



INSIGHTSIAS

SIMPLIFYING IAS EXAM PREPARATION

SECURE SYNOPSIS

MAINS 2019

GS- 2

AUGUST 2019



NOTE: Please remember that following 'answers' are NOT 'model answers'. They are NOT synopsis too if we go by definition of the term. What we are providing is content that both meets demand of the question and at the same time gives you extra points in the form of background information.



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PREPARATION

Indian Constitution- historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

Do you think Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution, which guarantee the right to equality and the right to live with dignity, are violated by having different legal age for men and women to marry in India? Debate with suitable justifications. (250 words)

[Indianexpress](#)

Why this question:

The article talks about the petition that was recently filed challenging the legal age of marriage in India that is different for male and female.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must provide for critical arguments upon the topic of different legal age for men and women to marry in India, one must present justifications as to how it violates the fundamental rights.

Directive:

Debate – Weigh up to what extent something is true. Persuade the reader of your argument by citing relevant research but also remember to point out any flaws and counter-arguments as well. Conclude by stating clearly how far you agree with the original proposition.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Begin with brief introduction on the legal age of marriage in India.

Body:

Discussion should include the following:

Explain that the law prescribes that the minimum age of marriage is 21 and 18 years for men and women, respectively. The minimum age of marriage is distinct from the age of majority, which is gender neutral. Explain why there is a need of minimum age in the first place? Discuss the historical evolution of this factor.

Discuss and debate why the age is different for men and women.

Explain why the country needs to reconsider the issue.

Substantiate your stand with suitable justifications by stating how it violates fundamental rights enshrined in article 14 and 21.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

In India, the minimum legal age for marriage of a girl is 18, while for boys, it is 21. Delhi High Court has issued a notice to the Centre and the Law Commission of India, seeking their response to the public interest litigation that sought a uniform age of marriage for men and women. The PIL alleges that Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution, which guarantee the right to equality and the right to live with dignity, are violated by having different legal age for men and women to marry.

Body:

Provisions of the current laws:

- The law prescribes a minimum age of marriage to essentially outlaw child marriages and prevent abuse of minors.

- Personal laws of various religions that deal with marriage have their own standards, often reflecting custom.
- The **minimum age of marriage is distinct from the age of majority**, which is gender-neutral.
- An **individual** attains the **age of majority at 18** as per the **Indian Majority Act, 1875**.
- For **Hindus**, Section 5(iii) of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 **sets 18 years as the minimum age** for the **bride** and **21 years as the minimum age for the groom**. Child marriages are not illegal but can be declared void at the request of the minor in the marriage.
- In Islam, the marriage of a minor who has attained puberty is considered valid under personal law.
- The Special Marriage Act, 1954 and the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 also prescribe 18 and 21 years as the minimum age of consent for marriage for women and men respectively.

Yes, Article 14 and 21 violated:

- The laws are a codification of custom and religious practices that are rooted in patriarchy. In a consultation paper of reform in family law in 2018, the Law Commission argued that having different legal standards “**contributes to the stereotype that wives must be younger than their husbands**”.
- Women’s rights activists too have argued that the law perpetuates the stereotype that women are more mature than men of the same age and therefore can be allowed to marry sooner.
- The **international treaty Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**, also calls for the abolition of laws that assume women have a different physical or intellectual rate of growth than men.
- The Law Commission paper recommended that the minimum age of marriage for both genders be set at 18. “The difference in age for husband and wife has no basis in law as spouses entering into a marriage are by all means equals and their partnership must also be of that between equals,” the Commission noted.
- In 2014, in **National Legal Services Authority of India v Union of India**, the Supreme Court while recognising transgenders as the third gender said that justice is delivered with the “assumption that humans have equal value and should, therefore, be treated as equal, as well as by equal laws.”
- In 2019, in **Joseph Shine v Union of India**, the Supreme Court decriminalised adultery and said that “a law that treats women differently based on gender stereotypes is an affront to women’s dignity.”

Way forward:

- In its consultation paper on '**Reform of Family Law**', the Law commission panel also said "if a universal age for majority is recognised, and that grants all citizens the right to choose their governments, surely, they must then be also considered capable of choosing their spouses".
- Amending personal laws on these lines would prevent child marriages and would remove inequality

Government must find a balance between the right to online privacy and the right of the state to detect people who use the web to spread panic and commit crimes. Critically Analyze .(250 words)

[The hindu](#)

Introduction:

The Tamil Nadu Government had recently told the Supreme Court that the user profiles on social media need to be linked with Aadhaar to keep a check on the circulation of fake, defamatory and pornographic content as well as anti-national and terror material. However, social media platforms, particularly Facebook have been resisting Aadhaar linking, stating that sharing of 12-digit Aadhaar number would violate the privacy policy of users.

Body:

Rationale behind Aadhar-Social Media link:

- The **dangers of the dark web** are a compelling reason behind Aadhar-Social Media link.
- There are rising instances of **cyberbullying, spreading of defamatory and humiliating messages and other intolerable activities on social media**. Aadhar-Social media link can help reduce it.
- Aadhaar-social media linking is needed to **keep a check on fake news and defamatory, anti-national and terror-sponsoring articles or content and pornographic material on social media**.
- The State also referred to the **Blue Whale game**, which had reportedly claimed the lives of several children in India.

Threats posed to Right to privacy by Aadhar-Social Media link:

- The linking of user profiles on social media with Aadhaar would make every message and post by the user traceable.
- Though the move will serve as a deterrent to social media instigators and perpetrators of defamatory and fake posts, it would also violate the privacy of the users, keeping a record of each message along with the registered mobile number or email account.
- This would mean the end of private communications.
- The privacy experts fear that the linking would allow India's nationalist government to force social media platforms to become surveillance tools.

Right to choice also affected due to Aadhar-Social Media link:

- It is unclear as of now of what will happen to those who don't link their social media accounts to their 12-digit Aadhaar number. Will their accounts be deleted or blocked?
- It is also unclear what action will be taken against parody accounts of users.
- Users also have concerns that if a tweet they did years ago suddenly goes viral out of context then will all the people who shared it also get investigated or punished or will their accounts be deactivated?

Challenges apparent in the linking of Aadhaar number with social media profiles:

- The private use of Aadhaar itself has been controversial since the striking down of Section 57 of the Aadhaar Act.
- The limited eKYC provisions, which have been allowed only for banks and other regulated entities, are indicative of this.
- The use of Aadhaar, further, has mainly been restricted to receiving government benefits such as the Section 7 benefits.
- It is thus difficult, legally, to find a way to permit Aadhaar-social media linking within the ambit of the Supreme Court's verdict on Aadhaar.

Need of the hour:

- The K.S. Puttaswamy decision (2017) in the 'privacy' case is worth mentioning here.
- Accordingly, any state intervention for regulation of online content has to pass the **test of proportionality** laid down by the court.
- Supreme Court stressed the need to find a **balance between the right to online privacy and the right of the State** to detect people who use the web to spread panic and commit crimes.
- The Supreme Court also called for Parliament to draft and pass a **data protection law**
- Supreme Court also impressed upon the respondents to bring out a **robust data protection regime** in the form of an enactment on the basis of **Justice BN Srikrishna (Retd.) Committee Report with necessary modifications** thereto as may be deemed appropriate.
- The government needs to move away from relying on Aadhaar and linking as a one-stop solution for issues ranging from terrorism (SIM linking), money laundering (bank account linking), electoral fraud (voter ID linking) and now cybercrime (social media account linking).
- It is without question that a solution is required, but it is increasingly worrying as the solutions move toward deprivation of fundamental rights and the first steps towards a possible surveillance state.

Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

“The creation of union territories is an expression of India’s geography”, Discuss in the light of recent creation of the union territory of Ladakh and J&K.(250 words)

Indiatoday

Why this question:

The question is amidst the recent state of affairs being witnessed in the erstwhile state of J&K which has been bifurcated into two UTs.

Key demand of the question:

One must discuss in detail the relevance and context of Indian geography and the formation of UTs.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

In short discuss about the UTs in India.

Body:

Explain in short, the reasons for which the union territories came into existence in India.

Explain the reasons behind the creation of each union territory

evaluate how it helped in geographical continuity and state in what way they are an Expression of India’s geography. Discuss the impact of having UTs in general on various aspects of the country.

Conclusion:

Conclude with significance.

Introduction:

A union territory is a **type of administrative division** in the Republic of India. Unlike the states of India, which have their own governments, union territories are usually federal territories governed directly by the central Government of India.

The Central government on August 5 did away with the special status awarded to Jammu and Kashmir by abrogating certain provisions of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. The government also introduced the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill in the Rajya Sabha, bifurcating the **State into two Union Territories (UT) — Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh**. The UT of Jammu and Kashmir will have a legislature, similar to Delhi and Puducherry, while the UT of Ladakh will not, mirroring UTs like Chandigarh and Daman and Diu.

Body:

UTs- the history:

- After independence in 1947, States were divided into 4 lists: Part A, Part B, Part C and Part D.

- In 1956, States reorganization act was passed and mostly states mentioned in Part C and Part D were either merged into states mentioned in Part A and Part B and left were termed as union territories.
- So, in 1956, Andaman and Nicobar, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura and Laccadive minicoy and amindivi island (later collectively becomes Lakshadweep) were 6 union territories of India.
- Then, Goa, Daman and Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Puducherry ceded to Indian. Some Union territories like Himachal Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura later gained statehood.
- So, now only 7 union territories remain Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar, Lakshadweep, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Puducherry and Chandigarh.

Reasons behind creation of UTs:

- **Small population and land size:** The union territories (except Delhi) have very small populations and land size comparing to a state hence, running legislative assembly and a council of ministers for them will cost additional burden to exchequer.
- **Strategic locations: Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar islands** are far west and east end of our country and they are quite far from mainland hence it is easier to govern them directly through Central government because they are very strategically important for India and in case of any emergency, Indian government can directly act there.
- **Protection of indigenous cultures:** Some of the union territories have different culture than surrounding state like **Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu** (Portuguese), **Puducherry** (French) and most recently **Ladakh**.
- **Administrative importance: Delhi and Chandigarh** are two union territories which are important as administrative capital of India and administrative capital of Haryana and Punjab. So, control of these union territories is important for Indian government.
- **Security situation and general backwardness: Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh** are located on the borders neighbouring Pakistan and China. Having faced aggressions from both nations and constant terror incidents, the state was **economically lagging despite natural resources**.

Constitutional status:

- Article 1 (1) of the Indian constitution says that India shall be a "Union of States", which are elaborated under Parts V (The Union) and VI (The States) of the constitution.
- Article 1 (3) says the territory of India comprises the territories of the states, the union territories and other territories that may be acquired.
- The concept of union territories was not in the original version of the constitution, but was added by the Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act, 1956.

- citizenship (part II), fundamental rights (part III), Directive Principles of State Policy (part IV), Judiciary role, the Union Territories (part VIII), Article 245, etc. are applicable to union territories as it refers specifically to Territories of India.
- The executive power of Union (i.e. union of states only) rests with President of India. President of India is also chief administrator of union territories per Article 239.
- As per Article 240 (2), supreme power is accorded to the President in regulating the affairs of the all the union territories except Chandigarh, NCT and Puducherry, including powers to override the laws made by Parliament and the constitution of India.
- Union territories with their own elected legislatures and governments: Puducherry, National Capital Territory of Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir (proposed from 31 October 2019),

Conclusion:

The Parliament has the power to redraw the political map of India. Over the years, the UTs are formed keeping in mind the geographical and other strategic factors. The direct control of the Union Government will help the socio-political and economic developments of the UTs.

Parliament and State Legislatures – structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

Why Some States in India have Bicameral Legislatures? Discuss the relevance of the Legislative Councils in the States in the backdrop of recent demand of certain states to create the second house. (250 words)

[Indianexpress](#)

Why this question:

The article discusses the debates surrounding the creation of Legislative Councils in states. The issue gains significance in light of the wish of Odisha to have an upper house of its own. The creation of Legislative Councils needs to be evaluated in this question.

Demand of the question:

The question expects us to discuss the role Legislative Councils play and how useful are they for states. The question makes an assertion that if LCs were useful for states, each state would have one. Since not all states are having LCs, it indicates the limited utility of LCs. We have to give our opinion on this assertion mainly.

Directive word:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction

Explain the constitutional provisions regarding LCs and highlight the number of states that have LCs in India.

Body

Discuss the role that LCs were envisaged to perform as per the founding fathers of our constitution – as a revisory house, give an opportunity to diverse section to be a part of the law-making process etc.

Highlight the status quo of functioning of Legislative councils in the states in India.

Mention the negatives of having an LC – Constitution Assembly itself felt this body would delay legislative process, not a representative of people directly, and an expensive institution, no real power except the power to delay legislations etc.

Discuss the recommendations of committees like 2nd ARC and what they have suggested for improving the functioning of LCs – election of members of legislative council, role of teachers and graduates should be decreased or done away with and how more say should be given to local bodies.

Examine whether a national policy for states to have LCs should be encouraged.

Conclusion

Give your view on the importance of LC for states and the way forward.

Introduction:

Bicameralism is the practice of having two Houses of Parliament. At the State level, the equivalent of the Lok Sabha is the Vidhan Sabha (Legislative Assembly), and that of the Rajya Sabha is the Vidhan Parishad (Legislative Council). At present, 6 states have bicameral legislatures. Most recently the Madhya Pradesh government has indicated that it plans to initiate steps towards creation of a Legislative Council.

Body:

Under **Article 169 of the constitution**, Parliament may by law create or abolish the second chamber in a state if the Legislative Assembly of that state passes a resolution to that effect by a special majority.

Rationale behind setting up Legislative councils in states:

- To act as a check on hasty actions by the popularly elected House.
- To ensure that individuals who might not be cut out for the rough-and-tumble of direct elections too are able to contribute to the legislative process.
- An Upper House provides a forum for academicians and intellectuals. It provides a mechanism for a more sober and considered appraisal of legislation that a State may pass.
- The legislative councils do accommodate such mature and serene personalities not only through the nominated quota at the disposal of Governor but also through the quota reserved for teachers and the graduates.
- It lessens the burden of the lower House and enables it to fully concentrate on measures of greater importance.
- LCs were envisaged to perform as per the founding fathers of our constitution as a revisory house, give an opportunity to diverse section to be a part of the law making process etc

Relevance of Legislative councils:

- **Opposition to the idea of Legislative Councils is centred on three broad arguments:**
 - They can be used to park leaders who have not been able to win an election.
 - They can be used to delay progressive legislation.

- They would strain state finances.
- In the West Bengal also one of the main reasons for its abolition was stated as unnecessary burden on the State exchequer.
- **The process of creating an Upper House is lengthy:**
 - The State Assembly has to pass a resolution for the creation of the Council by a majority of its total membership. Thereafter, Parliament has to enact a law to create it. Two Bills introduced in the Rajya Sabha in 2013 for establishing Legislative Councils in Assam and Rajasthan are still pending, indicating the lack of support for such a move.
 - Another issue is that graduates are no longer rare. Also, with dipping educational standards, a graduate degree is no guarantee of any real intellectual heft.
- **Constitution gives Councils limited legislative powers:-]**
 - Unlike Rajya Sabha which has substantial powers to shape non-financial legislation, Legislative Councils lack the constitutional mandate to do so. Legislative Assemblies have the power to override suggestions/amendments made to a legislation by the Council.
 - While Rajya Sabha MPs can vote in the election of the President and Vice-President, members of Legislative Councils can't. MLCs also can't vote in the elections of Rajya Sabha members.
 - As regards Money bills, only fourteen days' delay can be caused by the Council, which is more or less a formality rather than a barrier in the way of Money Bill passed by the Assembly.

Way forward:

- **Recommendations of committees like 2nd ARC** need to be implemented for improving the functioning of LCs like the election of members of legislative council, role of teachers and graduates should be decreased or done away with.
- More say should be given to local bodies so that they can represent local bodies at state level as Rajya sabha represents states at national level. This will help strengthen the root level democracy.
- There is need of a **National Policy on having Upper House** in State Legislatures. The provision of the law for Councils to have seats for graduates and teachers should also be reviewed.

Conclusion:

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar compared it to a “**curate’s egg—good only in parts**”. There is a need for **wide range of debates and public and intellectual opinion** to have an Upper House in all state legislatures.

Legislative councils should be a responsible body that can also form their part in policies and programmes for the development of states.

Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

Do you think a mere increase in the court's strength may suffice to liquidate the burgeoning issue of large pendency of cases? Examine. (250 words)

The hindu

Why this question:

Pendency of cases across courts in India has increased in the last decade.

Union Cabinet recently has approved a proposal to increase the strength of judges in Supreme Court from the present 31 to 34 (i.e. by 10%), including Chief Justice of India (CJI). Cabinet has approved a bill to amend the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must discuss the issue of pendency of cases and in what way increasing the number of judges alone cant be a solution to the problem and there have to be a multi-pronged approach.

Directive:

Examine – When asked to 'Examine', we have to look into the topic (content words) in detail, inspect it, investigate it and establish the key facts and issues related to the topic in question. While doing so we should explain why these facts and issues are important and their implications

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Describe the current conditions with few vital statistics to substantiate.

Body:

There are more than 3 crore cases pending in different courts of India. Many of these cases are pending for more than 10 years. Explain first why there are too many cases pending in Indian courts? Suggest Solutions to the Problem of Pending Cases in Indian Courts.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

Any move to increase the strength of the judiciary ought to be welcomed, given the perennial complaint that availability of judges is not increasing in proportion to the institution of cases. In this perspective, the Union Cabinet's decision to raise the strength of the Supreme Court from 31 to 34, including the Chief Justice of India, will help in dealing with the large pendency — 59,331 cases on July 11, 2019.

Body:

Reasons for increase in pendency:

- The valuable time of SC is being taken up by mundane matters that do not impinge on larger questions that involve interpretation of laws and constitutional provisions
- Routine bail matters land up in the Supreme Court within days of persons being arrested.

- Every major crime or disaster seems to invite a litigant, ostensibly in public interest, who mentions the matter before the Chief Justice for urgent hearing.
- The court is being invited to even oversee flood relief work.
- Rising pendency also results from the injunction [a judicial remedy issued in order to prohibit a party from doing or continuing to do a certain activity] of cases by Courts.
- For example, in the case of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) cases, injunctions have led to about 60 percent of cases being stayed, whose average pendency is 4.3 years. The average age of cases waiting for final judgment is inordinately high at 7.9 years.
- **Shortage of judges:** around 5,580 or 25% of posts are lying empty in the subordinate courts. It leads to poor Judges to Population Ratio, as India has only 20 judges per million population. Earlier, Law Commission had recommended 50 judges per million.
- **Frequent adjournments:** The laid down procedure of allowing a maximum of three adjournments per case is not followed in over 50 per cent of the matters being heard by courts, leading to rising pendency of cases
- **Burden of government cases:** Statistics provided by LIMBS shows that the Centre and the States were responsible for over 46% of the pending cases in Indian courts.
- **Judges Vacation:** Supreme Court's works on average for 188 days a year, while apex court rules specify minimum of 225 days of work.
- **Lack of court management systems:** Courts have created dedicated posts for court managers to help improve court operations, optimise case movement and judicial time. However only few courts have filled up such posts so far.
- **Inefficient investigation:** Police are quite often handicapped in undertaking effective investigation for want of modern and scientific tools to collect evidences.
- **Increasing Literacy:** With people becoming more aware of their rights and the obligations of the State towards them, they approach the courts more frequently in case of any violation

Measures needed:

- A reasonable restraint on the duration of oral arguments and a disciplined adherence to a schedule of hearings may be needed.
- In this case, one of the principal objectives should be to preserve the apex court's primary role as the ultimate arbiter of constitutional questions and statutory interpretation.
- All other questions involving a final decision on routine matters, especially civil cases that involve nothing more than the interests of the parties before it, ought to be considered by a mechanism that will not detract from the court's primary role.
- **Addressing the Issue of Vacancies:** Ensure the appointments of the judges be done in an efficient way by arriving at an optimal judge strength to handle the cases pending in the system.

The 120th Law Commission of India report for the first time, suggested a judge strength fixation formula.

- Supreme Court and High Courts should appoint efficient and experienced judges as Ad-hoc judges in accordance with the Constitution.
- **Use of Information technology (IT) solutions:** The use of technology for tracking and monitoring cases and in providing relevant information to make justice litigant friendly. A greater impetus should be given to
- **Process reengineering:** Involves redesigning of core business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in productivity and quality by incorporating the use of technology in court rules. It will include:
- **Electronic filing of cases:** e-Courts are a welcome step in this direction, as they give case status and case history of all the pending cases across High courts and Subordinate courts bringing ease of access to information.
- **Revamping of National Judicial Data Grid** by introducing a new type of search known as elastic search, which is closer to the artificial intelligence.

Way forward:

- Some countries have brought in a clear division at the level of the apex judiciary by having separate constitutional courts, which limit themselves to deciding questions of constitutional importance.
- It may be worthwhile considering the 229th Report of the Law Commission, suggesting a new system under which there will be one Constitution Bench in Delhi, and four 'Cassation Benches' for different regions of the country.
- These will be final appellate courts for routine litigation.
- This arrangement may also increase access to justice to those living in far-flung areas of the country and who may otherwise have to come to Delhi and spend more time and money in pursuing appeals. It may also cut down on the time taken for disposal of cases.

Conclusion:

The fundamental requirement of a good judicial administration is accessibility, affordability and speedy justice, which will not be realized until and unless the justice delivery system is made within the reach of the individual in a time bound manner and within a reasonable cost. Therefore, continuous formative assessment is the key to strengthen and reinforce the justice delivery system in India.

“Any step towards overhauling the Judicial System should intend to balance judicial independence and judicial accountability.” Examine the above statement in the light of recent controversies. (250 words)

Reference

Why this question:

The question aims to address the need for balancing independence and accountability of the judiciary.

Key demand of the question:

The answer should discuss the need for balancing judicial independence and judicial accountability amidst newer changes that are being made in the judicial system for improvisation.

Directive:

Examine – When asked to ‘Examine’, we have to look into the topic (content words) in detail, inspect it, investigate it and establish the key facts and issues related to the topic in question. While doing so we should explain why these facts and issues are important and their implications.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Discuss the recent changes that have been made in the judiciary.

Body:

Explain the importance of judicial review and importance of system of checks and balances. Highlight the need for judicial accountability by pointing out Basic structure doctrine, usurping powers of executive, lack of judicial values and non-obligation to RTI. Highlight the ways in which judicial independence and judicial accountability can be balanced by pointing out Code of Conduct, Judicial ethics, Judges Association, Transparency, Steps for Parliamentary reform.

Conclusion:

Reiterate the need to ensure judicial accountability while balancing Independence.

Introduction:

The Indian Judiciary plays an increasingly important role in the life and the governance of this country. It is argued that the Indian judiciary has become all powerful, mostly by taking on enormous authority in policy areas that are technically beyond its ambit.

Body:

The recent controversies surrounding Judicial System:

- The Chief Justice’s conduct in the sexual harassment allegations has sent a signal that he is above all principles of natural justice, above all due process, above all law and entitled to be a **judge in his own cause**.
- The controversies regarding the CJI being the master of the roster and how the cases were allotted to various benches in partisan manner.
- The issue of 4 senior most judges holding a public press conference wrt the above issue.
- Lack of transparency particularly in the appointment of judges has led to issues like that of errant judges like Justice CS Karnan.
- The sealed cover has now become a problem of opacity. In the Rafale case, the NDA government’s evidence is in a sealed envelope, as indeed are all the reports of the officer in-charge of the National Register of Citizens process in Assam. In former Central Bureau of Investigation chief Alok Verma’s case, the Central Vigilance Commission’s report remains in a sealed cover, as do the NIA’s reports in the Hadiya conversion case.
- Parliament had tried to create the National Judicial Accountability Commission (NJAC) exactly for such situations but the SC struck it down (4-1) as unconstitutional.

- The Supreme Court protects the Right to Information Act for us, but claims immunity for itself. Only seven of 27 SC judges have disclosed their assets. There is no transparency or disclosure of the collegium proceedings or even explanation when it changes its mind on an appointment.

The **principles of judicial independence and accountability** are sometimes regarded as fundamentally opposed to one another, and constantly in tension. Judicial independence is “an essential pillar of liberty and the rule of law”. The classic defence of judicial independence – usually put forward by judges themselves – rests primarily on two arguments. Firstly, that independence is a value and an end in itself. And secondly, that any means of accountability directly impinges upon, and damages, judicial independence.

The purpose of judicial independence, either of the judiciary as an institution or of an individual judge, is never an end in itself. Its purpose is always to secure judicial impartiality. If a judiciary cannot administer the law fairly and fearlessly, then nothing else is of any consequence. Impartiality is a central and necessary feature of judicial independence.

Measures needed:

- An independent enquiry towards complaints of Sexual harassment is needed to uphold the credibility of the SC.
- The Gender Sensitization and ICC should inquire into the affidavit of the complainant to ensure justice is done.
- **Appointment:**
 - More transparency in the appointment of judges, the **Memorandum of Procedure** must be adopted at the earliest.
 - All India Judicial services (AIJS) for uniformity and efficiency in appointment process.
- Strengthening alternative dispute resolution mechanisms
- Adequate funding to expand physical infrastructure.
- Modernization of court process; use of technology to be expanded. Initiatives like CIS should be supplemented by file tracking and knowledge management system.
- Analyzing appropriate court-related data for better understanding of problems. This would also help in proper case listing
- Application of management principles; full utilization of court managers; include external support agencies to work with judicial officers to cater to the needs of institution better.
- Creation of a transparent mechanism to discipline judges
- **Judicial Standards and accountability Bill, 2012:** The Bill seeks to put in a place a system to probe complaints against High Court and Supreme Court Judges.

Conclusion:

Judges, undoubtedly, require protection from being sued for their judicial decisions so as to be able to “do the duty with complete independence and free from fear” and hence require independence and supremacy in their functioning. Meanwhile it is imperative **to have a transparent system within the judiciary** itself to deal with **cases of judicial misconduct and to infuse the idea of judicial accountability**. The only way to salvage this is to open up the court. A judiciary that is confident of itself and of its place in the democratic republic should not be worried about subjecting judicial appointments to public scrutiny. As **Lord Woolf** had aptly said, “the independence of the judiciary is... not the property of the judiciary, but a commodity to be held by the judiciary in trust for the public”.

“Collective responsibility is a myth in the Indian cabinet system”. Elucidate.(250 words)

Indian polity by Lakshmikanth

Why this question:

The question is in the backdrop of recent tussle in the appointment of Karnataka cabinet system. Likewise historically many states and even the central cabinet has witnessed the issue of collective responsibility.

Key demand of the question:

One must discuss in detail the

Directive:

Elucidate – Give a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

First explain what you understand by cabinet system.

Body:

Discuss first the significance of cabinet system and what you understand by collective responsibility.

Discuss the provisions related to the collective responsibility in the constitution of India.

Explain the impact of the lacunae to not manifest collective responsibility in the cabinet.

Suggest solutions to overcome.

Conclusion:

Conclude that the quality of administration is largely conditioned by the leadership and direction provided by Ministers thus it is important to foster the collective responsibility in true sense.

Introduction:

Collective responsibility, also known as **collective ministerial responsibility**, is a constitutional convention in Parliamentary systems that members of the cabinet must publicly support all governmental decisions made in Cabinet, even if they do not privately agree with them. **Article 75(3)** of Indian Constitution states that the Council of Ministers shall be collectively responsible to the House of the People

Body:

Collective responsibility means members of a Cabinet follow an integrated policy, for which all of them accept responsibility and on which they stand or fall together. Even if there are differences among them on minor matters, they must always put up a united front in the legislature and before the country.

Lord Salisbury explained the principle of collective responsibility as: “For all that passes in the Cabinet, each member of it who does not resign is absolutely irretrievably responsible, and has no right

afterwards to say that he agreed in one sense to a compromise while in another he was persuaded by his colleagues.”

Collective Responsibility is a myth in India:

- Since Independence, several Prime Ministers had difficulty in enforcing collective
- For instance, during the regime of Jawaharlal Nehru, the country faced a shortage of food grains, resulting in high prices.
- When the MPs criticized the Government for not tackling this problem properly, the then Minister for Food and Agriculture, said the members should direct their complaints against other ministries, including the Ministry of Irrigation and Power for not providing adequate water for cultivation; the Ministry of Commerce and Industry for not supplying fertilizers; the Ministry of Health for not checking the growth of the population; the Ministry of Railways for not providing an adequate number of wagons for movement of food grains; and the State governments for not effectively implementing the various policies relating to agriculture.
- **Morarji Desai**, who was Prime Minister from 1977-79, had a tough time ensuring the efficient working of his **Charan Singh**, the then Home Minister, publicly criticized Desai, mentioning several specific instances where he had violated the principle of collective responsibility.
- There have been numerous other instances where Prime Ministers have been unwilling or unable to enforce collective responsibility, thereby affecting the country's progress.
- There have been a number of resignations in the past because of the differences with the Cabinet. **Mathai** resigned as a Finance Minister because he disagreed with the Cabinet on the question of scope and powers of the Planning Commission which was proposed to be set up then.
- **D. Deshmukh** resigned because he differed from the Cabinet on the issue of re-organization of States, especially on the question of Bombay.
- Collective responsibility becomes a bigger challenge when there is a coalition government, as the Cabinet comprises representatives of several parties, many of which have no clear-cut policies.

Implications:

- The inability of the Government to function on the basis of collective responsibility is the chief cause of infrastructural deficiencies, the heavy cost and time-escalation in implementing development projects, failure of poverty eradication schemes and the lack of dynamism in the export drive.
- It is not possible to achieve economic growth.

Conclusion:

The principle of Collective Responsibility may be regarded as fundamental to the working of the Parliamentary Government, as it is in the solidarity of the Cabinet that its main strength lies. The principle of Collective Responsibility means that the Council of Ministers is responsible as a body for the general conduct of the affairs of the government. All ministers stand or fall together in Parliament, and the government is carried on as a unity.

Salient features of the Representation of People's Act.

What is delimitation? examine its objectives and how delimitation affects the representation of the people act. (250 words)

Timesnownews

Why this question:

Days after the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019 got the nod of Parliament, the Election Commission on August 13 held an internal meeting on the delimitation of constituencies ahead of elections to the new Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Key demand of the question:

The question is straightforward and is about discussing the concept of delimitation and its effects on representation of people act.

Directive:

Examine – When asked to 'Examine', we have to look into the topic (content words) in detail, inspect it, investigate it and establish the key facts and issues related to the topic in question. While doing so we should explain why these facts and issues are important and their implications.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Define delimitation and its importance – Delimitation literally means the act of fixing the boundaries of constituencies.

Body:

Discuss the concept and evolution of delimitation in India.

Explain its significance, associated issues, current context of J and K.

Discuss what needs to be done and what are the consequences.

Conclusion:

Conclude with assertion of significance.

Introduction:

Delimitation literally means the **act or process of fixing limits or boundaries of territorial constituencies in a country or a province having a legislative body**. A **four-member Delimitation Commission**, including a member of the EC, carries out this task. In India, such Delimitation commissions have been set up four times in the past under 'Delimitation Commission Acts' of 1952, 1962, 1972 and 2002.

Body:

Days after the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 got the nod of Parliament, the Election Commission on August 13 held an internal meeting on the delimitation of constituencies ahead of elections to the new Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Objectives:

- Under **Article 82** of the Constitution, Parliament enacts a Delimitation Act after every Census which establishes a delimitation commission.
- The main task of the commission is redrawing the boundaries of the various assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies to ensure an equitable population distribution

Delimitation and RPA:

- The provisions of **Delimitation Act, 2002**, says that as of date, **all Assembly and Parliamentary constituencies are to be delimited on the basis of the 2001 Census.**
- According to the guidelines of the EC and the 84th and 87th amendments to the Constitution, the “state average per assembly constituency” is obtained by dividing the total number of the state population (as per 2001 census) by the total number of constituencies in the state.
- This method is aimed at having an equal population in each constituency.
- However, a deviation of plus-minus 10 per cent is acceptable if the geographical features, means of communication, public convenience, contiguity of the areas, and necessity to avoid breaking of administrative units so demand.
- As per the guidelines, seats have to be **reserved for the SCs and STs** in the proportion of their population separately both for the Assembly and Parliamentary constituencies in each state.
- The commission, after completing the process from its end, puts out papers and draft proposals for discussions and holds public meetings on the same.
- These proposals are notified in the Gazette of India and the state’s gazette after the President’s approval.
- The **commission’s order cannot be challenged in any court** as it has the force of law.
- The copies of orders are also presented before the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assembly concerned, but both these houses are not allowed to make modifications in that.

Conclusion:

While 2026 is still a few years away, if we do not start a debate now on how to deal with the problems that are likely to arise, we will be forced to postpone the lifting of the freeze to a future date as was done in 2001. This will only postpone the problem for which we must find a solution sooner or later. Even the various proposals for electoral reforms which have been recommended by various Commissions over the past decade do not address these issues. These are challenges which our political leaders have to address in the immediate future.

Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.

Discuss the merits of the recently suggested amendments to the Inter-State River Waters Disputes Act of 1956 that provides for setting up of a separate tribunal every time a dispute arises, to what extent can such a change bring solutions to the existing inter-state river water disputes? Examine.(250 words)

Indianexpress

Why this question:

Recently Lok Sabha cleared bill to speed up resolution of inter-state river water disputes by establishing a single central tribunal in place of the numerous existing ones.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must evaluate the significance of such step and analyse to what extent can such a solution work given the current conditions and past legacy of issues with respect to inter-state river water disputes.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Discuss the context of the question in short.

Body:

Explain how Inter-state River Water Dispute (Amendment) Bill, 2019, follows the failure of existing tribunals to resolve river water disputes in a time-bound manner. Of the nine tribunals set up to adjudicate such disputes, only four have given their awards and the time taken to do so ranged from seven to 28 years. Thus, the urgent need to amend and have a single tribunal.

Then discuss the merits and demerits of having a single tribunal to solve the disputes.

Discuss the key features of the new amendments introduced in the bill.

Conclusion:

Conclude with appreciation of the amendments.

Introduction:

Lok Sabha has passed the Inter-State River Water disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2019. The Bill seeks to amend the Inter State River Water Disputes Act, 1956 with a view to streamline the adjudication of inter-state river water disputes and make the present institutional architecture robust.

Body:

Drawbacks of interstate Water Dispute Act, 1956:

- The Inter State Water Dispute Act, 1956 which provides the legal framework to address such disputes suffers from many drawbacks as **it does not fix any time limit for resolving river water disputes.**
- Delays are on account of **no time limit for adjudication by a Tribunal, no upper age limit for the Chairman or the Members, work getting stalled due to occurrence of any vacancy and no time limit for publishing the report of the Tribunal.**

- The River Boards Act 1956, which is supposed to facilitate inter-state collaboration over water resource development, **remained a 'dead letter' since its enactment.**
- **Surface water is controlled by Central Water Commission (CWC) and ground water by Central Ground Water Board of India (CGWB).** Both bodies work independently and there is no common forum for common discussion with state governments on water management.

Merits of the bill:

- The Bill tries to **reduce the time it takes to constitute a tribunal i.e. it creates a permanent infrastructure.**
- Also, like most commercial disputes, **a pre-litigation dispute resolution process**, which is attempted for a period of 18 months with the central government playing the role of arbitrator is present. And if the issue is not resolved within that period, it gets referred to the tribunal as a dispute.
- The delay in the adjudication process is because of the appointment of the members i.e. judges of the Supreme Court and the High Court and the assessors. The Bill seeks to constitute a permanent tribunal, so there will be benches and one bench would be able to look at more than one issue/dispute. Hence, the process will be expedited.
- In the proposed Bill, some timelines have also been fixed.
- The Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) will take one year extendable by six months to one and a half years.
- The main report will be prepared in two months, that means the entire deliberations and argumentation and all those will take two years extendable by one year, so a total of three years.
- And the clarification that is required has to be decided within one year extendable by six months.

Way forward:

- The Centre's proposal to set up a single, permanent tribunal to adjudicate on inter-state river water disputes could be a major step towards streamlining the dispute redressal mechanism.
- However, this alone will not be able to address the different kinds of problems—legal, administrative, constitutional and political—that plague the overall framework.
- To strengthen the cooperative federalism, disputes must be resolved by dialogue and talks and the political opportunism must be avoided.
- **A robust and transparent institutional framework** with cooperative approach is need of the hour.

Conclusion:

The bill is a step towards the **cooperative federalism** and will promote a **prompt decision making** in case of the various interstate water disputes. The solutions on water disputes will help in the **socio economic development of stakeholder states**. The implementation of the proposed steps in the bill in its true spirit will develop an **integrated regime of river water utilisation**.

Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Socially inclusive innovation ecosystem as well as equitable distribution of necessary infrastructure for stimulating innovation across the country is the need of the hour. Discuss the statement in the light of recently launched Atal Community Innovation Centre (ACIC) to spur community Innovation.(250 words)

Reference

Why this question:

Government of India launched Atal Community Innovation Centre in New Delhi to encourage the spirit of innovation at the community level.

Key demand of the question

The question aims to evaluate the innovation ecosystem in the country.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

In brief quote some data and discuss the current conditions of innovation levels in the country.

Body:

Discuss about the innovation potential of India.

Then move on to discuss about AIM – This initiative has been launched under the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), a flagship initiative of NITI Aayog.

The purpose of this new initiative is to make innovation ecosystem socially inclusive as well as to ensure equitable distribution of infrastructure for innovation across the country.

The Atal Community Innovation Centre has been launched to focus on the 484 backward districts where the innovation infrastructure is very weak.

The new program has been specifically designed for underserved, unserved regions of Tier 1 or Metro cities, Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, Smart Cities, Aspirational districts, North-East, Jammu and Kashmir as well as the rural and tribal regions of India.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), flagship initiative of NITI Aayog, has launched the **Atal Community Innovation Centre (ACIC)** to **spur community Innovation in underserved and unserved areas of the country**. ACIC can serve as the **bridge between the knowledge base existing in communities and the advanced technical ecosystem prevalent in the market base**, addressing the needs of society.

Body:

Features of the program:

- ACIC is a new initiative of Atal Innovation Mission to **support community innovation drive** in the country.
- The program is directed to **encourage the spirit of innovation through solution driven design thinking** to serve the society.
- The purpose of this new initiative is to make innovation ecosystem socially inclusive as well as to ensure equitable distribution of infrastructure for innovation across the country.
- The Atal Community Innovation Centre has been launched to focus on the 484 backward districts where the innovation infrastructure is very weak.
- The new program has been specifically designed for underserved, unserved regions of Tier 1 or Metro cities, Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, Smart Cities, Aspirational districts, North-East, Jammu and Kashmir as well as the rural and tribal regions of India.
- ACIC will be **established either in PPP mode or with support of PSUs** and other agencies.
- The maximum grant-in-aid support from AIM will be up to 2.5 crores subject following compliance to ACIC guidelines and contributing matching from the host institutions and their funding partner(s).

Impact of the ACIC programme:

- **Build capacity of the potential innovators** through community engagement in innovation related events.
- **Conduct events like Ideathons** to encourage scouting solutions for addressing community challenges.
- **Provide training and mentorship to entrepreneurs** to groom their capacity to innovate.
- **Assist the potential startups** in unserved and underserved regions in creating a sustainable, scalable & profitable business model.
- It will help in **providing solutions to the problems that India is facing such as pollution, high fossil fuel import bill**
- It will play a **major role towards establishing India as Innovation and Technology led Start-up nation** and improve the ranking of India in Global Innovation Index.
- ACICs will become a **conduit for CSR funding by private and public sector firms** in addition to direct funding through Atal Innovation Mission(AIM).

Conclusion:

ACICs will add a new chapter to India's innovation story. It is a platform where the most innovative minds of the country can get access to solutions to modern entrepreneurial challenges.

Discuss the key features of recently cleared Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill 2019. Explain in what way it can provide an Efficient, Safe and Corruption Free Transport System in the Country. (250 words)

pib

Why this question:

Recently Rajya Sabha passed the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill 2019 to provide an Efficient, Safe and Corruption Free Transport System in the Country.

Key demand of the question:

One must discuss the key features of the MV amendment bill 2019, discuss and highlight the merits of the same.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Define the recent amendments made to the bill.

Body:

The bill seeks to amend the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 to provide for road safety. Around 1.50 lakh people die and 5 lakh people injured annually in road accidents.

Then discuss the key features of the bill – Provisions related to increasing penalties of traffic violations, addressing issues on third-party insurance, regulation of cab aggregators and road safety are proposed in the amendment.

It proposes a scheme to allow cashless treatment of victims in a road accident during the golden hour.

It proposes to increase the minimum compensation for hit and run cases. In case of the death, the compensation has been raised from 25,000 to 2 lakh rupees, and in case of grievous injury, it will be from 12,500 to 50,000 rupees.

The government will open motor driving training schools to impart skill trainings to drivers. The government will also give one crore rupees grant to those who want to open such training schools.

Quote the merits and associated challenges.

Conclusion:

Conclude by reasserting significance of the Bill.

Introduction:

The **Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2019**, which seeks to **amend the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988**, has been passed by the Rajya Sabha.

Body:

Key features of the bill:

- **Compensation for road accident victims:** The central government will develop a scheme for cashless treatment of road accident victims during golden hour. The central government may also make a scheme for providing interim relief to claimants seeking compensation under third party insurance.

- **Motor Vehicle Accident Fund:** The Bill requires the central government to constitute a Motor Vehicle Accident Fund, to provide compulsory insurance cover to all road users in India. The fund will be utilised for:
 - Treatment of persons injured in road accidents as per the **golden hour scheme**.
 - Compensation to representatives of a person who died in a hit and run accident.
 - Compensation to a person grievously hurt in a hit and run accident.
 - Compensation to any other persons as prescribed by the central government.
- This Fund will be credited through:
 - Payment of a nature notified by the central government.
 - a grant or loan made by the central government
 - balance of the Solatium Fund (existing fund under the Act to provide compensation for hit and run accidents)
 - any other source as prescribed the central government.
- **Good Samaritans:** The Bill defines a good samaritan as a person who renders emergency medical or non-medical assistance to a victim at the scene of an accident. The assistance must have been (i) in good faith, (ii) voluntary, and (iii) without the expectation of any reward. Such a person will not be liable for any civil or criminal action for any injury to or death of an accident victim, caused due to their negligence in providing assistance to the victim.
- **Recall of vehicles:** The Bill allows the central government to order for recall of motor vehicles if a defect in the vehicle may cause damage to the environment, or the driver, or other road users. The manufacturer of the recalled vehicle will be required to: (i) reimburse the buyers for the full cost of the vehicle, or (ii) replace the defective vehicle with another vehicle with similar or better specifications.
- **National Transportation Policy:** The central government may develop a National Transportation Policy, in consultation with state governments. The Policy will: (i) establish a planning framework for road transport, (ii) develop a framework for grant of permits, and (iii) specify priorities for the transport system, among other things.
- **Road Safety Board:** The Bill provides for a National Road Safety Board, to be created by the central government through a notification. The Board will advise the central and state governments on all aspects of road safety and traffic management including.
- **Offences and penalties:** The Bill increases penalties for several offences under the Act.
- **Taxi aggregators:** The Bill defines aggregators as digital intermediaries or market places which can be used by passengers to connect with a driver for transportation purposes (taxi services). These aggregators will be issued licenses by state. Further, they must comply with the Information Technology Act, 2000.

Impact of the bill:

- The Amendment Bill is robust and rectifies several systemic issues
 - by providing for a uniform driver licensing system
 - protection of children and vulnerable road users
 - rationalising penalties
- Introducing technology in the licensing procedure.
 - A digitised, uniform and centralised driver licensing system will go a long way in ensuring ease of access, efficiency and transparency in the filtering process.
- Bill also proposes to introduce digitisation in the monitoring and enforcement of traffic laws.
 - Kerala has a city surveillance and traffic monitoring system', and automated traffic enforcement systems to detect traffic light violations as well as speeding. The enactment of the Bill will facilitate the replication and creation of such digitised systems for all other States.
- **Safety of children:**
 - The Bill proposes to mandate the use of protective headgear by every person above the age of four driving, riding or being carried on a two-wheeler.
- Similarly, the Bill mandates the use of safety belts and child restraints for those less than 14 years and introduces a fine of Rs. 1,000 for the driver or guardian for the violation of the same.
- **Penalties:**
 - This Bill promises to rationalise the fines. For instance, the penalty for drunk driving has been increased to Rs. 10,000 for the first offence and Rs. 15,000 for the subsequent one.
- The Centre assumes a direct role in the reforms, since it will introduce guidelines that bind State governments in several areas:
 - notably in creating a framework for taxicab aggregators
 - financing insurance to treat the injured and to compensate families of the dead in hit-and-run cases
- **Road design and engineering:**
 - The bill provides that any contractor or consultant responsible for the design, construction, or maintenance of the safety standards of roads must follow design, construction and maintenance standards specified by the central government.
- The bill also specifies certain road design characteristics that the Courts should consider when looking at such cases.

- **Road safety agencies:**
 - The bill provides for a National Road Safety Board, to be created by the central government through a notification
- The bill specifies a time limit of three months to submit the accident information report.
- **Settlement of claims:**
 - The bill passed by Lok Sabha, provides that the insurance company can process claims on receiving information from the claimant also. Further, the insurance company must settle claims within a time limit of 30 days.
- **Removal of Second Schedule:**
 - The bill removes the Second Schedule to the Act. This Schedule provides for the manner of calculation of compensation for road accidents resulting in death or injury.
- The bill seeks to strengthen the Act, has attempted to address the issue of liability for road defects.
- For any road crash injury or death caused by defective road design and engineering, the designated authority responsible to construct and maintain the road is to be penalised with a sum capped at Rs.1 lakh.
- The bill aims to rectify several systemic issues by providing a uniform driver licensing system, protecting children and vulnerable road users, rationalising penalties and creating a system of accountability in the construction of roads.

Challenges:

- With a Fund already existing to provide compensation for hit and run accidents, **the purpose of the new Accident Fund is unclear.**
- State governments will issue licenses to taxi aggregators as per central government guidelines. Currently, state governments determine guidelines for plying of taxis. There could be cases where state taxi guidelines are at variance with the central guidelines on aggregators.
- While the penalties for contravening provisions of the proposed scheme on interim relief to accident victims are specified in the Bill, the offences that would warrant such penalties have not been specified. It may be argued **that imposing penalties without knowing the nature of the offences is unreasonable.**
- States also have concerns about their powers being curtailed in the Motor Vehicle (Amendment) Bill.

Way forward:

- There is a need for an accountable and professional police force then only the record of traffic fatalities is likely to change.

- State governments must prepare for an early roll-out of administrative reforms prescribed in the amended law, such as
 - Issuing learner’s licences online
 - Recording address changes through an online application
 - Electronic service delivery with set deadlines.
- To eliminate corruption, all applications should be accepted by transport departments online, rather than merely computerising them.
- Protection from harassment for good Samaritans who help accident victims is something the amended law provides, and this needs to be in place.
- There is a need to incorporate the Safe System Approach in all aspects of road design, engineering and construction. This approach takes into account the possibility of human error and ensures that the surrounding environment and infrastructure are designed to save lives.

Conclusion:

The bill has a number of forward-looking ideas, which was due for so long. Considering the features like providing enough protection to good Samaritans, this bill will go a long way in ensuring the safety norms in India, which is the prima facie of saving a life.

Highlight the shortcomings in the goods and services tax (GST). How far can the recent findings of CAG strengthen the weak links of the reformed system of taxation in India?

Discuss(250 words)

[Livemint](#)

Why this question:

The article captures the findings of the recent report on the tax by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) and highlights the shortcomings the GST reform has been facing in terms of implementation.

Key demand of the question:

The answer should evaluate the lacunae present and what are the problems in the implementation and what can be done to overcome these concerns and challenges.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Discuss about GST, its mandate and trace its coming till date.

Body:

Explain the lacunae being faced in implementation of the reforms.

Discuss that the major issues outlined by the CAG report is the lack of a system to match the invoices of buyers and sellers that would have closed interstitial spaces for tax evasion. The idea was to structure the system in such a way that there was no gap between two ends of a reported transaction.

Write a note on the findings of CAG and explain how these findings can be put to use to address the gaps in implementation of the reforms.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

The Goods and Services Tax is an indirect tax system which was rolled out in 2017 with the aim of 'One Nation, one tax'. The **Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG)** has pointed out lacunae in the GST regime, saying that **system-validated input tax credit through invoice matching is not in place** and a **non-intrusive e-tax system still remains elusive** after two years of its rollout.

Body:

Shortcomings of GST regime:

- **Difficulty in tax administration:** Goes against the canons of taxation. A modern tax system should be **fair, uncomplicated, transparent and easy to administer**. It must yield revenues sufficient to cover the cost of government services and public goods.
- **Complicated taxation structure:** A World Bank study published in May 2018 said that the Indian GST rate was the second highest among the 115 countries with a national value-added tax. It was also the most complicated, with five main tax rates, several exemptions, a cess and a special rate for gold. The multilateral lender said that only five countries had four or more non-zero tax rates—India, Italy, Pakistan, Luxembourg and Ghana.
- **Vulnerabilities in the system:** It draws special attention to the system's vulnerability to fraud by way of excess input tax credit claims—which are refunds of taxes already paid by input suppliers, GST being applicable only to the value added by a business or service provider.
- **Inconsistencies in the Data:** the lack of a system to match the invoices of buyers and sellers that would have closed interstitial spaces for tax evasion. The idea was to structure the system in such a way that there was no gap between two ends of a reported transaction. This way, neither party could under-report its value without detection, making it difficult for payments to be kept hidden.
- **Shortfall in government revenues post the shift to GST:** It estimates that the Centre's revenues from goods and services (excluding central excise on petroleum and tobacco) fell by 10 per cent in 2017-18, as compared to the revenue of taxes subsumed under GST in 2016-17.
- **High compliance costs:** are also arising because the prevalence of multiple tax rates implies a need to classify inputs and outputs based on the applicable tax rate. Along with the need to apply the correct rate, firms are required to match invoices between their outputs and inputs to be eligible for full input tax credit, which increases compliance costs further.
- **Instability in tax regime:** The GST rates for various goods and services have been shifted from one slab rate to another over the past 1.5 years. The federal demands from states during GST Council Meetings to assuage their fears are the main cause. Multiple rates create problems of classification, inverted duty structure and large-scale lobbying.

- **Estimation overshoot:** GST collections have not met with the monthly revenue and growth targets which validates the need for keeping certain goods in higher tax bracket
- **Tax-Sharing issues:** alleged deviation in the way GST revenue is shared with states. To determine how integrated GST is to be split up, the report notes, the government has followed a formula prescribed by the Finance Commission, though it should have gone by the Constitution and Integrated GST Act.
- There has been lack of coordination between the Department of Revenue, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs and the GST Network

Way Forward:

- The first target should be to move to at least a three-rate structure, a lower rate for essential goods, a relatively high rate for luxury goods, and a standard rate for the majority of goods and services.
- The next step would be simplifying the tax returns process.
- The scope for lowering the GST rate is umbilically linked to **direct tax reform**.
- A better way to make a tax system more just is by **lowering regressive indirect tax rates while widening the base for progressive direct taxes** on income and corporate profits.
- **Invoice matching** is a critical requirement that would yield the full benefits of this major tax reform. It would protect the tax revenues of both the Centre and states and lead to the proper settlement of IGST. It would **minimise, if not eliminate, the tax official-assessee interface**.
- Many goods are still outside the GST net, which comes in the way of seamless flow of input tax credit. Key items outside its ambit are electricity, alcohol, petroleum goods and real estate. This aspect need to be looked into.
- Emulating the best practices. The GST in New Zealand, widely regarded as the most efficient in the world, has a single standard rate of 12.5 percent across all industry groups.

Conclusion:

The problems of the complicated GST with multiple rate structure and high compliance costs are now evident. To maximize the potential of GST, the government needs to examine its flaws closely.

India has suffered from the problem of inappropriately trained doctors of varying quality since a very long time. Discuss in what way the newly passed National Medical Commission Bill, 2019 can address the issues associated with the regulating medical education and practice.(250 words)

The hindu

Why this question:

Recently, the National Medical Commission Bill, 2019 was passed by the parliament. The bill sets up the National Medical Commission (NMC) which will act as an umbrella regulatory body in the medical education system.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must evaluate the pros and cons of the National Medical Commission Bill, 2019 and in what way it can address the current issues facing the medicine fraternity and their field.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Briefly set the background of the question.

Body:

Explain the key features of the bill, discuss the merits and demerits of the provisions. The Bill seeks to repeal the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956 and provide for a medical education system which ensures: (i) availability of adequate and high-quality medical professionals, (ii) adoption of the latest medical research by medical professionals, (iii) periodic assessment of medical institutions, and (iv) an effective grievance redressal mechanism.

Explain what were the issues with MCI, in what way the new bill addresses the issues.

Conclusion:

Conclude with positive note and way forward.

Introduction:

The National Medical Commission Bill, 2019 was passed recently by the parliament. The bill **sets up the National Medical Commission (NMC)** which will act as an umbrella regulatory body in the medical education system. The NMC will **subsume the MCI and will regulate medical education and practice in India**. Apart from this, it also provides for the reforms in the medical education system.

Body:

Key highlights of the bill:

- The bill provides for the constitution of **four autonomous boards** entrusted with **conducting undergraduate and postgraduate education, assessment and accreditation of medical institutions and registration of practitioners** under the National Medical Commission.
- **Composition of National Medical Commission:** It will have government nominated chairman and members, and the board members will be selected by a search committee under the Cabinet Secretary. There will be five elected and 12 ex-officio members in the commission.
- As per the Bill, **the government**, under the National Medical Commission (NMC), **can dictate guidelines for fees up to 40% of seats in private medical colleges**.
- The bill also has a provision for a **common entrance exam and licentiate (exit) exam** that medical graduates have to pass before practising or pursuing PG courses. For MBBS, students have to clear NEET, and before they step into practice, they must pass the exit exam.

- **Recognised medical institutions don't need the regulator's permission to add more seats or start PG course.** This mechanism is to **reduce the discretionary powers of the regulator.**
- Earlier, medical colleges required the MCI's approval for establishment, recognition, renewal of the yearly permission or recognition of degrees, and even increase the number of students they admitted. Under the new bill, the **powers of the regulator are reduced to establishment and recognition.** This means **less red tape, but also less scrutiny of medical colleges.**

Significance and the need:

- The Bill seeks to regulate medical education and practice in India.
- The Bill attempts to tackle two main things on **quality and quantity: Corruption in medical education and shortage of medical professionals.**
- The Bill aims to **overhaul the corrupt and inefficient Medical Council of India**, which regulates medical education and practice and replace with National medical commission.
- Over the years, Medical Council of India has been marred by several issues regarding its regulatory role, composition, allegations of corruption, and lack of accountability.
- In 2009, the **Yashpal Committee and the National Knowledge Commission** recommended separating the regulation of medical education and medical practice.

Potentials of the bill:

- According to the Bill, the Commission may grant limited licence to practice medicine at mid-level as Community Health Provider to such person connected with modern scientific medical profession who qualifies such criteria as may be specified by the regulations.
- The NMC has the potential to link the disease burden and the specialties being produced.
- In the UK, for example, it is the government that lays down how many specialists of which discipline need to be produced, which the British Medical Council then adheres to.
- In India, the MCI has so far been operating independently. This gap can be bridged by the NMC.
- By introducing qualifying exams like NEET and NEXT, NMC can instil uniformity in the standard of competence and skills.
- It can reduce the burden of taking multiple exams, ensure a minimum level of knowledge in science, and reduce corruption by restricting student admission to those qualifying these exams.
- The State Medical Council will act as a **grievance redressal body** for any complaints relating to professional or ethical misconduct against a registered medical practitioner.
- This will protect the interest of the patients and checks the corrosive impact of the process of commercialisation of medical services.
- The differential pricing of medical education can benefit the economically weaker sections of society.

- NMC will have a final say in the determination of fees for up to 50% of the seats in private medical institutions and deemed universities.
- NMC can encourage and incentivise innovation and promote research by laying down rules that make research a prerequisite in medical colleges.

Conclusion:

India has suffered from the problem of inappropriately trained doctors of varying quality since a very long time. Decades back, **the Mudliar Committee Report (1959)** pointed out that doctors had neither the skills nor the knowledge to handle primary care and infectious diseases that were a high priority concern at the time. In recent times, the excessive reliance on a battery of diagnostic tests is reflective of commercial considerations and weak knowledge.

Discuss the key areas that require restructuring to transform India's Innovation ecosystem with special emphasis on the lessons it can take from other countries.(250 words)

The hindubusinessline

Why this question:

The article discusses the case study of Israel with respect to the innovation ecosystem prevailing.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must discuss the areas that India need to focus and restructure to transform Innovation ecosystem and the lessons that it should take.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Describe about innovation ecosystem in the country.

Body:

Explain that India is a rising economic power and an increasingly important locus of innovation. India is changing from a locus of low-cost contract research and reverse engineering to a global center of high-value, indigenously generated innovation. To sustain this transformation, Indian policy makers increasingly recognize the need for continuing economic reforms, new public investments in the nation's infrastructure, and new policy initiatives and institutions to encourage innovation, expand the skills and knowledge base of its population, and facilitate entrepreneurship.

Discuss how India can take lessons from Israel and suggest measures.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

India was ranked 52 among 130-odd economies in the recently released Global Innovation Index 2019. Nevertheless, its performance was commended as it topped the Central and South Asian region for the ninth consecutive year and its growth — from 81st rank in 2015 to 52nd this year — is the fastest by any major economy. What is also significant is that India continues to outperform on innovation relative to its gross domestic product (GDP).

Body:

Key areas that need emphasis:

- **Funding:**
 - The funding scenario is still in nascent stage in India.
 - Researchers need to depend upon Government funding which has been very low. Our investment in R&D is a paltry 0.7 per cent of GDP.
 - Private funding is abysmal in India, whereas there is only transfer of innovations from their home countries.
 - FDI in India has focused on setting up back-end offices for R & D centers in developed countries.
- **Poor R&D:**
 - Insufficient scientific research in India's private sector seems to be part of the problem. The large pharmaceutical sector, for example, remains dominated by the fabrication of generic products rather than original formulations.
 - As per UNESCO Institute of Statistics data, India spends 0.8% in GDP on R&D, which is notably less than China's 2% or the 2.7% of the US Or 4.2% of Israel.
 - Physical as well as other enabling infrastructure is missing to help in research capabilities.
- **Policies :**
 - Government is the **single largest enabler** for the innovation ecosystem.
 - Government's role in encouraging R&D and helping companies start is vital to ensuring success.
 - **Weak industry-academia linkage:** Unlike western countries, there is disconnect between industry needs and academics creating a vacuum in research and innovation.
 - **Issues regarding Intellectual Property rights (IPR):** Weak enforcement of IPR rules prevent the development of innovation ecosystem in the nation.
 - There is a severe backlog and high rate of pendency for domestic patent applications. According to reports there is a backlog of almost 2 lakh patents pending examination due to manpower shortages.
- **Bureaucratic inefficiencies:**
 - Firstly, there are a large number of procedures to be followed and clearances to be obtained to start and operate a business.
 - Secondly, each of these procedures can take an inordinately large amount of time.

- Policymakers should invest in human intellectual capital and create a knowledge-based economy.
- **Weak Education System:**
 - Indian education system is very weak especially when it comes to educating about entrepreneurship.
 - Students hardly get to know about entrepreneurship during their school studies.
 - Finding a team with right approach could be challenging for entrepreneurs especially when they are looking for people of non-tech skills.
 - Today, Israel spends 7 per cent of its GDP on education.
 - A large section of the country's public research is concentrated in national research centres such as the S. N. Bose Center, the Raman Research Institute and organizations such as the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science. In comparison, research at universities has been neglected.
- **Corruption:**
 - While under no circumstances, corruption can be justified, it is a bitter truth that it is rampant in many government departments.
 - Even private sector is not spared by bribes, unwarranted objections.
 - The urge to make illegal money, immense misuse of power, frivolous publications and patents, faulty promotion policies, victimization for speaking against wrong or corrupt practices in the management, sycophancy, and brain drain
- **Labour:**
 - Lack of manufacturing capability in India has been attributed to red tapism and corruption, but the low productivity of labour is also a big factor.
 - **Stringent labour laws** governing lay-off of employees make it very difficult to fire workers in case of non-performance or during times of financial distress when it becomes imperative to lay-off workers to maintain the financial viability of the business operations.
- **Ecosystem Limited to Big Cities:**
 - The startup ecosystem in India is limited to big cities including Bangalore, Delhi, Bangalore, Pune and Chennai etc.
 - There are very few resources that are actually working toward strengthening the startup ecosystem.

Way forward:

- The Economic Survey recommends doubling **national expenditures on R&D** with most of the increase coming from the private sector and universities.
- **Improve math and cognitive skills** at school level.
- There is a need to **encourage investor-led research**. In this direction, the **Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB)** has already been established. It is a promising start that needs to expand with more resources and creative governance structures.
- R & D should **focus on technology and extension services** that are directly related to common people.
- **Engage private sector, state government and Indian Diaspora.**
- The private sector should be incentivised to undertake and support R&D through **CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) funds**.
- Growing strength of India's economy and increasing anti-immigrant atmosphere in some Western countries has the potential to attract back scientific Indian Diaspora.
- Schemes like Ramanujan Fellowship Scheme, the Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE) Faculty scheme and the Ramalingaswami Re-entry Fellowship, Visiting Advanced Joint Research Faculty Scheme (VAJRA) should be enhanced to leverage the scientific Diaspora

Conclusion:

Many experts have faulted India's innovation that focuses on getting products and services to people at an affordable cost, rather than aiming for global leadership. They are wrong. Solving India's challenge will eventually open opportunities for Indian enterprises globally.

Case study: *Israel, which came into being around the same time as India in 1948, has a lot of lessons to offer for its ally — especially when it comes to converting challenges into a competitive advantage. With a population of just 8.5 million, it has a very small domestic market.*

Though located in an area that is home to earliest of civilisations, its enterprises cannot look at broadening its market by exporting to neighbouring countries as Israel is surrounded by enemies. That apart, it is endowed with very little natural resources including water. Its 22,000 square kilometre area is predominantly arid, fit to grow almost nothing.

Any other country with such adversity would have given up and become dependent on allies for survival. Not Israel. Its policy-makers decided early to invest in human intellectual capital and create a knowledge-based economy. By doing so they hoped that Israel could become home to technology focussed industries that do not depend on natural resources that their country sorely lacks while, at the same time, offering products that could be easily exported (despite an unfriendly neighbourhood) to meet the demand anywhere in the world.

e-commerce sector has grown multi fold in India and thus demands a change in the uncertain policy environment surrounding the sector. Elucidate. (250 words)

[Indianexpress](#)

Why this question:

The question is in the context of growing e-commerce environment in the country and recently the Department of Consumer Affairs has published the draft e-Commerce Guidelines for consumer protection 2019. It has invited parties to provide feedback by 16 September.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must discuss the scope of e-commerce industry, the demands and the efforts being made by the government in terms of policy.

Directive:

Elucidate – Give a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Describe what is e-commerce.

Body:

The answer should first paint a picture of the existing trends in e-commerce policy. Then discuss what changes are required, what are the various fronts that demand policy reforms for the e-commerce to flourish.

Suggest solutions and way forward – mention about the recent policy initiatives made to ensure conduciveness for the e-commerce sector.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

E-commerce or Electronic commerce is a **type of business model, or segment of a larger business model, that enables a firm or individual to conduct business over an electronic network, typically the internet.** It operates in all four of the major market segments in India – **business to business, business to consumer, consumer to consumer and consumer to business.** Keeping a tab on the growing e-Commerce in India, **Ministry of Consumer Affairs** has released the **draft guidelines on e-commerce for consumer protection.** It will act as the guiding principles for e-commerce business **for preventing fraud, unfair trade practices and protecting the legitimate rights and interests of consumers.**

Body:

Status of e-Commerce in India:

- India's e-commerce sector has grown quickly despite an uncertain policy environment.
- The e-commerce sector in India is estimated to reach USD 230 billion by 2028 (accounting for 10% of India's retail).
- The e-commerce sector in India has been witnessing an explosive growth fuelled by the increase in the number of online users, growing penetration of smartphones and the rising popularity of social media platforms.
- The Indian e-commerce industry is expected to surpass the US to become the second largest e-commerce market in the world by 2034.

- Online shoppers in India are expected to reach 120 million in 2018 and eventually 220 million by 2025.
- Even in non-traditional items such as furniture and high-end fashion labels, growth has been phenomenal.

Current Policy Environment:

- It is still a work in progress when it comes to safeguarding customer interest.
- Consumers are still compelled to take wild chances in online transactions.
- There is little they can do if their calls go wrong, as returns and reimbursements are risky and cumbersome.
- There are no authentic ways to figure out if product reviews, ratings or even discounts are genuine.

Proposed policy changes:

- The e-Commerce guidelines for Consumer Protection, 2019 will be applicable on all business-to-consumer (B2C) e-commerce platforms.
- **Compulsory Return Policy:** It is mandatory for e-commerce entities to accept returns in the event the products delivered are defective, wrong or spurious or if they do not have the characteristics or features advertised.
- **Seller Details:** E-commerce companies will also have to display details about the sellers on their website, especially the type of business furnished by the seller entity.
- **Transparent Contract:** The draft guidelines propose to increase transparency in contracts signed between e-commerce entities and the sellers, directing them to display terms of their contracts relating to aspects like return, refund, exchange, warranties and guarantees, delivery and shipment, mode of payments and redressing grievances.
- **Grievance Redressal:** The draft has also sought transparency on the procedure followed to address complaints, directing e-commerce companies to publish contact details of their grievance officers on their websites and setting a one-month timeline for them to redress issues from the time the complaint is registered.
- **Fair Pricing Policy:** E-commerce platforms will not be allowed to directly or indirectly influence the price of the products and services they offer.
- **Unfair Trade Practice:** E-commerce platforms cannot adopt any trade practice for the purpose of promoting the sale, use or supply of any goods or services or use unfair and deceptive methods and practices that may influence the consumer's transactional decisions.
- **False Reviews:** Guidelines aim to restrict sellers from falsely representing themselves as consumers or posting reviews as well as misrepresenting and exaggerating the quality and features of products on their sites.

However, it is challenging to balance between regulating consumer interests and encouraging innovation and investment, without discriminating against a particular class of investors. In this context, the element of indecision over data localisation requirement is still a worry. Besides, the new guidelines had raised concerns among foreign e-tailers. They feel that the rules would jeopardise their business models and could cost them time and money.

Given all these, the Centre should take a call soon on the e-commerce policy, balancing the priorities of the stakeholders.

Conclusion:

The draft guidelines thus proposes a series of consumer safeguards in India that forbid e-commerce companies from influencing pricing, adopting unfair promotion methods or misrepresenting the quality of goods and services.

The government recently planned to let medical practitioners without MBBS degrees offer basic healthcare services, we need more doctors, but should the quality standards be diluted at the cost of it? Explain. (250 words)

Livemint

Why this question:

The National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill, 2019, which was passed by the Rajya Sabha last week with some modifications and sent to the Lok Sabha for approval, has evoked widespread protests from doctors. The Indian Medical Association (IMA), a representative body of doctors, has called an all-India strike tomorrow against a few contentious aspects of the bill.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must discuss the merits and demerits of the recent move made by the government with National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill, 2019.

Directive:

Explain – Clarify the topic by giving a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Discuss the nuances of the government's decision with respect to medical practitioners.

Body:

First discuss the key highlights of the bill.

Bring out the situational crisis of lack of medical aid in terms of the number of doctors available, quote data from article to substantiate the current conditions.

Then move on to discuss the merits and demerits of the move.

Conclusion:

Conclude that a balanced approach is the need of the hour, the decision though aptly suits the situation, comes with bit of risk that the government must be able to tackle with.

Introduction:

The National Medical Commission Bill, 2019 was passed recently by the parliament. The bill **sets up the National Medical Commission (NMC)** which will act as an umbrella regulatory body in the medical education system. The NMC will **subsume the MCI and will regulate medical education and practice in India**. Apart from this, it also provides for the reforms in the medical education system.

Body:

Significance and the need:

- The Bill seeks to regulate medical education and practice in India.
- The Bill attempts to tackle two main things on **quality and quantity: Corruption in medical education and shortage of medical professionals.**
- The Bill aims to **overhaul the corrupt and inefficient Medical Council of India**, which regulates medical education and practice and replace with National medical commission.
- Over the years, Medical Council of India has been marred by several issues regarding its regulatory role, composition, allegations of corruption, and lack of accountability.
- In 2009, the **Yashpal Committee and the National Knowledge Commission** recommended separating the regulation of medical education and medical practice.

Status of medical professionals in India:

- India is woefully short of trained doctors, especially in the countryside.
- The shortage has slowed the state's programme to scale up healthcare facilities and medical education infrastructure.
- There just aren't enough qualified professionals to treat the country's 1.3 billion people and formally train others to do so.
- Despite decades of effort, India still has less than one doctor for every 1,000 people, the World Health Organization's minimum ratio for a country's healthcare adequacy.
- Moreover, for the efficacy of big-ticket welfare schemes such as Ayushman Bharat—which covers 500 million citizens with health insurance—a vast leap needs to be taken on that count.

Concerns:

- **Section 32 of the NMC Bill** that would grant “limited” licences to an estimated 350,000 “community health providers” to practise allopathic medicine, provided they meet a set of qualifying criteria.
- The bill allows practitioners of ayurveda, yoga and naturopathy, unani, siddha and homoeopathy could undertake a “bridge course” and legally start offering primary healthcare.
- According to the IMA, letting patients be treated by people without MBBS degrees would amount to quackery gaining legitimacy in a country full of fraudulent cures and dodgy practices.
- Unscientific mixing of systems and empowering of other practitioners through bridge courses will only pave the way for substandard doctors and substandard medical practice. This will seriously impact patient care and patient safety.

Way forward:

- One way to prevent dilution of standards is for an independent panel of well-regarded doctors to keep a close watch on the eligibility process for licences.
- It involves a common test on the assumption that practical training has already been imparted; if the test is found to be letting dubious practitioners acquire allopathic credentials, then the newly set up NMC would have to either drop or revise the idea.
- Clear guidelines are required indicating the circumstances and diseases where traditional practitioners can prescribe allopathic medicines.
- Community-level accredited practitioners after training should be equipped to provide the first line of care for acute conditions and to make referrals to a regular doctor within a GPS-supervised system.
- Patients who are not insistent on consulting allopaths need not despair, for they have plenty of options anyway.

Conclusion:

The Bill needs to confront reality and address it, keeping consumer interest paramount otherwise the new law will make little difference to people's lives.

Discuss the key features of recently passed Consumer Protection Bill, 2019. What are the issues and concerns involved? Discuss along with significance of the same.(250 words)

Reference

Why this question:

The Rajya Sabha on Tuesday passed the Consumer Protection Bill, 2019 that provides for the establishment of authorities for the timely and effective administration and settlement of consumer disputes.

Key demand of the question:

The question is straightforward, one has to first list down the key features of the Consumer Protection Bill, 2019. then discuss the concerns associated along with significance of the act.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

State that the Bill seeks to replace the three-decade-old Consumer Protection Act, 1986.

Body:

Bring out the highlights of the bill – detail upon the key provisions.

Provide for a comparison of the current bill and the old 1986 act.

Then move on to discuss the lacunae involved and how these are to be overcome. Discuss the significance of the bill, how can it prove to be a landmark change in terms of consumer protection.

Conclusion:

What should be the way forward.

Introduction:

A new consumer protection bill provides **for strict monitoring and punishment for misleading advertisements**. It aims to empower consumer courts at the state and district level to disperse **greater financial compensation** to the consumers. The bill also has a provision for setting up an executive agency called **central consumer protection authority** with a mandate to carry out investigations into violations of consumer rights, recall of unsafe goods and services and discontinue unfair trade practices. The bill will replace the Consumer Protection Act of 1986.

Body:

The salient features of the Consumer Protection Bill 2018 are:

- It defines the “**consumer**” as a person who buys any good or avails a service for a consideration.
- The Bill covers transactions, **both online and offline**, and **includes tele-shopping and multi-level marketing**.
- Definition of “consumer rights” in the Bill exhaustively covers the **right to be protected against the marketing of goods, products or services that are hazardous to life and property**.
- It also focuses on the **right to be informed about the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and price of goods, products or services**, as the case may be, so as to protect a consumer against unfair trade practices.
- It also includes the **right to be assured, wherever possible, of access to a variety of goods, products or services at competitive prices**.
- It involves the **right to seek redress against unfair or restrictive trade practices, or unscrupulous exploitation of consumers**.

Significance:

- Presently Consumers only have a single point of access to justice, which is time consuming. Additional swift executive remedies are proposed in the bill through Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA).
- Deterrent punishment to check misleading advertisements and adulteration of products.
- Product liability provision to deter manufacturers and service providers from delivering defective products or deficient services.
- Ease of approaching Consumer Commission and Simplification of Adjudication process.
- Scope for early disposal of cases through mediation.

Issues involved:

- The Bill does not address the **fundamental problem of protracted and complicated litigation**, the bane of consumer forums constituted under the Consumer Protection Act of 1986. Instead, it provides an alternative to the consumer forums, in the form of mediation.

- The Bill does provide for a regulator, but **there is no proper focus on the duties of the regulator.**
- Even the **definition of ‘consumer rights’ in the Bill is not simple and straight forward**, so that consumers at least know what their entitlements are.
- It has penalty provisions for the endorsers and on the other it is giving them a route to get away because the clause of due diligence will act in their defence
- It lags behind in tackling misleading advertisements endorsed by any celebrity
- This step will act as a **deterrent for manufacturers** since the liability quotient has increased

Way Forward:

- Time bound resolution of cases.
- Consumer education and proper awareness building measures.
- Several countries like Canada, Estonia have devised advertisement regulations for unhealthy foods targeted at children
- Countries such as the UK, Ireland and Belgium have specifically banned celebrity endorsement of unhealthy foods. The impact of such restrictions has been reported to be significant.

Conclusion:

The emergence of global supply chain, rise in global trade and rapid development of e-commerce have led to a new delivery system for goods and services and also provided new options and opportunities for consumers. Misleading ads, tele-marketing, multi-level marketing, direct selling and e-commerce pose new challenges to consumer protection and will require appropriate and swift executive intervention to prevent consumer detriment. This bill is the step in the right direction in addressing these issues.

Recently Lok Sabha passed the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill 2016. Examine the need, key provisions and associated concerns of the bill.(250 words)

[Indianexpress](#)

Why this question:

The Lok Sabha passed the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill 2019 on Tuesday. The Bill aims to regulate the practice of surrogacy in India and allow only “ethical altruistic surrogacy”.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must examine in detail the key provisions of the bill , the concerns and issues involved along with the need of such a law in place to regulate surrogacy in the country.

Directive:

Examine – When asked to ‘Examine’, we have to look into the topic (content words) in detail, inspect it, investigate it and establish the key facts and issues related to the topic in question. While doing so we should explain why these facts and issues are important and their implications.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Define what you understand by Surrogacy.

Body:

Explain the following –

Surrogacy is a form of assisted reproductive treatment (ART) in which a woman carries a child within her uterus on behalf of another person or couple. Recently Lok Sabha passed the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2016 which seeks to regulate commercial surrogacy which has become a flourishing industry in the country.

Discuss the need for the Bill – to curb unethical practices present in the medical industry with respect to surrogacy, women health aspects, to prohibit commercial surrogacy.

What are the key provisions of the bill?

Explain in detail the possible concerns – It does not allow single women or men, or gay couples to go in for surrogacy, clarity in case of unhealthy child born out surrogacy and its acceptance is missing etc.

Conclusion:

Conclude that sanctioning altruistic surrogacy will enforce emotional and societal pressure on close female relatives without any compensation for immense emotional and bodily labour of pregnancy involved in surrogacy as well as loss of livelihood.

Introduction:

The Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill 2019 aims to regulate the practice of surrogacy in India and allow only “ethical altruistic surrogacy. **Commercial surrogacy** a practice also known as **rent a womb** was **legalized in India** in the year **2002**, in order to promote medical tourism and soon India became the hub of surrogacy driven by factors like low cost and the absence of a strict legislation.

Body:

Need for the bill:

- **India has emerged as a surrogacy hub** for couples from other countries.
- There have been reports concerning **unethical practices, exploitation of surrogate mothers, abandonment of children born out of surrogacy, and rackets involving intermediaries importing human embryos and gametes.**
- The **228th report of the Law Commission of India** has recommended prohibiting commercial surrogacy and allowing altruistic surrogacy by enacting suitable legislation.

Key features of the bill:

- **Regulation of surrogacy:** The Bill prohibits commercial surrogacy, but allows altruistic surrogacy.
- **Purposes for which surrogacy is permitted:** Surrogacy is permitted when it is: (i) for intending couples who suffer from proven infertility; (ii) altruistic; (iii) not for commercial purposes; (iv) not for producing children for sale, prostitution or other forms of exploitation; and (v) for any condition or disease specified through regulations.
- **Eligibility criteria for intending couple:** The intending couple should have a ‘certificate of essentiality’ and a ‘certificate of eligibility’ issued by the appropriate authority.
- **The certificate of eligibility to the intending couple is issued upon fulfilment of the following conditions:** (i) the couple being Indian citizens and married for at least five years; (ii) between 23

to 50 years old (wife) and 26 to 55 years old (husband); (iii) they do not have any surviving child (biological, adopted or surrogate); this would not include a child who is mentally or physically challenged or suffers from life threatening disorder or fatal illness; and (iv) other conditions that may be specified by regulations.

- **Eligibility criteria for surrogate mother:** To obtain a certificate of eligibility from the appropriate authority, the surrogate mother has to be: (i) a close relative of the intending couple; (ii) a married woman having a child of her own; (iii) 25 to 35 years old; (iv) a surrogate only once in her lifetime; and (v) possess a certificate of medical and psychological fitness for surrogacy. Further, the surrogate mother cannot provide her own gametes for surrogacy.
- **Appropriate authority:** The central and state governments shall appoint one or more appropriate authorities within 90 days of the Bill becoming an Act. The functions of the appropriate authority include; (i) granting, suspending or cancelling registration of surrogacy clinics; (ii) enforcing standards for surrogacy clinics; (iii) investigating and taking action against breach of the provisions of the Bill; (iv) recommending modifications to the rules and regulations.
- **Registration of surrogacy clinics:** Surrogacy clinics cannot undertake surrogacy related procedures unless they are registered by the appropriate authority. Clinics must apply for registration within a period of 60 days from the date of appointment of the appropriate authority.
- **National and State Surrogacy Boards:** The central and the state governments shall constitute the National Surrogacy Board (NSB) and the State Surrogacy Boards (SSB), respectively.
- **Functions of the NSB include,** (i) advising the central government on policy matters relating to surrogacy; (ii) laying down the code of conduct of surrogacy clinics; and (iii) supervising the functioning of SSBs.
- **Parentage and abortion of surrogate child:** A child born out of a surrogacy procedure will be deemed to be the biological child of the intending couple. An abortion of the surrogate child requires the written consent of the surrogate mother and the authorisation of the appropriate authority. This authorisation must be compliant with the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971. Further, the surrogate mother will have an option to withdraw from surrogacy before the embryo is implanted in her womb.
- **Offences and penalties:** The offences under the Bill include: (i) undertaking or advertising commercial surrogacy; (ii) exploiting the surrogate mother; (iii) abandoning, exploiting or disowning a surrogate child; and (iv) selling or importing human embryo or gametes for surrogacy. The penalty for such offences is imprisonment up to 10 years and a fine up to 10 lakh rupees. The Bill specifies a range of offences and penalties for other contraventions of the provisions of the Bill.

Concerns associated with the bill:

- The Bill raises questions over the **reproductive rights of a woman**. The right to life enshrines the right of reproductive autonomy, inclusive of the right to procreation and parenthood, which is not within the domain of the state, warranting interference of a fundamental right.
- It is for the person and not the state to decide modes of parenthood. It is the prerogative of person(s) to have children born naturally or by surrogacy in which the state, constitutionally, cannot interfere.
- Criminalisation of commercial surrogacy is a refusal by the state to actually consider **the exercise of agency** that leads a woman to become a surrogate mother.
- Altruistic surrogacy includes contracting a '**close relative**' as a surrogate by a heterosexual married couple who have been childless for five years of their marriage. However, the Bill lacks the definition of the 'close relative'.
- The Bill specifies that the intending couples should be **married Indian couples**. There is **no mention of Non-Resident Indians working or studying abroad** who may want to come back home to have a baby.
- Restricting limited, conditional surrogacy to married Indian couples and disqualifying other persons on the basis of nationality, marital status, sexual orientation or age does not appear to qualify the **test of equality (article 14)**, or of being a reasonable classification, satisfying the objective sought to be achieved.
- The bill **deprives unmarried couples, homosexual couples and single men and women** of availing the bliss of parenthood through surrogacy
- Infertility cannot be compulsory to undertake surrogacy. This violates **the Freedom of choice available to citizens**.
- Knowing the **reality of patriarchal families in India, the stigma of infertility**, the pressure of producing children to maintain lineage and the low bargaining power of women, it can be expected that young mothers will be coerced into becoming surrogates for their relatives.
- Due to the prevalence of **clandestine ART clinic** coupled with viewing commercial surrogacy as inherently exploitative and banning it only expands the potential for exploitation as it would force the business underground..
- Bill also prohibits '**fashion surrogacy**' as only the couple who are infertile can opt for surrogacy.

Way forward:

- For surrogacy to happen, we need embryos, and embryos are cultured in various In-Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) laboratories. So regulation of surrogacy must be preceded by law on Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART).
- Rather than penalising surrogacy, the person providing a womb for surrogacy must be secured with a contract, ensuring proper, insurance and medical checks.

- The Standing Committee had recommended a **model of compensated surrogacy** which would cover psychological counselling of the surrogate mother and/or her children, lost wages for the duration of pregnancy, child care support, dietary supplements and medication, maternity clothing and post-delivery care. The Bill should, at the very least, incorporate these provisions.
- Right to privacy of donor as well as surrogate mother should be protected.
- Surrogacy should be made inclusive for all class of people irrespective of their sexuality

Conclusion:

Although the bill bans commercial surrogacy, it falls short to effectively tackle the **larger social, physical, psychological, emotional and economic issues** that continue to challenge the welfare and safety of both the surrogate mother and the child. The rights of surrogate mother and child born must comprehensively be formulated, along with that ART must be regulated thoroughly.

How far can the idea of electric vehicles help tackle the air pollution problem in India? Don't you think it can no longer be tackled with short term, reactive solutions but long term multi-pronged solutions? Critically analyse.(250 words)

Livemint

Why this question:

The question is in the context of discussing Air pollution and its effects on health, environment and economy, need of the hour.

Demand of the question:

The answer must relate the recent moves taken by government such as FAME-II etc. to promote electric vehicle mobility and the impact that it has on air pollution and to what extent it alone can prove to be a good fix, one must evaluate the short term versus long term fixes.

Directive:

***Critically analyze** – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.*

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

In brief discuss the electric vehicle policies that have been recently adopted and promoted by the govt.

Body:

The answer must first discuss the serious issue of air pollution in the country.

Then discuss the context of electric vehicles, the government's vision to promote it and then with hints and clues from article discuss how this can not be a solution alone and that the problem would require a multi-pronged approach.

Conclusion:

Suggest other solutions and appreciate the efforts of the EV mobility policies at the same time.

Introduction:

Adopting electric vehicles (EVs) could improve overall air quality and lower carbon emissions, according to a study. Researchers from the Northwestern University in the US quantified the differences in air pollution generated from battery-powered electric vehicles versus internal combustion engines.

Body:

E-vehicles address pollution in cities:

- Direct emissions include smog-forming pollutants (such as nitrogen oxides), other pollutants harmful to human health, and greenhouse gases (GHGs), primarily carbon dioxide.
- All-electric vehicles produce zero direct emissions, which specifically helps improve air quality in urban areas.
- Electric vehicles produce fewer emissions that contribute to climate change and smog than conventional vehicles.
- Reduced Noise Pollution: Electric vehicles put curb on noise pollution as they are much quieter. Electric motors are capable of providing smooth drive with higher acceleration over longer distances.

No, there is more to be done apart from e-Vehicles:

- 70-95% of PM emissions caused by road transportation is not related to tailpipe emissions but to road dust re-suspension and abrasion of brakes and tyres. E-buses will not eliminate these emissions.
- Electric power is mainly produced by coal-powered plants. So the switch to electric would neither change the air quality in the city nor would it be an environmentally friendly initiative.
- The technology is still too expensive primarily because of the battery.
- Recharge Points: Electric fuelling stations are still in the development stages.
- Not Suitable for Cities Facing Shortage of Power: As electric cars need power to charge up, cities already facing acute power shortage are not suitable for electric vehicles
- Newer vehicles require new Industries for manufacturing base. This might cause land pattern change and deforestation.

Measures needed:

- Three decisive measures need to be taken by the government to impact both pollution and our fossil-fuel import bill positively.
- By banning all Bharat Stage 3 (BS3) vehicles and below. Scrap them immediately, irrespective of age. In one stroke, close to 40% of all the 300 million vehicles on the roads will be gone.
- Assure top-notch public transport in India's top 24 cities. A multi-modal grid of trains, buses, taxis, three-wheelers and two-wheelers could achieve this. Disruptive thought and action would be needed to make the status-conscious Indian adopt public transport as an act of responsibility rather than sacrifice
- Decongest the 60 top smart cities. They constitute almost 90% of our vehicular population and thus vehicular pollution. We also need to focus on smoother traffic flow, better parking

management and pedestrian movement. Decongestion, like road safety, could be adopted as a cause by the government as well as corporate houses.

Way forward:

- The focus should be on measures which are more sustainable, paired with effective investments to improve air quality.
- With regards to the expected additional energy demand generated by India's 2030 vision of electric vehicles, it might make sense to couple this with renewable energy: every electric vehicle sold should require a dedicated clean source of power to be installed.
- Other ways to spur EVs, include dedicated charging spots, and discounted or free parking.
- In the Indian scenario, the government should provide the initial user base and demand to help technologies cross the chasm.
- The government could consider making all new government and corporate vehicles electric.
- This would force government buildings to install EV infrastructure, and hopefully create a large enough ecosystem for the maintenance market in petrol pumps and service shops to take off.

“Cooperative federalism is the want of the hour for restored management of dams in India”. Analyse.(250 words)

Reference

Why this question:

The Lok Sabha recently passed the Dam Safety Bill, 2019 by a voice vote. The Bill seeks to provide for institutional mechanism for surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance of specified dams across the country.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must address the aspect of need of cooperative federalism in managing dams in India.

Directive:

analyze – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

In brief state the recent coming of Dam safety Bill.

Body:

Discuss that Dams are critical infrastructure developed for irrigation, power generation, flood moderation and supply of water for drinking and industrial use.

As such their safety has serious consequences for human life, ecology and public and private assets and a matter of great concern to the general public and becomes a national responsibility to take necessary steps to ensure it.

Explain what is cooperative federalism? Discuss its role in managing dams, relevance to dam safety bill etc.

Conclusion:

Conclude that going forward, all the states will learn the lessons and will work towards national welfare by strengthening cooperative federalism.

Introduction:

The Dam safety bill 2019 seeking to set up an **institutional mechanism for surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance of specified dams across the country** was passed by Lok Sabha with the centre asserting it has no intention of taking over power of the states.

Body:

State of dams in India:

- Around **92 per cent of dams** in the country are on **inter-state river basins**.
- There are **5,745 reservoirs in the country** of which **293 are more than 100 years old**.
- The **age of 25 per cent of dams is between 50 to 100 years and 80 per cent are over 25 years old**.
- **40 dams have collapsed in India since Independence** and the worst such disaster occurred in Gujarat in 1979 leading to loss of thousands of lives of people.
- Though India has the **world's third-largest tally of dams**, next only to the US and China, it **does not have any statutory framework** to ensure their safety.

The provisions of the bill are proposed to be **applied to all specified dams in the country which have height of more than 15 metres, or between 10 metres to 15 metres**. Among other things, the bill also **seeks to resolve the inter-state issues concerning maintenance and safety of dams**. It plans to constitute **National Committee on Dam Safety and National Dam Safety Authority**.

Rationale behind the bill:

- The Bill says **dams are critical infrastructure** developed for irrigation, power generation, flood moderation and supply of water for drinking and industrial use.
- As such their safety has serious consequences for human life, ecology and public and private assets and a matter of great concern to the general public and becomes a national responsibility to take necessary steps to ensure it.
- Starting with a **Standing Committee under the chairman of the Central Water Commission** in 1982, efforts were made to **persuade states to legislate** such a mechanism, since **water is a state subject**.
- But later, as Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal demanded a uniform central legislation the central government initiated a central legislation.

Concerns regarding the bill:

- States' objections to the Bill are two-fold, one of which is that since 'water' comes under the State list, it is an unconstitutional move aimed at taking control of their dams.
- Certain states have put a question mark over the legislative competence of the Centre in violation of **federal spirit of constitution**.

- The provisions in the Bill imply that the dam-owning State would not have rights over the safety and maintenance of the dam located in another State.
- Tamil Nadu has opposed it, fearing that the dams owned and operated by it would come under the purview of the National Dam Safety Organisation (NDSO) and that Kerala would also get access to the dam and information about it.
- This clause is particularly worrisome for the State which has four dams — **the Mullaperiyar, Parambikulam, Thunakkadavu and Peruvipallam** — that are owned by it, but are situated in neighbouring Kerala.
- States fear that the Centre may take control over their dams.
- There is lack of sufficient consultation with the States on the Bill due to which States see Dam Safety Bill, 2018 with suspicion, as is already happening.
- Kerala MP also pointed out a conflict of interest in the Bill — the provision to have a representative of the Central Water Commission as a member of the NCDS (a regulatory body) would mean that CWC will function as both an advisor and regulator, which is impermissible under the Constitution according to the Supreme Court.
- Age of the dam is the major issue which should have been taken up.
- The bill is too focused on structural safety and not on operational safety.
- There is inadequate compensation to the people affected by dams.
- There is need for an independent regulator as well as for a precise definition of stakeholders.

Way forward:

- Dam Safety Bill, 2018 is much needed legislation to ensure the safety of man and materials in the downstream areas of dam.
- The bill is critical adaptive measure in context of climate change, as extreme weather events like floods are expected to increase e.g. recent Kerala floods are attributed to climate change.
- There is need for wider consultation with states in spirit of cooperative federalism, to allay the concerns of states. Objections by states should be addressed to ensure the legislation secure its aim without centre and states conflicts.
- **Dams rehabilitation improvement programme (DRIP)** will be helpful, where centre can help states to protect dams with the help from **World Bank**. This needs a better cooperation from centre and states.
- **DHARMA portal** can be used to monitor the health of dams.

Examine the main provisions of the Code on Wages Bill, 2019. Do you think declaring minimum wage through a legislation would ultimately destroy jobs? Critically analyse. (250 words)

Livemint

Why this question:

The Parliament passed the Code on Wages Bill, 2019 mandating a minimum wage across the country in its first session itself. This law mandates a universal minimum payment of ₹178 a day.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must analyse the impact of the bill and to what extent is it justified.

Directive:

Critically analyze – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When ‘critically’ is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Brief on the background of the bill; Origin of minimum wage, the concept and its application.

Body:

First acknowledge the issue of minimum wages in India, explain what are the pros and cons of the move, its objectives and in what way it is both a boon and a bane. Take hints from the article and detail upon it and form a balanced opinion.

Conclusion:

Conclude with need to improvise and make the system of wages more efficient and effective.

Introduction:

The new Parliament passed the **Code on Wages Bill, 2019** mandating a **minimum wage across the country** in its first session itself. This law mandates a **universal minimum payment of ₹178 a day**. The codification proposes to **simplify 32 central labour laws into four codes** to bring them in sync with the emerging economic situation, **facilitate easier compliance by establishments, promote ease of living and ensure labour welfare and wage and social security for workers**. The Code of Wages Bill is the first in the series of four labour codes.

Body:

THE WAGE DISPARITY

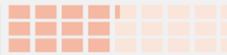
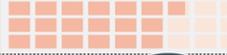
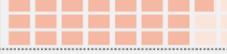
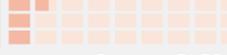
₹178 per day is what the government has proposed as the national minimum wage

₹700 is the **daily wage** that the 7th Central Pay Commission determined as a fair wage

45% of regular workers currently earn less than the existing minimum wage standard

Three-fourth of formal sector workers earn less than ₹20,000 per month

% of regular workers

Less than 5,000		12.2
5,000-10,000		32.7
10,000-15,000		18.8
15,000-20,000		10.8
20,000-50,000		21.9
50,000 and above		3.6

Source: PLFS 2017-18

Main provisions:

- The bill aims to **transform the old and obsolete labour laws into more accountable and transparent ones** and seeks to pave the way for the introduction of minimum wages and labour reforms in the country.
- It **regulates the wages and bonus payments in all employments** where any industry, trade, business, or manufacturing is being carried out.
- It seeks to subsume relevant provisions of **The Minimum Wages Act, 1948, Payment of Wages Act 1936, Payment of Bonus Act Act, 1965 and Equal Remuneration Act 1976**
- It **universalizes the provisions of minimum wages** and timely payment of wages to all employees irrespective of the sector and wage ceiling and seeks to **ensure “Right to Sustenance” for every worker** and intends to increase the legislative protection of minimum wage.
- It has been ensured in the bill that employees getting monthly salary shall get the salary by 7th of next month, those working on a weekly basis shall get the salary on the last day of the week and daily wagers should get it on the same day.
- The provisions of the bill will **apply to all the employees**. At present, the provisions of both the Minimum Wages Act and Payment of Wages Act apply on workers below a particular wage ceiling working in Scheduled Employments only.

- Many unorganized sector workers like agricultural workers, painters, persons working in restaurants and dhabas, chowkidars, etc. who were out of the ambit of minimum wages will get legislative protection of minimum wages after the bill becomes an Act.
- The Central Government is empowered to fix the floor wages by taking into account the living standards of workers. It may set different floor wages for different geographical areas.
- The minimum wages decided by the central or state governments must be higher than the floor wage.

Potential of the wages Code:

- According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey 2017-18, 45% of regular workers are paid less than the minimum wage.
- The law would **benefit about 50 crore workers**.
- With an easily understandable national wage floor— which would apply across job types and geographies—the hope is that compliance will improve.
- At the moment, women earn roughly 45% less than men in the same occupation. It prohibits gender discrimination in matters related to wages and recruitment of employees for the same work or work of similar nature.
- A national wage floor would also hopefully reduce rural-urban gaps.
- Since casual workers can be fired easily, estimates show that the wage may even go down to a miserable ₹20 a day in times of poor demand. A mandated minimum wage will hopefully reduce these glaring inequities.
- It will substantially reduce the number of minimum wages in the country from the existing more than 2000 rates of minimum wages.
- This would ensure that every worker gets a minimum wage which will also be accompanied by an increase in the purchasing power of the worker thereby giving a fillip to growth in the economy.

Shortcomings of the Code:

- For one, the wage prescribed is less than half the ₹375 a day recommended by a high-powered labour ministry panel.
- It is also miles away from the ₹700 fair wage that the 7th Central Pay Commission had arrived at.
- The new law increases the prevailing minimum wage standard by a paltry ₹2 a day.
- The minimum wage laws raise business labour costs. That's already the largest budget item for most of them. When the government forces them to pay more per worker, they hire fewer workers to keep the total labour costs the same. This increases the unemployment rate.

- It hits low-wage workers the hardest since they must now compete for fewer jobs. Some smaller companies may not be able to operate with fewer workers. They may be forced to declare bankruptcy instead.
- According to the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), states should have the power to determine minimum wages as the concept of a national minimum wage will affect job creation.
- A minimum wage penalizes companies that are labour-intensive. By default, this rewards those that are in capital-intensive industries. Over time, this can shift the very fabric of the country's economic base.
- Minimum wage laws may increase job outsourcing. Companies move their facilities to countries where labour costs are lower.
- Minimum wage laws may not reduce the country's poverty. It helps the workers who have jobs but increases unemployment. Research shows experienced workers received higher pay for less experienced workers lost their jobs.
- It could raise the cost of living in some areas. A higher minimum wage allows workers to pay more for housing. As a result, landlords could raise rents, creating inflation.

Measures needed:

- Increasing the ambit of the minimum wage system, it recommended deciding minimum wages on the basis of skills and split across geographical regions.
- With the government in the process of bringing the Code on Wages Bill in Parliament, the survey said the rationalisation of minimum wages proposed by the Bill should be supported.
- The survey suggested the government should notify a **“national floor minimum wage”** across five regions, after which States can fix their own minimum wages, but not lower than the floor wage.
- This would bring uniformity and make States “almost equally attractive from the point of view of labour cost for investment as well as reduce distress migration.”
- The proposed Code on Wages Bill should extend applicability of minimum wages to all employments/workers in all sectors and should cover both the organized as well as the unorganized sector.
- A mechanism for regular adjustment of minimum wages should be developed, with a national-level dashboard at the Centre that States can access and update.
- An easy to recall toll-free number to lodge complaints about non-payment of minimum wages should be publicised.

Conclusion:

A simple, coherent and enforceable Minimum Wage System should be designed with the aid of technology as minimum wages push wages up and reduce wage inequality without significantly affecting

employment. An effective minimum wage policy is a potential tool not only for the protection of low paid workers but is also an inclusive mechanism for more resilient and sustainable economic development.

Critically examine the effect of abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A on the federal fabric of the country.(250 words)

Hindustantimes

Why this question:

The article throws light on the recent move made by the government with respect to abrogating Article 370 and Article 35A and in what way it has affected the federal character of the country.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must critically examine the essence of federalism and the blow it has taken due to the scrapping of article 370 and 35A.

Directive:

Critically Examine – When asked to ‘Examine’, we have to look into the topic (content words) in detail, inspect it, investigate it and establish the key facts and issues related to the topic in question. While doing so we should explain why these facts and issues are important and their implications. When ‘critically’ is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Brief upon the context of the question or start with definition of federalism.

Body:

Discussion should have the following aspects covered:

In what way it has silenced the voices of those affected by these actions?

Tendency of centralization of power.

Detail upon the federal arrangements and effects on political decentralization.

Conclusion:

Conclude with need to respect and value federalism as the beholding fabric of the country and that it shouldn't be disturbed.

Introduction:

The government recently introduced a **resolution to remove provisions of Article 370**, which provides special status to Jammu and Kashmir. In addition, Home Minister also introduced a Bill bifurcating the State of Jammu of Kashmir into Union Territory of Ladakh and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The Presidential Order has extended all provisions of the Constitution to Jammu and Kashmir, including the chapter on Fundamental Rights. Therefore, the discriminatory provisions under Article 35A are now unconstitutional.

Body:

Federalism in India:

- The framers of India's constitution had to negotiate two conflicting tensions while designing the contours of India's federal system.

- On the one hand, the immediate historical context of Partition created the imperative for a strong central government that could pursue the task of nation building and democratic consolidation, unencumbered.
- At the same time, there was the recognition that India's diversity of language, region and religion, a diversity that was intrinsic to India's national identity, could only be preserved through federal accommodation.
- To balance these competing tensions, India's federal system combined unitary and federal elements.
- The central government was given wide-ranging powers, akin to most unitary systems.
- These include the power to redraw state boundaries and emergency powers to dismiss state governments and impose the will of the Centre through presidential rule.
- This strong Centre coexisted with a number of unique federal arrangements (or what political scientists have termed **asymmetrical federalism**) designed to accommodate the specific linguistic, regional, and more recently, ethnic assertions of statehood by offering varying degrees of autonomy from the Centre.
- It is in this context of balancing federal accommodation with strong central powers that Article 370 (and the far less discussed, but equally significant, Article 371 that makes special provisions for many other states and regions) was adopted and implemented.

Abrogation of Article 370 and effect on federalism:

- The constitutionality of the Reorganisation Bill and the Presidential Orders are doubtful on many grounds. First, it militates against the idea of federalism, which is a basic feature of the Indian Constitution.
- The move has undermined and weakened India's federal character by downgrading a State and territorially dividing it into two Union Territories without the consent of the people of J&K.
- The method adopted to execute this decision is of special concern because by equating or replacing the Constituent Assembly of J&K (which was dissolved in 1957) with the Legislative Assembly of J&K, and Parliament appropriating the latter's powers since the State is under President's rule, the Central government has acted unilaterally to reorganise the State of J&K.
- If this passes judicial scrutiny, it can then be done to any State in India, with drastic implications for its federal character.
- The bifurcation of a state **without satisfying the requirements of Article 3**, and abrogation of Article 370 without consultations clearly goes against the principles of Indian federalism.
- The **maxim of 'inclusivity'**, that is, a political demand being made must be inclusive in terms of representing the interests of all those in whose name it is made.

- The decision to divide the State is particularly fraught with the risk of deepening regional and communal fault lines.
- The moral authority of regional parties to safeguard India's federal system has been undermined.
- The unilateral move by the Union Government opines that Federalism has now been positioned as an impediment to development by arguing that asymmetric federalism and Article 370 have sowed the roots of separatism.

Conclusion:

The special status of J&K was meant to end, **but only with the concurrence of its people**. The Centre's abrupt move disenfranchised them on a matter that directly affected their life and sentiments. Moreover, that this was done after a massive military build-up and the house arrest of senior political leaders, and the communications shutdown reveals a **cynical disregard of democratic norms**. Whatever its intent in enabling the full integration of Jammu and Kashmir with India, this decision to alter the State's status could have unintended and dangerous consequences.

Discuss the key provisions of the draft new education policy and throw light on the status of its implementation.(250 words)

Hindustantimes

Why this question:

The article provides for in-depth analysis of the possibilities, and gaps, in the draft new education policy. The draft of New National Education Policy has been recently submitted by the Committee led by the Chairman Dr. Kasturirangan on education policy.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must discuss the key policies of the New draft education policy and discuss upon its status of implementation.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Begin with brief on the current education scenario in the country using some facts and recent statistics.

Body:

Discussion should include the following:

Explain that the draft Policy provides for reforms at all levels of education from school to higher education. It seeks to increase the focus on early childhood care, reform the current exam system, strengthen teacher training, and restructure the education regulatory framework. It also seeks to set up a National Education Commission, increase public investment in education, strengthen the use of technology and increase focus on vocational and adult education, among others.

Then discuss its status of implementation and what more needs to be done.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

The Draft National Education Policy, 2019 prepared by a committee chaired by Dr K. Kasturirangan aims at **making India a knowledge superpower by equipping students with the necessary skills and knowledge**. It also focuses on **eliminating the shortage of manpower in Science and Technology, academics and industry**. The Draft Policy is built on foundational pillars of **Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability**.

Body:

KEY PROPOSALS

- Internationalization of higher education
- Public-private-partnership in higher education
- Role of central government funded institutions to improve quality of people's lives
- Improving the quality of regulation, revamping regulators
- Vocationalization of education
- Outcome-based teaching-learning model in elementary schools
- Technology adoption to improve access and quality of education
- Spending 1.5% of gross domestic product on research and development
- Relooking at students' financial assistance schemes
- Revamping teacher education system
- Addressing regional disparities and social gaps
- Value education

Source: HRD ministry

Key Features of the Draft Policy:

Status of implementation:

- **School education sector:**
 - The reforms in teacher education carried out by the previous government find resonance in the draft NEP.
 - Four-year B. Ed programmes were conceptualised.
 - About 15 lakh untrained teachers have taken the diploma course.
 - The proposal in the NEP of offering a tenure track to teachers to become master and expert teachers, and putting institution leaders through leadership programmes, are in sync with what the previous government took baby steps in through the **LEAP and ARPIT programmes**.
- **Use of Technology:**
 - India is already the **second largest subscriber of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)** in the world.
 - The government-run **SWAYAM** has more than one crore subscribers.

- Students from remote parts of India are already able to access the best tutorials online.
- Our school children in urban areas learn through websites such as Insights.
- The draft NEP also refers to the **huge shortage of teaching faculty**, which is up to **40%**. If we have to train our students on a grand scale, the magic wand is the massive popularisation and acceptance of MOOCs and other tech platforms.
- In school education, it started **Operation Digital Board** to facilitate teaching through online materials.
- Building up of the tech platform of SWAYAM was also coupled with regulatory changes in UGC and AICTE, empowering universities to offer up to 20% of their courses through SWAYAM.
- **Education bureaucracy:**
 - A beginning has been made in allowing schools to set their own syllabus within the contours of the national curricular framework.
 - It will help our schools develop best-practices that work in the Indian milieu.
 - The draft NEP also offers solutions to untangle the conflict of interest in higher education by separating regulation, provision of education, financing, accreditation and standards setting.
 - The previous government was already working on separation of powers through higher education evaluation and regulation authority.
 - The policy proposes creation of **Special Education Zones (SEZ)**.
 - It fits well with the prime minister's thrust on 115 "Aspirational Districts".
 - The government could also conduct a few worthwhile experiments that can be scaled up in the rest of the education system.
- **Indic languages:**
 - The best parts of the draft NEP are the ones on languages and Indic thought. There is much-needed reorientation towards our own history and culture.
 - **Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI)** has been recommended.
- **Early Childhood care and Education:**
 - The early child care and education have been sought to be integrated within the Ministry of Education.
 - It is a product of extensive research in cognitive psychology over the years and activism by civil society in various states.

- **Vocational training:**

- The emphasis on vocational training in both school and higher education is a much-needed corrective measure.
- In fact, in higher education, the draft NEP calls for expansion of vocational courses to 50% of the learners by 2025.
- This has ramifications on the holistic learning of our students, addressing social biases and offering relevant skills to the market.

Conclusion:

The proposals offered are steady, incremental and executable. Hopefully, the feedback received in the last two months will correct the few anomalies. But the proof of the pudding will be determined by how many of the recommendations the executive takes up to enact laws and initiate programmes.

Access to credit is a human right, essential for the poor to create self-employment and income. In the backdrop of the above statement discuss the role played by microfinance institutions and explain whose interests are microfinance institutions serving today?(250 words)

epw

Why this question:

The question aims to analyse the role played by microfinances in the country to alleviate poverty.

Key demand of the question:

Discuss what are microfinancing institutions, what role they play in alleviating poverty in the country.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Define what are microfinance institutions.

Body:

Explain the role played by microfinance institutions in rooting out poverty.

Microfinance is the provision of financial services to low-income clients or solidarity lending groups including consumers and the self-employed, who traditionally lack access to banking and related services. It is not just about giving micro credit to the poor rather it is an economic development tool whose objective is to assist poor to work their way out of poverty. It covers a wide range of services like credit, savings, insurance, remittance and also non-financial services like training, counseling etc.

Then discuss the salient features. Explain how they can fulfill the gaps in the system.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way ahead.

Introduction:

Micro financing is the delivery of financial services to poor and low income households with limited access to formal financial institutions. It can also be described as banking for the underprivileged. Microfinance institutions (MFIs) came into being in the 90s as banks' reluctance to lend to those without

credit history provided an opportunity to those willing to take risk and organise rural communities. According to **Mohammed Yunus** (founder of Grameen Bank in Bangladesh) **access to credit was a human right, essential for the poor to create self-employment and income.**

Body:

Role played by MFIs:

- The two key systems for the release of financial services to such customers include ‘relationship-based banking’ for individual entrepreneurs and small businesses along with ‘group-based models’ where several entrepreneurs come together to apply for loans and other services as a group
- Be a viable financial institution developing sustainable communities.
- Mobilize resources to provide financial and support services to the poor, particularly women, for viable productive income generation enterprises enabling them to reduce their poverty.
- Learn and evaluate what helps people to move out of poverty faster.
- Create opportunities for self-employment for the underprivileged.
- Train rural poor in simple skills and enable them to utilize the available resources and contribute to employment and income generation in rural areas.

Benefits from MFIs:

- **It allows people to provide for their families.** Through microfinance, more households are able to expand their current opportunities so that more income accumulation may occur.
- **It gives people access to credit.** “By extending microfinance opportunities, people have access to small amounts of credit, which can then stop poverty at a rapid pace,”
- **It serves those who are often overlooked in society.** About 95 percent of some loan products extended by microfinance institutions are given to women, as well as those with disabilities, those who are unemployed, and even those who simply beg to meet their basic needs.
- **It creates the possibility of future investments.** Microfinance disrupts the cycle of poverty by making more money available.
- **It can create jobs.** Microfinance is also able to let entrepreneurs in impoverished communities and developing countries create new employment opportunities for others.
- **It encourages people to save.** “When people have their basic needs met, the natural inclination is for them to save the leftover earnings for a future emergency,”

However, off-late the main goals of MFIs are deviated:

- MFIs have strayed away from their original purpose of poverty alleviation and social empowerment to short-term profit-making.

- Many have begun to replicate the behaviour of mainstream financial institutions, setting financial targets which loan officers are under tremendous pressure to deliver.
- MFIs are harassing their clients who are usually too desperate to turn away from the credit being offered. This is true even when credit comes with the catch of high repayment rates.
- Several large MFIs that transformed into small finance banks (SFBs) are looking to diversify into inclusion adjacencies such as micro, small and medium enterprise loans and affordable housing loans.
- The demand potential in these segments also remains buoyant over the medium term given the untapped potential.

Way forward:

- There is a need for MFIs to consider adopting more flexible operating models, providing skills training and offering services such as portability of accounts to provide greater access for a longer duration of time.
- A diversified menu of micro loan products linked to sustainable income generation activities via micro enterprises or a creation of community-based pooled enterprise could possibly make it more attractive and compatible with the requirements of women.
- In addition, linking such developmental initiatives to an institution to nurture, monitor and handhold those activities in the formative stages is crucial for sustainability.

Conclusion:

As per the World Bank estimates, more than 500 million people have improved their economic conditions via microfinance-related entities. Strengthening the credit check and debt collection processes and educating the villagers about products and consequences is important. A model to retain and recycle within the target population could possibly lead to a sustained route for poverty alleviation.

India needs to shift towards a Solid waste management plan alongside the existing Swachh Bharat mission and look beyond toilets. Discuss.(250 words)

The hindu

Why this question:

In a nascent effort to look beyond toilets and kick off its ODF+ phase — that is, Open Defecation Free Plus — focussing on solid and liquid waste management, the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA) has included the prevalence of plastic litter and water-logging in villages as indicators of cleanliness in its 2019 rural survey.

Demand of the question:

The question is about giving importance to solid waste management in the mission of swachh Bharat.

Directive word:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction

Define solid waste management.

Body

In India, solid waste management needs to be planned and implemented alongside well-maintained drainage and sewerage networks and with the active participation of the communities.

The answer must bring out the progress made by Swachh Bharat and how it has achieved milestones so far and that it is time to shift towards bigger goals of waste management.

Conclusion

Conclude with significance.

Introduction:

Solid waste management (SWM) refers to **the process of collecting and treating solid wastes**. It also **offers solutions for recycling items that do not belong to garbage or trash**. In a nascent effort to look beyond toilets and kick off its ODF+ phase — that is, **Open Defecation Free Plus — focussing on solid and liquid waste management**, the **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA)** has included the prevalence of plastic litter and water-logging in villages as indicators of cleanliness in its 2019 rural survey.

Body:

Current Situation of SWM in India:

- ULBs are responsible for segregated waste collection, transporting waste in covered vehicle, processing, recyclables, separating domestic hazardous waste and disposing inert material in sanitary landfills
- Various studies reveal that about 90% of MSW is disposed of unscientifically in open dumps and landfills, creating problems to public health and the environment.
- Over 377 million urban people live in 7,935 towns and cities and generate 62 million tonnes of municipal solid waste per annum.
- Only 43 million tonnes (MT) of the waste is collected, 11.9 MT is treated and 31 MT is dumped in landfill sites.
- Most cities have confined themselves to collection and transportation of solid waste. Processing and safe disposal are being attempted only in a few cases.
- The CPCB report also reveals that **only 68% of the MSW generated in the country is collected of which, 28% is treated by the municipal authorities**. Thus, merely 19% of the total waste generated is currently treated.
- According to a **UN report, India's e-waste** from old computers alone will **jump 500 per cent by 2020**, compared to 2007.
- Disappearance of urban water bodies and wetlands in urban areas can be attributed to illegal dumping of Construction & Demolition waste.

Some of the major issues concerning solid waste management are:

- Absence of segregation of waste at source

- Lack of funds for waste management at ULBs.
- Unwillingness of ULBs to introduce proper collection, segregation, transportation and treatment/ disposal systems.
- Lack of technical expertise and appropriate institutional arrangement
- lack of infrastructure and technology
- lack of involvement from the private sector and non-governmental organisations
- Indifference of citizens towards waste management due to lack of awareness
- Lack of community participation towards waste management and hygienic conditions
- Lack of sewage management plan.
- About 70% of the plastic packaging products turn into plastic waste within a short period.
- Unorganized vendors and markets, existence of slum areas and Corruption are other issues plaguing MSWM.

Measures needed:

- State governments should **provide financial support to ULBs** to improve their waste management system under various schemes and programs.
- Initiatives like Smart Cities Mission, AMRUT should provide significant funding to improve civic services infrastructure.
- The key to efficient waste management is to ensure **proper segregation of waste at source** and to ensure that the waste goes through different streams of recycling and resource recovery as stated in the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016.
- **Waste to energy** is a key component of SWM. Installation of **waste-to-compost and bio-methanation plants** would reduce the load of landfill sites
- There is a need to **encourage research and development** so as to reinvent waste management system in India.
- The focus should be on **recycling and recovering from waste** and not landfill. Further, it is important to encourage recycling of e-waste so that the problem of e-waste
- **Public- Private Partnership models** for waste management should be encouraged.
- Construction and demolition waste should be stored, separately disposed off, as per the Construction and Demolition Waste Management Rules, 2016.
- **Responsibilities of Generators** have been introduced to segregate waste in to three streams, Wet (Biodegradable), Dry (Plastic, Paper, metal, wood, etc.) and domestic hazardous wastes

(diapers, napkins, empty containers of cleaning agents, mosquito repellents, etc.) and handover segregated wastes to authorized rag-pickers or waste collectors or local bodies.

- **Sensitization** of citizens as well as government authorities, community participation, involvement of NGOs. Littering should be prohibited.
- International Best practices should be emulated. South Korea is one of the few countries to separate and recycle food waste. It has also launched landfill recovery projects such as the **Nanjido recovery project** which have successfully transformed hazardous waste sites into sustainable ecological attractions.

Conclusion:

Solid waste management (SWM) is one of the major environmental problems of India. The need of the hour is scientific, sustainable and environment friendly management of wastes.

Will a greater centralisation of decision-making help the Ladakh region's already-fragile terrain? Discuss in the light of recent decision of the government to transform of Ladakh into a Union Territory (UT). (250 words)

The hindu

Why this question:

The article is in the backdrop of recent govt. decision of declaring Ladakh as a union territory and the significance of the decision.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must discuss the aspect of greater centralization and its pros and cons.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Describe the background of the situation.

Body:

Take hints from the article, first narrate the circumstances under which the decision has been taken by the government and then explain the reasons, impact of such a decision and the merits and demerits of it.

Conclusion:

Conclude with fair and balanced opinion on the issue.

Introduction:

The **Jammu and Kashmir reorganisation bill** passed by Parliament recently aims to redraw the map of the state by bifurcating it into two Union territories. The bill proposes to create a Union Territory for Jammu and Kashmir region and a separate one for the Ladakh region.

Body:



Government's rationale behind making Ladakh a UT:

- A substantial part of Ladakh (specifically, Leh district) has felt alienated for decades as it was controlled by the J&K government.
- It has been noted that from decades, the J&K government has often been insensitive to the Ladakh's ecological and cultural uniqueness.
- Ladakh was in difficult condition due to the pressure being put by the infrastructure projects, the presence of armed forces and excessive tourism.
- Inappropriate educational systems imposed on the people of Ladakh have disrupted the lifestyles of their traditional ethnic groups.
- Division of Ladakh into Leh and Kargil on religious ground has driven an unnecessarily division between Buddhist and Muslim populations.

Centralization of decision-making and its impact of fragile ecology of Ladakh:

- Being home to enormous mineral reserves and tourism sites, Ladakh could easily be exploited by commercial interests even more.
- This would put a greater pressure on its already fragile ecosystem and also impact its pastoral and agricultural communities that are dependent on it.
- Ladakh is facing environmental issues due to landslips, soil erosion, accumulation of solid waste, disturbances to its wildlife population and diversion of commons for development projects.

- The Central government could execute more hydropower, mining and road construction programmes in Ladakh, making sensitive areas more vulnerable.
- Since the Leh is a huge tourism attraction, more plans will be there to promote and protect the local culture at development works.
- The government may provide **'Smart city' tag to Leh** city under Smart City Mission as Leh is a huge tourism attraction.
- The increased presence of the armed forces could be one of the consequences of Ladakh being a UT.
- Due to the high importance given to the threats coming from China and Pakistan, the likelihood of more army personal getting stationed in Ladakh is high.
- Thousands of hectares of pasture land have already been occupied by the forces with disruptive consequences for wildlife and local communities.
- There are many civil society groups in Ladakh such as the Students' Educational and Cultural Movement of Ladakh, the Snow Leopard Conservancy India Trust, The Ladakh Ecological Development Group etc.
- However, as the central government will now handle the Ladakh, the voices of such societies are likely to be heard even less.

Conclusion:

Although there are some possible consequences with the new UT status of the region, it can be seen that there are more development possibilities in terms of education, health, lifestyle and preservation of its unique ecology of Ladakh as Union Territory as compared to its current status. The need of the hour is to **address the needs and aspirations of Ladakh's population**, including by providing sustainable livelihoods for its rural people and youth. **Ladakh's farmers, pastoralists, women and youth** must get a more meaningful voice in the new dispensation than they have had so far within the Hill Council status

What is the office of Chief of Defence Staff that Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced in his Independence Day address? Where did the idea come from, and what is the CDS supposed to do? Explain. (250 words)

[Indianexpress](#)

Why this question:

In his Independence Day address Thursday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the creation of the post of Chief of Defence Staff to provide "effective leadership at the top level" to the three wings of the armed forces, and to help improve coordination among them.

Key demand of the question:

Discussion should explain the significance of creation of the post of CDS, its key functions and roles and responsibilities.

Directive:

Explain – Clarify the topic by giving a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Define in brief who is a Chief of Defense Staff?

Body:

The CDS is a high military office that oversees and coordinates the working of the three Services, and offers seamless tri-service views and single-point advice to the Executive (in India's case, to the Prime Minister) on long-term defence planning and management, including manpower, equipment and strategy, and above all, "jointmanship" in operations.

Then discuss the evolution of the concept of CDS across the countries of the world. – The United States Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS), for example, is extremely powerful, with a legislated mandate and sharply delineated powers.

Discuss significance of such a post.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way ahead.

Introduction:

The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) is a **high military office that oversees and coordinates the working of the three Services**, and **offers seamless tri-service views and single-point advice to the Executive** (in India's case, to the Prime Minister) on **long-term defence planning and management**, including **manpower, equipment and strategy**, and above all, **"jointmanship" in operations**. It shall **provide "effective leadership at the top level"** to the three wings of the armed forces, and to help **improve coordination among them**.

Body:

Genesis of the idea:

- The first proposal for a CDS came from the **2000 Kargil Review Committee (KRC)**.
- Although the KRC did not directly recommend a CDS — that came from the Group of Ministers — it underlined the need for more coordination among the three Services, which was poor in the initial weeks of the Kargil conflict.
- The KRC Report pointed out that India is the only major democracy where the Armed Forces Headquarters is outside the apex governmental structure.
- It observed that Service Chiefs devote most of their time to their operational roles, "often resulting in negative results".
- Long-term defence planning suffers as day-to-day priorities dominate.
- Also, the Prime Minister and Defence Minister do not have the benefit of the views and expertise of military commanders, in order to ensure that higher level defence management decisions are more consensual and broadbased.
- The CDS is also seen as being vital to the creation of "theatre commands", integrating tri-service assets and personnel like in the US military.

Need for office of CDS:

- India has had a feeble equivalent known as the Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee (CoSC); but a toothless office in the manner of its structure.
- The senior-most among the three Service Chiefs is appointed to head the CoSC, an office that lapses with the incumbent's retirement.
- The post did not further tri-service integration, resulting in inefficiency and an expensive duplication of assets.

Conclusion:

Most countries with advanced militaries have such a post, albeit with varying degrees of power and authority. The United States Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS), for example, is extremely powerful, with a legislated mandate and sharply delineated powers. The role of the CDS becomes critical in times of conflict.

What are polymetallic nodules? In this context discuss the significance and relevance of Deep-Sea Mission of India and also discuss its challenges and limitations. (250 words)

The hindu

Why this question:

The question is based on the concept of PMNs and about discussing the Deep-Sea mission of India.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must discuss in detail the Deep-Sea Mission of India.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Begin with definition – Polymetallic nodules are small potato like rounded accretions composed of minerals such as manganese, nickel, cobalt, copper and iron hydroxide. They lie scattered on the Indian Ocean Floor at depths of about 6000m and the size can vary from a few millimeters to centimeters. These metals can be extracted and used in electronic devices, smartphones, batteries and even for solar panels.

Body:

Discussion should include the following:

Why the mission – To Boost India's Sea Exploration Capabilities. The mission proposes to explore the deep ocean similar to the space exploration started by ISRO about 35 years ago.

Discuss the key features of the mission.

What are the issues and concerns involved?

Conclusion:

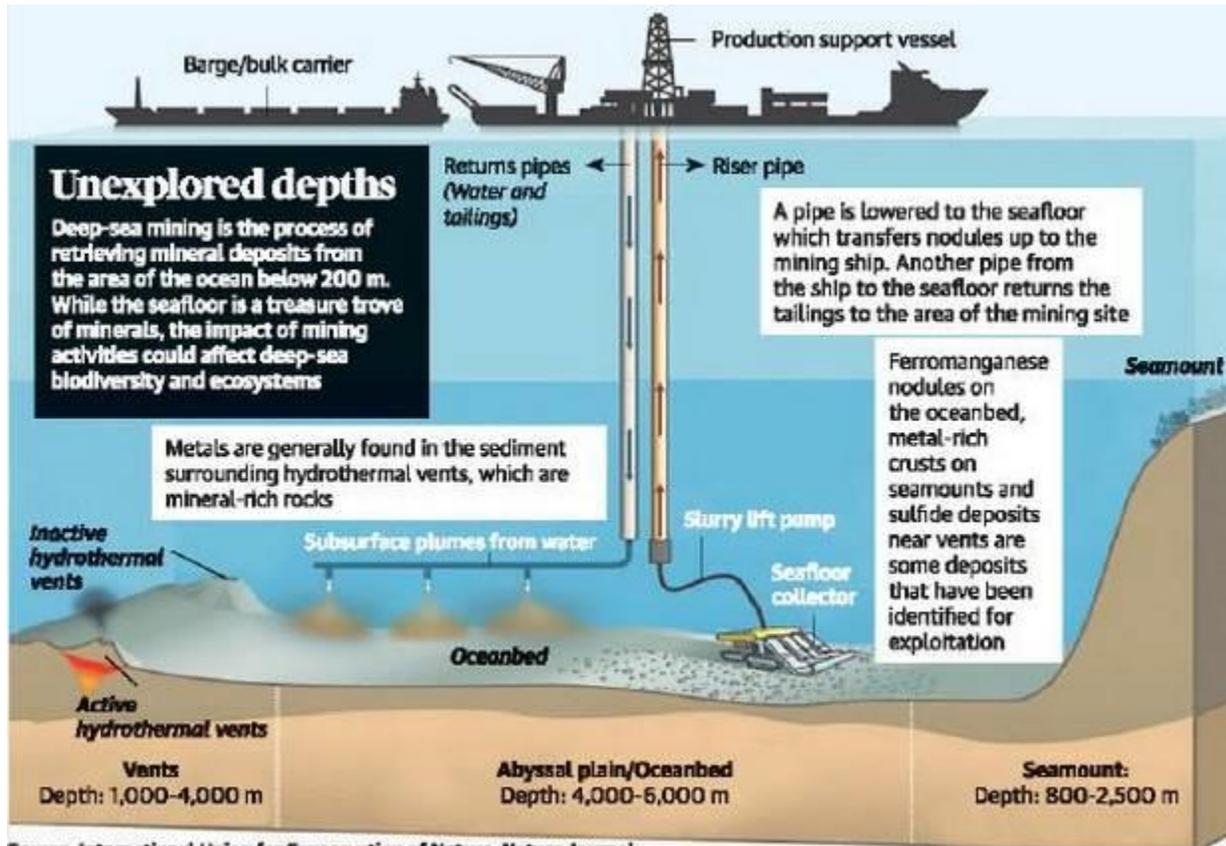
Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

Poly metallic nodules are **potato-shaped, largely porous Iron-Manganese oxide deposit** nodules found in abundance carpeting the sea floor of world oceans with **size ranging from 2 to 10 cm in diameter**. These are considered as the **precipitates of hot fluids from upwelling hot magma from deep**

interior of the oceanic crust, discharged through mineralized paths. Besides manganese and iron, they contain nickel, copper, cobalt, lead, molybdenum, cadmium, vanadium, titanium, of which nickel, cobalt and copper are considered to be of economic and strategic importance. India's ambitious 'Deep Ocean Mission' is all set to be launched this year.

Body:



Source: International Union for Conservation of Nature. Nature Journal

Significance of the Mission:

- The 'Deep Ocean Mission' plan will enable India to develop capabilities to exploit resources in the Central Indian Ocean Basin (CIOB).
- India has been allotted 75,000 square kilometres in the Central Indian Ocean Basin (CIOB) by UN International Sea Bed Authority for exploration of poly-metallic nodules.
- CIOB reserves contain deposits of metals like iron, manganese, nickel and cobalt.
- India is entirely dependent on imports to meet its requirements of cobalt, which is the most strategic of the three metals (cobalt, copper and nickel). As for copper and nickel, India is in a precarious position.

Economic significance

- Employment opportunities skill-sets and capacities

- Empowerment of coastal communities and attaining greater social and economic inclusion.
- New development in electronics industry.
- Providing a boost to coastal and national economies
- Promoting entrepreneurship in new areas of economic activity
- Development of blue economy and diplomacy.
- Sagarmala project will enhance the exploration.
- It will also open new doors for mining of oil and gas reservoirs which are potent for India's energy security.
- These metals can be extracted and used in electronic devices, smartphones, batteries and even for solar panels.

Strategic relevance:

- India's exclusive rights for exploration of Polymetallic Nodules in the allotted area in the Central Indian Ocean Basin will continue and would open new opportunities for resources of commercial and strategic value.
- Presently, China is controlling more than 95% of rare earth metals. This move will nullify the increasing influence of China.
- It will strengthen the bilateral relationship of India with Japan, Germany and South Korea

Challenges posed by the mission:

- **Environmental impact:**
 - According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), these deep remote locations can be home to unique species that have adapted themselves to conditions such as poor oxygen and sunlight, high pressure and extremely low temperatures.
 - Such mining expeditions can make them go extinct even before they are known to science.
 - The deep sea's biodiversity and ecology remain poorly understood, making it difficult to assess the environmental impact and frame adequate guidelines.
 - Environmentalists are also worried about the sediment plumes that will be generated as the suspended particles can rise to the surface harming the filter feeders in the upper ocean layers.
 - Additional concerns have been raised about the noise and light pollution from the mining vehicles and oil spills from the operating vessels.

- **Technology:**
 - The specialized drills and extraction-technology that would be required pulling out the metals from the deep sea would develop a major technical challenge.
- **Commercial Viability:**
 - The latest estimate from the ISA says it will be commercially viable only if about three million tonnes are mined per year. More studies are being carried out to understand how the technology can be scaled up and used efficiently.

Conclusion:

There is an urgent need for an international charter as in the absence of a clear charter, deep sea mining operations could cause irreversible damage to a little understood ecology. A new set of exploration guidelines must be worked out with discussions involving multi-stakeholders like ISA, IUCN, UNCLOS, littoral nations etc.

The Shield of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2019 weakens the Independence of National Human Rights Commission's. Critically examine. (250 words)

Reference

Why this question:

The Lok Sabha recently passed an amendment bill that allows a Supreme Court judge besides the Chief Justice of India to be appointed the chairperson of National Human Rights Commission of India (NHRC) and increases the number of members from two to three.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must justify in what way the new amendments curb the independence of NHRC.

Directive:

Critically— When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When asked to 'Examine', we have to look into the topic (content words) in detail, inspect it, investigate it and establish the key facts and issues related to the topic in question. While doing so we should explain why these facts and issues are important and their implications.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

State the changes brought in by the new bill.

Body:

The bill provides that a person who has been Chief Justice or Judge of a High Court will be the chairperson of a State Human Rights Commission.

It seeks to reduce the term of office of chairperson and members of the NHRC and SHRC to three years from five years or till the age of seventy years, whichever is earlier.

Discuss the different amendments made and the possible consequences of the same.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

The Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill 2019 passed in Lok Sabha. The bill aims to **accelerate the process of appointment of chairperson and members of the National Human Rights Commission**

(NHRC). It amends the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 and intends to **make the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) more inclusive and efficient.**

Body:

Salient Features of the Bill:

- The Bill amends the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993. The Act provides for a National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), State Human Rights Commissions (SHRC), as well as Human Rights Courts.
- **Composition of NHRC:** Under the Act, the chairperson of the NHRC is a person who has been a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The Bill amends this to provide that **a person who has been Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, or a Judge of the Supreme Court** will be the chairperson of the NHRC. In case of SHRC, the Bill amends this to provide that a person who has been Chief Justice or Judge of a High Court will be chairperson of a SHRC.
- **Inclusion of woman member:** The Act provides for two persons having knowledge of human rights to be appointed as members of the NHRC. The Bill amends this to **allow three members to be appointed, of which at least one will be a woman.**
- **Other members:** Under the Act, chairpersons of various commissions such as the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, and National Commission for Women are members of the NHRC. The Bill provides for **including the chairpersons of the National Commission for Backward Classes, the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights, and the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities** as members of the NHRC.
- **Term of office:** The Act states that the chairperson and members of the NHRC and SHRC will hold office for five years or till the age of seventy years, whichever is earlier. The Bill reduces the term of office to three years or till the age of seventy years, whichever is earlier. Further, the Act allows for the reappointment of members of the NHRC and SHRCs for a period of five years. The Bill removes the five-year limit for reappointment.
- **Powers of Secretary-General:** The Act provides for a Secretary-General of the NHRC and a Secretary of a SHRC, who exercise powers as may be delegated to them. The Bill amends this and allows the Secretary-General and Secretary to exercise all administrative and financial powers (except judicial functions), subject to the respective chairperson's control.
- **Union Territories:** The Bill provides that the central government may confer on a SHRC human rights functions being discharged by Union Territories. Functions relating to human rights in the case of Delhi will be dealt with by the NHRC.

Pros of the bill:

- The Amendment will strengthen the Human Rights Institutions of India further for **effective discharge of their mandates, roles and responsibilities.**

- Moreover, the amended Act will be in perfect sync with the agreed global standards and benchmarks towards **ensuring the rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual** in the country.
- The amendment will also make National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) **more compliant with the Paris Principle** concerning **its autonomy, independence, pluralism and wide-ranging functions** in order to effectively protect and promote human rights.
- Representation of all walks of members of society. The Bill incorporates every section of society, which will be beneficial in taking appropriate decision making.
- The amendment will ensure transparency in the appointment of chairman and members of the commission and will help fill all the vacancies with the wider ambit of knowledgeable person

Shortcomings of the bill:

- The government will now have a free choice for the NHRC chairperson as the amendments removes the qualification for chairperson. It will not be limited to former chief justices of the Supreme court but it can now choose any of the Supreme Court's retired judges. This could lead to conflicts of interest.
- The proposed amendment provides for a reduction in the tenure of Chairpersons of the National and State Human Rights Commissions to three years from the present five years.
- The proposed amendments could lead to a pick-and-choose system in the human rights bodies. In case a Chief Justice is available, will he be overlooked in favour of a hand-picked judge.
- There have been no changes in the executive powers of the NHRC, it still remains a recommendatory body.
- There is no inclusion of human rights specialists in the NHRC members.

Way forward:

- The efficacy of commissions will be greatly enhanced if their decisions are made enforceable by the government.
- It is also important to give this body a separate investigating branch so that they would have not to fall upon any other agency for their work.
- Misuse of laws by the law enforcing agencies is often the root cause of human right violations.
- So, the weakness of laws should be removed and those laws should be amended or repealed if they run contrary to human rights.

Appointment of a chief of defence staff (CDS), would constitute the most significant defence policy reform in decades for India. Comment.(250 words)

[Livemint](#)

Why this question:

In his Independence Day address, Prime Minister announced the creation of the post of Chief of Defence Staff.

Key demand of the question:

Answer must evaluate the significance of such an appointment and in what way it can bring significant change in the Defence wings of the country.

Directive:

Comment— here we have to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and form an overall opinion thereupon.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Define who is a CDS – The CDS is a high military office that oversees and coordinates the working of the three Services.

Body:

Discuss about the CDS, roles and functions of such an office – CDS shall provide “effective leadership at the top level” to the three wings of the armed forces, and to help improve coordination among them.

It offers seamless tri-service views and single-point advice to the Executive (in India’s case, to the Prime Minister) on long-term defence planning and management, including manpower, equipment and strategy, and above all, “jointmanship” in operations.

Explain in depth the case of having a CDS for the country.

Conclusion:

Conclude with significance.

Introduction:

The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) is a **high military office that oversees and coordinates the working of the three Services**, and **offers seamless tri-service views and single-point advice to the Executive** (in India’s case, to the Prime Minister) on **long-term defence planning and management**, including **manpower, equipment and strategy**, and above all, **“jointmanship” in operations**. It shall **provide “effective leadership at the top level” to the three wings of the armed forces**, and to help **improve coordination among them**.

Body:

Need for office of CDS:

- The move was considered necessary after the 1999 Kargil War and was first approved by the Atal Bihari Vajpayee cabinet in May 2001.
- India has had a feeble equivalent known as the Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee (CoSC); but a toothless office in the manner of its structure.
- The senior-most among the three Service Chiefs is appointed to head the CoSC, an office that lapses with the incumbent’s retirement.
- The post did not further tri-service integration, resulting in inefficiency and an expensive duplication of assets.
- By 2001, it had become clear to the leaders of India’s strategic establishment that jointness—the combination of land, sea and air power—was necessary to effectively combat adversaries,

who employed everything from terrorists and militants to regular troops through to nuclear weapons.

- With information, cyberspace and space becoming military domains already, the jointness which is required surpasses merely getting the groups in uniform together.

CDS – a significant defence policy reform:

- The appointment of the CDS will certainly change the civil-military balance, and, if done correctly, will address some of the grievances of the Armed Forces pertaining to their status vis-à-vis the civil services.
- The underlying rationale for appointing a CDS is to separate management and command of the Armed Forces.
- To take the logic of the CDS to its conclusion, the Armed Forces must be operationally restructured into theatre commands—complete joint war-fighting formations—led by combatant commanders.
- In the years ahead, a combination of climate change, violent non-state actors and volatile politics will increase the demands on the government to deploy military forces beyond the subcontinent.
- Despite a multitude of threats, India's Armed Forces have very limited capacity to operate overseas. Hence, the need for an expeditionary CDS.
- From a defence policy perspective, the CDS presents us with the opportunity to optimize defence economics and make expenditure more effective.

Way forward:

- To take the logic of the CDS to its conclusion, the Armed Forces should be operationally restructured into theatre commands
- The late strategic thinker K. Subrahmanyam argued that the army and navy chiefs should first hand over their command to theatre commanders, with the air chief doing so at a later stage.
- Three theatres are straightforward: Northern, Western and Southern to address the threats from China, Pakistan and the Indian Ocean, respectively.
- He envisaged doubling the air force to 60 squadrons by 2030 and placing them under theatre commands.

Conclusion:

Most countries with advanced militaries have such a post, albeit with varying degrees of power and authority. The United States Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS), for example, is extremely powerful, with a legislated mandate and sharply delineated powers. The role of the CDS becomes critical in times of conflict.

The automobile sector of the country is in the news as it is experiencing prolonged negative growth. What are the reasons? Why are jobs being lost? And how can the government help? Discuss. (250 words)

The hindu

Why this question:

The article captures the sudden slump being witnessed in the automobile industry in the country.

Key demand of the question:

Explain the causes for the slump in the automobile sector, the loss of jobs that is being witnessed and what the government needs to do to overcome the challenges and the concerns.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Discuss the current situation of automobile industry in the country.

Body:

Quote data from the article indicating the slowdown in the markets, explain the causative factors – global and domestic economic slowdown, lack of will in people to buy owing to policy changes in the tax regime, electric vehicles, BS VI reforms etc.

Explain what needs to be done by the government like –

A reduction in GST to 18% from the current rate of 28% will help in an immediate price reduction.

Measures to handle the NBFC crisis will help infuse the much-needed liquidity into the system ahead of the coming festive season.

Clarity on policy for electric vehicles and introduction of vehicle scrappage policy will also boost demand for new vehicles.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way ahead.

Introduction:

The Indian automobile industry, the world's fourth-largest, has finally embraced a slowdown after a near-decade of high growth. The Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) announced that in July, the sale of vehicles across categories in the country slumped 18.71% to about 18.25 lakh units, down from about 22.45 lakh units, a year ago in the same month. This has been the steepest fall in nearly 19 years.

Body:

With the industry failing to arrest the downturn that started almost a year ago, despite deep discounts and new model launches, it has been forced to undertake production cuts.

Reasons for the slump in sales:

- Domestic passenger vehicle sales declined for the first time after nine months in July 2018.
- In July 2017, vehicle sales spiked due to the benefits extended by the rollout of the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

- However, demand failed to pick up in August and September, after the floods in Kerala and heavy rainfall in several other States.
- In the ensuing months, consumer sentiment remained subdued as the total cost of vehicle ownership went up largely due to an increase in fuel prices, higher interest rates and a hike in vehicle insurance costs.
- In such an environment, the festive season too failed to boost demand, leading to a huge inventory pile-up with dealers.
- To add to this, the IL&FS crisis late last year led to a **severe liquidity crunch**, almost drying up credit for dealers and customers.
- Nearly half the vehicles sold in rural markets — a segment that has been witnessing a higher growth rate in comparison to urban markets — are financed by non-banking financial companies (NBFCs).
- Being stuck with higher inventory due to a lacklustre festive season, dealers too needed more working capital.
- There is also a possibility that some customers are waiting to buy the latest Bharat Stage (BS)-VI emission standard compliant vehicles or are waiting for more incentives from vehicle makers who will be looking to sell off their BS-IV compliant stocks before the April 1, 2020 deadline.

Reasons for Jobs loss:

- The automobile sector is one of the largest employers in the country, employing about 37 million people, directly and indirectly.
- The prolonged demand slowdown has triggered production as well as job cuts in the sector.
- According to the latest figures that are available, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) have removed about 15,000 temporary workers in the past two to three months.
- A lack of working capital amid tepid demand has led to closure of nearly 300 dealerships across the country.
- This has led to over two lakh people losing their jobs, according to the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA), the apex national body of automobile retail industry engaged in the sale, service and spares of two- and three-wheelers, passenger cars, utility vehicles, commercial vehicles (including buses and trucks) and tractors.
- Separately, the Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India (ACMA) warned in July that 10 lakh jobs were at risk and urgent action was needed to bring the industry back on track.

Measures needed:

- The industry's demands include a reduction in GST to 18% from the current rate of 28%, which will help in an immediate price reduction. It could kick-start demand in the short term, particularly ahead of the coming festive season.
- Besides, it has sought measures to handle the NBFC crisis to infuse liquidity into the system
- clarity on policy for electric vehicles
- Introduction of vehicle scrappage policy, which will also boost demand for new vehicles.
- Limit has to be imposed on state government to levy road tax.
- Saving rate has to be improved as long term measure which raises the purchasing power.
- Nudge to improve exports.

Conclusion:

The automobile sector is one of the few success stories that India has and perhaps the only one in manufacturing. If half the manufacturing GDP of the country is in doldrums and declining sales of cars, two wheelers and trucks will result in lower GST collections, the government's already precarious fiscal math could worsen further in 2019-20. Reviving the automobile sector should, therefore, become one of the top priorities of the government.

Unless we sight migrant workers as a dynamic part of a changing India, the problems concerning Urbanization will remain unaddressed. Comment.(250 words)

Livemint

Why this question:

The article presents the case study of migrant issue in the country and in what way it is associated with the problems of urbanisation.

Demand of the question:

Explain the interrelationship that exists between the migrants and the urbanization in the country.

Directive word:

Comment— here we have to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and form an overall opinion thereupon.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction

State data for migrants from the article.

Body

Explain briefly the current trends of migration in India and in what way it is impacting the urban landscape

Discuss the issues posed by migrants, also explain why they face vulnerabilities and thus fail to contribute productively and act as a counterproductive mechanism to the urban areas.

Explain what needs to be done to ensure migrants contribute to the productivity, suggest solutions.

Conclusion

Conclude with suitable solutions to the problems.

Introduction:

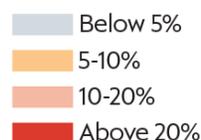
Migration is defined as the movement of people from one place to another across the political boundaries- national (internal) or international. It is an integral part and an important factor in redistributing the population over time and space. Migrants who move within the boundaries of their own country are known as internal migrants.

Body:

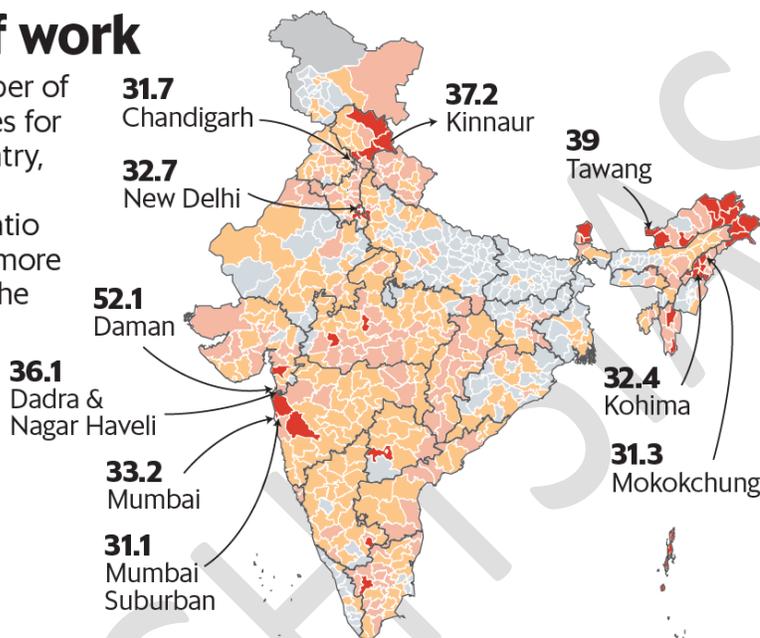
In search of work

Despite a large number of people moving places for work inside the country, there are only a few districts where the ratio of such migration is more than 20%. Here are the top ten districts.

Those migrating for work/business as % of total migrants



Source: Census 2011



Migration trends:

- Census 2011 says 45 million Indians moved outside their district of birth for work opportunities—be it employment or business.
- Of the 640 districts in 2011, just 5 accounted for 15% of all migrants who moved in for employment opportunities.
- Each was home to more than a million migrants who moved there for work—Thane (1.6 million), Bangalore (1.5 million), Mumbai Suburban (1.3 million), Pune (1.2 million) and Surat (1 million).
- In terms of inflows, there are only 57 districts across India where more than 20% of migrants moved for work reasons. These are the districts that hold the promise of employment opportunities.
- Across India, 25% of migrants who changed states did so for work. Only 8% of intra-state migrations were for work and employment.

Urbanization challenges encountered by migrant workers:

- **Employment in informal economy:** Migrants dominate the urban informal economy which is marked by high poverty and vulnerabilities. In an unorganized and chaotic labour market, migrant workers regularly face conflicts and disputes at worksites. The common issues they face are non-payment of wages, physical abuse, accidents and even death at work.
- **Issue of Identification documents:** Proving their identity is one of the core issues faced by poor migrant labourers at destination areas. The basic problem of establishing identity results in a loss of access to entitlements and social services, such as subsidized food, fuel, health services, or education that are meant for the economically vulnerable sections of the population.
- **Housing:** Lack of affordable housing in Indian cities force migrants to live in slums. Many seasonal migrants are not even able to afford rents in slums force them to live at their workplaces (such as construction sites and hotel dining rooms), shop pavements, or in open areas in the city
- **Financial Access:** Migrant workers have limited access to formal financial services and remain unbanked
- **Access to healthcare:** Migrant workers have poor access to health services, which results in very poor occupational health.
- **Education of children:** UNESCO's 2019 Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM Report) shows that children left behind by migrating parents and seasonal migrants face fewer educational opportunities overall. According to the report, 80% of migrant children across seven Indian cities did not have access to education near worksites. Among youth aged 15 to 19 who have grown up in a rural household with a seasonal migrant, 28% were identified as illiterate or had an incomplete primary education.
- **Social exclusion:** There is a growing hostility of urban governments, as well as middle-class citizens, towards the urban poor, especially migrants to the cities.
- **Political exclusion:** Migrant workers are deprived of many opportunities to exercise their political rights. A 2011 study pointed out that 22% of seasonal migrant workers in India did not possess voter IDs or have their names in the voter list.
- **At policy level** the major challenge is to formulate migration policies which must be linked with employment and social services, to enhance the well-being of the migrant living in urban area.

Measures to improve the delivery of services to migrant worker:

- There is an urgent need to develop a coherent legal and policy framework on migration. Policy can have two dimensions: reducing distress-induced migration and address conditions of work, terms of employment and access to basic necessities.
- Development strategies in backward rural areas should be strengthened to provide sustainable livelihood opportunities, food security programmes and creating opportunities for access to credit.

- Further, focus should be given on **improving rural infrastructure- health, education and connectivity.**
- A concerted national strategy that ensures access to entitlements and basic work conditions is necessary to address the plight of migrant workers.
- Internal migrants should be able to access legal aid and counselling to protect them from work and wage-related malpractice, and to ensure they have access to grievance handling and dispute resolution mechanisms.
- There is an urgent need to ensure that internal migrants are issued with a universally recognised and portable proof of identity that can form the basis on which to claim other socio-economic entitlements anywhere in the country.
- Overall processes of governance need to be democratized in order to include internal migrants in decision making processes and planning
- Education provisions should be sufficiently flexible to ensure that mobile populations are not left out.
- Initiatives should be taken to foster social inclusion of migrants and reduce discrimination.

Way forward:

- A national policy on migration should facilitate the integration of migrants into the local urban fabric, and building city plans with a regular migration forecast assumed.
- Lowering the cost of migration, along with eliminating discrimination against migrants, while protecting their rights will help raise development across the board.
- It should distinguish between the interventions aimed at ‘migrants for survival’ and ‘migrants for employment’.
- It should provide more space to local bodies and NGOs which bring about structural changes in local regions.
- It should focus on measures enhancing skill development would enable easier entry into the labour market.
- It should also distinguish between individual and household migrants, because household migration necessitates access to infrastructure such as housing, sanitation and health care more than individual migration does.
- The policy should improve financial infrastructure to enable the smooth flow of remittances and their effective use require more attention from India’s growing financial sector.

“Kashmir needs a new leadership emerging from the development narrative of the 21st century, not the separatist themes of the 20th century.” Comment. (250 words)

[Indianexpress](#)

Why this question:

The article discusses the need for new leadership in Kashmir given the current situation post abrogation of article 370 and 35A.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must provide for a comparison between developmental leadership and separatist leadership. And suggest why there is a need for newer leadership.

Directive:

Comment– here we must express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and form an overall opinion thereupon.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Discuss in brief the background of the issue in J and K.

Body:

The answer must explain the essence of the right leadership.

Explain the demerits of a separatist regime of leadership.

Compare and contrast it with the need of developmental leadership which is much needed for the valley.

Conclusion:

Conclude with solutions and suggest a way forward.

Introduction:

The government recently introduced a **resolution to remove provisions of Article 370**, which provides special status to Jammu and Kashmir. In addition, Home Minister also introduced a Bill bifurcating the State of Jammu of Kashmir into Union Territory of Ladakh and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The Presidential Order has extended all provisions of the Constitution to Jammu and Kashmir, including the chapter on Fundamental Rights. Therefore, the discriminatory provisions under Article 35A are now unconstitutional.

Body:

Separatist leadership in J&K:

- All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) is an alliance of 26 political, social and religious organizations formed on March 9, 1993, as a united political front to raise the cause of Kashmiri separatism.
- Separatist politics which surfaced in Kashmir from 1989 has taken different forms and is made up of various strands.
- There is one strand of separatists who want a separate Kashmiri nation, independent of India and Pakistan.
- Then there are groups that want Kashmir to merge with Pakistan.
- Besides these, there is a third strand which wants greater autonomy for the people of the state within the Indian union.
- The separatists are relevant because of a sentiment, which is not voted on in any election. The other reason why they remain relevant is their utility to the state at times of crises.

- When Kashmir was up in arms during the public agitations from 2008-10, New Delhi sent high-level delegations to speak to the separatists in a bid to calm tempers.
- The fact that Pakistan considers the separatists as representatives of the people is also an important reason to think of them as relevant on the ground.

Demerits of separatist leadership:

- The misuse of power by a handful of leaders in the Valley has left the ordinary Kashmiri in misery.
- The NIA has alleged that its probe into terror financing in Jammu and Kashmir has revealed that hardline separatist leaders received funds from abroad and utilised them for personal gains — from amassing properties to paying for foreign education of their kin.
- There are also allegations of Pakistan funding a sect of separatist leaders which amount to arson.
- It is also alleged that “one dead body a day” used to be the strategy of the separatist and terrorist establishment because each casualty would be used to foment more trouble and violence.

Measures needed: There is a need for sustained and coordinated efforts of public outreach involving **all the key stakeholders.**

State:

- Non-violent and democratic methods to achieve political aspirations.
- The way out of the deadlock is **to strengthen democracy.**
- **Empowerment of Local Governments** which involves people at the grassroots level.
- Setting aside of the mutual fears of the people of Jammu and of Kashmir and bringing the people of Ladakh into this ambit as well.
- **Socio economic development through various governmental schemes.**
- **Conducting recruitment rallies to employ the youth,** who are in a different state of mind.

Security Forces:

- While the army’s **Operation Sadbhavna (a military civic action initiative of 20 years)** has helped in extending marginal outreach, the lack of mass engagement has prevented the development of any perception change and the creation of alternative narratives to counter the propaganda from Pakistan and the separatists.
- **Direct outreach:** conduct of public meetings or “awami sunwais” in the field in areas where the reach of the administration had become marginal. **Example:** Awami Sunwai’s of the past.

- Maximum opportunity to the common citizens to **speak, criticise and complain**, so they can realise that there are enough people willing to listen rather than talk down to the common Kashmiri.
- Need to engage the security personnel especially army and CRPF for public outreach and conduct of public meetings and include the politicians and the public officials along with.

Religious heads:

- Involvement of **local clergies** who has substantial hold on the local populace and seek its cooperation in messaging the youth and others on the uniqueness of the Indian system.
- Exploitation of social media, as much as the countering of online propaganda of radicalisation.

Non-State Actors:

- The other major determinant is J&K is the part of Non-State Actors like Separatists, Neighbouring Pakistan and the state sponsored terrorists.
- They have a considerable hold on the people and their opinions.
- Engaging the non-state actors through **interlocutors, Tier-2 diplomacy** should help alleviate the fears and misunderstandings that have cropped up.

Media:

- Media described as the fourth pillar of democracy plays a very vital role.
- They are responsible for reporting of the incidents in a true and unvitiated manner. However, the political patronage and ownership by big media houses has made more one sided views.
- With internet on the surge and ease of access of information at tips, they help in shaping the views and opinions of people.
- Media should be ethical and democratic in its approach. It should spread the message of peace and harmony across people.

Conclusion:

The significant move, in theory, opens up potential opportunities for development-led economic growth in the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh. Thus, the move is bound to have a significant impact on the demography, culture, and politics of J&K. Whatever its intent in enabling the full integration of Jammu and Kashmir with India, this decision to alter the State's status could have unintended and dangerous consequences.

Do you agree that the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act could prove catastrophic for fundamental rights? Is sacrificing liberty for national security justified? Discuss and provide for your opinion.(250 words)

The hindu

Why this question:

In Parliament this month, former Union Minister P. Chidambaram questioned the need for certain amendments to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967. The Bill empowers the Central government to name any individual a terrorist if it believes him or her to be so.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must debate over the cost of declaring individuals terrorist in the UPA act, in what way it violates fundamental rights.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Describe the recent amendments made to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act.

Body:

The answer must first bring out the key changes that were made recently by the parliament.

Explain in what way these changes pose questions on the fundamental rights at the price of national security.

Take hints from the article and explain both pros and cons of such a move.

Conclusion:

Conclude by suggesting what needs to be done.

Introduction:

The Parliament recently approved an amendment to the anti-terror law – Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act to give **powers to the central government to designate an individual as terrorist and seize his properties**. Home Minister said a four-level scrutiny has been provided in the amendment and no human rights will be violated.

Body:

Key Features of the Bill:

- It empowers the government to designate individuals as terrorists if the person commits or participates in acts of terrorism, prepares for terrorism, promotes terrorism or is otherwise involved in terrorism.
- This has been done as it is seen that when a terrorist organization is banned, its members form a new organization to spread terrorism.
- The bill also empowers the Director-General, National Investigation Agency (NIA) to grant approval of seizure or attachment of property when the case is being investigated by the agency.
- Under the existing Act, the investigating officer is required to obtain the prior approval of the Director General of Police (DGP) to seize properties that bear any connection to terrorism.
- It has been seen that many times a terror accused own properties in different states. In such cases, seeking approval of DGPs of different states becomes very difficult, and the delay caused by the same may enable the accused to transfer properties.
- It empowers the officers of the NIA — of the rank of Inspector or above, to investigate cases.

- The existing Act provides for investigation of cases to be conducted by officers of the rank of Deputy Superintendent or Assistant Commissioner of Police or above.
- No changes being made in arrest or bail provisions. Also, the provision that the burden of proof is on the investigating agency and not on the accused, has not been changed.
- The International Convention for Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (2005) has also been added in the Second Schedule through the Amendment.

Impact on Fundamental rights:

- It allows the central government to name an individual as a terrorist if it “believes” without any formal judicial process, which is against the principles of natural justice.
- The name of such a person will be included in the ‘Fourth Schedule’ proposed to be added in the parent Act. The only statutory remedy available to such a person is to make an application before the Central Government for de-notification, which will be considered by a Review Committee constituted by the Government itself.
- An official designation as a terrorist will be akin to ‘civil death’ for a person, with social boycott, expulsion from job, hounding by media, and perhaps attack from self-proclaimed vigilante groups following.
- The Amendment poses threat to different viewpoints and goes against the freedom of speech and expression of an individual.
- The law could target minorities or a section of people thereby affecting their cultural rights.
- Provisions of the UAPA have an extremely wide ambit, which makes it possible to use them against not just criminals and terrorists, but even authors, academics, lawyers for alleged terrorists, and human rights activists.
- **Indefinite Imprisonment without Trial:** Even if the person is eventually acquitted of the charges, the delays in conducting judicial proceedings mean the case may only get heard several years after their arrest – failure to get bail means they have to spend the entire time in jail.
- The Act also interferes with the privacy and liberty of individuals contravening the provisions which protect against arbitrary or unlawful interference with a person’s privacy and home.
- The Act allows for searches, seizures and arrests based on the ‘personal knowledge’ of the police officers without a written validation from a superior judicial authority.

Liberty v/s National Security:

- This law is aimed at effective prevention of unlawful activities associations in India.
- Its main objective is to make powers available for dealing with activities directed against the integrity and sovereignty of India.

- But there must be a distinction between an individual and an organisation, and it must be kept in mind that the Constitution guarantees the former the right to life and liberty.
- Benjamin Franklin said: “Those who would give up essential Liberty, to purchase a little temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety.”

Way forward:

- There is a need to undertake structural changes to provide transparency in the proceedings to make UAPA act more accountable.
- Proper justification must be provided for the seizure of the properties and assets of an individual.
- The bill must ensure judicial solutions to the wrongly accused to safeguard the individual’s dignity, freedom and equality in the society.
- The government must also rethink regarding the issues pertaining to the rights of life and liberty, and to federalism.

Conclusion:

In civilised nations, from whom India has taken its Constitution and its laws, the criminal justice system is about the rights of the accused. That is also the foundation of our justice system. The very idea of the UAPA and the decision to start naming people terrorists without securing a conviction from a court of law, goes against the principles of natural justice.

Big data innovations, viz. large data sets from mobile phone tracking to satellite platforms reveal patterns, trends, and associations of disaster risks. Discuss the importance of Big Data in handling disasters. (250 words)

Reference

Why this question:

The question is based on the context of use of big data innovations in managing disasters in the country.

Key demand of the question:

One must relate the relevance of use of big data technology and innovations to disaster management.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

In short define what are big data innovations.

Body:

Explain that Disasters are dangerous, but Big Data can help improve disaster relief and preparedness to cut back on lives lost and community damage. Over the last two decades, remarkable innovations such as the Internet of things (IoT) have entered the mainstream. While the intensity of natural disasters is increasing, advances in communications because of this technology has greatly reduced casualties and injuries. Big Data technology has proven its merit as a resource for disaster relief and preparedness. It

helps emergency responder agencies identify and track populations such as elderly communities or areas with high concentrations of babies and children.

Additionally, Big Data systems help rescue workers identify support resources and plan logistics during emergencies. Big data also facilitates real-time communication during a disaster, and emergency managers use the technology to forecast how residents will react to crises.

Substantiate your answer by quoting recent examples.

Conclusion:

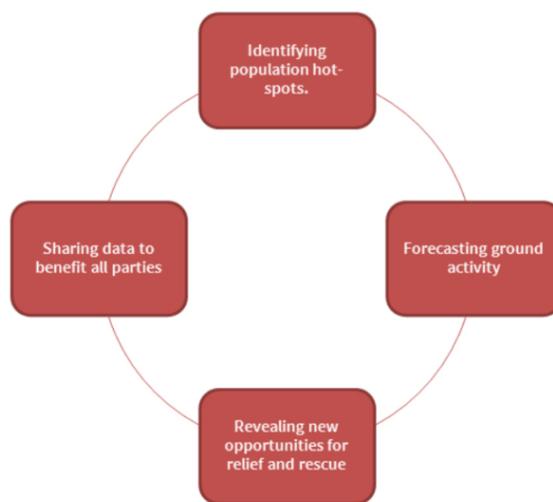
Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

Disaster management is a **systematic process with primary aim to reduce the negative consequences and effect of disasters, hence safeguarding people and social infrastructure.** Effective management as well as monitoring of disasters is a global challenge. As the number and access to different datasets is expanding rapidly, the potential and utility of big data is growing for disaster management.

Body:

BIG DATA IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT: THE OPPORTUNITIES



Importance of Big Data in disaster management:

- Empower decision-makers to make accurate assessment during a disaster.
- Big data generated from geo-informatics and remote sensing platforms can contribute to early warning systems for disasters.
- Integration of different data streams, along with data processing and storage is effective for disaster preparedness.
- Help in the development of effective strategies and contribute to minimize the potential effects of disasters.

- Significance of big data analytics to predict occurrences of the floods and for flood management.
- It will help for timely humanitarian response to different disasters.
- Using **geospatial datasets** along with big data paradigm can provide location based services to avoid hazardous situations.
- It will also benefit in the identification of regions which need the most urgent attention.
- Enhance disaster recovery by utilizing community information and connecting victims with emergency responders and family.
- Connecting Missing People with Their Families. E.g.: Facebook mark safe.
- With big data, safety professionals can better prepare disaster simulations for more accurate implementations.
- Big Data opens up new career opportunities for those who want to find innovative ways to help others

Limitations:

- Understanding how to link different datasets with different kinds of disaster
- The potential of big data technology has not been fully explored for disaster management.
- Not all big data is public and freely available.
- Network security threats and vulnerabilities.
- Challenges related to protection of personal information and privacy

Way Forward:

- Integration of datasets along with providing access to information to agencies managing disasters is crucial to enable effective decision making.
- It's important to protect individuals' identifications and efforts should be put to anonymize the collected datasets.
- Leverage techniques from artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) to understand, correlate and draw findings from the disaster related data.
- Analysis from processed disasters information can help to identify the most effective strategies to respond future disasters.
- Ensure data consistency, accuracy and completeness for decision making processes.
- Need to investigate data mining challenges as well for disaster management.
- Security as well as privacy issues in data transmission and storage also need to be under constant investigation.

Conclusion:

Big data has a significant role in all phases of disaster management. Big data from sensor networks, social media, and from other sources are available and shows its usefulness in disaster management already. These big data help policy makers and first responders to come with quick and concrete decision on the number of people affected, type and nature of the damage and where to allocate the resource. Many natural hazard forecasting systems rely on big data. Early warning system for tsunami, storm, forest fire, and flood can be more accurate and reliable from these huge volumes of data. **Crowd-sourcing, cyber infrastructure, and cloud computing approach** can be used to get required information for emergency management by analysing big data. **Machine learning approach and parallel processing approach** might save valuable processing time during an emergency. The big data archive can be helpful for model development and validation to ensure more efficient disaster management. Despite having these challenges, research and data gathering on the usefulness of big data in disaster management are ongoing. The disaster managers and policy makers will get more confidence on the usefulness of big data in disaster management.

Comment upon state of teachers training and education in India. What according to you are the reasons for poor quality of teachers training? Discuss the recent policy initiatives taken in this direction. (250 words)

The hindubuisnessline

Why this question:

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) launched the National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancements (NISHTHA) recently, which is aimed at training over 42 lakh teachers across the country.

Demand of the question:

The answer must evaluate in detail the current conditions of teacher training and education in India. One must discuss the reasons for poor quality of teacher training and suggest solutions.

Directive word:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction

In brief discuss the significance of teachers training and quote some relevant facts.

Body

Discuss the reasons for poor quality of teachers training –

For years, certain institutions which impart teacher training courses have failed to get the necessary recognition from the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE).

The future of those who graduate from such institutions, which are funded by the Central/ State government or Union Territory administration concerned, has been in jeopardy.

Certain institutions failed to obtain recognition and permission from the Council, though they continued to admit students for teacher education and training courses.

Irrelevant licensing and privatization of Teachers Education Institutes leading to low quality training of teachers.

Huge number of TEIs being either corrupt or dysfunctional.

Increasing number of teachers with substandard training because of lack of faculty in TEIs.

Then explain the importance of teacher training, explain recent initiatives taken in this direction etc.

Conclusion

Conclude with significance of teacher training.

Introduction:

Teachers play a vital role in educating and inspiring the young generation to become the demographic dividend of the future generation. NGO **Pratham's Annual Status of Education Report** shows that **India's persistently low-learning outcomes gain momentum once again**. Quality of education is depends upon the quality of teacher. Teachers' training in India is unable to cover tough spots and follows a 'one-size-fits-all' approach.

Body:

Economist Eric Hanushek finds that a **child taught by a good teacher gains 1.5 grade-level equivalents, while a child taught by a bad teacher only gets half an academic year's worth**. Teacher Education is a crucial area which urgently needs focus in order to develop the standards of pedagogy in India. It is suffering from many **deficiencies and structural issues**

- Majority of aspiring teachers do not have basic concepts of mathematics, leave aside teaching to students.
- Results of TET shows dismal figures of **only 3-4 percent of them passing the eligibility test**.
- Although NCTE lays down the minimum qualification criterion for appointing teachers at various level, but some states have sought relaxation in minimum qualification in recruitment as teachers. This has created a large pool of **'untrained teachers'**. Around **20 percent of regular teachers and 40 percent of contract teachers** did not have professional qualifications for elementary education.
- Teachers in India, especially those in the government school system, are largely seen as a **governance problem**, with the focus on getting them into the classroom rather than developing their skills and motivation.
- Those teachers not meeting the qualification were mandated to get it within five years, but this remains unmet.
- **Widespread corruption** in appointment of teachers as seen in Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and with variation in other states also.
- A **National Council of Educational Research and Training** study finds there is no systematic incorporation of teacher feedback into designing trainings, and little variation or consideration of local issues. There is no measure of whether this is translated into classroom practice.
- Nearly **half the teachers** believe that not all children could achieve excellent educational outcomes because of their socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Only **25% incorporate activity-based learning** and **33% use storytelling or role-play** in their pedagogic approach, either because these weren't priorities or because they did not have time.

Government Initiative so far:

- The Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) launched the **National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancements (NISHTHA)** recently, aimed at training over 42 lakh teachers across the country.
- The ministry of human resource development and the National Council for Teacher Education in collaboration with non-government stakeholders launched the **National Teacher Platform or Diksha in 2017**.
- Diksha is envisioned as a one-stop solution to address teacher competency gaps through courses that address their skill gaps and by empowering them to “learn what they want, where they want”.
- State initiatives like **RISE** (Rajasthan Interface for School Educators), Rajasthan’s version of Diksha.
- **National Council for Teacher Education** plans and co-ordinates the development of teacher education system throughout the country.
- **Justice Verma Commission and Poonam Batra Committee** was appointed to look into teacher education. Their recommendations were based on creating new teacher education programmed in multi disciplinary environments.

Way forward:

- The **World Development Report On Education (2018)** states that “teacher skills and motivation both matter” and that individually-targeted, continued training is crucial to achieving learning improvements through teachers.
- **Better incentives for teachers:** Post training, there should be no differences in the salary of teachers, public or private. This will attract the best young minds towards this profession and will help it regain lost ground.
- Investments in teacher capacity through stronger training programmes. Teachers need to **unlearn and relearn the subjects** and the way it should be taught. There is **no point in teaching and employing rote learning**, for just passing the examination.
- Teacher training programmes should be **complemented by focus-group discussions with local NGOs and community-based organizations**.
- The teacher training models should have the **ability to provide continuous professional development through a blended model, complementing existing physical trainings**.
- A **technology-enabled platform** which allows training to become a **continuous activity** rather than an annual event is necessary.
- Apart from creating good content, it is also important to **consider teachers’ technology consumption patterns, the potential of gamification to drive up engagement** and the **role of headmasters in promoting teachers’ professional development**.

Conclusion:

Teachers are important. This importance doesn't stem from their exalted mythical status, but from their role as professionals and critical levers in defining the quality of education children receive. Thus, Teacher education program forms the back bone of education system of a nation.

Complete penetration of clean cooking fuel and cookstoves in rural India requires more of a behavioural and attitudinal change rather than policies that promote clean cooking alone. Critically examine in the light of successes achieved by Ujjwala scheme in comparison to the past efforts in this direction. (250 words)

The hindu

Why this question:

The article emphasizes on the fact that Complete penetration of clean cooking fuel and cookstoves in rural India requires a multi-pronged approach.

Key demand of the question:

One must discuss in detail the significance of behavioural and attitudinal change required to bring change in cooking fuel methods in the rural pockets of the country.

Directive:

***Critically examine** – When asked to 'Examine', we have to look into the topic (content words) in detail, inspect it, investigate it and establish the key facts and issues related to the topic in question. While doing so we should explain why these facts and issues are important and their implications. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.*

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

In brief explain the background of the scenario.

Body:

Explain first the need of getting rid of conventional cooking methods, necessity of clean cooking fuel methods.

What are the multiple factors that affect clean cooking choices?

Explain how the policies have evolved over time in terms of addressing the issue.

Discuss the significance of Ujjwala scheme and in what way it addresses the behavioral and attitudinal aspects.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way ahead.

Introduction:

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) is a scheme of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas for providing LPG connections to women from **Below Poverty Line (BPL) households**. India is home to more than 24 Crore households out of which about 10 Crore households are still deprived of LPG as cooking fuel and have to rely on firewood, coal, dung – cakes etc. as primary source of cooking.

The PMUY has helped the spread of LPG cylinders predominantly in the urban and semi-urban areas with the coverage mostly in middle class and affluent households. It aims to safeguard the health of

women & children by providing them with a clean cooking fuel – LPG, so that they don't have to compromise their health in smoky kitchens or wander in unsafe areas collecting firewood.

Body:

Achievements:

- The oil ministry's Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) estimates that LPG coverage in India (the proportion of households with an LPG connection) has increased from 56% in 2015 to 90% in 2019. There is a significant increase in eastern states, with 48% of the beneficiaries being SC/STs.
- The government reports show that around 80% of the beneficiaries have been refilling cylinders, with average per capita consumption being 3.28 cylinders.
- PMUY has resulted in an additional employment of around 1 Lakh and provide business opportunity of at least Rs. 10,000 Crore in last 3 Years to the Indian Industry.
- The scheme has also provided a boost to the 'Make in India' campaign as all the manufacturers of cylinders, gas stoves, regulators, and gas hose are domestic.
- PMUY reduces these ill-effects by providing clean fuel and cutting out on drudgery. Increased use of cooking gas will shrink the incidence of tuberculosis in India, based on the statistics from the latest National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) on TB prevalence.
- PMUY has helped in reducing the drudgery for women. The time saved can be used in socio-economically productive activities like **Self-Help Group activities**.
- The **World Health Organisation** hailed PMUY as decisive intervention by the government to facilitate the switch to clean household energy use, thereby addressing the problems associated with Indoor Household Pollution.

However, given the **scale** of the scheme there are some **implementation shortcomings** of the scheme

Cost issues:

- Consumers were paying market price for refills till the loan repayment for stove and first refill was made. This led to some consumers not going in for such refills.
- **Economic Burden:** The **increased monthly expenditure** has shied many consumers away from LPG and lured them back to firewood and cow-dung cakes.
- The **CEEW study** across Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal and Odisha found people were unwilling to pay upfront Rs.900-1,000 for a 14 kg refill.
- A **CRISIL Study** shows that of those surveyed, 86% said they had not shifted from biomass to LPG because the price of installing a connection was too high. Almost the same number – 83% – said the price of refills was too high.

Administrative issues:

- The government claims that around 80% of the beneficiaries have been refilling cylinders, with average per capita consumption being 3.28 cylinders. But there are implementation issues with the scheme in Madhya Pradesh, for instance.
- Aadhar seeding also faces issues caused by data discrepancies, especially where the spelling of names is concerned as a result of which applicants can find themselves unable to register for the scheme.

Logistic issues:

- Lack of LPG cylinder bottling plants near rural areas and connectivity issues especially in the tribal areas.
- Last-mile connectivity and delivery still poses a great challenge.

Safety and Behavioural issues:

- Safety has been another concern about distribution of LPG connection, especially to BPL families. Lack of awareness and safety amenities in beneficiary households have increased the likelihood of accidents.
- Cow-dung cakes lying around the house all the time. Hence, LPG cylinders are used on special occasions or during some kind of emergency or when it's entirely too hot to burn wood.
- The CRISIL report also noted that 37% of households in rural areas procure cooking fuel for free.
- **Agency:** Most rural women do not have a say in determining when a refill is ordered, even though the connection is in their name.

Way Forward:

- **Increase Affordability:** A case in point is state-run fuel retailers introducing a 5kg refill option to make purchases affordable.
- **Increase Accessibility:** Gas Agencies should be set up within 10km radius, especially in the rural and remote areas to increase accessibility.
- **Increase Availability:** Alternatives like Gas-grid and piped connections in cities and areas near the bottling plants can free up the cylinders for other areas.
- **Promote 'Give it up':** The initiative of the government to persuade the well-off to give up the LPG subsidies has added to the corpus of PMUY. Similar initiatives can be promoted.
- **Encourage Private Players** to set up LPG franchises at rural areas.
- **Sensitization and Education** of safe use of LPG through **LPG Panchayats, NGO's etc.**

Conclusion:

PMUY is a novel scheme having twin benefits of women empowerment as well as environmental conservation. Ironing out the implementation issues can reap the envisioned benefits and lead to a sustainable future in energy consumption.

Should States have their own flags in India? Discuss the key provisions of Flag Code of India, 2002 and justify your opinion if possibilities of having a state flag would amount to the threat of national integrity. (250 words)

Indianexpress

Why this question:

In March 2018, the government of former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had unveiled the proposed official state flag for Karnataka, and sent it to the central government for approval, with a request to include it in the Schedule of the Emblems and Names (Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1950. Recently the issue is back in fore with the incumbent govt. not willing to pursue the fact further.

Key demand of the question:

One must discuss in detail the Questions of nationalism and sub nationalism in separate Kannada flag.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

In brief narrate the background of the issue.

Body:

Explain that the only state in India so far to have a separate state official flag was Jammu and Kashmir, which enjoyed special status under Article 370 of Indian constitution.

Discuss the provisions in this context in the constitution – Supreme Court said that here is no prohibition in the Constitution for the State to have its own flag. However, the manner in which the state flag is hoisted should not dishonor the national flag.

Under the Constitution, a flag is not enumerated in the Seventh Schedule. However, Article 51A rules that every citizen shall abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the national flag, and the national anthem.

Then explain in what way assertion of regional identity has always been a tricky issue in a country as diverse as India.

Conclusion:

Conclude that there should be clear rule that flag of state cannot be a substitute of national flag and it should be smaller and fly lower. People against state flags say that the tricolor binds India together and any move to allow states to have flags would reduce the standing of the national flag. Allowing one state to have its own flag could trigger demands from other states too.

Introduction:

In March 2018, the government of former Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had unveiled the proposed official state flag for Karnataka, and sent it to the central government for approval, with a request to include it in the Schedule of the **Emblems and Names (Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1950**. The Karnataka state government set up a panel to explore if the state can have its own separate flag in 2018.

Body:

States and own flag:

- **State flag can be allowed:**
 - The state flag can be the representation of regional culture, aspirations and local representation.
 - Allowing display of state flag can be an innovative way to have expression of regional aspirations at national level.
 - The question arises that, if the state can declare its state animal, State plant and flower, the permission can also be given to have a State flag.
 - There has no mention of provision in constitution of India, that the state has restrictions to display its flag.
 - Thus even if any state adopts and displays any flag as a state flag, it is not unconstitutional.
- **State flag must not be allowed:**
 - India does not have any specific history of state flags and thus the demand of such flag must be of recent origin.
 - It has been observed that, the recent demands are highly separatist in nature and affect the internal security of the country.
 - The state flag which displays regional aspirations that goes against unity and integrity of the country must not be allowed.
 - The display of flag by one state may create a chain-link that can lead to more state opting for this course of action.

Flag code of India, 2002 provisions:

- The Flag Code of India, 2002 is a compilation of all the laws, conventions, practices, instructions and guidelines that govern the display of the National Flag. Knowingly or unknowingly, many citizens violate the Flag Code.
- The National flag should be hoisted at a height in a suitable manner.
- Whenever the flag is hoisted, it should occupy the position of honour and be distinctly placed.
- Where the practice is to fly the flag on any Government building, it should be flown on that building on all days including Sundays and holidays from sunrise to sunset, irrespective of the weather conditions.
- The flag should always be hoisted briskly and lowered slowly and ceremoniously. The hoisting and lowering should be simultaneous with the bugle calls.
- When the flag is displayed horizontally or at an angle from the window or balcony, of a building, the saffron band must be upper most.

- When the flag is flown during a public meeting, the speaker should face the audience and the flag should be displayed behind and to the right of the speaker or flat against the wall above and behind the speaker.
- When used on occasions like the unveiling of a statue, the flag shall be displayed distinctly and separately.
- When the flag is displayed on a car, it should be attached to a staff, which should be affixed firmly on the bonnet of the car.
- When the flag is carried in a procession or a parade, it should be held in the right hand. If there is a line of other flags, the National flag should be in the middle.
- The flag should not be stooped downwards in respect to any person or thing.
- No other flag should be hoisted higher than the National flag.
- The flag should not be used to cover or decorate the speaker's desk during any meeting.
- The National flag should never be displayed with the saffron band down.
- The flag should not be allowed to touch the ground or trail in water.
- The flag should not be displayed or fastened in a manner which might damage it.

Constitutional provisions about state flag:

- The Indian National flag represents the hopes and aspirations of the people of India.
- Supreme Court said that there is no prohibition in the Constitution for the State to have its own flag. However, the manner in which the state flag is hoisted should not dishonour the national flag.
- Under the Constitution, a flag is not enumerated in the Seventh Schedule.
- However, Article 51A rules that every citizen shall abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the national flag, and the national anthem.

Way forward:

- Assertion of regional identity has always been a tricky issue in a country as diverse as India.
- People against state flags say that the tricolour binds India together and any move to allow states to have flags would reduce the standing of the national flag.
- Allowing one state to have its own flag could trigger demands from other states too.
- Arguments in favour of the decision stress on the fact that states in both Germany and USA have their own flags without any danger of their imminent disintegration.
- The committee that is being setup has to look into legal ramifications of having a separate state flag.

- State government’s move to have a committee to look into the possibilities of having a state flag is anything that would amount to the threat of national integrity.
- However, there should be clear rules that flag of state cannot be substitute of national flag and it should be smaller and fly lower.

Discuss the key features of Fit India campaign, in your opinion to what extent can it help tackle rise in lifestyle disorders and diseases? elucidate. (250 words)

Livemint

Why this question:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday launched the “Fit India Movement”, highlighting the need to stay healthy amid rising instances of lifestyle disorders and non-communicable diseases (NCDs). The campaign was announced at an event organized to celebrate the National Sports Day.

Key demand of the question:

The question aims to bring out the significance of the newly launched fit india campaign.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Discuss the importance of being fit and its impact on several other aspects of life.

Body:

First discuss that physical activity has reduced due to the advent of technology, leading to disorders such as cardiovascular diseases, stroke, cancer, diabetes and obesity.

The World Health Organization (WHO), too, blames unhealthy diet and lack of physical activity for increasing instances of high blood pressure, increase in blood glucose, elevated blood lipids and obesity. Then discuss the idea of fit India – It aims to encourage Indians to include fitness activities and sports in their daily lives to pave way for a healthy and fit lifestyle.

Explain in what way root cause of most lifestyle diseases are lifestyle disorders and there are many diseases that can be overcome by making small changes in our lifestyle.

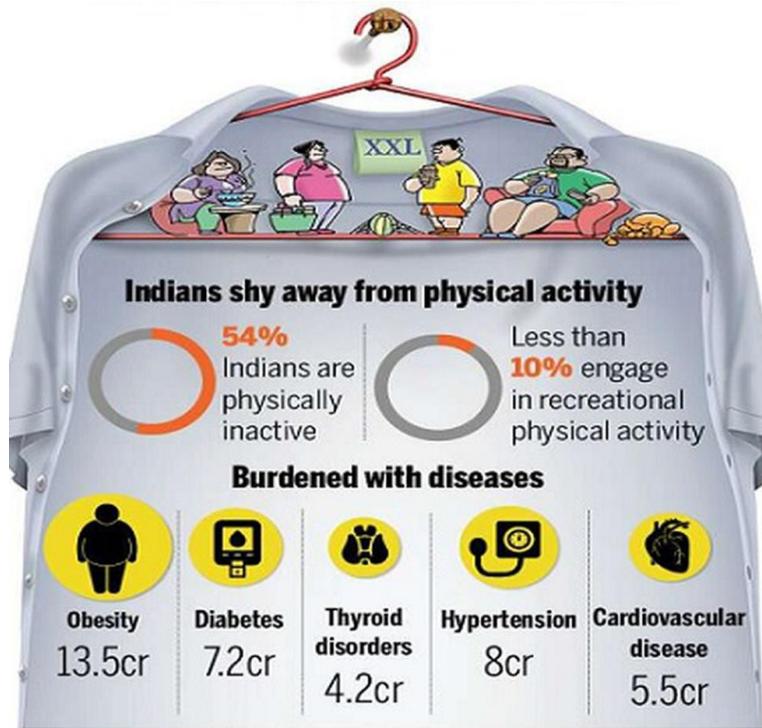
Conclusion:

Conclude with significance of such a campaign and in what way it will have long term impact on the growth and development of the country.

Introduction:

Fit India Movement, envisioned by the Prime Minister, is a nation-wide movement which aims to motivate every Indian to incorporate simple, easy ways of staying fit in their everyday life. Prime Minister launched the movement on the occasion of National Sports Day.

Body:



Source: Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), News reports

Key features of Fit India campaign:

- It aims to encourage masses to include fitness activities and sports in daily lives in order to keep themselves hale and hearty.
- Fit India should be seen as a household movement, a daily routine, and the nation will only become fit when each citizen becomes fit.
- Fitness aims to improve cognition in children and elderly, and improve mental health and lower depression and improve productivity.
- This will also lower our health care costs and improve economic productivity.
- Sports has a direct relation to fitness but 'Fit India Movement' aims to go beyond fitness.
- Fitness is not just a word but an essential pillar to a healthy and prosperous life.
- Fitness is zero percent investment with infinite returns.
- Many lifestyle diseases like diabetes, hypertension is increasing in India and small lifestyle changes can prevent these diseases. He asserted that the Fit India Movement is to inspire the country for these changes.

Relevance of Fit India Movement:

- Fewer than 10% adults in India follow the World Health Organization (WHO)-recommended regimen of **at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous**

activity through the week, according to an ongoing pan-India study across 25 states by the Madras Diabetes Research Foundation.

- The study, which is part of the Indian Council of Medical Research-India Diabetes (ICMR-INDIAB) study and the most comprehensive analysis of physical activity patterns across states, has found that **women are far less active than men.**
- The burden of NCDs is considerable in India. According to the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, the estimated proportion of all deaths due to NCDs has increased from 37.09% in 1990 to 61.8% in 2016. WHO has recognized diabetes as a growing challenge in India with an estimated 8.7% diabetic population between the age group of 20 and 70 years.
- As per the **National Family Health Survey 2015-16**, 11% of women (1 in 10) and 15% of men (1 in 7) of 15-49 years are hypertensive. In India, the Global Disease Burden (GBD) 2015 ranks chronic kidney disease as the eighth leading cause of death.
- Only 3% women meet the minimum healthy levels of physical activity, which brings a clutch of health benefits such as the reduced risk of hypertension, coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, breast/colon cancer, obesity, depression and falls, as well as improvement in bone and functional health.
- Physical inactivity damages health as much as obesity and smoking. It is the fourth-leading risk factor for death (6% of deaths globally) and the leading cause of 21-25% of breast and colon cancers, 27% of diabetes, and 30% of cardiovascular disease.

Measures needed:

- Lower and middle income countries such as India also face environmental and social challenges that become deterrents to activity, such as rapid urbanisation, which leads to unplanned growth of cities, high migration, large populations, chaotic transportation, encroached pavements, air pollution, and high ambient temperature.
- **Trees and green spaces** within a 0.5km radius of homes, workplaces, and schools have been shown to lower the risks of death, cardiovascular disease, prostate cancer and depression, and better cognitive development in children.
- Apart from adequate quality public transport and wider pavements, there is need for more tree cover on active transport roads, green spaces to lower the ambient air temperature and mitigate noise pollution, and lower air pollution to make outdoor activities more comfortable.
- Instead of widening roads for motorised transport at the cost of trees, pavements and green spaces, governments should focus on pedestrians and other active transport priorities like public transport. A measure of development of a country is how well we treat pedestrians and those using active transport.
- Progressive interventions, especially those targeting women, are needed to create a safe space for women.

- Physical activity, which is defined as at least 30 minutes of sustained walking, dancing, running, swimming, or playing a sport, can take any form.
- Kerala made headlines in 2016 for its **5 percent 'fat tax'**, hoping to reduce the consumption of NCD causing junk food by making it pricier. However, even then public health experts had pointed out that sugar was a bigger culprit

Conclusion:

'Fit India' Movement' initiative is the need of the hour and will take the country towards a healthier future.

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.

Albeit migrants add significantly to the economy, they are always seen as a burden or unfavourable by the recipient regions. Critically analyse. (250 words)

The hindu

Why this question:

The question is to evaluate the issue of migrants and their contributions to the Indian economy.

Key demand of the question:

One must discuss in detail the effects migrants have on the Indian economy and in what way they are often seen in negative sense.

Directive:

Critically analyze – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

In short explain the concept of migration, provide facts for Indian scenario.

Body:

Have the following aspects covered:

Define migration – Migration is movement of people from one geographical area to another geographical area. Factors like economic interests, unfavorable climate, political instability or war may prompt people to migrate.

Bring out the economic benefits of migration.

Describe the reasons why migration is not seen favorably by recipient states and cities.

Discuss with case studies if possible to substantiate better.

Conclusion:

Conclude with solutions as to what needs to be done to harness the potential that the migrants bring.

Introduction:

Migration is defined as the movement of people from one place to another across the political boundaries- national (internal) or international. It is an integral part and an important factor in

redistributing the population over time and space. Migrants who move within the boundaries of their own country are known as internal migrants.

Body:

Positive impacts of migrants:

- Labour mobility has a positive effect on the economy because they are engaged in the construction industry, domestic work, textiles, mines and quarries, agriculture, food processing and the hotel and restaurant business.
- The rising contribution of cities to India's GDP would not be possible without migration and migrant workers.
- Migrants also take their skills and knowledge back with them, generally called 'social remittances'.
- The backbone of the Green Revolution in Punjab was actually migrant labour.
- With rising incomes, migrant remittances also encourage investment in human capital formation.
- Migration may provide an opportunity to escape caste divisions and restrictive social norms.
- Migrants may return with renewed social attitudes and act as a channel of knowledge.
- Migration and inter-cultural dialogue between populations bring in new ideas, energy, and diversity to urban spaces.

Negative impacts of Migration:

- Internal migration has created a demographic divide among states.
- Unplanned migration and urbanisation can also create serious development challenges.
- The problem is multiplied in cases where there is a high level of segregation between the migrants and the host community.
- There are examples where conflicts between the two have turned violent.
- The host states are increasingly under pressure to keep up with the needs of the incoming migrants.
- The source states suffer from outflow of human capital.
- People's ration cards are invalid in their destinations of work.
- So a migrant family will lose out on their rations in their new homes and purchase food in the open market.
- This significantly increases their cost of living and reduces the additional earnings they might hope to remit to their families.

- A migrant's family may also lose out on schooling and health.
- Many smart city proposals identify slums as a "threat" to the city in their "SWOT" (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis while totally failing to account for migrant labour in the schemes.
- Women migrants are victims of gender-based violence, physical, sexual, or psychological abuse, exploitation, and trafficking.

Way forward:

- A **national policy on migration** should facilitate the integration of migrants into the local urban fabric, and building city plans with a regular migration forecast assumed.
- Lowering the cost of migration, along with eliminating discrimination against migrants, while protecting their rights will help raise development across the board.
- It should distinguish between the interventions aimed at 'migrants for survival' and 'migrants for employment'.
- It should provide more space to local bodies and NGOs which bring about structural changes in local regions.
- It should focus on measures enhancing skill development would enable easier entry into the labour market.
- It should also distinguish between individual and household migrants, because household migration necessitates access to infrastructure such as housing, sanitation and health care more than individual migration does.
- The policy should improve financial infrastructure to enable the smooth flow of remittances and their effective use require more attention from India's growing financial sector.

Conclusion:

India must safeguard the rights of internal migrants. Continued dynamic interventions over long periods of time would yield better results compared to single-point static interventions. The need of the hour is for the government to consider the needs of this section of the economy and design special assistance for them.

Why despite India being a large agricultural country a large population is malnourished? Discuss in detail the reasons and challenges associated with malnutrition in India.(250 words)

deccanherald

Why this question:

The question is to evaluate the issue of malnutrition in the country.

Key demand of the question:

One must discuss in detail the causes and consequences of malnutrition across the country.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

In short explain the backdrop of the question that despite being an agrarian economy India is witnessing the problems of malnutrition.

Body:

First assert using suitable facts the prevalent scenario in the country – According to the ‘Food and Nutrition Security Analysis, India, 2019’ report authored by the Government of India and the United Nations World Food Programme malnutrition amongst children in India is projected to remain high, despite all the progress made in food security.

Discuss what is malnutrition? what are the causes? What needs to be done to address the challenge.

Conclusion:

Conclude with solutions as to what needs to be done to address the issue.

Introduction:

A new report, ‘**Food and Nutrition Security Analysis, India, 2019**’, authored by the Government of India and the United Nations World Food Programme, paints a picture of hunger and malnutrition amongst children in large pockets of India. Malnutrition in India also persists because of the age-old patterns of social and economic exclusion. Over 40% of children from Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes are stunted. Close to 40% of children from the Other Backward Classes are stunted.

Body:

Reasons for malnutrition in India:

- **Mother’s health:**
 - Scientists say the initial 1,000 days of an individual’s lifespan, from the day of conception till he or she turns two, is crucial for physical and cognitive development.
 - But more than half the women of childbearing age are anaemic and 33 per cent are undernourished, according to NFHS 2006. A malnourished mother is more likely to give birth to malnourished children.
- **Social inequality:**
 - For example, girl children are more likely to be malnourished than boys, and low-caste children than upper-caste children.
- **Sanitation:**
 - Most children in rural areas and urban slums still lack sanitation. This makes them vulnerable to the kinds of chronic intestinal diseases that prevent bodies from making good use of nutrients in food, and they become malnourished.
 - Lack of sanitation and clean drinking water are the reasons high levels of malnutrition persists in India despite improvement in food availability.

- **Lack of diversified food:**
 - With the increase in diversity in food intake malnutrition (stunted/underweight) status declines. Only 12% of children are likely to be stunted and underweight in areas where diversity in food intake is high, while around 50% children are stunted if they consume less than three food items.
- **Lack of food security:**
 - The dismal health of Indian women and children is primarily due to lack of food security.
 - Nearly one-third of adults in the country have a body mass index (BMI) below normal just because they do not have enough food to eat.
- **Failure of government approaches:**
 - India already has two robust national programmes addressing malnutrition the Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) and the National Health Mission but these do not yet reach enough people.
 - The delivery system is also inadequate and plagued by inefficiency and corruption. Some analysts estimate that 40 per cent of the subsidised food never reaches the intended recipients
- **Disease spread:**
 - Most child deaths in India occur from treatable diseases like pneumonia, diarrhoea, malaria and complications at birth. The child may eventually die of a disease, but that disease becomes lethal because the child is malnourished and unable to put up resistance to it.
- **Poverty:**
 - The staff of ICDS places part of the blame of malnutrition on parents being inattentive to the needs of their children, but crushing poverty forces most women to leave their young children at home and work in the fields during the agricultural seasons.
 - Regional disparities in the availability of food and varying food habits lead to the differential status of under-nutrition which is substantially higher in rural than in urban areas. This demands a region-specific action plan with significant investments in human resources with critical health investments at the local levels.
- **Lack of nutrition:**
 - Significant cause of malnutrition is also the deliberate failure of malnourished people to choose nutritious food.
 - An international study found that the poor in developing countries had enough money to increase their food spending by as much as 30 per cent but that this money was spent on alcohol, tobacco and festivals instead.

Challenges to fight malnutrition:

- Lack of coordination between various ministries affects the programme's implementation.
- The scheme also suffers from under-utilisation of allocated funds.
- Till now, State and Union Territory governments have only used 16% of the funds allocated to them.
- Lack of real-time data monitoring, sustainability and accountability also impact the National Nutrition Mission (NNM).
- Anganwadis are key to the distribution of services to mothers and children. But many States, including Bihar and Odisha, which have large vulnerable populations, are struggling to set up functioning anganwadis, and recruit staff.
- The Mission does not have differential approach to the issue of malnutrition, more focus is needed on the areas where malnutrition levels are comparatively high.
- For example- the highest levels of stunted and underweight children are found in Jharkhand, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra.

Measures needed:

- **Availability:**
 - Farmers should be encouraged and incentivised for agricultural diversification.
 - Innovative and low-cost farming technologies, increase in the irrigation coverage and enhancing knowledge of farmers in areas such as appropriate use of land and water should be encouraged to improve the sustainability of food productivity.
 - The government should improve policy support for improving agricultural produce of traditional crops in the country.
- **Accessibility:**
 - The targeting efficiency of all food safety nets should be improved, especially that of the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), to ensure that the poorest are included.
 - In addition, fortification of government-approved commodities within the social safety net programmes can improve nutritional outcomes.
 - Child feeding practices should be improved in the country, especially at the critical ages when solid foods are introduced to the diet.
 - Fortification, diversification and supplementation may be used as simultaneous strategies to address micro and macronutrient deficiencies.
- **Utilisation:**

- Storage capacity should be improved to prevent post-harvest losses.
- There is a need for more robust measures that can take cognizance of all aspects of SDG 2.
- All the major welfare programmes need to be gender sensitive.
- The inherited dehumanising poverty explains the persistence of malnutrition on a large scale.
- Children born in impecunious circumstances suffer the most from malnutrition. It is all the more reason for governments to intervene to provide adequate nutrition to all.
- Funds for food to all yield great returns and help in unlocking the full potential of citizens besides strengthening the workforce.

Conclusion:

As **Amartya Sen** noted, famines are caused not by shortages of food, but by inadequate access to food. For the poor and marginalised, access to food is impeded by social, administrative and economic barriers. If India wants to be malnutrition free, it will not be achieved only through government intervention, but through a **Cultural Revolution or Jan Andolan like Kuposhan Mukth Bharat (Malnutrition Free India)**.

Discuss the recent amendments made to the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill, 2019 and analyse why and how the effective operation of the POCSO Act needs the support of all the stake holders.(250 words)

Reference

Why this question:

The question aims to evaluate the effects of recent changes brought in the POCSO bill 2019 and the effects it has on rights of children.

Key demand of the question:

One must discuss in detail the recent key amendments in the POCSO act.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Discuss the importance of POCSO in general with respect to protection of child rights.

Body:

Explain the key changes brought in recently in the POCSO act like The POCSO (Amendment) Bill will make punishment more stringent for committing sexual crimes against children including the death penalty.

The amendments also provide for levy of fines and imprisonment to curb child pornography. The amendment is aimed to establish clarity regarding the aspects of child abuse and punishment.

Explain that the modification is made to address the need for stringent measures required to deter the rising trend of child sex abuse in the country on one hand and to address the menace of relatively new kind of crimes on the other hand.

Conclusion:

Conclude with appreciation of the amendments.

Introduction:

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill, 2019 was passed recently by both Houses of Parliament with an objective of stopping the rampant sexual abuse of children. The bill seeks to provide more stringent punishment, including death penalty, for sexual crimes against children.

Body:

Key changes proposed:

- **Penetrative sexual assault:** The bill increases minimum punishment for this offence from 7 years to 10 years. It also provides for with imprisonment between 20 years to life, with fine if person commits penetrative sexual assault on child below age of 16 years.
- **Aggravated penetrative sexual assault:** The Bill adds two more grounds to definition of aggravated penetrative sexual assault. These include: (i) assault resulting in death of child and (ii) assault committed during natural calamity or in any similar situations of violence. It also increases minimum punishment from 10 years to 20 years, and maximum punishment to death penalty.
- **Aggravated sexual assault:** The Bill adds two more offences to definition of aggravated sexual assault. These include: (i) assault committed during natural calamity and (ii) administering or help in administering any chemical substance or any hormone to child for the purpose of attaining early sexual maturity.
- **Child Pornography:** The Bill defines child pornography as any visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct that involves child such as photograph, video, digital or even computer generated image indistinguishable from actual child. It also enhances punishments for certain offences related to child pornography.
- **Storage of pornographic material:** It increases punishment for storage of pornographic material with imprisonment between three to five years, or fine, or both. In addition, it also adds two other offences for storage of pornographic material involving children. These include: (i) transmitting, displaying, distributing such material except for the purpose of reporting it and (ii) failing to destroy or delete or report pornographic material involving child.

Positives:

- The amendment is expected to discourage the trend of child sexual abuse by acting as a deterrent due to strong penal provisions incorporated in the Act.
- It intends to protect the interest of vulnerable children in times of distress and ensures their safety and dignity.
- The amendment is aimed to establish clarity regarding the aspects of child abuse and punishment thereof.

- It is gender-neutral and thus looks into the sexual assault of both minor boys and girls.

Challenges:

- Lack of social awareness among the masses.
- Children find it difficult to understand many advertisements and campaigns related to abuses.
- There is advancement of law but it appears that it has no impact because the number of cases is multiplying.
- Problem with implementation of the law.
- Child protection committees not in place at village level.
- Politicization of rape cases on communal grounds.
- The rate of conviction under the POSCO act is only 32% as that of past 5 years and pendency is 90%.
- Absence of proper training at village level leads to child abuse.
- Judges don't use the power to announce medical interim compensations to the victims.
- In a 2017 report, "**Everyone Blames Me,**" Human Rights Watch found that survivors (of the crime), particularly among marginalized communities, still find it difficult to register police complaints.
- Every case desires media attention equally and not only Unnao and Kathua rape cases.

Way Forward:

- Problems related to implementation of POCSO Act such as lack of adequate special courts, lack of sensitization for investigators and prosecutors in dealing with child victims, poor rate of convictions etc. need to be resolved urgently.
- The Supreme Court direction to set up special courts within 60 days of the order in each district having more than 100 pending cases under the act must be complied with urgently.
- The provision of death penalty should be widely discussed and debated and should be used only for the rarest of the rare cases.
- **Massive awareness and sensitization** should be created among the masses about child's dignity and about the law in place.
- There needs to be an overhaul of the criminal justice system in the country rather than emphasising on the death penalty.
- POSCO Act needs to be part of school syllabus.
- Proper police training and a dedicated children cell at stations as that of a women cell.

- Many Indians – men and women – refuse to believe that sexual violence is a serious problem eating away at India’s vitals. It is essential to recognise that the crisis lies in the precise manner in which the existing criminal justice system unfolds.
- Instant medical relief and compensations should be provided to the victim.
- Children should be given a platform and proper environment to speak against such abuse.
- Check on technology.
- Strict action must be taken against the police officer found guilty of obstructing the probe or colluding with perpetrators of such cases.
- Providing sex education to children, which is neglected in India. This makes them more aware of various protective laws, good touch-bad touch etc.

Conclusion:

Society itself will have to take the responsibility of giving it the right direction. Without this, we cannot achieve all the promise that we had as a nation at the time of Independence. We must collectively rise to the occasion and create a safe India for our children.

Discuss the issue of child well- being in India, what are the challenges faced by the children and list down measures to ensure their well- being.(250 words)

The hindu

Why this question:

Recently the states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh and Puducherry topped the charts in the child well-being index, a tool designed to measure and tracks children’s well-being comprehensively.

Key demand of the question:

One must discuss in detail the issue of child well- being in India and suggest suitable measures that need to be taken.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Start by explaining that in India recently child well-being index has been released by the non-government organization World Vision India and research institute IFMR LEAD.

Body:

Explain what is child well-being.

In terms of health, it has to be ensured that the child is taken care of in the first 1,000 days of life.

Stunting is a big issue in India and this is linked to poor sanitation and lack of safe water.

States should look at their respective scores on the dimensions of child well-being, and prepare for priority areas of intervention with specific plans of action.

This should also trigger policy level changes, seek better budgetary allocations and initiate discussions with all stakeholders, which can help in enhancing the quality of life of all children in the country.

Conclusion:

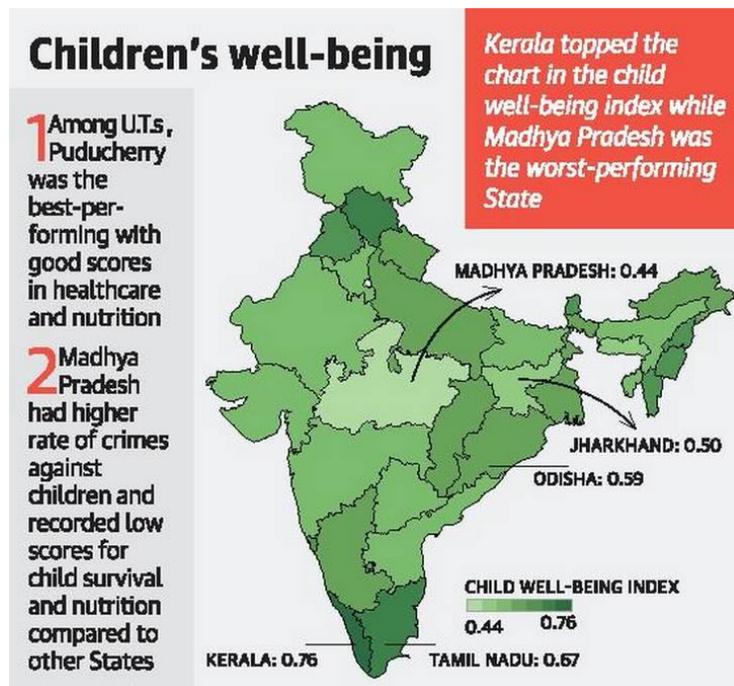
Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

The **Child Well-Being Index**, released recently, is a tool designed to measure and track children's well-being through three dimensions of healthy individual development, positive relationships and protective contexts. The report highlights the **multi-dimensional approach towards measuring child well-being — going beyond mere income poverty**. The NITI Aayog cited the report as crucial & significant in securing the rights of children and achieving the goal of child well-being, using a composite Child well-being Index.

Body:

The index has been developed by NGOs World Vision India and IFMR LEAD. Focusing on the three key dimensions, 24 indicators were selected to develop the computation of the child well-being index.



Key findings of the report:

- Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh and Puducherry topped the charts.
- Meghalaya, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh featured at the bottom.
- The data shows that even states that are performing best in overall child well-being, are not doing so well in indicators of health.

Challenges faced:

Health:

- unequal sex ratio

- stunted-underweight children
- access to institutional delivery is low
- low child survival rate: a higher number of children were dying before they turned five
- sanitation facilities
- immunisation

Social:

- Incomplete schooling, since more children were dropping out of school
- budget for children
- Gender gap in education for girls

Rights:

- juvenile crimes and crimes against children
- child marriage
- child labour
- pornography
- child adoption

Measures needed:

- Effective implementation of the laws and programs available in the country.
- There is a need for regionally-targeted policy reorientation to better cater to children's needs.
- To ensure that India's future generation is physically healthy and mentally sound
- States should look at their respective scores on the dimensions of child well-being, and prepare for priority areas of intervention with specific plans of action.
- This should also trigger policy level changes, seek better budgetary allocations and initiate discussions with all stakeholders, which can help in enhancing the quality of life of all children in the country.

Conclusion:

Children have the potential to transform the country, but if neglected, they will exacerbate the burden of poverty and inequality. It is imperative that all stakeholders prioritise and invest in the well-being of our children

Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Discuss the effectiveness of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) related amendments made to the Companies Act? Analyse the pros and cons of the same. (250 words)

livemint

Why this question:

Parliament on Tuesday cleared amendments to the companies' law that will tighten norms pertaining to CSR spending for corporates, strengthen enforcement provisions and help unclog National Company Law Tribunal.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must evaluate the amendments made with respect to CSR in the companies act.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Define what is CSR.

Body:

One has to discuss the salient features of the companies act and the key features pertaining to the CSR. Explain the newly introduced provisions – provision wherein the unspent CSR amount would be transferred to an escrow account for three financial years. Subsequently, if the amount remains unspent then the same would be moved to funds specified in Scheduled VII of the Companies Act. Under the Act, certain class of profitable companies are required to shell out at least two per cent of their three-year annual average net profit towards CSR activities etc.

Weigh the possible pros and cons and provide for your opinion.

Conclusion:

Conclude with significance of such amendments and importance of CSR to the country.

Introduction:

Corporate Social Responsibility is a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders. India became the first country to make CSR spending mandatory through a law, i.e. through Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013. The recent amendments aim to ensure **more accountability and better enforcement to strengthen the corporate governance norms and compliance management in corporate sector.**

Body:

Key features of the Companies (Amendment) Bill, 2019:

- A key change in the Bill is related to CSR spending, wherein companies would have to mandatorily keep unspent money into a special account.
- The companies will have one year to firm up the CSR proposal and another three years to spend funds.

- In case money remains unspent for one plus three years, the money will have to be moved to an escrow account, could even be the Prime Minister's Relief Fund.
- The amended law requires companies to confiscate 2% of their profits towards CSR, with unspent balances appropriated to the Central coffers if unspent for 3 years.
- Companies will be penalized for slip-ups in spending this quota and the Centre can direct them to spend it.

Extra information: Other provisions:

- *Provides more teeth to the central government to deal with violators and reducing burden on special courts.*
- *Seeks to enable the National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) to perform its functions through divisions and executive body.*
- *Seeks to empower Registrar of Companies (RoC) to initiate action for removal of a company's name if the latter is not carrying out business activities as per the Act.*
- *Proposes to transfer some functions from NCLT to the Central government such as dealing with applications for change of financial year and conversion from public to private companies.*
- *In order to curb the menace of shell companies, the Bill proposes making non-maintenance of registered office and non-reporting of commencement of business grounds for striking off the name of the company from the register of companies.*

Pros:

- Corporate Social Responsibility links Corporate Sector to Social Sector
- **Promote Relationship:** Relationship is the oxygen of life. It enhances the “social quotient” of the company hence help in getting appeal for its product from people. Ex Lifeboy soap success story
- It imparts an ethical, responsible character to company's profile, helps it to justify its product, growth and create a distinct aura of company in public sphere. E.g.: Nanhi Kali project of Godrej group.
- **Competitive advantage:** Businesses that show how they are more socially responsible than their competitors tend to stand out. TATA group enjoys much social appeal when compared with fellow competitor The Classmate notebooks which contributed Rs. 1 towards social welfare gained appeal over other brands.
- **Boosts employee morale:** CSR practices have a significant impact on employee morale, as it reinforces his confidence on Company's empathy.
- Presence and involvement of company in CSR activity will provide a soft corner to it in government's approval, preferences. Its active involvement to implement government flagship program like Swaccha Bharat Mission enhances company's credibility in government's eyes.

- **Promotes Socio-Economic Development:** If the company is engaged in CSR programs it attracts foreign investment and helps the country to get valuable foreign exchange. This in turn leads to socio-economic developmental activities.

Cons:

- There's no reason why a for-profit private enterprise should be expected to be good at executing social projects.
- Subjecting the CSR obligations of the companies by the government to a yearly quota and a short 3-year deadline is counter-productive.
- The government, as it seeks to hold companies accountable to a high bar on CSR, its own track record in utilizing its countless cess is nothing exceptional.
- India Inc can render a far greater service than these social responsibilities to society, by being compliant with tax laws, not cutting corners on labour or environmental laws, paying its MSME dues on time and treating its lenders and shareholders fairly.
- There is no justification for more back-door levies as the government already takes a lot from India Inc by way of the highest corporate tax rate in the world.

Way forward:

- The Centre needs to introspect whether it has imposed too many arbitrary conditions, as to the large unspent amounts reported by companies.
- Do away with mandatory CSR, lower corporate taxes, and introduce tax deductions for certain activities that the government wishes to promote.
- Revisiting some of the unnecessary rules of the Act may help in better compliance.
- Companies taking up genuine projects should be given time to thrash out the most cost-efficient mode of delivering social impact.
- The global wave towards Environmental, social and governance (ESG) investing is mounting pressure for companies to be more socially responsible; the government must do its best to encourage this trend in India.
- The right role and the right balance between corporate profits, government taxes, and individual charity promote social welfare.

Conclusion:

Socially beneficial activities involve an element of welfare, charity and providing maximum good to maximum number of people. While doing them the donator will definitely get benefitted in terms of positive wishes, economic gains or prestige enhancement. Hence Corporate Social Responsibility makes companies more profitable and sustainable.

Universities should be a place for ‘creativity’, ‘out of the box thinking’ and ‘ideological disruptions’. Comment in the light of existing higher education scenario in India.(250 words)

ndtv

Why this question:

The question aims to discuss the significance of universities as platforms for creative thinking.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must discuss the Indian scenario of higher education, what way they are places for creative thinking.

Directive:

Comment— here we have to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and form an overall opinion thereupon.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Begin with brief introduction on the current status of universities in India.

Body:

Discussion should include the following:

Give a brief on the current scenario on Universities.

Discuss the issues surrounding the higher education system in the country, what are the key challenges and suggest what needs to be done to overcome the same.

Explain what can be done to ensure they become hubs for creative thinking and innovation.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

India is a rapidly changing country in which inclusive, high-quality education is of utmost importance for its future prosperity. The country is currently in a youth bulge phase. It has the largest youth population in the world—a veritable army of 600 million young people under the age of 25.

Body:

Challenges facing Indian higher education:

- **Gross Enrolment Rate issues:**
- India’s higher education system, does not have the capacity to achieve enrolment ratios anywhere close to those of other middle-income economies.
- The country’s tertiary gross enrolment rate is growing fast, but remains more than 20 percentage points below that of China or Brazil, despite the creation of large numbers of higher education institutions (HEIs) in recent years.
- **Brain-Drain:**
- Educational attainment in present-day India is also not directly correlated to employment prospects—a fact that raises doubts about the quality and relevance of Indian education.

- Such bottlenecks have caused a large-scale outflow of labour migrants and international students from India.
 - The number of Indian students enrolled in degree programs abroad has grown almost fivefold since 1998, while hundreds of thousands of labour migrants leave the country each year.
 - Many of these migrants are low-skilled workers, but there is also a pronounced brain drain of skilled professionals of 950,000 Indian scientists and engineers lived in the U.S. alone in 2013 (a steep increase of 85 percent since 2003).
- **Regulation:**
 - High control and low on support and facilitation
 - UGC has been accused of biased granting of funds
 - Undermining independence of autonomous universities
 - UGC's flawed method of determining recruitment and career advancement of faculty: Academic Performance Indicator (API).
- **Indian Talent Pool of IIT's:**
 - The Indian Institutes of Technology are synonymous with excellence and the national academic frontier.
 - But, the IITs' ability to live up to these expectations in terms of research output and the quality of education is contingent on its faculty. However, of late, the shortage of faculty members in the IITs has been under the spotlight.
 - It was reported recently that there are just 40 foreign teachers at all of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) that is just 1% of the total faculty of 5,400 — despite the government's goal to attract 20% international faculty at higher education institutions such as the IITs.
- **Scales of salary:**
 - Indian academic salaries are not globally competitive, even taking into account variations in living costs.
 - In the U.S., senior academics at research universities typically earn around Rs.8,970,000 and up annually, and those at top universities can earn Rs.13,800,000 or more.
 - The average salary for a full-time academic is Rs.5,037,000, with those in high demand fields in the sciences, business and others earning significantly more.

- China, which is also actively luring top international faculty to its research universities, is offering salaries of Rs.6,900,000 or more along with additional research funding.
- International faculty cannot be offered long-term appointments in Indian public institutions. A five-year contract is all that is available. Thus, there is little job security.
- **Private colleges and Deemed Universities:**
 - Arbitrary nature of fees; “capitation fees”
 - Admissions manipulated- Management quotas
 - Ill equipped to organize courses
 - De facto management—the trustees of the sponsoring societies or trusts

Measures needed to improve status of Indian Universities:

- The best Indian universities would require a kind of “cultural revolution” to join the ranks of global world-class universities and to be able to lure top faculty.
- It is virtually impossible for India to attract large numbers of international professors of high standing and ability without dramatic changes in many aspects of the existing governance structure in higher education. **Dramatically enhanced funding would also be required.**
- The Ministry of Human Resource Development should be working closely with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs to have a road map that **incentivises CSR funding to be made available for universities.**
- There need to be an immediate move to attract more candidates, such as the faculty recruitment drive in the US, and monetary incentives like the **Young Faculty Incentive Fellowship Scheme.**
- **Parallel development in infrastructure** is necessary to accommodate the research needs of incoming faculty.
- The **structural and practical realities of Indian universities** make them generally unattractive to academic talent from abroad, this must be rectified at the earliest.
- The key motivation for hiring foreign faculty must be to improve international competitiveness and secure positions in global rankings, which in turn would also attract more motivated students.
- Attracting foreign nationals, Indians who studied at prestigious foreign universities by offering higher salaries and other benefits.
- The moral and motivation of the academics have to be maintained. Not only attract the quality but also retain the quality of teachers. For this, the recruitment and the promotion policy have

to be looked into. Recruitment policy on merit, kind of promotion on merit and in intervals would retain good teachers.

Conclusion:

If universities become centre of fresh knowledge production then things change. Complete freedom of thought in direction and ideas is need of the hour. There is a prevailing culture that knowledge is finite and job of student is to master pre-existing knowledge. This has a limiting problem in educational culture which needs to be challenged.

Despite its best intentions to introduce sweeping reforms in medical education in India, the National Medical Commission (NMC) Act, 2019 seems to fail in addressing the larger issues plaguing the medical education and health sector. Critically analyse.(250 words)

Livemint

Why this question:

The article critically analyses the recently passed National Medical Commission (NMC) Act, 2019.

Key demand of the question:

The answer should discuss in detail the issues plaguing the medical sector and in what way the new act also is failing to capture effectively such issues.

Directive:

Critically analyze – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When ‘critically’ is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Discuss the coming of the National Medical Commission (NMC) Act, 2019.

Body:

Explain the key features or changes brought in by the National Medical Commission (NMC) Act, 2019.

Then discuss in detail the merits and demerits of the act.

Take clues from the article and list down upon the lacunae the National Medical Commission (NMC) Act, 2019 poses or fails to address in the medical sector.

Suggest what can be done?

Conclusion:

Conclude with way forward and suggest approaches that need to be adopted.

Introduction:

The National Medical Commission Bill, 2019 was passed recently by the parliament. The bill **sets up the National Medical Commission (NMC)** which will act as an umbrella regulatory body in the medical education system. The NMC will **subsume the MCI and will regulate medical education and practice in India**. Apart from this, it also provides for the reforms in the medical education system.

Body:

Nursing a sick system back to health

With National Medical Commission (NMC) Act 2019 in force, an overarching body NMC has replaced the scam-tainted Medical Council of India. NMC will approve and assess medical colleges, conduct common MBBS entrance and exit examinations, and regulate medical course fees.

What NMC offers

PREVENT QUACKERY by punishing unqualified practitioners with imprisonment of up to one year with a fine of up to ₹5 lakh

REGULATE FEES and all other charges in 50% seats in private colleges and deemed-to-be universities

BRING TRANSPARENCY in medical education with four autonomous boards

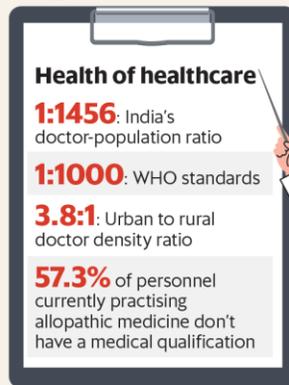
REDUCE BURDEN on students with a common final-year MBBS exam—National Exit Test—for admission to PG courses and for getting licence to practice medicine

What NMC fails to address?

- ➔ **POSTGRADUATE** medical education
- ➔ **NO** guarantee of corruption-free education system
- ➔ **OVERCROWDING** of doctors in urban areas
- ➔ **NO** innovative ideas for improving the imparting of education
- ➔ **HEALTHCARE** infrastructure

Medical education: What the numbers say

479 Medical colleges in India	227 Government colleges	252 Private colleges
67,352 MBBS seats	31,415 Postgraduate seats	



Significance and the need:

- The Bill seeks to regulate medical education and practice in India.
- The Bill attempts to tackle two main things on **quality and quantity: Corruption in medical education and shortage of medical professionals.**
- The Bill aims to **overhaul the corrupt and inefficient Medical Council of India**, which regulates medical education and practice and replace with National medical commission.
- Over the years, Medical Council of India has been marred by several issues regarding its regulatory role, composition, allegations of corruption, and lack of accountability.
- In 2009, the **Yashpal Committee and the National Knowledge Commission** recommended separating the regulation of medical education and medical practice.

Concerns:

- The NMC Act is unlikely to harbinger a fundamental change in the way medical education is provided in India or effectively address the **rural–urban imbalance.**
- The issue of variable duration of 'bonds' arbitrarily enforced by the states and medical institutes needs to be redressed on a priority and logically standardized.
- It is unfair on a young doctor to have grossly different policies in different states under the garb of federalism or institutional immunity.

- **Emoluments to interns, residents, and fellows** also vary severely and need to be made more uniform.
- Although the bill has taken into account undergraduate medical education (MBBS), it has completely ignored post graduate studies.
- The abolishment of 2-year postgraduate diploma and awarding of a uniform 3-year postgraduate degree is a crying need which is not addressed.
- Having a number of nominated members does not guarantee excellence, it said, adding that regulatory capture by private colleges which are ready and able to pay bribes will continue to be a threat.
- **Section 32 of the NMC Bill** that would grant “limited” licences to an estimated 350,000 “community health providers” to practise allopathic medicine, provided they meet a set of qualifying criteria.
- The bill allows practitioners of ayurveda, yoga and naturopathy, unani, siddha and homoeopathy could undertake a “bridge course” and legally start offering primary healthcare.
- According to the IMA, letting patients be treated by people without MBBS degrees would amount to quackery gaining legitimacy in a country full of fraudulent cures and dodgy practices.
- Unscientific mixing of systems and empowering of other practitioners through bridge courses will only pave the way for substandard doctors and substandard medical practice. This will seriously impact patient care and patient safety.

Way forward:

- If India really wants to provide high quality medical care service for every citizen, it urgently needs to have a clear idea about the health human resources required, decide how to set up the requisite number of training institutions.
- There is a need to have clear policies for employment and remuneration of the graduates of these institutions, decide on the resources required to make this possible in a realistic time scale and take the states along in planning.
- One way to prevent dilution of standards is for an independent panel of well-regarded doctors to keep a close watch on the eligibility process for licences.
- It involves a common test on the assumption that practical training has already been imparted; if the test is found to be letting dubious practitioners acquire allopathic credentials, then the newly set up NMC would have to either drop or revise the idea.
- Clear guidelines are required indicating the circumstances and diseases where traditional practitioners can prescribe allopathic medicines.

- Community-level accredited practitioners after training should be equipped to provide the first line of care for acute conditions and to make referrals to a regular doctor within a GPS-supervised system.
- Patients who are not insistent on consulting allopaths need not despair, for they have plenty of options anyway.

Conclusion:

The Bill needs to confront reality and address it, keeping consumer interest paramount otherwise the new law will make little difference to people's lives.

The fight against leprosy cannot be fully won without fighting the stigma against the disease. Critically analyse the statement in the light of recent findings of World Health Organization (WHO) which concluded that country now hosts 66% of all leprosy patients in the world. (250 words)

Livemint

Why this question:

The question is based on the recent WHO studies that have established that India still has 66% of Leprosy patients.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must evaluate the causes of failure to eradicate the disease of leprosy in the country. And suggest what needs to be done.

Directive:

Critically analyze – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Explain what you understand by leprosy.

Body:

Discuss the following points in detail –

India has become the leprosy capital of the world in the 14 years since it was declared free of the disease, as lack of vigilance and unfriendly laws paved the way for its return.

India officially eliminated leprosy in 2005, reducing its prevalence rate to 0.72 per 10,000 people at national level. But the country now hosts 66% of all leprosy patients in the world, data from the World Health Organization (WHO) showed.

Then move on to explain the reasons for such a condition in the country.

Explain what can be done? How can the disease be eradicated totally with special attention on the aspect of social stigma attached to it.

Conclusion:

Conclude that effective policies not just in terms of medical facilities but also in terms of mainstreaming the issue is essential to eradicate the disease totally.

Introduction:

India has become the **leprosy capital of the world** in the 14 years since it was declared free of the disease, as lack of vigilance and unfriendly laws paved the way for its return. India figures among 22

nations considered to have a 'high burden' for leprosy according to according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Body:

Present Status in India:

- India officially eliminated leprosy in 2005, reducing its prevalence rate to 0.72 per 10,000 people at national level.
- But the country now hosts 66% of all leprosy patients in the world, data from the World Health Organization (WHO) showed.
- In 2016-17, at least 1,35,485 cases of leprosy were detected in the country, but public health experts say this is an under-estimate
- One person is diagnosed with leprosy roughly every four minutes in India, accounting for 60% of all new leprosy cases annually
- The current global prevalence is estimated by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to be 0.23 per 10000 population.
- In 2017, India along with Brazil and Indonesia are the only countries where more than 10000 new cases are reported per year.
- Two out of three new global Leprosy cases are detected in India, according to official data.

Reasons for continued high burden:

- Major concerns include undetected new cases, problems with leprosy integration, the presence of leprosy in children, and paucity of education and training for livelihoods.
- It is highly unlikely that India achieves elimination of Leprosy at the state or district levels any time soon.
- Leprosy is becoming more of a disease of most marginalized and underserved populations in far-flung areas.
- In the Adivasi community the percentage of Leprosy patients have increased from 13.3% in 2009, to an alarming 18.8%.
- The earlier gains in containing the disease have stagnated and we are at risk of a re-emergence of Leprosy as a public health problem in substantial areas of the country.
- Rampant stigma against the disease prevents patients from seeking medical treatment.
- A large number of leprosy affected fall in the category of persons with disabilities as they hesitate to come forward for

Government Interventions

- India is currently running one of the largest leprosy eradication programs in the world, the **National Leprosy Eradication Program (NLEP)**.
- The **National Health Policy 2017 (NHP)** has elimination of Leprosy as a national level target.
- **Leprosy Case Detection Campaign (LCDC)** is being implemented by the Union Health Ministry.
- **SPARSH Leprosy Awareness Campaign (SLAC)** was launched on 30th January 2017 to promote awareness and address the issues of stigma and discrimination.
- Since 1984, leprosy has been completely curable at any stage with **multi drug therapy (MDT)**—a combination of Rifampicin, Dapsone and Clofazimine—for a period of six months or one year depending on the severity of the disease
- The Lok Sabha passed the **Personal Laws Amendment Bill, 2018**, removing leprosy as a ground for divorce.
- A **public interest litigation** filed by the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy has challenged 119 statutory provisions that continue to provide legal sanction to discrimination against people affected by leprosy.
- The Health Ministry has asked the ministers to expedite the process and introduce of the **Elimination of Discrimination against Persons Affected by Leprosy (EDPAL) Bill**, drafted by the **Law Commission of India and annexed in its 256th report**.
- The target of **Global Leprosy Strategy 2016-2020** is to reduce the number of countries with laws allowing discrimination on grounds of leprosy to zero.

Way forward:

- The emphasis must shift to more policy level changes and sustaining quality of services.
- The government must implement the key recommendations of the Law Commission on rights and special privileges.
- To reduce the burden, it is important to develop a **multi-pronged approach** that includes public education campaign, sustainable livelihood programmes, skill training workshops and generate employment, identify interventions to dispel stigma and mainstream the affected people.
- **Continued training of medical officers, nurses, physiotherapists, and paramedical workers** about quality diagnosis and treatment of leprosy must also be given prime focus.
- **Public education** on the fact that leprosy can be cured and is not to be feared is imperative.
- Those who have been cured at an early stage and can work often need to given opportunities to learn skills and trades that would enable them to work.

Conclusion:

Mahatma Gandhi had an enduring concern for people afflicted with leprosy. His vision was **not just to treat them, but also to bring them to mainstream to our society**. India, which is among the endemic

countries, has been advised to include strategic interventions in national plans to meet the new targets, such as screening all close contacts of persons affected by leprosy; promoting a shorter and uniform treatment regimen, and incorporating specific interventions against stigmatisation and discrimination.

Discuss the significance of Oxytocin. What are the challenges associated with it that led to ban on manufacturing of it by the pharmaceuticals in India? Discuss the possible solutions to such concerns.(250 words)

Livemint

Why this question:

Recently the final decision on whether the government can block private pharmaceutical companies from manufacturing and selling vital pregnancy drug oxytocin in India has been deferred, with the Supreme Court deciding the issue needs further deliberation.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must discuss the significance of oxytocin and challenges associated with the manufacturing of the same.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Define oxytocin – Oxytocin has also been dubbed the love hormone and the bliss hormone due to its effects on behavior, including its role in love and in female reproductive biological functions in reproduction.

Body:

Discuss first the issue involved – The Delhi high court had quashed the Centre's December 14, 2018 notification, which had banned its sale by private manufacturers and retail chemists, saying the sale was allowed. Essentially, this meant that only KAPL could produce the drug as there is no other public sector enterprise doing so. However, Delhi high court quashed the amended order too. The central government moved Supreme Court against the Delhi high court order.

Explain why is oxytocin vital?

What reasons have necessitated the ban?

What needs to be done?

Conclusion:

Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

Oxytocin is a uterine stimulant hormone, prescribed for the initiation of uterine contractions and induction of labour in women, as well as stimulation of contractions during labour. The health ministry in April 2018 notified a ban on private firms from manufacturing and selling oxytocin, stating that it wanted to restrict the responsibility of supplying the drug to a Karnataka-based public sector manufacturer to avoid its misuse in the veterinary field.

Body:

Significance:

- **Oxytocin** is a hormone that is made in the brain, in the hypothalamus. It is transported to, and secreted by, the pituitary gland, which is located at the base of the brain.
- Oxytocin has also been dubbed **the hug hormone, cuddle chemical, moral molecule, and the bliss hormone** due to its effects on behavior, including its role in love and in female reproductive biological functions in reproduction.
- It acts both as a hormone and as a brain neurotransmitter.
- The release of oxytocin by the pituitary gland acts to regulate two female reproductive functions: **Childbirth and Breast-feeding**.
- Oxytocin helps contract the uterus and induce delivery, control bleeding, and promote the release of breast milk (breast engorgement).
- Its use is especially crucial to prevent new mothers from excessively bleeding after giving birth—a common cause of maternal deaths.
- According to an India sample registration scheme survey conducted in 2001-2003, postpartum haemorrhage accounted for 38 per cent of maternal deaths.
- It is also used to help abort the foetus in cases of incomplete abortion or miscarriage, and to control bleeding after childbirth.

Challenges that led to the ban are:

- **Misuse in dairy industry:** The drug is misused in the dairy industry where livestock is injected with Oxytocin to make them release milk at a time convenient to farmers.
- This has increased the unlicensed facilities that are manufacturing the drug for veterinary use.
- There is also a concern that oxytocin led to infertility in dairy animals.
- It has also been linked to mastitis, a painful inflammation of the udder (mammary gland).
- Another concern is the exposure of milk consumers to oxytocin drug through dairy products
- Oxytocin is also used to increase the size of vegetables such as pumpkins, watermelons, eggplants, gourds, and cucumbers.
- It is also misused on young girls to induce puberty.

However, the ban has also led to problems:

- The proposed ban on private production raised an alarm on the possible shortfall of Oxytocin supply if only one company was permitted to make this drug.
- The proposed ban could exacerbate the inflow of illegal versions of the drug making its way into the Indian market from China and also drive out legitimate companies.

Measures needed:

- Oxytocin is included as a lifesaving drug in the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM). Thus, there is a need for strict implementation of the regulations on the uncontrolled sale of Oxytocin.
- Most of the veterinary use comes from illegal import of oxytocin from neighbouring countries.
- The misuse could be prevented through strict control in sale and end use of the drug especially prevention through clandestine channels.
- There is a need for education and awareness among the farmers and cattle-rearers about the controversial but life-saving drug Oxytocin.
- Oxytocin being of grave importance for maternal health should be made available to the needy mothers easily rather than blanket ban and single company manufacture.

Conclusion:

The Supreme Court bench should look into various aspects like whether the government notification will result in monopoly, if the restriction on its manufacturing be in public interest, whether the government's decision would achieve the objective and purpose of preventing the unregulated and illegal use of the drug, among others.

What is lymphatic filariasis? Examine how it affects the poorest population in the Indian society and suggest what needs to be done to overcome the challenges of the same.(250 words)

The hindu

Why this question:

Vector-borne diseases have gained significance in recent years with several States reporting a surge in malaria, dengue, chikungunya, etc., year after year. While there is awareness about these, not many know that lymphatic filariasis is another preventable vector-borne disease that needs to be tackled effectively to meet the Health Ministry's target of eliminating it in India by 2020.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must discuss what is lymphatic filariasis, in what way it affects the poorest the most and what needs to be done to overcome this challenge to achieve health for all goal of 2020.

Directive:

Examine – When asked to 'Examine', we must look into the topic (content words) in detail, inspect it, investigate it and establish the key facts and issues related to the topic in question. While doing so we should explain why these facts and issues are important and their implications.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Describe What is lymphatic filariasis?

Body:

The answer must first discuss what is the disease about, its prevalence in the country. Lymphatic filariasis, commonly known as elephantiasis, is a neglected tropical disease.

Infection occurs when filarial parasites are transmitted to humans through mosquitoes. Infection is usually acquired in childhood causing hidden damage to the lymphatic system. The painful and disfiguring visible manifestations of the disease, lymphoedema, elephantiasis and scrotal swelling (hydrocele) occur later in life and can lead to permanent disability. These patients are not only physically disabled, but suffer mental, social and financial losses contributing to stigma and poverty.

Explain the policies and initiatives that are under progress to tackle the menace.

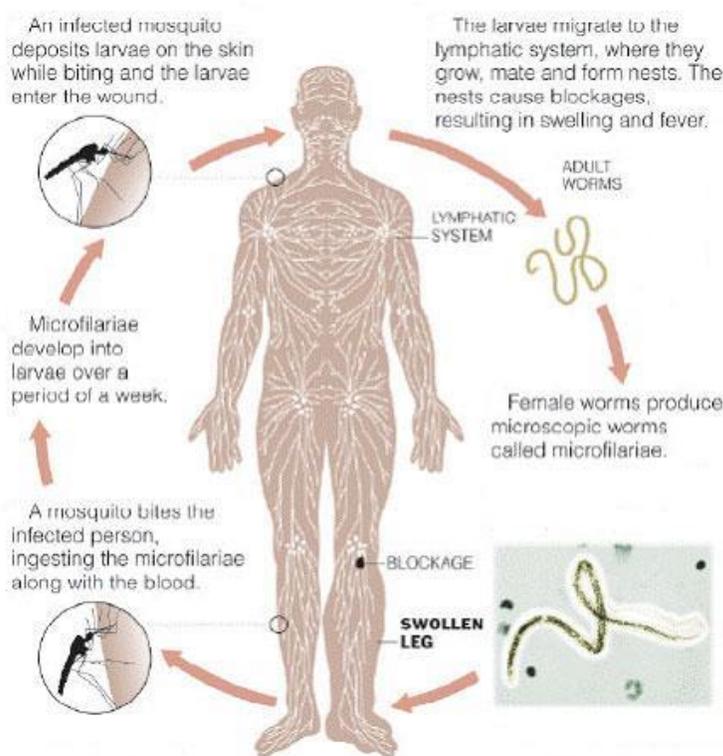
Conclusion:

Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

Lymphatic filariasis, commonly known as **elephantiasis**, is a **neglected tropical disease**. Infection occurs when filarial parasites are transmitted to humans through mosquitoes. Infection is usually acquired in childhood causing hidden damage to the lymphatic system. Lymphatic filariasis is a **preventable vector-borne disease** that needs to be tackled effectively to meet the Health Ministry's target of eliminating it in India by 2020.

Body:



Impact of Lymphatic filariasis on the poor:

- Over 40% of worldwide cases are found in India. Presently, India has 256 endemic districts across 16 States and five Union Territories including nine endemic districts in Karnataka.
- According to Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), India still has over 2.3 crore people suffering with lifelong disability due to lymphatic filariasis (LF).
- The painful and disfiguring visible manifestations of the disease, lymphoedema, elephantiasis and scrotal swelling (hydrocele) occur later in life and can lead to permanent disability.

- These patients are not only physically disabled, but suffer mental, social and financial losses contributing to stigma and poverty.
- LF has been a low priority among public health issues in the country and comprises only a minute portion of the overall health budget,
- There is often no coordination between the various funding and research bodies to prioritise the research agenda and minimise duplication.

Measures needed to overcome the challenges:

- Although the compliance rate (consumption of drugs) has gone up from 35% to 65% over the years, the need of the hour is to achieve 80%.
- There is a need for **an integrated approach with multi-sectoral involvement** in tackling the disease.
- Tackling the elimination of LF on a war footing, in June 2018, India renewed its commitment towards achieving the global LF elimination goal of 2020 with the launch of **Accelerated Plan for Elimination of LF (APELF)**.
- Greater emphasis needs to be placed in employing strategies tackling the source of the disease – **preventing mosquitoes to human transmission**.
- The **triple drug therapy**, as recommended by **WHO**, with the long term aim of eradicating lymphatic filariasis should be implemented.
- **An institutional mechanism at a national level** to identify gaps in neglected diseases research, set priorities, liaise with research institutions, or monitor research output is the need of the hour.

Conclusion:

Lymphatic filariasis poses a grave threat to India. A unified programme on neglected diseases encompassing research and elimination measures is likely to have a greater impact in prioritising the matter in the health agenda and streamlining efforts towards disease elimination. Creating an enabling environment for research and innovation will be crucial if India is to achieve the target set in **sustainable development goal 3.3** to end epidemics of neglected tropical diseases by 2030.

Quality of teachers play a pivotal role in minimising the dropout rates in the schools.
Suggest measures to reform the teacher education system in the country.(250 words)

Reference

Why this question:

The question intends to examine the role played by teachers in curtailing the drop out rates in the schools of the country.

Key demand of the question:

One must discuss the importance of teachers, their quality and impact on controlling the dropout rates.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

In short provide for some related facts that signify the link between quality of teachers and the respective effect in the dropout rates in schools.

Body:

Explain that quality of teachers is an essential foundation of a good education system.

Discuss the significance of teacher training – The best route for teachers to go from local to global, especially in pre-service training phase, is to enroll in skill development programmes such as global best practices, research, international curriculum, and performance measurements. They also need to acquire bi-lingual proficiency, especially in a foreign language. The government needs to introduce tests such as the CAT, harmonized across the country at national and state levels, as well as familiarize teachers with international cultures and cultural sensitivities training.

Relate with recent policies in direction and examples of arrest in dropout rates associated with increase in quality of teachers.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

“One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world” – Malala Yousafzai. Quality education plays an important role in one’s life which helps him/her to be socially acceptable, increase in job opportunities, economically sound etc so role of educators is of immense importance in providing quality education.

Body:

Reasons behind poor quality of teachers:

- Current teachers training in India is unable to cover tough spots and follows a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach
- Increased workload on the teachers (Mid day meal, election duty etc.) and not following standard Teacher student ratio (1:30).
- Absence of proper monitoring system for evaluating the performance of the teachers and no proper feedback providing system.
- Results of TET shows dismal figures of **only 3-4 percent of them passing the eligibility test.**
- Around **20 percent of regular teachers and 40 percent of contract teachers** did not have professional qualifications for elementary education. (NCTE study).
- Increase in the culture of the private coaching classes and involvement of teachers there.
- Appointment of Ad-hoc teachers because of the lack to adequate number of qualified and properly trained teachers
- Wide spread corruption at various levels in teaching (management level, Internal politics etc.)
- A **National Council of Educational Research and Training** study finds there is no systematic incorporation of teacher feedback into designing trainings, and little variation or consideration of local issues. There is no measure of whether this is translated into classroom practice.

- Nearly **half the teachers** believe that not all children could achieve excellent educational outcomes because of their socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Only **25% incorporate activity-based learning** and **33% use storytelling or role-play** in their pedagogic approach, either because these weren't priorities or because they did not have time.

Government Initiative so far:

- The Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) launched the **National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancements (NISHTHA)** recently, aimed at training over 42 lakh teachers across the country.
- The ministry of human resource development and the National Council for Teacher Education in collaboration with non-government stakeholders launched the **National Teacher Platform or Diksha in 2017**.
- Diksha is envisioned as a one-stop solution to address teacher competency gaps through courses that address their skill gaps and by empowering them to "learn what they want, where they want".
- State initiatives like **RISE** (Rajasthan Interface for School Educators), Rajasthan's version of Diksha.
- **National Council for Teacher Education** plans and co-ordinates the development of teacher education system throughout the country.
- **Justice Verma Commission and Poonam Batra Committee** was appointed to look into teacher education. Their recommendations were based on creating new teacher education programmed in multi disciplinary environments.

Way forward:

- The **World Development Report On Education (2018)** states that "teacher skills and motivation both matter" and that individually-targeted, continued training is crucial to achieving learning improvements through teachers.
- **Better incentives for teachers:** Post training, there should be no differences in the salary of teachers, public or private. This will attract the best young minds towards this profession and will help it regain lost ground.
- Investments in teacher capacity through stronger training programmes. Teachers need to **unlearn and relearn the subjects** and the way it should be taught. There is **no point in teaching and employing rote learning**, for just passing the examination.
- Teacher training programmes should be **complemented by focus-group discussions with local NGOs and community-based organizations**.
- The teacher training models should have the **ability to provide continuous professional development through a blended model, complementing existing physical trainings**.

- A **technology-enabled platform** which allows training to become a **continuous activity** rather than an annual event is necessary.
- Apart from creating good content, it is also important to **consider teachers' technology consumption patterns**, the **potential of gamification to drive up engagement** and the **role of headmasters in promoting teachers' professional development**.

Conclusion:

Economist Eric Hanushek finds that a **child taught by a good teacher gains 1.5 grade-level equivalents, while a child taught by a bad teacher only gets half an academic year's worth**. Teacher Education is a crucial area which urgently needs focus in order to develop the standards of pedagogy in India.

Though India has been making efforts in terms of policies and programmes for the development of sports, it is yet to fulfil gaps on infrastructure front. Critically analyse. (250 words)

Financial Express

Why this question:

The question aims to address the question of infrastructural gaps prevailing in the country's development of sports.

Key demand of the question:

One must discuss in detail the lacunae, gaps that are being witnessed by the sports infrastructure in the country.

Directive:

***Critically analyze** – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.*

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

In short bring out the importance of sports for the country.

Body:

Explain that Sports infrastructure plays a crucial role in achieving excellence in the global arena of sports.

Explain the policies and programmes in this direction, why are there gaps in it.

Discuss the major initiatives in place – national sports policy, assistance for sports infrastructure etc.

Explain what are the points of deficit and what needs to be done.

Conclusion:

Conclude with need to revamp the policy paradigm for improving the infrastructural aspects in sports.

Introduction:

Sports in India refers to the large variety of games played in India, ranging from tribal games to more mainstream sports such as football and cricket. Sports infrastructure plays a crucial role in achieving excellence in the global arena of sports. It not only helps in producing sportspersons of international repute but also encourages the young population of a country to participate in sporting activities with the objective of creating a culturing of sports.

Body:

National policy for sports:

- Broad basing of sport and achievement in excellence.
- Upgradation of development and infrastructure
- Support normal sports federation and other sports bodies.
- Strengthening of scientific and coaching support to the sport.
- Special incentives to support the sport
- Enhanced participation of women and, scheduled tribes and rural youth.
- Involvement of the corporate sector in sports promotion.
- Promote sports mindedness among the public in large

Policies and Programmes for development of Sports:

- **Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS)** The Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports is implementing TOPS within overall ambit of **National Sports Development Fund (NSDF)** for providing financial assistance to elite athletes included in TOPS for their customized training in world class training institutes/academies within the country and abroad.
- **Khelo India** It has been formed after merger of **Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan (RGKA)**, **Urban Sports Infrastructure Scheme (USIS)** and **National Sports Talent Search Scheme (NSTSS)**. Objective of Scheme a) Mass participation of youth in annual sports competitions through a structured competition; b) Identification of talent c) Guidance and nurturing of the talent through existing sports academies and new set up either by the central Government or State Government or in PPP mode. d) Creation of Sports Infrastructure at mofussil, Tehsil, District, State levels, etc.
- **National Sports Development Fund** The National Sports Development Fund (NSDF) was instituted by the Central Government with a view to mobilizing resources from the Government as well as non-governmental sources, including the private/corporate sector and non-resident Indians, for promotion of sports and games in the country. To make contributions to the fund attractive, 100 per cent exemption from income tax is available on all contributions. Further, Government contribution is on matching basis to the contributions received from other sources.
- **Scheme for Promotion of Sports among Persons with Disabilities** The Ministry formulated a scheme for promotion of sports and games among disabled during 2009. The Scheme of Sports and Games for the Disabled has the following components:- (i) Grant for sports coaching and purchase of consumables and non-consumable sports equipment for Schools; (ii) grant for Training of Coaches; and (iii) grant for holding District, State and National level competitions for the disabled.

- **Assistance to National Sports Federations:** the government has been providing financial assistance to the recognized National Sports Federations (NSFs) for supporting girls/women's exposure, training and participation at national/ international level.

Reasons for poor infrastructure:

- **Lack of infrastructure:** This is one of the most important factors for the apathy of the sport in India. Since infrastructure is necessary for training and organizing games, its non-availability and its access to only a few sections of the society have adversely impacted the sport participation and the quality of sports persons.
- **Corruption & Mismanagement of sports authorities:** Corruption has become synonymous with sports administration in India. Whether it is the most popular cricket or hockey or weightlifting, most of the sports authorities in India have come under attack due to corruption charges.
- **State subject:** sport is a State subject. The state governments allocate funds for the development of sports and sports infrastructure as per their priority. There is no comprehensive approach to the development of sports infrastructure uniformly throughout the country
- **Social and economic inequalities:** Social and economic inequalities have a negative impact on the Indian sport. Denial of access to sports infrastructure due to poverty, concentration of stadiums and other sports avenues only in cities, lack of encouragement to girls to participate in sports, etc, have impaired the development of a positive sports culture in the country.
- **Policy lacunae:** For the development of any sector, formulation and execution of an effective policy is a sine qua non. This is true for sports also. Till date, the sports policy planning and implementation is centralized in the country due to the paucity of resources and the expertise by the State and local governments. Moreover, the absence of a separate ministry of sports at the union level reflects the apathy towards sports.
- **Meagre allocation of resources:** Compared to other developed and developing countries, allocation of financial resources is meager in India. In the Union Budget 2017-18, Rs 1943 crore allocated for sports. While it is Rs 450 crore higher than the previous year, it is much below than the around Rs 9000 crore spent annually by the UK for the sports sector.

Way forward:

- Sports deserve to be recognized as human resource development (HRD) activity in the Indian context.
- Extension of Justice Lodha Committee recommendations on BCCI to all other sports bodies will be a right step in this direction.
- Sports complexes like the DDA's Siri Fort one are the need of the hour as they provide much-needed sports infrastructure for the public.
- To arrange a dedicated land bank for the setting up of sports infrastructure

- To adopt the PPP model in which the government will provide institutional and financial support for the building of infrastructure and the private sector will manage and maintain its operations
- Use these facilities for multiple purposes, such as organizing exhibitions, conferences or for the setting up of sports academies
- To make these infrastructural facilities open for the use of the public against membership fees.

Conclusion:

Despite the above mentioned measures taken by the government, the sports ecosystem is of poor quality in the country. For a country of over 1.33 billion, the existing sports infrastructure is not satisfactory. The lack of world-class infrastructure and the inadequate support of the government is reflected in poor performance of Indian athletes in major international events like the Olympics. Tiny countries like Cuba, Croatia and Lithuania performed better in the 2016 Olympics compared to India. It is high time, the public and private sector should come together to lift the Indian sport sector from the present deplorable situation.

Issues relating to poverty and hunger.

Discuss the issue of childhood obesity in India. Suggest measures to tackle with it. (250 words)

Downtoearth

Why this question:

India has the second highest number of obese children in the world, with 14.4 million reported cases, according to a new study published in The New England Journal of Medicine. The article explains in detail the causes and consequences of the issue.

Demand of the question:

One must explain in depth the issue of child obesity in India and what are the causes, what needs to be done to overcome the alarming issue.

Directive word:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

State few facts to justify the assertion in the question statement about the child obesity.

Body

Explain what is child obesity? – Childhood obesity is a condition where excess body fat negatively affects a child's health or wellbeing. Discuss the causes of it. Explain what are the possible consequences – effect on overall health and on the generations to come. Discuss how to overcome it.

Conclusion

Conclude by suggesting solutions.

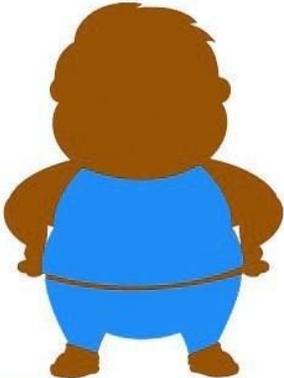
Introduction:

Childhood obesity is a condition where **excess body fat negatively affects a child's health or well-being**. India has the second highest number of obese children in the world, with 14.4 million reported cases, according to a new study published in The New England Journal of Medicine.

Body:

Obesity among Indian kids on the rise

Indians aged between 5 and 19 years are increasingly getting obese, according to a report by a commission formed by the World Health Organization (WHO).



STARTLING FACTS:

- Between 1990 and 2014, the number of overweight children in low and middle income countries has more than doubled from 7.5 million to 15.5 million.
- In 2014, almost half (48%) of all overweight and obese children under 5 years age lived in Asia and one-quarter (25%) in Africa.
- Almost 22% of Indian children are obese and face health risks.

ALARMING CONSEQUENCES:

- Obesity is directly linked to high blood pressure
- Type 2 diabetes
- Heart disease
- Osteoporosis

Causes:

Children become overweight and obese for a variety of reasons. The most common causes are **genetic factors, lack of physical activity, unhealthy eating patterns, or a combination of these factors**. Only in rare cases is being overweight caused by a medical condition such as a **hormonal problem**. A poor diet containing high levels of fat or sugar and few nutrients can cause kids to gain weight quickly. Fast food, candy, and soft drinks are common culprits. Convenience foods, such as frozen dinners, salty snacks, and canned pastas, can also contribute to unhealthy weight gain.

Effects on health:

- **Physical**
 - Childhood obesity however can also lead to life-threatening conditions including diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, sleep problems, cancer, and other disorders.
 - Some of the other disorders would include liver disease, early puberty or menarche, eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia, skin infections, and asthma and other respiratory problems.

- The early physical effects of obesity in adolescence include, almost all of the child's organs being affected, gallstones, hepatitis, sleep apnoea and increased intracranial pressure.
- Overweight children are also more likely to grow up to be overweight adults.
- Obesity during adolescence has been found to increase mortality rates during adulthood.
- A 2008 study has found that children who are obese have carotid arteries which have prematurely aged by as much as thirty years as well as abnormal levels of cholesterol.
- **Psychological:**
 - The first problems to occur in obese children are usually emotional or psychological.
 - Obese children often experience bullying by their peers.
 - Some are harassed or discriminated against by their own family.
 - Stereotypes abound and may lead to low self-esteem and depression.
- **Long-term effects**
 - Children who are obese are likely to be obese as adults. Thus, they are more at risk for adult health problems such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, several types of cancer, and osteoarthritis.
 - One study showed that children who became obese as early as age 2 were more likely to be obese as adults.
 - According to an article in The New York Times all of these health effects are contributing to a shorter lifespan of five years for these obese children.

Measures to tackle it:

- **Educate the child about childhood obesity:** We all have cravings but it is important to balance it out with healthy food and educating children regarding this is at a young age is important.
- The longer babies are breastfed, the less likely they are to become overweight as they grow older. Breastfed babies are 15 to 25 percent less likely to become overweight. For those who are breastfed for six months or longer, the likelihood is 20 to 40 percent less.
- **Gradually work to change family eating habits** and activity levels rather than focusing on weight. Change the habits and the weight will take care of itself.
- **Be a role model.** Parents who eat healthy foods and are physically active set an example that increases the likelihood their children will do the same.

- **Encourage physical activity.** Children should have an hour of moderate physical activity most days of the week. More than an hour of activity may promote weight loss and subsequent maintenance.
- Mandatory minimum grounds size and other sports infrastructure by strict implementation of RTE act norms.
- The new guidelines on physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep for children under 5 years of age were developed by a **WHO panel of experts**. It must be implemented
- Reduce time in front of the TV and computer to less than two hours a day.
- Encourage children to eat only when hungry, and to eat slowly.
- Avoid using food as a reward or withholding food as a punishment.
- Keep the refrigerator stocked with fat-free or low-fat milk and fresh fruit and vegetables instead of soft drinks and snacks high in sugar and fat.
- Serve at least five servings of fruits and vegetables daily.
- Encourage children to drink water rather than beverages with added sugar, such as soft drinks, sports drinks and fruit juice drinks.
- Millets can also help tackle health challenges such as obesity, diabetes and lifestyle problems as they are gluten free, have a low glycemic index and are high in dietary fibre and antioxidants.
- **Guidelines for Junk foods** – prohibition of junk food around school, introduction of sin tax on the junk food
- Construction of parks and leave open spaces in colonies (urban planning) so that children do not remain busy with indoor activity like video games, computer games.
- Organisation of sport competitions at local level by municipalities, societies etc.

Conclusion:

Investing in early childhood development is one of the best investments a country can make to boost economic growth, promote peaceful and sustainable societies, and eliminate extreme poverty and inequality. Equally important, it is necessary to uphold the right of every child to survive and thrive.

Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance-applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures.

In the recent past the parliament has been aggressively pushing bills on many fronts for a better India, however they suffer from the common malady that they are likely to be extremely under-enforced because of weak state capacity. Should Parliament pass laws that the government cannot enforce? Analyse.(250 words)

Livemint

Why this question:

The article elaborately discusses in what way the laws are often not implemented and they remain only on paper.

Key demand of the question:

Answer should analyse clearly the lacunae in the governance on the implementation front, as to what are the reasons that hold back the implementation of laws that are aggressively put in place but often lose relevance due to lack of implementation.

Directive:

analyze – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

First bring out in a line or two the recent laws that were passed by the parliament.

Body:

Take hints from the article and explain the hurdles that the country face on governance front specifically on the implementation front.

Explain what are the genuine problems with passing laws without the capacity to enforce them like – low capacity to enforce leads to arbitrary enforcement.

a rule violator weighs the expected costs and benefits of breaking a rule.

Stronger penalties that are under-enforced may actually incentivize more rule violation. When the enforcement infrastructure is overloaded, this also affects pre-existing laws and not just newly passed legislation. Etc.

Conclusion:

Conclude by suggesting reasonable solutions, how India can take lessons from other countries etc.

Introduction:

The first session of the 17th Lok Sabha has provided important takeaways on both the work done and the working style of the highest legislature in the country. In its 35 sittings this session, the two Houses of Parliament have passed a staggering 26 Bills. However, well intentioned laws without the capacity to enforce them may result in even more rule violation.

Body:

Some of the laws enacted:

- The **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill, 2019**, aims to increase the severity of punishment for sexual offences against children.

- **The Code on Wages Bill, 2019**, replaces four existing laws regulating wages, covers 500 million workers, and establishes floors for wages and overtime as well as penalties and criminal punishments for violating these rules.
- **The Companies (Amendment) Bill, 2019**, criminalizes violations of the spending provisions of money meant for corporate social responsibility activities.

Yes, stronger laws are necessary:

One view is that it is better to have these strong laws on the books, as the prospect of severe punishment can be used to deter individuals from breaking rules. As India develops more state capacity in the future, these laws will be primed for better enforcement. Unfortunately, this view does not take into account the kind of incentives created by under-enforcement and its unintended consequences.

However, passing laws without capacity to enforce those leads to:

- Low capacity to enforce leads to arbitrary enforcement. So, some individuals will get away while others will be punished. This tends not to be random. Typically, rich and politically well-connected individuals get away.
- Selective enforcement can also be pernicious, where the government uses these laws to punish its Opposition or target particular groups and individuals.
- A rule violator weighs the expected costs and benefits of breaking a rule.
- It is not only the severity of punishment, but also the probability of facing the severe punishment that deters rule violations.
- Stronger penalties that are under-enforced may actually incentivize more rule violation. When the enforcement infrastructure is overloaded, this also affects pre-existing laws and not just newly passed legislation.
- Even sensibly crafted pre-existing laws that were enforced to some degree will now be enforced to a less degree because of overloading of the enforcement infrastructure. More individuals will be incentivized to break those laws, resulting in more criminal behaviour in society.

Way forward:

- The first step is to stop passing laws that simply overload the system and cannot be enforced.
- The second is to pass laws that actually increase state capacity by increasing the personnel that enforce the laws.
- India requires the accompanying infrastructure to reduce processing times and thus congestion in its criminal justice system.
- The third step is to free up existing state capacity by reducing or repealing onerous regulations in almost every area of social and economic conduct.

- Streamlining and shrinking the ambit of the regulatory state to a size that can actually be effectively enforced will free up precious capacity that will help increase enforcement in all other areas.
- The severity of punishment is not a substitute for state capacity. Parliament would do well to recognize this while framing laws.

Conclusion:

In sum, passing well intentioned laws with severe punishments without accounting for state capacity can create very harmful effects in society that are not easy to reverse. Increasing the amount of crime in society by criminalizing much more, without the state capacity to enforce penalties, can actually incentivize more rule violators.

The concerns of misuse of Aadhaar-social media link can be addressed only through achieving a balance between right to privacy, preventing crime and fake news issue.

Elucidate.(250 words)

The hindu

Why this question:

The article talks about the recent observations made by the apex court in the matter of linking Aadhaar number with social media to prevent issues arising out of cybercrimes and fake news.

Demand of the question:

One has to answer how a balanced approach is required to handle such an issue, how one can address it.

Directive word:

Elucidate – Give a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction

Discuss the background of the question.

Body

Recently the Supreme Court stressed on the need to find a balance between the right to online privacy and the right of the State to detect people who use the web to spread panic and commit crimes.

Discuss what are the issues of privacy that get violated if Aadhaar is linked to social sites, then discuss and debate on what are the advantages of doing the same.

Conclusion

Conclude by emphasizing on need to find a balanced approach to resolve the issue.

Introduction:

The Tamil Nadu Government had recently told the Supreme Court that the user profiles on social media need to be linked with Aadhaar to keep a check on the circulation of fake, defamatory and pornographic content as well as anti-national and terror material. However, social media platforms, particularly Facebook have been resisting Aadhaar linking, stating that sharing of 12-digit Aadhaar number would violate the privacy policy of users.

Body:

Rationale behind Aadhar-Social Media link:

- The **dangers of the dark web** are a compelling reason behind Aadhar-Social Media link.
- There are rising instances of **cyberbullying, spreading of defamatory and humiliating messages and other intolerable activities on social media**. Aadhar-Social media link can help reduce it.
- Aadhaar-social media linking is needed to **keep a check on fake news and defamatory, anti-national and terror-sponsoring articles or content and pornographic material on social media**.
- The State also referred to the **Blue Whale game**, which had reportedly claimed the lives of several children in India.

Threats posed to Right to privacy by Aadhar-Social Media link:

- The linking of user profiles on social media with Aadhaar would make every message and post by the user traceable.
- Though the move will serve as a deterrent to social media instigators and perpetrators of defamatory and fake posts, it would also violate the privacy of the users, keeping a record of each message along with the registered mobile number or email account.
- This would mean the end of private communications.
- The privacy experts fear that the linking would allow India's nationalist government to force social media platforms to become surveillance tools.

Right to choice also affected due to Aadhar-Social Media link:

- It is unclear as of now of what will happen to those who don't link their social media accounts to their 12-digit Aadhaar number. Will their accounts be deleted or blocked?
- It is also unclear what action will be taken against parody accounts of users.
- Users also have concerns that if a tweet they did years ago suddenly goes viral out of context then will all the people who shared it also get investigated or punished or will their accounts be deactivated?

Challenges apparent in the linking of Aadhaar number with social media profiles:

- The private use of Aadhaar itself has been controversial since the striking down of Section 57 of the Aadhaar Act.
- The limited eKYC provisions, which has been allowed only for banks and other regulated entities are indicative of this.
- The use of Aadhaar, further, has mainly been restricted to receiving government benefits such as the Section 7 benefits.
- It is thus difficult, legally, to find a way to permit Aadhaar-social media linking within the ambit of the Supreme Court's verdict on Aadhaar.

Need of the hour:

- The K.S. Puttaswamy decision (2017) in the ‘privacy’ case is worth mentioning here.
- Accordingly, any state intervention for regulation of online content has to pass the **test of proportionality** laid down by the court.
- Supreme Court stressed the need to find a **balance between the right to online privacy and the right of the State** to detect people who use the web to spread panic and commit crimes.
- The Supreme Court also called for Parliament to draft and pass a **data protection law**
- Supreme Court also impressed upon the respondents to bring out a **robust data protection regime** in the form of an enactment on the basis of **Justice BN Srikrishna (Retd.) Committee Report with necessary modifications** thereto as may be deemed appropriate.
- The government needs to move away from relying on Aadhaar and linking as a one-stop solution for issues ranging from terrorism (SIM linking), money laundering (bank account linking), electoral fraud (voter ID linking) and now cybercrime (social media account linking).
- It is without question that a solution is required, but it is increasingly worrying as the solutions move toward deprivation of fundamental rights and the first steps towards a possible surveillance state.

India and its neighborhood- relations.

Discuss the difficult trajectory of contemporary Sino-Indian relations, with special focus on recent issue of Beijing’s stance on Kashmir. (250 words)

Livemint

Why this question:

China’s support for Pakistan’s position on Kashmir at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has once again underscored the difficult trajectory of contemporary Sino-Indian relations. Thus, it is necessary for us to evaluate the changing dimensions of Sino-Indian relations.

Key demand of the question:

Evaluate the changing conditions of Sino-Indian relations in the current dynamics.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Brief upon the current changes that have affected the Sino-Indian relations.

Body:

Explain how by backing Pakistan’s request for the UNSC to discuss India’s latest move, China has signaled its priorities and made any normalization of ties almost impossible.

Discuss the recent changes, reasons for such change in the relations between the two countries.

Conclusion:

Conclude with what should be the way forward.

Introduction:

The rise of India and China as two major economic and political actors in both regional and global politics has caught global attention. The two emerging and enduring powers representing two modes of civilization signify a complex and dynamic relationship in world politics. China's support for Pakistan's position on Kashmir at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has once again underscored the difficult trajectory of contemporary Sino-Indian relations. By backing Pakistan's request for the UNSC to discuss India's latest move, China has signalled its priorities and made any normalization of ties almost impossible.

Body:

Challenges in Sino-Indian relations:

- India's consolidation of autonomy over Ladakh – and by extension Aksai Chin – will set up a new challenge as the two countries continue a dialogue on the border dispute. The 22nd round of that process should take place later this year.
- China's response is also driven by its wider interests as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has pushed China to be even more aggressive on Kashmir.
- With China reportedly planning to set up a permanent military base in Pakistan for CPEC, India should be prepared for greater Chinese meddling on this matter.
- For years, even as New Delhi and Beijing had temporary crises along their border, including the 2017 stand-off over an obscure patch of Bhutanese territory known as Doklam, their dialogue has mostly continued.
- While no final resolution of the border dispute was imminent, the two sides were heading toward a crystallisation of the old status quo, with India likely making concessions on Aksai Chin, and China on the eastern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh.
- However, with India's abrogation of Article 370, Beijing may find itself toeing an uncompromising line on the border – taking what is certain to be a less compromising stance than before.
- In particular, China's claim over Tawang, a town in Arunachal Pradesh, is likely to harden as a result of India's reorganisation of Ladakh.
- Moreover, Tawang's prominence in the border dispute may take on special importance in post Dalai Lama era, setting up a succession crisis between a Beijing-anointed successor and a legitimate successor outside Tibet.
- In the near term, we may also expect Beijing to push the envelope along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) – the demarcation separating Indian-administered areas from Chinese-administered ones.
- With its move on article 370, India will have to concern itself with both of its disgruntled neighbors.

- While the situation with Pakistan will remain more acute in the coming days, India just made the task of finding a lasting solution to the border dispute with China a lot more complicated.

Possible solutions:

- India is not without options and has shown it's not shy of using them.
- Continued engagement, both bilaterally and in multilateral forums such as BRICS, SCO and the Russia-India-China trilateral, in order to maintain overall stability, deepen economic ties, and foster diplomatic cooperation on regional and international issues.
- India has also sustained efforts to enhance its military and deterrent capabilities.
- The new external balancing effort: The evolution of India-US relations in particular but also of India's relationships with Japan and Australia as well as the quadrilateral cooperation among them indicates a growing convergence in their views regarding stability in the Indo-Pacific region particularly with respect to China's intentions in laying territorial claims to more than 80 per cent of the South China Sea as well as to the sovereign territories of India and Japan.
- China can't expect that its priorities on trade and 5G would be considered favourably by India if it continues to challenge the fundamentals of good neighbourly ties.
- If China is so aggressive on Kashmir, then nothing stops India from raking up issues like Hong Kong and Xinjiang. Tibet and Taiwan remain Chinese vulnerabilities.
- China should realize that there is no major constituency left in India today that has a favourable view of China.
- If China has a long-term strategy of containing India within South Asia, then India can just as easily adopt a strategy of challenging China's core interests.

Conclusion:

It is clear that both India and China want to maintain the Wuhan Spirit especially given the multiple tensions and uncertainties that both countries face internationally and domestically.

Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

“Multilateral institutions have lived longer than their usefulness, now is the time for bilateral institutions.” Do you agree with the statement? Discuss in the context of the ongoing global trade war. (250 words)

[Economic Times](#)

Why this question:

The question is in the backdrop of ongoing trade war between US and China.

Demand of the question:

The answer needs to provide for a detailed analysis on how the multilateral institutions are losing relevance in the current context of global trade wars and the bilateral institutions are the need of the hour.

Directive word:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction

Write in a few lines about the ongoing trade war between US and China.

Body

Mention as the US-China trade war rapidly turns into a full-fledged economic war after Washington's designation of China as a currency manipulator on 5 August, China appears to have an upper hand in holding out longer than the US.

Then move onto discuss how the role of multilateral institutions has been diminishing with escalating tensions between the two countries. Explain this has led to tinker upon the need for bilateral institutions.

Conclusion

Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

The escalating trade war between the U.S. and China is nudging the world economy toward its first recession in a decade with investors demanding politicians and central bankers act fast to change course. The volatility in the world economic system suggests investors may be beginning to take threats of a trade war more seriously.

Body:

The global trade landscape is witnessing strong cross-currents. Trade sentiments are oscillating between sheer despair and scattered hope.

Multilateral institutions on the decline:

- In the decades following World War II, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade was the center of gravity for trade negotiations.
- While that system wasn't perfect, most of the world's countries could at least participate, to one degree or another, in hammering out the rules of trade.
- The multilateral trading order reached its heyday in 1995, with the creation of the World Trade Organization. But more recently, the system has weakened. Today, most of the world's new agreements are struck between only two countries or within a single region.
- Trade war will **gravely undermine the rules-based multilateral system** that has underpinned global prosperity since the end of World War II.
- As the United States accuses China of predatory trading practices while doling out unilateral punishment, the trade organization tasked with preserving the peace appears marginalized.
- **Threats to WTO:**

- WTO is already under strain.
- The collapse of the Doha round of trade talks in 2015, after many fruitless years, put needed reforms on hold indefinitely.
- Disputes that might have been swept into a new trade round have fallen to the WTO's dispute-resolution machinery, which is too slow and too frail to carry the burden.
- The WTO has not kept pace with economic change.
- As America is looking to pursue a mercantilist trade policy in defiance of the global trading system, other countries are bound to follow. That might not lead to an immediate collapse of the WTO, but it would gradually erode one of the foundations of the globalised economy.
- Countries have shown little appetite for continuing the multilateral negotiations. E.g.: Trump hammered on regional accords, famously renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement and withdrawing from the Trans-Pacific Partnership.
- There is a move away from multilateralism – in which many countries agree on certain trading principles – and toward bilateralism – which pits nation against nation, raising the stakes.

Rise in Bilateralism:

- The administrations have given further credence to the notion that it favours bilateralism over multilateralism and protectionism over free trade. E.g.: USA
- The clear preference is for bilateral deals where **a country can use its market power to force concessions from its negotiating partners.**
- Bilateralism could help fix specific grievances with trading partners.
- On the contrary, growing bilateralism also points to a breakdown in trust and the mechanisms of international co-operation.
- Bilateral and regional deals are making it easier for large countries to use trade policy more explicitly as an **arm of foreign and military policy.**
- Modern bilateral deals are not recreating the colonial systems of the past, but they do tend to center on major powers in what some scholars have called a “hub” and “spoke” pattern. The “hub” often enjoys significant influence over the “spoke,” and not just in commercial affairs. China's overtures to African countries over a free trade deal, for example, are likely linked to its strategic interest in securing access to national resources.

Way forward:

- Multilateral co-operation is needed to maintain an **open global economy.**
- **Some international issues simply cannot be fixed bilaterally.** These include environmental issues such as **climate change, critical economic issues like trade and the functioning of the international financial system.**

- One pernicious consequence of abandoning multilateralism is the **mounting complexity and discriminatory nature of global trading arrangements**.
- Even though it is a lengthy and time consuming process, the settlement of disputes through international conventions and rules is the need of the hour.
- One real benefit of the multilateral systems like WTO is that the same rules, more or less, apply to everyone.
- Major trading powers, such as Japan and the EU, should continue to insist on the importance of maintaining a rules-based trading system, with the WTO at its core.
- WTO dispute settlement resolution mechanism should be approached instead of unilateral decisions.
- The benefit of the WTO process is that it prevents the damaging consequences of trade protectionism.
- Nations can resolve their disputes through WTO instead of raising tariffs.
- Trade disputes should be resolved within the WTO framework. As economists have pointed out, when assessing economic relationships, what matters is not a country's bilateral trade balance with a specific trading partner but its overall trade balance with the rest of the world.

Conclusion:

If the rising number of bilateral deals become an instrument of security policy, and trade increasingly flows only to strategically friendly countries. Even without an emergency, the leaders of the world's largest economies will need to rediscover the habit of co-operation or the world cannot come out of this intensified trade war.

As positions in WTO's dispute settlement body remain vacant, an analogous arbitration procedure is a necessity now. Do you agree? Critically analyse. (250 words)

[Financialexpress](#)

Why this question:

The article suggests With WTO's dispute settlement process set to fall apart due to appellate body vacancies remaining unfilled, a parallel arbitration procedure is a must.

Demand of the question:

The answer must evaluate the need and necessity for arbitration procedure as a parallel to WTO's dispute settlement body.

Directive word:

Critically analyze – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction

Provide for a brief background of the current situation at the WTO.

Body

Explain what are the present conditions at the WTO's dispute settlement body, discuss the need for a parallel arbitration mechanism.

The EU and Canada have jointly indicated their intention to resort to arbitration under Article 25 of the Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU), and set up an interim arbitration procedure. This procedure will be followed in disputes involving the two WTO members if the AB is unable to hear appeals due to an insufficient number of members.

Discuss the implications of such a step.

Conclusion

Conclude with way ahead.

Introduction:

Resolving trade disputes has been one of the core functions of the WTO. When countries cannot resolve matters with their trading partners, they show up at the door of the WTO. The **Appellate Body (AB)**, one of the highest adjudicating bodies of the international trade world, hears disputes brought by WTO members. After more than two decades, this mechanism is now under duress.

Body:

Track-record of Appellate body:

- More than 500 disputes have been filed at the WTO by countries since 1995.
- The AB has adjudicated on complex and diverse issues including on environmental protection, renewable energy subsidies, tax evasion, money laundering, patent protection, animal welfare and food safety, among many others.
- The dispute settlement system has increasingly become the *raison d'être* of the WTO itself, experts say.

Context of the issue:

WTO is facing existential crisis during a time when **developed economies have adopted protectionist attitude**. The **U.S. has systematically blocked the appointment of new Appellate Body members ("judges")** and de facto impeded the work of the WTO appeal mechanism. The strength of the AB has already been reduced to three. The matter will come to a head on December 11, 2019, when two more members retire and the requirement of a quorum of three members can no longer be met. The AB will not be functional any more.

Issues faced by the WTO:

- **Politicisation of the Appellate Body appointment and reappointment process:**
 - The quasi-attribution of permanent Appellate Body seats to the U.S. and the European Union (EU).
 - There is a trade war between US and China despite both being a member of WTO. This negates the **core non-discriminatory principle** of WTO.

- US and China have imposed **counter-productive duties**, accusing each other of harming their domestic interests. WTO has not been able to prevent the trade wars despite best efforts and has been labelled as a talk shop.
- There is concern that China may be on its way to having a permanent seat.
- **The “Overreaching” or judicial activism of United States:**
 - USA has systematically blocked the filling of vacancies for ‘judges’ to the seven-member AB, it has acutely affected the functioning of the body, even as disputes continue to pile up.
 - The US is linking the broader reform of the dispute settlement process with the filling of vacancies for the members to the AB. This impacts the dispute settlement mechanism as a whole.
 - The US here tried to separate trade from development and objected to mention centrality for development at the preparation of the declaration.
 - The US stand will **adversely affect the development interest of the developing world.**
 - At the **Buenos Aires**, the developed countries led by the US and the European Union formed **groups on e-commerce, investment facilitation and MSMEs** within the WTO with more than 70 members in each group.
 - The **WTO dispute settlement mechanism** is not a world trade court. The process remains political and diplomatic. In trade wars, the objective is not to settle a dispute; it is to win the battle.
 - The very existence of an appeal mechanism is now paradoxically questioned at a time the global community criticises the absence of the same mechanism in Investor-State Dispute Settlement.

China’s prospects:

- **Beijing** might well be the **new WTO leader** and China’s growing assertiveness may be the reason for the U.S.’s hard posturing.
- China is trying to establish herself by its assertiveness in rule-based WTO system.
- In less than a decade since its first dispute, China has accumulated a vast experience close to that of the U.S. or Europe.
- This strategic and selective normative acculturation has been an empowering one — so much so that Beijing, together with a few others, the EU, and to some extent India, is now the main supporter of multilateralism.
- China, EU, and to some extent India, and a few others, is now the main supporter of multilateralism.

- The recent **EU-China proposal** to promote the reform of the WTO is said to combat “**unilateralism and protectionism**” but might well fail to address unfair trade issues raised against China itself.

Way Forward:

- WTO needs to **strengthen the dispute settlement mechanism** as there are issues in appointment of judges in new appellate body.
- WTO needs to **enhance discussion mechanism** by introducing wider consultations. It has been a long-standing complaint by the smaller participants that the consultations or decision making is limited to the green room of DG of WTO.
- The need of free trade is required more by developing countries like India than developed countries.
- There is **need for the structural reform in the WTO** functioning as multilateral trading system. Despite WTO being a democratic organization, there is a need to make it more effective in protecting the interests of small nations against stronger countries.
- The process of retaliation is ineffective and too impractical for smaller players.
- So, developing countries must work collaboratively to strengthen WTO to collaborate effectively and learn from the past experiences when India and China led the developing countries in environmental forums, garnering funds in the form of GCF.

Conclusion:

The world has changed and multilateral institutions now have to embed these changes. This WTO crisis might well be the final battle to retain control over a Western-centric organisation. The time has come for the emerging economies and the developing world to have a greater say in how to shape multilateralism and its institutions.

In an undefined world order, India and France are natural partners in building the new coalitions. elucidate.(250 words)

[Economic Times](#)

Why this question:

The question is about evaluating India and France bilateral relations.

Key demand of the question:

One must explain in detail how in a more uncertain world order, India and France are natural partners in building the new coalitions.

Directive:

***Elucidate** – Give a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.*

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

In short explain the current context of the question.

Body:

In brief first explain the historical relations that India and France have been sharing.

Discuss that India and France recognize the urgency of constructing coalitions that can provide a measure of stability in an increasingly unstable world. France, which had sought strategic autonomy within the framework of its alliance with the US, and India, which has valued independent foreign policy, are natural partners in building the new coalitions for an uncertain era.

Discuss the ties between the two countries on various fronts.

Explain the effect of other factors that have a potential of affecting India-France relations and in what way the two countries have still been in friendly relations with each other.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way ahead.

Introduction:

The recent visit of Indian PM to France reflects the strong strategic partnership which the two countries deeply value and share. India and France have excellent bilateral ties, which are reinforced by a shared vision to cooperate for further enhancing peace and prosperity for the two countries and the world at large. The strong strategic and economic partnership is complemented by a shared perspective on major global concerns such as terrorism, climate change, etc.

Body:

India –France relations in the past:

- For nearly four decades, successive French presidents — Francois Mitter and in the 1980s, Jacques Chirac from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s and Nicolas Sarkozy after that — made repeated efforts to elevate the engagement with India to a higher level.
- If Paris was an eager suitor, Delhi was distracted by the preoccupied relations with other major powers — US, Russia and China
- Delhi could hardly appreciate the pivotal value of France, and more broadly that of Europe, in transforming India's international position.
- However, this trend has begun to change as Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid greater strategic attention to France and Europe in the first term.

Significance of India-France relations today:

- The relative harmony between the major powers witnessed after the Cold War is now becoming a distant memory.
- The growing tensions between the US on the one hand, and China and Russia on the other seems to make wider ramifications.
- Meanwhile, due to Trump administration's disruptive moves, the cracks in the political West are widening.
- In this wider context of the slow breakdown of the post-War order, India and France could make coalitions that can provide a measure of stability.

India-France: Natural partners:

- **Enhancing bilateral cooperation in strategic sectors:**
 - France has always been an important partner in the development of advanced technologies.
 - This is set to advance further with the consolidation of civil nuclear cooperation and enhancing space cooperation.
 - The summit this week saw the placing of artificial intelligence and the unfolding digital revolution at the top of the bilateral agenda.
- **Defence:**
 - The new commitment to go beyond the buyer-seller relationship in the field of weapons procurement.
 - Synergies between India's large defence market and the French strengths in armament production
 - The signing of Agreement regarding the Provision of Reciprocal Logistics Support
 - Political cooperation began with French support for India in limiting international sanctions on Delhi after its 1998 nuclear tests.
 - Today, France has emerged as India's most reliable partner on issues relating to terrorism and Kashmir.
- **Regional Cooperation:**
 - To intensify maritime and naval cooperation in the Indian Ocean and more broadly the Indo-Pacific.
 - There is a sweeping and ambitious ocean agenda awaiting the two countries — from maritime governance to oceanographic research and from interoperability between their armed forces to capacity building in the littoral.
- **Bilateral trade and Economic relations:**
 - The India-France Administrative Economic and Trade Committee (AETC) provides an appropriate framework to assess and find ways to further promote bilateral trade and investment as well as to speed up the resolution of market access issues to the benefit of economic operators
- **Global agendas:**
 - Climate change, biodiversity, renewable energy, terrorism, Cybersecurity and digital technology, etc:
 - There have been joint efforts to limit climate change and develop the **Solar Alliance**
 - Both countries have agreed on a road map on Cybersecurity and digital technology.

Way forward:

- France also opens the pathway for deeper engagement with Europe on global issues.
- Since independence, India has experimented with different institutions including the NAM and BRICS to shape global norms.
- The new partnerships with France, Germany and other like-minded countries like Japan would hopefully be significant for India's influence on the global stage.

Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian Diaspora.

China's weakening of its currency to hurt US economic interests for political gains will only make other Asian countries more vulnerable to a political crisis. Comment in the light of recent currency manipulation steps taken by China. (250 words)

Livemint

Why this question:

With a trade war between the US and China already having ruptured the stability in Asia, Beijing's cheapening of the yuan has stoked fears of a 'currency war'.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must analyse in depth the recent economic policies adopted by China in response to the ongoing trade wars with US.

Directive:

Comment— here we have to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and form an overall opinion thereupon.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

In brief put across the concept of currency manipulation.

Body:

Explain that China's economy depends significantly on its exported goods. By devaluating its currency, the Asian giant lowered the price of its exports and gained a competitive advantage in the international markets. A weaker currency also made China's imports costlier, thus spurring the production of substitute products at home to aid the domestic industry.

Explain the impact of such a move on global trade markets.

Effect on Asian markets – With Chinese goods becoming cheaper, many small- to medium-sized export-driven economies could see reduced trade revenues. If these nations are debt-ridden and have a heavy dependence on exports, their economies could suffer. For instance, Vietnam, Bangladesh, and Indonesia greatly rely on their footwear and textile exports. These countries could suffer if China's devaluations make its goods cheaper in the global marketplace.

Provide for a passing reference to impact on India.

Conclusion:

Conclude that China's recent moves will continue to send ripples across global financial systems, and rival economies should brace themselves for the after-effects.

Introduction:

Recently, the Chinese yuan broke the seven-to-one parity against the dollar for the first time since 2008. The People's Bank of China, which had maintained this level consistently till now, deliberately moved to devalue the Chinese currency after the latest tariff threats issued by US President. The USA officially labelled China a 'currency manipulator'.

Body:

Reasons behind Yuan devaluation:

- **Economic:**
 - China's weakening manufacturing competitiveness is likely to strengthen with yuan-priced goods and services getting cheaper across supply chains in East Asia, parts of Africa, etc.
 - It is likely to widen China's trade surplus with the US in the immediate short run.
 - It will also help China expand trade margins within its own region, especially with Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, etc.
- **Political:**
 - The US' own strategic engagement in Asia has weakened under Trump, who questioned the "value of US alliances with Japan and South Korea
 - Japanese imposed trade restrictions on South Korea. China and Russia staged their first joint aerial patrols in the region, causing South Koreans to react militarily.
 - China-US friction has offered significant economic and political leverage to smaller emerging nations like Vietnam and Indonesia within their respective regional spaces

Risks posed by Yuan devaluation:

- Chinese export will become cheap. Will impact other exporting nations.
- Risk not only for those trading in the US and Chinese currencies or their stocks, but also for capital flows between emerging markets
- China, around 2015-16, tried something similar by letting the yuan depreciate; it led to a stock market crash in China, and billions of its dollar reserves disappeared in just a few days.
- That devaluation saw led to a massive capital flight from China, further weakening its external position.
- **Beggar-thy-neighbour policy:** The debt denominated in foreign currencies has increased for global companies and developing nations across the world, and maybe vulnerable to a currency shock if the "currency war" continues.
- Most foreign investors switched to the safety of gold or other currencies like yen.

- **Economic slowdown:** This may lead to delayed recovery of economies dependent on exports due to stiff competition by Chinese products

Conclusion:

China's weakening of its currency to hurt US economic interests for political gains will only make other Asian countries more vulnerable to a political crisis that could quickly escalate to a financial crisis induced by either a dollar currency crash or waves of capital flight. Any markets responding cautiously to the latest devaluation are correct in issuing a "fragile" alert for investors for now.

Do you agree that the recently signed Singapore convention by United Nations will have huge impact on Indian economy in the context of global trade? Elucidate. (250 words)

Financialexpress

Why this question:

Recently the Union Cabinet has approved the signing of the United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements (UNISA) resulting from mediation by the Republic of India scheduled to be held at Singapore on 7th August, 2019.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must discuss the impact of such a deal upon the Indian economy with reference to global trade.

Directive:

Elucidate – Give a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

In brief define the context of the question.

Body:

First discuss about the UNISA, its key features.

Then explain how Signing of the Convention will boost the confidence of the investors and shall provide a positive signal to foreign investors about India's commitment to adhere to international practice on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and thus boost trade and economy of the country.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way ahead.

Introduction:

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the **United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements** resulting from mediation ("the Convention") on 20th December 2018. The convention is also known as the "**Singapore Convention on Mediation**" (**the Convention**). **India has recently signed the UNISA**. So far 46 countries have signed this international treaty on settlement agreements.

Body:

Importance of Mediation:

- In commercial disputes, mediation often proves to be the cheapest, quickest and the most confidential mode for dispute resolution.

- Often, corporates find themselves in a situation where they have multiple dealings with one another, and do not wish to spoil the relationship due to a disagreement in a particular transaction.
- Mediation is the answer as it helps to preserve business relationships.
- It also affords the parties greater control over the outcome, leading to a more commercially-sound resolution as opposed to a determination through an adjudicatory mechanism.

Shortcomings of Mediation:

- Mediation, unlike arbitration or court litigation, suffers from a drawback.
- Mediated settlements typically take shape in the **form of a settlement agreement**.
- This is unlike a court judgment or arbitral award, where a party could directly file for execution and/or initiate contempt proceedings.
- Therefore, mediated settlements would generally be recorded in the form of court orders or consent awards.
- This leads to unnecessary costs, delays and, in certain cases, to loss of confidentiality.
- Therefore, there is a need for an international framework to enforce such settlement agreements.

Benefits of Singapore convention for India:

- It ensures that parties reach a settlement that becomes binding and enforceable in accordance with simplified and streamlined procedure.
- It aims to become essential instrument that facilitates international trade and in promotion of mediation as alternative and effective method of resolving trade disputes.
- It also seeks to contribute to strengthening access to justice, and to the rule of law.
- Signing of the Convention will boost the confidence of the investors and shall provide a positive signal to foreign investors about India's commitment to adhere to international practice on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).
- It is particularly important for the growth of mediation in India and enhancing the ease of doing business in India particularly in the legal front.
- It will provide positive signal to foreign investors about India's commitment for adhering to international practice on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) or external dispute resolution (EDR).

Way forward:

- To further boost foreign investors' confidence in the Indian market, the law supporting the convention in India should cover all government contracts with investors for mediation both in India and in a third country choice of disputing parties.
- India may have to enact a new law on mediation, setting out the process for enforcement.
- With contract-based businesses set to boost the Indian economy to the USD 5 trillion target, foreign companies would be asking legal groups about their mediation capabilities
- A number of UN member countries, both the convention signatories and the ones yet to sign, will need domestic laws supporting the mediation agreements within their respective jurisdictions

Conclusion:

The convention is likely to promote the adoption of mediation by the parties in relation to international commercial disputes, as it will make 'settlement agreements' independently enforceable. This will promote mediation and could consequently reduce the burden on other forms of dispute resolution procedures.

Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

Write a short note on United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).(250 words)

Reference

Why this question:

Earlier this month, India contributed USD 5 million to the UN Palestine refugee agency and called for ensuring sustained fiscal support for the organization's work.

Key demand of the question:

The answer is straightforward and expects one to discuss in depth the mandate, genesis and relevance of UNRWA.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Discuss in brief the coming of UNRWA.

Body:

Discuss the following aspects –

It was established in 1949, following the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict.

In the absence of a solution to the Palestine refugee problem, the General Assembly has repeatedly renewed UNRWA's mandate, most recently extending it until 30 June 2020.

What is its mandate? – To support Palestinian refugees, and their patrilineal descendants, who fled or were expelled from their homes during the 1948 Palestine war and 1967 Six Day war.

What services does it provide? – It provides education, health care, and social services to the population it supports.

Conclusion:

Conclude with significance of the agency.

Introduction:

The **United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA)** is a **relief and human development agency** which supports more than 5 million registered Palestinian refugees, and their patrilineal descendants, who fled or were expelled from their homes during the 1948 Palestine war as well as those who fled or were expelled during and following the 1967 Six Day war.

Body:

India has recently contributed USD 5 million to UN Palestine refugee agency. The contribution was provided in support of UNRWA's core programmes and services, including education, health care, and relief and social services.

It is the only UN agency dedicated to helping refugees from a specific region or conflict and is separate from UNHCR.

Mandate of UNRWA:

UNRWA's contemporary mandate is to provide relief, human development and protection services to Palestine refugees and persons displaced by the 1967 hostilities in its fields of operation: Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, West Bank and the Gaza Strip. UNRWA's mandate has been repeatedly renewed by the UN General Assembly.

Funding:

UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions from UN Member States. UNRWA also receives some funding from the Regular Budget of the United Nations, which is used mostly for international staffing costs.

Functions:

- UNRWA has been providing health, education, relief and social services, as well as emergency humanitarian assistance, across its five fields of operation **Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip** since 1950.
- The Agency currently serves 5.4 million Palestinian refugees 20% of the world's refugees.
- UNRWA has launched a series of emergency appeals for emergency food, employment and cash assistance.
- The emergency programme serves over one million people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip who have been impoverished by the conflict, violence and restrictions.
- UNRWA provides this emergency assistance in addition to its regular programme services in the areas of relief and social services, education and health and other assistance.

Challenges faced by UNRWA:

- The UN agency is going through a difficult financial situation due to voluntary contributions from a limited donor base.

- There is a projected shortfall of more than USD 200 million against a funding requirement of approximately USD 1.2 billion for UNRWA this year.
- The shortfall may impact the agency's ability to provide essential services to the Palestine refugees, notably in the fields of education, health, and assistance to the most vulnerable refugees.
- Besides, a corruption scandal involving sexual misconduct, nepotism, retaliation against whistleblowers and lots of business-class travel has gripped the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

Conclusion:

In 2011 UNRWA agreed to be assessed as a multilateral organisation by The Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN). The UNRWA is committed to fostering the human development of Palestine refugees by helping them to acquire **knowledge and skills, Lead long and healthy lives, achieve decent standards of living, Enjoy human rights to the fullest possible extent.**

Write a short note on United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements (UNISA)(250 words)

Economictimes

Why this question:

India has signed the United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements (UNISA) recently.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must discuss the detailed features of United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements (UNISA) and effect on India.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Begin with brief on the origin and coming of United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements (UNISA).

Body:

Discussion should include the following:

First explain about the United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements (UNISA); The United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation ("the Convention") on 20th December 2018. The convention is also known as the "Singapore Convention on Mediation" (the Convention).

What are the key features of it?

Advantages and merits of it.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the **United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements** resulting from mediation ("the Convention") on 20th December 2018. The convention is also known as the **"Singapore Convention on Mediation" (the Convention)**. **India has recently signed the UNISA.** So far 46 countries have signed this international treaty on settlement agreements.

Body:**Key features:**

- The Convention provides a uniform and efficient framework for the enforcement of international settlement agreements resulting from mediation and for allowing parties to invoke such agreements, akin to the framework that the Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards (New York, 1958) (the “New York Convention”) provides for arbitral awards.
- The Convention defines two additional grounds upon which a court may, on its own motion, refuse to grant relief.
- Those grounds relate to the fact that a dispute would not be capable of settlement by mediation or would be contrary to public policy.
- It ensures that parties reach a settlement that becomes binding and enforceable in accordance with simplified and streamlined procedure.
- It aims to become essential instrument that facilitates international trade and in promotion of mediation as alternative and effective method of resolving trade disputes.
- It also seeks to contribute to strengthening access to justice, and to the rule of law.

Benefits for India:

- Signing of the Convention will boost the confidence of the investors and shall provide a positive signal to foreign investors about India’s commitment to adhere to international practice on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).
- It is particularly important for the growth of mediation in India and enhancing the ease of doing business in India particularly in the legal front.
- It will provide positive signal to foreign investors about India’s commitment for adhering to international practice on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) or external dispute resolution (EDR).

Way forward:

- To further boost foreign investors’ confidence in the Indian market, the law supporting the convention in India should cover all government contracts with investors for mediation both in India and in a third country choice of disputing parties.
- With contract-based businesses set to boost the Indian economy to the USD 5 trillion target, foreign companies would be asking legal groups about their mediation capabilities
- A number of UN member countries, both the convention signatories and the ones yet to sign, will need domestic laws supporting the mediation agreements within their respective jurisdictions

Conclusion:

The Indian judicial system is marred by delays because of which businesses suffer as disputes are not resolved in a reasonable time period. Therefore, need for alternative dispute resolution processes like negotiation, mediation conciliation and arbitration is felt from time to time. Joining the convention is a step in the right direction.

In the current day world, with all its on-going troubles, do you think WTO may still emerge as the lynchpin of global trade governance? Analyse.(250 words)

[Indianexpress](#)

Why this question:

The article talks about the role WTO still has to play in global trade governance.

Key demand of the question:

Explain the relevance of WTO in today's world despite the criticism faced by it owing to changing world trade conditions.

Directive:

Analyze – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Explain in brief the role that WTO has been playing since its genesis in managing world trade.

Body:

Discuss first its achievements from the past till present, explain how It also monitors the implementation of free trade agreements, produces research on global trade and economic policy, and serves as a forum for settling trade disputes between nations. An alternate way to look at the WTO's success is not to focus on how much trade it has helped create and the corresponding tariff reductions, but the damage in trade value it has helped avert.

Take hints from the article and quote examples and justify in what way WTO still remains to be the lynchpin of global trade.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

The World Trade Organization remains an indispensable organisation but it requires urgent modernisation. Developed countries like US have constantly accused of developing nations using the tag to benefit unduly. The former have blamed the inefficiency of WTO to regulate this and threatened to quit the global body.

Body:

Achievements of WTO since its inception:

- Since the WTO came into being in 1995, the world has witnessed massive changes, some deeply structural in nature.
- New technologies have transformed the way we live, communicate, and trade.

- In 1995, less than 0.8 per cent of the world's population used the internet; in June 2019 it was around 57 per cent.
- Communication technologies and containerisation lowered costs and boosted volumes of components moving in and out of countries allowing production chains to become increasingly international and also much more complex.
- An iPhone, for example, has about 14 main components that are manufactured by 7-8 multinational companies with branches in more than 40 countries.
- Overall trade in goods has nearly quadrupled since 1995, while WTO members' import tariffs have declined by an average of 15 per cent.
- **Over half of world trade is now tariff-free (WTO, 2015).**
- Growth in trade has exceeded growth in world GDP and has been associated with improved standards of living.
- Today, the WTO regulates more than 98 per cent of global trade flows among its members.
- It also monitors the implementation of free trade agreements, produces research on global trade and economic policy, and serves as a forum for settling trade disputes between nations.
- An alternate way to look at the WTO's success is not to focus on how much trade it has helped create and the corresponding tariff reductions, but the **damage in trade value it has helped avert**. One estimate puts the value of avoided trade wars at \$340 billion per year.

Challenges faced by WTO:

- **Dispute settlement cases** continue to be filed for the time being and are being litigated. A civil dialogue over trade issues persists.
- **Technical functioning is now wholly inadequate to meet the major challenges** to the strategic relevance of the WTO in the 21st century. In critical areas, the organisation has neither responded, nor adapted, nor delivered.
- Dimensions of its structures and functions are fragile, creaking, and failing in parts.
- Functioning of state enterprises engaging in commercial activities is interfering with and distorting the operative assumption of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)/WTO that international trade is to be conducted, principally, by private sector operators in response to conditions of supply and demand through price in a market economy.
- Many WTO members bear responsibility for the use of trade-distorting domestic subsidies. Agricultural and industrial subsidies have caused blockages in the system and prompted protectionist reactions in a number of WTO members.
- **Blockage and deadlock in the Appellate Body stage** of the WTO dispute settlement system triggered the present crisis.

- The WTO **lost the critical balance between the organisation as an institution** established to support, consolidate, and bind economic reform to counter damaging protectionism, on the one hand, and the organisation as an institution for litigation-based dispute settlement, on the other hand.
- For years now, the **multilateral system for the settlement of trade dispute has been under intense scrutiny and constant criticism**. The U.S. has systematically blocked the appointment of new Appellate Body members (“judges”) and de facto impeded the work of the WTO appeal mechanism.

Measures to revive WTO:

- A vibrant WTO cannot accommodate conflicting economic models of market versus state. All WTO members will have to **accept the operative assumption of a rules-based order** steered by a market economy, the private sector, and competition.
- **Launch negotiations to address the intertwined issues of agricultural subsidies and market access**, while recognising that food security concerns will not disappear.
- A credible trading system requires a **dispute settlement system that is accepted by all**.
- Launch serious negotiations to restore the balance, and we must do so in an open-ended plurilateral manner that cannot be blocked by those who do not want to move ahead.
- GATT/WTO rules in a number of areas are outdated. **New rules are required** to keep pace with changes in the market and technology. Rules and disciplines on topics ranging from trade-distorting industrial subsidies to digital trade require updates.

Conclusion:

Members have to face the reality that the organisation requires non-cosmetic, serious root-and-branch reform for a WTO adapted to 21st century economic and political realities. A reformed WTO will have to be constructed on the foundation of **liberal multilateralism, resting on open, non-discriminatory plurilateral pillars, an improved Appellate Body, explicit accommodation of regional trade agreements, and appropriate safety valves for rules-based sovereign action**. A reaffirmed commitment to the **rules-based liberal market order** with a development dimension must be the foundational starting point.