Yemen civil war-
1. The civil war between the Yemeni government and Iran-backed Houthi rebels began in 2014. The Houthi rebels gradually took over the capital Sana'a.
2. In 2015, the war intensified. Saudi Arabia and 8 other Arab nations, supported by the US, the UK, and France, launched airstrikes against the Houthis. This attack was aimed to restore the Hadi government in Yemen.
3. The Saudi-led coalition imposed a blockade on Yemen, in the hope of weakening the Houthis.
4. Despite the blockade, the Houthis continued to amass weapons, including technologically sophisticated drones. They used these weapons to strike Saudi targets across the border.
5. The Saudi-led coalition failed to eject the Houthis as the rebel group still controls the city.

Consequences of Yemen-Saudi war
- The war has produced a humanitarian crisis. At least 8.4 million people are at risk of starvation and 22.2 million people (75% of the population) are in need of humanitarian assistance.
- The conflict has killed more than 100,000 Yemenis and displaced 8 million.
- Towns and cities have been destroyed. Poverty has spread and diseases like cholera have proven difficult to combat because of poor medical infrastructure.
- According to the UN, 50,000 Yemenis are starving to death and 16 million will go hungry this year.

What are the steps taken by the US?
- Joe Biden has announced an **end to US support for Saudi-led offensive operations** in Yemen.
- The Biden administration had put a temporary **halt on arms sales to Saudi Arabia and the UAE.** Moreover, **US-appointed a Special Envoy for Yemen.**
- **Other than that, the US also Removed the Shia Houthi rebels from the terrorist list.**
- The US is planning to increase the number of refugees accepted by the US from 15000 to 125000 for the fiscal year.

What needs to be done?
- The international community should focus on tackling the humanitarian situation in Yemen.
- The Biden administration should use its leverage to pressure Saudi to lift the blockade on Yemen.
- The Houthis and the Saudis must agree to a ceasefire. After that, the US and its regional allies can call a multilateral conference involving all stakeholders to consider Yemen's future.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

11. Issues in the Process of Spectrum Auction
Source: click here
Syllabus: GS – 3, Mobilisation of Resources
Synopsis: The government should revisit spectrum auction formats, unrealistic pricing, regulatory norms.
Introduction
The telecommunications' spectrum auction successfully held in India recently. The winning bids in the auction collectively outdid the government's own low expectations for receipts from the sale of airwaves.

▪ The three largest telecom service providers bought only essential airwaves. They bought it either as renewal or for strengthening their network.
▪ Reliance Jio bought close to 60% of the spectrum. It contributed almost three-fourths of the 77,815 crores. Jio's contribution of 57,123 crores by itself surpassed the government's estimate of 45,000- 50,000 crores from the auction.

However, the concerning fact is that only 37% of the airwaves on offer found buyers.

What are the issues in spectrum auctioning?
1. Like the auction of the 2016 spectrum, the auction of 700 MHz this time also is not successful. The high reserve price is a reason behind that. It prohibits buyers from auctioning with a motive of gaining from it.
2. The 700 MHz spectrum is a nationally valuable resource. The government's approach of keeping prices high is hard to understand.
3. The relatively low frequency **700 MHz is considered ideal for enhancing network availability** in large, densely built-up cities. Here, the issue of poor signal penetration inside buildings is an everlasting problem for users and providers.
4. Other than that, the government needs to take care of the following issues:
   o The auction format requires updation, it is evident after looking at the severely reduced number of participants.
   o Regulatory norms and tax practices will create monopolies in the sector.

What are the steps to be taken?
The country's telecom authorities shall reconsider the entire policy framework to tackle current persistent insecurity in the industry.

▪ **Firstly,** Grossly unrealistic pricing of the spectrum should be rationalized.
▪ **Secondly, the** government must ensure it does not end up hurting the telecom sector. This sector has become a key multiplier of economic empowerment and progress.

12. India's Space Sector: Initiatives and Issues
Source: click here
Syllabus: GS – 3
Synopsis: ISRO should take advantage of the market opportunities in the space sector.

Introduction
Brazil's Amazonia-1 satellite was launched last week from Sriharikota. It was the first dedicated commercial mission of NewSpace India Limited (NSIL). NSIL is a two-year-old commercial arm of the Department of Space.

Initiatives by India for promotion of Space sector
There is a potential explosion of market opportunities from space applications in the near future.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

1. **Firstly, the institutionalization of space commerce.** Regulatory agency the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Center (IN-SPACe) and an independent tribunal are formed. It will be helpful in resolving disputes among private space entities. It also signifies the recognition of potential in space commerce by the government.
2. **Secondly, the private sector** plays an important role in developing launch and satellite infrastructure for ISRO. Many companies now offer numerous services. Many of these companies even aspire to launch their own satellites.
3. **Thirdly, NSIL has a broad ambit of functions.** It will collaborate on new launch programs and with overseas space industries. It is also expected to be a marketer of ISRO's technologies. Likewise, it has to find new business opportunities and expand the sector.

What are the issues?
1. **Firstly, the Commercialization experience of ISRO has not always been smooth.** The Government still owes nearly $1.2 billion to devas multimedia due to the Devas-Antrix deal controversy. Antrix was a commercial arm of the Department of Space.
2. **Secondly, the motivation behind NSIL may not be purely commercial.** NSIL is considered to be a move by India's space establishment to protect the space industry in India from **the consequences of the Devas-Antrix mess.**
3. **Third,** there is a scope of overlapping of roles between NSIL and ANTRIX. This is primarily because the difference in the responsibilities of NSIL and Antrix is quite confusing. It is yet to be properly delineated.

The way forward
NSIL must try to not be another Antrix but be continuously in start-up mode. It must think of ways to aid space start-ups to reach out to rural India and enable more recruits from India's young. It must see itself both as an Indian ambassador and disruptor in the space arena.

13. Cyber Attacks in India and Institutional arrangements for Cybersecurity
Source: The Hindu
Gs3: Basics of Cyber Security
Synopsis: India's Critical Infrastructure is vulnerable to Cyberattacks from foreign countries. India needs to upgrade its Institutional arrangements for Cybersecurity.

Background
- Recently, The New York Times reported that China is threatening India through Cyber-attacks.
- It raised the possibility that the power outage in Mumbai (on October 13 2020) could have been an attack by a Chinese state-sponsored group.
- In the same direction, Maharashtra's Home Minister acknowledged a report by the Maharashtra Cyber Cell. The report showed that the grid failure was potentially the result of **"cyber sabotage".**
- **However,** Power ministry contended that the grid failure was not linked to any cybersecurity incident.

Has India been affected by Chinese state-sponsored Cyber security attacks in the past?
India has been attacked by suspected Chinese state-sponsored groups multiple times in the past. **For example,**

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

- **In 2009, GhostNet** (cyber espionage network) extensively targeted Indian entities. These entities included military establishments, news publications, and even the National Security Council Secretariat.
  - After the attack, **Shadow Network investigation** by researchers found clear evidence that confidential documents accessed by the attackers.
- **Suckfly** attack, targeted government and private entities including a firm that provided tech support to the National Stock Exchange.
- **Dtrack** attack in2019, it first targeted Indian banks, and later the **Kudankulam nuclear power plant (**Tamil Nadu).
- India also faced attack from **Stuxnet,** which had hampered functioning of nuclear reactors in Iran.
- Apart from state-sponsored Cyber-attacks**,** there are enough evidence to show that the Chinese are also helping them to dismantle the infrastructure behind some of these attacks.
- More fearfully, WikiLeaks has shown that groups such as the **Central Intelligence Agency's UMBRAGE project** have advanced capabilities of '**false flag attacks**. (ability to make other nations responsible for cybersecurity attacks with false proofs)

What are the Institutional arrangements in India related to cybersecurity?
Over the past two decades, India has made a significant effort for providing cyber security, some of them are
- **One**, Cyber security is given high priority by including cyber portfolios in PMO (Prime Minister's Office). For example, National Security Council, chaired by the National Security Adviser.
  - The NSA also chairs the National Information Board, the apex body for cross-ministry coordination on cybersecurity policymaking.
- **Two,** Establishment of **National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre** under the **NTRO**. It protects critical information infrastructure,
- **Three**, in 2015, the Prime Minister established the **office of the National Cyber Security Coordinator. It** advises the Prime Minister on strategic cyber security issues.
- **Four**, the **Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), is** the nodal agency. It responds to various cybersecurity threats to non-critical infrastructure.
- **Five,** The Ministry of Defence has recently upgraded the **Defence Information Assurance and Research Agency**.
  - It aims to establish the **Defence Cyber Agency**, a tri-service command of the Indian armed forces to coordinate and control joint cyber operations and craft **India's cyber doctrine**.
- **Six,** the Ministry of Home Affairs oversees "coordination centres". It focuses on law enforcement efforts to address cybercrime, espionage and terrorism.
- **Finally,** the Ministry of External Affairs coordinates India's **cyber diplomacy** with other countries and at international fora like the United Nations.

What are the issues in India's cybersecurity framework?
- **First, the institutional framework for cybersecurity has the following concerns.**
  - Lack of effective coordination.
  - Overlapping responsibilities
  - Lack of clear institutional boundaries and accountability.
- **Two,** India is yet to prepare a Cyber doctrine that defines the limits for offensive cyber operations, or the scope of countermeasures against cyber-attacks.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS

What is the way forward?

1. **First**, a clear-cut cyber doctrine similar to **Nuclear doctrine** is needed for protecting cyber spaces. For example, the '**No First Use**' nuclear posture was critical in preventing a nuclear war despite rising tensions.

   o The absence of a credible cyber deterrence strategy allows states and non-state actors to conduct cyber attacks on critical information infrastructure.

2. **Second,** India should push for the debate on **global governance architecture** regarding **Cyber space** in international fora based on India's strategic interests and capabilities.

   o It should also push for making binding rules that makes cyberspace-attacks on critical infrastructure illegitimate. (health-care systems, electricity grids, water supply, and financial systems)

3. **Third,** need for improved coordination between the government and the private sector at the national and State levels. It will effectively counter threats from both state actors and their proxies.

4. **Four**, need to publish cyber-attack information in Public domain for enabling meaningful public discussions on future Cyber policies.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.
ForumIAS