

9pm

Compilation

May, 2021 (Third Week)

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General Studies Paper - 2

General Studies - 2

1. Need of Constituting National Tribunal Commission in India

Source- [The Hindu](#)

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

Synopsis- The formation of the National Tribunal commission could transform the present tribunal system in India.

Introduction-

- Recently, the Centre government has issued the [Tribunals Reforms \(Rationalization and Conditions of Service\) Ordinance 2021](#).
- The ordinance aims to abolish certain existing appellate tribunals and transferred their functions to other existing judicial bodies.
- The ordinance also shortened the period for members of the tribunals to 4 years.
- However, the ordinance has been widely criticized and is being challenged in the Supreme Court.

Reason for Criticism of the ordinance-

1. **Firstly, the ordinance bypasses the usual legislative process.**
2. **Secondly, the Center abolished tribunals** such as the Film Certification Appellate Tribunal and the Intellectual Property Appellate Board, **without any stakeholder consultation.**
3. **Third, No Judicial Impact Assessment (JIA)** was conducted, before abolishing tribunals. Whereas, in *Roger Mathew v. South Indian Bank (2019)* SC directed the government for JIA before any such step.
4. **Fourth, the ordinance has fixed a four-year tenure** for Chairpersons and members of the tribunal. It is against the SC direction of fixing the 5- year term.
5. **Lastly, No National Tribunals Commission (NTC)** was constituted for supervising tribunals. This idea was proposed in the *L. Chandra Kumar v. Union of India (1997)*.

Need of National Tribunals Commission

- **Executive interference**– executive interference in the functioning of tribunals is common, especially in the appointment and removal of tribunal members, provision of finances, infrastructure, etc. Thus, the formation of NTC can remove this possibility.
- **Lack of independent supervisory body** [such as NTC] to support the uniform functioning of the tribunals.
- Inadequate infrastructure, lack of judicial independence, and sluggish conflict settlement. All of these issues necessitated the establishment of the National tribunal Commission. It will be an independent umbrella body to supervise the functioning of tribunals, including the recruitment of members and disciplinary processes against them as well as the administrative and infrastructural needs of the tribunals.

Benefits of National Tribunals Commission (NTC)

- It will provide administrative support across all tribunals.
- It could separate the administrative and judicial functions carried out by various tribunals.
- Further, it would set performance standards for the efficiency of tribunals and their own administrative processes.
- Also, it will function as an independent recruitment body to develop and operationalize the procedure for disciplinary proceedings and tribunal member appointments.

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- Lastly, Speedy resolution of disputes.

Way forward-

- NTC may ensure the functional, operational, and financial independence of tribunals.
- Till the time NTC does not come into existence, the FM should come up with a transition plan.

2. Central Vista Project – Demolition of National Institutions

Source: [Click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 2

Synopsis: Demolition of national institutions for Central Vista Project require thorough analysis.

Introduction

- The Government of India's Central Vista redevelopment project is being treated as a national priority amid a pandemic. This is very debatable. The project comprises the construction of a new Parliament building and new residences for the Prime Minister and the Vice President.
- A new Parliament building is certainly required. There is a strong case for restructuring the existing offices of the central government. However, it is not the right time for giving priority to a development project over public good.
- Moreover, 76 scholars, artists, writers, curators, and museum professionals highlighted a major concerning facet of the project last week. The National Museum of India, the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), and **the National Archives are set to be smashed to make way for new buildings.**

Why demolition of national institutions has been criticised?

- **Firstly, these experts have asked for a speedy suspension of the project.** Their concern is valid about the preservation of the collections kept at these centers.
- **Secondly, transfer of the materials** at the National Museum, archival accounts at the National Archives, and manuscript holdings at the IGNCA can be a very perplexing task. **It is a difficult task that needs thorough planning and knowledge.**
- **Thirdly, such major changes around chief institutions take place only after extensive talks** in any part of the world. Not in an opaque and casual manner as it is being planned here.
- **Fourthly, the experts have pointed out that articles at the National Museum still lack a complete inventory. This could lead to a risk of loss or mishandling.**
- **Lastly, the Central Vista redevelopment project is clearly being implemented in a hurry.** The government's intolerance towards any public analysis of the project is evident. They have even banned the photography of the construction.
- The country is facing an unmatched health crisis. The impact of the crisis can also be felt on the economic, social, and political spheres. The government should suspend the project, and take the Opposition and the public into confidence on the future course, in calmer times.

3. China-India Relations and India's Weakening Geo-Political Position

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs2: India and its Neighborhood- Relations

Synopsis: The unsettled border crisis at LAC, India's weakening global status, unfriendly Pakistan will only escalate issues in India-China relations.

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Background

- **Last year, ingressions by the Chinese army led to a standoff between India and China at the LAC (Line of Actual Control).**
- The seven hotspots were **Depsang plains, Galwan, Gogra, Hot Springs, North bank of Pangong Tso, Kailash range and Demchok.**
- **At Galwan valley**, a violent clash broke out that resulted in the death of 20 Indian soldiers.
- Sooner, the situation at Galwan was resolved by the two sides through disengagement from the face-off sites.
- After that, India and China agreed to disengage from the **Kailash range and north bank of Pangong Tso.**
- Further, it was stated by the Indian defense minister that, both sides will address and resolve all other remaining issues sooner than later. However, China refused to even discuss the remaining issues.

Concerns over growing tensions between India and China

1. **First**, peace achieved on the border is both unstable and unsustainable.
 - Hopes for Peace is defied as there are massive deployments on each side after the disengagement.
 - Similarly, the Kailash range has seen neither de-escalation nor de-induction so far.
 - Also, India's aim of restoring the status quo ante as of April 2020 remains unfulfilled.
 - By resorting to deal with issues on individual basis, India had lost the opportunity to simultaneously resolve all the flashpoints in Ladakh.
2. **Second**, geopolitical concerns over the border crisis have been enlarged by the devastation caused by the mismanagement of COVID-19.
 - Very recently, India was seen as a better alternative to Beijing's vaccine diplomacy, particularly in South Asia.
 - Even the QUAD pledge to deliver a billion doses of COVID-19 vaccine throughout the Indo-Pacific by the end of 2022 was focused on India's capabilities to produce Vaccines.
 - India also made commitments to poor countries to supply vaccines through GAVI's **COVAX scheme.**
 - **However**, India backtracked on its existing contractual commitments to supply vaccines to its friendly neighbors due to intense public criticism over the shortage of vaccines for its own population.
 - This has created doubts on India's reliability as a partner and its ability to act as a counter to China.
 - Further, a weaker India will make India more dependent on the United States to deal with China. This would further strain India-China ties.
3. **Third**, the Possibility of Two front collusion at Indian borders.
 - India sought peace with Pakistan to avoid a two-front collusive threat after the Ladakh crisis.
 - However, American military withdrawal from Afghanistan and a win for the Taliban, and the backing of assertive china might make ground for Pakistan to attack India.
4. **Fourth**, the recent disagreement over Chinese supplies to India also reflects the poor state of bilateral ties.

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- Beijing's efforts have been largely confined to private companies and donations from the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies. It is unlike other countries which have pledged government help to India.
- While the Chinese media ambiguously frames it as Chinese aid, India maintains that these are largely commercial contracts between private companies.
- The opportunity provided by the Pandemic for the two Asian giants to work together has been lost as both governments have focused on point scoring.

4. Systemic Issues affecting Women's Participation in labour Market

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs2: Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections of the population by the Centre and States and the Performance of these Schemes.

Synopsis: The burden on Women during the Pandemic increased disproportionately due to Societal norms, a male-dominated job market, and a lack of gender-sensitive policymaking. This article provides a solution to address these issues.

Background

- **Gender inequality** in terms of employment is high in India. For instance, only 18% of working-age women were employed as compared to 75% of men.
- Lack of good jobs, **restrictive social norms**, and the **burden of household work** are the main reasons for this widening Gender divide in employment.
- After the Pandemic, the **Gender gap in employment** has further widened. Women workers, in particular, have borne a disproportionate burden.

What factors are affecting Women's participation in labour market?

The data from the Centre **for Monitoring Indian Economy** has revealed the following.

- **First**, during the lockdown, job losses were disproportionately high for women as compared to men. The reasons were,
 - **Job security for men is high:** 61% of male workers were unaffected during the lockdown while only 19% of women experienced this kind of security.
 - **Male-dominated work culture:** 47% of employed women who had lost jobs during the lockdown, had not returned to work whereas it was only 7%, in the case of Men.
 - **Further**, Despite the nature of Industry, Women lost a greater number of Jobs compared to Men. For instance, in the education and Health industry.
 - **More fallback options for men:** Between 2019-2020, 33% of formal salaried men moved into self-employment and 9% into daily wage work. In contrast, only 4% and 3% of formal salaried women moved into self-employment and daily wage work.
 - **Burden of care:** This is one of the major reasons for poor employment recovery among Women.
- **Second**, during the lockdown, women's domestic work increased manifold. According to the **India Working Survey 2020**, among employed men, the number of hours spent on paid work remained more or less unchanged after the pandemic.
 - But for women, the number of hours spent in domestic work increased manifold. This increase in hours came without any accompanying relief in the hours spent on paid work.

What needs to be done?

- **First, increase employment opportunities.** It can be done by,
 - Expanding the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)**
 - Introduction of an urban employment guarantee targeted towards women.
 - **Setting up of community kitchens.**
 - **Prioritizing the opening of schools and Anganwadi centers**
 - **Engagement with self-help groups for the production of personal protective equipment kits**
- **Second, direct income support.** A COVID-19 hardship allowance of ₹5,000 per month for six months can be announced for 2.5 million **accredited social health activists** and Anganwadi workers, most of whom are women.
- **Third, Policy support to address issues related to Women workforce.**
 - **The National Employment Policy** should systematically address the issues related to the availability of work and household responsibilities.
 - Envisioning **universal basic services Programme**. It not only fills existing vacancies in the social sector but also expands public investments in health, education, child and elderly care.
 - It can also alleviate Women's problems such as nutritional and educational deficits and domestic work burdens.

5. India's Palestine policy

Source: [Click Here](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – Foreign Policy of India

Synopsis:

India's statement at the recent UNSC meeting points towards the evolving nature of India's Palestine policy. The country backed Palestine but without any reference to Jerusalem or its borders.

Background:

- The violence between Israel and Hamas has intensified since the May 11 encounter. It involved the exchange of rockets [between Hamas and Israel](#).
- A meeting of UNSC was convened to bring about a ceasefire of the situation, although no concrete outcome was achieved. The US blocked a joint statement calling for an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.
- Being a non-permanent member, India gave its statement in the meeting.

India's Palestine Policy

- India recently issued a statement on the Israel-Palestine conflict. In this statement;
- It showed **strong support for the just Palestinian cause**. Further, India supported the two-state solution for solving the conflict.
- The country expressed deep concern over violence in Jerusalem especially on Haram esh-Sharif/Temple Mount during the holy month of Ramzan. Further, the possible eviction process in Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighborhood in East Jerusalem was also criticized.
- The statement pointed towards the clashes in the Al-Aqsa compound and East Jerusalem's neighborhood as the trigger point of conflict. Rather than May 10 rocket strikes by the Hamas group over Israel.
- The country requested both sides to refrain from attempts to unilaterally change the existing status quo, including in East Jerusalem and its neighborhood.

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- This means Israel should stop the eviction process of Palestinians and restore the status quo ante at the Al Aqsa compound.

Evolving Nature of India's Palestine policy:

- In the statement, there was no direct reference to the status of Jerusalem or the future Israel-Palestine borders.
 - The statement fails to mention east Jerusalem as the future capital of Palestine under the two-state solution. Although, this has been the traditional stance of India.
 - Until 2017, India called for creating secure and recognized borders, side by side at peace with Israel. However, now the focus is only on peaceful coexistence with Israel.
- Earlier India used to use the term Haram esh-Sharif, but now it has been using the term Haram esh-Sharif/Temple Mount. The Former term meant exclusive Islamic control and ownership but the latter makes it a Jewish as well as Islamic issue.
- Further, as a part of the Link West Policy, India has de-hyphenated its relationship with Israel and Palestine in 2018. This allows it to treat both the countries as mutually independent and exclusive.

6. Method to Estimate Covid Deaths in India

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs2: Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

Synopsis: Instead, of calculating the 'excess' death at the national level, Excess death calculated at the District level will provide a more accurate estimation of Covid19 deaths in India.

Background

- To understand the magnitude of the pandemic there is a need for estimating COVID-19 deaths globally and in India.
- The most commonly used approach is the **"excess" death approach**. It is the difference between death in Normal years and deaths during the Covid-19 period.
- It includes deaths directly caused by COVID-19 as well as deaths indirectly caused due to the lack of access to care for other diseases during the pandemic and the lockdown.
- Based on the **"excess" death approach** estimates have been released globally. However, India's reported deaths contradict Global estimates.
- At present India needs to rely on global estimates rather than India-specific data.
- This is because of poor data availability for COVID-19 excess deaths, India has been classified in category 3 countries by WHO.
- Category 3 constitutes countries where the data on deaths are not available or usable. Hence, they are forced to adopt an indirect approach of using data from other countries.
- So, to have a reliable estimate for India on Covid deaths, India needs to calculate Excess death at the District level by analyzing the data from the **Civil Registration System (CRS)**.

What do the global estimates reveal about the Covid deaths?

As far as now two estimates have been released globally.

- **One, the World Mortality Dataset**. It is the largest international dataset of all-cause mortality in 89 countries. According to this dataset, researchers conclude that

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excess mortality exceeds the number of reported COVID-19 deaths in these countries by over 1.6 times.

- **Two, The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME).** According to their findings, global COVID-19 deaths by May 3, 2021 is at 6.93 million. This is two times higher than the reported number of deaths of 3.24 million.
 - India accounted for about 10% of them at 6,54,395. This is about three times higher than the reported official figure.

What needs to be done?

India currently has only crude estimates based on the number of extra deaths reported as compared to previous years. To improve the accuracy of Covid death estimation, we need to do the following.

- **First**, before estimating excess deaths a probable baseline should be defined. It can be done by estimating the mean and standard error based on data for the last five years to provide a probable range for a baseline.
- **Second, Civil Registration System (CRS) data** of districts with an acceptable quality of registration should be analyzed to estimate the excess deaths in a given period.
 - Since there are enormous differences in the severity and timing of the epidemic and its health system capacity within India combining data at higher levels is likely to lead to errors in estimation
- **Third**, for districts that lack an acceptable quality of registration, we could use alternative approaches.
- **Finally**, the long-term way out for India is to address the data limitations while academics work on refining their statistical approaches.

7. West Asia's Diplomatic Resets

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs2: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Synopsis: Factors responsible for the diplomatic engagements between West Asian rivals and India's opportunity to assist West Asia in providing regional security.

Background

- In the last few months, many West Asian nations have made efforts to bridge their diplomatic ties with their rival nations.
 - **One**, the most significant one is the recent interaction between **Saudi and Iranian officials**.
 - **Two**, the removal of the diplomatic and economic blockade on Qatar that was imposed by Saudi Arabia.
 - **Three**, similarly, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Egypt, Qatar has made efforts to bridge ties with both Saudi Arabia and Egypt.
 - **Four**, most recently Turkey and Egypt had their first diplomatic meeting in Cairo after they had broken diplomatic ties in 2013.
- Diplomatic engagements have provided an opportunity for countries, to address their differences. It could realign the existing regional alignments and possibly end ongoing conflicts.

What are the reasons for resetting diplomatic ties between rival west Asian countries?

- **First**, the change in the U.S. approach towards West Asian affairs is a major factor compelling the need for diplomatic engagements. Some Changed US approaches are,

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- **One, US's non-lenient approach towards Saudi Arabia.** For instance, the US has called for closer scrutiny of its human rights record and has strongly opposed the war in Yemen. Egypt too has concerns on the human rights issue,
- **Two, appeasing attitude towards Iran.** The US could re-enter the nuclear agreement and sanctions on Iran could be revoked.
- **Three, increasing distrust in U.S - Turkey relations.** Turkey under **President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan** has built close ties with Russia, while threatening U.S. allies in Syria, the Kurds, with military force. Compounding to the problem, the US recognition of the Armenian "genocide" has created more distrust between the two allies.
- **Fourth,** S decision to depart away from its responsibility of providing regional security to West Asian nations. The US wants regional states to be responsible for their regional security.
- **Second, the novel coronavirus pandemic is devastating West Asia.** The epidemic has severely damaged regional economies and has impacted oil prices creating uncertainties for the producer states.
- **Third, the West Asian nations have recognised that Peaceful resolution of disputes is the better solution.** For instance, the ongoing regional conflicts, in Syria, Yemen, and Libya, despite the massive death and destruction, have yielded no military outcome The priority for Saudi Arabia is to end the Yemen conflict.
- **Fourth, conflicts impose huge economic costs on Nations. For instance,** Iran's role in Syria costs its exchequer a few billion dollars every month. Whereas Saudi Arabia has spent several hundred billion dollars in buying weaponry to sustain its partnership with the U.S.

Opportunity for India

- Currently, West Asian nations are preparing to negotiate their strategic interests without outside intrusion.
- However, given that the regional contentions are inter-connected, third-party facilitators are needed to promote mutual confidence and prepare the ground for a comprehensive regional security arrangement.
- This arrangement will have provisions for participating states to uphold regional peace and promote mutually beneficial cooperation in energy, economic and logistical connectivity areas.
- Given India's close ties with all the regional states, India is well-placed to build an association of like-minded states with Japan, Russia, South Korea to shape the West Asian peace process

8. Misuse of Sedition law in India

Source- [The Hindu](#)

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

Synopsis – Unwarranted arrest of MP in Andhra Pradesh is another example of the misuse of the Sedition law in India relating to exciting disaffection against the government.

Introduction-

- Section 124-A [which deals with sedition law] has been misused in a number of cases in India. One of them is the unwarranted arrest of K. Raghu Ramakrishna Raju, an MP from Andhra Pradesh.
- Raju was arrested for allegedly acting in a manner that harmed the state government's reputation.

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- He has been charged under Sections 124A (sedition), 153A (Promoting enmity between different groups), and 505 (conducting public mischief).

What is the sedition act and the issues related to it?

Section 124A of the IPC, which deals with sedition states – Any offense committed with the intent to bring hatred or contempt or attempt to spread disaffection toward the government, shall be punished.

Punishment under sedition law- Sedition is a non-bailable offense. The punishment under the law varies from imprisonment up to three years to a life term and fine.

Issues with the act-

- **Against fundamental right to speech** – The law often goes against the fundamental right to free speech and expressions. Which are essential parts of democracy. The sedition law has a chilling effect on people who think and speak freely.
 - **For example-** Raju was accused of only speech-based offenses relating to his diatribe against his party leader and CM.
- **Sedition law is a relic of colonial legacy** – The law of sedition [British legacy] is an outdated and archaic rule that stands in the way of the Constitution's provision of freedom of speech.
- **Low conviction rate-** Most cases that are filed do not end in a conviction if Section 124A is applied.
- **The sedition law is overly wide and loosely defined-** The terminology used under Section 124-A, such as **disaffection**, is unclear and open to multiple interpretations depending on the investigating officers.

How K. Raghu Ramakrishna Raju's arrest was unjust?

According to the Supreme Court's Armesh Kumar judgment (2014), there is no need to arrest someone for a crime that carries a sentence of seven years or less.

- Prison time for Sections 153A and Sections 505 is less than seven years.
- And Sections 124A (sedition), which has a maximum sentence of life imprisonment, also prescribes an alternative jail term of three years.

Way forward-

- The definition of sedition should be narrowed down and properly defined.
- Section 124A should not be misused as a tool to curb free speech and expression and it would be even more protective of free speech if the Centre abolished the provision.

9. Role of ICMR in Facilitating Evidence-based Treatment

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs2: Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health.

Synopsis: ICMR must assess evidence and provide specific recommendation on treatment. An Evidence-based Treatment will build public trust in the health care system.

Background

- Drugs and therapies are being used for the Covid-19 treatment, without clear evidence. For instance, **convalescent plasma therapy (CPT)**, Hydroxychloroquine, and the anti-parasitic drug, ivermectin.
- Evidence-based ICMR guidelines can control this issue effectively.

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The case for non-evidence-based treatment: The Use of convalescent plasma therapy (CPT)

1. Last year, the ICMR, based on its clinical trial results, demonstrated that CPT neither saves lives nor improves the patient's condition. However, ICMR was ineffective in informing the public about the issue. This led to the widespread use of CPT in many states.
2. In a recent statement, the ICMR recommended that the use of CPT is advisable only in early moderate disease, or within seven days of symptoms.
3. Finally, in its latest guidelines, The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has finally dropped its recommendation on use of convalescent plasma therapy (CPT) as treatment for moderate COVID-19.
4. This comes after the results published by **The Lancet**. It found no effect of the use of CPT.
5. Further, evidence is emerging that CPT may be contributing to the evolution of coronavirus mutations.

What needs to be done?

- Not only CPT, but many drugs such as Hydroxychloroquine and ivermectin also, continue to find a place for the treatment of mild disease. It is also despite a specific mention of "low certainty of evidence.
- So, to avoid such situations in future, the ICMR task force has to qualitatively assess evidence and be very specific with its recommendations.
- Further, ICMR should publicize these guidelines at regular intervals to educate the public about the evolving nature of the treatment.
- This will work better towards easing the pressure on doctors as well as in improving trust in systems

10. Measures to Prevent Future Waves of Pandemic Disaster

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs2: Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health.

Synopsis: India needs to enhance its surveillance system, vaccinate its population, and reprioritise healthcare services. It will prevent future waves of pandemics.

What measures should be taken to prevent future waves of pandemic disaster?

- **First**, inputs of a **strong surveillance system** are needed to identify or predict future waves. Identifying upcoming waves is very important in mitigating a catastrophe. The current disaster is mainly because of our failure to predict waves due to unreliable testing and under-reporting of cases and deaths. Hence, we need to improve on the following,
 - The Central and State government should use real-time data by encouraging **reliable reporting and initiating standardised definitions**.
 - **Review mechanisms** should be strengthened. It will detect the outbreak in the initial stages and extinguish it before the pandemic spreads to other areas.
 - Simultaneously, **genomic sequencing** in real-time in the fixed proportion of samples needs to be prioritized. It will identify the Mutant variants causing outbreaks.
- **Second**, ramping up vaccination manufacturing to ensure universal vaccination for all not only in India but globally. India has a proven capacity to scale up testing facilities within a short period of time. Thus,

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- The Central government should invite foreign manufacturing firms to collaborate with Indian firms under the 'Make in India' Programme'.
- Fast-tracking the manufacture of all vaccines that has been approved for use by various regulatory authorities through a single-window clearance.
- **Third**, since 2009, WHO had declared six public health emergencies of international concern. India cannot always rely on reactive systems for each pandemic. Hence, India needs to plan for preventing and managing pandemics in the future. Future plan should focus on,
 - Nearly 60% of known infectious diseases and up to 75% of new or emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic in origin. Adopting the '**One Health**' agenda can prevent future pandemics. Because it ensures that environmental health and animal health are given similar priority as human health.
 - Greater financial allocations, increasing vaccination capacity, applied research, enhancing effective communication, and monitoring effectiveness will strengthen India's role in the future for preventing and managing pandemics.
- **Finally**, need to build a robust public health workforce to provide efficient public health responses.
 - Front-line workers play an indispensable part in surveillance, contract-tracing, and mobilising people for primary healthcare services, including vaccination. Hence, we need to ensure that one Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) worker is hired for every 1,000 people. Further, an Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) and nurse practitioner are hired for every 5,000 people.
 - To provide access to critical care capacity for all, we need to ensure at least one hospital with 100 beds. It should include beds with emergency and critical care services that caters to a population of 30,000-50,000.

11. Significance of India's Diaspora

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs2: Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests, Indian Diaspora.

Synopsis: India needs to remain engaged with the members of the Progressive Democratic Party in the US, despite a difference of opinions.

Background

- India and South Africa proposed a temporary TRIPS waiver at WTO to waive Intellectual Property Rights on Covid-related innovations.
- Relaxation in IPR will boost the manufacturing of Covid related medical kits including vaccines. However, many western countries and business corporations opposed this.
- In this context, The U. S has recently announced its support for a TRIPS waiver. Further, the US is providing Covid-19 related aid to India.
- It has been said that the Change in U. S's Positive approach towards India is a result of continued efforts by the political and business class, civil society, Indian Americans. More importantly, the Progressive Democratic Party's efforts.

Indian diaspora in the Progressive Democratic Party

- The notable persons are Congresswoman **Pramila Jayapal**, Congressman **Rohit 'Ro' Khanna** Congressman **Raja Krishnamoorthy**.
- Earlier they were instrumental in voicing against Human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir and supported in favour of Peaceful Farmers protest.

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- Irrespective of these positions, they were instrumental in pursuing the US government to support India through aid and TRIPS waiver.

12. Rising Cyclone Intensity and Frequency due to Micro-Climatic Changes

Synopsis: According to the Council on Energy, Environment and Water(CEEW) report the cyclone frequency has doubled after 2005 in India. Micro Climatic Changes are contributing to this change.

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Key Findings of the report:

- **In the last 50 years**, India has recorded a 12-fold increase in the number of cyclonic events such as extreme rainfall, floods, sea-level rise, and thunderstorms.
- **The frequency of extreme weather events** is far more severe on the western coast of India. This is expected to increase further in the coming decades.
- **Concern:** This is a worrying sign for India. This is because Arabian Sea cyclones have been impacting India's west coast at the rate of one per year since 2018. This frequency is not seen before in five decades.

Reasons behind the increasing intensity of cyclones on western coastal areas

- **Microclimatic changes** triggered by local climate change drivers are the reasons behind it. Changes include land-use-surface change, deforestation, encroachments upon wetlands and water bodies, which are contributing to this change.
- These factors are contributing to excessive heating of land areas. This heat is further pulled into the ocean, which is in excess of the heating of oceans due to global warming. It intensifies storms into cyclones.

Vulnerable States:

Gujarat:

- **In Gujarat**, as many as 29 districts are vulnerable to extreme climate events. These extreme events have increased three-fold between 1970 and 2019.
- **Moreover, Gujarat is becoming increasingly common** to have droughts in one set of districts and floods in other sets of districts in the same season.

Other States:

- **Maharashtra:** The analysis also points to Maharashtra as a vulnerable state which has been affected most by droughts. The state has seen a seven-fold increase in the past 50 years affecting more than 80% of its districts.
- **Goa:** There has been a four-fold increase in storm surge and cyclone events in the last 50 years in Goa. Cyclone-associated events have also increased six-fold since 2005.
- **Initiatives by the government:**
- **The Government of India** launched the second phase of the [National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project](#) in 2015.
- **The programme is being implemented** successfully in the Eastern coast of India and especially states like Odisha.
- **However, the projects along the western coast** are lagging. The projects were to be completed by 2019, but the states here have missed this deadline, Hence, the deadline has now been extended to 2022.

Recommendations:

- **Climate-vulnerable states** such as Gujarat need to focus more on building climate resilience, especially at the local and regional levels.

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- **States must invest** in cost-effective (and nature-based) resilient infrastructure.
- **Governments should develop decentralised capacity** to respond to climate shocks and design salient public information campaigns to prepare vulnerable communities against climate risks.
- **At the national level, a Climate Risk Commission** with statutory status is required. The commission should be supported by a Climate Risk Atlas with district-level information.
- **New insurance schemes** should be launched to provide the safety net for livelihoods and not just the saving of lives.

13. [India Needs an Effective Vaccine Policy](#)

Source: [The Hindu](#)

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

Synopsis: The surge in Covid-19 cases coupled with a limited supply of vaccines warrants the adoption of an effective vaccine policy by the country. The policy should prioritize groups, address hesitancy and formulate a more equitable distribution plan.

Background:

- The second wave of Covid-19 has shown that the virus is not going away in a short time. It may strike the country multiple times in the coming years.
- In this scenario, the best possible way is to vaccinate the population in order to build effective immunity against the virus and reduce the death tolls. However, there are multiple concerns that demand changes to make vaccination policy effective.

Concerns regarding vaccine policy:

- **Limited Supply of Vaccines:** The country is facing a shortage of vaccines due to production constraints and import resistances.
 - Technicalities of vaccine production make it likely that indigenous manufacturers will require 3 to 6 months to increase capacity significantly.
 - For instance, the novel mRNA vaccine candidate (HGCO19) can't be developed by Gennova Biopharmaceuticals Ltd. without support from HDT Biotech corporation, U.S.
 - Similarly, the import of vaccines can be enhanced only after August 2021. It is when wealthy nations would have made substantial progress in the immunization of their populations.
- **Vaccine Hesitancy:** People are showing unwillingness to vaccinate themselves as they doubt the efficacy of vaccines.
 - One of the reasons is the halt in the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine (Covishield) by some countries due to concerns over blood clots, etc. It contributed to doubts about the safety of vaccines in India.
- **Target Groups:** The limited supply has created a challenge of choosing amongst the multiple groups for vaccination. India needs to choose between the most vulnerable (elders, comorbidities patients) and the most valuable (working population). The former will reduce the death toll and the latter would be more beneficial for economic revival.
- **Distribution Concerns:** The current policy has allowed vaccination for all adults however it does not tell the order of distribution.
 - The state governments are now compelled to bear all the costs of vaccination. This may give an advantage to wealthier states over poor states.

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- Further, it allows market forces to decide on vaccine access for a substantial part of the population and calls for using technology (Co win portal) to get vaccinated.
- This has allowed the least vulnerable to get vaccinated early as they possess more resources.

Way Forward:

- The central government should pioneer in both – enhancing the supply and formulating a policy to ensure equitable access to vaccines.
 - It should avoid transferring expenses to State governments and shouldn't allow the private sector to decide vaccine access.
- The country should take the help of **behavioral scientists** to combat vaccine hesitancy and ensure that the population is vaccinated.
- The target groups must be selected on the basis of vulnerability. However, if this is impractical, then some combination of the vulnerable and working population should be chosen. This should be worked out using data and the basis of the decision should be made public.

14. VIP Security Cover to West Bengal MLAs – Associated Issues

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary

Synopsis:

The Ministry of Home Affairs recently extended security cover to all 77 BJP MLAs in the West Bengal assembly. It appears to be a politically motivated and unprecedented move. It should be reconsidered as it is suffering from multiple issues.

Background:

- The BJP MLAs were facing a threat of persecution post the West Bengal assembly verdict. The party lost the elections and became the opposition party by winning only 77 seats in 294 member assembly.
- The MHA has ordered a security cover of X- category security to 61 MLAs while the remaining 16 will get or are already enjoying a higher cover.

About Security Cover:

- There are six kinds of central security covers: X, Y, Y plus, Z, Z plus, and SPG.
- The Special Protection Group protects only the Prime Minister while the other type of securities can be provided to anyone based on the Centre's assessment.
- The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) are the two forces tasked with providing security to VIPs.

How is a security cover provided?

- An MHA committee decides regarding the security cover.
- It comprises officials from the Home Ministry, the Intelligence Bureau, Delhi Police, and senior officials of the Central Armed Police Forces.
- The Intelligence Bureau prepares the list of persons under threat and the degree of threat. Whereas the committee decides on the force to be deployed depending upon the place where the person is located.
- The threat perception of every person is discussed one by one and not collectively for any group.

Issues in the recent decision:

1. **First**, it appears to be a **politically motivated decision** as threat perception for each person was not discussed.
2. **Second**, the **degree of threat was not large enough** to provide such a big security cover. For instance, such blanket covers were given in the past in the case of the Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir elections. These regions were witnessing militant unrest at that time.
3. **Third**, such actions **deteriorate Centre-State relations** as law and order is a state subject. Further, the order also questions the integrity of West Bengal police officers of being aligned to a particular political party.
4. **Fourth**, the forces are already **over deployed** in the protection of VIPs. In 2019, 66,043 police and CAPF personnel were deployed to protect 19,467 Ministers, MPs, judges, and bureaucrats. Although the sanctioned strength was 43,556 personnel as per the Data on Police Organisations.
5. **Fifth**, constant deployment **impacts the training schedule** of CAPF personnel. After the initial eight-week training for VIP protection, the forces have to take a periodic two-week refresher training for improving their skills.
6. Thus, there is a need to charge a fee for the security personnel deployed to protect legislators and other prominent persons. This would curb the tendency of unnecessarily demanding security personnel around themselves.

15. Future of India – Pakistan Trade Relations

Source: [Click Here](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – India and its neighbourhood- relations

Synopsis:

The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of Pakistan put forward a proposal to import sugar, cotton, and cotton yarn from India. Although the proposal was rejected by Pakistan's government, it is definitely an indication of improving the future course of India-Pakistan trade relations.

Background:

- The two countries are undergoing restrictive trade since 2019. The Pulwama Terror attack in Kashmir and cross-border airstrikes in 2019 induced India to impose trade restrictions. It withdrew the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status of Pakistan and imposed a customs duty hike of 200% on imports.
- Similarly, Pakistan imposed a complete ban on trade when India revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The Pakistani ECC's recent proposal of importing Indian goods shows a softness in attitude. Thus, it would help in improving the future course of trade relations.
- **Factors indicating future improvement in India-Pakistan Trade Relations:**
- **First**, the **past precedent** shows that trade restrictions are lifted after some time for mutual benefit.
 - For instance, the protocol on resumption of trade was invoked in 1974 after a suspension of nine years due to the 1965 war. The trade was started in essential items like agricultural commodities and expanded over the years.
- **Second**, Pakistan **deviated from the complete ban within a month of suspension**. It lifted the ban on the import of medicines and raw materials from India. The aim was to avert any crises and ensure that there is no shortage of essential drugs.
 - Similarly, now its own Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) is suggesting to import sugar, cotton, and cotton yarn from India.

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- **Third**, Indian trade data shows that despite a ban from Pakistan's side, **the trade has been ongoing**. During 2020-21 (April-February), the recorded bilateral trade was \$280 million. Out of this, India exported goods worth \$278 million and imported goods worth \$2 million.
 - The biggest component of export (77%) were vaccines and pharmaceutical products. After this, the second position was occupied by sugar at 15%.
- **Fourth**, there exists a **significant cost of refraining from the trade**. A healthy trade allows both countries to stabilize domestic prices and take care of seasonal shortages in the home country.
 - Further, a severe restriction allows **the trader to shift to informal channels** of trade that reduce the potential tax revenue of the government.

Way Forward:

- The countries should cooperate on creating a positive list for trade as the first step towards normalisation.
- Business organisations on both sides can create a strong lobby. This could be used to build momentum in opening channels and influence the shaping of the India-Pakistan trade policy.

16. Analysing the Social security code 2020 for Informal Workforce

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs2: Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation.

Synopsis: Critical analysis of the social security code 2020 reveals that it is short of providing universal social security for informal workers.

Background

- Informal workers constitute 91% of the workforce. The Pandemic had pushed them into severe poverty and debt burden due to loss of livelihoods.
- Social security arrangements could have saved them from the misery. Such as
 - Free basic curative care in public clinics and hospitals,
 - The elderly had old-age pensions,
 - Disability insurance or life insurance,
 - Minimum income guarantee
- However, an unprepared government had made them helpless.
- Even the social security code 2020 passed in parliament in September 2020 is short of providing universal social security for informal workers.

What are the Issues in Social security code 2020?

- **First**, it is just a merger of existing social security laws and does little to provide universal social security for informal workers.
 - The SS Code 2020 amalgamates and rationalizes the provisions of eight existing central labour laws.
 - Even in the new scheme the employee's **provident fund, employees state insurance (ESI), maternity benefit, gratuity** still remain only for organised sector workers.
 - Only a subtle change has been done to include informal workers within the ambit of social security administration. **For example**,
 - In **employees' state insurance**, the existing employee threshold has been withdrawn. Now the central government can extend ESI benefits to any organisation irrespective of the number of workers employed.

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- **Second**, the SS 2020 scheme takes little consideration to solve the existing hurdles for informal workers in accessing Social security schemes. **For instance**,
 - The legal framework, as proposed in the Code and Rules, implies that the basic onus lies on informal workers registering as beneficiaries. It makes registration a prerequisite for universal coverage to avail social security.
 - However, it has failed to understand the underlying problem faced by the informal workers while making registration.
 - **One**, most informal workers **lack digital literacy and connectivity**. Hence, providing them the option for Online registration will make the Social security scheme a failure.
 - **Two**, most informal workers are **footloose casual workers** (26% of all workers) and self-employed (46% of all). This makes it difficult for them to furnish all documentary papers required as part of the registration process.
 - Further, furnishing proof of livelihood and income details in the absence of tangible employer-employee relations is also very difficult.
 - **Three**, Similar provisions are already there in existing social security schemes run by State governments under the **Unorganized Workers' Social Security Act, 2008**.
 - Yet, many informal workers are outside the ambit of any social security because of the failure to address their concerns.
- **Third**, unorganised workers are spread across the length and breadth of India. However, the code does not address the need for inter-State arrangements and cooperation for providing social security net.
- **Fourth**, Under the SS Code, the provision of **maternity benefits** has not been made universal. Maternity benefit is presently applicable for establishments employing 10 workers or more. The definition of 'Establishment' in the proposed code did not include the unorganised sector. Hence, women engaged in the unorganised sector would remain outside the purview of maternity benefit.
- **Fifth**, The SS Code maintains that the **Employees' Provident Fund Scheme** will remain applicable, as before, to every establishment in which 20 or more employees are employed.
- Thus, for informal sector workers, access to employees' provident fund remains unfulfilled in the new code.
- **Sixth**, although **payment of gratuity** was expanded in the new Code, it still remains inaccessible for a vast majority of informal workers.
 - The code fails to recognise that **India is aging without social security**. The **demographic dividend** of the young workforce that could support the aging will also end in 15 years. Hence, it's a priority for India to institutionalize a Universal social security arrangement for all including the informal workforce by removing the above-mentioned challenges.

17. Significance of Citizen-led Fact-Finding Missions

Source: [Click Here](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders.

Synopsis:

Citizen-led fact-finding missions play a significant role in a democracy. They provide an alternative opinion on things, empower citizens on critical issues and enrich the judicial process.

Background:

- Recently, citizen-led fact-finding missions came in the news in a Delhi High Court case pertaining to the North East Delhi riots of 2020.
 - The solicitor-general of India challenged five fact-finding reports conducted on the riots.
 - He called such inquiries as examples of self-constituted parallel judicial systems that have no authority in the court of law.
- However, these missions have been an integral part of Indian and world polity since colonial times.

Citizen-led fact-finding missions/inquiries in Colonial India:

- The **Champaran Satyagraha of 1917** started as an extensive fact-finding exercise.
 - Gandhi carried out a detailed investigation with a team of volunteers to inquire into the plight of indigo planters.
 - It was found that they were compelled to grow Indigo and charged with high taxes.
 - This exercise forced the Lieutenant Governor of Bihar to set up a formal inquiry committee with Gandhi as one of its members.
- The Congress set up a **Punjab sub-committee** to inquire into the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre of 1919.
 - The leaders were disappointed with the work and political motivations of the Hunter Commission that was initially set up by the government to investigate the massacre.
- A fact-finding exercise was undertaken to find out the authenticity of the **Kanpur Cotton mills incident of 1924** in which 6 workers were killed and 58 injured. The inquiry exposed the collusion between the mill management and the police.

Significance of Citizen-led Fact-Finding Missions:

- **Rights Advocacy:** It is a tool that helps to do rights advocacy. The process highlights the denial of rights to the target group and demands justice for them.
- **Enrich the Judicial Process:** It complements the judicial process by presenting to it an authentic view of facts. It often lays the groundwork for prosecution if a court of law finds their evidence admissible.
 - For instance, a **group of lawyers from the Alternative Law Forum** undertook a fact finding study on deaths of several workers in manholes in 2008.
 - The group submitted a PIL and its report in Karnataka High Court. The court later instructed the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board to procure manhole cleaning machines. It also issued orders for compensation to the victims' families.

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- **Breed Accountability:** They help to highlight the lacunas of government institutions and personnel in fulfilling their duty.
 - For instance, **the Andhra Pradesh Civil Rights Committee (APCRC)** conducted an enquiry of Naxalite encounters in 1977. The report of the committee induced the government to institute a judicial enquiry under Justice Vashist Bhargava.
- **Alternative Opinion:** They provide citizens a medium to state their side of the story. It would be dangerous if official information was the only information available in the public domain.
 - For instance, **people's tribunals** were set up in the wake of the 1992-93 Mumbai riots after the Babri Masjid demolition. They revealed shocking ground realities that were not recorded by the official enquiry committee.
- Thus, Citizen led fact-finding missions are cost-effective, rapidly mobilised, and encourage civic participation. Due to this, there has been a surge in their numbers in the last few decades. Fact-finding reports should be verified and criticized rather than dismissing them outrightly because these are self-constituted by the citizens.

18. Collaborative Governance Should be the future of Governance

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs2: Important Aspects of Governance, Role of Civil Services in a Democracy

Synopsis: Outdated nature of public bureaucracy has to be accounted for the ineffective response to the COVID-19 crisis in India. A new public governance model based on collaborative governance need to be institutionalised.

What are the issues with Weberian model of Bureaucracy?

The **Weberian bureaucracy model** that India follows suffers from the following challenges. It needs improvements to make Indian bureaucracy more efficient.

- **One**, Weberian bureaucracy still prefers a generalist bureaucracy over a specialist.
- **Two**, Weberian bureaucracy prefers **leadership based on position over leadership of function**.
 - Leadership of function is when a person has expert knowledge of a particular responsibility in a particular situation.
 - In leadership of function, every official involved in a particular role responds to the situation rather than relying on directions from above authority.

Implications of Weberian model of Bureaucracy

- **First**, the rigid adherence to rules has resulted in the rejection of innovation.
- **Second**, the hierarchical nature of work flow and cumbersome clearance processes even during the period of crisis results in delayed efforts.
- **Third**, negligent of Specialist role results in policy failure and ineffective planning

What are the reforms suggested to address the issue?

- The reform often suggested in India is **new public management**. It promotes privatisation and managerial techniques of the private sector as an effective tool to improve public service delivery and governance.
- However, failure of private sector in public service delivery as witnessed during Covid19 and wide spread social inequality and regional variations in development had made this idea infeasible in India.

What is the Way forward?

- The model of **new public governance** based on **collaborative governance** will be the most appropriate solution.
- In this model, the public sector, private players and civil society, especially public service organisations (NGOs), work together for effective public service delivery
- All agencies will be involved in policy formulation and implementation.
- To institutionalise the model of new public governance, the behaviour of bureaucracy needs to change. It needs flexibility in hierarchy, a relook at the generalist versus specialist debate, and an openness to reforms such as lateral entry and collaboration with a network of social actors

All major revolutions with huge implications on public service delivery have come through the collaboration of public bureaucracy with so-called outsiders. These include the Green Revolution (**M.S. Swaminathan**), the White Revolution (**Verghese Kurien**), Aadhaar-enabled services (**Nandan Nilekani**) and the IT revolution (**Sam Pitroda**).

19. Concerns Associated with demolition of National Archives of India's Building

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Gs2: Important Aspects of Governance, Transparency and Accountability

Synopsis: Many experts have raised their concerns on the demolition of the National Archives of India's Annexe building. There is a need for public scrutiny and public consultation on this matter.

Background

- A part of the National Archives of India (NAI) complex, Annexe building, is planned to be demolished during the **Central Vista redevelopment project**.
- The lack of clarity around the plans for preservation, transfer, and access of these national records is the cause of concern.

Significance of National Archives of India

- The National record archives reportedly houses several public records, private papers, departmental records etc.
- Archives are essential to the relationship between a state and its citizens. **For instance**, the production, storage, and use of information about the population is central to the work of governance.
- The NAI has a broader, material relevance. **For instance**, people looking for land records, bureaucrats looking for an older government order, a lawyer seeking a legal precedent are dependent on NAI.
- Finally, it supports Historical research. Thus, any changes to the National Archives of India (NAI) will impact the future of historical research.

What is the current issue?

- **Lack of Transparency:** **For example**, the National Archives' website does not have notification about the pending demolition, plans for the safe removal of materials etc.,
- **Lack of Public consultation:** **For instance**, when the Federal Government of the United States decided to move the National Archive, there were extensive public consultations. No such measures were taken in India.
- **Lack of public access:** The British Library is the only alternative repositories for archival resources for colonial India. If the NAI is inaccessible for an indefinite period, scholars who have the privilege of access to the British Library, will have

exclusive rights to write about Indian history. It perpetuates differential access among students, researchers and scholars located in India and abroad.

20. Maratha Reservation Case Judgment and Federalism

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs2: Issues and Challenges Pertaining to the Federal Structure

Synopsis: Recently Supreme Court declared the reservation to the Maratha community in education and public employment as unconstitutional. This judgment is against **federalism**.

What were the reasons given by the Supreme Courts' five-judge Bench?

- **One**, the Maratha community did not constitute a socially and educationally backward class.
- **Two**, the law is against **Indra Sawhney judgment**. In Indra Sawhney case the court has disallowed reservations made in excess of 50% of the total available positions.
- **Third**, the State governments had no independent power to declare a group as a backward class.

What are the issues in the interpretation provided by the Supreme Courts' five-judge Bench?

The reasoning that it violates **Indra Sawhney judgment** and State governments had no independent power to declare a group as a backward class is against the values of **equality and federalism**.

- **First, the cap of 50% on the reservation of Indra Sawhney judgment** does not come from the constitution. **Articles 16(4) and 15(4)** confer power on the government to make reservations, contains no such limitation.
 - **Also, in State of Kerala vs N.M. Thomas (1975)**, the seven-judge bench held that reservation was inherent in the Constitution's basic guarantee of equal treatment. This statement by the state high court contradicts the principle of capping reservation at 50%.
- **Second**, the court's interpretation that states do not have the power to declare groups as backward classes is misleading.
 - The **102nd Constitutional Amendment Act** forms the basis of court's ruling.
 - After the **102nd Constitutional Amendment Act** granted constitutional status to the **National Commission for Backward Classes, Article 342A, Article 366(26C)** were introduced.
 - **Article 342A** stipulates that President may, notify groups of persons within a State deemed to be socially and educationally backward, after consultation with the state.
 - Further, **Article 342A** states that Central lists could be altered only by the Parliament.
 - **Article 366(26C)** defines "socially and educationally backward classes" as such backward classes identified under **Article 342A**.
 - Based on the provision of **Article 342A**, a majority on the Bench had made **erroneous** interpretation that, the Centre is empowered to identify socially and educationally backward classes similar to the preparation of the lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and not the states.
 - However, the five-bench ruling of the supreme court has overlooked two essential factors,
 - One, the term "Central List" in Article 342A refers to the categorisation of groups as backward for the purposes of reservation

of posts and seats under the Union government's control only. It does not affect states power to categorise backward classes for promoting reservations in State's domain.

- Two, the Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment had earlier clarified that Article 342 doesn't take away the state's right to include or remove classes from the List.

Way forward

- The court's decision in denying the right to recognize backward classes by states directly impede their ability to secure just social order.
- Hence, the Parliament should amend the Constitution and grants to States an express power to determine backwardness.

21. Issues and Significance of Longer Vaccine Gaps

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS:2 – Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

Synopsis: Recently, the government introduced longer vaccine gaps for few reasons. But it fails to take other things into account.

Introduction:

Recently the Indian government recommended a higher interval between two doses of the Covishield vaccine. Apart from that, the government also introduced few other changes. Such as,

- Encouraging lactating women to take vaccines
- 3-month waiting period before taking vaccines for the Covid-19 recovered persons (earlier it was four to eight weeks).
- If the person gets Covid-19 infections after the first dose, s/he also needs to go through a three-month waiting period before taking the second dose of Covid-19 vaccine.
- Increasing the [vaccine gap](#) between two doses from 12-16 weeks for Covishield.

Two underlying principles behind longer vaccine gaps:

1. **To tackle the shortage in the vaccine:**
 - Prior to second-wave, the government focussed on vaccinating vulnerable sections and frontline workers.
 - But [during the second wave](#), the government allowed vaccine manufacturers to ['free up' vaccine supply](#). Under this, they can sell only 50% to Center and the rest on their own. But this policy [did not improve access to all citizens](#).
 - So, the government introduced the higher vaccine gap.
2. **Best timing of the second dose for an optimal boost to the immune system:**
 - Clinical trials of the AstraZeneca vaccine in the UK (18-55 years) showed that the binding antibodies (the ones that actually block viruses) were nearly twice high for persons who got their vaccine shots after 12 or more weeks.
 - Further, the vaccine also appeared to be **more protective** for persons above 18 with a longer dose interval.

Challenges with longer vaccine gaps:

A general policy for childhood vaccines in India is 4 to 8-week intervals. So, the 12-16 week difference is not a general one. Further, it also has many concerns. Such as,

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- Antibody levels are one of the key markers of protection. But, they are not the only ones. **Cell-based immunity** (immune system confers long-lived immunity) is not considered in scientific studies.
- **Duration of protection:** At present, there is **huge uncertainty** about the duration of protection given by vaccines. For example, there are many pieces of evidence that exist for **breakthrough infections and Covid-19 related deaths even after the second dose** of vaccination. So, only more vaccination will provide greater clarity on the degree of protection.

Way forward:

The death tolls from India's second wave continue to surpass similar daily figures from the U.S. and Brazil. Further, the policymakers have to remember that many Indians have still not been exposed to the virus and newer threatening variants are on the line.

So the government has to [aim for universal vaccination](#) to [prevent disease spread and death toll](#). The government has to [accelerate vaccination drives](#) and policy recommendations geared towards that goal.

22. WhatsApp's Privacy Policy and Data Protection law in India

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus:

Synopsis: The government sought a response against [WhatsApp's Privacy policy](#), but it is just a short-sighted one. The government should focus on long-term solutions like [enacting data protection law](#).

Introduction:

The central government recently issued a [notice to WhatsApp to withdraw](#) its updated privacy policy. But this is a clear government intervention into a legitimate business decision.

The development of WhatsApp's privacy policy:

- [WhatsApp updated its privacy policy](#) earlier this year. Under this policy, WhatsApp can share data (such as location and number) with its parent company Facebook unless they delete their accounts altogether. The App initially proposed a February 8 deadline.
- This **attracted harsh criticisms** from the government and experts. Further, there was also an **exodus of user migration** to rival platforms such as, Signal.
- WhatsApp moved the deadline to May 15. Eventually, WhatsApp decided not to enforce the policy itself.

Reason behind WhatsApp's Privacy policy:

- The App has more than two billion users in the world. Among them, about half a billion are Indians. The privacy policy aims to **make business interactions easier**. At the same time, the policy aims to **create personalised ads** on Facebook.
- In its affidavit in the Delhi High Court, WhatsApp has reportedly said that it is **not forcing users to accept** the updated privacy policy. As the users have the **option to delete their accounts**.

The Government response:

Ministry of Electronics and IT (MEITY) has sought a response from WhatsApp within seven days. Due to the following reasons,

- The MEITY thought that the Privacy policy is discriminating against Indian users as Indians depend on WhatsApp for communication.

- The ministry is also of the opinion that WhatsApp is imposing unfair terms and conditions. As the similar policy is not applicable for WhatsApp's European users.

Concerns with government decision:

- **It is a business decision:** The privacy policy reflects WhatsApp's strong business decision. The users can avoid accepting the policy and delete their accounts. Even WhatsApp is **ready to take the risk of user migrations** to other Apps. This is also reflected in the WhatsApp affidavit.
- **WhatsApp is not the only one:** Private apps such as Google, BigBasket, Koo, and public apps such as Aarogya Setu, Bhim, IRCTC, and others also use similar privacy policies.
- **India did not have [General Data Protection Regulation or GDPR](#) like the EU:** The government instead of seeking a response from companies has to enact a [data protection law](#) in line with the GDPR.

23. Why IITs Demand for Priority Vaccination is not Justified?

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Gs2: Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Synopsis: IITs are demanding priority vaccination. Their demand for vaccinating their staff and students against Covid-19 on a should not be encouraged.

Background

- In a recent meeting with the Union education minister, the IIT directors have demanded for vaccinating their staff and students against Covid on a priority basis, so that they can resume classes.

Why IIT's demands should not be encouraged?

- **First**, no person's **right to life** is bigger than other persons. Though IITs are largely residential institutions, there are many other similar institutions. The risk of community infection is the same for all.
- **Second**, IITs cannot demand priority on grounds of the nature of their work. They are not a frontline sector. Also, equally, everyone's work is essential for the functioning and well-being of the community.
- **Third**, to grant priority to a single interest group would open the floodgates to more such demands. With India facing a shortage of vaccines, such demands will reduce our vaccine distribution to complete chaos.
- **Fourth**, vaccination is not a private but a public good. Vaccination protects not only the individual receiving it but everybody around them. India can be Pandemic free only when every individual is safe from the threat of the virus.
- **Fifth**, it will deepen the endemic divisions of our society. For instance, distribution and administration of Covid vaccines are already heavily skewed in favour of the urban over the rural, the affluent over the poor, the digitally-enabled over the digitally-deprived. Any decision to promote subgroup interest will widen this gap further.
- IITs need to employ their combined expertise and authority more effectively to guide the nation's struggle against Covid to general benefit, thus lessening the need for sectarian demands.

24. Voluntary Licensing Mechanism for Vaccines Will Ensure Social Justice

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs2: Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

Synopsis: Other alternatives available to boost Vaccine supply are less effective. But Voluntary licensing Mechanism for Covid 19 vaccines will lead to affordable and accessible vaccines.

Background

- Affordable vaccination is the key to achieve global herd immunity and to prevent new strains of COVID-19.
- To make vaccines affordable there are multiple arrangements globally. Such as
 - **Voluntarily licensing:** Manufacturers can place their licensing agreements for which they owned patent rights in the **UN-affiliated Medicines Patent Pool**.
 - **Compulsory licensing:** Through **TRIPS Waiver on Patent rights**, for Covid-19 vaccines under WTO TRIPS agreement.
 - **COVAX Program:** It was established to purchase vaccine doses and donate them to low-income countries but does not involve modifying patent rights
 - **WHO's COVID-19 Technology Access Pool:** a patent-sharing pool for Covid-19 products.
- However, a voluntary licensing mechanism will be more effective in achieving the target of affordable and universal vaccination. Further, it has been successfully demonstrated in making AIDS drugs more affordable.

How voluntary licensing can make medical drugs affordable?

- The case study of AIDS drugs can better explain how voluntary licensing can make medical drugs/ vaccines more affordable.
- During the 1990s, the WTO started implementing a global intellectual property regime known as the **Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights agreement** (TRIPS).
- After that, there was anti-TRIPS activism around the globe due to fear of price rise of essential medicines because of the TRIPS agreement.
- Responding to anti-TRIPS activism from low-income countries, some manufacturers who owned patent rights to produce AIDS drugs placed their licensing agreements in the **UN-affiliated Medicines Patent Pool**.
- This allowed Several India-based companies to use the voluntary licences to manufacture these drugs on a massive scale and sell them at prices they determine.
- This effort brought down the price of key AIDS medications in low-income countries. For instance, tenofovir, the first-line treatment for HIV/AIDS, has come down in price from \$200-\$500 per person per year to \$39 per person per year in low-income countries.

What are the issues in other alternative mechanisms?

1. **First**, the Voluntary licensing mechanism will reduce the cost and time taken to manufacture vaccines compared to producing vaccines through a 'Compulsory licensing agreement'.
 - a. Voluntary licensing enables goodwill among Patent right holding companies and general manufacturers.
 - b. It will enable easy flow of "technology transfer" thereby reducing the cost and time taken to manufacture vaccines.

- i. **About Compulsory licensing:**
 - ii. Compulsory licenses is a mechanism to override patent rights. It allows local production or import of drugs by generic manufacturers in the event of a public health crisis.
 - iii. This right has been enshrined in the **Doha Declaration** addendum to the WTO's TRIPS agreement.
 - iv. This is what India and South Africa are lobbying for in the WTO, having recently been joined by the United States.
2. **Second, COVAX Programme** faces the issue of underfunding. Also, Similar attempts like COVAX Programme during the AIDS crisis were chronically underfunded and had only minor effects on that pandemic compared to the voluntary licensing.
 3. **Third, the WHO's COVID-19 Technology Access Pool too faces issues similar to COVAX Programme.** For instance, no patent holders have joined this effort. This is the reason why India and South Africa called on the WTO to temporarily waive patent protections for COVID-19.

Way forward

- Patents are not absolute ownership rights. They are a temporary contract that balances the public interest with the claims of the innovator.
- Further, billions of dollars are spent through public money to develop COVID-19 vaccines.
- Considering the above facts, patent owners should enable the mass production of affordable vaccines by granting voluntary licensing for Covid-19 vaccines.

25. India's Stand on Palestine and Israel Conflict

Source: [click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 2

Synopsis: In its recent statement, India tried to maintain a balance between its relations with Israel and Palestine. Why is it difficult for India to take sides in this conflict?

Introduction

India is a non-permanent at the UN Security Council. It attempted a subtle balancing act by repeating its traditional support for the Palestine cause. However, it didn't either desert its new friend Israel at a session held for the Gaza conflict.

- India's Permanent Representative at the UN conveyed distress over the violence in Jerusalem and the possible expulsion of Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah. He advised against efforts to change the status quo in Jerusalem.
 - He restated India's strong support for the Palestinian cause and its firm pledge to the two-state solution.
- India was cautious of not upsetting Israel's feelings. It directly disapproved of the rocket attacks from Gaza. However, no direct reference was made regarding the uneven bombing by Israel on the Gaza Belt since May 10.
 - India also did not make any mention of the status of Jerusalem or the future borders of the two states, in line with a recent change in its policy.

How are the relations that India shares with Palestine and Israel?

India supported the creation of an independent, sovereign Palestine state based on the 1967 border with East Jerusalem as its capital until 2017. India's stance this time did not appear to have gone down well with the Israeli side.

- **Firstly**, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu thanked 25 countries that stood with Israel, he did not mention India. **India voted against the creation of Israel in**

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historic Palestine in 1947 in the UN General Assembly. Their links with Israel have changed since the early 1990s.

- In 2017, Mr. Modi was the first Indian PM to visit Israel and Mr. Netanyahu traveled to India in 2018.
- **Secondly, even though India has good relations with Israel, it cannot ignore the Palestinians for historic, moral, legal, and realist reasons.** Historically, India opposed the partition of Palestine. Throughout the Cold War, it stayed a strong ally of Palestinian freedom.
 - It took a moral and legal stance against the Israeli occupation, in line with international laws and norms.
- **Thirdly, India established full diplomatic relations with Israel in 1992.** But India never abandoned the Palestinians.
 - India's Palestine policy had radical footings too. It has been dependent on the Arab world for energy. It cannot isolate the Arab voices or be isolated in the General Assembly, where most member countries oppose the occupation.

Several lives have lost in this conflict. However, it is not easy for India to choose between its stand for Palestine since independence and its new ally Israel. Only a pragmatic approach can solve this dilemma of India.

General Studies Paper - 3

General Studies - 3

1. Kerala Model to tackle the Covid-19 Pandemic in India

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS:3 – Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors

Synopsis: The Kerala model provides a lot of lessons to Center and State governments to tackle the pandemic.

Introduction:

India at present not only battling with Covid-19 cases but also battling with many associated issues. Such as **floating dead bodies in the Ganges, the demand for medical oxygen and the challenges with the vaccination drive**, etc. All these impacted the health infrastructure of India a lot.

Lockdown and prerequisites:

With these challenging issues, there is a debate going to **implement a national lockdown**. Even if national lockdown is not feasible, regional lockdowns/micro-containment zones are necessary. But before imposing them, there are a few things to consider.

- The lockdown has to **protect the interests of migrants** and other worst affected sectors.
- **Adequate preparation and planning** are required to ensure the proper continuation of lockdown.
- The government has to provide an **adequate time for the people** to get themselves to prepare for the lockdown.

Lessons from Kerala model to tackle the pandemic:

The Kerala model provides lessons to not only implement the lockdown but also to tackle the pandemic effectively. The important initiatives are,

- **Transparency in governance:** The government of Kerala provided daily press briefings. During that, the government reveals detailed information on the rate of infections and fatalities. Apart from that, the regular information includes the **availability of beds, ICUs, oxygen, vaccines, and measures taken to deal with the pandemic**.
 - All these increased public participation in controlling the pandemic. Further, the public also knows the gravity of the situation and built people's trust and confidence in government measures.
 - So, the Central government and other state governments have to see **transparency as an important part of the COVID-19 response toolkit**.
- **Tackling Hunger:** To tackle poverty and hunger, the Kerala government provided food kits to homes. Apart from that, **Community kitchens and Janakeeya hotels**(people's hotels) have also opened to control hunger.
- **Providing adequate medical attention:** The government of Delhi faced a lot of challenges in providing adequate medical facilities. As a result, people used personal networks to hunt for oxygen and beds in hospitals.
 - In contrast, the Kerala model created **First-level treatment centers and second-level treatment centres**. These models screened and treated people appropriate to their symptoms.
 - **Only** the most **serious cases reach the district and specialty COVID-19 hospitals**.
 - Further, **Domiciliary care centres** have also been created in Kerala to provide shelter, food, and treatment to those who do not have space at home

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to be quarantined. This prevented the migrant worker not to flee to their hometowns in panic.

- In private hospitals, 50% of the beds have been declared as COVID-19 beds. Also, the government fixed the cost of RT-PCR testing and treatment charges in private hospitals at a reasonable level.
 - The private hospitals filed a PIL against fixing of price. But the Kerala High Court dismissed the petition.
- Similar to the **'Mumbai model'**, beds are allotted through centralised control rooms in each district. These rooms also monitor the **requirements of oxygen and ambulances**.
- **Empowering the Local bodies:** The Kerala model identified the Local Bodies as a **first line of defence** in the fight against COVID-19. They perform various functions in controlling the pandemic. Such as,
 - They look out for fresh infections amongst their constituencies and ensure the supply of medicines and provisions.
 - Panchayat members motivate people to get vaccinated
 - The Local body members also supervise the implementation of the lockdown in their locality.
 - Apart from that, they also set up help desks, providing ambulances facilities, and organising food packets.

Suggestions:

- The government has to understand that the battle against the Covid-19 is a long one. So, the Center and the States have to prepare for not only the second wave but for the third and fourth wave. To control them **lockdowns will be inevitable** until the **progress of vaccination drives**. The Kerala model has lessons for both lockdown and vaccination drives.
 - Twelve Opposition parties issued a joint letter to the Center. In that they demanded,
 - The government should initiate a **free universal mass vaccination campaign**.
 - Ensuring an **uninterrupted supply of medical oxygen and vaccines**.
 - **Invoking compulsory licensing** to expand domestic vaccine production.
- If the Centre provided these things and the other States adhere to the Kerala model then India can tackle the pandemic effectively.

2. Government Must Ensure 'Right to Life' for Economic Recovery

Source: [Click Here](#)

Syllabus: GS 3 – Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources

Synopsis: The pandemic time warrants the state to take some proactive measures that would enable the masses to properly exercise their 'Right to Life'. This would enhance their consumption capacity thereby fueling demand and eventually leading to revival.

Background:

- The Indian population is undergoing severe stress due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This includes:
 - Surviving a health emergency on a crippled health infrastructure
 - Battling Job losses and reduction of incomes
 - Countering mass hunger and worsening nutrition.

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- A recent study called 'hunger watch' found that almost 25% of households witnessed a 50% decline in income levels. Similarly, 2/3rd of households were eating less than what they did before the lockdown.
- This all is happening because the government is unable to protect and augment the Right to Life of the masses.

About Right to life:

- Article 21 of the Indian Constitution states that 'No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to a procedure established by law'.
- The courts have widened the meaning of life in multiple judgments to allow the individuals to live a dignified life.
 - For instance, **In Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India**, the Supreme Court gave a new dimension to Art. 21.
 - It held that the right to live is not merely a physical right but includes within its ambit **the right to live with human dignity**. It includes bare necessities of life such as adequate nutrition, clothing, shelter over the head, etc.

Acts undermining Right to Life during the Pandemic:

- The current vaccine policy for the 18-45 age group that demands a fee for vaccinating in private hospitals is against the right to life. The policy discriminates against the poor people who can't afford to pay a hefty sum. This discriminatory policy was formulated as:
 - The government did not ensure adequate production through compulsory licensing of more producers;
 - It did not order enough vaccines;
 - It introduced differential pricing. This forced state governments to compete with each other and with private clinics to buy vaccines.
 - It allowed price overcharging by Bharat Biotech and Serum Institute of India.
- The Supreme Court ordered providing free rations and meals without insisting on ID proof to all migrant workers in Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh. However, it was criticized as:
 - It was restricted to a few states rather than the whole country
 - It did not extend the facility to cover cash payments by the state besides meals and ration
 - Lastly, It made the facility a state prerogative rather than a right.
- The policymakers abandoned the plight of the poor (especially informal workers). Because, they were denied adequate compensation over the past year of lockdowns, restrictions, and economic distress.
- The country remains fiscally conservative, resulting in less expenditure on welfare activities and discouraged economic revival.
 - The Central government spending over April 2020 to February 2021 shows a rise in non-interest expenditure only by 2.1% of GDP. The focus was on creating infrastructure for economic recovery.

Ineffectiveness of current measures:

- Focusing on infrastructure creation has a lesser 'multiplier' effect than cash transfers to people.
 - Countries that were hit more severely in the first wave than India, managed to show a good recovery. They announced larger fiscal packages directed towards providing income support to people.

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- Cash Transfers helped people spend more on domestically produced goods and revive the economy.
- Free rations and meals, as mandated by the Supreme Court, have a very little expansionary effect on the economy. As the bulk of the commodities required to come from the existing stocks of food grains.

Way Forward:

- The state needs to take multiple measures to augment the 'Right to Life' that would also ensure equitable economic recovery. This includes:
 - Centralised procurement of Covid-19 vaccines along with enhancement of production capacity. Both things must be done to ensure free immunization to all.
 - Universal access to free foodgrains of 5 kg per month to all the vulnerable people for the next six months.
 - Cash transfers of Rs. 7,000 per household to those without regular formal employment for at least three months.
 - MGNREGA expansion by removing the limit on the number of days or beneficiaries per household.
 - A parallel scheme like MGNREGA for the educated unemployed in urban areas.
- These measures would cost around 3.5% of GDP. This might enhance the fiscal deficit that would further widen wealth inequalities and frighten globally mobile finance capital.
 - However, 1% cost would be set off by the additional taxation generated by Centre and State Governments. For the remaining 2.5% GDP, the government can impose a 1.5% Wealth Tax on the top 1% of households.

3. Need of Global Rules to protect the Cyberspace

Source: [Click Here](#)

Syllabus: GS 3 – Challenges to internal security through communication networks

Synopsis:

The 21st century is going to be an era of data revolution wherein almost all the activities would be carried on in cyberspace. This calls for creating some global rules to protect cyberspace as their absence has failed to prevent cyberattacks even on powerful countries like the U.S.

Background:

- The US created cyberspace as a free, open, decentralized, distributed, and self-governing platform.
- In the current scenario, the domain has gained utmost importance as our critical systems like power, financial or military etc. are connected to it through data.
 - Further, the introduction of 5G technology and the Internet of Things would turn everything into a networked object. It would lead to an exponential expansion of data.
- This high usage of data would ease the governance process but would also make the system more prone to cyber-attacks.

Reasons behind Cyberattacks:

- **Economic Benefits:** A cyberattack gives a hacker access to critical economic data that can be sold for millions in the grey market.

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- For instance, a Chinese attack on the weapon design system of the US allows it to develop a competitive advanced defence system. It enables the country to save millions of dollars and years of research and development.
- **Ideological Conflict:** The free and decentralised structure of cyberspace goes against the ideology of authoritarian countries like Russia and China. This induces them to launch attacks on democratic countries like U.S and India. They have also built firewalls to protect their societies from freedom.
- **Geopolitical Interest:** One country attacks another country's data to serve its geopolitical interest in the region. The attack is aimed to cripple the governance structure in another country and induce it to act in a favourable way.
 - For instance, IP theft costs the US economy hundreds of billions of dollars annually and reduces US companies' R&D investment and innovation. The reduced investment and rising losses diminish its geopolitical position.

Factors fueling Cyberattacks:

- **No Global Order:** Countries have domestic laws and agencies to punish cyber offenders. However, it is difficult to punish if the attacker is located in another country as there are no global rules on cyberspace.
- **Low Entrance Threshold:** It enables a curious person to learn and become a hacker. This allows him/her to get into infrastructure, financial or military systems without leaving a trace.
- **Synergy between State and Non-State Actors:** Rogue states and well-organised digital terrorist groups use footloose hackers to invade diplomatic and strategic plans.
 - For instance, the October 2020 cyberattack shut down the electrical grid of Mumbai. The New York Times claimed this to be an attack carried out by China with the support of non-state actors.
- **Traceability:** The advancement in technology has made the traceability of hackers very difficult.
 - For instance, the hacking group demanded ransom in bitcoins in the May 7 ransomware attack on Colonial Pipeline, one of America's largest fuel suppliers. However, the countries can't trace transactions in cryptocurrency.

Way Forward:

- The countries should realise the inefficiencies of domestic laws and institutions in combating cyber attacks.
 - For instance, the US has a National Security Agency that conducts surveillance under the authority of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.
 - Similarly, it has a dedicated Cyber Command but still, it was unable to prevent the May 7 ransomware attack on the colonial pipeline.

Thus, the countries must work together to develop global law and technology to implement more aggressive measures against cyberattacks. The focus should be on developing foolproof encryption to protect the nation's data.

4. Steps and Suggestions to Handle Cyclone related Disasters

Source: [click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 3

Synopsis: Precise forecasts and resilience-building are very important in handling severe cyclones.

Introduction

- Cyclone Tauktae has become a severe cyclonic storm. It is throwing huge volumes of water all along the west coast. It caused loss of life in Kerala, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra, and Gujarat, before fading overland.
- **Thousands of people had to be evacuated to safe locations.** This year's pre-monsoon season is posing a double risk. People are stuck between a fast-spreading virus variant and a pounding storm.
- Many coastal residents would have gone through a similar experience last year, when the severe cyclonic storm, **Nisarga**, moved landwards from the Arabian Sea.

Initiatives and suggestions

1. India has taken many steps in forecasting, disaster mitigation. However, it needs to develop greater expertise in crafting policies to increase resilience among communities. Only then it would be prepared to handle cyclones.
2. **Firstly**, the India Meteorological Department (**IMD**) **introduced an impact-based cyclone warning system** from the October-December season aimed to reduce economic losses last year. It focussed on districts and specific locations. It also incorporated factors such as population, infrastructure, land use, and settlements.
3. **Secondly**, the **IMD claimed that its accuracy of forecasts is now better.** For instance, in plotting landfall location. This is a promising approach (along with ground mapping of vulnerabilities) to avoid loss of life and destruction of property.
4. **Thirdly, the importance of accurate early warnings cannot be over stressed.** The Arabian Sea has become a major source of severe cyclones. Their intensity is heightened by a long-term rise in sea surface temperatures related to pollution over South Asia and its neighbourhood.
5. **Lastly, climate-proofing of lives and dwellings should be a high priority now.** Climate proofing requires a multi-sectoral approach:
 - To build durable homes of suitable design.
 - Create adequate storm shelters.
 - Provide accurate early warnings.
 - Ensure financial protection against calamities through insurance for property and assets. Governments must rise up to this challenge.