



Yojna IAS

योजना है तो सफलता है

JANUARY 2024

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

YOJNA IAS WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS
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WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS CONTENTS

S.No.	Topics	Pg No.
1.	MANDATORY: MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT (MNREGA) IT IS NOW MANDATORY FOR WORKERS TO LINK AADHAAR WITH THEIR BANK ACCOUNT FOR WAGES	1 - 6
2.	COVID-19 SUB-VARIANT JN.1	6 - 8
3.	REVIVING THE FLAME OF INDIA - SOUTH KOREA DEFENSE COOPERATION RELATIONS	9 - 14
4.	LPG REFORMS 1991-92	15 - 17
5.	DISCRETIONARY POWER OF GOVERNOR	17 - 18
6.	INDIA-MALDIVES RELATIONS IN CURRENT PERSPECTIVE	19 - 22
7.	ISSUE OF ONLINE HATE AND SOLUTIONS TO TACKLE IT	22 - 24
8.	SLUMP IN GST GROWTH. ANALYZING GST PERFORMANCE IN LAST 6 YEARS ALONG WITH THE CHALLENGES	25 - 26
9.	JUDICIAL ACTIVISM & RESTRAINT	26 - 28
10.	ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE	28 - 31
11.	ULFA PACT: TRIPARTITE COMPREHENSIVE AND EFFECTIVE AGREEMENT ON SECURITY MEASURES	31 - 36
12.	HISTORY OF KADAMBAS	36 - 39
13.	SICKLE CELL ANAEMIA	39 - 42
14.	SEBI'S SHIELDING / PROTECTION / DEFENSE	42 - 47
15.	GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP) GROWTH ESTIMATE BY NSO	48 - 50
16.	STUDY ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF NANO UREA	51 - 53

CURRENT AFFAIRS

JANUARY 2024

MANDATORY: MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT (MNREGA) IT IS NOW MANDATORY FOR WORKERS TO LINK AADHAAR WITH THEIR BANK ACCOUNT FOR WAGES

(This article was published by 'Official website of Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India', 'The Economy Times of India', 'Oxfom India', 'Indian Express', 'The Hindu', monthly magazine 'World Focus' and 'PIB'. The editorial deals with a brief summary of the same. It also includes the suggestions of the Yojana IAS team. This article is related to the UPSC Civil Services Examination especially 'Growth of Indian Economy, Poverty and Development-Related Issues, Government Policies and Interventions, Growth and Development, MNREGA Scheme. This article is related to 'Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act workers now mandatory to link Aadhaar with their bank account for wages' under 'Daily Current Affairs').

General studies - growth of indian economy, poverty and development issues, government policies and interventions, growth and development, mnrega scheme.

WHY IN DISCUSSION / NEWS?

According to the order issued by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, wages under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) will now be paid directly into bank accounts. Aadhaar based system (ABPS) has been prepared for this. Workers have been asked to link Aadhaar with their bank account. Laborers/workers will have to link Aadhaar with the bank account in which they have to receive wages. This order will come into effect across India from February 1, 2024. According to the department, out of the target set to generate man days by March 31 in this financial year, currently 76 percent has been achieved. It is a type of payment system based on unique identification number and allows Aadhar card holders to carry out financial transactions seamlessly through Aadhar based authentication. Aadhar Based System (ABPS) Banking Service aims to empower all sections of the society by making financial and banking services available to all through Aadhar. Cash deposit, cash withdrawal, account balance check, money transfer from one base to another, transactions and various government schemes like NREGA, Housing, NRLM. Payment of etc. D.B. Will go directly into the accounts of the beneficiaries/stakeholders through T. The beneficiary will have to take his Aadhar card and passbook to the bank. After that KYC The form will have to be

filled and deposited in the bank.



INTRODUCTION TO MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT (MNREGA):

- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), launched in 2005 by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, is one of the largest labor guarantee programs not only in India but in the entire world.
- The primary objective of the scheme is to guarantee 100 days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do unskilled manual work related to public work.
- The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) has seen a significant increase in women's participation, a historic increase in the current financial year 2023-24.

WHAT DO THE TRENDS OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN MGNREGA MEAN?

MEANING OF TRENDS IN WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION:

- There has been a gradual increase in women's participation over the last decade, with the percentage increasing from 53.19% during the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020-21 to the current 59.25%.
- Southern states such as Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Goa have significantly higher female participation rates, exceeding 70%, while northern states such as Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh are around 40% or less.
- Despite historical disparities across the world, some states in India such as Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Lakshadweep have shown recent improvement due to increasing percentage of women's participation rates in the current financial year.

THE MAIN REASONS FOR THE INCREASING TREND OF WOMEN IN THE RURAL LABOR FORCE:

- The Periodic Labor Force Survey (PLFS) by the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation shows a substantial increase in the female labor force participation rate (LFPR) in rural areas, beyond the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).
- Notable data from the Periodic Labor Force Survey (PLFS) shows that the rural female labor force participation rate (LFPR) has increased from 18.2% in the session 2017-18 to 30.5% in the session 2022-23, with the female The unemployment rate declined from 3.8% to 1.8%.
- The scheme provides a legal guarantee of minimum one hundred days of employment in each financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do unskilled manual work related

to public works at minimum wages.

- The number of active employees/workers under this scheme in the financial year/session 2023-24) was 14.32 crore.



KEY FEATURES OF MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT (MNREGA):

- The cornerstone of the design of MGNREGA is its legal guarantee, which ensures that any rural adult can request work and must get it within 15 days.
- If for some reason this commitment is not fulfilled, then in such a situation those workers should be provided 'unemployment' allowance.
- It is necessary that priority be given to women in such a way that at least one third of the beneficiaries are women who have registered and requested for work.
- Section 17 of MNREGA mandates social audit of all works executed under MNREGA.

ORGANIZATION IMPLEMENTING MNREGA:

- The Ministry of Rural Development (MRD), Government of India, is monitoring the overall implementation of this scheme in collaboration with the State Governments.

OBJECTIVE OF MNREGA:

- This Act was introduced with the aim of improving the purchasing power of the people in rural areas, its main objective is to provide semi or unskilled work mainly to the people living below the poverty line in rural India.
- The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) seeks to reduce the income gap and lifestyle gap between the rich and the poor in India.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF MNREGA FOR THE YEAR 2022-23:

- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) has provided employment to about 11.37 crore families across the country.
- Out of this, 289.24 crore person-days of employment has been generated, which includes:
 - 56.19% women
 - 19.75% Scheduled Caste (SC)
 - 17.47% are Scheduled Tribe (ST) people.

MAJOR CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT (MNREGA):

DELAY AND INADEQUACY IN DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS:

- Most states in India fail to pay wages within the 15 days mandated by MNREGA or have failed, according to some data. Apart from this, those workers are also not compensated for the delay in payment of wages, which creates many challenges in rural areas.
- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), has turned the scheme into a supply-based program and after which, workers have stopped taking interest in working under it.
- Substantial evidence received so far, including admissions from the Ministry of Finance, Government of India, indicates that delays in salary payments are a result of inadequate funds.

NEGATIVE IMPACT OF CASTE-BASED SEGREGATION IN INDIA:

- There were significant variations in the delay in payments under this scheme based on caste in India. 46% payments to SC workers and 37% to ST workers were completed within the mandatory seven-day period, while it was a dismal (26%) for non-ST/SC workers.
- The negative impact of caste-based segregation is particularly felt in poorer states such as Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal.

INEFFECTIVE ROLE OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTION (PRI):

- Panchayati Raj institution in India is a subject of "State List". In many states of India, the states are not able to implement the MNREGA Act in an effective and efficient manner due to very little autonomy given to the Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) in practice by that state.

DELAY IN COMPLETING TASKS AND LARGE NUMBER OF INCOMPLETE TASKS:

- There has been delay in completing the works under MNREGA within the stipulated time frame and at the same time the inspection of these projects has been irregular. Besides, the issue of quality of work and wealth creation under MNREGA has also been related. As a result, the issue of a large amount of work remaining incomplete also comes to the fore.

CASE LIKE CREATION OF FAKE JOB CARD BY INCLUDING FAKE NAMES:

- There are many issues under MNREGA like creation of fake job cards by including fake names, entries with multiple names missing and delay in inclusion of entries in the job card, posing challenges in its smooth functioning. She is coming.

SCHEMES/INITIATIVES RUNNING UNDER MNREGA:

Amrit Sarovar Yojana: The main objective of this scheme running under MNREGA includes construction/renovation of at least 75 Amrit Sarovar (ponds) in every district of the country which will help in increasing the availability of groundwater both on surface and underground.

'Jaldoot' App: This app was launched in September 2022 to measure the water level in a Gram Panchayat through 2-3 selected open wells twice a year in the construction works under MNREGA.

Lokpal for MNREGA: Lokpal app was launched in February 2022 for smooth reporting and classification of complaints received from various sources related to timely implementation of all schemes under MNREGA.

CONCLUSION / WAY FORWARD TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM:

- Even though the Constitution of India has provided all the fundamental rights to women in India in the year 1950 itself and has implemented “equal pay for equal work” and has prohibited any kind of discrimination between men and women on the basis of gender. But even today in Indian society, the working skills and abilities of women are underestimated. Therefore, there is a need to make it practical and visible on the ground for women to get “equal pay for equal work” even in the construction works done under MNREGA. Any kind of discrimination in the work of men and women is a hindrance in the “building of an inclusive society” and in the “process of building an egalitarian nation”, which needs to be removed with immediate effect.
- There is an urgent need to ensure continuous fund flow to States and implementing agencies by leveraging digital tools for timely and transparent salary payments.
- By focusing on the various exclusionary errors that deprive family members of marginalized SC and ST communities from the benefits of MNREGA and identifying the areas that deprive them of the benefits of MNREGA. There is an urgent need to remove it with immediate effect so that the objective underlying the MNREGA scheme can be fulfilled.
- There is a need to strengthen the State and Central Employment Guarantee Councils to achieve the core objective of the MNREGA scheme by involving public participation through trade unions, civil societies and legislatures, as well as D.B. There is a need to send wages/salaries of MNREGA workers directly to the accounts of beneficiaries/stakeholders through T.T. so that any kind of discrimination and corruption can be stopped and the basic objective of the MNREGA scheme can be achieved.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM:

Q.1. Consider the following statements regarding Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA).

1. This is one of the largest labor guarantee programs not only in India but in the entire world, launched by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India in the year 2005.
2. The primary objective of the scheme is to guarantee 180 days of employment in every financial year to unskilled adult members of any rural household engaged in public work.
3. The MNREGA scheme works to widen the gap in income and lifestyle between the rich and the poor in India.
4. Periodic Labor Force Survey (PLFS) data shows that the rural female labor force participation rate (LFPR) has increased to 30.5% in the session 2022-23, while the female unemployment rate has declined from 3.8% to 1.8%.

Which of the above statement/statements is correct?

- (A). Only 1 and 4
(B). Only 1, 2 and 3
(C). None of these.
(D). All of these.

Answer – (A).

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM:

Q.1. What is Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act? How will linking your Aadhaar with your bank account bring transparency in timely payment of salaries to MNREGA workers and implementation of government schemes? Discuss in details.

COVID-19 SUB-VARIANT JN.1

This article covers 'Daily Current Affairs' and the topic details 'Spread of a new COVID variant' This topic has relevance in the Science and technology section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 3 : Science and Technology

Why in the News?

A new sub-variant JN.1 of COVID has been detected in the country and approximately 200 cases of it have been detected so far by Indian SARSCoV2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG).

About JN.1

- It is a sub-variant of Omicron, and it is also known as the Mu variant or B.1.621. It has evolved through some genetic changes from Omicron variant to its current genetic changes.
- JN.1 is a descendent of BA 2.86 also known as Pirola. Even though JN.1 only has one extra spike protein mutation when compared to Pirola, researchers have been keeping an eye on it because Pirola has more than 30 mutations.
- JN.1 possesses a single mutation in its spike protein, which might potentially modify some of the virus's characteristics. However, initial studies suggest that this mutation could offer more immune evasion. WHO has classified JN.1 as a separate "variant of interest" because of its rapidly increasing spread. Any virus-associated index (VOI) often identifies specific genetic markers linked to modifications in the virus's receptor-binding behaviour.

Symptoms of COVID-19 JN.1 variant

- Sore throat
- Congestion
- Cough
- Runny Nose
- Fatigue
- Muscle aches
- Sneezing

Although right now it is hard to tell whether JN.1 had different symptoms than the other Omicron sub variants or COVID-19 variants. But if someone faces issues of breathlessness then the patient should immediately seek a doctor's help.

Difference between JN.1 variant and other Omicron variant

- 1) In Genetic make up
- 2) When compared to Omicron, JN.1 has a far higher transmissibility rate, meaning it can affect a larger population.
- 3) It has 1 extra mutation in spike protein than the BA 2.86.

Precautions and treatments of JN.1

The precautions and treatments of JN.1 variant and other COVID-19's variants are similar in nature. Hence, the difference between both regarding precautions and treatments is minute.

Precautions

- Maintain physical distancing.
- Frequent hand washing.
- Cover your nose and mouth with handkerchief/tissue while sneezing and coughing.
- Maintain a safe distance from persons during interaction, especially with those having flu-like symptoms.
- To sneeze on the inner side of your elbow and not to cough into the palms of your hands.
- To see a doctor if you feel unwell (fever, difficulty in breathing and coughing). While visiting the doctor, wear a mask/cloth to cover your mouth and nose.
- Get Vaccinated.

Treatments

- **Medications**
 - (a) **Antiviral Drugs** : Remdesivir
 - (b) **Anti-Malaria Medications** : Chloroquine and Hydroxychloroquine
 - (c) **HIV Drugs** : Lopinavir and Ritonavir
- **Convalescent Plasma Therapy** : It uses the antibodies of the recovered patients. These recovered patients donate whole blood or plasma, which is then injected into critically ill patients in order to help them fight off the virus by transferring antibodies.
- While **Oxygen therapy** only for severe cases.

Tests to detect the JN.1 and other variants of COVID

- 1) **Molecular (RT-PCR) test** = RT-PCR stands for Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction. Generally it is used to directly detect the presence of the virus in the given sample. It detects the virus's RNA and then this RNA is converted to DNA using an enzyme known as

reverse transcriptase. The PCR then detects this converted DNA. For sample Throat swab is taken.

- 2) **Rapid Antigen test** = Antigen is any foreign matter or protein in the body which triggers an immune response. It is performed outside the laboratory and is generally used to obtain a diagnostic result fast as it takes less time than the molecular tests. For sample Throat swab is taken.
- 3) **Antibody test** = It only identifies the antibodies that the immune system produces in reaction to the infection—not the virus itself. It tells whether a patient was previously infected from the virus. For sample minute amount of blood is taken.

Some concerns regarding JN.1 variant

- More transmissible than other variants which could lead to larger outbreaks
- One possible concern is that it may be more resistant to vaccines than the other variants of the COVID.
- Can cause severe illness comparable to other variants. Hence, it has enough potential to harm people suffering from chronic diseases like Hypertension, diabetes etc.
- If lockdown is ordered again then it will cause severe harm to Human Capital as already acknowledged by the World Bank in its report "*Collapse and Recovery: How COVID-19 Eroded Human Capital and What to Do*".

Conclusion

To mitigate the possible threats which can be caused by the upcoming variants of the COVID we need to follow the prevention measures and WHO guidelines regarding COVID-19. A pan India robust monitoring is needed to monitor genomic variations in the SARS-CoV-2.

Prelims Question

Q. Which of the following COVID vaccines uses mRNA technology?

- (a) MODERNA
- (b) Sinovac
- (c) Covaxin
- (d) AstraZeneca

Answer – A

Mains Question

Q. How COVID has impacted the culture and human capital? What do you understand by Shadow Pandemic?

REVIVING THE FLAME OF INDIA – SOUTH KOREA DEFENSE COOPERATION RELATIONS

(This article is a brief summary of the combined editorials of 'Indian Express', 'The Hindu', 'World Focus' and 'PIB'. It also includes suggestions from the YOJNA IAS team. This article is specifically for the UPSC Civil Services Examination. Belongs to the section 'International Relations, Indian Politics and Governance, India-South Korea Defense-Cooperation'. This article is related to 'Reviving the flame of India-South Korea Defense-Cooperation relations' under 'Daily Current Affairs').

GENERAL STUDIES: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, INDIAN POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE, INDIA-SOUTH KOREA DEFENSE COOPERATION.

WHY IN DISCUSSION / NEWS ?

India, during its **G20 presidency in 2023**, recalled the contribution of its diplomatic role in the Korean War seven decades ago. India and South Korea have taken their mutual relations to new heights through bilateral treaties and agreements over the years. During the global pandemic **COVID-19**, better mutual coordination was also seen between the two countries in the health sector. To stop the spread of Coronavirus, South Korea worked seriously on strategies like high speed of testing, strict quarantine policy and contact tracing, which proved to be a path-breaking example for India. Apart from the strong trade and economic relations between India and South Korea, equal importance is also being given to the dynamic defense relations. In the year 2019, India and South Korea have signed an agreement under Special Strategic Partnership under which both the countries will use each other's naval bases for exchange of logistics. Recently, between **Indian Defense Minister Rajnath Singh and his South Korean counterpart Suh Wook, both the countries decided to emphasize joint research, joint production of defense equipment and joint export of defense industrial cooperation in the field of defense industrial cooperation. Defense industrial cooperation was discussed extensively in this meeting. South Korea, as a strong ally, has been a major supplier of arms and military equipment to India. In 2019, India and South Korea finalized a roadmap for cooperation in joint production of various naval systems.**

- **India's role in the Korean War was partially successful, yet India is counted among the countries that contributed to ending the war.**

EVENTS OF THE KOREAN WAR:

BACKGROUND:

- This war event has its roots in the conflict over **Japanese control of Korea between 1910 and 1945.**
- When Japan was defeated in World War II, the Allied forces agreed to establish a **"Four Power Trusteeship over Korea"** at the Yalta Conference (1945).
- While the **Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)** invaded Korea and took control of the northern region, South Korea remained under the control of the rest of its allies, primarily the United States.

- **The 38th parallel**, the official border dividing Korea into two parts, divided the two regions into North and South Korea, which still remains the official border dividing Korea into two parts.
- **The Republic of Korea (South Korea) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) were established in 1948.**
- Both the countries tried to expand their reach regionally and ideologically at their respective levels, due to which the Korean conflict emerged between the two countries.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

- The relations between South Korea and India are not from today but are more than 2000 years old.
- There are many such legends and legends and it is believed that **Princess Suriratna of Ayodhya married King Kim-suro of Korea. Therefore, in view of this marital relationship between the two countries, a joint postage stamp has also been issued.**
- **Buddhism originated mainly in India but spread to China, Japan and Korea**, thus the cultural ties resulting from the spread of the religion brought the two countries closer to each other.
- Many rulers of India had sent their messengers to this region to spread Buddhism and also the students here used to come to get education in the Buddhist education centers of India.



VARIOUS AREAS OF INDIA-SOUTH KOREA COOPERATION:

POLITICAL SECTOR:

- Political relations between India and South Korea began after the independence of South Korea in 1945. India has always played an important and positive role in the affairs of South Korea.
- Only **Shri K.P.S. Menon of India** was appointed as the Chairman of the 9-member United Nations Commission formed in 1947 to conduct elections in Korea.
- **During the Korean War (1950-53)**, both sides of the war accepted a resolution sponsored by India and a ceasefire was declared on 27 July 1953, which was a major achievement for India.
- The state visit of the then President of India, **Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam to the Republic of Korea in 2006** marked the beginning of a new phase in India-Republic of Korea relations. During this visit, a task force was formed to take a decision on the bilateral **Comprehensive Economic**

Partnership Agreement (CEPA). This Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement came into effect in January 2010.

- **Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's** visit to South Korea in 2019 was very important when he was awarded the **Seoul Peace Prize**. In this way, political relations between India and South Korea have remained very strong.

ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS SECTOR:

- **Korea is India's 15th largest trading partner.** Shipbuilding, automobile, electronics, textile, food processing and manufacturing etc. are the major sectors in India-Republic of Korea mutual trade.
- **The investment of Indian technology companies in the Republic of Korea is approximately Rs 2 billion. Whereas big companies of Republic of Korea like Samsung, Hyundai Motors and LG have invested more than 3 billion dollars in India.**
- **603 small and big Korean firms are officially operating in India. Multinational Korean company Samsung, by setting up its world's largest enterprise in Noida, has made its intention clear that if India creates an investment-friendly environment, Korea will not lag behind in investment.**
- Apart from this, Korea has announced that it will establish a startup center in India. Bilateral trade between the two countries reached \$22.52 billion in the year 2019-2020.

CULTURAL AREA:

- To enhance cultural exchange between India and the Republic of Korea, Indian Cultural Centers were established in Seoul in April 2011 and Busan in December 2013.
- **Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi** and the **University of Delhi**, which are located in Delhi, India, offer research programs ranging from graduate-level to PhD courses in Korea Studies and Korean Language courses, respectively.
- In the year 2013, '**Indian Institute of Studies Korea**' was established by the Korea International Trade Association. The Institute of Indian Studies Korea is a platform that brings together a large number of Korean and Indian academicians, economists and business representatives.
- Exchange of youth delegations between India and the Republic of Korea has been taking place on an annual basis for many years.

OVERSEAS INDIANS LIVING IN SOUTH KOREA:

- **The total number of Indian citizens living in the Republic of Korea is around 11,000.** More than 1000 Indian scholars are studying and doing research in postgraduate and PhD courses in the Republic of Korea.
- Many professionals from important sectors like information technology, shipping and automobile have migrated to the Republic of Korea in the last few years mainly from India and are making significant contributions in strengthening the economy there.



CURRENT PERSPECTIVE OF INDIA-SOUTH KOREA BILATERAL RELATIONS:

- While South Korea wants to establish better relations with India through the **New Southern Policy**, India is promoting its relations through its **Look East Policy**.
- South Korea has declared India as its special strategic partner, South Korea has made such an agreement only with its traditional allies like Japan and America.
- During the global pandemic Covid-19, both the countries have ensured mutual exchange of health-related equipment such as testing kits, masks and medicines that develop immunity.
- Along with the joint meeting at the ministerial level between South Korea and India, talks like **2 + 2 Dialogue** are going on at the secretary level, due to which both India and South Korea are continuously strengthening their strategic relations. Are doing, it turns out.
- Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement that allows India and South Korea free import of critical metals and articles from each other. There is also a **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement** between India and South Korea.
- **South Korea is building a project on a trilateral basis with India in Afghanistan. Along with this, he has always been supporting India's Afghanistan policy.**
- India-South Korea Technology Exchange – Center has been established in the premises of 'National Small Enterprises Corporation' located in New Delhi. Through this, both the countries are helping each other in the field of small and medium industries.
- Korea Plus has been operationalized between the two countries since June 2016, involving representatives of the **South Korean Ministry of Industry, Trade and Energy, Korea Trade Investment and Promotion Agency (KOTRA)** and Invest India. Are included.
- **Korean Broadcasting System** and **Prasar Bharati** have agreed to facilitate the **broadcasting of Doordarshan** India Channel in **South Korea** and **Korean Broadcasting Channel in India** as well as to promote mutual cultural relations between India and South Korea.

CHALLENGES IN INDIA-SOUTH KOREA RELATIONS:

- **South Korea's trade with China is almost 10 times more than that with India.** Therefore, we should not forget that even though India wants to sideline China from a strategic and trade point of view by signing an agreement with South Korea, the undeniable truth is that there is

still confusion between the two countries regarding the free trade agreement. Therefore, trade between India and South Korea is not achieving the expected pace.

- In the last few years, relations between South Korea and **North Korea have normalized and it is indirectly believed that there is a partnership between North Korea and Pakistan on nuclear programs which is a matter of concern for India.**
- Special attention is not being given to the cultural relations between India and South Korea, as a result incidents based on racial discrimination are increasing.
- There was an agreement between India and South Korea to increase strategic partnership a decade ago, but that agreement is still limited on paper or it can be said that not much progress has been made in this regard.
- **The Indo-Pacific region** has the highest contribution in world trade but India's relations with these island countries are not as strong as they should be. Which may create difficulties for India in future in both strategic and commercial areas.

INDIA-SOUTH KOREA COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER:

- On one hand, while India is focusing on implementing its **'Act East Policy'**, on the other hand, South Korea is also working with North-East Asia, South-East Asia, Australia and India as per its **'New South Policy'**. Will strengthen its strategic and trade relations.
- **India's population is 24 times that of South Korea, while in terms of per capita GDP it is only 16th of South Korea.** Thus, the relationship between the two complements each other because while South Korea has capital along with advanced technology and experts, **India has a huge market and availability of raw materials which both countries can take advantage of. Due to which both the countries can strengthen their strategic and trade relations between themselves.**
- Unlike India, South Korea is completely dependent on sea imports for its energy needs, while both India and South Korea are peninsular countries. In such a situation, amid India's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific region, there is a common interest of both the countries in the security of maritime traffic. The convergence of mutual interests between India and South Korea also facilitates technology transfer.
- The Indian Navy's dominance in the Indian Ocean may prove useful for Seoul. At the same time, South Korea's shipbuilding capabilities can prove helpful for India. South Korea's cooperation in shipbuilding modernization for military and commercial use in India can prove to be a **'win-win deal'**.
- From drones to air defense guns and effective border surveillance systems, there are many fronts of partnership on which both the countries are discussing. If India gets access to the sensitive surveillance systems developed by South Korea in the Demilitarized Zone adjacent to North Korea, then it can prove to be effective for India in dealing with the challenges of infiltration along the Line of Control with Pakistan. India and South Korea are also talking about joint development and production of missile air-defense systems.
- Both India and South Korea are in support of the Indo-Pacific Policy. Moreover, like India's Act East Policy, South Korea's New South Policy also aims at economic, diplomatic, and To strength-

en strategic relations.

- In view of the increasing trade war between America and China, India needs a new market. In such a situation, India can give a new direction to economic relations with South Korea.

CONCLUSION / WAY FORWARD:

- The way the mutual relations between the two countries are currently deepening in order to contribute to the contribution of both India and South Korea in providing peace and security at the global level, is reflected in the mutual strategic, trade and economic development of both the countries. Cultural relations have attracted the attention of the global world towards mutual needs and requirements but there is a need to take it further so that both the countries can contribute to world peace and security.
- India's '**Act East Policy**' and South Korea's '**New South Policy**' still need to be strengthened to reduce growing regional instability.
- To emphasize on joint research, joint production of defense equipment and joint export of its strategic, trade, cultural and defense industrial cooperation, India needs to include South Korea among its top priority countries as South Korea is a strong ally, the country has been a major supplier of arms and military equipment to India. Therefore, India and South Korea currently need to work together for regional stability.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM:

Q.1. What is the 2 + 2 Dialogue running between South Korea and India?

- (A). A Rail project between South Korea and India.
- (B). A roadmap for cooperation in joint production of naval systems between South Korea and India.
- (C). Establishment of India-South Korea Technology Exchange – Center in the premises of 'National Small Enterprises Corporation' located in New Delhi.
- (D). Along with the joint meeting at the ministerial level between the two countries, South Korea and India, talks are being held at the secretary level.

Answer – (D)

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAINS EXAM:

Q.1. What is the 'Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement' between India and South Korea? In the context of strategic, cultural and economic relations between India and South Korea, discuss how India's 'Act East Policy' and South Korea's 'New South Policy' can affect the increasing regional instability?

LPG REFORMS 1991-92

UPSC MAINS SYLLABUS GS3 PAPER: INDIAN ECONOMY AND ISSUES RELATING TO PLANNING, MOBILIZATION OF RESOURCES, GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

WHY IN NEWS?

1. S.Venkitaramanan, an IAS officer who served as the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) from December 1990 to December 1992 passed away recently.
2. He played a pivotal role in steering India through the 1991 financial crisis by employing strategies like pledging gold reserves and implementing import compression to stabilise the country's Balance of payments (BOP) crisis.

CAUSES OF BOP CRISIS IN 1991-92:

- The balance of payments (BoP) record the transactions in goods, services, and assets between residents of a country with the rest of the world in a financial year. It represents a summation of country's current demand and supply of the claims on foreign currencies and of foreign claims on its currency:
1. Indian economy was plagued with low rate of economic growth (called as Hindu rate of growth) averaging 3-4% of GDP between 1950s-1980s due to the:
 1. Poor performance of public sectors
 2. Red Tapism: Entrepreneurs were unwilling to establish new industries because laws like MRTP Act 1969, corruption, undue delays and bureaucratic inefficiency disenfranchised them.
 2. Also, under India's Industrial policy 1977 suggesting for Heavy industrialisation had led to large import of heavy industrial products.
 3. To finance this, Indian Government under Rajeev Gandhi tenure had taken huge loans from International financial institutions such as IMF & World Bank.
 4. Additionally, India was highly dependent on Oil imports for its energy needs up to 80% of energy demands. This led to heavy drain of FOREX.
 5. Further, fall of the Eastern Bloc or USSR in 1989 with which had significant trade relations with India led to deficit of FOREX payments flowing towards India.
 6. Thus accumulation of factors (1),(2),(3) ,(4) & (5) had led to India facing high TWIN Deficit:
 1. High Current Account Deficit (CAD) i.e; reduction of receipts and a rise in the value of imports, up to 3% of GDP (highest in two decades)
 2. High fiscal deficit incurred by the Government. For example, India's fiscal deficit had risen from 10% in 1985 to 12% in 1990-91.
 7. Thus, India was facing a Balance of Payments (BOP) crisis in 1990 which means inability to procure imports to serve need of economy due to dwindling of Foreign Exchange reserves.
 8. This was further exacerbated by Gulf crisis of 1990-91 which led to the rise in the price of oil following the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussain.
 9. There was also growing speculation that India would default on its external payment **obligation**.
 10. In February 1991, the Chandrasekhar government was unable to pass the budget after Moody's

downgraded India's bond ratings.

Following this, IMF suspended its loan program to India, and the World Bank also discontinued its assistance limiting the government's options to address the crisis. These issues forced the Government & RBI to take drastic measures to avoid defaulting on its payments:

IMMEDIATE MEASURES TO CONTROL 1991 BOP CRISIS:

1. RBI had begun a programme of import compression, implemented mainly via raising the cash margin on imports which was hiked fourfold between October 1990 and April 1991. This strategy turned out to be a winner, and CAD flipped from a high of 3% in 1990-91 to a mere 0.3% of GDP in 1991-92
2. Devaluation of the rupee: The government, along with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), undertook a two-step devaluation of the rupee – 9 & 11%.
3. Pledging gold holdings to shore up forex reserves: The RBI pledged India's gold holdings with the Bank of England in four tranches from 4-18 July 1991 raising around \$400 million through this route.
4. Budget 1991-92 increased Corporate tax rates by 5 % to 45% and introduced the concept of Tax deducted at source (TDS) for some financial transactions like bank deposits.
 1. It also increased the prices of cooking gas cylinders, fertilisers and petrol and removed the subsidy on sugar.
 2. It opened up mutual funds to the private sector and relaxed rules for investment by non-residents.

LONG TERM MEASURES: NEW ECONOMIC POLICY 1991:

P. V. Narasimha Rao took over as Prime Minister in June 1991 and appointed Manmohan Singh as Finance Minister & ushered in several reforms that are collectively referred to as Liberalisation, Privatisation & Globalisation (LPG) reforms:

LIBERALISATION OF INDUSTRIES:

1. Free determination of interest rate by the commercial Banks
2. Increase in the investment limit for the Small Scale Industries (SSIs) to Rs 1 crore
3. Indian industries were allowed to buy machines and raw materials from foreign countries to do their holistic development
4. Industries were made free to diversify their production capacities and reduce the cost of production (Earlier government used to fix the maximum limit of production capacity)
5. Industries were freed from licensing and other restrictions, except following industries: Liquor, Cigarette, Defence equipment's, Industrial explosives etc.

PRIVATISATION:

1. Indian Govt. started selling shares of PSU's to public and financial institution e.g. Govt. sold shares of Maruti Udyog Ltd.
2. The share of private sector were increased from 45% to 55%.

3. Number of industries reserved for public sector was reduced from 17 to 2: Space & Defence.

GLOBALISATION:

1. Custom duties and tariffs imposed on imports and exports were reduced gradually just to make India economy attractive to the global investors.
2. All controls on foreign trade were removed
3. Partial Convertibility of Indian currency: Led to increased Remittances to meet family expenses, Payment of interest, Import and export of goods and services.
4. Increase in Equity Limit of Foreign Investment (FDI & FPI)
5. Further, India moved from Fixed exchange rate system under Bretton Wood system to Market determined exchange rate since March 1993.

UPSC MAINS 2024 PRACTISE QUESTION:

Q: Examine the effects of the LPG reforms on poverty alleviation in India. (10M, 150W).

DISCRETIONARY POWER OF GOVERNOR

UPSC MAINS SYLLABUS GS2 PAPER: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES PERTAINING TO THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The “**unconstitutional**” behaviour of the Governors in discharge of their “**discretionary powers**” in the states ruled by the Opposition Governments has come under severe scrutiny by the Supreme court of India in its recent judgements.

DISCRETIONARY POWERS OF THE PRESIDENT & GOVERNORS:

DISCRETIONARY POWER OF THE PRESIDENT:

The President has been provided with **only “situational discretion”** under norms and conventions established under the Parliamentary procedures:

1. Appointment of the Prime Minister in the case of “**Hung assembly**”
2. Dismissal of Council of Ministers (CoM) in case of passage of the **Non-confidence motion** in the Lok Sabha
3. Dissolution of Lok Sabha if the Council of Ministers (CoM) **loses majority in Lok Sabha**

DISCRETIONARY POWER OF THE GOVERNOR:

Under **Article 153** of the Constitution, The Governor acts as the **Chief Executive head** of the State and is appointed by the **President** under his warrant and seal of hand in which capacity he acts as the “**Nominee**” of the **Central Government**. Unlike President, the Governor has been provided

with Situational as well as **Constitutional Discretion:**

1. **Article 167** : Seeking info on Administrative & Legislative affairs from Chief Minister
2. **Article 201** : Reserving the State Bill for the Consideration of President
3. **Article 356** : Recommendation for President Rule
4. Determination of amount payable to Tribal District Council (TDC) under **6th schedule** States

RATIONALE BEHIND DISCRETIONARY POWER OF THE GOVERNOR:

1. It ensures that States *do not act against larger national interest* or opposed to **Directives under Part 4** of the Constitution
2. It ensures that Bills passed by the State *do not breach independence of Judiciary* which is integral to sustain the **Federal structure** of Indian constitution.
3. To **curb cessationist tendencies** in states to ensure integrity of the Nation
4. To prevent *breakdown of Constitutional Machinery* under **Article 365**
5. As **Union Territories** are regions of strategic interest, they shall be devoid of any kind of political exigencies
6. To ensure welfare of people in the **“mineral areas”** in the 6th schedule areas

Thus discretionary power of the Governor is integral for welfare of citizens to tone down any regional imbalances in Socio-economic growth and ensure uniform progress throughout the country.

WAY FORWARD:

However, the Supreme Court of India held in **Nabam Rabia Case 2006** that despite provisions of Constitutional discretion, the Governor shall act according to the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers under **Article 163**.

OTHER IMPORTANT DIRECTIVES RELATED TO THE GOVERNOR:

1. **NCT of Delhi v. Union of India(2018)**: The Supreme Court emphasized the need to identify the “moral values of the Constitution” based on a notion of **“constitutional culture”**.
2. **Rameshwar Prasad vs UOI 2006**: The Supreme Court held that the **Article 361** of the Constitution provides only a limited and conditional immunity for the Governors. Thus, any motivated and whimsical conduct of the Governor is **amenable to judicial review**.
3. **Kishor v. State of Uttar Pradesh(2023)**: The Court said that the freedom of expression of public functionaries could not be curtailed other than by way of the **“reasonable restrictions”**, as permitted by **Article 19(2)** of the Constitution.

UPSC MAINS 2024 PRACTISE QUESTION:

Q: In light of the recent judgements by the Supreme court of India, critically analyse the discretionary powers of the Governors in the State. (10 M, 150 words)

INDIA-MALDIVES RELATIONS IN CURRENT PERSPECTIVE

(This article is a brief summary of the combined editorials of 'The Hindu', 'World Focus', 'Indian Express' and 'PIB'. It also includes suggestions from the YOJNA IAS team. This article is specifically for the UPSC Civil Services Examination belongs to the section 'International Relations, Indian Politics and Governance, 'India-Maldives Relations in the Current Perspective'. This article is related to 'India-Maldives Relations in the Current Perspective' under 'Daily Current Affairs') :

General Studies: International Relations, Indian Politics And Governance, India-Maldives Relations In Current Perspective

WHY IN DISCUSSION / NEWS ?

The recent decision of Maldives to cancel an agreement with India for joint hydrographic services in Maldivian waters has caused considerable dismay in the Indian media and strategic world. **The agreement, signed during the visit of Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to the island in 2019, was seen as a symbol of India-Maldives defense relations.**

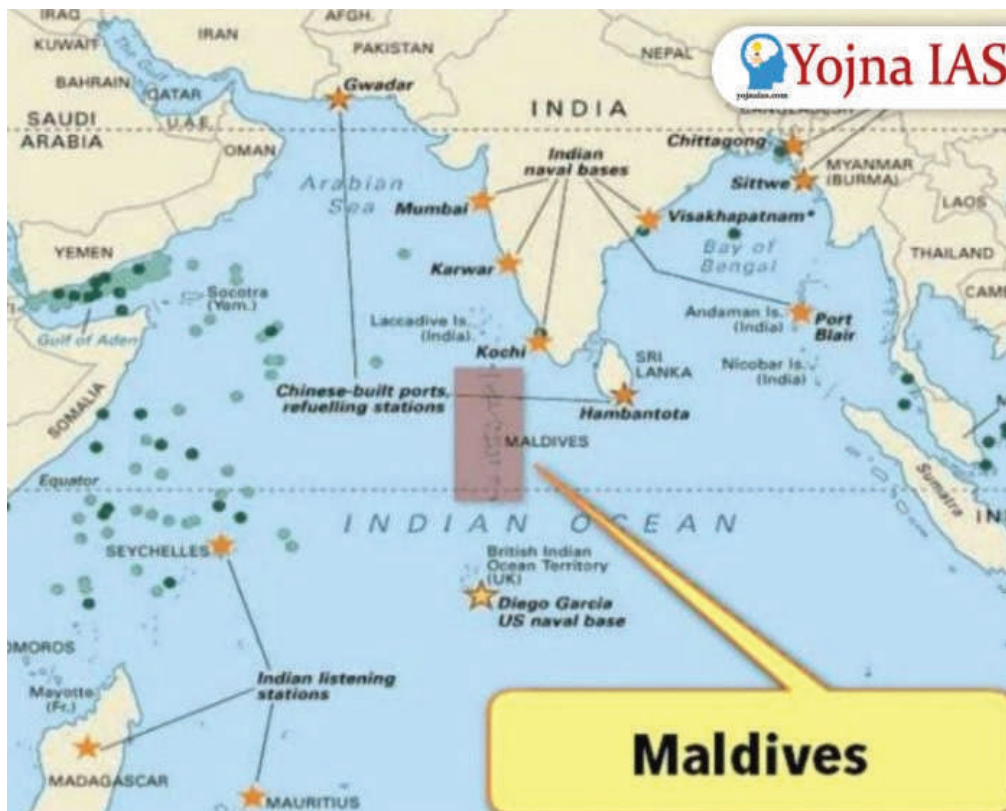
Maldives, located in the Indian Ocean, is a country neighboring India and south of the Lakshadweep group of India. The election of Chinese supporter Mohammed Muizzu as the provisional President of Maldives in the recent presidential elections in Maldives is a matter of concern for India. During the **COP28 climate conference**, Maldivian President Mohammed Muizzu appealed to the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to request the new government formed in Maldives to take back about 75 Indian military personnel to India to work on humanitarian operations. Have agreed to. Mr Muizzu said this at the summit in Dubai after he used 'India Out' as a slogan during his election campaign in Maldives. Opposition candidate from **Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM)**, Mohammed Muizzoo, has won the Maldives presidential election with 54 percent votes against his rival candidate and current President Mohammed Ibrahim Solih.

The important aspect is that the electoral system of France and Maldives is similar. In this electoral process, to win the election and become the winner in the election, the candidate has to get more than 50% of the votes. If no candidate is able to achieve this figure in the first round of the process, then the winner of the election will be declared on the basis of the votes obtained by the top two candidates out of the votes obtained in the second round.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE :

- After Maldives got independence from colonial British rule in 1965, India was the first country which accepted the independent rule/independence of Maldives and India established its mutual cultural, economic, military and strategic relations with Maldives.
- Maldives established a High Commission in New Delhi in November 2004 with the aim of improving and deepening its diplomatic relations with India so that a new dimension can be provided to the diplomatic mission of India-Maldives relations.
- Adopting a balance and balance approach towards Sri Lanka, the friendly relations with India were further strengthened as India is also the nearest neighbor and largest mutual trading partner of Maldives.

CHINA'S INCREASING INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF MALDIVES AND INDIA-MALDIVES RELATIONS:



INITIATIVE FOR CHANGE IN CORDIAL AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS:

- In the changed political scenario, there have been many significant changes in the traditional foreign policy of Maldives in recent times due to its pro-China stance, because the earlier foreign policy of Maldives was more inclined towards India and friendly than the current foreign policy. The recent change in the foreign policy of Maldives as soon as the current President assumed power has created concern and apprehension for India in view of the growing influence of China and its political and strategic interference in the neighboring countries of India, which has affected India's attitude towards Maldives. This is worrying for foreign policy.

INFRASTRUCTURAL INVESTMENT:

- Maldives, like many other countries in the Indian Ocean region, has been receiving significant investment from China for infrastructure.
- China has made large-scale infrastructure investments in the Maldives, making it a partner in China's **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**. China has played a significant role in investing in infrastructure under the '**String of the Pearls**' initiative in the Maldives by financing and building various other projects including the development of bridges, airports, ports and other critical infrastructure.

REASONS FOR INDIA'S CONCERN AMID CHINA'S INCREASING INFLUENCE IN MALDIVES:

India has expressed concern over China's increasing internal interference in India's neighboring countries such as Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Maldives, falling within or around the Indian Ocean region. The

development of military facilities by China in these strategically important areas and the ports controlled by China are being seen as a challenge to India's strategic interests and regional security, which will pose a threat to India in the coming future. It is becoming a cause for concern.

India's countermeasures:

- Responding to China's growing dominance in the Maldives, India has also launched infrastructure projects and expanded defense cooperation with the Maldives and other Indian Ocean countries. It has strengthened its diplomatic and strategic ties. It has extended its influence in the region by providing economic assistance, undertaking infrastructure projects and expanding defense cooperation.
- The purpose of the **"Neighborhood First"** policy started by India is to control and balance China's growing presence in India's neighboring countries.

CHANGING NATURE OF FOREIGN POLICY OF MALDIVES:

- The election of Ibrahim Mohammed Solih as the President of Maldives in the year 2018, a positive change was once again seen in the foreign policy of Maldives towards India, because the President of Maldives Ibrahim Mohammed Solih was seen as a supporter of India. Known in. Solih's government in Maldives attempted to rebalance relations between India and China while maintaining its traditional and reciprocal relations with India.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF MALDIVES FOR INDIA:

- The Maldives' strategic location in the Indian Ocean, along with major sea routes, makes it strategically, commercially and strategically important for both India and China. As a result, both India and China will keep a close eye on every important strategic and tactical events happening in Maldives and both India and China will keep making every possible effort to establish their influence there.

EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON MALDIVES –

- According to the geographical location of Maldives and India, both these countries are low-lying island nations. The Maldives are at risk of submergence due to the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels and marine heat waves. Therefore, both India and the Maldives are extremely vulnerable to the risks posed by climate change. The common interests can be protected.

CONCLUSION / SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM:

- The establishment of an inspectorate is an important and effective step in keeping with India's diverse interests in the Indo-Pacific security region, in ensuring regional security and in playing an important strategic role in South Asia and the surrounding maritime boundaries. Must play a role.
- The Indo-Pacific security region has developed as a response to the growth of extra-regional powers (particularly China) in India's maritime sphere of influence.
- At present, the 'India Out' campaign is supported by its limited population in Maldives, but it is also true that this campaign should not be underestimated by the Government of India, because the current President of Maldives became the President of Maldives with the help of this election

slogan. Is made.

- The **'India Out'** campaign requires careful resolution to strengthen India's existing strategic and strategic ties with the Maldives. If this problem is not carefully resolved then the current internal and domestic political situation of Maldives may create many obstacles in India's current relations with this country and may sour India-Maldives relations in future.
- Keeping in mind India's longstanding commitment to promote a multi-polar and rules-based world order, India needs to establish or rehabilitate its strategic and strategic relations with its neighboring countries keeping in mind the needs of the present times. A liberal attitude should be adopted.
- There is a need to give maximum space to Project Mausam in order to increase the economic dependence of Maldives on India and to increase the dependence of the structural changes resulting from it, which will increase both economic and structural dependence of Maldives on India. And India can stop China's increasing dominance in Maldives.
- India is a preferred country for the people of Maldives for education, medicine and business. According to the Ministry of External Affairs of India, there is an increasing demand for long term visas by Maldivian citizens to stay in India for higher education and treatment.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM:

Q.1. Eight Degree Channel separates India and Maldives from which island group?

- (A) Separates Indian Minicoy (part of the Lakshadweep Islands) from the Maldives.
- (B) Separates Andaman and Nicobar from Maldives.
- (C) Separates Sumatra and Java from the Maldives.
- (D) Separates Nicobar and Sumatra from Maldives.

Answer - (A).

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM:

Q.1. In the light of the recent change of political power in Maldives, discuss how it will affect the mutual strategic, economic and strategic relations between India and Maldives?

ISSUE OF ONLINE HATE AND SOLUTIONS TO TACKLE IT

UPSC MAINS SYLLABUSGS1 PAPER: URBANIZATION THEIR PROBLEM AND THEIR REMEDIES

WHY IN NEWS?

Recent article by Nipesh narayan in the hindu newspaper on slums and changing narrative about their definition issues challenges and their empowerment.

WHAT IS SLUM?

A slum is a neighborhood that has subpar housing that is unmaintained, crowded, and/or inadequately served, making it unsafe, unhealthy, and socially unattractive. While a single residence may meet this criteria, the phrase “rural” or “urban” is typically used to refer to larger areas. Like the impoverished who live in them, slums have always existed, but their numbers increased as industrial cities grew.

TIMELINE OF CHANGING PERCEPTION ABOUT SLUMS

First era (1950-60)-The slums were viewed as a legacy of the country’s creation, the product of partition and the influx of a massive population into small, decaying residential zones. Example-old delhi’s katras. Introduction of the Slum Areas Act of 1956 which marked a pivotal moment that made government intervention plausible after an area was officially notified as a slum. After this act slums became legal entity and their citizenship rights were also ignored , there sites were very prone to demolition by government.

- Second era (1970-80)-The narrative around slums changed from one of a place that needed to be eradicated to one of a necessary evil that required advancement. Town planning became crucial in the governance.
- Third era (mid 1980-late 90)- in 1985 National Commission on Urbanisation published its first report , where cities were consider as an asset than liabilities. Interventions in cities were justified based on economic considerations rather than social ones. Town planning suffered a setback while housing policy saw a major shift toward a more comprehensive strategy that addressed land, finance, and infrastructure concerns. During this time, the first two National Housing Policies were implemented. In addition, the National Slum Launching the Development programme brought back targeted funding for slum reconstruction from the union government. It was all based on data because the period depended on economic growth and the emphasis was on a variety of social and physical infrastructure.
- Fourth era(2000-2014)-The definition of slums expanded with the aid of the census of 2001, giving rise to numerous specialized programs. Slums were formerly social issues but are now technical, economic items, emphasizing the effectiveness of implementation and economic growth.

CHALLENGES FACED BY SLUMS

- Overcrowding: Tight quarters with little room for occupants are a common feature of slums.
- Housing of poor quality: Many slum dwellings are made of improvised materials and lack facilities and adequate foundations.
- Water Scarcity: Access to dependable, clean water sources is frequently limited in slum regions.
- Poor Sanitation: Unsanitary conditions raise the risk of disease because of inadequate sewage and waste disposal systems.
- Absence of Essential Services: Healthcare: Restricted availability of medical services and facilities.
- Education: Lower literacy rates are a result of inadequate educational facilities and resources.
- Poverty and Joblessness:
- Limited Economic Opportunities: Slum inhabitants frequently struggle to obtain steady jobs, which feeds the cycle of poverty.
- Low Income: Most people living in slum areas usually live below or on minimum income.
- Discrimination: People who live in slums may experience prejudice and social stigma, which can cause them to become marginalized and shut out of normal society. The susceptibility to calamities
- Lack of Resilience: Slums are more likely to be affected by natural disasters since they are frequently situated in high-risk regions like floodplains or steep slopes. Low levels of security and high rates

of crime:

- **Limited Law Enforcement:** There may not be enough police presence in slum areas, which raises crime rates and makes people feel uneasy. **Informal Settlements:** Because they frequently do not have a valid land title, people living in slums are at risk of being uprooted and evicted.
- **Health Issues: Disease Outbreaks:** Respiratory infections, waterborne illnesses, and vector-borne illnesses are among the diseases that are made more likely to spread when living circumstances are poor.

MEASURES TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT TO AMELIORATE SLUMS

- **Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission(JNNURM)-** The Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programmes (IHSDP) and Basic Services to the Urban Poor (BSUP) are being implemented with an emphasis on integrated slum development and basic services to the urban poor.
- **Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY)-** to give the urban poor who are unemployed or underemployed gainful employment. It does this by promoting self employment among those who fall below the poverty line, offering skill development opportunities, and paying wage workers for their labor when public assets are being built that will benefit society and the economy. This program is applicable to all of the nation's cities and towns.
- **Rajiv awas yojana-** Under the Scheme, States that agree to grant slum inhabitants property rights in exchange for providing them with a respectable place to live, basic civic and social services, slum redevelopment, and the construction of an inventory of inexpensive homes are given financial support.
- **The Interest Subsidy Scheme for Housing the Urban Poor (ISHUP),** which offers a 5% interest subsidy on loans up to Rs. one lakh, is being implemented to help the urban poor get credit for housing loans at reasonable rates. RAY and this plan go hand in hand.

CONCLUSION-

SINCE A VERY LONG TIME TIME URBAN POOR WERE SEEN IN BAD LIGHT , BUT IN RECENT TIMES DUE TO SOCIAL AS WELL AS POLITICAL CHANGES THEIR EMPOWERMENT AS WELL AS AMELIORATION HAS BECOME THE SUBJECT OF DEBATE.

PRELIMS QUESTION

Q1 What is the main reason why urban slums are spreading so quickly in developing nations?

- A) Absence of governmental directives
- B) Rapid migration from rural to urban areas
- C) Recession in the economy
- D) Insufficient progress made in technology

Answer B. Main reason for rising urban slums is rapid migration from rural to urban areas

MAINS QUESTION

Q- Explain the reason that leads to the accumulation of slums and mention measures taken by government for their amelioration?

SLUMP IN GST GROWTH. ANALYZING GST PERFORMANCE IN LAST 6 YEARS ALONG WITH THE CHALLENGES

This article covers ' Daily Current Affairs ' and the content details of ' Slump in GST growth. Analyzing GST performance in the last 6 years along with the challenges it is facing ' This content is applicable in the " Indian Economy " section of the UPSC CSE test.

GS 3 : Indian Economy

Why in the News?

In December 2023, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in India amounted to ₹1,64,800 crore. The month of November saw a 15.1% increase in GST revenue, but year-over-year growth has been slowed down to a three-month low of 10.3%.

About GST

- GST is a value-added tax that is applied to Indian suppliers of goods and services.
- Excise duty, service tax, and other state-level taxes are some of the several indirect taxes that have been replaced by the GST.
- It is imposed on service providers as well as producers and retailers of goods.
- The tagline "One nation, One market, One tax" was used to introduce the GST. The goal of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) is to replace the fragmented tax system that was in place before its implementation with a single, national tax framework.
- Destination-Based Tax: The Goods and Services Tax is levied at the place of consumption, as opposed to the point of origin, as it is a destination-based tax. This promotes the unrestricted movement of commodities and services across states.

Achievements of GST in last 6 years

- Revenue collection : In spite of the less buoyant performance of indirect taxes, gross GST income has increased at an average rate of 3% between 2018–19 and 2022–2023, hence exceeding the nominal GDP growth rate of 9.8%. From the start of the GST, monthly collections have continuously surpassed 1.6 lakh crore which shows the success of GST.
- Simplified Tax System: The GST has reduced the cascading effect of taxes by replacing a convoluted and multi-layered tax structure with a more consistent and simplified one.
- Unified National Market : By removing tax barriers between states, GST has provided a smooth movement of products and services throughout the nation hence it is helping in creating a unified national market.
- Helped in improving rank in Ease of Doing Business.
- Increasing Compliance: The indirect tax system's technology foundation is provided by the GST Network (GSTN). In order to provide updated data and close income leaks, it has been utilising artificial intelligence and machine learning.
- Center-State Relations: Since the GST Council's establishment, all of its decisions have been made by unanimous consent. This indicates that India's cooperative federalism is getting better.
- Input Tax Credit (ITC) Benefits: The availability of ITC has helped businesses to reduce their tax liability by allowing them to claim credit for taxes paid earlier.

Challenges

- False invoicing and fake businesses reduce revenue and hurt sincere taxpayers' ability to compete.
- Multiple Tax Rates: India has several tax rates, in contrast to many other economies that have adopted similar tax structures. This hampers the nation's efforts to implement a single indirect tax rate for all commodities and services.
- Absence of Coverage: Since petrol, diesel and ATF are exempted from the GST, the indirect tax system still does not apply to a sizable portion of the economy.
- Compensation to States: If a State's revenue (after the GST is implemented) falls short of 14% annual growth, the GST (Compensation to States) Act guarantees full compensation to the State for the first five years of the GST. Numerous States have relied on the compensation

Prelims Question

Q) Which Goods has been exempted from GST?

- (a) Clothing
- (b) Electronics
- (c) Medicines
- (d) Petrol

Ans- D

Mains Question

Q) How has GST impacted federalism in India? And what are its advantages over previous tax structure?

JUDICIAL ACTIVISM & RESTRAINT

UPSC MAINS SYLLABUS GS2 PAPER:

WHY IN THE NEWS?

1. The Supreme Court of India has recently guided the Judges of the Higher courts to follow the principle of **Separation of powers** between the *judiciary and the executive* laid in the Constitution under the Directive Principle of State policy (**Article 50**) should be maintained.
2. The Chief Justice of India directed the judges to **exercise restraint** and summon the Government officials only in the complex issues which require *expert evidence or in non adversarial adjudication*, including those concerning policy issues.

WHAT IS JUDICIAL ACTIVISM?

The Constitution envisages a proactive role of Judiciary in **protection of rights of citizen & promotion of justice** in society. In the words of political analyst **WL Wadhwa**, Judicial activism represents the departure of the Judiciary from strict adherence to Judicial precedent in favour of **progressive & new social policies** as showcased below:

1. The idea of Judicial activism flows from the Constitution itself. For example; **Article 32** of the Constitution which provides for the **Judicial review** of Legislative acts and Executive actions.
2. It laid to the establishment of mechanism of **Public Interest Litigation (PIL)** which has made justice accessible for marginalised groups
3. It performs the essential functioning of **Social engineering**. For example, **Navtej Johar judgement** of 2018 decriminalised homosexuality thus expanding the scope of “Right to Equality” under **Article 14**.
4. It helps in upholding the **Fundamental rights** of the citizen. For example, KS Puttaswamy Judgement of 2017 upheld the Right to Privacy as integral part of Right to Dignified life under **Article 21**.
5. It helps in checking the arbitrary powers of the Executive. For example, the **Writs of Mandamus & Habeas Corpus** under Article 32.
6. It becomes a necessary evil in cases of a Hung assembly or court of law being misused by Authoritarian govt for ulterior motives. For example, Role of Supreme court in upholding democratic principles during **proclamation of Emergency** by Indira Gandhi government during 1975-77.
7. It also fills the **legislative vacuum** created by ineffective governance. For example, Supreme court issuing the **Vishakha guidelines** to counter the issue of Sexual Harassment at Workplace.

As the current CJI of India, DY Chandrachud held; “In Humanitarian crisis, Court can not stand as silent spectator”.

ISSUES ARISING OUT OF JUDICIAL ACTIVISM:

With repeated interventions by the Judiciary in the field of Executive & Legislature has led to growing criticism by various Political analysts that Judiciary is increasingly becoming “**Super legislative**” that undermines the basic tenets of Parliamentary Democracy:

1. Judiciary has taken the role of a legislative body to frame or amend laws. For example, the Supreme court **struck down NJAC Act 2015** in favour of own devised Collegium system under Judges Cases (1992-98).
2. Similarly it has encroached upon the Executive domain as well. For example, establishing the Environment Pollution Control Authority (EPCA) to **regulate pollution in NCR-Delhi region**.
3. Additionally, the Court’s interference in micromanagement of **Day-to-Day governance** such as regulating policy matters during Pandemic control was also criticised.
4. It has also devised various mechanisms which does not have Constitutional backing. For example, **Basic structure doctrine** established under the Keshavanand Bharati case 1973.
5. Judicial activism also leads to **Policy paralysis** or subpar framing of laws by the Parliament.
6. It undermines the role of Parliament to **exact accountability of Executive**. For example, members approaching the Courts instead of using tools like Adjournment motions to keep lawmakers in check.

7. It also undermines the **mandate of People** as the Solicitor General of India argued in the judicial debate related to the issue of Same Sex marriage that; “5 wise men can not make law for such diverse country”.
8. Further, Judicial activism has led to **staggering growth of arrears**. For example, there are more than 70,000 pending cases in Supreme court as of 2023.

As Judicial activism violates the principle of Separation of Power under Article 50, the Supreme court in 2007 verdict observed that ;”Courts should not take over the functions of Executive of Legislature & must follow...

“JUDICIAL RESTRAINT”:

1. It ensures that Judicial activism shall not transform into “**Judicial Adventurism**”.
2. It recognises the **equality of all three organs** of Parliamentary system i.e; Legislative, Executive & Judiciary.
3. It aims to minimise the **Inter-branch interference**
4. The court following “Judicial restraint”, perform continuous evaluation through **Public awareness & Civic engagement**
5. It also ensures that people exercise their Electoral franchise as laws to govern them are made and regulated by their “**elected representative**”.

WAY FORWARD:

As emphasised in “**Spirit of Laws**” by Montesquieu, the Separation of Power essential for holding the principles of the democracy and thus Judiciary shall ensure that *all three “engines” of the Governance in India functions in harmony* to ensure all-round Socio-economic development.

UPSC MAINS 2024 PRACTISE QUESTION:

Q: Critically examine the Supreme Court’s judgement on ‘National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, 2014’ with reference to the appointment of judges of higher judiciary in India. (10 M, 150 words) (2017 question)

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

This article covers ‘Daily Current Affairs’ and the content details of “ NCDC survey on inappropriate use of antibiotic causing antimicrobial resistance”. This topic has relevance in the “Issues relating to development of services/social sector relating to Health “section of the UPSC CSE exam.

UPSC MAINS SYLLABUS GS-2 PAPER : Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to health

Why in the News ?

As per the recent survey of NCDC released by the Health Ministry only 6% of patients received antibiotics after a confirmed diagnosis, still 94% of patients received the prescriptions for these medications even before the diagnosis of the infection.

What is Antimicrobial Resistance?

Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) refers to the capacity of bacteria, viruses, parasites, and fungi, among other microbes, to adapt and resist the actions of antimicrobial medicines, thereby making these medications useless. Antimicrobial-resistant bacteria have the ability to proliferate and spread, which can result in the development of infections that are difficult or impossible to treat.

What Causes Antimicrobial Resistance(AMR)?

- **Unsupervised access to antibiotics:** When antibiotics are used in the dairy, poultry, and animal husbandry industries, they naturally sneak a way into other organisms' food chains and hence affect humans as well.
- **Insufficient Dosage and Duration:** Bacteria that survive antibiotic prescriptions may become resistant if the course is not finished or if the whole dose is not taken as advised. A selection pressure brought about by insufficient doses favors the survival of resistant strains.
- **Poor hygiene:** Microbes spread through trash and wastewater from healthcare facilities, pharmaceutical companies, and animal husbandry.
- **Antibiotic Overuse and Misuse:** Excessive and inappropriate antibiotic use, both in human and animal health, contributes significantly to the development of resistance. This includes unnecessary antibiotic prescriptions for viral illnesses, inadequate treatment courses, and self-medication.
- **Globalization and Travel:** Increased worldwide travel and trade help in the spread of resistant bacteria around the world. Resistant strains have the ability to go beyond boundaries, making it difficult to limit and manage their spread.

Issues caused by Antimicrobial Resistance

- **Treatment Options Are Limited:** The number of effective antibiotics is decreasing as resistance grows. The absence of new medicines in development worsens the problem by giving doctors less treatment options for infections.
- **Mortality and morbidity have increased:** Infections caused by resistant bacteria are related with increased mortality and illness severity. Treatment failures increase healthcare expenditures and put an increased load on healthcare systems.
- **Global Health Danger:** AMR is a serious danger to world health because it can make common illnesses untreatable. This decreases the effectiveness of medical operations that depend on the availability of effective antibiotics, such as surgery, chemotherapy, and organ transplants. For example, Multi-Drug Resistant Tuberculosis (MDR-TB) is increasing at an alarming rate.
- **Infectious Disease Burden:** India has a high burden of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, typhoid and cholera. The rise of AMR makes it harder to treat these diseases success-

fully. It's especially troubling given that these diseases are already big public health issues in the country.

- **Limited Research and Innovation:** To combat AMR, research and innovation in the development of novel antibiotics, diagnostics, and vaccines are important. The lack of such attempts in India is worrying as it decreases the arsenal of techniques available to treat resistant illnesses.
- **Economic Consequences:** AMR results in increased healthcare costs due to prolonged treatments, additional testing, and the need for more expensive second-line drugs. Productivity losses from prolonged illness and increased mortality also impact economies.

Steps taken to control antimicrobial resistance?

- **Access, Watch, and Reserve (AWaRe)** – It is an initiative by WHO to consider the impact of various antibiotics.
- **Global-One Health Approach:** A quadripartite project by UNEP, WHO, FAO, and the World Organization for Animal Health which advocates best practices to minimize AMR levels.
- **National Action Plan (NAP) for AMR:** The NAP aims to raise awareness, strengthen surveillance, promote research, and improve infection prevention and control.
- **Delhi Declaration on AMR:** It is an inter-ministerial consensus, which was signed during the inauguration of NAP-AMR by ministers from the relevant ministries committing their unwavering support for AMR containment.
- **Red Line campaign:** To raise awareness about the dangers of using antibiotics without a prescription and to avoid irrational usage of prescription-only antibiotics.

Way Forward –

- Antimicrobial resistance is a future health disaster that requires a multidisciplinary strategy as well as R&D funding.
- Antimicrobial prescriptions should be based on definitive diagnosis rather than an assumption.
- The economic contribution of AMR is enormous, therefore it is vital to create and implement policies using a holistic “One Health” approach.

Conclusion

The emergence of antibiotic resistance is a huge public health issue all over the world. It makes even mild infections difficult to cure, resulting in serious illnesses and deaths. As a result, a loud call to halt this menace must be issued at the local, national, and global levels, which would eventually aid in the achievement of SDG 3, ensuring excellent health and well-being for everyone.

Prelims practice questions

Q1) What is the primary cause of antimicrobial resistance (AMR)?

a) Underutilization of antibiotics

- b) Proper adherence to antibiotic prescriptions
- c) Overuse and misuse of antibiotics
- d) Strict control of antibiotic distribution

Ans- C

Q2) Why is antibiotic resistance regarded as a worldwide health risk?

- a) It only affects underdeveloped countries
- b) resistant infections are easier to cure
- c) it restricts treatment options and raises mortality rates
- d) it has no effect on public health.

Ans- C

Mains practice Question

- Q) Describe how agriculture contributes to antibiotic resistance. How can sustainable farming methods be used to reduce the development of resistance in animals and its possible transmission to humans?

ULFA PACT : TRIPARTITE COMPREHENSIVE AND EFFECTIVE AGREEMENT ON SECURITY MEASURES

(This article is related to the summary of the combined editorial of 'The Hindu', 'Indian Express', 'World Focus' and 'PIB'. It also includes the suggestions of the YOJNA IAS team. This article is related to the UPSC Civil Services Examination specifically 'Indian Politics', Insurgency, Maoism, Terrorism, Internal Security and External Security of the country. And this article is related to 'ULFA-Pact: Tripartite Comprehensive and Effective Agreement on Security Measures' under 'Daily Current Affairs' section.)

GENERAL STUDIES: INSURGENCY, MAOISM, TERRORISM, INTERNAL SECURITY AND EXTERNAL SECURITY OF THE COUNTRY.

WHY IN DISCUSSION / NEWS ?

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, led by Union Home Minister Amit Shah and a pro-talk faction of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), and the Government of Assam and the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), have eliminated insurgency in Assam and surrounding areas. Recently a mutual tripartite MoU has been signed. It is noteworthy that the ULFA (Independent) faction led by Paresh Baruah is still against the signing of this tripartite MoU.



WHAT IS ULFA?

- The United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) originated as an anti-immigrant movement opposing immigrants from outside the state of Assam.
- This immigration movement started in 1979 with the demand for the formation of a separate and sovereign Assamese state for the Assamese language speaking Assamese people. Which gradually adopted the path of violent, aggressive and armed struggle in the nature of its movement.

MAIN AIM/OBJECTIVE OF ULFA :

The main objective of ULFA was to create a sovereign Assamese nation for the Assamese speaking people on the basis of language through armed struggle. For the creation of a separate sovereign Assamese nation, ULFA supporters first helped the helpless and needy people there and received their moral support and then gradually these people resorted to extortion, kidnapping, etc. to carry forward their struggle. Inhuman, undemocratic and violent methods like bomb blasts and forced hanging of people were adopted.

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S REACTION TOWARDS ULFA:

Seeing such increasing violence in Assam, the then Central Government first declared Assam a 'disturbed area' by imposing President's rule in Assam and in 1990, by starting 'Operation Bajrang', more than 1200 ULFA militants were killed. The militants were arrested and the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (ASFA) was implemented in Assam.

GEOGRAPHICAL EXPANSION OF ULFA:

ULFA's geographical spread includes camps situated in the inaccessible terrain of mountains, forests and dense and deeply wooded hills which serve as cross-border insurgent and terrorist camps. These camps serve various functions like training centers for these militants, launch pads for militant activities and shelter-in-place. Their geographical expansion extends to Bhutan, Myanmar and Bangladesh. These extremist organizations also have links with the radical Islamic organization 'Al-Qaeda' and Pakistan's main intelligence agency (ISI). This fact has also come to light that Pakistan's main intelligence agency (ISI) had earlier trained these ULFA militants to spread internal unrest in India. During the Kargil war between India and Pakistan, ULFA militants had openly supported Pakistan for its "illegal infiltration in Kargil" by writing against India in their monthly magazine "Swadhinta". This militant organization still has a training center in Myanmar.



MAIN HISTORICAL REASONS FOR THE RISE OF ULFA:

- In the North-Eastern states and in the state of Assam, there has been migration and arrival of people from everywhere other than the natives since the 19th century, due to which there has been a change in the culture of the natives and their conduct, behavior and food habits. Changes have occurred due to contact with migrants. With the arrival of these immigrants, the feeling of insecurity among the native residents also increased.
- Due to the migration of these refugees who fled from the then East Pakistan as a result of the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, the situation in this area started getting worse day by day.
- The mutual competition for the natural resources available in this area started an undeclared war between the natives and immigrants of this area, as a result, a long people's struggle and mass movement started from 1979, which continued for almost 6 years.
- Due to the 'Bangladesh Liberation War' that started in East Pakistan and also due to the support given by the then Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi to the 'Bangladesh Liberation War', the people of this region had to cross the Indian border, due to which The number of migrants increased.
- The situation in the region is also deteriorating due to ULFA militants buying weapons from Thailand and Myanmar to spread unrest in the region, issuing illegal passports and using fundamentalist religious organizations as external support to get these militants trained by the ISI. happened.

POLITICAL REASONS FOR THE RISE OF ULFA:

- Using the AGP (Assam Gana Parishad) politically and giving in to the ULFA terrorists or remaining inactive towards it was seen as a political compulsion of the government and also by the local government to give the ULFA terrorists a political boost. Also included being used as a second line of defense for heritage.
- The election victory of AGP in 1985 and the signing of the Assam Accord are said to be linked to each other.

VARIOUS EFFORTS MADE TO RESTORE PEACE IN THE TROUBLED REGION AFFECTED BY MILITANCY:

- The PCG-People's Consultative Group replaced the 11-member group/committee formed by ULFA in 2005 and this committee attempted to mediate three rounds of talks.
- This committee also included Jnanpith Award winning writer and renowned intellectual, late Indira Raisom Goswami.
- It mediated 3 rounds of talks before ULFA walked out of the discussion and launched a new wave of terror.
- In 2008, some ULFA commanders like Arabinda Rajkhowa tried for peace talks, but this was opposed by Paresh Baruah and he was expelled from the Rajkhowa organization, which led to a split in ULFA and it was divided into two factions. Went.
- In 2011, the pro-peace talks faction signed a Suspension of Operations (SOO) with the Government of Assam and the MHA.
- In 2012 AD, they submitted their 12-point charter demands to the Central Government, which were finally answered in 2023.
- In the year 2023 AD, a peace agreement was discussed between Rajkhowa's faction and the Home Ministry of the Central Government, which recently led to the signing of the Tripartite Peace Agreement and it resulted in the Tripartite Peace Agreement. With this, it is hoped that internal peace will be restored in Assam in the coming time.

SIGNIFICANCE OF SIGNING OF TRIPARTITE MOU:

ENSURING INTERNAL PEACE AND SECURITY:

The signing of this tripartite MoU is expected to ensure internal peace in Assam, security of people's life and property and curb illegal infiltration. Along with this, extremist activities and terrorist activities are also expected to be curbed.

EMPHASIS ON MOVING FORWARD ON THE PATH OF DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS:

With this tripartite peace agreement, emphasis is now being given to Assam as well as the surrounding North-Eastern states to create a new path and new paradigm for development and progress. For this, an investment of ₹ 1.5 lakh crore was promised in this area, so that this area, like other states of India, can join the mainstream and write a new story of development and progress.

POLITICAL WILL AND IMPLEMENTATION:

Union Home Minister Amit Shah expressed confidence that a time-bound program will be prepared by the Home Ministry of the Government of India to fulfill the 12-point demands of ULFA while signing this tripartite MoU.

SURRENDER OF MILITANT ORGANIZATIONS AND VIOLENT GROUPS:

With the signing of this tripartite MoU, more than 9000 hardcore militant cadres have surrendered in Assam. So that by including them in the mainstream and providing livelihood employment, they can be included in the mainstream politics and society and peace can be restored there.

TRIUMPH OF THE INDIAN DEMOCRATIC PROCESS AND THE CONCEPT OF RULE OF LAW:

The ULFA militants also expressed their consent to participate in the Indian democratic process and the peaceful democratic process established by the polity run by law in India and to maintain the unity and integrity of India and assured to act under the rule of law.

CHALLENGES IN THE WAY OF TRIPARTITE MOU AND GOVERNMENT:

INCOMPLETE AND INCOMPLETE PEACE AGREEMENT:

The other faction of ULFA-I is against this agreement. The other group, ULFA-I, led by Paresh Baruah, which has the support of about 100 hardline cadres, has not yet joined the peace process agreement. Due to which, the possibility of unrest in the region may persist in the near future cannot be ruled out. can be done.

ULFA STILL EXISTS ACROSS THE BORDER IN INDIA:

ULFA's geographical expansion extends to Bhutan, Myanmar and Bangladesh along with other neighboring countries bordering India. These extremist organizations also have links with the radical Islamic organization 'Al-Qaeda' and 'Pakistan's main intelligence agency (ISI). This fact has also come to light that Pakistan's main intelligence agency (ISI) had earlier trained these ULFA militants to spread internal unrest in India. Till some time back, ULFA also had camps in countries like Bhutan and Bangladesh and it still has camps and training centers in Myanmar. As a result, even after the signing of this tripartite MoU and consensus being reached, the continued existence of ULFA across the border of India is a matter of concern for India from the point of view of internal peace and security and extremism.

ULFA'S SUPPORTING LINKS WITH FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS:

ULFA has links with several terrorist and insurgent organizations in Assam as well as in the Northeast and Myanmar, as well as radical religious and Islamic organizations such as 'Harkat-ul-Jihad-e-Islami' and Islamic terrorist organizations such as 'Al-Qaeda'. Which is a cause of concern for the security of India, both internal extremism and external terrorism.

CONCLUSION / WAY TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM:

Both the central and state governments should fulfill their promises:

Both the Central and State Governments need to fully fulfill all the commitments made during the peace agreement, keeping in mind the underlying concerns and aspirations of the communities affected by ULFA and its atrocities.

RESTORATION OF THE PEACE PROCESS MUST BE ENSURED:

Both the Central and State Governments should ensure the restoration of a comprehensive and complete peace process to the common people affected by ULFA so that the common people and people of that area develop confidence in the democratic process of India and they support the unity and integrity of India. Can protect.

BY FULLY EMBRACING CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION:

The Government should also ensure mainstreaming of the entire population of the area by providing vocational training, rehabilitation programs and support for full assimilation and cultural, economic and social integration of the people of that area.

TO ENSURE CONTINUOUS MONITORING:

Both the Central and State Governments should continue to ensure that all parties involved in this agreement continue to adhere to their commitments and there should be a provision for continuous monitoring of the rules of the NICE Tripartite Agreement by both the Central and State Governments.

DISBANDMENT OF ULFA-1 (INDEPENDENT) FACTION LED BY PARESH BARUAH:

The Government of India should leverage its foreign policy at diplomatic and strategic levels to counter any support given by China to the ULFA-1 (Independent) faction led by Paresh Baruah in collaboration with the Government of Myanmar and Paresh Baruah. The ULFA-1 (Independent) faction led by D.K. must be permanently dismantled or eliminated so as to ensure restoration of peace and tranquility in Assam and the North-Eastern States of India and to put Assam and the North-Eastern States on the path of development and progress. A new epic story of development can be written while moving forward.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM:

Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA).

1. This movement started in 1979 with the demand for the formation of a separate and sovereign Assamese state for the Assamese language speaking Assamese people.
2. The People's Consultative Group Committee also included Jnanpith Award winning author and renowned intellectual, late Indira Raisom Goswami.

Which of the above statement /statements is/ are correct?

- (A). Only 1
(B). Only 2
(C). Neither 1 Nor 2
(D). Both 1 and 2.

Answer – (D).

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM:

Q.1. What is ULFA Tripartite Agreement? Discuss in detail the steps taken by India to prevent terrorism and extremism from the point of view of India's internal and external peace and security?

HISTORY OF KADAMBAS

UPSC MAINS SYLLABUS GS1 PAPER: INDIAN CULTURE – SALIENT ASPECTS OF ART FORMS, LITERATURE AND ARCHITECTURE FROM ANCIENT TO MODERN TIMES

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Recently, a 10th century **Kadamba inscription** written in **Kannada and Sanskrit** was found in **Goa**. It is in the literary style of the **Talangre inscription** of ancient ruler Jayasimha I. Thus the history of Kadambas holds significance in context of upcoming prelims.

HISTORY OF KADAMBAS:

1. Kadambas of Goa were the *subordinates* of **Chalukyas of Kalyani**.
2. The Chalukyan emperor **Tailapa II** who was a **Rashtrakuta** feudatory ruling from **Tardavadi** (Bijapur district) overthrew Karka II & *re-established the Chalukya rule* in the western Deccan and recovered most of the Chalukya empire.

3. He appointed **Kadamba Shasthadeva** as **mahamandaleshwar** of Goa for his help in overthrowing the Rashtrakutas.
4. Shashthadeva later conquered the city of **Chandrapur** (at the southern bank of Zuari river) from the Shilaharas and established the Goan Kadamba dynasty in **960 CE**.
5. Later he conquered the port of **Gopakapattana** (*present Goa*) which served as capital.
6. A Jain Sanskrit text, **Dvayāśraya** mentions the extension of his capital and that Port Gopakapattana had trade contacts with **Zanzibar, Bengal, Gujarat and Sri Lanka**.
7. In **1310 CE** it was looted by Alauddin Khilji's general **Malik Kafur** enroute to capturing Dwarasamudra (Karnataka).

ADMINISTRATION OF KADAMBAS:

1. The Kings of Kadambas assumed titles like **Konkanadhipati, Saptakotisha Varaveera, Gopakapura varadhishva, and Panchamahashabda**.
2. **Administrative titles:**
 1. **Pradhana** – Prime minister
 2. **Sarva karyakarta** – Chief secretary
 3. **Tantrapala or Sabhakarya Sachiva** – Secretary of Council
 4. **Rahasyadhikritha** – Private secretary
 5. **Dharma dhyaksha** – Chief justice
 6. **Rajjukas** – Revenue officers
 7. **Deshamatya** – Physician
 8. **Lekhakas** – Writers and scribes
3. They introduced the **Kannada language** to Goa where it exercised a profound influence on the local Konkani language.
4. The **Nagari, Kadamba, Halekannada and Goykanadi** scripts were also very popular.

PRELIMS PERSPECTIVE : ARCHITECTURE OF CHALUKYAS:

1. The Western Chalukyas (of Badami) **King Mangalesha (597-609 CE)** built **Badami caves** in the 6th century CE:
 - Mangalesha was son of Pulakesin 1 and brother of Kirtivarman 1 (Badami caves shows portrait of Kirtivarman 1)
 - It was built in **Red Sandstone hill**
 - It depicts various **Avatars of Vishnu**: Varaha, Narasimha etc

- The largest cave depicts God Vishnu residing on Sheshanaga
 - Kadambas patronized **Shavism, Vishnavism** as well as gave *grants to Jains*
- 2. Pulakesin 2 (609-642 CE)** built temples of **Aihole (Ayyavole) temples** in 634 CE:
- The **Lad khan temple** at Aihole is one of the earliest stone temple.
 - At Hucci, he built **Marigudi temple** for Goddess Durga (shows the spread of Shaktism).
 - The **Meguti Jain temple** shows early development of Mandapa style.
 - There are stucco pillars with big capital which are distinct from Nagara style.
- 3. Virupaksha Temple at Pattadakal** at bank of Malaprabha river:
- It was built by **Queen Loka Mahadevi** to commemorate victory of her husband Vikramaditya 2 at the conquest of Kanchipuram from Pallavas in 730 CE
 - It shows early features of **Dravidian architecture**
 - It has a kannada inscription which mentions the sculptor of the temple as **Tribhuvacharya**
 - The Greek geographer Ptolemy who wrote "Geography of India" termed the place Pattadakal as "**Perti gal**".
4. In later stage of the development, the **Papanatha temple** shows Shikhara in "Rekha prasad" style thus reflecting "Nagara features".
5. The Chalukyan inscriptions calls the Architects as "**Sutradhars**"

PRELIMS 2024 PRACTISE QUESTION:

Q1: The Kings of which of the following dynasties in the ancient India assumed pompous titles such as Konkanadhipati, Saptakotisha Varaveera, Gopakapura varadhishva, and Pan-chamahashabda?

- a. Vakatakas
- b. Pallavas
- c. Chalukyas
- d. Kadambas

ANSWER: d

Q2: Consider the following statements regarding the Chalukyas architecture & identify the incorrect statement:

- A. The Badami caves were built under King Mangalesha in 6th century CE

- B. The Lad Khan temples was built by King Pulakesin 2 who was contemporary of Chinese traveller Xuanzang
- C. The Virupaksha temple at Pattadakal was built by Queen Loka Mahadevi in 8th century to commemorate victory of King Vikramaditya 2 over Pallavas of Kanchi
- D. The Virupaksha temples are situated at the bank of the Godavari river

ANSWER: D

SICKLE CELL ANAEMIA

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Sickle Cell Anaemia and National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission”. This topic “Sickle Cell Anaemia” has relevance in the “Science and Technology as well as Government Schemes” sections of the UPSC CSE exam.

UPSC MAINS SYLLABUS GS-2 PAPER : Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to health.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

According to the Health Ministry, over one crore people have been screened as part of the National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission till now. Under this mission government aimed to eliminate Sickle Cell Anaemia by 2047.

ABOUT SICKLE CELL ANEMIA

- Sickle cell disease (SCD) is a category of red blood cell abnormalities that are inherited (genetic).
- Haemoglobin, a protein that transports oxygen, is found in red blood cells (RBCs). Red blood cells in good health are round and flow through small vessels to carry oxygen to all regions of the body. In SCD, the hemoglobin is abnormal, causing the RBCs to become hard and sticky, like a C-shaped farm tool known as a “sickle.”
- It is passed down from parents who have a faulty ‘beta globin’ gene.
- Since sickle cells die early, there is a continual lack of RBCs.
- They become caught and obstruct the blood flow when they go through small blood arteries. This can result in pain as well as other dangerous complications (health issues) such as infection and acute chest pain.
- As per various research and screening programmes, tribal groups in India have a higher prevalence of haemoglobinopathies (blood illnesses) than non-tribal communities.
- It is common among communities living in malaria-endemic areas. The sickle cell trait thereby offered an evolutionary benefit, by providing certain people with immunity during malaria epidemics.

SYMPTOMS

- **Pain Crises:** People with sickle cell anemia frequently have extreme pain episodes termed as pain crises. These crises occur when sickle-shaped red blood cells block blood flow through small blood vessels, causing pain and organ damage.
- **Anemia :** Sickle cells have a shorter lifespan than normal red blood cells, resulting in Anaemia, or a chronic lack of red blood cells. As a result, patients may have weariness, weakness, and pale skin.
- **Hands and Feet swelling:** Sickle cell anemia can induce blood vessel obstructions, resulting in swelling, particularly in the hands and feet.
- **Frequent infections:** Frequent infections are more common in people with sickle cell anemia because their spleens are destroyed.
- **Delayed growth :** Sickle cell anemia can cause growth and development delays in children.

TREATMENT

While there is no cure for sickle cell anemia, various treatments aim to manage symptoms, prevent complications, and improve the quality of life for individuals with the condition.

- **Pain Control:** Pain crises are frequently treated with pain drugs, and in extreme cases, hospitalisation may be required for more intensive pain management.
- **Hydroxyurea:** This medicine stimulates the development of fetal haemoglobin, which aids in the prevention of sickle cell disease.
- **Blood Transfusion :** Regular blood transfusions can help improve the amount of normal red blood cells and decrease problems.
- **Hydration:** Keeping hydrated helps to keep red blood cells from sickling.
- **Folic acid supplements :** Folic acid medications are frequently administered to assist the body in producing new red blood cells.
- **Bone Marrow Transplant:** In extreme situations, especially in children, a bone marrow transplant may be considered to replace the faulty bone marrow with healthy donor cells.
- **Gene Therapy :** To treat the disorder, the DNA inside the haemoglobin gene is altered.

INITIATIVES BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA TO TACKLE SICKLE CELL ANAEMIA

- **National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission:**

Mission: To enhance the care of all Sickle Cell Disease patients for a better future, as well as to reduce the disease's prevalence, through a comprehensive integrated approach to screening and awareness campaigns.

Vision: By 2047, India will have totally eliminated sickle cell disease as a public health problem.

- **NHM (National Health Mission):**The National Health Mission (NHM), is a flagship programme of the Indian government, contains provisions for disease prevention and management, including hereditary anomalies such as sickle cell anaemia. Within the NHM, specific programs and initiatives target awareness, early detection, and treatment of sickle cell anemia.

- The Union Health Minister stated in Budget 2023 that the government intends to distribute “special cards” across tribal territories, and that the mission will be funded through the National Health Mission.

WAY FORWARD

- **Early Detection and Screening:** Strengthening and expanding genetic counseling and testing programs to identify carriers early on and provide necessary information to affected families.
- **Public Education and Awareness:** Establishing a supportive and informed environment by implementing long-term public awareness initiatives to educate communities about the disease, its hereditary basis, and the significance of genetic testing.
- **Research and Development:** Continued research investment for better understanding of the genetic and molecular elements of sickle cell disease, resulting in the development of more effective treatment options and potential treatments.

CONCLUSION

We can strive towards better outcomes for individuals and families impacted by sickle cell disease by promoting a collaborative and educated environment, ultimately aiming for a future where the impact of this genetic ailment is minimised and effective treatments, if not cures, become a reality.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q1. Which of the following statements about sickle cell trait is correct?

- a) Sickle cell trait is a severe form of sickle cell disease.
- b) Individuals with sickle cell trait do not carry the abnormal hemoglobin gene.
- c) Sickle cell trait carriers are resistant to malaria.
- d) Sickle cell trait is inherited only from the mother.

Answer: c)

Q2. What is the primary function of folic acid supplementation in the management of sickle cell disease?

- a) Reducing pain during crises
- b) Enhancing the production of normal hemoglobin
- c) Preventing the formation of sickle cells
- d) Improving blood viscosity

Answer: b)

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Q1) Examine the difficulties that the Indian healthcare system has in dealing with hereditary illnesses such as sickle cell anaemia. How can the current healthcare infrastructure be improved to give specialized care and assistance to people with this genetic condition?
- Q2) Analyze the effectiveness of public awareness campaigns in India regarding sickle cell anemia. How can the healthcare system collaborate with community organizations to improve awareness, reduce stigma, and encourage proactive measures for managing the disease?

SEBI'S SHIELDING / PROTECTION / DEFENSE

(This article is a brief summary of the joint editorial of 'The Economy Times of India', 'The Hindu' and 'PIB'. It also includes the suggestions of the YOJNA IAS team. This article is based on the information about UPSC Civil Services Examination specifically on 'Indian Economy'. This article belongs to the section 'Growth, Poverty and Development-Related Issues, Government Policies and Interventions, Growth and Development, Securities and Exchange Board of India'. This article is related to 'Shielding / Protection / Defense of SEBI' under 'Daily Current Affairs').

GENERAL STUDIES: *Growth of Indian economy, poverty and development-related issues, government policies and interventions, growth and development, securities and exchange board of India.*

WHY IN DISCUSSION / NEWS ?

The bench of the Supreme Court comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice Manoj Mishra, while delivering the judgment, said – “The Supreme Court of India has the right to enter into the regulatory framework of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). Power is limited. Bottom line: The Supreme Court of India has expressed no confidence in the investigation process being conducted by SEBI and there is no basis to transfer the investigation process of this case from the investigation agency constituted by SEBI to the SIT. The Supreme Court should have put pressure on SEBI to do more, rather than reviewing its policy actions. The Court is certainly aware of past instances where it has found that SEBI was not showing promptness in enforcement, the panel of experts appointed in this case has also marked this aspect. After all, **justice must not only be done, but must also be seen to be done.**’

WHAT WAS THE MATTER?

Recently a report by Hindenburg Research regarding the shares of Adani Group was released. In this report, Adani Group was accused of manipulating the value of shares, after which a huge fall in the value of shares of listed companies of Adani Group was also recorded. In the Adani-Hindenburg case, the Supreme Court, while giving its decision on 3 January 2024, has given SEBI 3 more months to investigate the remaining 2 cases. At the same time, they have refused to hand over the investigation of the case from SEBI to SIT.

WHAT HAS THE INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE CONSTITUTED BY SEBI FOUND SO FAR IN THE INVESTIGATION?

On March 2, 2023, the Supreme Court constituted a committee in this matter and SEBI was also given 2 months time to investigate. SEBI was to submit its report by May 2, 2023, but during the hearing, SEBI had asked for an extension of 6 months for the investigation. The Supreme Court bench had extended it till August 2023, meaning SEBI was given a total of 5 months to submit its investigation report. On August 14, 2023, SEBI sought additional time of 15 days from the Supreme Court to complete its investigation and submit the report and on August 25, 2023, SEBI filed the status report of its investigation in the Supreme Court, stating that 22 The investigation of the cases has been completed and the investigation of 2 cases is still incomplete. On November 24, 2023, the Supreme Court, while reserving its decision in this matter, had accepted that there is no need to accept the Hindenburg Report as correct in India right now.

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE BOARD OF INDIA (SEBI):

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) was established on April 12, 1992 in accordance with the provisions of the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992.

PREAMBLE OF SEBI:

The basic functions of SEBI are mentioned in the Preamble of the Securities and Exchange Board of India as follows –

- To protect the interests of investors investing in securities.
- To promote and regulate the development of the securities market.
- To make provision for matters relating to or incidental to the securities market.

WHAT IS SEBI ?

The full name of SEBI is Securities and Exchange Board of India. It is a statutory body/institution (a non-constitutional body established by the Parliament) which regulates the functioning of the Indian capital market and also regulates transactions of shares in the stock market and mutual funds. Also controls the issue. Its major function is to protect the interests of investors and develop the Indian capital markets by enacting various rules and regulations from time to time. India's stock market runs on the guidelines of this institution.

SEBI is an autonomous organization that works under the administration of the Union Finance Ministry.



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SEBI:

- Before the establishment of SEBI in India, the Indian capital market was governed by a regulatory authority called the Controller of Capital Issues. Which was given the authority under the Capital Issues (Control) Act, 1947 to resolve and settle all the issues related to the stock market in India. Securities and Exchange Board of India was established on 12 April 1988 and the Government of India gave it statutory recognition on 30 January 1992 under the SEBI Act 1992 through an ordinance. The headquarters of SEBI is located in Mumbai and it also has some regional offices in New Delhi, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kochi, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Shimla, Jaipur and Lucknow.

WORK OF SEBI:

- SEBI being a statutory body in India, it has the powers to perform many important functions. A list of such powers as described/contained in the regulatory body's SEBI 1992 Act is given. The core function of SEBI makes it an important body/institution in India as a major securities issuer, protector of the interests of investors and traders and a financial intermediation body. In Section 11 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act (Act), the functions of SEBI are mainly divided on three grounds. Which are of the following types –
 - Protective Function
 - Regulatory Functions
 - Developmental Functions

PROTECTIVE FUNCTION:

- The major objective of the protective function of the Securities and Exchange Board of India is primarily to monitor and monitor the functioning of business in the financial markets. Which includes the following work –
 - The Securities and Exchange Board of India investigates stock price manipulation in India.
 - It prevents and regulates stock insider trading in India from outside India.
 - The Securities and Exchange Board of India, as part of its regulatory functions, promotes fair share trading in India.
 - It makes investors aware of the risks of the stock market by providing them awareness about the risks involved in investing in the stock market in India.
 - As part of its protective function, the Securities and Exchange Board of India prevents and regulates fraudulent and improper securities transactions in the stock market in India.

REGULATORY FUNCTIONS:

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India, as part of its regulatory functions, protects the interests of SEBI investors and other financial participants investing in the stock market. Which includes the following work –
 - Securities and Exchange Board of India provides guidelines to financial intermediaries and corporate companies or corporate houses in India to function properly and also formulates code

of conduct for financial transactions. One of the major functions of the Securities and Exchange Board of India is to scrutinize securities transactions in India and also conduct securities audits.

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India provides a platform or arrangement of platforms to financial intermediaries and corporate companies or corporate houses in India and investors investing in the stock market so that there are portfolio managers, bankers, stock-brokers, investment-advisers, Merchant bankers, registrars, share-transfer-agents and others could carry out transactions or investments or regulation together.
- Its regulatory function also includes regulating substantial acquisition of shares and takeovers of companies in a given time frame.

DEVELOPMENTAL FUNCTIONS:

One of the major functions of the Securities and Exchange Board of India also includes developmental work in India. Following are some of the main points of this developmental work –

- One of the main functions of the Securities and Exchange Board of India is to publish useful information for all and also to provide training to the brokers associated with the stock market and to make those brokers aware of the risks of the stock market.
- Its developmental work also includes educating, training and making investors aware about investment and the advantages and disadvantages of investment.
- Another important function of the Securities and Exchange Board of India is to conduct market research and create awareness among the key stakeholders by publishing latest and useful information to the stock market participants and all others who are connected with the stock market.
- Its developmental functions also include promoting transactions done through proper channels.
- Another important function of this is to encourage stakeholders and companies and self-regulatory organizations associated with the stock market.
- One of the developmental functions of the Securities and Exchange Board of India is also to encourage buying and selling of mutual funds through brokers or directly.
- One of its developmental functions is to promote fair transactions in the stock market.
- It is SEBI's job to take suo motu cognizance of frauds committed against investors in the stock market world and take appropriate action on them.



NATURE OF SEBI:

Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) in its structural form is in the form of a corporate structure consisting of various departments which are managed by the Heads of Department of that department. It is an organization which is managed by its members only. SEBI consists of around 20 departments covering legal affairs, corporate finance, debt and hybrid securities, enforcement, economic and policy analysis, commodity derivatives, market regulation and many other departments. SEBI has a hierarchical structure in a hierarchical manner. Which includes these key members:

- The SEBI Board consists of a Chairman and several other full-time and part-time members.
- SEBI also appoints various committees from time to time to investigate the important issues of the time.
- SEBI primarily consists of a Chairman who is nominated by the Central Government of India.
- Two members are appointed to SEBI by the **Union Finance Ministry of India**.
- A member is also appointed to SEBI by the **Reserve Bank of India**.
- **Five members are also nominated in SEBI by the Central Government of India.**

JURISDICTION AND POWERS CONFERRED BY SEBI:

- Since Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is a statutory body in India, it has the powers to perform many important functions and its jurisdiction is also wide. A list of such powers as described/contained in the regulatory body's SEBI 1992 Act is given. The core function of SEBI makes it an important body/institution in India as a major securities issuer, protector of the interests of investors and traders and a financial intermediation body. SEBI has many powers under the Act 1992 so that SEBI can operate the Indian financial market smoothly and powerfully. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is primarily mandated to prevent any kind of fraud in the securities market and to prevent unethical behavior in the financial market. SEBI has the same powers as a civil court. Apart from this, if a person does not agree with the decision or order of the 'Securities Appellate Tribunal' (SAT) then he can appeal to the Supreme Court. Therefore, in India, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has the following powers, which it uses from time to time –
- **Quasi-Judicial** – Under the quasi-judicial powers given to the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), SEBI has the power to take decisions if a company, broker or investor commits any fraudulent or unethical behavior in the securities market. These powers facilitate maintaining transparency, accountability and fairness in the securities market.
- **Quasi-Executive** – If any individual, corporate or institution violates the rules, guidelines and decisions of SEBI, then SEBI reserves the right to take legal action against it using its quasi-executive powers. If any violation of any rule or regulation is found in it, SEBI is authorized to inspect the accounts and other documents of that company or securities brokers and issue the same to the stock exchange. SEBI also has the power to grant rejection in such a situation.
- The Chairman of SEBI also has the power to order "Search and Seizure operations". The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) may also seek any information such as telephone call data records or contract documents from any individual, corporate, entities in connection with any securities transaction.
- **Quasi-Legislative** – Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has the authority to promulgate rules and regulations to protect the interests of stock market investors in India. Some of its rules

include insider trading regulations, listing obligations and disclosure requirements. It prevents and regulates stock insider trading in India from outside India.

CONCLUSION: / SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM:

The main objective of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is to keep the Indian financial and stock markets fair and safe. Since the establishment of SEBI, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) in India has carried out many reforms in the stock market of India through new laws, rules and its guidelines. SEBI keeps incorporating new rules from time to time keeping in mind the needs of the stock market and investors. It works to continuously improve and bring transparency in the stock market so that the Indian financial market remains safe and strong for the investors and all the stakeholders associated with the stock market. At present, SEBI has completely “freed” the stock market from cashless transactions or withdrawals and has now “converted it to electronic transactions”. Due to which now any person can invest in the stock market sitting at home through the internet on his own without the help of any broker. Along with this, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) strengthens the Indian securities market by strengthening the regulatory system of the stock market, which is now attracting more investors towards the trading platform of the stock market. It prevents and regulates stock insider trading in India from outside India. Ultimately, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is a powerful body in India that reduces the risks of fraud to investors investing in the securities market and stock market.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM:

Q.1. Consider the following statements with reference to the Securities and Exchange Board of India.

1. It is a statutory body/institution (a non-constitutional body established by the Parliament), which incorporates and regulates the functioning of the Indian capital market.
2. The headquarters of SEBI is located in New Delhi.
3. The Chairman of SEBI also has the power to order “Search and Seizure Operations”.
4. It prevents and regulates stock insider trading in India from outside India.

Which of the following statement /statements is correct ?

- (A). 1, 2 and 3 only
- (B). Only 1, 3 and 4
- (C). None of these.
- (D). all of which.

Answer - (B).

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM:

Q.1. Discuss in detail the need and importance of a strong regulatory framework for the capital market in India in line with international standards and principles by the Securities and Exchange Board of India in the light of the changing nature of the financial market.

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP) GROWTH ESTIMATE BY NSO

UPSC MAINS SYLLABUS GS3 PAPER: INDIAN ECONOMY AND ISSUES RELATING TO PLANNING, MOBILIZATION OF RESOURCES, GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

WHY IN THE NEWS?

1. As per the first advance estimate of the **National Statistic Office (NSO)**, India's **real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth** (*adjusted for inflation* from the base year 2011-12) for fiscal year 2023-24 is estimated at **7.3%**.
2. Thus the economy is expected to surpass the **7% growth rate** recently projected by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
3. However, the growth in **Gross Value Addition (GVA)** will come down from **7%** in 2022 to **6.9%** in 2023.
4. At the same time, **Nominal GDP growth** will fall short of the Budget 2023 estimate of 10.5%, to only **8.9%**.
5. Less Nominal GDP growth translates into **less tax collection** for the Government thus leading to **Fiscal deficit** i.e.; the amount Government needs to borrow over and above Revenue expenditure.
6. The GVA growth for the **farm sector** will more than halve from 4% in 2022 to just **1.8% in 2023** as in the case for Trade, Hotels, Transport, Communication and Services.

WHAT IS GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP)?

1. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country includes **all goods and services** produced in the **domestic boundary of India**, produced by either a **Citizen or a resident**.
2. **GDP comprises of:**
 - Private Consumption
 - Investment from Public & Private sector
 - Expenditure incurred by the Government
 - While exports are included, *imports are not*.
3. As per the Budget 2023, Private consumption forms **58% of the GDP** thus indicating that India is primarily a **"consumer" economy**.
4. GDP is calculated by NSO through **Expenditure method** which includes:
 - Final consumption expenditure on Goods & services by Households
 - Final consumption as well as Capital expenditure by Industries

- Taxes on products are included
- Imputed rent of self-occupied houses
- 5. Following items are **not included in the GDP**:
 - **Transfer payments** such as the Government expenditure on pension schemes, scholarships, unemployment allowances etc.
 - Expenditure on **Intermediate goods**
 - **Subsidies** on products are not included
 - It does not take into account the **externalities** caused during production of Goods & services such as pollution from refinery of crude oil
 - **Secondary market** items such as Bond and share transactions are not included
- 6. As per **Forbes India**, India's Current GDP (As of December 2023) is **\$3.73 trillion** making it the **5th largest economy in the world**.

WHAT IS GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT (GNP)?

1. $GNP = GDP + \text{Income obtained by Indians through investment abroad.}$
2. GNP includes the value of all goods & services produced by the "**citizen**" of the country *either within the domestic boundary of the country or in foreign territories.*
3. It does not include the products manufactured by foreign companies. For example, **Adidas shoes**, even if manufactured in India, are not included in India's GNP.
4. As India is a majorly import dependent country with 56% GDP produced by consumer purchases, **India's GDP is greater than India's GNP.**
5. The Net National Product (NNP) includes the Goods & services produced by citizens of India **minus depreciation**. Thus it more accurately reflects India's success in continuing "minimum production standard".

WHAT IS GROSS VALUE ADDED (GVA)?

1. **GVA = GDP + Subsidies on Products - Taxes on products**
2. GVA calculates National Income from **Supply side**.
3. NSO measures **GVA @ Basic Price** which includes the **Factor Cost & Production Tax**. It does not include **Taxes on Product** (such as GST) which if added, becomes the MRP.
4. Thus GVA includes Net Taxation at Point of Production but *does not include Net Taxation at Point of Sale.*
5. The Base year for GVA calculation has been revised to **2011-12**.
6. As per the Budget 2023, **Service sector** contributes **55%** of Gross Value Addition (GVA) followed by Industry (26%) & then Agriculture (18%).

7. Within Services, the **Financial and Real Estate services** contributes the largest share of 21% followed by Trade, Hotel, Transport, communication (18%) & Public administration and Defence (14%).

WHAT IS GREEN GDP?

1. Green GDP includes the **estimates for “externalities”** caused by production of goods & services within the domestic boundary of the country (GDP) such as:
 - Environmental degradation
 - Depletion of natural resources etc.
2. Thus, Green GDP = GDP minus Carbon emission cost + Opportunity cost of waste generated + adjusted savings of natural resource depletion.
3. The **Kuznets curve** postulates that in the Initial development phase of a developing country, as the Per capita income increases, the pollution level increases as well. Thus, for development in Amrit Kaal (2023-2047), India faces concerning **issue of growing pollution**.
4. Recently to achieve the target of **Carbon neutrality by 2070** taken under **Glasgow commitments** at 26th COP of UNFCCC, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has launched the Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services (**NCAVES**) along with UN & European Union.
5. Also, recently **Uttarakhand** became the 1st state in India to measure **Gross Environment Product (GEP)** for quantifying ecological growth measurement.
6. The GEP calculates value of the ecosystem in providing products and services, and it is one of the components of green GDP.

UPSC PRELIMS 2024 PRACTISE QUESTION:

Q1: The national income of a country for a given period is equal to the:

- (a) total value of goods and services produced by the nationals
- (b) sum of total consumption and investment expenditure
- (c) sum of personal income of all individuals
- (d) money value of final goods and services produced

ANSWER: (a)

STUDY ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF NANO UREA

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details of "2 year study on the effectiveness of Nano Urea.". This topic is relevant to the Agriculture section of the UPSC CSE exam.

UPSC mains syllabus GS3 : Agriculture

Why in the News?

- When compared to traditional nitrogen (N) fertiliser treatment, researchers at Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) have observed a significant drop in rice and wheat yields during a two-year field experiment on the effectiveness of nano urea. There was also a decrease in the nitrogen content of the grains, which is necessary for the synthesis of protein.
- The findings highlight the need for additional extended field tests lasting from five to seven years in order to determine whether nano urea is sustainable in sustaining crop yields and whether it is comparable to regular urea.

Important Findings about Liquid Nano Urea's Efficacy

- **Yield Decline:** When nano urea was used, it was found that there was a 21.6 percent drop in wheat output and a 13 percent fall in rice yield.
- **Decrease in Grain Content:** When nano urea and N were applied to the soil together, the grain N content of wheat and rice decreased by 11.5 and 17.5%, respectively. A reduced protein content was reflected in a drop in grain N content.
- **Traditional Urea found more effective:** The paper states that even if this nano formulation achieves 100% use efficiency, the developing crop would not be able to receive the necessary nitrogen fertiliser, as opposed to 45 kg of regular urea.
- **Higher Cost:** The formulation of nano urea was ten times more expensive than granular urea, which increased farmers' cultivation expenses.
- **Reduced Crop Mass and Root Volume:** The Punjab Agricultural University field tests also showed that following the application of nano urea, there was a decrease in both above-ground (crop) biomass and root volume, which resulted in a reduction in the amount of root biomass added following crop harvest. The decreased root volume suggested a reduced root-surface area that may lead to a loss in the root's ability to absorb nitrogen and other nutrients.

About Nano Urea

- It is an innovative agri-input that gives plants nitrogen and is based on nanotechnology.
- The Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) is the one who invented and patented it.
- The only nano fertiliser listed in the Fertiliser Control Order (FCO) and authorised by the Indian government is IFFCO Nano Urea.

Features:

- Nano Urea has a more ideal particle size of 20–50 nm and higher surface area (10 times more than 1 mm urea prill) and number of particles (55,000 nitrogen particles over 1 mm urea prill) than traditional urea prill.
- It can reduce the need for traditional urea by at least 50%, which is why it was designed to replace it.
- Its 500 ml container carries 40,000 mg/L of nitrogen, which is the same amount of nitrogen nutrients as one bag of traditional urea.

Potential benefits

- It has a year's shelf life, so farmers don't have to worry about it "caking" in the presence of moisture.
- **Pricing:** It is available for Rs 250 for a half-litre bottle and currently doesn't need a subsidy. In contrast, a 50-kg bag of generously subsidised urea costs a farmer approximately Rs 350.
- **Efficiency:** While liquid nano urea can have an efficiency of up to 85–90%, conventional urea only has an efficiency of roughly 25%.
- **Absorption:** The plant absorbs liquid nano urea when it is sprayed directly on the leaves. Nano fertilisers give crops a focused supply of nutrients since they are absorbed through stomata, which are pores on the leaf's epidermis.
- **Lower Subsidy expense:** Its goal is to minimise the disproportionate and careless use of conventional urea by cutting down on the nation's subsidy expense.

Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO):

- It is the largest multi-state cooperative society of India which is completely owned by Indian cooperatives.
- Fertiliser manufacture and distribution are the main activities of IFFCO

Prelims practice question

Question 1) What is the primary advantage of Nano Urea over traditional urea?

- a) Higher nitrogen content
- b) Slow-release properties
- c) Improved water solubility
- d) Reduced environmental impact

Answer: b) Slow-release properties

Question 2) Sustainable agriculture can benefit from the use of nano urea by:

- a) Growing reliance on synthetic fertilisers
- b) Using less water for irrigation
- c) Promotion of monoculture

d) Quickening the deterioration of soil

Answer - b) Using less water for irrigation

Mains practice Question

Question 1) Examine how Nano Urea can help address the environmental issues related to the conventional application of urea in Indian agriculture.

