



PLUTUS IAS Weekly

CURRENT AFFAIRS



PLUTUS IAS WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS 14-06-2021 to 20-06-2021

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CURRENT AFFAIRS

JUNE 2021

The World is Hardly Wired for Cyber Resilience (The Hindu, GS-2, Internal Security)

CONTEXT:

Cyber security means securing cyberspace from attack and economic espionage. Cyberspace is nothing but the interconnectedness of IT infrastructure such as Internet, Telecom networks, computer systems etc.

TYPES OF CYBER CRIMES

1. **Cyber defamation:** It is defamation with the help of computers.
2. **Corporate smear:** It is a false rumour about a company
3. **Digital forgery:** Making use of digital technology to forge a document such as fakes IDs, cheques, currency, passports, visas, etc.
4. **Gambling:** The world of online gambling, due to its anonymity, unfortunately has many other hazards like danger of illegal use of credit card or illegal access to bank account.
5. **Illegal articles:** Articles like drugs, guns, pirated software or music that might not be permitted in a territory
6. **E-mail spamming:** It is an unsolicited message requiring one's time and effort to get rid off.

RECENT HISTORY OF CYBER ATTACK:

- **Solar Winds':** Involved data breaches of several wings and departments such as including defence, energy and state of the U.S. government.
- **Chinese group Hafnium:** This group exploited serious flaws in Microsoft's software, thus gaining remote control over affected systems.
- **Dark Side:** Ransomware attack by Russia, Colonial Pipeline (which is the main supplier of oil to the U.S. East Coast), compelling the company to temporarily shut down operations.
- **Stuxnet** attack by USA on Iran's Nuclear facility.
- **Nobelium:** Next launched a phishing attack on 3,000 e-mail accounts, targeting USAID and several other organisations.
- **Ransomware Attacks:** These attacks now a days have skyrocketed these demands and payments going into multi-millions of dollars

WHY THERE IS NEED OF CYBER SECURITY IN INDIA:

1. **Government's digital push:** Government programmes such as Aadhaar, MyGov, Government e-Market, DigiLocker, Bharat Net etc. are a sitting duck for the hackers
2. **Start-ups digital push:** India is the third largest hub for technology-driven startups
3. **Prevent economic loss:** It is expected to reach \$20 billion in the next 10 years.
4. **Increasing internet users:** India ranks 3rd in terms of number of internet users
5. To protect women and children who are more vulnerable such as cyber bullying, online harassment, Child pornography etc.

What is the current Say, Cyber attack is directed towards civilians: Earlier attacks on civilians were excluded from cyber security. But now we must refine the orientation of cyber security which must comprehensively include civilian cooperation as well as civilian defence.

WHAT IS THE NEED OR WAY FORWARD:

- aware of the nature of the cyber threat to their businesses
- We must take adequate precautionary measures.
- The current pandemic has also created too much data in the health infrastructure. Our health infra is not having that critical cyber security i.e. being capable of breach of data.
- the cyber landscape is poised to undergo more fundamental changes.
- data becomes the world's most precious commodity
- several billion devices interconnected to billions of end point devices exchanging petabytes of sensitive data.
- cybersecurity professionals are now engaging in building a 'Zero Trust Based Environment'
 - ▶ Zero Trust Based Environment means
 - ▶ zero trust on end point devices
 - ▶ zero trust on identity
 - ▶ zero trust on the network to protect all sensitive data
- Building deep technology in cyber is essential for ensure the security of critical infrastructure.
- Machine learning and quantum computing present new opportunities
- regular vulnerability assessments and create necessary awareness of the growing cyber threat.

Swarn Singh

Demand Stokes Illegal Rosewood Felling (GS-1, Geography, GS-3, environment and ecology)

CONTEXT:

A steep demand in the international market for musical instruments and furniture caused illegal felling of the endangered tropical hardwood tree.

WHAT IS EVERGREEN FOREST:

- **Conditions for Evergreen Forest:-**
 - ▶ More than 77% humidity required.
 - ▶ More than 250 cm rain-fall
 - ▶ More than 25 degree centigrade temperature.
- **Properties of evergreen forest:**
 - ▶ They are thickly forested.
 - ▶ Canopy density is too high.
 - ▶ Presence of creepers and epiphytes, sparse undergrowth interspersed with clearings
 - ▶ They occupy about 7% of the earth's surface.
 - ▶ mostly near the equator.
 - ▶ Ebony, Mahogany, Rosewood, Rubber Cinchona are the examples of evergreen forests.

ABOUT NATIONAL FORESTRY POLICY:

- **The National Forest Policy 1952**
 - ▶ It was aimed at bringing one-third of the total land area with 65% in hilly and 25% in plains under the forest cover.
 - ▶ It also suggested the extension of tree lands on river/canal banks, roads, railways, cultivable waste and degraded lands.
- **forest policy was adopted in 1988:**
 - ▶ it's main emphasis was on the protection, conservation, regeneration, and development of forests.

LAWS REGARDING FORESTRY:

They basically to regulate the use of forests, ban on cutting of trees and encroachment on forest lands:

- Forest Conservation Act, 1980 was passed for reserved forest areas.
- Environmental Protection Act gave the Central Government powers to protect and improve the quality of the environment and preventing pollution.
- The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006,
 - ▶ It recognizes the rights of forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers over the forest areas inhabited by them and provides a framework for in case of dispute over the land.

ISSUES IN THE EVERGREEN RAINFOREST:

- Shifting cultivation in the north east and in the southern states.



- **Illegal felling:** Illegal cutting of tree in the southern states by Jungle mafia
- Illegal export to the other countries such as Bangladesh and developed countries.
- **Jungle mafia problem:** Nexus between criminals and government officials.

Swarn Singh

Sedition Law

(GS PAPER-2, Fundamental Right Source- Indian Express)

CONTEXT:

- Recently, the decision of the Supreme Court has quashed the sedition charges against a senior journalist. Civil society has hailed this as a rootless development, especially in the context of the rapid increment number of sedition cases filed. Continuous Increment in the number of sedition cases shows the repressive approach to dissent and criticism of the government.
- Recently, Freedom House released a report showing that there is a rise in sedition cases against dissenters. Therefore, as the sedition law is seen as being used to stifle democracy, it should be removed from the statutes.

THE OBJECTIVE OF SEDITION LAW:

- **To put Reasonable Restrictions:** The constitution of India puts reasonable restrictions (under Article 19(2)) that can be imposed on the rights to ensure its responsible exercise and ensure that it is equally available to all citizens of India.
- **To Maintain Unity & Integrity:** It is said that Sedition laws are helping the government in combating anti-national, secessionist, and terrorist elements.
- **To Maintain Stability of State:** It helps in protecting the elected government from the practice to overthrow the government with violence and illegal means.

WAY FORWARD:

- **Scrapping Sedition Law:** There are enough laws in our country to curb external and internal threats to India and there is no need to continue with the sedition law. Therefore it is necessary to abolish the sedition law on the ground that it is used to curb freedom of expression and speech.
- **Role of Judiciary:** Until the sedition law is scrapped by the parliament, the Supreme Court can use its supervisory powers to sensitize the executive to the constitutional provisions protecting free speech. Further, to avoid the misuse of sedition law, the higher judiciary should narrow down the definition of sedition to address only the issues about the territorial integrity of India as well as the sovereignty of the country.
- **Raising Civil Society Awareness:** Civil society should take the lead to raise awareness about the arbitrary use of Sedition law.

-Khyati Khare

National AI Portal

(GS PAPER-3, Government Policies, and Interventions Source- The Hindu)

CONTEXT:

- The 'National AI Portal', has celebrated its first anniversary on 28th May 2021.

KEY POINTS:

- **About the National AI Portal:** It is a collaboration of the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY), National e-Governance Division (NeGD), and NASSCOM.
- **National e-Governance Division (NeGD):** In 2009, NeGD came into place as an Independent Business Division under the Digital India Corporation.
- **NASSCOM:** It is a not-for-profit industry association, It is one of the apex bodies for the IT and IT-enabled products and services sector in India. It is serving as a central hub for Artificial Intelligence (AI) related news, learning, articles, events, and activities, etc., in India and beyond.
- **About Artificial Intelligence (AI):** It is discussing the action of machines accomplishing tasks that have historically required human intelligence. It encompasses technologies like machine learning, pattern recognition, big data, neural networks, self algorithms, etc. It also involves complex things such as saving a particular data into the machine and making it react as per the different situations. Nowadays AI is being used in different industries including finance and healthcare.

RECENT EXAMPLES OF USE OF AI IN INDIA:

- **For the Covid-19 Retaliation:** There was an AI-enabled chatbot used by MyGov for ensuring communications.
- **In Judicial System:** An AI-based portal SUPACE was made assisting judges with legal research.
- **In Agriculture:** ICRISAT has recently developed an AI-power sowing app, which is utilizing weather models and data on local crop yield and probability of rainfall to more accurately predict and advise local farmers on when they should plant their seeds.
- **In Disaster Management:** An AI-based flood forecasting model developed in Bihar is now being expanded to cover the whole of India for ensuring around 200 million people get alerts and warnings 48 hours earlier about impending floods.
- **In Banking & Financial Services Industry:** Some banks in India have started adopting AI to increase digitization to improve customer experience and use algorithms in risk management.

WAY FORWARD:

- **Global Lessons:** Countries like China, the USA, and Israel are currently showing the way in terms of AI adoption. India can consider a few learnings from these countries to further grade up its AI ecosystem while keeping in mind the overall social development and inclusiveness agenda.

- **Clear Central Strategy and Policy Framework:** AI adoption in India may be accelerated through the formulation of more focused policies related to innovation, for example, patent control and security. Fraudulent use of AI should be managed as well.
- **Collaboration among Government, Corporates, and Academia:** These three stakeholders should work synergistically to undertake actions like nurturing entrepreneurship, promoting re-skilling, encouraging research and development, and driving the policies on the ground.



– Khyati Khare

Jump of Indian Economy from Primary to Tertiary (GS PAPER-3, Sectors of Economy Source- pib)

CONTEXT:

Indian economy is divided into three sectors i.e; primary sector that deals with agriculture related aspects, secondary sector that deals with manufacturing related angle and the tertiary sector that is concerned with service sector.

REASONS OF JUMPING FROM PRIMARY SECTOR TO TERTIARY SECTOR:

- India had a strong and bitter colonial experience and a taste of capitalism's exploitative nature. British colonized India to serve as a source of raw material for its fast developing industries
- Indian manufacturing sector and crafts industry broke down due to competition from cheap European products and exploitative policies of British, forcing people to move from industries to land-based activities.

- The services like law, health, civil services , banking etc grew lucrative and were widely respected as they provided employment and status in colonial India.
- The socio-capital economy was plagued by restrictions and red-tapism widely known as “license raj” and hence never gave the required impetus to the industrial sector despite it being planning commissions priority.

IMPORTANCE OF SECONDARY SECTOR:

- Helps in production of commodity required for consumption
- Improve employment ratio in the country
- Helps in developing purchasing power capacity
- Increases the GDP of the country

GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO BOOST SECONDARY SECTOR:

- Schemes like Production Linked Incentive is helping the government to boost secondary sector
- Promoting 100% FDI in selected category has improved capital inflow that leads to the development of manufacturing sector
- Government has set up Mega Food Parks recently to boost primary as well as secondary sector

WAY FORWARD:

All the sectors of the economy have equal weightage and need equal attention. But due to past experiences the government preferred to promote the service sector instead of the secondary sector. But now schemes like Atma Nirbhar bharat Yojna and Vocal for local campaigns have boosted the manufacturing sector.

Khayti Khare

The Road from Galwan, a year later (The Hindu, GS-2, International relations)

CONTEXT:

On June 15 , 2020 , the Line of Actual Control (LAC) witnessed its first deaths after 1975.when 20 Indian soldiers had a violent clash with China’s People’s Liberation Army (PLA). Top of that details about the violent incident have not been officially made public till now.

ISSUES AFTER LADAKH INCIDENT ON POLITICAL FRONT:

- Government didn’t brief about the incident through the press conferences.
- Government always stayed away from any scrutiny, either by media or by the opposition.
- When there was an all party meet, P.M. remarks were also not about briefing, rather misrepresenting.
- Government’s political strategy for dealing with the Ladakh border crisis has been based on dodging, denial and digression, this strategy did not give fruitful results rather gave a low to India’s stature in the neighbourhood.
- There is no record of a meeting of Cabinet Committee on Security being convened to discuss the Ladakh border situation.

WHAT IS CURRENT MILITARY SITUATION IN LADAKH:

- There is a Chinese presence on the Indian side of the LAC in Gogra, Hot Springs and Demchok gives the PLA.
- But the major issue is Chinese control of Depsang Plains.
- The Indian Army has only weakened its negotiating position during the talks with the PLA.
- This Ladakh crisis has also exposed India's military weakness to tackle a collusive threat from both China and Pakistan.

HOW IS INDIA REBALANCING CHINA?

- Indian government is looking for external partnerships such as QUAD.
- India is countering the burgeoning Chinese influence in the neighbourhood, But it has faltered because of exacerbated by the mishandling of the second wave

CHALLENGES BETWEEN INDIA AND CHINA:

- **Border dispute in eastern and western sectors:** This issue is of McMahon Line, Mc Mahon line is the boundary between india and china. India accepts this but China doesn't accept this because this line was accepted by Tibet during negotiations between India and Tibet. According to China, Tibet was not sovereign country, so it doesn't have authority to negotiate.
- **Issue of Dalai Lama:** There are more than 1,00,000 Tibetans refugees in India and India's continued willingness to provide shelter to the Dalai Lama is a continued source of irritation in China-India relations.
- **Nuclear supplier Group (NSG):** india wants entry to NSG which is blocked by china.
- The Indian Army had asked the PLA to stop the road construction activity that has resulted in a stand-off.
- **Neighbourhood ties:** China is strengthening its trade and defence ties with countries which are strategically important to India, it poses security threats to India.
- China displaced the U.S. to be India's biggest trade partner in 2020-21 and on other hand we are making a huge cry for not buying chinese products.
- Competition and cooperation can't go hand in hand.
- Indian military's failure on Chinese incursions in Ladakh have shown that the idea of deterrence has failed.

WAY FORWARD:

- learn from the American experience of implementing the Multi Domain Operations (MDO) doctrine to wage a war of the future against a technologically superior PLA.
- New Delhi has to learnt that india can no longer have simultaneous competition and cooperation with Beijing.
- India needs to relook the SAARC process in order to secure historical affinity with its neighbours.

EXTRA FOR PRELIMS AND TITBITS:

Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG):

- A group of nuclear material and technology supplier countries that seeks to contribute to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons .
- It was set up as a response to India's nuclear tests (Smiling Biddha) conducted in 1974.
- **The Aim of this group is to:** Trade of nuclear material for peaceful purposes so that proliferation of nuclear weapons should not happen.
- There are 48 participating governments and the European Commission acts as an Observer.

PELINDABA TREATY (AFRICAN NUCLEAR WEAPON FREE ZONE TREATY):

- It has created a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Africa.
- The treaty was signed in 1996 with the effect in July 2009.
- The aim is to prevent nuclear proliferation and prevent strategic minerals of Africa from being exported freely.
- This treaty prohibits member parties to come into bilateral agreement with countries who are non signatories of NPT (Nuclear non-proliferation treaty)

WHAT IS QUAD:

- informal strategic dialogue between India, USA, Japan and Australia.
- The Idea was first mooted by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007.
- The main aim of this group is free, open and prosperous” Indo-Pacific region.



–Swarn Singh

Operation Olivia

(GS PAPER-3, Conservation Source- The Hindu)

CONTEXT:

The Indian Coast guard has pressed into service an aircraft for 'Operation Olivia' to protect Olive Ridley Turtle recently

INDIAN COAST GUARD:

- It is an Armed Force, Search and Rescue and Maritime Law Enforcement agency that is functioning under the Ministry of Defence. It was established in 1978.
- It has a range of task potential for both surface and air operations. It is one of the greatest coast guards in the world.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Operation Olivia:

- The Indian Coast Guard's started "Operation Olivia", in the early 1980s, to protect Olive Ridley turtles as they congregate along the Odisha coast for breeding and nesting from the month of November to December. It is also intercepting unlawful trawling activities.
- Round-the-clock surveillance is taking place from November till May and utilizing Coast Guard assets such as fast petrol vessel air cushion vessels, interceptor craft and Dornier aircraft to enforce laws near the rookeries.
- The Coast Guard is devoting 225 ship days and 388 aircraft hours to protect 3.49 lakh turtles that laid eggs along the Odisha coast.

OLIVE RIDLEY TURTLES:

1. Features:

- The Olive ridley turtles are one of the smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles found in the world.
- Olive Ridleys are carnivores and derive their name from their olive-colored carapace.
- It is often seen that they migrate hundreds of kilometers between feeding and mating grounds in a year.
- They are known for their unique mass nesting known as Arribada, where thousands of females come together on the same beach to lay eggs.

2. Habitat:

- They are often found in warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian oceans.
- The Odisha's Gahirmatha Sanctuary is worldwide known as the largest rookery of sea turtles.

3. Protection Status:

- IUCN Red data list: Vulnerable
- CITES Appendix I
- Wild Life Protection Act: Schedule I

4. Threats:

- They are hugely poached for their meat, shell and leather, and their eggs.
- However, the most severe threat they are facing is the accidental killing through trawl nets and gill nets due to unregulated fishing during their mating season around nesting beaches.

INITIATIVES BY GOVERNMENT:

- To reduce their accidental killing in India, the Odisha government has now made it mandatory for trawlers to use Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs), a net that is specially designed with an exit cover that allows the turtles to escape while retaining the catch.



-Khyati Khare

PASIPHAE

(Gs Paper-3, Innovations Source - Indian Express)

CONTEXT:

- The Wide Area Linear Optical Polarimeter (WALOP), which is a prime instrument for the PASIPHAE Project, is being developed by Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA), India.
- Polar-Areas Stellar-Imaging in Polarisation High-Accuracy Experiment (PASIPHAE) is an international collaboration with a sky surveying project.

ASTRONOMICAL POLARIMETRY:

- Polarimetry is a method to measure the polarisation of light and a powerful tool that allows astronomers to infer information about celestial objects, from passing comets to distant galaxies, that can not be obtained by using other techniques.
- Polarization is known as a property of light that is representing the direction that the light wave oscillates.
- An Indian astrophysicist Sujan Sengupta had put forth an idea, that the light emitted by a cloudy brown dwarf or reflected off an extrasolar planet, will be polarised.

KEY POINTS:

- **About the PASIPHAE Survey:**
 - ▶ It is an Opto polarimetric survey targeting to measure the linear polarization from millions of stars.
 - ▶ The survey is using two high-tech optical polarimeters to observe the northern and southern skies.
 - ▶ The survey will be conducted from the South African Astronomical Observatory in Sutherland, South Africa in the southern hemisphere, and the Skinakas Observatory in Crete, Greece.
 - ▶ It is focused on capturing starlight polarisation of very faint stars that are so far away that polarisation signals from there have not been systematically studied.
 - ▶ The distances to these stars will be obtained from measurements of the GAIA satellite.
 - ▶ GAIA is on a mission to chart a three-dimensional map of our Galaxy, the Milky Way, in the process which is telling the composition, formation, and evolution of the Milky Way.
 - ▶ GAIA is a European Space Agency astronomical observatory mission.
 - ▶ Scientists from the University of Crete, Greece, Caltech, USA, IUCAA, India, the South African Astronomical Observatory, and the University of Oslo, Norway, are coming under the same umbrella for this project, steered by the Institute of Astrophysics, Greece.

IMPORTANCE OF THE PROJECT:

- Since its inception, the universe has been constantly expanding, as evidenced by the presence of Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB) radiation which fills the universe.
- It is said that the Milky Way Galaxy contains a lot of dust clouds that are present in the form of clusters. When starlight passes through it they get scattered and polarised.
- The PASIPHAE polarimetric maps are used to perform magnetic tomography of the Milky Way Galaxy.
- Now it will reduce the 3-dimensional structure of the magnetic field and the dust that resides in the Milky Way.

- This map will provide valuable information for future CMB B-mode experiments searching for inflationary gravitational waves.
- The B-mode experiment is used to test the theory of cosmic inflation and differentiate between inflationary models of the very early universe by making precise measurements of the polarization of the Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB).
- According to the theory of inflation, the early Universe is expanding exponentially fast for a fraction of a second after the Big Bang.



–Khayti Khare

Weathering (GS PAPER-1 Geomorphology Source-gsi.in)

CONTEXT:

Weathering is an in-situ process of disintegration and decomposition of rocks, where the movement of debris is not involved (though some downslope movement under gravitational force is possible). Weathering is an important phenomenon of degradation of mountains and plateaus, which results in the development of soil.

VARIOUS TYPES OF WEATHERING INCLUDE:

1. **Physical weathering:** It is the disintegration of rocks due to physical forces by various geomorphic agents.
 - ▶ Effects of changing temperature, impact by water, wind or glacier, freeze and thaw mechanism in colder regions are more pronounced effects – leading to physical weathering.
 - ▶ Such weathering is more common in hot and dry areas

2. **Chemical Weathering:** Here the disintegration of rocks occurs due to the exchange of ions and chemical alteration in the composition of rocks through various chemical reactions.
 - ▶ They are more pronounced in wet regions as water forms acid and rocks disintegrate through the processes like a solution, carbonation, hydrolysis, hydration, etc.
 - ▶ Other ion exchange methods are oxidation, leachates, etc.
3. Biological weathering is done by biological agents like flora, fauna, and above all humans. This involves processes like burrowing, mining, etc.

ECOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

- Soil formation is the most important consequence of weathering which is important for the growth and survival of autotrophs, driving the entire food web.
- Roots of trees get essential minerals from parent rock through microorganisms present in pores, created by weathering.
- Weathering is important for the modification of landforms, giving rise to different biomes and ecosystems.

ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE:

- The formation of soil is the basis of agriculture, which forms the backbone of many world economies.
- Help in mining and concentration of ores, which has commercial importance.



–Khyati Khare

China threat for Global Security

(Gs Paper-2, Diplomacy Source- The Hindu)

CONTEXT:

- On 14th June, NATO leaders came out declaring that China is a persistent security challenge and is working to undermine the present global order.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- NATO leaders have stated that China's goals and 'assertive behavior is presenting systemic challenges to the rules-based international order and to the areas which are relevant to alliance security.'
- Joe Biden has persuaded all its allies to speak out against China's trade, military, and human rights practices.
- Although in the group 30 heads of the states have not called China an enemy but said that it poses 'coercive policies' and it should become more transparent as it is opaque in modernizing its armed forces and its use of misinformation.
- China should imbibe international commitments.
- China was following forced labor practices and other human rights violations which are hugely impacting Uyghur Muslims and other ethnic minorities living in the western Xinjiang province.

NATO:

- The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an association or a group of European and North American countries, formed after World War II as a bastion against Soviet aggression.

VIEWS OF OTHER EUROPEAN POWER:

- German Chancellor Angela Merkel has stated that NATO's decision to name China as a threat "shouldn't be overstated" because Beijing, is also a partner in some areas same as Russia.
- China is one of Germany's top trading partners and also Germany is hugely dependent on Russia in fulfilling the country's energy needs.
- France's President Emmanuel Macron pushed that alliance not to let China divert it from what he saw as more urgent issues facing NATO, including curbing terrorism and security issues related to Russia.
- NATO has also updated Article 5 to offer greater transparency on how the alliance should respond to major cyberattacks which is a rising concern during hacks aiming at the U.S. government and businesses around the globe by Russian hackers.
- Beyond expanding the possible use of the Article 5 mutual defense clause to space, the leaders also strengthen the definition of what is constituting such an attack in cyberspace, in a warning to any opposition that might use constant low-level attacks as a tactic.

CHINA'S VIEW:

- China has reverted to the G-7 communiqué saying that NATO is interfering in its internal matters and sovereignty and to those nations that are against China.



-Khyati Khare

IAS

Tussle over Basmati (GS PAPER-3, International Agreements Related to IPRs SOURCE- Indian Express)

CONTEXT:

- India is the world's largest exporter of basmati rice. Recently India has applied for the status of protected geographical indication (PGI) from the European Union's Council on Quality Schemes for Agricultural Products and Foodstuffs. This status would give prime sole ownership of the basmati title in the EU.

WHAT'S THE ISSUE OF TUSSLE:

- Pakistan, which is the only main other basmati rice exporter in the world, is opposing this move as it would severely impact its own exports, especially as the EU is a prime market for its basmati.
- Pakistan has enacted the Geographical Indications (Registration and Protection) Act in March 2020, which gives the country the right to oppose Indian application for registration of exclusive rights of Basmati rice.
- While India has stated that Basmati is an Indian-origin product in its application, published in the EU's official journal on September 11.

- As per the EU's official journal, any country can oppose the application for registration of a name pursuant to Article 50(2) (a) of Regulations (EU) of the European Parliament and of the Council on quality schemes for any agricultural products or any foodstuffs within three months from the date of its publication.



BACKGROUND:

- In May 2010, GI status was given to basmati grown which was grown in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Uttrakhand, and parts of western Uttar Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir.

ABOUT GI TAG:

- A GI tag is primarily an agricultural, natural or a manufactured product originating from a definite geographical territory.
- Tag conveys an assurance of quality and distinctiveness, which is essentially attributable to the place of its origin.

BENEFITS:

- Once the GI protection is given, no other producer can misuse the name to the market of any similar products. It also provides comfort to customers about the authenticity and assurity of that product.

WHO IS A REGISTERED PROPRIETOR OF A GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION:

- Any association or a group of persons, producers, organization, or authority established under the law can be a registered proprietor.
- Their name should be mentioned in the Register of Geographical Indication as registered proprietor for the Geographical Indication applied for.

VALIDITY:

- The registration of it is valid for a period of 10 years.
- Renewal can be performed from time to time for a further period of 10 years each.

REGULATORY BODY:

- Geographical Indications are mentioned as a component of intellectual property rights (IPRs) under the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property. It is also governed by the World Trade Organisation's (WTO's) Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

–Khyati Khare

America's Mistakes in the 'Forever War' (The Hindu, International Relations, GS-2)

CONTEXT:

- USA President Joe Biden has set the September 11 deadline for all American troops to withdraw from Afghanistan. This withdrawal will end 20 years of the invasion by the United States. There were peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban that started in Doha last year.

A HISTORY ABOUT THIS CONFLICT:

- A terrorist attack in America on 11 September 2001, This attack killed nearly 3,000 people in America. Osama Bin Laden was identified as the man responsible for this attack. He was the head of Islamist terror group al-Qaeda
- The Taliban protected Bin Laden and refused to hand him over. A month after the 9/11 attack the US launched airstrikes against Afghanistan.
- The US was joined by an international coalition and NATO forces. This ousted the Taliban from power.
- Now the Taliban turned into an insurgent force and continued deadly attacks.
- These attacks were destabilising subsequent Afghan governments.
- Since then, the US has been fighting a war against the Taliban.
- Every other president whoever is, from Obama to Biden there is a pressure on the government to quit from Afghanistan because it takes too much human resources and financial resources
- The negotiations began in September 2018 with the appointment of Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad to initiate direct talks with the Taliban. After nine rounds of US-Taliban talks in Qatar, the two sides seemed close to an agreement.

WHY AFGHANISTAN IS AT THE FOREFRONT SINCE ANCIENT IN TERMS OF WAR:

- Afghanistan is the gateway to central Asia.
- Afghanistan is a connecting link between the West and the most prosperous country India in the medieval times.
- The British empire sent troops to the country in 1839 on the pretext of a Russian invasion to India via Afghanistan, In this British empire ousted its ruler Dost Muhammad.

- Afghanistan has access to the central asia resources.
- In 1979, the Soviet Union sent troops to Afghanistan to save the country's communist regime from the USA.
- The current issue takes the birth in the rivalry of two Giants i.e. USA and USSR.
- The USSR faced a bloody Mujahideen resistance and had to pull back in 1989.

ISSUES CURRENTLY:

- Since May 1 the Taliban have seized eight districts in four different regions in afghanistan.
- 22% of Afghanistan's 398 districts are in the Taliban's control.
- 24% of these distt are with the government.
- Terrorist networks are now scattered across Asia and Africa. These are the networks which the U.S. vowed to destroy when it launched its global war on terror in Afghanistan.

WHAT ARE THE THREE MISTAKES DONE BY THE USA IN CONTEXT OF AFGHANISTAN ISSUE:

- The U.S went into Afghanistan to wage a war, without learning anything from the country's history. This is a perfect example of U.S. obsession with the unipolar world. U.S. is retreating and its inconclusive war practically leaving Afghanistan to the mercy of the Taliban.
- The U.S. launched the Iraq invasion to topple Saddam Hussein and export democracy there at the same time Taliban got the oxygen to resurface again with the help of Pakistan. By the time the U.S. shifted its focus back to Afghanistan, there were growing calls at home to end the "endless wars. Though the USA has defeated the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.
- Now amid growing concern of war in Afghanistan, US could have withdrawn the forces quite smoothly rather suddenly. This has given more legitimacy to Taliban and a moral boost to Taliban to continue with the war against Afghanistan forces.

WHY IS THIS ISSUE IMPORTANT TO INDIA:

- There is much investment by India in Afghanistan e.g. SALMA dam, Construction of Parliament, Capacity building in terms of human resources and physical infrastructure.
- Afghanistan shares the boundary with India's only one U.T, i.e. J&K.
- Taliban resurgence to power will certainly hit the cultural ties and it will again push Afghanistan's society into the medieval ages.
- Sudden withdrawal from Afghanistan may help in spreading the radicalization of Youth in J&k.
- Afghanistan provides access to central Asia which will help India to have energy and mineral security.
- Afghanistan is rich in mineral resources such as Copper and Iron (Hajigak mines of copper in Afghanistan).

EXTRA TITBITS:

History of India-Taliban Relations

A Commercial Airplane Named IC-814 Hijacked in 1999:

- The plane was hijacked and taken to Kandahar in Afghanistan at that time Kandhar was under the control of the Taliban. This has resulted in negotiations and India had to release terrorists —

including Maulana Masood Azhar. These terrorists carried out terror attacks on Parliament (2001), in Pathankot (2016) and in Pulwama (2019).

- Taliban perceived India as a hostile country because India had supported the anti-Taliban force after the 9/11 attacks.
- India never gave diplomatic and official recognition to the Taliban when it was in power during 1996-2001.



–Swarn Singh

Energy Inefficiency can short Circuit Cooling India (GS-3, Science and Technology, The Hindu, Editorial)

CONTEXT:

Climate change will give rise to global temperatures. This will give More frequent and intense heat waves. There have been 660 heat waves across India, These led to 12,273 deaths across the breadth and length. This climate change led rise in temperature will increase the demand for cooling.

A DELHI SURVEY RESULTS:

- It was a door to door household survey.
- 43% of the households own an AC.
- 39% own coolers.

- The way households use ACs also differs quite a bit.
- Most households use an AC for three to four hours a day.
- 15% use ACs for over eight hours a day.
- Half of the households set their ACs between 24°C-26°C.
- 27% prefer their AC temperature to be between 21°C-23°C.
- Every 1°C increase in AC set point temperature can lead to additional 6% energy savings.
- Only 7% of the households have an energy efficient (star-rated) fan.
- 88% of the coolers are locally assembled.

WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES IN ACHIEVING THE TARGETS UNDER COOLING ACTION PLAN AND INDIA'S TARGET TO FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE:

- Households did not know of the Star Labelling programme.
- Lack of awareness in households about energy efficiency's best practices.
- Higher upfront cost of Air conditioners and simultaneous low market availability of efficient air conditioners.
- Government passive efforts in achieving the aims.
- Issue in the implementation of plans.

WAY FORWARD:

- Use of non energy cooling methods such as natural ventilation.
- Majority of investments in cooling technologies such as improving the infrastructure
- Need of the behavioral change in the population about Energy efficiency etc.
- Awareness campaigns on the benefits of energy efficiency to all stakeholders.
- Subsidies and financial incentives which will help in decreasing the higher upfront costs.
- Encouraging the use of passive cooling alternatives which includes energy efficient building designs, decreasing of cooling loads etc.

What is India's Cooling Action Plan:

OBJECTIVES OF ICAP:

1. Assessment of cooling requirements across sectors for about next 20 years.
2. Mapping the technologies that are available to cater the cooling requirement including passive interventions, refrigerant-based technologies and alternative technologies such as not-in-kind technologies,
3. Provide suggestion about the interventions in each sector to provide for sustainable cooling and thermal comfort for all,
4. Focus on skill set of Refrigeration and air-conditioning(RAC) service technicians

WHAT ARE THE TARGETS:

- By year 2037-38 there should be reduction of cooling demand across sectors by 20% to 25 %
- Reduction of refrigerant demand by 25% to 30% by year 2037-38.

- Reduction of cooling energy requirements by 25% to 40% by year 2037-38.
- Training and certification of 1 lakh servicing sector technicians by the year 2022-23 which will be under Skill India Mission.
- Recognize “cooling and related areas” of research under the national S&T Programme.

ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF ICAP:

- Thermal comfort for all which specifically includes cooling for Economically Weaker Section (EWS) and Low Income Group (LIG) housing
- Sustainable cooling so that low (Greenhouse Gas)GHG emissions related to cooling.
- Doubling Farmers Income for which plan will help to create better cold chain infrastructure which further enhances the value of produce to farmers, less wastage of produce
- Skilled workforce for better livelihoods and environmental protection, there by skill Indian mission.
- Make in India will help domestic manufacturing of air-conditioning and related cooling equipment.
- Robust R&D on alternative cooling technologies will give thrust to innovation in the cooling sector.

WHAT ARE INDIA’S TARGET ABOUT INDC (INTENDED NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS):

What is INDC:

- Every country which is a party to the Paris climate summit under UNFCCC has to submit her goal so that the overall target of Paris submit can be achieved.
- India has submitted its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- The INDCs are recognized under the agreement and they are not legally binding.

INDIA’S INDC

- India has to achieve the GDP emissions intensity by 33 to 35 per cent by 2030 below 2005 levels.
- India has to increase the share of non-fossil fuels-based electricity to 40 per cent by 2030.
- India has to achieve an increase in the forest cover which will absorb 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide by 2030.

WHAT IS UNFCCC (UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE) ALL ABOUT:

- It was an outcome of the Earth summit which took place in 1992. This earth summit took climate change as the center stage and help in supporting the global response to the threat of climate change.
- This Convention has 197 Parties which make it almost universal in nature. There is a treaty of the 2015 Paris Agreement.
- The UNFCCC is also a precursor treaty of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol.
- It’s secretariat is located in Bonn, Germany.

WHAT IS PARIS CLIMATE DEAL:

- signed on 22 April 2016.
- A global effort to curtail the rise of global temperature this century below 2-degree Celsius above pre-industrial levels

- A global effort to pursue efforts to limit the increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- Develop mechanisms to help and support countries that are very vulnerable to the impact of climate change.
- Carbon Dioxide emissions reductions by 20%

–Swarn Singh

SIPRI Report (GS PAPER-2, India and its Neighborhood Source- The Hindu)

CONTEXT:

According to a report published in the SIPRI Yearbook 2021 recently the number of nuclear warheads which are ready and deployed are increasing globally.

SIPRI YEARBOOK:

This book is released by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) which is involved in the domain of international armament and conflict. This book assesses the current state of armaments, disarmament and international security.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Nine Nuclear Armed States:** At present there are nine nuclear armed states US, Russia, the U.K., France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea. They together possessed an estimated 13,080 nuclear weapons at the start of 2021. Even Russia and the US togetherly have over 90% of global nuclear weapons .However Both the US and Russia have approved the extension of the New start Treaty but the treaty will expire in Feb 2021.At present China's nuclear arsenal consists of 350 warheads . China is modernising and expanding its nuclear weapon inventory. India possessed an estimated 156 nuclear warheads at the start of this year compared to 150 at the start of 2020, while Pakistan had 165 warheads, compared to last year.
- **Largest Military Spenders:** The growth in total spending in 2020 on arsenals was largely influenced by expenditure patterns in the United States and China who are first and second largest spenders on arsenal respectively). India's spending of USD 72.9 billion, an increase of 2.1% in 2020, ranked it as the third highest spender on arsenals in the world.
- **Importers of Major Arms:** SIPRI has shown 164 states as importers of major arms in 2016-20 in its report. The five largest arms importers were Saudi Arabia, India, Egypt, Australia and China, which together accounted for 36% of total arms imports according to the report.
- **Suppliers of Major Arms:** The five largest suppliers of arsenals in 2016-20 – the United States, Russia, France, Germany and China – accounted for 76% of the total volume of exports of major arms.

RECENT INSTANCES OF ARMED CONFLICT:

- The territorial conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir- The situation in 2020 was largely reverted to the status quo of relatively low levels of armed violence.

- Border tension between India and China- In June 2020, for the first time in over five decades, the disputed eastern Ladakh region of Kashmir turned into a new battle ground.
- Tigray Region- A new armed conflict broke out in November 2020 between federal government forces and the Tigray People's Liberation Front who has done massive killing.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS:

- Nuclear weapon can be said to be a device designed to release energy in a highly explosive manner as a result of nuclear fission, nuclear fusion, or a combination of both.
- Fission weapons are popularly referred to as atomic bombs, and fusion weapons are categorized as thermonuclear bombs or, more commonly, hydrogen bombs.

TREATIES PREVENTING NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION AND TESTING:

- Nuclear Non- Proliferation Treaty
- Partial Test Ban Treaty
- The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
- The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW),

OTHER RELATED INITIATIVES:

- Nuclear Supplier Group
- Missile Technology Control Regime
- Hague Code of Conduct
- Wassenaar Arrangement

INDIA'S NUCLEAR WEAPON PROGRAM:

- India conducted its first nuclear test in May 1974, but remains outside both the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as well as Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).
- However, India did have a facility-specific safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency and a waiver from the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) .
- India got admitted as a member into the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in 2016, Wassenaar Arrangement in 2017 and Australia Group in 2018.
- India maintains its commitment to No first use of nuclear weapons officially

-Khyati Khare

Mughal Architecture

Gs Paper-1, Indo-Islamic Architecture Source- The Hindu

CONTEXT:

- The Archaeological Survey of India has recently notified that all centrally protected monuments, sites, and museums across the country including the Humayun's Tomb will reopen for visitors from mid of June.

- Humayun's tomb in Delhi is known for its fine specimen of the great Mughal architecture. ASI, working under the Ministry of Culture, is the premier organization for the archaeological research and protection of the cultural heritage of India.

HIGHLIGHTS:

About Humayun's Tomb:

- This tomb was built in 1570, having cultural significance as it was the first garden tomb on the Indian subcontinent.
- It has inspired several major architectural innovations, culminating in the construction of the white marble building Taj Mahal.
- It was built under the patronage of Humayun's son, the great Emperor Akbar.
- It is also known as the 'dormitory of the Mughals' as in the cells are buried over 150 Mughal family members.
- It is an example of the Charbagh (a four-quadrant garden with the four rivers of Quranic paradise represented), with pools joined by channels.
- UNESCO recognized it as a World Heritage site in 1993.



ABOUT MUGHAL ARCHITECTURE:

- This building style flourished in northern and central India under the patronage of the great Mughal emperors.

- The Mughal period symbolized a striking revival of Islamic architecture in northern India under the patronage of the Mughal emperors, Persian, Indian, and various provincial styles were amalgamated to produce works of unusual quality and refinement.
- It got expanded especially in north India that these can be seen further in the colonial architecture of Indo-Saracenic style.

KEY FEATURES:

- **Mixed Architecture:** It was an amalgamation of Indian, Persian, and Turkish architectural styles.
- **Diversity:** Different types of buildings were made such as majestic gates (entrances), forts, mausoleums, palaces, mosques, sarais, tombs, etc.
- **Building material:** Mostly, red sandstone and white marble were used in their building.
- **Specialty:** Specific features such as the Charbagh style of the mausoleums, pronounced bulbous domes, pietra- dura, slender turrets at the corners, broad gateways, beautiful calligraphy, arabesque, and geometric patterns on pillars and walls, and palace halls supported on pillars can be seen.

Deep Ocean Mission

(Gs Paper-2, Government Policies, And Interventions Source- The Hindu)

CONTEXT:

- The government of India has approved the 'Deep Ocean Mission' to study biodiversity, the impact of climate change, and the establishment of an offshore marine station to explore sources of thermal energy.

ABOUT:

- The Ministry of Earth Sciences has proposed a 'Deep Ocean Mission' aiming to explore the Deep Ocean for searching resources and to develop deep-sea technologies for unceasing use of ocean resources.
- The project is a five-year mission to be implemented in phases with an estimated cost of Rs4,077 crore. The first phase of the project is for three years (2021-2024).
- Indian Organizations such as ISRO, BARC, CSIR, DRDO, the Department of Biotechnology, and some other bodies will assist the Ministry of Earth Sciences in its implementation.
- The expertise and technology for this mission are available only in five countries- the US, Russia, France, Japan, and China.
- India is the sixth country to adopt this technology.
- This mission will explore strategic polymetallic nodules such as Copper, Nickel, Cobalt, and Manganese in the Central Indian Ocean basin.
- "The mission will also focus on changes, because of climate change, to study more deep-sea biodiversity.
- It will also conduct a deep-sea survey.
- There is also the establishment of an advanced marine station for ocean biology and also an offshore ocean station (to explore) thermal energy as part of the mission.
- It will conduct research on climate variables and support the Blue economy of the country that includes marine fisheries, off-shore energy, and coastal tourism.



SIX COMPONENTS OF THE MISSION:

1. Development of high-end technologies for deep-sea mining and manned submersible
2. Development of ocean climate change advisory services
3. Technological innovations for deep exploration and conservation of deep-sea biodiversity
4. Deep ocean survey and its exploration
5. Off-shore ocean energy and freshwater from the ocean
6. Advanced establishment of marine station for ocean biology

Khayti Khare

Loan to Srilanka (GS PAPER -2, India and its neighborhood Source- The Hindu)

CONTEXT:

- India has signed an agreement extending a USD 100 million Line of Credit (LOC) to its neighbor Sri Lanka for projects related to the Solar Energy Sector.
- This LOC is for a period of 20 years, with an interest of 1.75%.
- This agreement was signed between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Export-Import (EXIM) Bank of India.
- EXIM Bank is a specialized financial institution and is solely owned by the Government of India.

WHAT IS LINE OF CREDIT:

- It is a credit facility extended by any bank or any other financial institution to a government, business, or individual customer, that can enable the customer to draw the maximum loan amount.
- The borrower can access funds from the line of credit at any point of time as long as they do not exceed the maximum amount (or credit limit) set in the signed agreement and meet any other requirements such as making timely minimum payments etc

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LINE OF CREDIT:

- It will help Srilanka to finance various projects in the solar energy sector such as rooftop solar photovoltaic systems for households and government buildings.
- Some of these projects were already announced during the Founding Conference of the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE:

- This initiative was launched by the Indian Prime Minister and the President of France in 2015 on the sidelines of the United Nations Climate Change Conference of Parties (CoP 21) with 121 solar resource-rich countries lying fully or partially between the tropic of Cancer and tropic of Capricorn as prospective members.
- 89 countries have signed the ISA framework agreement up to 2021.
- Its' vision is to enable One World, One Sun, One Grid (OSOWOG).

-Khyati Khare

Jobless Growth Gs Paper-3, Growth Source-pib

CONTEXT:

- Jobless growth is an economic phenomenon in which a macroeconomy experiences growth while maintaining or decreasing its level of employment.

- The Indian growth experience of the last decade can be called jobless growth as the rate of employment growth is less than population growth.

THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS CAN BE HIGHLIGHTED REGARDING THIS:

- While the share of employment has largely declined in the Agriculture sector, the Service and Manufacturing sectors have failed to absorb all the people shifting from the agriculture sector.
- The rapid rise of employment opportunities in the informal or unorganized sector in recent years is another aspect of employment generation in India, which further marginalizes labor.
- While the IT or Service Sector has been the spearhead of economic growth in India after the advent of globalization, they can't absorb any significant labor. Because the sector requires highly skilled people only.
- During 2005-10, only 1 million net jobs per annum were generated in the organized sector, whereas 60 million people entered the labor market of India.
- Large scale unemployment among engineering graduates, postgraduates like MBA and doctorates are other examples of jobless growth. This is the reason why lakhs of students including engineers, MBA or Ph.D. students applied for only 300 posts of peon in Uttar Pradesh.

WAY FORWARD:

- The answer to jobless growth lies in policy initiatives that will promote the manufacturing and services sector. Reforms in labor laws, provision of infrastructure, encouragement of small-scale industries, and promotion of export-oriented light industries that are manpower intensive are some of the policy initiatives that are required.
- The experiences of developed countries have demonstrated that the growth of smaller businesses can drive employment generation.
- Further education and skill development is the need of the hour to increase employment with economic growth by harnessing the potential of demographic dividend.

-Khyati Khare

A Place for Disruptive Technology in India's Health Sector (The Hindu, GS-2, Health)

CONTEXT:

The medical community has been selfless during this COVID-19 times in particular on one hand and this community is also losing a number of staff on the other. They only have masks and gloves as the protective gear which exposes them to great risk. So in this COVID-19 time technology can be a great game changer for both i.e. Health workers and patients.

WHAT ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL SCENARIO:

- There are reports where hospitals are using robots to care for COVID-19 affected patients.
- In China 5G-powered temperature measurement devices are used at the entrance to flag patients who have fever/fever-like symptoms.
- Robots are used to measure heart rates and blood oxygen levels through smart bracelets and rings that

patients wear

- Robots are also used to sanitise wards.

IN INDIA:

- Sawai Man Singh government hospital in Jaipur held trials with a humanoid robot to deliver food and medicines to COVID-19 patients.

HOW TECHNOLOGY CAN BE USED IN THE HEALTH SECTOR:

- Blockchain technology can help in addressing the interoperability challenge.
- Block chain will help in combining history of all medical data, including formal medical records
- Health data from mobile applications and wearable sensors will also help in contributing to Big-Data.
- Big data analytics can help improve patient-based services.
- hospital health-care facilities can be improved.
- AI and the Internet of Medical Things will shape health-care applications.
- Medical autonomous systems will help in creating supporting medical care delivery within a complex environment.
- The Medical Autonomous system will include an autonomous critical care system, autonomous intubation, autonomous cricothyrotomy and other autonomous interventional procedures which will further improve the health data and delivery of health services.
- Cloud computing will help in improving the accessibility of data to the whole health sector, especially data exchanges between doctors, departments, and even institutions and medical providers.
- Universal health coverage (UHC) which is one of the most powerful concepts in making health services accessible.
- Universal health coverage (UHC) takes help of digital technologies, led by a robust strategy integrating human, financial, organizational and technological resources.

POSSIBLE CHALLENGES:

- Synchronization and integration, developing a template for sharing data, and reengineering of data will remain a forefront challenges
- Big data applications should help the hospitals to provide the best facilities at less cost, provide a level playing field for all sectors and players which further foster competition.
- Standardization of health data across the health sector
- Working of organization in silos such as private sector and government sector
- Data security and data privacy and ensuring the Rights are at the same time.
- High investments.

WAY FORWARD:

- India needs to own its digital health strategy
- A Digital Health strategy (DHS) must work and lead towards universal health coverage and person-centred care.
- This DHS strategy should emphasize the ethical appropriateness of digital technologies, cross the digital divide, and ensure inclusion across the economy

- Ayushman Bharat' and other such tools such as Information and Communication Technology could be fine-tuned with other public and private interventions
- Using local knowledge:- For example Ebola virus outbreak in Africa, where communities proactively helped curtail the spread
- Indonesia experienced the bird flu outbreak in poultry farmers, and her community response was tremendous.

Extra Titbits:

NATIONAL HEALTH POLICY (NHP) 2017:

- **Assurance based approach:** NHP advocates a progressive incremental assurance-based approach with special focus on preventive and promotive healthcare for all strata of population.
- **Health Card linked to health facilities:** NHP recommends the linking of health cards to primary care facilities for a comprehensive and defined package of services anywhere in the country.
- **Patient Centric Approach:** NHP recommends the setting up of a separate and empowered medical tribunal for speedy resolution to address disputes /complaints regarding standards of care, prices of services etc
- **Micronutrient Deficiency:** NHP here focuses upon reducing micronutrient malnourishment and thereby providing a systematic approach to address heterogeneity in micronutrient adequacy across regions in india.
- **Quality of Care:** Public hospitals and facilities would undergo periodic measurements and certification to ensure a level of quality to be maintained.
- NHP Focus on Standard Regulatory Framework to eliminate risks of inappropriate care by maintaining adequate standards of diagnosis and treatment.
- Make-in-India Initiative:- NHP is vocal about the need to incentivize local manufacturing to provide customized indigenous products for Indian population in the long run.
- **Application of Digital Health:** NHP advocates extensive deployment of digital tools for improving the efficiency and outcome of the healthcare system which further aims at an integrated health information system which serves the needs of all stake-holders.
- This policy advocates about improving efficiency, transparency, and citizen experience.
- NHP provides for private sector engagement for strategic purchase for critical gap filling and for achievement of health goals.

THE KEY GOALS UNDER NATIONAL HEALTH POLICY:

- Allocating 2/3rd or more of financial and physical resources to primary care.
- To Increase Life Expectancy at birth from 67.5 to 70 by 2025.
- To reduce Total fertility rate (TFR) to 2.1 at national and sub-national level by 2025.
- To reduce Under Five Mortality (U/5) to 23 by 2025 and Maternal mortality rate (MMR) from current levels to 100 by 2020.
- To reduce infant mortality rate (IMR) to 28 by 2019.
- To reduce neonatal mortality to 16
- To achieve global target 90:90:90 for HIV/AIDS
- To achieve and maintain elimination status of Leprosy by 2018, Kala-Azar by 2017 and Lymphatic

Filariasis in endemic pockets by 2017.

- Ayushman Bharat Abhiyan (A way for universal Health Coverage):-

KEY FEATURES:

- This health insurance scheme will provide free coverage of up to Rs 5 lakh per family per year at any hospital which is empaneled in this scheme, which includes both private and public all over India for secondary and tertiary medical care facilities.
- This scheme will be given to 10 crore beneficiary families and about 50 crore Indian citizens.
- This scheme takes data based on Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) data in the rural and the urban areas.
- There are no restrictions on the basis of family size, age or gender.
- It is like other medical insurance schemes and covers almost all diseases from day one of the Ayushman Bharat policy.
- This scheme includes benefit cover includes both pre and post hospitalization expenses.
- Premiums of insurance will be shared between Central and State Governments in a specified ratio.
- The NHPM (National Health Protection Mission) will pay for the hospitalization costs of its beneficiaries through strategic purchasing from public and private hospitals.
- The 1.5 lakh sub-centers that are converted into wellness center.
- Wellness centers will cater to the majority of services such as detection and treatment of cardiovascular diseases, screening for common cancers, mental health, care of the elderly, eye care, etc.



ANALYSIS OF AYUSHMAN BHARAT SCHEME:

- There is Inadequate human resources with requisite skill-sets to implement the scheme at the state level.

- There is lack of time and manpower to distribute the PM letters and other IEC materials.
- There is a general lack of Infrastructure (Temporary Office Space)
- Insufficient information Detailed information about the scheme/package was not shared by the kiosks; as some of the beneficiaries we met lamented:
- There are long waiting time at kiosk for completing the identification

WAY FORWARD:

- **Awareness:** Government should set up stalls in various trade-fairs, organize (mega) camps periodically, arrange special outreach programmes in inaccessible regions;
- Conduct more IEC activities involving local communities/youths (like Saksham Yuva scheme in Haryana)(e.g. Nukkad Play) and local PRIs, local political party cadres (for example Better use social media such as FB/WhatsApp)
- **Identification:** This Involve the village/ward representatives (such as PRI members)
- Put in place mechanisms for automatic registration using the latest database (Aadhar/Ration Card)
- **Overcoming supply side constraints:** Put in place a designated Cell with the requisite skill set for carrying out IEC activities. Hire a professional agency to make the IEC materials in regional languages.

Swarn Singh

In India, Looking beyond the Binary to a Spectrum (GS-2, Governance, The Hindu)

CONTEXT:

A case was filed in the High Court of Delhi surrounding the question of same sex marriages. The Solicitor General of India was called upon and made himself available only to request the court to have the matter adjourned on the ground that it was not urgent.

WHAT IS RIGHT:

- Rights are nothing but the obligations of the state. These rights are formulated to ascertain twin principles viz. Anti-dehumanisation and Anti-hierarchy. In India, this can be reflected in a chapter on Fundamental Rights in the constitution.
- The division of human rights can be categorized into four generations which was initially proposed in 1979 by the Czech jurist Karel Vasak at the International Institute of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

What are the four Category of Human Rights:

FIRST-GENERATION HUMAN RIGHTS:

- Also known as blue rights.
- They deal with liberty and participation in political life.
- They are negative in character which protect the individual from excesses of the state.
- Examples of these are the right to life, equality before the law, freedom of speech, freedom of religion,

property rights, the right to a fair trial, and voting rights.

SECOND-GENERATION HUMAN RIGHTS:

- They are fundamentally economic, social, and cultural in character.
- They guarantee different members of a section of society equal conditions and treatment.
- These include the right to be employed in just and favorable conditions, rights to food, housing and health care, as well as social security and unemployment benefits.

THIRD-GENERATION HUMAN RIGHTS:

- They are also known as Solidarity human rights.
- These include a new generation right.
- These include Right to self-determination, Right to economic and social development, Right to a healthy environment, Right to natural resources.

FOURTH GENERATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS:

- The rights that cannot be included in the third generation, future claims of first and second generation rights and new rights.
- Examples of these rights are The right to equally access computing and digital spaces, The right to digital self-determination, The right to digital security, The right to access one's own digital data.

ISSUE OF 377:

- This was a colonial legacy. Which said that “whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal shall be punished”.
- This section was challenged on the particularity of article 14,19 and 21 of Indian constitution.

PROBLEMS FACED BY LGBT COMMUNITY:

- Physical and emotional abuses against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people including arbitrary arrests, violence, bullying in schools, denial of access to health and harassment at work.
- A high level of depression is amongst members of the LGBT community
- Failures because of societal rules and discrimination in a normal life.
- Financial security is denied to these people
- Constant police harassment of the gay community.
- Doctors need to say that homosexuality is not a disease.
- Government should do capacity building of doctors to understand health issues specific to the homosexual community, it needs to be part of the educational curriculum.

INDIAN PERSPECTIVE ON SAME SEX MARRIAGE:

- In India general marriage are governed under Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, Indian Christian Marriage Act, 1872, Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937.
- same-sex and queer marriages are not clearly recognized in India and neither by society.
- Arun kumar and Sreeja vs The Inspector General of Registration and Ors:- Madurai Bench of the High Court of Madras employed a progressive interpretation holding that the term ‘bride’ under the Hindu

Marriage Act, 1955 includes transwomen and intersex persons identifying as women.

WHAT ARE THE COURT JUDGMENTS REGARDING IPC 377?

Naz Foundation vs. Govt. of NCT of Delhi (2009)

- Delhi High Court struck off in its famous judgement on section 377. Court specifically legalizing consensual homosexual activities between adults.
- Suresh Kumar Koushal Case (2013)
- SC completely overturned the previous judgment by Delhi High Court (2009) that decriminalized homosexual acts and criminalized homosexuality once again.
- In 150 years less than 200 persons had been prosecuted under Section 377.
- SC argued that, “plight of sexual minorities” could not be used as an argument for deciding the constitutionality of law.
- Further, SC said that it was for the legislature to look into the desirability of deleting section 377 of IPC.

JUSTICE K.S. PUTTASWAMY VS. UNION OF INDIA (2017)

- Right to Privacy is intrinsic to life and liberty and must be included in Fundamental right under Article 21 of the Indian constitution.
- Bodily autonomy was an integral part of the right to privacy said by Supreme court
- Sexual orientation of an individual is one's choice.

NAVTEJ SINGH JOHAR VS. UNION OF INDIA (2018)

- This judgement decriminalized homosexuality.
- Why decriminalization of 377 is a milestone:-
- It recognizes the rights of most discriminated persons.
- It shows the upholding of fundamental rights to all.
- It is progressive judgment which will further gives consolidation to same sex marriage's rights.
- Protection of Human rights under United nation human declaration for which India is party.

INTERNATIONAL VIEWS ON THE ISSUE OF SAME SEX MARRIAGE AND LGBTQIA+ RIGHTS:

Constitutional Court of South Africa In 2005:

- Minister of Home Affairs and Another vs Fourie case:- where court said that the common law definition of marriage i.e. “a union of one man with one woman” was inconsistent with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa
- So the words “or spouse” was included in place of “husband”.
- The South African government enacted the Civil Union Act, 2006 which said marriage is voluntary union of two persons above 18 years of age.

IN AUSTRALIA:

- The Same-Sex Relationships (Equal Treatment in Commonwealth Laws – General Law Reform) Act 2008 was enacted which provide provide equal entitlements for same-sex couples in matters of, inter alia, social security, employment and taxation.

- England and Wales:-
- the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 enabled same-sex couples to marry in civil ceremonies or with religious rites.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

- Supreme Court of the United States decided that the fundamental right to marry is guaranteed to same-sex couples.
- Obergefell vs Hodges ushered in a landmark shift in the American position and allowing same-sex marriages

A CASE OF IRELAND:

- Ireland is 1st country which recognizes and legalizes the same sex marriages.

WAY FORWARD:

- Where ever there is any legal or statutory bar to same sex and queer marriages must necessarily be held to be unconstitutional and specifically on the violation of article 14,19 and 21.
- There is a recognition that the unequal laws discriminating against the LGBTQIA+ community have acted and are acting as a trigger to reform and modernize the legal system which in actual sense provides equality.
- Self Respect marriages were legalized in Tamil Nadu through amendments to the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.
- A community evolved mechanism which ensure the rights of all people especially LGBTQIA+ should be protected.
- Government must amend the laws and put a progressive definition of marriage.
- Court must also pronounced a progressive and more sensitive approach towards the deprived people of same sex marriage.
- 172nd Law Commission Report recommended deletion of Section 377.
- In 2016, a UN report had urged to decriminalize consensual homosexual relations.
- Government bodies need to be sensitized and made aware about the changed position of law to ensure that the LGBTQ community is not denied public services or harassed for their sexual orientation.

Swarn Singh

Funding in Election System

(GS PAPER-2, Functions and Responsibilities of Various Constitutional Bodies, Transparency, and Accountability)

Source- The Hindu)

CONTEXT:

- In a democracy, power is supposed to flow from popular or people's approval, as a mandate given in elections.



- However, in practice, it has been observed, this system is often distorted by a number of factors, financial power, and muscle powers being the most prominent of them.
- This leads to the case, where the Political parties are seen to shape policy not as per the desires of their voters but their funders.
- Moreover, the government has brought many legal changes in the foreign Contribution and Regulation Act (2013), which is increasing the influence of anonymous corporate funding in the elections.
- Further, lack of transparency in political funding is a prime concern and experts believe that electoral bonds have made it worse.
- Unfortunately, these changes in India's election funding system are creating more loopholes that allow moneyed interest groups to surmount influence on political parties.

Issues In India's Election Funding System:

ELECTORAL BONDS:

- In 2017, the Government has introduced electoral bonds, a new form of anonymity to thousands of crores of donations.
- Under this scheme, only the ruling party via the State Bank of India (SBI) has a sole account of all donations being made via electoral bonds.
- Neither Parliament, the Election Commission, and the Opposition parties do not have this information, nor do the public.

- Electoral bonds provide political power to get funds from companies, wealthy individual donors, and foreign entities, thus diluting the universal franchise of one voter-one vote.

AMENDMENTS IN FCRA, 1976:

- In 2014, the Delhi High Court gave a verdict that two national political parties were guilty of illegally accepting donations from two companies registered in India but whose operating their shareholder via the foreign company.
- In 2016 and 2018, the government of India has amended the FCRA through the annual Finance Bills, to retrospectively legalize all the violations.
- According to the amendment, earlier, foreign companies or companies where the controlling stake was taken by a foreign company couldn't contribute; now they can.
- According to the Election Commission of India, this can allow unchecked foreign funding of political parties in India, which could lead to Indian policies being influenced by any foreign companies.

AMENDMENTS IN COMPANIES ACT, 2013:

- The Finance Bill of 2017 amended Section 182 of the Companies Act 2013 to remove the need for declaring disaggregated donations to any political parties.
- In the past only profit-making domestic companies were able to contribute to political parties; now loss-making companies can too.
- Further, the limit of 7.5% for corporate donations to political parties has been completely removed.
- With this amendment corporations are free to donate whatever amount of money and are not liable to tell the recipient of their donations.

NULLIFYING RTI EFFECT:

- The Right to Information Act, 2005 is enabling easier access to information held by public authorities.
- However, the above changes could in effect nullify the overall impact of transparency provisions even if political parties come under the ambit of Right to Information (RTI).

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA:

- The Election Commission of India is an autonomous constitutional authority of India which is responsible for administering Union and State election processes in India.
- The body administers elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, and State Legislative Assemblies in the country and the offices of the President and Vice President.

STRUCTURE OF THE ELECTION COMMISSION:

- Originally the commission had only one election commissioner but after the Election Commissioner Amendment Act 1989, it has become a multi-member body.
- The body consists of one Chief Election Commissioner and two Election Commissioners.
- The secretariat of the commission is situated in New Delhi.
- At the level of the state, the election commission is assisted by the Chief Electoral Officer.
- In India, the President appoints the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners.
- The body has a fixed tenure of six years, or up to the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.

- They enjoy the same status and receive salary and perks as available to Judges of the Apex court of India.
- The Chief Election Commissioner can be removed from office only through a process of removal similar to that of a Supreme Court judge by Parliament.

Measures were taken for Electoral Reform:

LEGISLATIVE MEASURES:

- Put a Limit on the spending of candidate
- Under Rule 90 of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, a candidate who is contesting in Lok Sabha polls can spend up to ₹70 lakh and in an assembly election up to ₹28 lakh, depending on the state in which the person is contesting polls.
- A private member bill was presented in the Parliament which intended to do away with the limit on election spending by candidates.
- The move was taken on the grounds that the ceiling on election expenses ends up being counterproductive by encouraging candidates to under-report their expenditure.
- In 2003, a law was passed by the Parliament of India after the Tehelka scam took place.
- According to the report donations to political parties will receive 100% income tax exemptions for donors.

2. MEASURES BY ECI:

- Political Parties Registration Tracking Management System: To permit an applicant to track the progress of his/her application.
- Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation Programme (SVEEP): ECI organizes voter awareness campaigns in order to educate and aware voters.

3. MEASURES BY JUDICIARY:

- Supreme Court in the following cases recommended various reforms:
- In the Union of India versus Association of Democratic Reforms 2002 case: Contesting candidates need to disclose their assets and liabilities, criminal convictions, etc. in a holistic way at the time of filing their nomination paper for the election.
- In the Ramesh Dalal versus Union of India 2005 case: A legislator will be disqualified from contesting elections if, on the day of filing the nomination papers, he/she stands convicted in a Court of law.
- In Lily Thomas versus Union of India 2013 case: The nature of disqualification for being a member of the Parliament or assembly as provided under Article 101(3) & 190(3) is automatic and takes place with immediate effect.
- In the People's Union of Civil Liberties versus Union of India 2013 case: Voters enjoy "Right to Negative Vote" or Right to not to use in the election process and directed the ECI to include the choice of "NOTA" in the ballot paper.

WAY FORWARD:

- **Transparency in Electoral Bonds:** Even though the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of electoral bonds in India, it could order full and real-time disclosure, to the actual benefit of transparency and accountability.

- **Moral Leadership:** Companies and political parties could exercise moral leadership and voluntarily disclose the identity of recipients and donors, as the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha recently did.
- **State Funding of Elections:** In many advanced countries, elections are funded publicly. This ensures principles of parity, equality and there is not too great a resource gap between the ruling party and the opposition.
- **Transition Towards Civic Culture:** India has been a democracy for nearly 75 years. Now in order to make the government more accountable and transparent, the voters should become self-aware and reject candidates and parties that violate the principle of free and fair, and neutral elections.

CONCLUSION:

- Every vote is not equally valuable if companies will be able to influence policies through hidden donations for their self-benefit.
- The winner of this arrangement is the ruling party, whether at the Centre or in a State, and the loser is the average voter or the person sitting in the middle of the road.

-Khyati Khare

