



Yojna IAS

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DECEMBER 2023

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

YOJNA IAS WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS
25/12/2023 TO 31/12/2023

Delhi Office

706 Ground Floor Dr. Mukherjee Nagar
Near Batra Cinema Delhi – 110009
Contact No. : +91 8595390705

Noida Office

Basement C-32 Noida Sector-2
Uttar Pradesh 201301
website : www.yojnaias.com



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS CONTENTS

S.No.	Topics	Pg No.
1.	HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN INDIA	1 - 2
2.	MACROECONOMIC CAUSES/ REASONS OF EMPLOYMENT CRISIS IN INDIA/ UNEMPLOYMENT PREVALENT IN INDIA	3 - 7
3.	EMERGING ISSUES IN INDIA- RUSSIA RELATIONS	7 - 13
4.	AD-HOC COMMITTEE TO MANAGE WFI AFFAIRS	14 - 16
5.	CHINESE BAN ON EXPORT OF RARE EARTH TECHNOLOGIES	16 - 21
6.	THE ISSUE OF ARTICLE 370 IS OVER IN THE LIGHT OF THE SUPREME COURT'S DECISION: BUT IT IS NECESSARY TO END THE ISSUE OF TERRORISM VICTIMS	21 - 26
7.	INDIA – ASEAN: CHANGING DYNAMICS IN CONTEXT OF FTA	26 - 31
8.	ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB)	31 - 33
9.	CURRENT RELEVANCE OF A NEW ECONOMY FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT	33 - 38
10.	ISSUE OF CHILD LABOUR IN INDIA	38 - 41
11.	PM JANMAN scheme	41 - 44
12.	THERE IS NO PLACE FOR HIJAB RIGHT NOW: HIJAB BAN ISSUE AND FREEDOM OF RELIGION IN KARNATAKA	44 - 48
13.	JAPAN'S SLIM MISSION	48 - 51
14.	QATAR COURT PUTS INTERIM STAY ON DEATH SENTENCE OF EIGHT INDIANS	51 - 55
15.	UNDERSTANDING DARK ENERGY IN THE UNIVERSE	55 - 57
16.	INDIA'S STEADY WAY IN THE SHIPPING VALUE CHAIN: INDIA'S FIRST CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR GREEN PORTS AND SHIPPING	57 - 61

CURRENT AFFAIRS

DECEMBER 2023

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN INDIA

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Human Trafficking in India". This topic has relevance in the Social Issues section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 2: Social Issues

Why in the news?

A flight transporting 303 passengers, predominantly of Indian nationality, is anticipated to arrive at Mumbai airport at approximately 2:20 pm from France, following a three-day delay prompted by suspicions of human trafficking. Originally destined for Nicaragua, the A340 aircraft was immobilized near Paris following an anonymous tip.

Understanding Human Trafficking:

Human trafficking, an illicit trade involving humans, encompasses activities such as sexual slavery, commercial sexual exploitation, organ extraction, forced marriage, forced labor, and domestic servitude. It ranks as the third-largest organized crime globally, following drugs and arms trade.

Prevalence in India:

In 2022, India's National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reported identifying over 6,500 human trafficking victims, with 60% being women and girls. Experts posit that actual figures may be significantly higher due to underreporting.

Constitutional and Legislative Provisions:

- **Constitutional Prohibition:** Article 23(1) of the Indian Constitution prohibits trafficking in human beings or persons.
- **The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956 (ITPA):** This legislation is pivotal for preventing trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.
- **Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013:** Amended Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code to address various forms of human trafficking, including child exploitation and forced organ removal.
- **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act 2012:** Specifically protects children from sexual abuse and exploitation.
- **Other Relevant Legislation:** Acts such as the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, and Transplantation of

Human Organs Act address specific aspects of trafficking.

Government Measures:

The Government of India, through the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), has implemented several measures to combat human trafficking:

- **Anti-Trafficking Cell (ATC):** MHA established an Anti-Trafficking Nodal Cell to coordinate efforts and monitor actions taken by state governments.
- **Comprehensive Scheme for Strengthening Law Enforcement:** MHA released funds to establish Anti-Human Trafficking Units in 270 districts across India.
- **Capacity Building:** Training of Trainers (TOT) workshops on combating human trafficking for police officers was conducted nationwide to enhance their skills.
- **Judicial Colloquium/Seminar:** High-level Judicial Colloquiums on human trafficking aim to train and sensitize trial court judicial officers.

Way Forward:

- **Strengthen Enforcement:**
 - Enhance collaboration among law enforcement agencies for more effective and coordinated efforts.
 - Ensure strict implementation of existing legislation, with a focus on proactive measures.
- **Public Awareness and Education:**
 - Conduct nationwide campaigns to raise awareness about the various forms of human trafficking.
 - Integrate anti-trafficking education into school curricula to empower the younger generation.
- **Victim Support and Rehabilitation:**
 - Establish and strengthen rehabilitation programs for survivors, addressing physical, psychological, and economic needs.
 - Encourage public-private partnerships to create job opportunities for survivors.
- **International Cooperation:**
 - Strengthen collaboration with international organizations and neighboring countries to curb cross-border trafficking.
 - Share best practices and intelligence to enhance the global fight against human trafficking.

Source:

Plane with more than 300 passengers, mostly Indians, to land at Mumbai airport today from France after human trafficking suspicions (msn.com)

Q.1 Discuss the socio-economic factors that make individuals susceptible to human trafficking. How can targeted social and economic interventions help prevent the trafficking of vulnerable populations?

MACROECONOMIC CAUSES/ REASONS OF EMPLOYMENT CRISIS IN INDIA/UNEMPLOYMENT PREVALENT IN INDIA

This article pertains to a brief summary of the combined Editorials of 'The Economy Times of India', 'Oxfom India', 'Indian Express', 'The Hindu', 'Jansatta', the monthly magazine 'World Focus' and 'PIB'. The scheme also includes suggestions from the YOJNA IAS team . This article is specifically from the section 'Indian Economy, Employment, Growth and Development, Poverty, Education, Skill Development, Human Resources, Employment and Unemployment in India, Types of Unemployment' section of UPSC Civil Services Examination. This article is related to 'Macroeconomic causes of employment crisis in India/Unemployment prevalent in India' under 'Daily Current Affairs').

General Studies-III – Indian Economy, Employment, Growth and Development, Poverty, Education, Skill Development, Human Resources Employment and Unemployment in India, Types of Unemployment.

WHY IN DISCUSSION/ NEWS?

According to a recent study, fewer people are currently employed in agriculture and agriculture-related sectors, yet the change in the unemployment rate has also been weak.

- People leaving agriculture are working in greater numbers in construction sites and unorganized sectors of the economy than in factories.



UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN INDIA: HISTORICAL DATA

The following is the unemployment rate data for the last 10 or 15 years in India, which can be understood from this chart/graph –

Year	Unemployment rate (percentage)
2023	10.05 (in October)*
2022	7.33
2021	5.98
2020	8.00
2019	5.27
2018	5.33
2017	5.36

2016	5.42
2015	5.44
2014	5.44
2013	5.42
2012	5.41
2011	5.43
2010	5.55
2009	5.54
2008	5.41

Source: CMIE

METHOD OF MEASURING CURRENT UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN INDIA:

Currently the following is the way to measure the current unemployment rate in India –

- The past and present unemployment rate in India is an important economic indicator expressed as a percentage which varies depending on the prevailing economic conditions.
- When job opportunities reduce during economic recession, unemployment starts increasing. Conversely, during periods of economic growth and prosperity, the unemployment rate is expected to decline, with many job opportunities available to the public.
- The formula to calculate the current unemployment rate in India is as follows:
- **Unemployment rate = number of unemployed persons / citizen labor force come on**
Unemployment rate = Number of unemployed persons / (Number of employed persons + Number of unemployed persons)

TO BE CLASSIFIED AS UNEMPLOYED, A PERSON MUST MEET SPECIFIC CRITERIA:

- They must be at least 16 years of age and available for full-time work in the last four weeks.
- They should actively seek employment during this period.
- Some exceptions include individuals who have been temporarily laid off and are actively seeking to rejoin their previous jobs.

TYPES OF UNEMPLOYMENT:

DISGUISED UNEMPLOYMENT:

- This is a situation in which more people are employed than are actually required.
- It is mainly found in agricultural and unorganized sectors of India.

SEASONAL UNEMPLOYMENT:

- This unemployment is observed during certain seasons of the year.
- Agricultural laborers in India have very little work throughout the year.

STRUCTURAL UNEMPLOYMENT:

- It is a category of unemployment resulting from an imbalance between the jobs available in the market and the skills of workers.

CYCLICAL UNEMPLOYMENT:

- This is a result of the business cycle, where unemployment increases during recessions and decreases with economic growth.

TECHNICAL UNEMPLOYMENT:

- This is the reduction in employment due to changes in technology.

FRICTIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT:

- Frictional unemployment refers to the time gap between jobs when a person is looking for a new job or changing jobs.

VULNERABLE EMPLOYMENT:

- This means that people are working informally without proper job contracts and thus have no legal protection.
- These individuals are considered 'unemployed' because their work is never recorded.

EMPLOYMENT IN AGRICULTURE SECTORS:

- In the year 1993-94, agriculture constituted about 62% of the country's employed labor force.
- The labor percentage in agriculture (based on data from the National Statistical Office's Periodic Labor Force Survey) had fallen by about 6% points by 2004-05 and by 9% points over the next seven years.
- This declining trend in labor percentage continued at a slow pace in the subsequent seven years.
- The share of agriculture in India's workforce declined from 61.9% to 41.4% between 1993-94 and 2018-19.
- It is estimated that as per the per capita GDP level in the year 2018, India's agriculture sector should employ 33-34% of the total workforce.
- Thus, this 41.4% does not represent a substantial deviation from the average workforce.

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS IN INDIA:

AGRICULTURE:

TRENDS REVERSAL:

- There has been a continuous change in this trend in the last two years, due to which the share of people employed in agriculture has increased to 44-45% in the year 2020-21.
- This is primarily related to Covid-induced economic disruptions.

STRUCTURAL CHANGES:

- The migration of labor out of agriculture that India has seen over the past three decades or more does not qualify as what economists call "structural change."
- Structural change involves the shift of labor from agriculture to sectors, particularly manufacturing and modern services, where productivity, value added and average incomes are higher.
- Along with agriculture, their share in total employment in sectors like manufacturing (and mining) has also declined.
- Surplus labor from agriculture is being absorbed into manufacturing and services on a large scale.
- The process of structural change in India has been weak and flawed.
- Despite the temporary halt due to Covid, labor movement into non-agricultural sectors continues, but that surplus labor is not moving towards higher value-added non-agricultural activities, especially manufacturing and modern services.

- Labor transfer is taking place within the low-productivity informal economy.

SERVICE AREA:

- The service sector includes relatively well-paying industries such as information technology, business process, outsourcing, telecommunications, finance, health care, education and public administration.
- Most of the jobs are related to service sector employment like small retailing, small eateries, domestic help, sanitation, security staff, transportation and other similar informal economic activities.
- The low share of employment in organized enterprises, defined as those employing 10 or more workers, also shows that the employment situation in India is pathetic.

Growing Employment Opportunities In Information Technology Sector:

- The combined headcount of India's top five IT companies (Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, Wipro, HCL Technologies and Tech Mahindra) has increased from 55 lakh to 15.69 lakh between 2020-22.
- This is an increase of 4.14 lakh or about 36% over the post-Covid pandemic period, when most other sectors except agriculture were losing jobs and wages.
- The number of combined employment in these five companies is higher than the combined employment of Indian Railways and the three defense services.
- Much of the recent success in the IT sector has been a result of exports, which have led to job creation.
- India's net exports in software services have increased from \$84.64 billion in 2019-20 to \$109.54 billion in 2021-22. Which is also related to the issue of employment generation in many ways.

POSSIBLE MEASURES TO CURB UNEMPLOYMENT:

TO PROVIDE SKILL TRAINING TO WORKERS ENGAGED IN AGRICULTURE:

- The government should give priority to schemes that enhance the skills of the workforce engaged in the agricultural sector.
- This will provide a dual benefit by promoting skills and knowledge in the agriculture sector and at the same time it will help the workers to look for other better areas of employment.

PROMOTION OF LABOURS - INTENSIVE INDUSTRIES:

- **There are many labour-intensive manufacturing sectors in India such as food processing, leather and footwear, wood products and furniture, apparel, textiles and clothing etc.**
- **Every industry requires a special package to generate employment.**

DECENTRALIZATION OF INDUSTRIES:

- To provide employment to people in every region, it is necessary to decentralize industrial activities.
- Development of rural areas will help in reducing migration of rural people to urban areas thereby reducing pressure on employment in urban areas.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES TO REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE:

To reduce India's huge population and the current unemployment rate, the following initiatives or schemes are also being run by the government to solve the problem of unemployment and to provide employment to maximum people –

- 'Support for Marginalized Persons for Livelihood and Enterprise (SMILE) Scheme .
- PM Daksh Yojana .
- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) .
- Prime Minister Skill Development Scheme .
- Startup India Scheme .

THE WAY FORWARD TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF UNEMPLOYMENT:

- According to the National Sample Survey Survey (NSSO) , the unemployment rate for persons aged 15 years and above in urban areas declined to 6.8 per cent during January-March 2023 from 8.2 per cent a year ago . This positive development suggests a possible turnaround in the job market amid the current economic complexities. However, continued vigilance and effective policy measures are critical to promote sustainable job growth and secure the country's future prosperity.
- Unemployment remains a serious concern in India, with fluctuations being seen across various sectors of employment in India. According to a recent report by Bloomberg, which references Center for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) data for July, the overall unemployment rate in India stands at 7.95 percent by July 2023.

QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM:

Q.1. The unemployment found in the agricultural sector in India in which more people are employed than required is called?

- (a) Seasonal unemployment.
- (b) Disguised unemployment.
- (c) Structural unemployment.
- (d) Marginal unemployment .

Answer – (b)

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM:

Q.1. What do you understand by unemployment and unemployment rate? Explaining the current situation of unemployment in India, discuss the major initiatives and programs being run to solve the problem of unemployment.

EMERGING ISSUES IN INDIA- RUSSIA RELATIONS

MAINS RELEVANCE: GS2 SYLLABUS- Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/ or affecting India's interests:

WHY IN NEWS:

- **External Affairs Minister** S. Jaishankar on Monday began his 5 day visit to Moscow and St. Petersburg, during which he will hold talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Trade Minister Denis Mantu.
- The visit is also significant as it comes in lieu of the annual summit due to be held between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin, an **unbroken tradition from the year 2000 until 2021** due to the Russia-Ukraine war.
- The visit is expected to see discussions on a number of thorny bilateral issues, including continuing problems over the **rupee-rouble payment mechanism** amid a surge in the import of Russian oil and bilateral trade and **delays in supplies of defense equipment**.
- Russia's supply of the fourth and fifth regiment of the **S400 Triumf Air Defence Systems**, also under U.S. sanctions, have been delayed and are now expected in 2024.

INDIA-RUSSIA RELATIONS: CONVERGENCE:

1. GEO-POLITICAL:

- The India and Russia ties have been a longstanding relation since 1971 when Russia supported India in Liberation war of Bangladesh against pressure of Nuclear warfare by USA
- India-Russia signed the Indo-Soviet **Treaty of Friendship & Cooperation on 9th August 1971**: It was the **first political treaty** India made with another nation.
- It acted as a turning point in India's traditional **Non-aligned policy** so vigorously enunciated at Bandung in 1955.
- India further signed the "**Declaration on the India-Russia Strategic Partnership**" in 2000.
- Political engagement has seen further highs with the current Government. For example: In 2019, President Putin signed the Executive Order on awarding PM Narendra Modi Russia's highest state decoration – The **order of St Andrew the Apostle**.
- India's decision to not join the U.S.led naval **operation against Houthi attacks** on shipping in the Red Sea, named "**Operation Prosperity Guardian**" so far is also likely to find favor in Moscow.

2. GEO-STRATEGIC:

- Russia has also provided "unwavering support" to India's demand for **Permanent Seat at UNSC**
- Russia can significantly contribute to **defusing tensions with China**: For example Russia organized a trilateral meeting among the foreign ministers of Russia, India, and China following deadly clashes in the Galwan Valley in the disputed territory of Ladakh in 2020.
- There is a long standing mutual cooperation against Terrorism through Groupings such as Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (**SCO**) & **BRICS** etc
- Two Inter-Governmental Commissions – one on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (**IRIGC-TEC**), and another on Military-Technical Cooperation (**IRIGC-MTC**), meet annually.
- Both countries regularly conduct the Tri-Services exercise '**INDRA**'.
- Russia is India's **topmost weapon supplier**:
 - Though as per **SIPRI Report 2021**: Russia's share in India's weapon import has fallen from 69% to **49%**
 - Examples of India's Import: MIG-21, Sukhoi-30, T-72 tanks, Russian S-400 air defense missile system and a joint venture to manufacture AK-203 assault rifles.
 - Indian Navy's first submarine, '**Foxtrot Class**' came from Russia

- **INS Vikramaditya**, the sole aircraft carrier operated by India, is also Russian in origin.
- The **joint military programmes** between India and Russia include: **BrahMos cruise missile** programme, 5th generation fighter jet programme, **Sukhoi Su-30MKI** programme, Ilyushin/HAL Tactical Transport Aircraft & KA-226T twin-engine utility helicopters.
- Russia is an important partner for India in the area of peaceful use of **nuclear energy**:

1. **Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP)** is being built in India .

2. Both India and Russia are implementing **Rooppur Nuclear Power Project in Bangladesh**

3. TRADE RELATIONS:

- The two countries intend to increase bilateral investment to **US\$50 billion** and bilateral trade to **US\$30 billion by 2025**.
- A Phenomenal Growth in Bilateral Trade has been observed as it has increased by around **2.1 times** in January- September in 2023, up to almost 50 billion USD owing to strong **demand for hydrocarbons in India**.
- Exceeding Expectations: India and Russia have already **achieved the bilateral trade target** of \$30 billion before the target year of 2025.
- Resilient **Engineering Exports**: According to Engineering Exports Promotion Council (EEPC) India, amid declining demand for engineering goods from major markets such as the US and China, shipments to Russia continued their **uptrend and more than doubled** to around US\$ 123 million in July 2023 from around US\$ 55 million in July 2022.
- India has also shown active engagement in the **Eastern Economic Forum (EEF)** to develop Russia's far east (eg-Vladivostok). It will help India to Explore **Critical Minerals** such as Hydrocarbon, diamonds, gold and tungsten from Far-East.
- India and Russia are discussing a free trade agreement (FTA) involving the **Eurasian Economic Union (EEU)**, against the backdrop of bilateral economic ties seeing a sharp expansion since the start of the Ukraine conflict.
 - Member countries of EEU: Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan.
 - Diversifying Trade: India has diversified its export basket to Russia to include pharmaceuticals, fertilizers, coal, diamonds, chemicals, and ceramics, among other goods.
 - **Rupee-Rouble Mechanism: De-Dollarization of Economy**: The payment mechanism between India and Russia was devised to circumvent the **U.S. and EU sanctions** against Russia over the Ukraine war.

4. CULTURAL RELATIONS:

- Cultural contact through Yoga, Vaishnavism, Ayurveda and Dance etc
- About 20 Russian Institutions, including leading universities and schools, regularly **teach Hindi** to about 1500 Russian students
 - EXAMPLE: creation of a **Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)**.
- Apart from Hindi, languages such as **Tamil, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Urdu, Sanskrit and Pali** are taught in Russian Institutions

EMERGING ISSUES BETWEEN RUSSIA & INDIA:

1. **High trade deficit incurred by India**: The skewed trade balance has been an area of concern between the two countries:

- For example, during FY23, India had around a **\$43 billion trade deficit** with Russia, which left their exporters with **large surpluses in their Vostro accounts** in India.

- This has meant delayed payments, as well as the need for India to use third country currencies including the **UAE Dirham and Chinese Yuan** to pay for Indian imports from Russia that have grown a massive 368% year on year from 2022 to 2023, mainly due to an **increase in import of Russian oil**, leading to a major trade deficit.
 - This has created **Challenges in Rupee- Ruble Trade**: Indian refiners are using a mix of currencies to settle most of their Russian oil purchases.
1. Both countries previously discussed trading in their local currencies but this is yet to take off because of **currency volatility and the high trade deficit**.
 2. **Russia's Over Dependence on China**: China enjoys direct connectivity, advanced logistics supply, a high level of trade, and profitability with Russia.
 - Since the beginning of Russia- Russia-Ukraine conflict, Russia-China cooperation has grown in all directions.
 - The trade turnover between the two countries reached a record \$190 billion last year, increased by another 39% in the first quarter of this year compared with the same period in 2022.
 2. **Infrastructure and Connectivity Issues**: Inadequate transportation infrastructure and connectivity can impede the smooth flow of goods between India and Russia.
 - The absence of a direct trade route and high shipping costs make exports to Russia a costly affair for India, as it doesn't share a land border with Russia, unlike China
 3. **Divergence on International Relations**: While Russia has been openly critical of Israel's actions, and in particular, the U.S.'s support to Israel over the bombing of civilians, India's stand has been less strident.
 4. **Challenging India's role as Balancing Power**: Russia along with China has been highly critical of India as **Member of QUAD** including US, Australia and Japan, grouping formed to ensure security of trade and transit in Indo-Pacific region
 5. While India has been wary of **SCO's emerging outlook as "Anti-Western" grouping**: Eg- Recent inclusion of Iran and Belarus as member & Myanmar as Observer making practically every member facing sanctions by Europe & USA.

STEPS TO TAKE BY INDIAN DIPLOMACY:

1. **Addressing Trade Imbalance**: A huge imbalance in trade heavily towards Russia is an issue in the Rupee-Ruble trade. To solve this problem, Russia is keen to **import manufacturing equipment** including machinery from India.
2. **Increasing Asia's Importance for Russia**: To compensate for the decline in trade with the West, Russia is looking much more toward Asia.
 - For India, this could mean broadening our engagement that was overly reliant on the triad of military, nuclear, and space cooperation.
3. Providing Solutions to Short- and Medium-Term Challenges in Business: **Payments, logistics,**

and certification were some of the key areas of issues and it is possible to find solutions to them.

- Attracting Russian's investors towards India's key infrastructure shall be emphasized upon
4. **Improving Rupee-Ruble Trade:** To tackle the accumulation of Indian currency in Russia, **increasing Rupee trade with third countries common to both India and Russia**, where India has a trade surplus can help in ensuring seamless money flow while solving the problem.
- For this, India has taken steps to de-dollarize trade while pushing for the internationalization of the Indian Rupee.
5. **New Trade Routes:** The development of new trade routes like the **Eastern Maritime Corridor** and the **Northern Sea Route** will also be of interest in deepening trade ties.
- **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** is another effective connectivity initiative to increase Indo-Russian trade.
 - The two countries are also discussing the possibility of launching a **trans-Arctic container shipping line** and processing facilities along the Northern Sea Route.
6. Defense deals and nuclear energy cooperation can further float relations

CONCLUSION:

Thus in words of International Policy Expert **Sahasini Hiader**: India's adequate response to the crisis posed by Russia-Ukraine War has displayed its "**Diplomatic Deftness**" as India not only secured its National interest but reinforced its commitment for Rule based order. However, **addressing trade imbalances, enhancing connectivity, and exploring diversified partnerships** will be crucial for sustaining and strengthening their economic ties in the evolving global landscape.

Prelims Question (2019)

Q: Recently, India signed a deal known as 'Action Plan for Prioritization and Implementation of Cooperation Areas in the Nuclear Field' with which of the following countries?

- (a) Japan
- (b) Russia
- (c) The United Kingdom
- (d) The United States of America

Ans: (b)

POTENTIAL PRELIMS 2024 QUESTIONS:

Q1: "Operation Prosperity Guardian" recently seen in the news is associated with which of the following:

- 1. Operation by India to curb Narco-Terrorism in Golden Crescent region

2. Operation by USA to provide Maritime security in Red Sea region
3. An initiative launched by BRICS countries to provide loans to Lower Middle income countries
4. A joint military exercise between all members of QUAD grouping

ANSWER: B

EXPLANATION:

“Operation Prosperity Guardian”:

1. It is an initiative **launched by USA to protect Red Sea commerce.**
 - This follows missile and drone attacks by **Yemen’s Iran-aligned Houthis:**
 1. The Houthis are a large clan belonging to the Zaidi Shia sect, with roots in **Yemen’s northwestern Saada province.**
 2. The Houthi movement, officially called Ansar Allah (Supporters of God), began in the 1990s against the dictatorship of Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh.
 3. Today, the Houthis are one faction in a bloody civil war that has raged in Yemen since 2014.
 4. The Houthis, backed by Iran, are a part of what Iran calls, **“The Axis of Resistance”** : an informal **anti-Israel and anti-West** political and military coalition that it leads.
 5. Other notable groups in the Axis include **Hezbollah and Hamas.**
 6. In Yemen, the Houthis are fighting against the Sunni-led internationally recognized Yemeni government, backed by **Saudi Arabia and the UAE.**
 - Countries Involved: The U.K., Bahrain, Canada, France, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Seychelles, and Spain are participating.
 - Joint Patrols: These nations will conduct joint patrols in the southern **Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden**
 - **NOTE: India is NOT a member of alliance**
 - Recently Japanese owned & Liberia flagged merchant Vessel **Chem Pluto** with 21 crew members (20 Indians & 1 Vietnamese national) sailing from UAE to New Mangalore port (India) faced drone attack by Iran backed **Houthi militants** in the Red Sea region, just outside Indian **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).**
- Q2: India & Russia have recently accomplished 50 years of Strategic ties through Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship & Cooperation 1971. Which of the following initiatives are being developed under joint cooperation by India & Russia:
1. INS Vikramaditya
 2. BrahMos cruise missile programme
 3. Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant in Tamil Nadu

4. Rooppur Nuclear Power Project in Bangladesh

Choose the correct code from options below:

1. Only one pair
2. Only two pair
3. Only three pair
4. All of the above pair

ANSWER: B

EXPLANATION:

1. The India and Russia ties have been a longstanding relation since 1971 when Russia supported India in Liberation war of Bangladesh against pressure of Nuclear warfare by USA:
 - India-Russia signed the Indo-Soviet **Treaty of Friendship & Cooperation on 9th August 1971**: It was the **first political treaty** India made with another nation.
 - It acted as a turning point in India's traditional **Non-aligned policy** so vigorously enunciated at Bandung in 1955.
2. India further signed the **"Declaration on the India-Russia Strategic Partnership" in 2000.**
3. Political engagement has seen further highs with the current Government. For example: In 2019, President Putin signed the Executive Order on awarding PM Narendra Modi Russia's highest state decoration – The **order of St Andrew the Apostle.**
4. JOINT PROJECTS BY INDIA & RUSSIA:
 - Indian Navy's first submarine, **'Foxtrot Class'** came from Russia
 - **INS Vikramaditya**, the sole aircraft carrier operated by India, is also Russian in origin.
 - The **joint military programmes** between India and Russia include: **BrahMos cruise missile** programme, 5th generation fighter jet programme, **Sukhoi Su-30MKI** programme, Ilyushin/ HAL Tactical Transport Aircraft & KA-226T twin-engine utility helicopters.
 - Russia is an important partner for India in the area of peaceful use of **nuclear energy**:
 - **Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP)** is being built in India .
 - Both India and Russia are implementing **Rooppur Nuclear Power Project in Bangladesh**

Practice Mains Question:

Discuss the importance of India-Russia relationship in the current global context. In light of recent developments, highlight the scope for strengthening economic and strategic cooperation between the two countries especially with regards to India's Act Far East policy. (15 marks, 250 words)

AD-HOC COMMITTEE TO MANAGE WFI AFFAIRS

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Ad-hoc committee to manage WFI affairs". This topic has relevance in the Social Justice section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 2: Social Justice

Why in the news?

The Sports Ministry has urged the Indian Olympic Association to form an ad-hoc committee responsible for overseeing and regulating the operations of the federation. Previously, the ministry had taken the step of suspending the recently elected governing body of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI).

Background:

• Allegations and Protests:

- Wrestlers, led by Vinesh Phogat, have accused WFI President Brij Bhushan of engaging in the sexual exploitation of women wrestlers, along with alleging financial mismanagement and arbitrary practices within the WFI.
- The wrestlers are demanding the registration of an FIR against Brij Bhushan, his arrest under the POCSO Act, his removal as the WFI president, and the dissolution of the federation.

• Oversight Committee Intervention:

- In response to the allegations, the government formed a six-member Oversight Committee, headed by MC Mary Kom, tasked with investigating the claims.
- The Oversight Committee faced delays in submitting its report, finally doing so in April before being disbanded.

• Disrupted Election Process:

- The government nullified the ongoing WFI election process scheduled for May 7th due to the persistent protests.
- The United World Wrestling (UWW) suspended WFI for its failure to meet election deadlines, and despite repeated postponements, the WFI rescheduled elections for December 21, resulting in the election of Sanjay Singh as the new WFI chief.

• Fresh Protests and Governance Crisis:

- Sanjay Singh's appointment as the new WFI chief faced strong opposition from notable wrestlers, including Vinesh Phogat, Sakshi Malik, and Bajrang Punia.
- In response to the appointment, Sakshi Malik announced her retirement, and Bajrang Punia returned his Padma Shri award as a form of protest.
- The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports reacted by suspending the newly elected WFI governing council, citing violations of the National Sports Code, which included the untimely announcement of Under-15 and Under-20 National Championships and the absence of the WFI Secre-

tary-General during crucial meetings.

- **National Sports Code Violation:**

- The Ministry of Sports suspended the recognition of WFI under the National Sports Code, citing violations.
- Specific breaches included the improper announcement of competitions and the absence of the Secretary-General during key meetings.

- **Ongoing Tension:**

- The Indian wrestling community finds itself grappling with internal strife and external sanctions.
- Uncertainty prevails concerning the resolution of the serious allegations, the conduct of fair elections, and the future governance of the WFI.

Wrestling Federation of India (WFI): Overview

- **Foundation and Location:**

- The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) was established in 1958 and is headquartered in New Delhi.
- It serves as the governing body for wrestling in the country.

- **Mission and Promotion:**

- WFI focuses on promoting wrestling athletes for prestigious competitions, including the Olympics, Asian Games, National Wrestling Championships, and World Wrestling Championships.
- Its primary objective is to nurture and advance the sport of wrestling on both national and international platforms.

- **Affiliation and Compliance:**

- WFI is affiliated with the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), aligning itself with the larger Olympic movement in India.
- It adheres to the rules and regulations stipulated by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the United World Wrestling (UWW).

- **Role of UWW:**

- UWW, as the international governing body for wrestling, plays a pivotal role in overseeing the sport at prestigious events such as the World Championships and the Olympics.
- WFI collaborates with UWW to ensure the implementation of standardized rules and practices in the sport globally.

- **Contract System for Wrestlers (2018):**

- In a significant development in 2018, WFI introduced a groundbreaking contracts system for wrestlers.

- Wrestlers are categorized into four grades:
 - Grade A: Provides monetary support of 30 lakh rupees.
 - Grade B: Provides financial support amounting to 20 lakh rupees.
 - Grade C: Extends support of 10 lakh rupees.
 - Grade D: Offers financial assistance of 5 lakh rupees.
- Contracts undergo review on an annual basis, reflecting WFI's commitment to supporting and recognizing the contributions of wrestlers.

Source:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/sports/ioa-debars-outgoing-wfi-officials-from-undertaking-federations-administrative-work/articleshow/100205481.cms>

Q.1 Examine the recent controversies surrounding the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) and the protests initiated by top Indian wrestlers. Critically analyze the impact of these controversies on the sport of wrestling in India

CHINESE BAN ON EXPORT OF RARE EARTH TECHNOLOGIES

GS3 - Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

WHY IN NEWS?

1. China, the world's **top processor of Rare earths minerals**, on Thursday **banned the export** of technology to extract and separate the strategic metals, as it overhauled a list of technologies deemed key to **national security**.
2. In October 2023, USA had put restrictions on exporting advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) to China to prevent it from acquiring **cutting edge chips** to develop AI technologies such as large language models that power applications such as **ChatGPT**.
 - For example, the Biden Administration had banned two Chinese chip startups, Biren and Moore Threads.
3. In retaliation, Beijing exercised its lever as the **largest supplier** of Rare earth metals needed for chip production:
 - In July 2023, China placed restrictions on some **Gallium and germanium** products. In December, restrictions were placed on several types of **Graphites** and a ban imposed on the export of technology for making rare earth magnets and technologies for extracting and separating rare earths.
4. This can become a major energy security issue as China is the world's top processor of rare earths, accounting for 70% of the world's **production**.

WHAT ARE RARE EARTH MINERALS (REE)?

1. They are set of **17 metallic elements**: Including **15 lanthanides** on the periodic table in addition to **scandium and yttrium** that show similar physical and chemical properties to the lanthanides.
 - The 17 Rare Earths are: Cerium (Ce), dysprosium (Dy), erbium (Er), europium (Eu), gadolinium (Gd), holmium (Ho), lanthanum (La), lutetium (Lu), neodymium (Nd), praseodymium (Pr), promethium (Pm), samarium (Sm), scandium (Sc), terbium (Tb), thulium (Tm), ytterbium (Yb), and yttrium (Y).
 - **NOTE: Gallium and germanium banned by China are NOT Rare Earth minerals.**
2. REEs are crucial in **manufacturing of Batteries**: Minerals like Cobalt, Nickel, and Lithium are required for batteries used in Electric vehicles.
 - As per **NITI Ayog**: 80% of the country's two- and three-wheeler fleet, 40% of buses, and 30 to 70% of cars will be **EVs by 2030**.
3. REEs are an essential component of more than 200 consumer products which includes mobile phones, computer hard drives, electric and hybrid vehicles, semiconductors, flat screen TVs and monitors, and high-end electronics.
4. **Industrial use**: Traditional uses like Cerium for glass polishing and lanthanum for car catalysts or optical lenses.
5. **Manufacturing of magnets**: neodymium, praseodymium and dysprosium, are crucial to the manufacture of magnets which are used in industries and also in wind turbines and Drones.
6. Even futuristic technologies need these REEs. For example, **high-temperature superconductivity, safe storage and transport of hydrogen for a post-hydrocarbon economy**, environmental global warming and energy efficiency issues.
7. They are called 'rare earth' because earlier it was **difficult to extract** them from their oxides forms technologically.
8. They occur in **many minerals but typically in low concentrations** to be refined in an economical manner.

DOMINANCE BY CHINA:

1. China has mastered the **solvent extraction process** to refine the strategic minerals, which Western rare earth companies have struggled to deploy due to technical complexities and pollution concerns.
2. China has over time acquired global domination of rare earths, even at one point, it produced 90% of the rare earths the world needs.
3. Today, however, it has **come down to 60%** and the remaining is produced by other countries, including the QUAD countries: Australia, India, Japan and United States.
4. China under Wolf warrior Diplomacy is using supply of Critical Earth minerals as tool of **Economic warfare**:

- Eg- China's ownership of Democratic Republic of Congo's **Cobalt mines** which produces 70% of world's Cobalt output.

ADVERSE IMPACT ON INDIA:

1. Along with REEs, Critical minerals such as Lithium (White gold), cobalt & graphite etc. are crucial to country's **manufacturing & infrastructure development**.
2. Green Energy based upon Semiconductors used to run batteries such as Lithium-Ion battery is imperative to meet India's **Net Zero target by 2070**.
3. India has only **6% of the world's rare earth reserves**. It **only produces 1% of global output** and meets most of its requirements of such minerals from China.
4. **High Import dependency** due to concentration of extraction & processing of REEs in few regions:
 - For Example: India is **100% Import dependent** for supply of critical minerals such as **lithium, cobalt, nickel, beryllium etc.**
 - REEs such as **Dysprosium, Terbium, and Europium** are not available in Indian deposits in extractable quantities.
 - In India, **monazite and thorium** is the principal source of rare earths.
5. Thus, in case of **Supply chain vulnerability** caused by export ban by China or Semiconductor chip war between USA & China can be detrimental to India's **energy security** concern and its target to become **3rd largest economy by 2027**.
6. High import dependency also leads to High **Current Account Deficit (CAD)**: Eg- India Imported worth **₹27,000 crore Copper** in 2022.

ISSUES FACED BY INDIA:

1. **Expensive exploration** & mining of deep-seated minerals such as gold, silver, copper, platinum etc
2. **Limited investment in Research & Development** of Technologies: India spend only **1.7 % of its GDP** while China spends 17 times more than India.
 - For Example: India's share in Global mineral exploration budget stands **only at 1%**
3. As per Geological Survey of India (GSI): India has done only **10% exploration** of its Geological potential while out of potential sites discovered; only 2% sites **have** been mined. (Source: Hindu Report, July 2023)
 - Due to this poor exploration & production, India has been denied membership in **Minerals Security Partnership (MSP)** launched by USA: which aims at catalyzing investment from governments and the private sector to develop supply chains of Critical minerals & challenge China's monopoly.
4. In Mining & Exploration sector, there is **huge dependency on PSUs & Govt's Organizations** such as MECL, GSI etc.
 - Example: **Indian Rare Earths Ltd (IREL)** which is a Government of India Undertaking, and **KMML**,

a Kerala State Government Undertaking are actively engaged in mining and processing of beach sand minerals from placer deposits.

5. **Low Private Sector Involvement:** Mining & Exploration is highly capital intensive & long gestation period which deter Private investment.
6. Also, there is requirement of **Advance Technology** such as Aerial surveys, geochemical analysis, geological mapping etc. which are not available at remote locations and at ground level.
7. **Environmental Impact:** The chief concern is that the REEs are bound up in mineral deposits with the low-level **radioactive element like thorium**, exposure to which has been linked to an increased risk of developing **lung, pancreatic, and other cancers**.

STEPS TAKEN BY INDIA:

1. MINES & MINERALS ACT 2023:

- To **attract private investment** in exploration of critical minerals: 6 minerals including **Lithium** has been **removed from “critical & strategic” minerals category** thus allowing private exploration.
- To encourage prospective stage exploration: Drilling & subsurface excavation has been allowed.
- National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET) has been setup to Fund G4-G1 explorations.

WAY FORWARD:

1. India should amend **Atomic Mineral Concession Act (2016)** which has reserved all beach Sand Mines deposits containing more than 0.75 per cent Monazite (source of REE) for government owned companies.
2. Department for rare earths (DRE) could secure access to REEs of strategic importance by offering **viability gap funding** to companies to set up facilities in the upstream sector.
3. **Australia Model:** “Junior explorer” private firms which have expertise to map commercially viable mines shall be incorporated who can further sell the research to bigger private companies which will eventually develop & operate mines.
4. **Building up domestic capability:** There is a need to build domestic capability and broad-base supply sources for such an important and strategic raw material.
5. Making it part of **Make in India campaign:** There is a need to make rare earth minerals a part of the ‘Make In India’ campaign, citing China’s **‘Made in China 2025’ initiative** that focuses on new materials, including permanent magnets that are made using rare earth minerals.
6. **Supply chain resilience:** The focus should be back on building cooperation on supply chain resilience which is a trade partnership for critical and emerging technology to deal with issues of climate, economy and pandemic impact.
7. QUAD Critical and Emerging Technology Working group: It aims to develop supply resilience among Quad members which includes India, US, Japan, and Australia.

8. **Green goals:** the critical minerals and emerging technology are the major need of the hour for achievement of green future goals.
9. **Minerals Security Partnership (MSP):** India should try through diplomatic channels to enter this partnership.

POTENTIAL PRELIMS 2024 QUESTION:

Q1: Consider the following statements regarding Rare Earth Elements (REE) often seen in the news:

1. China accounts for more than half of the World's Rare Earth metals production
2. REEs are set of 17 metallic elements including Gallium & Germanium
3. REEs are used from manufacturing of Semiconductors to Cerium used for Glass polishing
4. They are called as "Rare" metals because of their low availability in the world

Which of the above given statements is correct?

- a. 1,2 and 4
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 1,3 and 4
- d. 1, and 3 only

ANSWER: D

Explanation: RARE EARTH MINERALS:

1. They are set of **17 metallic elements**: Including **15 lanthanides** on the periodic table in addition to **scandium and yttrium** that show similar physical and chemical properties to the lanthanides.
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3. REEs are an essential component of more than 200 consumer products which includes mobile phones, computer hard drives, electric and hybrid vehicles, semiconductors, flat screen TVs and monitors, and high-end electronics.

4. **Industrial use:** Traditional uses like Cerium for glass polishing and lanthanum for car catalysts or optical lenses.
5. **Manufacturing of magnets:** neodymium, praseodymium and dysprosium, are crucial to the manufacture of magnets which are used in industries and also in wind turbines and Drones.
6. Even futuristic technologies need these REEs. For example, **high-temperature superconductivity, safe storage and transport of hydrogen for a post-hydrocarbon economy**, environmental global warming and energy efficiency issues.
7. They are called 'rare earth' because earlier it was **difficult to extract** them from their oxides forms technologically.
8. They occur in **many minerals but typically in low concentrations** to be refined in an economical manner.
9. China is the world's top processor of rare earths, accounting for 70% of the world's **production**.
10. India has only **6% of the world's rare earth reserves**. It **only produces 1% of global output** and meets most of its requirements of such minerals from China.

MAINS QUESTION 2024:

Q. The world is in search of alternative supply chains. India with its reserves in rare earth elements must leverage this, in this context discuss the importance of Rare Earth Material. What should be the steps for boosting Rare Earth Material industry in India? Illustrate.

THE ISSUE OF ARTICLE 370 IS OVER IN THE LIGHT OF THE SUPREME COURT'S DECISION: BUT IT IS NECESSARY TO END THE ISSUE OF TERRORISM VICTIMS

(This article is a summary of the combined editorials of 'Indian Express', 'The Hindu', 'Official website of the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of India', 'Jansatta', 'Sansad TV's program Sarokar', monthly magazine 'World Focus' and 'PIB'. It is related to the summary. It also includes the suggestions of the YOJNA IAS team. This article is specifically related to the 'Indian Polity and Governance' section of the UPSC Civil Services Examination . This article is related to 'Daily Current Affairs' under 'In the light of the Supreme Court decision. The issue of Article 370 is over: But the issue of terrorism victims needs to be over.')

GENERAL STUDIES – INDIAN POLITY AND GOVERNANCE.

Why in Discussion / News?

On 11 December 2023, **the Honorable Supreme Court of India** delivered its historic judgment on the abrogation of **Articles 370 and 35A** . Through this decision, **the Supreme Court confirmed the sovereignty and integrity of India**, which every Indian cherishes in his mind. The Supreme Court held that the government's decision to abrogate Article 370 on August 5, 2019—which ended

the special status of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir—was taken to promote constitutional integration and not disintegration. The Court also accepted the fact that Article 370 was 'temporary' in nature.

Process of abrogation of article 370 by parliament/central government :

By presidential order :

In the Presidential Order of the year 2019, the Parliament introduced a provision and gave a new meaning to the 'Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir' as 'Legislative Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir' and then used the President's rule to abrogate Article 370. Through this, the powers of the Legislative Assembly were assumed.

By resolution in parliament:

Concurrent resolutions were passed by both Houses of Parliament, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, on 5 and 6 August 2019 respectively. These resolutions also repealed the remaining provisions of Article 370 and replaced them with new provisions.

Jammu and Kashmir reorganization act:

The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act 2019 was passed by the Parliament on 5 August 2019. This Act divided the State of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories - 'Jammu and Kashmir' and 'Ladakh'.



Reason for abrogation of article 370 -

Reasons for unification and development of the nation:

Article 370 hindered the full integration of Jammu and Kashmir into the Indian Union and at the same time it also created a feeling of separatism, which hindered the development of Jammu and Kashmir . It was also believed behind its integration that complete integration of Jammu and Kashmir into India would create better access to resources, infrastructure and opportunities for the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

From a strong national security perspective :

Article 370 was being misused by Pakistan to support terrorism and separatism in Jammu and Kashmir region. Repealing it would strengthen national security as the Government of India would have greater control over this area and crack down on terrorist activities .

With a view to end discrimination :

Article 370 discriminated against women, Dalits and other marginalized groups in Jammu and Kashmir. By repealing it, these groups will come under the ambit of Indian laws and they will get equal rights and opportunities.

With a view to ensure transparency and accountability in governance :

Article 370 had created a lack of transparency in the governance of Jammu and Kashmir and in determining accountability. With its repeal, the state of Jammu and Kashmir will come under the ambit of the [Central Vigilance Commission \(CVC\)](#) and the [Right to Information Act \(RTI\)](#) , thereby ensuring better governance and accountability .

From the perspective of economic prosperity and development:

Article 370 hindered economic development in Jammu and Kashmir. Repealing it would allow for more investment, tourism and job creation in the area.

Highlights of the decision given by the supreme court:

Article 370 is a temporary provision:

The Supreme Court held that Article 370 was a temporary provision and the state of Jammu and Kashmir had **no internal sovereignty**. The Supreme Court also held that Article 370 was a **'temporary provision'** for two primary reasons.

1. It **served a transitional purpose** , which was to make an interim arrangement for the establishment of the Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir, which was to draft the state constitution.
2. Its objective was to **facilitate the integration of Jammu and Kashmir into the Union of India in view of the war-like situation prevailing in the state in the year 1947.**

The governor can assume the 'all or any' role of the state legislature:

The Supreme Court, citing the landmark decision of ***SR Bommai vs Union of India (1994)*** (which deals with the powers and limitations of the Governor under President's rule), held that the Governor is an **'all or any' member of the state legislature.**) can assume the role.

- **The Chief Justice of India (CJI)** said that **the Governor (President in the case of Jammu and Kashmir) can act 'all or none' of the state legislature and such action should be judicially tested only in exceptional cases.**
- **It is not necessary to take the consent of the state government to remove Article 370 :** The Court said in its decision that the President, exercising the powers under **Article 370 (3) of the Constitution, can unilaterally notify that Article 370 has ceased to exist.** Is.
- **The Supreme Court further held that there was no need for the President to obtain the concurrence of the State Government in this regard, as specified by the proviso to Article 370(1)(d).**

Ratification of jammu and kashmir reorganization act 2019 :

The Supreme Court **confirmed the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act 2019 to the extent that the Union Territory of Ladakh** was separated from the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

The views of the state legislature are recommendatory in nature and are not binding on the parliament:

The Supreme Court also said that **the views of the state legislature regarding the proposed reorganization** are recommendatory in nature and not binding on the Parliament.

During president's rule, parliament is not the only law making body:

The Chief Justice said that **the power of Parliament in a state under/during President's rule is not limited to mere law making.** This also extends to executive action.

- The Court also said that when a proclamation under Article 356 is in force, there are a number of decisions which are taken by the Central Government on behalf of the State Government for the purpose of day-to-day administration.
- Every decision and action taken by the Central Executive on behalf of the State is not subject to challenge.
- Openly challenging every decision would lead to chaos and uncertainty.

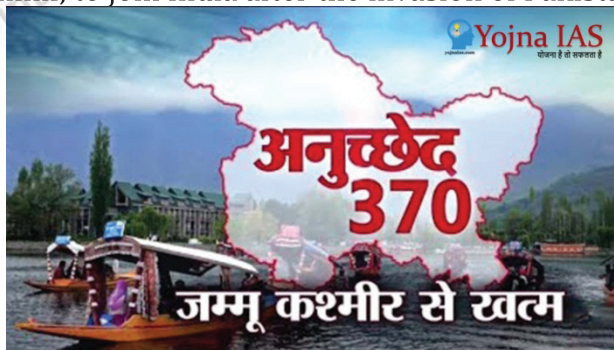
Along with holding elections, restoration of statehood: the supreme court said that the statehood of jammu and kashmir should be restored as soon as possible. He ordered that the elections to the legislative assembly of jammu and kashmir should be completed by 30 september 2024.

Establishment of 'truth and reconciliation commission:

Justice Kaul, **in his concurring opinion, has** ordered a proposal to set up a 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission' on the lines of the commission established after apartheid in South Africa to resolve the issues that have arisen since the 1980s. To address human rights violations by both state and non-state actors in Jammu and Kashmir.

Article 370: historical background.

- Article 370 in the Indian Constitution provided **special status to Jammu and Kashmir, which is a disputed area between India, Pakistan and China.**
- Its **draft was written by Indian Constituent Assembly member N. Gopalaswami Iyengar** and it was added to the Indian Constitution as a 'temporary provision' in the year 1949 .
- This provision allowed the state of Jammu and Kashmir **to have its own constitution and flag, as well as autonomy in most matters except defence, foreign affairs and communications.**
- It was based on the terms of the **Instrument of Accession**, which was signed by Hari Singh, the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, to join India after the invasion of Pakistan in 1947.



Effect of abrogation of article 370:

Decline in terrorist incidents and incidents of violence:

There has been **a significant decline in the incidents of violence in Jammu and Kashmir** since

the revocation of Article 370 .

- According to official figures, **the number of terrorist incidents** has declined by more than 50% in the last four years and security forces have killed more than 300 terrorists.
- The decline in terrorist incidents and violence can be attributed to a combination of factors, including increased security measures, better intelligence gathering and declining public support for extremism.

Initiatives of the central government to promote economic development:

The government has implemented several initiatives to promote economic development in Jammu and Kashmir. For example – **Prime Minister’s Development Package (PMDP) and Industrial Development Scheme (IDS) .**

- These initiatives of the Central Government have led to an increase in investment, employment creation and economic growth in the region.
- Jammu and Kashmir as a union territory saw **a 31% increase in tax revenue .**
- **Jammu and Kashmir’s GDP at constant prices grew at the rate of 8%** during 2022-23 , while at the national level it stood at 7%.

Huge investment also in the development of advanced infrastructure sector in jammu and kashmir:

The government has also invested heavily in the development of infrastructure sector in jammu and kashmir. This includes projects such as the construction of new roads, bridges, tunnels and power lines. These reforms have made it easier for people to travel and do business in the region.

Huge growth in tourism sector :

There has been a massive increase in the number of tourists visiting Jammu and Kashmir since the abrogation of Article 370 . This has been made possible by a combination of various factors including better security, better marketing and the introduction of new tourism initiatives.

- According to a report, Jammu and Kashmir **received 1.62 crore tourists in the year 2022, which is the highest in 75 years of India’s independence.**

Path to solution/conclusion:

The recent judgment of the Supreme Court has not only reinforced the principles of **‘One India, Best India’ but has also proved the importance of unity, mutual trust, development of nationalism and collective dedication for good governance.** The judgment also reveals the Court’s commitment to strengthening the fabric of our nation and reinforcing the values that define us as a society. Which can also be seen as an effort towards defining India as a strong democratic country and making it grow as a democratic country.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM:

Q.1 Consider the following statements in the context of Article 370.

1. Article 370 was ‘temporary’ in its nature.
2. The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act 2019 was passed by the Parliament on 5 August 2019.

Which of the above statement/statements is correct?

- a. Only 1

- b. Only 2
- c. Both statement 1 and 2.
- d. None of these.

Answer – (c)

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAINS EXAM:

Q.1. Discussing the main arguments behind the abrogation of Article 370, in the light of the Supreme Court's decision to abrogate Article 370, discuss how it affects the economic and infrastructural development and development of the tourism sector along with the violence in the Jammu and Kashmir region. Will the type affect?

INDIA – ASEAN: CHANGING DYNAMICS IN CONTEXT OF FTA

UPSC MAINS SYLLABUS GS2: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

WHY IN NEWS?

1. Recently, the Prime Minister (PM) of India attended the 20th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (**ASEAN**)-India Summit and the 18th East Asia Summit (**EAS**) in **Jakarta, Indonesia**.
2. The two summits were an opportunity for India to strengthen its relationships with ASEAN countries and reaffirm its commitment to a *free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific*.

WHAT IS ASEAN?

1. ASEAN was established on **8 August 1967** in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of **Bangkok Declaration** by the 5 Founding Fathers of ASEAN: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand (IMPST).
2. ASEAN currently comprise of **10 countries**: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.
3. It aims to promote **stability and economic growth** across these nations.
4. Chairmanship rotates annually, based on the alphabetical order of the English names of Member States.
5. The region has one of the largest economies in the world, and it is believed that by 2050, it will have the 4th-largest economy in the world.

IMPORTANCE OF ASEAN FOR INDIA:

1. ASEAN forms an integral part of India's **Act East policy** which focusses on the extended neighborhood in the Asia-Pacific region.

1. Policy originally conceived as an economic initiative, has gained **political, strategic and cultural dimensions** including establishment of institutional mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation.
 2. By aligning India's Act East Policy with the **U.S. Pivot to Asia**, India seeks to expand its geo-strategic space to contend with China's growing assertiveness and foster balanced relations.
2. ASEAN engulfing regions of **Indo-Pacific** is integral for India for various important aspects:
1. Indo-Pacific Region makes up **65%** of the global population & generates **62% of global GDP**. For India, **50% of its total trade volume** is concentrated in the Indo-Pacific region.
 2. In addition to being a wealthy market, the region also manages **international supply networks** through important straits such as Strait of
 3. The immense quantities of **marine resources** found in the Indo-Pacific Oceans include offshore hydrocarbons, methane hydrates, seabed minerals, Rare earth metals, fisheries, etc.
 4. A **competitive environment** for the exploitation of these resources has been established by the extensive coastlines and **Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs)** of littoral countries. For example: China claiming vast lands in South China Sea under its "**9-dash**" line strategy.
 5. Thus, India seeks to guarantee freedom of navigation, protect choke points, end conflicts amicably, and confront unconventional security concerns in the Indian Ocean region (IOR).

INDIA - ASEAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (FTA):

WHAT IS AN FTA?

1. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is a pact between two or more nations to **reduce barriers to imports and exports** among them.
2. Under a free trade policy, goods and services can be bought and sold across international borders with **little or no government tariffs**, quotas, subsidies, or prohibitions to inhibit their exchange.
3. The concept of free trade is the opposite of trade protectionism or economic isolationism.

FTA WITH ASEAN:

1. India signed an FTA with ASEAN (its **4th largest trading partner**), known as the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (**AITIGA**), on 13th August, **2009** followed by an FTA in Services and investments in 2014.
2. Apart from this, India has a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (**CECA**) with various countries of the ASEAN region which has resulted in concessional trade and a rise in

investments.

3. However, it did not bore significant results as envisaged by India as there were various **Short-comings:**
 1. ASEAN-India trade took over a decade to double in value.
 2. India has been particularly concerned with the rising **trade deficit** with ASEAN, which increased to **US\$ 43.57 billion** in the 2022 from just US\$ 5 billion in 2010-11.
 3. India's net exports to countries without a trade agreement were only marginally lower than its net exports to countries with FTAs while imports from countries with trade agreements were substantially higher, pushing India into a trade deficit.

REASON FOR FAILURE OF FTA WITH ASEAN:

1. **Lack of market access and connectivity:** Some Indian products do not have market access in ASEAN countries due to a number of factors such as **high tariffs and non-tariff barriers**.
 - Despite efforts in this direction, physical and digital connectivity between India and ASEAN countries remains limited, which affects trade, investment, and people-to-people ties.
2. **ASEAN strict rules of origin:** This makes it difficult for Indian exporters **to export products to ASEAN** countries and benefit from the tariff reductions under the FTA.
 - On the other hand there are a number of alleged instances where merchandise is being **re-routed from China**, via ASEAN countries with minimum value addition, thereby misusing the India-ASEAN FTA.
3. **Nature of engagement:** India still engages with ASEAN countries **more on a bilateral basis** rather than through a multilateral approach leading to problems of coordination and consensus-building.
4. **Competing regional agreements:** Engagement of ASEAN countries with other regional agreements like the **RCEP** and the **Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)** diverts attention and resources away from the ASEAN-India relationship.

Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP):

1. RCEP is the world's **largest trading bloc** comprising 33% of Global Population & **30% of World's GDP**.
2. The RCEP negotiations began in 2012. It was officially signed in November 2020, marking a major milestone in regional trade.
3. **15 member** countries include ASEAN countries & 5 Associate states: China, Japan, South Korea, Australia & New Zealand.
4. The RCEP negotiation includes trade in goods, services, investment, economic and technical

cooperation, intellectual property, competition, **dispute settlement, e-commerce, small and medium enterprises (SMEs)** and other issues.

5. It majorly aims to reduce or eliminate **tariffs and non-tariff barriers** to trade.

India was a founding member of the RCEP, However In 2019, **India decided to withdraw from the RCEP negotiations** due to following concerns:

1. Flooded by Cheap goods from Manufacturing hubs like **China & Vietnam**.

- **Poor Manufacturing Sector:** In the recent period, manufacturing holds a share of **14%** in India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- Share of Manufacturing as % of GDP for other countries: **China: 27 %**, Indonesia: 20 % & Germany: 19 %
- India already has a massive **trade deficit with China**, amounting to \$53 billion (€48 billion)

2. India was also concerned about the RCEP's potential impact on sectors like **agriculture**, which would affect the country's vast rural population.

- Indian agriculture is largely **subsistence-based** and beset by alarmingly low levels of modern technology, packaging, processing and storage facilities.
- Opening it up to competition from much more advanced agriculture producers in places like **Australia, New Zealand and Japan** would have led to an economic and social crisis. For example: Concerns raised by **dairy and food processing sectors**.

3. Even bigger industrial sectors, like **Steel, iron and rubber** manufacturing, were not in favor of the trade pact. These industries in India are dominated by big family-controlled firms, which are protectionist in nature.

4. Protectionism: The **Atmanirbhar Bharat campaign** has also exacerbated the view that India is increasingly becoming a **protectionist closed market economy**.

WAY FORWARD:

1. **Building Resilient Supply Chain:** Current engagement in value chains between ASEAN and India is not substantial. Thus, ASEAN and India must upgrade their logistics services and strengthen the transportation infrastructure. India has focused on promoting connectivity with other ASEAN states through Myanmar and Thailand. For example:

- India-Myanmar-Thailand (IMT) highway,
- Bhutan-Bangladesh-India-Nepal (BBIN) road-rail network
- Kaladan Multimodal Project
- Mekong-Ganga Economic Corridor.

2. **Maritime Security in Indo-Pacific** region is crucial for the protection of India's interests as well

as those of ASEAN:

- To ensure its role as Net Security Provider (NSP) in region, India participates in Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), ASEAN-led frameworks like the East Asia Summit, the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus, ASEAN Regional Forum as well as the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).
- 3. Also, ASEAN should emphasize the principles of the **UN Convention for the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)** to solve the disputes in the South China Sea region.
- 4. **Regional Tourism:** India and ASEAN should also enhance regional tourism and people-to-people connectivity as they already have civilizational and cultural influences on each other.
- 5. **Unfolding Act-East Policy:** Reciprocity and mutual understanding on common concerns will help both ASEAN and India to overcome some of the challenges.
- Thus, Coordination in the fields of Digitalization, Pharmaceuticals, Agriculture Education and Green Growth is imperative.

PREVIOUS YEARS PRELIMS QUESTIONS:

Q1. India is a member of which among the following? (2015)

1. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
2. Association of South-East Asian Nations
3. East Asia Summit

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 3
- (d) India is a member of none of them

Answer: (b)

Q2. Consider the following countries: (2018)

1. Australia
2. Canada
3. China
4. India
5. Japan

6. USA

Which of the above are among the 'free-trade partners' of ASEAN?

(a) 1, 2, 4 and 5

(b) 3, 4, 5 and 6

(c) 1, 3, 4 and 5

(d) 2, 3, 4 and 6

Ans: (c)

Q3. The term 'Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership' often appears in the news in the context of the affairs of a group of countries known as (2016)

(a) G20

(b) ASEAN

(c) SCO

(d) SAARC

Ans: (b)

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB)

Why in the news?

The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have entered into an agreement for a \$250 million policy-based loan.

About Asian Development Bank (ADB)

- **Establishment:**

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) was established on December 19, 1966, as a regional development bank.

- **Headquarters and Field Offices:**

- ADB is headquartered at 6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong, Metro Manila 1550, Philippines.
- It maintains 42 field offices in Asia and the Pacific, with representative offices in Washington, Frankfurt, Tokyo, and Sydney.

- **Aim and Mandate:**

- ADB positions itself as a social development organization committed to poverty reduction in Asia

and the Pacific.

- Its objectives include fostering inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable development, and regional integration.
- These goals are pursued through investments in various sectors, such as infrastructure, health-care services, financial and public administration systems, climate change preparedness, and natural resource management.
- **Membership:**
 - ADB started with 31 members and has now expanded to include 68 members.
 - Membership is open to members of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and non-regional developed countries.
- **Decision-Making and Votes:**
 - ADB's decision-making process mirrors that of the World Bank.
 - The number of votes held by a member corresponds to the number of shares it owns, distributed in proportion to capital subscriptions.
 - Japan currently controls the highest number of shares, constituting approximately 15.5% of the bank's ownership.

Board of Governors:

- **Highest Policy-Making Body:**
 - The Board of Governors, consisting of one representative from each member state, serves as the highest policy-making body of the ADB.
 - This board elects the twelve members of the Board of Directors, including their deputies.
- **Composition:**
 - Eight of the twelve directors represent regional (Asia-Pacific) members, while the others represent non-regional members.
- **Election of President:**
 - The Board of Governors is responsible for electing the president, who also serves as the chairperson of the Board of Directors and manages the overall functioning of ADB.

President:

- **Term and Re-election:**
 - The president holds a five-year term and is eligible for re-election.
 - Traditionally, the president has been Japanese, reflecting Japan's significant shareholding in the bank.

Areas of Focus:

- **Aligned with SDGs:**
 - ADB's development initiatives align with the World Bank's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- **Key Areas:**
 - The bank prioritizes key areas, including Education, Health, Transport, Energy, Finance Sector, and Climate Change.
- **Sustainable and Inclusive Growth:**
 - ADB aims to foster sustainable and inclusive economic growth by financing projects in education and health.
 - It also contributes to improving capital markets and business infrastructure in target countries.
- **Specialized Areas:**
 - ADB engages in specialized areas such as Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), Information Technology, Regional Cooperation and Integration, etc.
 - These serve as secondary capacity-building programs to complement primary focus areas.

Source:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/asian-development-bank-injects-250-million-to-boost-indias-industrial-corridors/articleshow/105860657.cms?from=mdr>

CURRENT RELEVANCE OF A NEW ECONOMY FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

(This article is from 'Institute of New-Economy Thinking', 'Official website of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India', 'United States Agency for International Development', 'The Hindu', 'Indian Express', 'Sansad TV program Sarokar', Brief summary of the accompanying editorials of 'Energy and Environment', an interdisciplinary journal that invites energy policy analysts, natural scientists and engineers, as well as lawyers and economists to contribute to mutual understanding and learning' and 'PIB ' This plan also includes suggestions from the YOJNA IAS team . This article is specifically related to the ' Indian Economy and Development, Growth and Employment, Sustainable and Inclusive Development and Environment and Ecology' section of the UPSC Civil Services Examination . This article is related to the 'Daily Current Affairs' section. Relates to ' Relevance of a New Economy for Inclusive Development ').
General Studies: Indian Economy and Development, Growth and Employment, Sustainable and Inclusive Development and Environment and Ecology.

WHY IN DISCUSSION / NEWS ?

“May everyone be happy and may everyone be healthy. Let all look for the good, and let no one suffer.” That is, “May all human beings in this entire world be happy, may all be free from disease, may all witness the good of each other and may no one suffer in this world.” This proverb, written in ancient Indian scriptures, wishes the welfare and happiness of the entire creature. The concept of ‘inclusive development’ is not new in the Indian context. If you observe the ancient scriptures, they also contain the sense of taking all people together and since the time of development of Indian civilization (ancient times) who believed in the concept of ‘Vasudevam Kutumbkam’ and he called the entire world ‘Vasudevam Kutumbkam’ That is, it has been a country that believes in ‘one family’ namely India has always considered this entire world human civilization as a family or mutually related / allies and this is also affirmed in Indian theologies. of sustainable and inclusive development at the recently concluded G20 meeting hosted by India India has drawn the attention of developed and developing countries all over the world towards the need for the development of a new economy. During the hosting and meetings of the G20, the Prime Minister of India used the motto ‘Vasudevam Kutumbkam’ for the G20, which meant ‘One Earth, One Family, One Future.’ This aptly reflects our vision for the G20 Presidency. The whole earth is like a family to us. In any family, the future of each member is closely linked to that of every other member. So, when we work together, we move forward together, leaving no one behind.”



भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था 5 : सतत विकास और समावेशी विकास



KEY OBJECTIVES/PRIORITIES OF A NEW ECONOMY FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH:

The priorities of the G20 meetings were also the following –

- **Inclusive, equitable and sustainable development.**
- **Life (lifestyle for the environment).**
- **Women Empowerment.**
- **Digital public infrastructure and technology – enabling growth in sectors ranging from health, agriculture and education to commerce.**
- **Skills-Mapping, Culture and Tourism, Climate Finance, Circular Economy, Global Food Security, Energy Security, Green Hydrogen, Disaster Risk Reduction and Adaptation.**
- **Development cooperation, the fight against economic crime, and multilateral reform.**

This concept of development emerged in a new form after 'globalization' arising from liberalization in the nineties because during liberalization, global economies got an opportunity to join together and this concept went out of the scope of countries and states and gained its importance in the global context. Was successful in maintaining. In India too, under liberalization, privatization and globalization in the nineties, India also moved towards a new economy under inclusive development and maintained its importance in the global context. At present, India is the fifth largest economy in the world, which is moving towards becoming the third largest economy in the world in the coming few years.

MEANING OF INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT:

The meaning of inclusive development can be understood on the basis of the following criteria –

- **Inclusive development is taken to mean such development which creates employment opportunities and which proves helpful in reducing poverty.**
- **It includes providing equality of opportunity and empowering people for education and skills, that is, it includes promoting development with equality of opportunities.**
- **A form of development that not only creates new economic opportunities, but also ensures equitable access to such opportunities for all sections of society.**
- **Objectively, inclusive development refers to a situation where high growth rates of GDP per capita are reflected in high growth rates of GDP, accompanied by reduction in inequality between the distribution of income and wealth.**
- **Inclusive development focuses on providing basic amenities to all sections of the population, i.e. housing, food, drinking water, education, health as well as generating means of livelihood to live a dignified life. Along with all this, it is necessary to take care of environmental protection for inclusive development because development done at the expense of the environment can neither be called sustainable nor inclusive.**

INITIATIVES TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR NEW ECONOMY AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT:

- **The concept of inclusive development was first introduced in the 11th Five Year Plan. The 11th Five Year Plan continued from the year 2007 to 2012 and was the second last Five Year Plan of India . The theme of which was – “Rapid and more inclusive development”. In this plan, the concept of inclusive development was introduced. It was said to improve the quality of life of all sections of people and provide them equality of opportunities.**
- **The 12th Five Year Plan (2012-17) completely focused on inclusive growth and its theme was – “ Rapid, Inclusive and Sustainable Development” . In this plan, special emphasis was given on poverty, health, education and providing livelihood opportunities. So that the growth rate of 8 percent prescribed in the plan can be achieved.**
- **Many schemes have been launched by the government to achieve inclusive development. These include- ‘ Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana’, ‘Integrated Child Development Programme’, ‘Mid-Day Meal Scheme’, ‘MNREGA’, ‘Sarva- Education campaign’ etc.**
- **Keeping women in mind, schemes like ‘Start-up India’, ‘Support to Training and Employment Program for Women ‘ have been started by the government. Apart from this, schemes like ‘ Women Entrepreneurship Forum’ and ‘Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana’ have been started by the government. Efforts also include financial inclusion efforts for women.**

- Many initiatives/schemes have also been started by the government for financial inclusion. These include important schemes like 'Mobile Banking', 'Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana', 'Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana', 'Senior Pension Insurance Scheme' etc. Has been done
- Steps like Disability Act 1995, National Trust for Welfare Act 1999, SIPDA, Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan, Swavalamban Yojana and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2017 have been taken by the government to include the persons with disabilities in inclusive development.
- 'Soil-Health-Card', 'Neem-Coated-Urea', 'Pradhan Mantri Krishi-Irrigation Yojana', 'Pradhan Mantri Fasal-Bima-Yojana' have been launched by the government to promote financial inclusion in agriculture sector and for farmers. And important schemes like 'National Food Security Mission' are being implemented.

METHODS OF MEASUREMENT OF INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT:

Measuring a nation's progress based on the progress of its poorest segment, i.e. measuring per capita income based on the progress of the bottom 20 percent of the population, is the best way to measure inclusive growth.

- An indicator of healthy inclusive development is that if there is an increase in per capita income then it is an indicator of healthy inclusive development.
- If a country or state has to achieve high growth rate, then the weakest sections of the society will also have to be included in the mainstream pace of development. The concept of inclusive development depends on this.



NEED FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT: RELEVANT IN THE PRESENT TIMES.

No country can develop in the absence of inclusive development. Inclusive development is not only economic development but it is also a social and moral imperative of economic development. The importance of inclusive development in the context of the development of the new economy can be understood on the basis of the following context –

- Inclusive growth is essential for sustainable development. Therefore, if development is not

sustainable then a situation of decline will arise in the economy.

- Due to imbalance in income distribution, wealth will be concentrated in a few people, as a result demand for goods will decrease and GDP growth rate will also decrease. If there is no inclusive development, there will be imbalance in income distribution.
- Due to lack of uniform inclusive development, inequality increases in different parts of the country due to which the deprived sections are not able to join the main stream of development.
- Disruptive tendencies like communalism, regionalism, racial and ethnic violence within the geographical boundaries of any country are born due to lack of inclusive development, which sometimes creates a situation of dissatisfaction in the country, as a result of which the geographical boundaries of the country deteriorate. Disruptive tendencies like communalism and regionalism are born .

CHALLENGES BEFORE INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT:

- Migration towards urban areas is having a negative impact on the agricultural economy due to which agricultural productivity is decreasing.
- Due to lack of basic facilities in villages, people migrate from villages to cities. Due to this, population pressure increases in cities.
- There is still a need to create permanent and long-term employment sources in rural areas because MNREGA and many other such employment related schemes are being implemented in rural areas but these cannot be included as permanent sources of employment.
- Corruption also has a negative impact on the country's economy by hindering the pace of inclusive development.

PATH TO SOLUTION/WAY FORWARD/ CONCLUSION:

At present, if the goal of rapid inclusive growth is to be achieved in India, then there will be a need to pay special attention to the agriculture sector, because the United Nations has set a target of eliminating all forms of poverty (unemployment, low income, poverty etc.) by the year 2030. The target is specified in Goal 1 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Since the agricultural sector in India provides employment to half of the total labor force. Apart from this, the government had also set a target of doubling the income of farmers by the year 2022, but the per capita productivity in this area is very low due to which it is associated with the highest area of poverty. However, in a country with a large population like India, the biggest challenge is how to spread the benefits of development to all sections and all sections of the society and this is where the role of appropriate use of technology comes into play. The recently launched '**Digital India Programme**' is a good initiative to face this challenge. Therefore, India is poised to become the leader of the **G20 group of countries** in developing a new economy for inclusive growth and the third largest economy in the world, growing at a very fast pace . Which is a sign of the bright future of India's strong and new economy among the countries with developed economies globally .

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM:

Q.1. CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW ECONOMY FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH.

1. The global agenda of sustainable development is possible only when all countries fulfill their share of responsibilities .
2. India is one of the few countries in the world where forest and tree covered areas are continuously increasing despite the development process. The extent of tree covered area in India has reached 80.73 million hectares which is 24.6 percent of the total geographical area of the country.
3. The agenda of the Rural Development Program revolves around its development mantra – “Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas” (inclusive development), which aims to ensure that the benefits of development reach the poor and deprived sections.
4. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jyoti Yojana aims to provide electricity at affordable rates and focus on green energy, clean energy to increase the power supply.

1. Only 1, 3 and 4
2. Only 2 and 4
3. Only 1, 2 and 4
4. All of these.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

Answer – (d)

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM:

Q.1. In a New economy for inclusive growth, can technological change create an inclusive future of work and promote inclusive growth? How can pollution be addressed while considering inequalities and injustices in the vision of inclusive development?

ISSUE OF CHILD LABOUR IN INDIA

UPSC MAINS SYLLABUS GS2: Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections of the population by the Centre and States and the Performance of these Schemes; Mechanisms, Laws, Institutions and Bodies constituted for the Protection and Betterment of these Vulnerable Sections

WHY IN NEWS?

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour, Textiles and Skill development in its 52nd report on ‘National Policy on Child Laborer’s has said that it is **“practically not possible”** to meet the international commitment to **eliminating child labour by 2025**.

1. The report, titled ‘National Policy on Child Labour – An Assessment’, states the country has a long way to go in eliminating child labour, and requires **changes to the policies and laws** that govern the issue.

ISSUE OF CHILD LABOUR IN INDIA:

As per the Standing Committee, with increased **economic insecurity, lack of social protection and reduced household income**, the children from poor households are being pushed to contribute to the family income with the risk of exposure to exploitative work:

1. As per **International Labour Organization (ILO)** definition, Child labour is a form of **modern slavery** that includes any work which deprives children of their childhood, their potential and that harms their **physical or mental development**.
2. The practice includes *trafficking, sexual exploitation, debt bondage, and even exploitation in armed conflicts*.
3. The Constitution of India under **Article 24** prohibits the employment of children **below the age of 14 years** in any factory or mine or employed in any hazardous employment.
4. Even then, as per **Census of India 2011**: There were **10.1 million** working children in the age group of **5-14 years** out of whom 8.1 million were working in rural areas mainly engaged as cultivators (26%) and agricultural labourers (32.9%).
5. According to the latest **NSO data** available in 2023, Uttar Pradesh has the greatest number of Child Labour accounting to **2.1 million** child labourers.
6. Child labour seems to be more prevalent among boys than girls at every age.

Child labour not only takes away the **“Right to Education” & “Dignified life”** of children but working in Hazardous factories also exposes them to various **health risks**. It acts as hindrance for the child to develop essential skills for better opportunities in future and thus catches them in **“Poverty trap”**.

CAUSES OF CHILD LABOUR:

As per the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour, they majorly come from **traditionally deprived section** of society (**SC/ST, Tribals, lower income group etc.**)

- Thus, they lack access to quality and age-appropriate education, health facilities, employment, and developmental initiatives such as those for poverty alleviation.
 - The **low levels of skills and unemployment** of adults, combined with the **discrimination** that children may face in schools, pushes many of these children to work.
1. As per **Vandana Kandhari of UNICEF**: “Urban children are more vulnerable due to **economic uncertainty caused** by Pandemic & increasing work opportunities in **Informal sector**”.
 - The informal economy often employs them because it is **difficult to enforce child Labour laws** in the informal sector.
 2. While **Orphans** get involved to meet their daily needs in absence of Social security cover, **Debt trap** by moneylenders and Trafficking Mafia further dents children’s future.
 3. **Legal and bureaucratic malfunctions** and loopholes further worsen the situation: “*There are no systems to help reintegrate or rehabilitate the children,*” says Soha Moitra, Regional director of Child Rights and You (CRY) foundation.

4. **Lack of Awareness among parents** of the physical, mental, and psychological ill consequences on children further worsens the situation.

STEPS TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT TO CURB PRACTISE OF CHILD LABOUR:

As Child labour acts as major hindrance to the Socio-economic welfare of the country, the Government has taken various steps such as:

1. The **Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976**: prohibits systems of labour where people, including children, work under conditions of *servitude to pay off debt*, and also provides a framework for rehabilitating released labourers.
2. **The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 1986**: It bans the employment of children **up to the age of 14** in hazardous occupations.
3. Further the National Policy on Child Labour **1987** contains an action plan to tackle the problem of child labour.
4. In 1992, India became the **first country** to join The International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (**IPECL**), a global programme launched by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).
5. The **Supreme Court Judgement of 1996** has directed that authorities shall conduct a survey to *identify working children, withdrawal of children working in hazardous industries, and ensure they are educated in appropriate institutions*.
6. Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (**POCSO) Act 2012**: seeks to prevent commercial sexual exploitation of children.
7. The **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015**: governs laws relating to children alleged and found to be in conflict with the law
8. The Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Care and Rehabilitation) Bill 2021 provides detailed measures to prevent, protect and rehabilitate victims of trafficking.
9. Under **National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme**: the Union Ministry of Labour & Employment has been implementing the scheme for the rehabilitation of child labourers (9-14 years of age) through **District Project Societies** under the chairmanship of the District Magistrate.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee noted that Government's efforts have bore significant results as **number of working children has decreased** from 2011 Census.

SUGGESTIVE MEASURES TO CURB CHILD LABOUR BY 2025:

The Parliamentary Standing Committee has given following suggestions to curb the practice of Child Labour in India to achieve Sustainable Development Targets (SDGs):

1. Discrepancies in the **criteria for determination of the age of the child** in various Acts shall be removed and a uniform age shall be set.
2. The prevailing differences in provisions of offence being **cognizable & non-cognizable** under the

Child and Adolescent Labour Act, 1986 & Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 shall be examined to ensure they do not lead to any **delay in securing justice** for aggrieved children.

3. The amount of fine shall be increased by 3-4 times as well as stricter punishment in the form of **cancellation of license, attachment of property, etc.**, shall be incorporated to protect the interests of children.
4. Further, ensuring universal access to free and quality education for all children under **Right to Education Act 2009** shall be given impetus.
5. In this regard, collaboration with international organizations, such as the International Labour Organization (**ILO**) and **UNICEF**, to access expertise, technical assistance, and financial resources is necessary.
6. Developing and implementing comprehensive rehabilitation programs for rescued child laborers, including access to education, vocational training, healthcare, and psychological support is also must.
7. The panel notes that as nearly **80% of child labour** in India emanates from rural areas, the **Panchayat** can play a dominant role in mitigating child labour by generating awareness about the ill-effects of child labour, encouraging parents to send their children to school & informing industry owners about the laws prohibiting child labour and the penalties for violating these laws.

WAY FORWARD:

As action taken today will determine the **future of children of tomorrow**, the Committee impress upon the Labour Ministry to take up the issue in a **mission mode** and devise a systematic action plan-based policy to meet **international commitments**, which are not only relevant for economic development of the country but will also brighten the image of the country in international forum.

MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION:

Question: Examine the issue of Child Labour prevalent in India in context of recent Parliamentary report. Suggest any five measures that India shall take to eliminate Child Labour by 2025.

(10 marks, 150 words)

PM JANMAN scheme

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "PM JANMAN scheme". This topic has relevance in the Social Justice section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 2: Social Justice

Why in the news?

The Scheme is designed to cater to the needs of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) households and habitations by ensuring:

Basic Facilities:

- Provision of safe housing, clean drinking water, and sanitation to enhance living conditions.

Improved Access to Education, Health, and Nutrition:

- Focus on enhancing access to quality education, healthcare, and nutrition for PVTG communities.

Road and Telecom Connectivity:

- Initiatives to improve road and telecom connectivity to overcome geographical isolation and enhance communication.

Sustainable Livelihood Opportunities:

- Implementation of measures to promote sustainable livelihoods, including skills training, resources, and support for economic activities.

Saturation for Key Schemes:

- Ensuring saturation for key government schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY), Sickle Cell Disease Elimination, TB Elimination, 100% immunization, Pradhan Mantri Poshan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, etc.

This initiative is part of the Pradhan Mantri-PVTG Development Mission, as announced in India's 2022-23 Union Budget. The government has allocated Rs 15,000 crore over three years for the comprehensive development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs):

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) are subsets of tribal communities in India that are identified as more vulnerable due to their isolation, distinct socio-economic and cultural traits, and low population. The concept of PVTGs evolved from the Primitive Tribal Groups (PTG) category established by the Dhebar Commission in 1960-61, which aimed to address disparities among Scheduled Tribes. In 2006, this category was renamed Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.

Numbers and Spread:

- In 1975, the Indian government identified 52 tribal groups as PVTGs based on the Dhebar Commission's recommendations.
- Currently, there are 75 PVTGs in 22,544 villages across 18 states and one Union Territory, with a total population of about 28 lakh individuals.
- Odisha has the highest number, with more than 2.5 lakh PVTG individuals.

Characteristics:

- PVTGs are characterized by stagnant or declining populations, pre-agricultural technology, extremely low literacy levels, and subsistence-level economies.
- Population sizes vary significantly, ranging from under 1,000 to over 1 lakh in different groups.

Challenges:

- PVTGs face severe marginalization due to isolation, low population, and unique socio-economic and cultural traits.
- Challenges include limited access to basic services, social discrimination, vulnerability to displacement from development and natural disasters, and lack of political representation.

Government Schemes:

- The PVTG Development Plan focuses on providing education, healthcare, and livelihood opportunities while preserving traditional knowledge.
- The Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission (PMJVM) emphasizes market linkages and procurement of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) at Minimum Support Prices.
- Other schemes include the Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana, Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP), Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP), Eklavya Model Residential Schools, Forest Rights Act 2006 for land titles, Support to Tribal Research Institute (STRI) scheme, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989, and the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996.
- Direct recruitment through reservations aids in education, self-governance, and protection against discrimination.

How PM-JANMAN scheme different:

PM-JANMAN, or Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission, distinguishes itself through several key features aimed at addressing the unique challenges faced by Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs):

Proper Identification and Recognition:

- **Critique of Existing Criteria:** The criteria for identifying PVTGs have been criticized as outdated, leading to confusion and exclusion. Some PVTGs are not recognized as Scheduled Tribes in certain states.
- **Government's Response:** The initiative includes creating a Human Development Index for PVTGs, addressing concerns raised in reports by Dr. Hrusikesh Panda and Virginius Xaxa. Baseline surveys have been conducted for about 40 PVTG groups for targeted development planning.

Participatory Bottom-Up Approach:

- **Customized Strategies:** PM-JANMAN rejects a 'one-size-fits-all' approach, instead adopting customized strategies that respect the unique needs and priorities of PVTGs.
- **Inclusive Decision-Making:** The scheme actively involves PVTGs in decision-making processes, specifically addressing issues like land rights, social inclusion, and cultural preservation.

Livelihood Promotion:

- **Skills Training and Resources:** The scheme focuses on providing skills training and resources, including land and credit, to promote sustainable livelihoods.
- **Forest Rights Act Implementation:** Granting land titles under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) secures access to forest resources, with Section 3(1)(e) of the FRA specifically supporting the rights of primitive tribal groups and pre-agricultural communities.
- **Cultural Heritage Preservation:** Encouraging traditional technologies and skill enhancement

through industry partnerships helps maintain cultural heritage while promoting sustainable development.

Health, Nutrition, and Education:

- **Mobile Medical Health Units:** Outreach strategies, such as Mobile Medical Health Units, are crucial for providing healthcare in remote areas.
- **Cultural Integration in Education:** Incorporating the culture and language of PVTGs into the curriculum, providing transportation, and training teachers about PVTG cultural contexts enhance education accessibility.

Infrastructure Development:

- **Relaxed Guidelines:** Habitations of PVTGs often do not meet the criteria for mainstream schemes due to factors like population requirements or lack of surveys.
- **Guidelines Adjustment:** Guidelines for infrastructure schemes, including Pradhan Mantri Grameen Sadak Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, and Jal Jeevan Mission, have been relaxed to improve access to housing, water, sanitation, electricity, and connectivity for PVTGs.

SOURCE:

Experts Explain: How the PM JANMAN scheme can help Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups | Explained News – The Indian Express

THERE IS NO PLACE FOR HIJAB RIGHT NOW: HIJAB BAN ISSUE AND FREEDOM OF RELIGION IN KARNATAKA

(This article can be found in 'Official website of Supreme Court', 'Official website of Kerala High Court', 'Official judgment of Fathima Tasneem vs. State of Kerala (2018) case', 'Indian Express', 'The Hindu', 'Government of Karnataka Home The official website of the Ministry, 'Jansatta', 'Sansad TV's program Sarokar' is related to the brief summary of the combined editorial of the monthly magazine 'World Focus' and 'PIB'. It also includes the suggestions of the YOJNA IAS team. This article is related to UPSC This article specifically deals with the 'Indian Polity and Governance, Social Justice, Issues related to Women, Fundamental Rights, Issues related to Freedom of Religion, Judiciary, Government Policies and Interventions, Supreme Court, Hijab' section of the Civil Services Examination. 'No place for Hijab now: Hijab ban issue and freedom of religion in Karnataka' under 'Daily Current Affairs').

General Studies – Indian Polity and Governance, Social Justice, Issues related to women, Fundamental Rights, Issues related to freedom of religion, Judiciary, Government policies and interventions, Supreme Court, Hijab.

WHY IN DISCUSSION / NEWS?

Recently the Supreme Court gave a divided judgment in the Karnataka hijab ban case.

- In the event of a split decision as described in the Constitution of India, the case is heard by a larger

bench.

- The bench to which the case of a split decision is transferred may be a three-judge bench of the High Court, or an appeal may be made to the Supreme Court.
- Petitions by a section of Muslim students in Karnataka seeking permission to wear hijab in classrooms were rejected by the High Court in March 2022 on the grounds that it is not a part of essential religious practice in the Islamic faith and it was unnecessarily construed on grounds of religious freedom. But an appeal has been made for hearing.

There is no longer any restriction on Muslim girl students wearing hijab in educational institutions of Karnataka. The Congress government made this announcement on 23 December 2023. Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had made this announcement on [December 22, 2023, at the inauguration of three police stations](#) in Nanjanguda in Mysuru district. Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah argued behind this that in India it is the personal right/matter of any person to choose to wear any kind of dress and eat any kind of food. In India, behind such controversial matters is vote bank politics and appeasement.

Recently, six students at a college in Karnataka's Udupi district were banned from entering the college for wearing hijab (a garment worn by some Muslim women in public). This issue raises legal questions on freedom of religion and whether the right to wear the hijab is constitutionally protected. Or it also has some different implications. This matter had reached the Supreme Court via Karnataka High Court. Ultimately it was decided that there will be a ban on sitting in the classroom wearing hijab in educational institutions. Will be allowed to come to class only wearing Uniform. Female students could come to school in hijab, but would have to take off their hijab before entering the classroom.



WHAT ARE ITS IMPLICATIONS?

According to the fundamental rights granted to Indian citizens by the Indian Constitution, Indian citizens have the following fundamental rights –

- **Freedom of conscience:** Freedom of conscience and to freely profess, practice and propagate religion.
- **Right to practice religion:** The right to declare one's religious belief and faith publicly and without fear.
- **Right to practice:** The right to practice religious worship, rituals, ceremonies and to demonstrate beliefs and ideas.
- **Right to propagate:** To communicate or disseminate one's religious beliefs to others or to explain the principles of one's religion.

TEST OF ESSENTIAL RELIGIOUS CONDUCT:

- Over the years the Supreme Court has developed a practical test process for determining which religious practices can be constitutionally protected and which can be ignored.
- The Supreme Court in the year 1954 in the *Shirur Math case* said that the word 'religion' would include all the rituals and practices 'integral' under a religion. The test to determine what is 'integral' is called the 'essential religious practice' test.
- This test is often criticized by legal experts in relation to judicial determination of religious practices, as it leads the court to interfere in religious matters.
- Constitutional experts are of the opinion that the work of the court should be limited to restricting religious practices for the sake of public order and the court should not determine the practices necessary for any particular religion. In many cases the Court has applied this test to certain practices.
- The Supreme Court, in a judgment given in the year 2004, held that the 'Anand Marg sect' had no fundamental right to perform 'Tandav dance' on public roads, as it is not an essential religious practice of the sect.
- There are many instances in which the Court has also applied this test to individual liberty as these issues are considered to be largely community-based.
- In 2016, the Supreme Court had upheld the decision of the Indian Air Force to discharge a Muslim airman for having a beard.
- The Armed Forces Regulations, 1964 prohibit hair growth for armed forces personnel, except 'those personnel whose religion prohibits cutting or shaving of hair.'
- In one of its decisions, the Court essentially held that 'keeping a beard is not an essential part of Islamic practices'.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COURT'S DECISION:

JUDGMENTS OF THE COURTS SO FAR ON THE ISSUE OF HIJAB:

- Two such petitions were filed before the Kerala High Court in 2015, challenging the dress code for all India pre-medical admissions, which permitted wearing of slippers with "salwar/pajama" and light, half-sleeved shorts. There was a provision to wear only clothes which did not have big buttons, badges, flowers etc.
- Accepting the contention of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) that the rule was only to ensure that the candidates do not use unfair means by hiding objects inside the clothes, the Kerala High Court has asked the CBSE to impose additional scrutiny on those students. Instructed to take measures who intend to dress in accordance with their religious custom, but which is contrary to the dress code.
- The Kerala High Court examined this issue more closely in the case *Amna Bint Bashir v. Central Board of Secondary Education (2016)*. In this case, the Court held that the practice of wearing hijab is an essential religious practice, but did not strike down the CBSE rule.
- The Court once again allowed "additional measures" and safeguards in 2015. However, on the issue of school-prescribed dress, another bench ruled differently in the case *Fathima Tasneem v. State of Kerala (2018)*.
- The single bench of the Kerala High Court said that- "The collective rights of an organization will be given priority over the individual rights of the petitioner. ,

PROTECTION OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM UNDER THE CONSTITUTION:

- Articles 25 to 28 of Part-3 (Fundamental Rights) of the Constitution provide the right to freedom of religion.
- Article 25 (1) of the Constitution guarantees 'freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practice and propagate religion'.
- It is a right that guarantees negative freedom, which means that the state will ensure that there is no interference or obstruction in exercising this freedom.
- The Constitution, like all fundamental rights, can restrict the right to public order, decency, morality, health and other state interests.
- Article 26 explains the freedom to manage religious affairs subject to public order, morality and health.
- According to Article 27, no person shall be compelled to pay any tax for the propagation or practice of any particular religion.
- Article 28 explains the freedom to attend religious instruction or religious worship in educational institutions.

SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM/WAY FORWARD:

- In the current political climate, the decision by the Government of Karnataka to mandate either a prescribed uniform or any dress in the "interest of unity, equality and public order" has been viewed as a majoritarian attempt in the guise of enforcing secular norms, equality and discipline in educational institutions. Also seen as a claim.
- A single decision that legitimizes this non-inclusive approach to education for people of any community, religion or caste and a single policy that can deny equal opportunities to Muslim women is not in the interest of the country and it will also be unconstitutional.
- In schools, colleges or other educational institutions, hijab or any dress, religious or otherwise, should not be different from the uniform prescribed by the school, colleges or other educational institutions. Therefore, there should be reasonable scope for wearing any attire other than the uniform as long as it does not detract from the uniform, such as hijab or any other religious attire. Therefore, the uniforms prescribed by schools, colleges or other educational institutions cannot be rejected on the basis of individual freedom of dress.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM:

Q. 1. Consider the following statements regarding the issue of wearing hijab on the basis of freedom of religion.

1. Articles 25 to 28 of Part-3 (Fundamental Rights) of the Constitution provide the right to freedom of religion.
2. The Constitution of India grants citizens the right to freedom of conscience and religion to freely profess, practice and propagate religion.
3. The Constitution, like all fundamental rights, can restrict the right to public order, decency, morality, health and other state interests.
4. According to Article 27 of the Indian Constitution, no person shall be compelled to pay any tax for the propagation or practice of any particular religion.

Which of the above statement/statements is correct?

- a. 1 and 4 only
- b. 1, 3 and 4 only
- c. All of these.

d. None of these.

Answer – c

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM:

Q. 1. “On the basis of freedom of religion, any religious identity should be free from any public display in any public places/ places or institutions.” In the light of this statement, what is the situation by the government of karnataka regarding school uniforms? Critically evaluate the orders/decisions given in the same.

JAPAN’S SLIM MISSION

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Japan’s SLIM Mission”. This topic has relevance in the Science and Technology section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 3: Science and Technology

Why in the news?

Having achieved lunar orbit on Christmas Day, SLIM is set to undertake a soft-landing attempt on the moon on January 19.

Background:

On December 25, 2023, Japan’s Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM) spacecraft successfully entered lunar orbit, marking a crucial step in its mission. The planned moon-landing attempt is scheduled for January 19, 2024, positioning Japan to potentially become the fifth country to achieve a soft landing on the moon. This development follows India’s success with the Chandrayaan-3 mission in August 2023. The outcome of SLIM’s mission holds significance for future lunar exploration endeavors, including the upcoming Chandrayaan-4 mission.

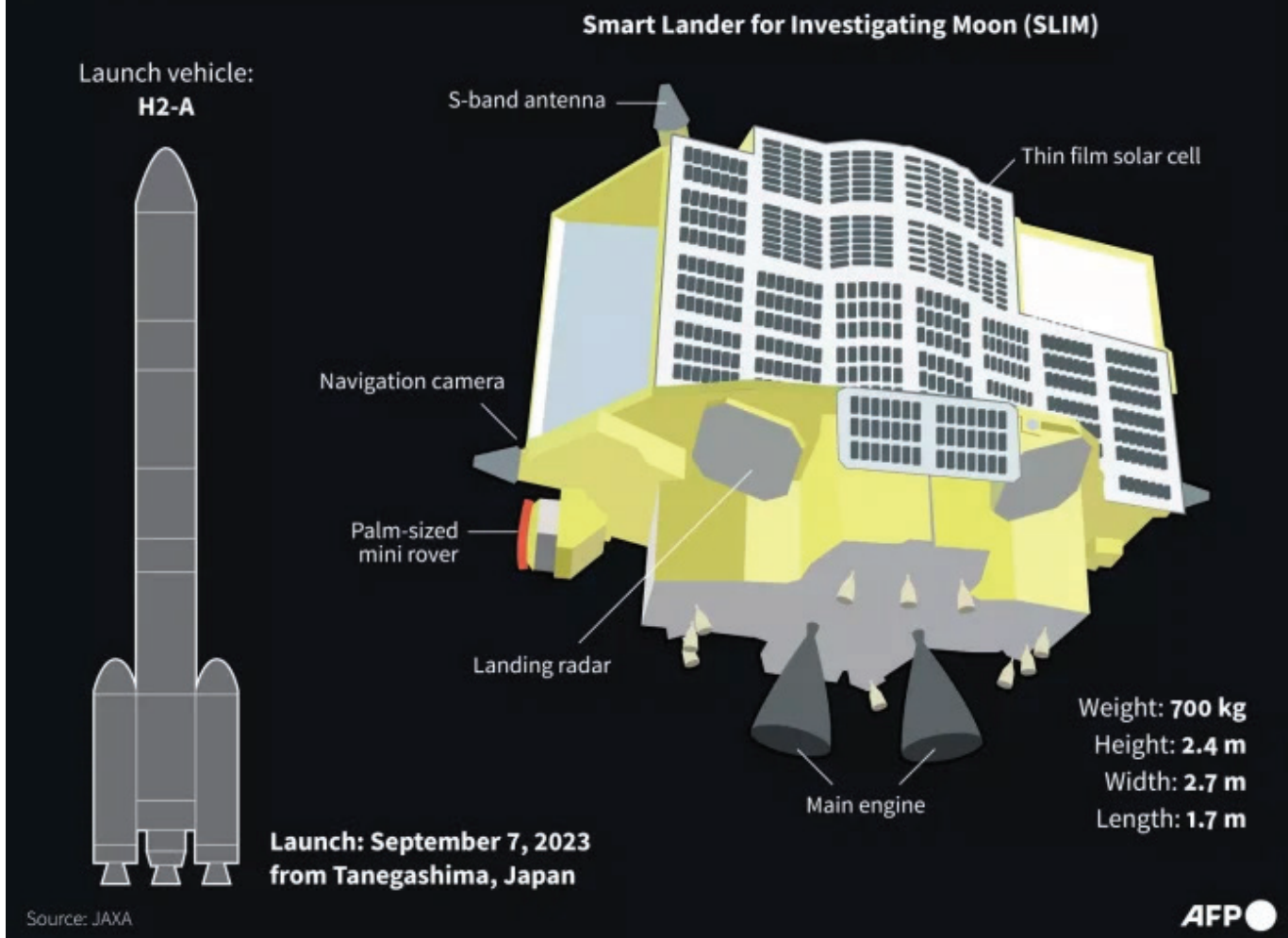
About SLIM:

- SLIM, crafted and launched by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) on September 7, 2023, is a compact spacecraft weighing merely 590 kg at launch.
- In contrast, Chandrayaan-3, launched by India, had a launch weight of 3,900 kg, highlighting SLIM’s streamlined design.
- Launched alongside the XRISM X-ray space telescope aboard an H-2A rocket, SLIM entered an elliptical lunar orbit with a farthest point (apogee) of 4,000 km and a closest point (perigee) of 600 km above the lunar surface.
- SLIM’s moon-landing attempt in January 2024 represents Japan’s second endeavor this year, following the HAKUTO-R M1 lander’s unfortunate crash in April.

Japan's 'Moon Sniper' mission

Mission: To investigate the Moon's formation by examining exposed pieces of the lunar mantle

Landing accuracy: Aims to land within 100 m of a specific target on the Moon



Comparing SLIM and Chandrayaan-3

- **Trajectory Comparison:** Compared to Chandrayaan-3, the Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM) exhibits a lighter design due to carrying less fuel. Chandrayaan-3, with a total weight of 3.9 tonnes, had a propulsion module weighing 2.1 tonnes. While Chandrayaan-3 followed the Hohmann transfer orbit, allowing it to reach the moon in less than a month, SLIM took four months for its journey. SLIM's elongated trajectory, based on the weak-stability boundary theory, focused on fuel efficiency.
- **Approach to Lunar Capture:** Chandrayaan-3, upon nearing the moon, applied brakes, consuming fuel to slow down and be captured by the moon's gravity. In contrast, SLIM, upon proximity to the moon, allowed itself to be deflected towards the lunar direction, bypassing lunar orbit and delving deeper into space. This deflection resulted from combined forces exerted by the earth and the moon.
- **SLIM's Lunar Objectives:** On January 19th, SLIM aims to achieve a remarkably precise land-

ing within 100 meters of its designated site, setting a record for the smallest area tolerance in moon-landing missions. For context, Chandrayaan-3's 'Vikram' lander targeted a descent within a 4 km long downrange and 2.5 km wide cross-range elliptical area.

- **Deployment of Rovers:** Just before landing, SLIM will deploy two small rovers named Lunar Excursion Vehicle (LEV) 1 and 2. Together with SLIM, these rovers will conduct studies on the lunar surface near the landing point, gather temperature and radiation data, and endeavor to explore the moon's mantle. The SLIM mission, with its precise landing and rover deployment, represents a significant step in advancing lunar exploration capabilities.

Impact of SLIM on Chandrayaan-4 and Lunar Polar Exploration

Exploring the Lunar South Pole:

- Scientists are particularly intrigued by the moon's south pole region, where certain craters are perpetually in shadow, harboring water-ice.
- These shadowed areas present an opportunity for lunar surface missions to explore and potentially extract water.

Conclusion of Chandrayaan-3 and the Lunar Polar Exploration Mission:

- ISRO's successful execution of Chandrayaan-3 marked the conclusion of the second phase of its lunar exploration program.
- The next mission, Lunar Polar Exploration (LUPEX), also known as Chandrayaan-4, is a collaborative effort between India and Japan, with a tentative launch date in 2026.

Crucial Role of SLIM Technologies:

- SLIM's technologies, especially a feature-matching algorithm and navigation systems, tested by JAXA, will be instrumental for LUPEX/Chandrayaan-4's success.
- JAXA's approval of LUPEX has been granted, although India is yet to confirm.
- The Japanese space agency is expected to provide the launch vehicle and lunar rover, while India will contribute the lander module.

Advancements in Lunar Exploration:

- LUPEX/Chandrayaan-4 aims to explore an area closer to the moon's south pole than Chandrayaan-3, unlocking new insights into lunar geology and resources.
- SLIM's findings and testing of technologies will significantly contribute to the success of LUPEX.
- The specific landing site for LUPEX/Chandrayaan-4 is yet to be determined, with the 'Vikram' lander of Chandrayaan-3 landing approximately 600 km from the south pole.

Source:

How Japan's moon-landing attempt in January will affect Chandrayaan 4 – The Hindu

Q.1 SLIM Lunar Mission, recently seen in the news is a mission associated with:

- (a) JAXA
- (b) ESA
- (c) NASA
- (d) ISRO

ANSWER: A

Q.2 Assess the evolution of India's lunar exploration program . Discuss the significance of India's pursuit of lunar exploration in the context of global space exploration initiatives.

QATAR COURT PUTS INTERIM STAY ON DEATH SENTENCE OF EIGHT INDIANS

(This article is from 'Indian Express', 'The Hindu', 'Official website of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India', 'Official website of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India', 'Jansatta', monthly magazine 'World Focus' and 'PIB'. The included editorial is related to a brief summary. It also includes the suggestions of the Yojana IAS team. This article is related to UPSC Civil Services Examination especially 'International Relations, International Organization, Indian Polity and Governance, Indian Navy, India-Qatar Relations, International Court. (ICJ), United Nations (UN)' section. This article is related to 'Qatar court's interim stay on death sentence of eight Indians' under 'Daily Current Affairs'.)

General Studies: International Relations, Indian Politics and Governance, Indian Navy, India-Qatar Relations, International Court of Justice (ICJ), United Nations (UN).

WHY IN DISCUSSION / NEWS?

- In a major relief to 8 former Indian marines sentenced to death in Qatar, on 28 December 2023, on the appeal of the Government of India, an interim stay has been put on the death sentence of all eight people. India's Ministry of External Affairs had approached the court in Qatar regarding this case, during the hearing of which the Qatari court reduced the death sentence.
- Official sources of the Ministry of External Affairs of India have said that - "We (India) are waiting for the copy of the detailed decision." Our legal team is in touch with the families of the eight Indians regarding next steps. During the hearing, India's ambassador and officials based in Qatar were present in the court. ,
- India's Ministry of External Affairs further said that - "We have stood with the families of the eight Indian people from the beginning. Considering the sensitivity of this matter, it

would not be right for us to speak too much about it. We have been and will continue to raise this matter with the Qatari authorities.”

WHO ARE THESE EIGHT FORMER INDIAN NAVY PERSONNEL?

The eight former Indian Navy personnel have been identified as **Captain Navtej Singh Gill, Captain Birendra Kumar Verma, Captain Saurabh Vashishtha, Commander Amit Nagpal, Commander Purnendu Tiwari, Commander Sugunakar Pakala, Commander Sanjeev Gupta and Sailor Ragesh Gopakumar.**

WHAT IS THE ALLEGATION AGAINST THEM?

Eight Indians working in Qatar-based Al Dahra Company (Qatar’s private security company) are accused of allegedly spying, for which recently a court in Qatar has issued a sentence to eight former officers of the Indian Navy. He has been sentenced to death on charges of espionage. The officials involved were arrested in August 2022 and charged with sharing confidential information.



BACKGROUND OF THE PRESENT CASE:

PETITION:

- The accused officers, who were working with Al Dahra (Qatar’s private security company) in Doha, were accused of allegedly sharing classified information at the time of their arrest in Qatar in the year 2022.
- The Qatar-based company ‘**Dahra Global Technologies and Consultant Services**’, for which the eight former Indian Navy officers worked, was also involved in the production of advanced submarines of Italian origin, which are also known for their stealth warfare capabilities.
- The main thing to note is that the charges against the eight Indian officials have not been made public by the Qatari authorities.
- Earlier investigation process regarding the present case:
- Presently, the investigation process regarding this matter has been completed twice in March and June of the year 2023 and more have also been done. While these accused detainees were granted consular access on several occasions, the authorities of both the Indian and Qatari countries maintained the confidentiality of the case citing the sensitivity of the matter.

RESPONSE GIVEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA IN THE PRESENT CASE:

- The Government of India is exploring all possible legal options to secure the release of the eight accused former Indian Navy officers, while also expressing concern over the death penalty imposed by India on its citizens.
- **The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** has reiterated its commitment to provide consular and legal assistance to the eight Indian former naval officers detained in Qatar, and has also coordinated with all major authorities related to the case. Made aware of its importance.

DIPLOMATIC IMPLICATIONS:

- While the large Indian diaspora contributes to boosting economic and diplomatic ties, this decision could potentially strain relations between India and Qatar. More than seven lakh Indian expatriates reside in Qatar. This increases the pressure on the Government of India to take the highest level of action to save the lives of the prisoners lodged in the jails there.
- Those NRIs in Qatar are known and highly respected for their honesty, hard work, technical expertise and law-abiding nature as they contribute in different areas of employment in NRI Qatar. Are giving.
- Remittances from Qatar to India by the Indian expatriate community are estimated to be around \$750 million per year.
- The current affair represents the first major crisis in India-Qatar relations, which have been generally stable until now.
- In the year 2016, along with the visit of the Indian Prime Minister to Doha, high-level meetings were also held between the two countries, after which meetings were also held between the two countries with the Emir of Qatar.
- An important supplier of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to India is Qatar, which supplies a major portion of India's LNG imports.

THE EXISTING OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO INDIA TO STOP THE PUNISHMENT OF NAVAL PERSONNEL ARE:

DIPLOMATIC OPTION:

- In the present case, India can hold direct diplomatic talks with the Qatar government to find a solution to the matter. Given the strategic and economic importance of relations between the two countries, India's diplomatic leverage can play an important role.
- The Indian government can also use diplomatic pressure to stop the death penalty.
- The idea is to use the agreement signed by India and Qatar in 2015 for the transfer of convicted prisoners so that they can serve their sentence in their home country. Such possibilities are also being considered by India.
- Filing an appeal against the decision by the Qatari court or NGOs and civil society can also raise this issue at the global level and pressure can also be put on Qatar by the United Nations.

LEGAL OPTIONS:

- According to Qatar's judicial system, persons sentenced to death can file an appeal within the Qatari legal system. Therefore, India's first step is to appeal within the judicial system in Qatar.
- India can ensure that detainees' right to appeal is properly followed by providing them with legal representation.
- If proper procedures are not followed or the appeal process is disorganized, India can invoke [International Court of Justice \(ICJ\)](#) jurisdiction.

- The International Court of Justice (ICJ) acts as a world court with two types of jurisdiction. That is, it is also to give advisory opinions in case of legal disputes between two states submitted by them (controversial matters) and on legal questions referred to it by the organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations (consultative proceedings).



IN WHICH CASES WAS INDIA INVOLVED IN THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE (ICJ) JURISDICTION TILL NOW?

- Kulbhushan Jadhav case ([India vs Pakistan](#))
- Right of passage over Indian territory ([Portugal vs. India, ended in 1960](#)).
- Appeals relating to the jurisdiction of the ICAO Council ([India v Pakistan, abolished in 1972](#)).
- Pakistani Prisoners of War Trial ([Pakistan vs. India, ended in 1973](#)).
- Air incident of August 10, 1999 ([Pakistan vs India, ended in 2000](#)).
- Obligations related to preventing the nuclear arms race and negotiating nuclear disarmament ([Marshall Islands v. India, ended in 2016](#)).

WAY TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM/WAY FORWARD:

- India needs to remain committed to the welfare and legal rights of its citizens while dealing with the complexities of international diplomacy and legal processes in Qatar. The way forward in this direction is likely to be challenging and may take time and require India to show determination.
- In this present case, as well as in the future, India may desperately need a combination of its diplomatic efforts, systematic legal actions and international cooperation for a successful and appropriate resolution of such problem/case. For which India needs to build very cordial and unbreakable diplomatic relations with other countries.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM:

Q.1. Consider the following statements with reference to the death sentences of eight former Indian sailors who have been granted interim stay by the Qatar court.

1. The eight Indians working in Al Dahra Company based in Qatar are accused of allegedly spying.

2. Consular access was also provided to these accused prisoners on several occasions.
3. India can use International Court of Justice (ICJ) jurisdiction in this case.
4. 'Dahra Global Technologies and Consultant Services' was also involved in the production of advanced submarines of Italian origin, which are also known for their stealth warfare capabilities.

Which of the above statement/statements is correct?

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

Answer – C

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM:

Q.1. In the context of the interim stay on death sentence of Indian former naval personnel in Qatar, discuss the legal options before India and its impact on India-Qatar relations.

UNDERSTANDING DARK ENERGY IN THE UNIVERSE

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details " Understanding Dark Energy in the Universe". This topic has relevance in the Science and Technology section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 3: Science and Technology

Why in the news?

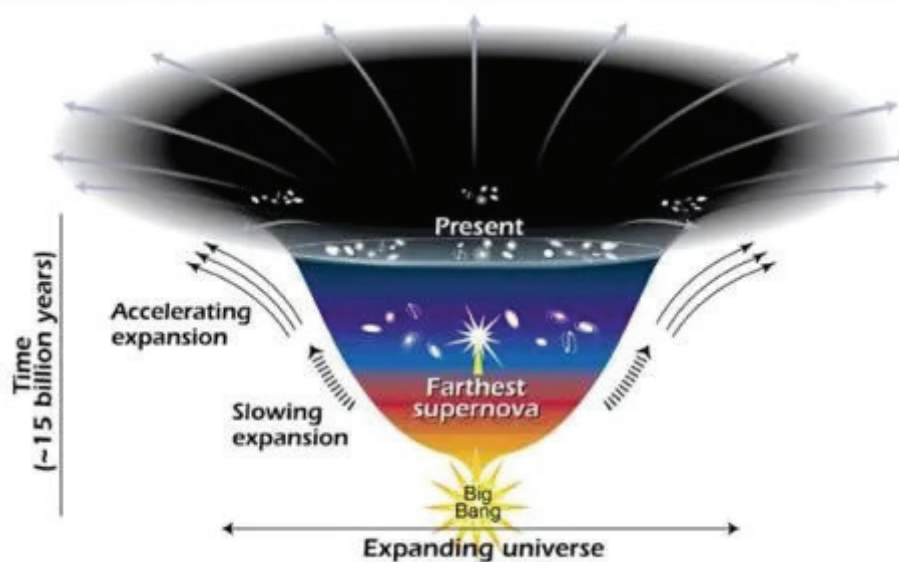
- The composition of energy in the universe is characterized by a subtle equilibrium among various forms of matter and radiation.
- Taking up a substantial 68%, dark energy significantly influences and directs the expansion of the universe.

Overview:

Dark energy, a mysterious and enigmatic form of energy, constitutes a substantial portion of the total energy content of the universe. This elusive force is believed to be the driving factor behind the observed accelerated expansion of the cosmos, with approximately 68% of the universe attributed to dark energy, while dark matter accounts for about 27%. Remarkably, all the ordinary matter on Earth and everything observed in the universe with scientific instruments amounts to less than 5% of the total cosmic composition.

Key Points to Grasp about Dark Energy:

- Invisible Force Steering Expansion:
 - Dark energy, an unseen force, plays a pivotal role in the accelerated expansion of the universe. Unlike gravity, which attracts objects, dark energy acts as a repulsive force, pushing galaxies away from each other.
- Characteristics of Space:
 - Contrary to the conventional idea of space as an empty void, dark energy introduces a new perspective. Space is not merely an empty expanse; it is a dynamic, stretchable medium that responds to the presence of energy.
- Expansion Dictated by Energy Forms:
 - The universe's expansion is not uniform, and different forms of energy contribute uniquely to this process. Whether it's matter, radiation, or dark energy, each type influences how a specific region of space expands or contracts.
- Balancing Act:
 - Dark energy dominates the universe's energy budget, dictating the overall rate of space expansion. Striking a delicate balance with other forms of energy is crucial for the stability of the cosmos.
- Implications:
 - The quantity of dark energy holds significant implications for the observable universe. Too much positive energy could result in galaxies moving away faster than light, limiting visibility. Excessive negative energy might lead to the universe collapsing.
- Diluteness of Dark Energy:
 - Although it holds a position of dominance, dark energy is remarkably sparse throughout the immense expanse of the universe. In a cubic kilometer, it's as sparse as a single sugar crystal, raising questions about the nature and distribution of this mysterious force.



Possible Explanations of Dark Energy:

- Property of Space:

- Albert Einstein's gravity theory with a cosmological constant suggests that "empty space" possesses its own energy, causing the universe to expand faster as more space comes into existence.
- Quantum Theory of Matter:
 - The quantum theory of matter proposes that "empty space" is filled with temporary ("virtual") particles continuously forming and disappearing.
- Fifth Fundamental Force:
 - Speculative theories propose a fifth fundamental force to explain dark energy, often referred to as "quintessence." However, none of these theories have been conclusively proven, rendering dark energy as "the most profound mystery in all of science."

INDIA'S STEADY WAY IN THE SHIPPING VALUE CHAIN: INDIA'S FIRST CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR GREEN PORTS AND SHIPPING

(This article is from 'Official website of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Government of India', 'The Hindu', 'Indian Express', 'United States Agency for International Development', 'Sansad TV's program Sarokar', 'Energy and Environment An interdisciplinary journal that invites energy policy analysts, natural scientists and engineers, as well as lawyers and economists to contribute to mutual understanding and learning 'Official website of the Institute of Marine Engineers, Government of India' and 'PIB. It also includes the suggestions of the Yojana IAS team. This article is specifically related to the 'Development of Indian Economy, Ministry of Shipping, Transport and Waterways, Environment and Ecology' section of the UPSC Civil Services Examination. This article is related to 'India's Sustainable Direction in Shipping Value Chain: India's First Center of Excellence for Green Ports and Shipping' under 'Daily Current Affairs').

General Studies: Development of Indian Economy, Ministry of Shipping, Transport and Waterways, Environment and Ecology.

WHY IN DISCUSSION / NEWS ?

Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways and AYUSH Shri Sarbananda Sonowal announced India's first National Center of Excellence for Green Ports and Shipping (NCoEGPS). The objective of the Center is to develop a regulatory framework and road map for adoption of alternative technologies to promote carbon neutrality and circular economy (CE) in the sector of Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways in India. India aspires to increase the share of renewable energy in the total power demand in all its major ports, which is currently less than 10 percent, to 60 percent, to be met through power generated by solar and wind energy. India's first National Center of Excellence for Green Port & Shipping (NCOEGPS) has been launched by the Government of India at the recent "INMARCO 2022" held in Mumbai. .

OBJECTIVE : -

To promote carbon neutrality and financial economy in India and to make ports and shipping more environment friendly.

INMARCO is a quadrennial international maritime conference and exhibition, hosted by the Institute of Marine Engineers (Government of India). That is, INMARCO organizes this program every four years by presenting its report on developing a road map for green ports and adoption of alternative technologies for shipping.

INDIA'S FIRST CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR GREEN PORTS AND SHIPPING (NCOEGPS) :

INTRODUCTION:

- It is a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MOPSW) as part of the Sagarmala Program of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways towards providing green solutions in the Ministry of Shipping and Waterways. Will work under the framework of.
- The information and implementing partner for this project is **The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)**.

AIM OF THE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE:

- The objective of the Center is to develop a regulatory framework for green shipping and a road map for adoption of alternative technologies to promote carbon neutrality and circular economy (CE) in the shipping sector in India.
- Green shipping is the practice of using less resources and energy to transport people and goods by ship to protect the global environment from environmental pollutants and greenhouse gases (GHGs) produced by ships.
- **India aims to increase the share of renewable energy in the total power demand of each of its major ships to 60% from the current share of less than 10%.**
- It will be implemented with the help of solar energy and wind energy.
- Center of Excellence is a team, a shared facility or a unit that provides the best leadership, practice, research, collaboration and training in a single location for a particular area.
- It promotes innovation.



OBJECTIVES OF INMARCO :

- Its main objective is to strengthen 'Make in India' in the field of ports, shipping and waterways and engineering by developing cutting-edge technologies and application products in this sector under 'Make in India Scheme'.
- The aim is to provide the most appropriate solutions to various challenges in these areas by enabling innovations.
- One of its main objectives is to create a competent work force for the industry equipped with state-of-the-art theoretical and practical knowledge by creating a pool of capable manpower.
- Its main objective is to identify and analyze the complex problems of this sector and provide assistance in solving the issues, in order to provide self-reliance to India in technology development through scientific study and providing short-term solutions through the technical branch.

IMPORTANCE OF INMARCO:

- INMARCO Mission is a major effort towards realizing the Lifestyle for the Environment (LiFE) movement as it aims to transform ports and make the shipping sector eco-friendly.
- India's first National Center of Excellence for Green Ports and Shipping will work with all ports, shipping and maritime states of India to understand their local problems and offer solutions through a scientific approach.

RELATED INITIATIVES LAUNCHED BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA:

- The ports also aim to reduce carbon emissions per tonne of cargo by 30% by 2030.
- The Maritime Vision Document 2030 is a 10-year blueprint on India's vision of a sustainable maritime sector and vibrant blue economy.
- India has been selected as the first country under the Green Voyage 2050 project of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to conduct a pilot project related to green shipping.



GREEN VOYAGE 2050 PROJECT:

- The Green Voyage 2050 project is a project launched in May 2019 between the Government of Norway and the **International Maritime Organization (IMO)**, which aims to transform the shipping industry into a low-carbon emitting future.
- The global partnership will help **Small Island Developing States (SIDS)** and Least Developed Countries (Least Developed Countries) meet their commitments to climate change and energy efficiency targets relevant to international shipping by supporting the inaugural **IMO Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Strategy. Developed Countries-LDC** is supporting the developing countries.

- One of the important objectives of Green Voyage 2050 is to encourage global efforts to demonstrate and test technology solutions.

REPORT PRESENTED BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL INLAND WATERWAYS:

- Inland waterways are a navigable river and canal system. **The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)** regulates and develops national waterways for inland shipping and navigation.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

OPERATION OF NATIONAL WATERWAYS:

- At present there are a total of 111 notified national waterways in India, out of which 23 have been made operational.
- Due to financial and staff constraints, the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways** has said that 63 national waterways are currently not being developed by the ministry.
- A committee constituted by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways of India has suggested that these 63 waterways should not be developed at present as it is impractical.

INTERMODAL CONNECTIVITY FOR TRANSPORTATION OF CARGO:

- Under intermodal connectivity for transportation of cargo, the committee has said that connectivity of waterways with major ports, railways and roads will reduce the burden of transportation of cargo and will also reduce the cost of logistics.
- The Committee has suggested that in case of newly notified waterways, connectivity with rail, road and ports should be dealt with at the project completion stage itself.

LOW SHARE OF WATERWAYS:

- The average share of waterways in freight traffic in India is about **2%, compared to 4% in the USA, 14% in China, 48% in Vietnam and 49% in the Netherlands.**
- **India aims to increase the share of this sector to 5% by the year 2030.**
- The Committee has recommended that the Ministry prepare an action plan on an urgent basis to harness and develop the potential of waterways as a sustainable transit option and tourism service.

IMPORTANT FACTS : -

- The center will utilize a number of technological measures to support the shipping and shipping sector and address various problems faced by the industry through scientific research.
- It will also provide valuable education, applied research and technology transfer in maritime transportation at local, regional, national and international levels.

This center will focus on 5 broad areas-

- **Policy, Regulatory and Research,**
- **Human Resource Development,**
- **Network- key partners and strategic partners,**
- **Exploration- scope of work, results, projects and resources,**

- **Attached – Scope of work, results, projects and resources.**

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM:

Q.1. Consider the following statements with reference to India's first National Center of Excellence for Green Ports and Shipping (INMARCO).

1. INMARCO is a quadrennial international maritime conference and exhibition, hosted by the Institute of Marine Engineers (Government of India).
2. INMARCO Mission is a major effort towards realizing the eco-friendly lifestyle movement.
3. The Green Voyage 2050 project is a project launched in May 2019 between the Government of Norway and the International Maritime Organization (IMO).
4. India aims to increase the sector's average share of waterways in freight traffic to 5% by 2030.

Which of the above statement/statements is correct?

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

Answer-D

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM:

Q.1. What is Sagarmala Project? How INMARCO is helpful in promoting carbon neutrality and financial economy in India and making ports and shipping more environment friendly? Discuss logically.