

ISSUE - 21

The write-ups can also be found in the current affairs section on our website

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HISTORY, ART & CULTURE

V.D. Savarkar

Source: The Hindu

Manifest pedagogy: This year's mains paper 1 question on secularism as a threat to the diversity of India points to a gradual process of change which has set in UPSC. In this changed context and building of new narratives some of the leaders of Hindu right and their ideologies and outlook too will gain prominence. As Manifest believes in visualising and targeting the areas which can be asked as questions in Upsc and the context of promises of awarding a Bharata ratna to V D Savarkar. The information below gains prominence.

In news:

- Government is proposing to confer Bharat Ratna on V.D.Savarkar

Placing it in syllabus:

- Great personalities in Indian history

Dimensions:

- V D Savarkar's political career
- Participation in Revolutionary terrorism
- His views on Social reform and Social Change
- His views on Hindutva and Hindu Nationalism
- Time in Andaman Prison and the petitions to the British Crown
- Accusations of the role in the Assassination of Mahatma Gandhi

Content:

Savarkar's political career:

- V. D. Savarkar (1883-1966) was a charismatic leader, who played a significant role in the freedom struggle of India.
- There were **two phases** in the ideological development of Savarkar.
- In the first phase of his life, he was **influenced by** the philosophy of the Italian nationalist **Joseph Mazzini** and supported the concept of the composite Indian nationalism, which was not different from the nationalism of Aurobindo and Tilak.
- During this period, **religion played an important role** in his concept of nationalism, but it **did not exclude any religious community** from it.
- But in the **second phase** of his career after 1922-23, Savarkar became the **supporter of Hindu nationalism**.
- After his release from the confinement in 1937, as a response to the Muslim League, he **joined**

the Hindu Mahasabha and became its President from 1938 to 1945.

- He **popularized the term Hindutva** (Hinduness), to create a collective "Hindu" identity as an essence of Bharat (India).
- Savarkar was a pragmatic **practitioner of Hindu philosophy**.
- He advocated for validating religious myths and blind faith against the test of modern science.

Participation in Revolutionary terrorism:

- Savarkar and his brother Ganesh Damodar Savarkar founded a secret society called **Abhinav Bharat Society in 1903** (influenced by Mazzini's Young Italy).
- Initially founded at Nasik as Mitra Mela when Vinayak was still a student at Fergusson College, Pune, the society grew to include several hundred revolutionaries and political activists with **branches in various parts of India**, extending to London after Savarkar went to study law.

- It carried out a few **assassinations of British officials**, after which the Savarkar brothers were convicted and imprisoned.
- The society was formally **disbanded in 1952**.
- In London, he **involved** himself with radical organizations such **India House and the Free India Society**.
- He also **published books** advocating complete Indian independence by revolutionary means.
- **In 1910**, he was arrested and ordered to be **extradited to India** for his connections with the revolutionary group India House.
- On the voyage back to India, Savarkar staged an **attempt to escape and seek asylum in France** but he was **handed back to the British** by France in contravention of international law.
- On return to India, Savarkar was **moved to the Cellular Jail in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands**.

His views on social reforms and social change:

- He exhorted the Hindus to accept **modern practices based on science and reason** and reject the religious superstitions and customs which were standing hindrance to social progress.
- He was a **critic of caste system** and held that both 'Chaturvarna' and caste system proved very disastrous for the unity of Hindu society and gave birth to **inhuman practice of untouchability**.
- The **caste** encouraged and **institutionalised inequality**, divided Hindu society into numerous compartments and sowed the seeds of hostility and hatred among the Hindus.
- He wanted the Hindus to **reject blind faith in the Vedas and customs** and tried to acquire material strength by accepting the supremacy of machines.
- He rejected the sanctity of religious scriptures and maintained that all **religious scriptures were man-made** and their teaching could **not be applied to all societies in all times**.
- He favoured the pursuit of science and reason and **criticised 'irrational and superstitious' practices of Hindus**.

- He was a product of renaissance in the Western world and **from the European philosophical tradition, he borrowed three important ideas**:

1. In life struggle, the **fittest survived** and those who could not stand the struggle got eliminated.
2. **Violence was in-built in the creation of nature** and-the nature abhorred absolute non-violence. Hence, in this difficult life, man should acquire strength and power to overcome the problems he faced.
3. There was **no absolute morality in the world**. The use of all weapons was desirable provided it was directed against slavery and imperialism.

Thus, in Savarkar's theory of social change, the **principle of life struggle** played an important role. For him, reason, science and technology were important to bring about the change in the society.

His views on hindutva:

- Savarkar described a **"Hindu" as a patriotic inhabitant of Bharatavarsha**, venturing beyond a religious identity.
- He outlined his vision of a **"Hindu Rashtra" (Hindu Nation) as "Akhand Bharat"** (United India), purportedly stretching across the entire Indian subcontinent.
- He defined Hindus as being neither Aryan nor Dravidian but as **"People who live as children of a common motherland, adoring a common holyland."**
- **Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains**, in his view, met both conditions and **were therefore Hindus**.
- All Hindus were the members of the nation. **Non-Hindus** (according to him, Muslims and Christians) might **not become the members of the Hindu nation but they were members of the Indian state**.
- He wrote a book called 'Hindutva' in 1924 to explain the basic principles of Hindu nationalism.
- He **launched the Shuddhi movement** to reconvert the converted Hindus to Hinduism and to purge Marathi language of Arabic and Persian words.

- In **1925, the R.S.S. or the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh was formed** by Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar to protect the Hindus from the Muslims aggression.
- In the subsequent period, **Savarkar and the R.S.S. propagated the Hindu nationalist ideology against the ideology of the composite Indian nationalism expounded by Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress.**
- He opposed the Quit India struggle in 1942, calling it a "Quit India but keep your army" movement.
- He became a fierce critic of the Indian National Congress and its acceptance of India's partition.

Time in Andaman prison and petitions to British crown:

- He was sent to the notorious Cellular Jail in the Andamans in 1911 for his revolutionary activity.
- He first petitioned the British for early release within months of beginning his 50 year sentence.
- Then again in 1913 he submitted his next mercy petition and presented it personally to the Home Member of the Governor General's council, asking for forgiveness, and he described himself as a "**prodigal son**" **longing to return to the "parental doors of the government"**.
- He wrote that his release from the jail will recast the faith of many Indians in the British rule.
- In 1917, Savarkar submitted another mercy petition, for a general amnesty of all political prisoners.
- In 1920, the Indian National Congress and leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Vithalbai Patel and Bal Gangadhar Tilak demanded his unconditional release.
- **In 1921 after signing a plea for clemency that required him to renounce revolutionary activities, he was released.**
- He was eventually moved to Ratnagiri, Maharashtra, where he stayed until 1937.

Though his defenders insist that his promises were a tactical ploy his critics say otherwise, as he stayed true to his promise after leaving the Andamans by staying away from the freedom struggle and actually helping the British with his divisive theory of 'Hindutva', which was another form of the Muslim League's Two Nation theory.

Accusations of his role in the Assassination of Mahatma Gandhi:

- Following the assassination of Gandhi on 30 January 1948, police arrested the assassin **Nathuram Godse** and his alleged accomplices and conspirators.
- Godse was a member of the Hindu Mahasabha and RSS.
- Godse was the editor of Agrani – Hindu Rashtra, a Marathi daily from Pune which was run by the company "**The Hindu Rashtra Prakashan Ltd**" (The Hindu Nation Publications) in which Savarkar had invested Rs. 15000.
- **Savarkar**, the former president of the Hindu Mahasabha, **was arrested on 5 February 1948** and was charged as a co-conspirator in the assassination of Gandhi.
- Due to lack of evidence, Savarkar was arrested under the Preventive Detention Act.
- Godse claimed full responsibility for planning and carrying out the assassination.
- However, according to the approver **Digambar Badge**, on 17 January 1948, Godse went to have a last darshan with Savarkar in Bombay before Gandhi's assassination.
- The prosecution had no difficulty in showing that Nathuram Godse had organised the conspiracy, but it was a difficult task to prove the direct complicity of Savarkar.
- **Badge's testimony was not accepted as the approver's evidence lacked independent corroboration and hence Savarkar was acquitted.**

Mould your thoughts:

1. Throw light on Savarkar's concept of "Hindutva". What were his ideas on bringing social changes in society?

Saint Ravidas

Source: The Hindu

Manifest pedagogy: Upsc in recent times has taken great interest in Bhakti and Sufi movements in both prelims and Mains. There have been many questions ranging from periodisation of Bhakti saints to the specificities of their philosophies. In this context the issue of Ravidas temple demolition can be a good trigger for the examiner.

In news:

- Following the **demolition of Guru Ravidas temple in south Delhi's Tughlakabad** by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), the Supreme Court (SC) has asked parties to find "better land and location" for construction of new temple.

Placing it in syllabus: Great personalities in Bhakti movement (explicitly mentioned)

Dimensions:

- Ravidas periodisation
- His outlook on Bhakti and his role in it:
- His role in social reforms
- His literary works.

Content:

Ravidas periodisation:

- Ravidas, **also called Raidas, of 15th or 16th century**, was a mystic and poet who was one of the most renowned of the saints of the North Indian bhakti movement.
- He was born in Varanasi as a member of an untouchable leather-working Chamar caste.
- It is said that he was born in Magha Purnima - the full moon day in the month of Magh month.
- Guru Ravidas birth anniversary is celebrated as per the Hindu lunar calendar and therefore has no fixed date attached to it.

His outlook on Bhakti and his role in it:

Ravidas was a prominent figure in the bhakti movement and a **renowned poet of the nirgun bhakti tradition that valued the worship of a formless God** who could be envisioned without the mediation of human intermediaries.

By the turn of fourteenth century, Muslim rule was well established in India. When **Bhagat Ramanand** (1366-1467 AD) came to Northern India and made Benares as his home, he noted that the Muslim religion had made inroads into Hinduism.

He **initiated the veneration of Universal Brotherhood** and accepted Hindus of low-castes and even invited Muslims to join him in worship, and become his followers. Among his most **noted disciples were Kabir, a Muslim weaver**, and Ravidas.

Kabir was another well-known poet in the bhakti movement who also belonged to the nirgun bhakti tradition. Both Ravidas and Kabir challenged upper caste hegemony. Disciples of Kabir are known as Kabir-panthis.

Mira Bai was another prominent bhakti poet of the **Vaishnava saguna tradition** which proposed that the divine could best be approached through embodied form. She **accepted Ravidas as her preceptor-guru**. The **interaction of Mira Bai and Ravidas provided a platform for dialogue between nirguna and saguna bhakti traditions**.

When **Nanak Dev**, the first guru of Sikhs, visited Banaras he collected Ravidas' poetry and brought it back with him to the Punjab. When the **fifth Sikh guru Arjan Dev** compiled in 1604 the **Adi Granth**, the key religious scripture of the Sikhs, he **incorporated 41 verses of Bhakt Ravidas**.

The Ravidassia religion compiled a new holy book, Amritbani Guru Ravidass Ji which contains

exclusive writings and teachings of Sant Ravidas. It contains 240 hymns and is used in all Ravidassias temples.

His role in social reforms:

- Ravidas is considered a **symbol of** caste assertion, Dalit identity, the resilience of Hinduism, and egalitarianism aspect of Sikhism all at the same time.
- He was **vocal against the varna (caste) system** and in his poetry, questioned caste hegemony, valued labour of all sorts, as well as a life of simplicity and morality.
- He imagined an **egalitarian society** called **Begumpura**, means "land without sorrow" where there would be no discrimination or exploitation.
- He **initiated conversations with upper caste Hindus** on questions related to caste, social justice, love and forms of worship.
- He acknowledged Vishnu, Brahma, and Shiva in his poetry as manifestations of God, but **rejected celibacy, asceticism, penance, austerity, rituals, pilgrimage, idol worship and the authority of texts considered sacred.**
- He formed his distinct identity so his **disciples** came to be known **Ravidas-panthis**.
- In the 20th century, Sikh, Hindu, and even Muslims used to follow his teachings and they came to be known as **Ravidassias**.
- He **chose the middle path between radical separation and assimilation.**

His literary works:

- The **Adi Granth of Sikhs, and Panchvani of the Hindu Dadu Panthis** are the two oldest attested sources of the literary works of Ravidas.
- In the Adi Granth, **forty of Ravidas's poems are included**, and he is one of thirty six contributors to this foremost canonical scripture of Sikhism.
- His poetry covers topics such as the **definition of a just state** where there are no second or third class unequal citizens, the need for dispassion, and who is a real Yogi.
- The poetry attributed to Ravidas, and championed by his followers from the 17th-20th century, **have a strong anti-Brahmanical and anti-communal theme.**
- The songs of Ravidas discuss **Nirguna-Saguna themes and ideas that are at the foundation of Nath Yoga philosophy of Hinduism.**
- He has frequently mentioned the term '**Sahaj**', a **mystical state** where there is a union of the truths of the many and the one.
- In the Sikh tradition, the **themes of Nanak's poetry** are broadly **similar to the Nirguna bhakti ideas** of Ravidas.

Mould your thoughts:

1. Discuss the role of saint Ravidas in bringing social reforms in his time. What was his contribution to the Bhakti Movement?

INDIAN SOCIETY

Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis Programme (PMNDP)

Source: The Hindu

Manifest pedagogy: Health as topic must be studied from two dimensions

1. Governance
2. Science aspects

As an illustration, one can see that the topic below consists of both. The programme is governance part and the disease has science aspects.

Governance is focused on more in Mains and Science in Prelims

In news:

- Health Ministry has released guidelines for establishing peritoneal dialysis services under the PMNDP.

Placing it in syllabus:

- Health sector (explicitly mentioned)

Dimensions:

- Features of the programme

- Guidelines for peritoneal dialysis services
- Hurdles to PD
- Importance

Content:

Features of PMNDP:

- Was rolled out in 2016 as part of the National Health Mission (NHM) for provision of free dialysis services to the poor
- It is implemented in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode.
- Every year about 2.2 Lakh new patients of End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) get added in India resulting in additional demand for 3.4 Crore dialysis every year.

There are two types of dialysis: hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis.

Hemodialysis: In HD, the blood is filtered through a machine that acts like an artificial kidney and is returned back into the body. HD needs to be performed in a designated dialysis centre.

Peritoneal dialysis (also known as water dialysis): In PD, the blood is cleaned without being removed from the body. The abdomen sac (peritoneum lining) acts as a natural filter. A solution (mainly made up of salts and sugars) is injected into the abdomen that encourages filtration such that the waste is transferred from the blood to the solution then is drawn back out of the body and discarded.

PPP for Hemodialysis services:

- As per the guidelines, the **private partner is to provide** medical human resource, dialysis machine along with Reverse Osmosis (RO) water plant infrastructure, dialyzer and consumables.
- The **space, power, and water supply** within District Hospitals is to be **provided by the State Government**.
- Currently, **under NHM 100 % of the service procedure fees for patients from below poverty line (BPL) economic group is covered.**
- **Non BPL patients** would have the benefit of accessing the services close to the community at the **district hospitals at the same rate as**

paid by the Government for the BPL patients.

- However, for BPL families registered under **Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY)**, the cost of dialysis care shall be catered through RSBY funding up to its maximum coverage.

Guidelines for peritoneal dialysis services:

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has come out with a set of guidelines for establishing peritoneal dialysis services under the PMNDP which serve as a **comprehensive manual to states that intend to set up peritoneal dialysis services.**

1. **Reducing procurement costs** like local production of PD solution bags, abolition of statutory duties on PD supplies and bulk procurement of PD supplies.
2. Unique survival on PD so that patients are not forced to transition to HD by **developing a trained cadre of PD providers at all levels** (physicians, nurses, clinical coordinators, etc)
3. **Measuring and monitoring quality indices** and implementing corrective steps in a timely manner.
4. With rare exceptions, all End stage kidney failure (ESKF) patients are suitable for PD.

Generally acceptable patients are:

- Age ≤ 60 ;
 - With residual renal function;
 - Adults without significant associated comorbidities;
 - Patients with a functional peritoneum and no recent history of major abdominal surgery;
 - Children with adequate home-support;
 - House with space to store PD supplies, adequate water supply and dedicated space for undergoing PD.
1. The initial decision to start a patient on dialysis can be made by a nephrologist or a physician with appropriate training.

2. In order to increase the reach of PD, states could consider either providing PD in PHC, CHC and DH, for those who live close to these facilities. Home Based PD could be considered for those who meet the criteria.
3. Providing training to community health workers (ANM, MPW, ASHA) to provide support to persons on peritoneal dialysis at home or in primary healthcare settings.
4. The drugs and diagnostics are to be provided free of cost to the patients under Free drugs programme and Free diagnostic service initiative.

Hurdles to PD:

- Place of residence may not permit PD
- Previous major abdominal surgeries
- Morbid obesity
- Large abdominal wall hernias
- Abdominal walls conduits
- Large abdominal aortic aneurysms
- Severe visual impairment or poor manual dexterity
- Lack of caregivers at home

Importance of new guidelines:

A population-based study has determined the age-standardised incidence of **ESKF in India to be around 225,000 people** (2006). With approximately 4950 **dialysis centres, largely in the private sector** in India, the demand is less than half met with existing infrastructure.

Now PMNDP has been expanded to include peritoneal dialysis. This move will instantly **benefit 2 lakh Indians** who develop ESKF every year in India.

The new guidelines issued aims to

- **achieve equity in patient access** to home-based peritoneal dialysis,
- **reduce the overall cost of care to the system** by focusing on efficient leveraging of resources,
- **bring in consistency of practice, pricing** and a full range of product availability,
- reduce the demands placed on the healthcare system and **offers patient autonomy**.

Mould your thoughts:

1. Highlight the guidelines issued for peritoneal dialysis under Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis Programme (PMNDP). What is its importance?

GEOGRAPHY

New map of Jammu and Kashmir

Source: The Hindu

Manifest pedagogy: After reorganization of Jammu and Kashmir, a new map has been published by GoI. It only reiterates India's stand that PoK and Aksai Chin are integral parts of India. Based on new map, geography and polity related prelims questions could be asked. At the mains stage, the significance and its implications could be asked.

In news:

- Government has released a new map of India showing UTs of Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh.

Placing it in syllabus:

- Redrawing of national boundaries

Static Dimensions:

- General description of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K)
- Erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir map as per 1947

Current dimensions:

- Present reorganization of new map
- Significance of the new map

Content:

General description of J&K:

- Jammu and Kashmir was a region formerly administered by India as a state from 1954 to

2019, constituting the southern and southeastern portion of the larger Kashmir region.

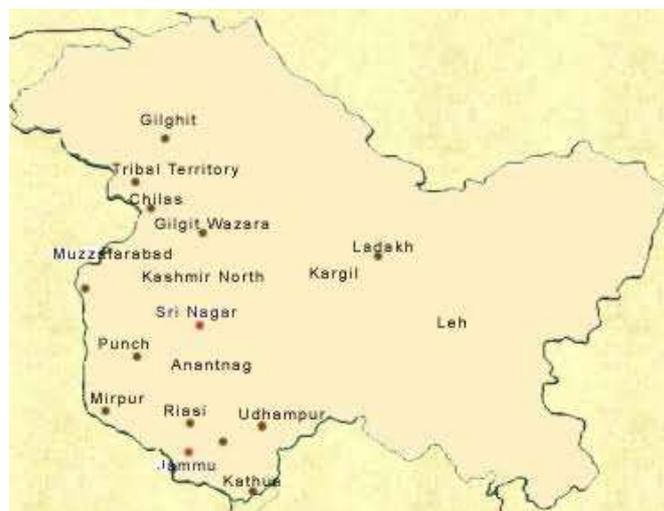
- The western districts of this state are known as Azad Kashmir and northern territories known as Gilgit-Baltistan are administered by Pakistan.



- **Raja Gulab Singh** of J&K captured **Aksai Chin from the Chinese in 1842** which has provided India with its current claim to this Chinese-held territory.
- The **Aksai Chin region in the east**, bordering Tibet has been under Chinese control since 1962.
- In 2019, the **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act** was passed by the parliament which repealed the special status accorded to Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 of the Indian constitution.
- Now the state is reorganised it into **two union territories – Jammu and Kashmir in the west and Ladakh in the east**, with effect from 31 October 2019.

Erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir map as per 1947:

In 1947, the former State of Jammu and Kashmir had the following 14 districts - Kathua, Jammu, Udampur, Reasi, Anantnag, Baramulla, Poonch, Mirpur, Muzaffarabad, Leh and Ladakh, Gilgit, Gilgit Wazarat, Chilhas and Tribal Territory.



Present reorganisation of new map:

The maps prepared by **Survey General of India** depicting the new UTs of J&K and Ladakh, as created on October 31, 2019, along with the map of India, are released.

- **By 2019**, the government of erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir had reorganised the areas of **14 districts into 28 districts**.
- The **names of the new districts** were - Kupwara, Bandipur, Ganderbal, Srinagar, Budgam, Pulwama, Shupian, Kulgam, Rajouri, Ramban, Doda, Kishtivar, Samba and Kargil.
- Out of these, **Kargil district was carved out from the area of Leh and Ladakh district**.
- Now the new **UT of Ladakh consists of Kargil and Leh - two districts**.

MAP OF UT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR AND UT OF LADAKH



- The **Leh district** has been defined in the **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Removal of Difficulties) Second Order, 2019**, issued by the President of India, to **include the areas of** the districts of Gilgit, Gilgit Wazarat, Chilhas and Tribal Territory of 1947, in addition to the remaining areas of Leh

closed cyclonic circulation. They have a spiral, anti-clockwise movement. Tropical cyclones feed on heat released when moist air rises, resulting in condensation of water vapour contained in the moist air.

Why more tropical cyclones in the Bay of Bengal (BoB) than Arabian sea?

According to the National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project (NCRMP), the Indian subcontinent is exposed to "nearly 10 per cent" of the world's tropical cyclones.

Both the Bay of Bengal (BoB) and Arabian Sea experience cyclonic events due to their proximity to the Indian Ocean. But the BoB sees approximately five times as many cyclones as Arabian Sea. In addition, cyclones in the Bay are stronger and deadlier.

According to the meteorologists, the relatively **colder waters of the Arabian Sea are not conducive to the formation and intensification of cyclones**. BoB gets higher rainfall and the sluggish winds around it keep temperatures relatively high. Warm air currents enhance this surface temperature and aid the formation of cyclones.

The Arabian Sea receives stronger winds that help dissipate the heat, and the lack of constant fresh water supply helps the warm water mix with the cool water, reducing the temperature.

Additionally, the eastern coast of India receives cyclones that form not just in the BoB but also those travelling from the Pacific Ocean, where the frequency of 'typhoons', is quite high.

Most of these cyclones weaken considerably after encountering a big landmass. Therefore, **these do not travel to the Arabian Sea side**. The western coast of India thus witnesses only those cyclones that originate locally or the ones, like that travel from the Indian Ocean near Sri Lanka.

Tropical cyclones of BoB and Arabian sea in 2019:

The North Indian Ocean has seen five tropical cyclones in 2019.

Category 4 Fani: Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storm Fani was the **strongest tropical cyclone to strike Odisha** since the 1999 Odisha cyclone. It originated from a tropical depression that formed west of

Sumatra in the Indian Ocean on 26 April. Areas affected include Sri Lanka, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, East India, Bangladesh, Bhutan.

Category 2 Vayu: Very Severe Cyclonic Storm Vayu formed in the Arabian Sea.

Areas affected include Maldives, India, Pakistan, Oman.

Category 1 Hikka: A depression formed in the Arabian Sea and soon intensified into a cyclonic storm. Areas affected include Oman, India.

Category 4 Kyarr: Super Cyclonic Storm Kyarr is the first Super Cyclonic Storm over the North Indian Ocean since Gonu in 2007. It was also the **strongest tropical cyclone in the Arabian Sea ever recorded** and the second-most intense tropical cyclone in North Indian Ocean history only behind the 1999 Odisha cyclone. Kyarr developed from a low-pressure system near the Equator. Areas affected include West India, Oman, UAE.

Category 4 Maha: It is the fourth cyclone in Arabian Sea. It formed off the southwest coast of India.

Kyarr and Maha tropical cyclones - Rare two low pressures in Arabian sea:

- Two tropical cyclones were active in the Arabian Sea - Kyarr and Maha.
- India Meteorological Department (IMD) confirmed that this was the **first recorded case since 1965 of two cyclones occurring simultaneously in the Arabian Sea**.
- Only one or two tropical cyclones form each year in the Arabian Sea, on average since 1891, according to IMD records.
- This phenomenon occurred due to a strongly **positive Indian Ocean dipole and the Madden-Julian oscillation**.
- Cyclone Maha formed off the coast of western India is expected to gain strength over the central Arabian Sea over the next few days while Cyclone Kyarr is weakening.

Mould your thoughts:

1. What are the conditions required for the formation of tropical cyclones? Why Bay of Bengal (BoB) witnesses more tropical cyclones than the Arabian Sea?

INDIAN POLITY

Removal of Sikkim CM

Source: The Hindu

Manifest pedagogy:

This year's UPSC mains paper 2 is a clear reflection of the extent and specificity to which UPSC can go. In this context the provisions of RPA 1951, the governance aspect of the neutrality of constitutional bodies like the election commission and the rules of disqualification along with their specifics become areas of importance. The aspect of political neutrality of constitutional importance also is important for paper 4 in ethics.

In news:

- The Delhi High Court has sought a response from the Centre and the Election Commission (EC) on a petition challenging the EC's decision to reduce the disqualification period of Sikkim CM from six years to 13 months.

Placing it in syllabus:

- State legislatures—structure and functioning
- Salient features of the Representation of the People's Act

Dimensions:

- What is the issue about?
- ECI and its decision
- Loopholes in its decision
- Solution

Content:

Barred by law from contesting elections for six years after completing his one-year prison term in a graft case in 2018, Sikkim CM Prem Singh Tamang's disqualification was reduced to just a year and a month by the EC recently.

In August 2018, Tamang came out of jail after being convicted in a corruption case. The case pertained to his tenure as State Animal Husbandry Minister, when he was accused and convicted of misappropriating funds in the procurement of cows.

This attracted the provisions of the Representation of the People Act (ROPA), debarring him from being an electoral candidate for six years from the date he was released.

Though he did not contest the Sikkim Assembly elections held earlier in 2019, the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) leader and BJP ally was appointed as Chief Minister. As per ECI order, he will now be eligible to contest polls.

Much-needed relief

P.S. Tamang was found guilty of corruption in a cow distribution scheme while he was the Animal Husbandry Minister



- He was appointed as Chief Minister on May 27 and needs to be elected to the Assembly within six months

- The EC reduced his period of disqualification under Section 11 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951

- It said the offence went back to 1996-1997, when a sentence of two years or more would lead to disqualification under the Act

- He was jailed between 2017 and 2018, and was released on August 10, 2018

- The Section of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, under which he was convicted, was omitted in an amendment in 2018

EC and its decision:

- In their order, EC cited Section 11 of the Representation of the People Act (ROPA), 1951, which allows the ECI to reduce or remove disqualification "for reasons to be recorded".
- The EC's order said the "alleged offence" for which the SKM leader had been convicted in 2016 went back to 1996-1997, when the

minimum punishment of two years would lead to disqualification under the RP Act.

- The order noted that Mr. Tamang had been sentenced to one year imprisonment on December 26, 2016 and that the section of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, under which he was convicted, had been omitted in an amendment in 2018 (he completed the one-year sentence on August 10, 2018).
- The consequence of the recent EC order is that the Sikkim governor's decision to invite Tamang to form the government and the subsequent administration of oath of office and secrecy is now untenable.
- Hence when Tamang was sworn in as chief minister in May, 2019 his disqualification was very much in force.

Loopholes in EC's decision:

- NGO Association for Democratic Reforms has said that the EC order was "**not conducive to reducing criminalisation of politics**".
- Morally, it is wrong of parties to give tickets to those convicted of crimes or to appoint someone convicted as already **43% of the people sitting in the Lok Sabha have pending criminal cases**.
- The EC is already battling a perception that its actions are partisan. Its order in favour of Mr. Tamang is bound to further **strain its credibility**.
- The **EC decision goes against a series of legislative and judicial measures** to strengthen the legal framework against corruption in recent years.

Solutions:

The **Law Commission of India (Chairperson: Justice A.P. Shah)** in its report on Electoral Disqualifications in 2014 made the following **recommendations**:

- The current practice of disqualification upon conviction has been unable to curb the criminalisation of politics, owing to long delays in trials and rare convictions.
- Hence by effecting disqualification at the stage of framing of charges, with adequate

safeguards, the spread of criminalisation of politics may be curbed.

- **Safeguards** to be included to prevent misuse of this provision and to address the concern of lack of remedy for the accused include:
 1. Only offences that attract a maximum punishment of five years or above should be included within the ambit of this provision.
 2. Charges filed within one year before the date of scrutiny of nominations for an election will not lead to disqualification.
 3. The disqualification will operate until acquittal by a trial court, or a period of six years, whichever is earlier.
- Disqualification at the stage of framing of charges must apply retroactively as well.
- Persons with charges pending (punishable by five years or more) at the time of this law coming into effect must be disqualified from contesting future elections.

In 2001, though Jayalalitha faced disqualification as she was convicted in a corruption case involving sale of government land in April 2000, she was sworn-in as CM of TamilNadu by the governor as her party elected her as the leader.

In September 2001, a Constitution bench of the Supreme Court held the appointment of Jayalalitha as CM of TamilNadu by the governor was unconstitutional and that a person who was disqualified from holding the position of a legislator could not become CM.

It dismissed the contention that the Constitutional provision allowing a person to remain chief minister for six months without being elected could be applied in the case of a disqualification.

If this precedent is applied to Tamang, it is clear that he has now lost grounds to remain chief minister as the governor's invitation to him to form the Sikkim government during his disqualification period is unconstitutional.

Mould your thoughts:

1. What is the Election commission (EC)'s recent order on removal of Sikkim Chief Minister all about? Discuss the loopholes in EC's decision.

RTI Rules Notified

Source: The Hindu

Manifest pedagogy:

RTI as a topic has linkages with three sections

1. Polity
2. Governance
3. Ethics

It has to be studied from all dimensions for a comprehensive coverage.

In news:

- RTI rules are notified

Placing it in syllabus:

- Right to Information (RTI) Act

Dimensions:

- What are the rules?
- Reasons given for the rules
- Criticisms

Content:

Centre has notified the rules for the amended RTI Act, 2005. These rules will be **applicable on all new appointments**.

What are the rules?

- The **tenure of Information commissioners (ICs)** in both Central Information Commission (CIC) and State Information Commissions (SIC) has been reduced **to three years**.
- Earlier, the commissioners had a term of five years or retired at the age of 65, whichever was earlier.
- The rules have done away with the protection of stature of commissioners. Now the salary of CIC is fixed at Rs 2.50 lakh and of Information Commissioners at Rs 2.25 lakh. For information commissioners, this is a reduction of Rs 25,000.
- **Rule 21** gives absolute power to the Central Government to decide on any other allowances or service conditions not specifically covered by the 2019 Rules and its decision will be binding.
- **Rule 22** states that the central government has the power to relax the provisions of any of the rules in respect of any class or category of persons.

- **Rule 23** makes the Central Government the final arbiter with regard to the interpretation of these Rules.

Reasons given for the rules:

- The RTI Amendment Act, 2019 **amended sections 13, 16 and 27 of the RTI Act, 2005** to empower the central government to prescribe through rules, tenure, salaries, allowances and other terms of service of the chief and other information commissioners of the CIC and all state information commissions SICs.
- It received President's assent on August 1, 2019.
- As the central government did not prescribe requisite rules for nearly 3 months, vacancies in information commissions could not be filled.
- This led to huge backlogs and concomitant long delays in the disposal of appeals and complaints of people.
- The issue of the central government's failure to promulgate rules was highlighted by members of civil society at the annual CIC convention held on October 12, 2019.
- A letter to the Prime Minister was sent by the **National Campaign for Peoples' Right to Information (NCPRI)** demanding immediate formulation of rules in keeping with the

provisions of the Pre Legislative Consultation Policy of 2014.

- On October 25, 2019, the Central Government notified the rules.

Criticisms:

- The new rules give the government full control over the information commissions and puts a **question mark on their autonomy**.
- The rules prescribe a fixed quantum of salary for commissioners. Hence the **removal of the provision guaranteeing equivalence to other posts** (Chief Election Commissioner, Election Commissioners, Chief Secretaries) means that salaries of information commissioners will be revised only if the central government decides to revise the rules.
- The government could potentially invoke powers under Rule 22 to **determine different tenures for different commissioners at the time of appointment** and use it as a means to exercise control and influence.

- The rules made by the central government **have done away with the protection of stature of commissioners**. Hence information commissions might function like **'caged parrots'**.
- **Commissioners** will potentially be **wary of giving directions to disclose information** that the central government does not wish to provide.
- **More discretion has been brought in through Rule 21** which states that conditions of service for which no express provision has been made in these rules shall be decided in each case by the Central Government which would mean that the **government will decide the post retirement entitlements, including pension, of each commissioner**.

Mould your thoughts:

1. Critically analyse the newly notified RTI rules.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, ISSUES AND INSTITUTIONS

India Pakistan sign Kartarpur pact

Source: The Hindu

Manifest pedagogy: In the heated environment of India Pakistan relations the kartarpur pact is a sign of peace. Though it cannot be a stand alone question it can be an important part of the answer on the confidence building measures taken up by India.

In news:

India, Pakistan has signed the Kartarpur pact

Placing it in syllabus:

India and neighbourhood relations

Dimensions:

What is the pact?

What is the entire project about?

How does it help promote relations?

Content:

What is the pact?

India and Pakistan recently signed a pact to operationalise the Kartarpur corridor that will facilitate pilgrims from India to visit the **Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan**.

The pact was **signed at the "zero line" on the border**, indicating that both sides wanted to keep the signing low key.

The gurdwara, **situated on the bank of the Ravi**, can be seen from the international border.

The agreement is **valid initially for five years**.

India will hand over the **list of pilgrims to Pakistan 10 days in advance** and those granted permission to go may be informed only four days before the proposed date of travel.

The agreement will allow **5,000 Indian pilgrims daily** to visit Gurdwara where Guru Nanak spent the last 18 years of his life.

Islamabad will be charging **\$20 service fee/pilgrim** which the Indian government is asking to reconsider.

The pilgrims would be allowed to carry a maximum of Rs. 11,000 and a baggage upto 7 kgs that could contain drinking water and would not be allowed to venture beyond the shrine.

They would **travel in the morning and return the same day**.

According to the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**, children below 13 years and persons of about 75 years and above will have to travel in groups.

The people need to carry their **passports and an electronic travel authorization** they receive if their registration for the pilgrimage is deemed successful.

Registration does not confer a right to travel.

People of Indian origin holding the passport of another country will need to **carry their Overseas Citizen of India card**.

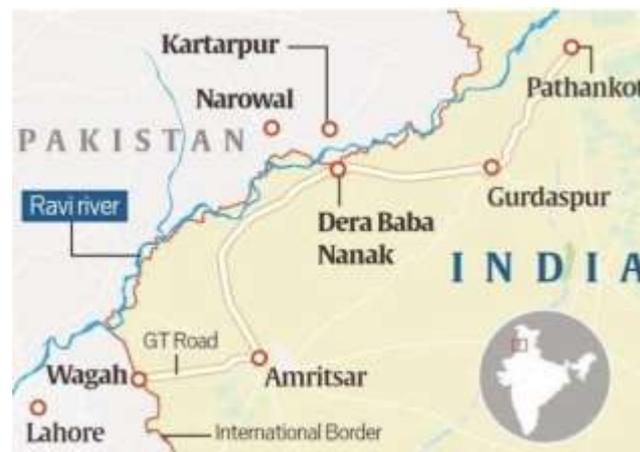
Pilgrims would be **allowed to carry kirpans (dagger)**, one of the five articles of faith worn by Sikhs.

There would be **no reverse flow of visitors**, meaning, only those who enter from the Indian side would be allowed to return via the same route.

Attari (India)-Wagah (Pakistan) will continue to be the only official border point through which people with valid documents will be able to enter India.

What is the entire project about?

The Kartarpur corridor is being built to connect Dera Baba Nanak in Gurdaspur, Punjab, India with Gurdwara Darbar Sahib at Kartarpur, in Narowal district of Pakistan, the final resting place of Sikhism founder Guru Nanak, to commemorate his 550th birth anniversary celebrations on November 12, 2019.



The gurudwara complex which is spread across 42 acres is located 4km (2.5 miles) from the border with India.

The corridor, which **will be open to the public on 10 November, 2019**, leads from the border straight to the gurdwara.

The corridor will also feature a **bridge that will allow visitors to cross over the Ravi river**, which flows between the international border and the shrine.

The **expansion includes** a new courtyard, museum, library, dormitories, locker rooms, an immigration centre and an embankment to protect the temple in case of floods.

Officials have said that the corridor will be able to **accommodate up to 5,000 pilgrims per day, and up to 10,000 will be able to visit the shrine every day**.

About 575 pilgrims will be visiting the Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara via corridor, to be inaugurated on November 9.

The Sikh community in India has long demanded access to the corridor. Previous Indian governments first discussed in 1998 and then again in 2004 and 2008, but these talks never led to anything concrete.

Significance of the shrine:

The present shrine was built in 1925 after the original one was destroyed by floods.

This was later restored by the Pakistani government in 2004.

The shrine was built to commemorate the site where Guru Nanak spent the last 18 years of his life.

It is considered to be the second holiest site for Sikhism after Gurdwara Janam Asthan in Pakistan, which was built at the site where Guru Nanak was born.

How does it help promote relations?

The corridor is coming up at a time when few avenues for India-Pakistan relations exist. In the past few years, not only has all official dialogue ceased but other exchanges by actors, artists, authors, academics, media and musicians have all but ended.

Religious pilgrimages by Sikhs and Hindus to shrines in Pakistan and by Muslims to Sufi shrines

India-Saudi Arabia

Source: The Hindu

Manifest pedagogy: West Asian Policy in the context of India has acquired a new vigour under the present government. It begins with the Riyadh declaration signed between the two under Manmohan Singh government. Historical linkages are a must to write a good answer in IR

In news:

- Prime minister Narendra Modi's Saudi Arabia visit.

Placing it in syllabus:

- India-Saudi Arabia bilateral relations

Dimensions:

- Recent meet and agreements signed
- Strategic partnership between the two countries
- Conflicting issue

Content:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently visited Saudi Arabia for a high-profile **Future Investment Initiative Summit**, dubbed as "Davos in the desert," an initiative of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Recent meet and agreements signed:

12 Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) on issues related to defence industries, security, air services, renewable energy, medicine products regulation, prevention of narcotics trafficking, Atal

in India see a reduced number of visas, and the corridor will be an exception where large numbers will be able to travel visa-free.

Leaders on both sides have termed it as corridor of peace.

It stands apart for its potential to further other such exchanges, as well as in promoting dialogue between the two neighbours.

It has been described as a confidence building measure by the analysts.

Mould your thoughts:

1. What is the recently signed Kartarpur pact all about? How does it promote India-Pakistan bilateral relations?

Innovation Mission, Haj related cooperation, RuPay card were signed.

ISPRL (Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited) signed an **agreement with Saudi Aramco** to lease part of the 2.5 million-tonne **Padur storage in southern Karnataka state**.

Indian Oil Corp signed a preliminary deal **with Saudi Arabia's Al Jeri company** for cooperation in the downstream sector, including setting up fuel stations in the kingdom.

Saudi Aramco has decided to invest \$35 billion in India's **West Coast refinery project that is set to be constructed in Maharashtra's Raigad district** which will be the largest refinery of Asia.

Strategic partnership council:

- Both countries signed an agreement to form a Strategic Partnership council that will be led by the leaderships of both the countries to **"help India address its expectations and aspirations."**
- **Saudi Arabia is the fourth country with whom India has an inter-governmental mechanism** headed by the prime minister. The other three are **Germany, Russia and Japan.**
- **India is the fourth country** with which Saudi Arabia has formed such a strategic partnership, **after the UK, France and China.**

Strategic partnership between the two countries:

Recent visit by PM Modi to Saudi Arabia has reinforced substantive shift happening in India's approach to the **Middle East policy**. India and Saudi Arabia are **moving from a purely buyer-seller relationship towards a closer strategic partnership.**

India imports around 18 percent of its crude oil from the Saudi Arabia, making it the **second-largest source of crude oil** for India (1st being Iran). India's bilateral trade with Saudi Arabia was at \$27.48 billion in 2017-18, making **Saudi Arabia its fourth largest trading partner.**

During his maiden trip to New Delhi in February, 2019, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had said that, it would be **investing \$100 billion in India** in areas of energy, refining, petrochemicals, infrastructure, agriculture, minerals and mining.

Saudi Arabia has promised to **share more intelligence to boost counterterrorism cooperation with India**, a powerful message considering the ongoing India-Pakistan confrontation.

India is also showing signs of overcoming its reluctance to forge security partnerships with the Gulf states whose security apparatuses had long been closely associated with Pakistan.

Regarding India's decision to **abrogate Article 370** in Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan's desperate attempt to internationalise the issue, **Saudi Arabia has taken a positive approach vis-a-vis India** and has cautioned Pakistan against escalating the crisis.

Further, Saudi Arabia might find value in buying the Indian government's stake in Bharat Petroleum, which is believed to be offloaded soon. According to reports, **Saudi Aramco is already talking to Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) for buying 20 per cent stake in refinery and petrochemical business of RIL.**

Fluctuating oil prices along with competitiveness of alternative energy sources compels Saudi Arabia to push reform measures and diversify its economy on the lines of **"Vision 2030"**. Rather than competing for resources both nations are willing to collaborate, explore comparative advantage, and co-create value for citizens.

Conflicting issues:

Saudi Arabia is a key ally of Pakistan. It supported Pakistan's stance on the Kashmir conflict and during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971, at the expense of its relations with India. The **Soviet Union's close relations with India also negatively affected Indo-Saudi relations.** During the Persian Gulf War (1990-91), India officially maintained neutrality.

But since the 1990s, both nations have taken steps to improve ties. Saudi Arabia has supported granting observer status to India in the **Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)** and has expanded its collaboration with India to fight Islamic terrorism in the Middle East.

India's Saudi policy, however, face many challenges, most importantly the **regional instability, the Iran factor, low oil prices and the international dynamics.** Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has been a frequent visitor to Saudi Arabia to seek Riyadh's support on the Kashmir issue.

Hence a balanced approach is very much required to resolve any conflicts and maintain stability in relations, while respecting the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in each other's internal matters.

Mould your thoughts:

1. How the evolving strategic partnership between India and Saudi Arabia helpful in

shaping India's Middle East policy?

Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit

Source: The Hindu

Manifest pedagogy: Non Alignment policy and the movement formed a cornerstone of Indian foreign policy in post independence world. India considered itself as the leader of this normative world order. Today with the changing geopolitics and emergence of a unipolar to Multipolar transitioning world order the questions like the historical role, role in today's world and relevance of NAM are questions of importance to UPSC.

In news:

- Recently, the Vice President of India attended the 18th NAM Summit which was held in Baku.

Placing it in syllabus:

- Global groupings involving India

Static dimensions:

- NAM and its history

Current dimensions:

- 17th summit important decisions
- 18th summit
- Relevance of NAM today
- Effects of India's neglect

Content:

NAM and its history:

- The NAM was founded during the collapse of the colonial system and at the height of the Cold War.
- Its actions were a key factor in the decolonization process, which led later to the attainment of independence by many countries.
- It has always played a fundamental role in the preservation of world peace and security.
- The African-Asian Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955, was convened by the Heads of State and Government Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Ahmed Sukarno of Indonesia and Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia, who later became the founding fathers of the NAM.
- Indonesia's President, Ahmed Sukarno, was the host of the conference in which Ten Principles of Bandung were set forth which later evolved as the essential criteria to the membership of this movement.

1. Respect of fundamental human rights and of the objectives and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.
2. Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations.
3. Recognition of the equality among all races and among all big and nations.
4. Non-intervention into the internal affairs of another country.
5. Respect of the right of every nation to defend itself, either individually or collectively.
6. Non-use of collective defense pacts to benefit the specific interests of any of the great powers.
7. Refraining from acts or threats of aggression and use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country.
8. Settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means in conformity with the Charter of the UN.
9. Promotion of mutual interest and cooperation.

10. Respect for justice and international obligations.

Six years after Bandung, the NAM was officially established, at the First Summit Conference of Belgrade, 1961. Today NAM is a forum of 120 developing world states that are not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc. It has 17 observer countries and 10 observer organisations.

17th summit of NAM:

17th NAM Summit was held in Margarita Island, Venezuela in September, 2016 with the theme "Peace, Sovereignty and Solidarity for Development". A 21-article final declaration was issued.

1. Full and decisive support to the consolidation, strengthening and revitalization of the NAM.
2. Strengthening the International Order
3. Right to Self-Determination
4. They resolved to work to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and achieve international security.
5. They reaffirmed their commitment to the promotion and protection of universal human rights.
6. Condemnation at the promulgation of unilateral coercive measures against countries of NAM.
7. Condemnation of terrorism
8. Importance of promoting respect for religious, social and cultural diversity.
9. Comprehensive and just solution to the Palestinian refugees' cause.
10. Reform of the UNSC in order to transform it into a more democratic, effective, efficient, transparent and representative body.
11. Reaffirming the need for greater transparency and inclusiveness in the process of selection and appointment of the Secretary General of the UN.
12. Working towards the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
13. Principles of peacekeeping operations
14. Promotion of Education, Science and Technology for Development

15. Climate change

16. Reform of the international financial architecture

17. Reiterated that South-South Cooperation is an important element of international cooperation and is a complement to the North-South Cooperation.

18. Highlighted the efforts of the international community to counter and eradicate the spread of various pandemics.

19. Refugees and migrants

20. Recognized the important role that youth and women play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, as well as in peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts.

21. Emphasized the need for information and communication strategies.

18th summit of NAM:

- 18th NAM summit was held at **Baku, Azerbaijan.**
- The **theme of the summit** was "Upholding the Bandung Principles to ensure concerted and adequate response to the challenges of the contemporary world."
- The theme **relates to the forthcoming 65th anniversary of Bandung Principles (2020) and the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Non-Alignment Movement (2021).**
- This NAM Summit majorly focussed on contemporary issues such as terrorism, threats to peace and security, UN reform, climate change, sustainable development, economic governance, and south-south cooperation.
- **Four final documents** adopted at the Summit are Baku Final Act, Baku Political Declaration, the Palestinian Declaration and the document of gratitude and solidarity to the government and people of Azerbaijan.

Relevance of NAM today:

- NAM has played an active role in **preserving world peace.** It has prohibited invasion of any country, **promoted disarmament** and a sovereign world order.
- NAM has acted as a **protector of third world countries** against the western hegemony.

- No matter the world is – bipolar or multi-polar, non-alignment as a foreign policy of the small / weak states will continue to remain valid so long as the sovereign nation states exist.
- As NAM represents **two third members of the UN general assembly**, NAM members act as important vote blocking group in UN.
- NAM together with the G-77 has succeeded to keep Third World issues on the agenda in most UN forums and agencies due to their numerical strength. This can also **help India getting a UNSC membership**.
- NAM **promotes equitable world order** and can act as a bridge between the political and ideological differences existing in the international environment.
- NAM has always been a platform which **negotiates and conclude disputes peacefully** securing the favorable decisions for each member nation.
- NAM can provide a **platform to raise human rights violation issues** and resolve the same through its principles.
- Can be used as larger **platform to make consensus on global burning issues** like climate change, migration and global terrorism and lead the world towards sustainable development and higher economic growth.

Thus, the major thrust of NAM is the creation of a new world based on rational, democratic, equitable and non-exploitative inter-states relation. Hence NAM continues to be relevant so long as there is exploitation, war, hunger, poverty and disease on the earth.

Effects of India's neglect:

Honourable **PM Narendra Modi skipped the second NAM summit in a row (17th and 18th Summits)**. It had been the customary practice ever since the inception of NAM that India had always participated in the summit meetings through its Prime Minister (single exception of the 6th NAM Summit when Chaudhury Charan Singh was the caretaker PM and hence missed it).

This move marks India's transformation from a non-aligned country to one which is supposedly multi-aligned. This may be yet another sign of the winds of change sweeping India's foreign policy.

Many experts believe that NAM will be of little use in furthering India's case on important issues like the menace of terrorism and UNSC reforms. India is always wanting NAM to go ahead and form a working group on terror. Even in 18th summit at Baku, India's External affairs minister advocated the finalisation of the **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT)** that India had proposed in 1996.

India **must not land into any kind of confrontation with any of the major powers** in the world including America, Russia and China, particularly against the backdrop of North Korea's mounting nuclear arms buildup, emerging Sino-US Cold War and China's mounting aggression in the South China Sea.

Given these conditions, PM Modi's non-participation in the Baku NAM Summit may be a covert strategy to not displease the US and other Western nations and also China, with a view to consolidate and expand India's infrastructure, economy, military modernization and also securing a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, besides pressurizing Pakistan to stop cross-border terrorism.

India's **ancient ethical-cultural roots** and rich traditional heritage characterised by peace, truth, equality, liberty, brotherhood and non-violence are truly **imbibed in the doctrine of the nonalignment**. Thus PM's absence in this NAM summit may be a **meticulous planning and sound strategy** on the part of Indian leadership which would prove to be more productive as regards protecting India's national interests.

Mould your thoughts:

1. Explain the relevance of Non-aligned movement (NAM) in today's multipolar world.
2. How the role of India in Non-aligned movement (NAM) has evolved since its inception?

INDIAN ECONOMY

Power firm takes Water Ministry to court over Ganga notification

Source: The Hindu

Manifest pedagogy:

Rivers in India have become highly polluted and posing a threat to human sustenance. Clean Ganga mission would be failure without continuous flow of water. Regulation of water flow keeping the interest of hydro-electric projects is crucial. The topic could be asked from prelims and mains perspective.

In news:

- Power firm takes Water Ministry to court over Ganga notification

Placing it in syllabus:

- Hydropower generation (explicitly mentioned)

Static dimensions:

- Hydro power generation along Ganga and its tributaries
- NMCG

Current dimensions:

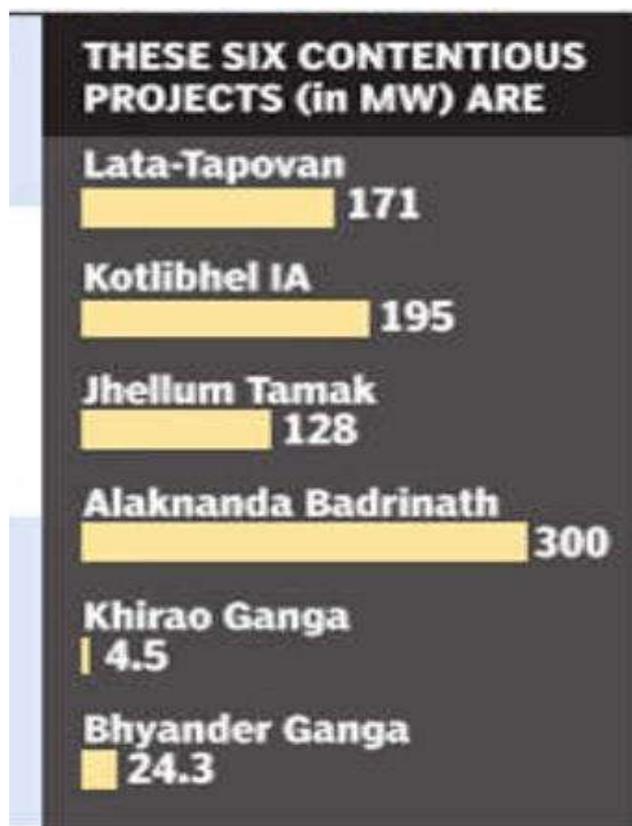
- Environmental flow for clean Ganga
- Objection by power firms for changes in the notification.

Content:

Hydro power generation along Ganga and its tributaries:

- The hydroelectric potential of the Ganges and its tributaries is ranged from **51,700 to 128,700 megawatts** of which about two-fifths lies within India and the rest in Nepal.
- As of now, **19 hydropower projects are functioning** along various stretches of the Ganga and its tributaries.
- **Eight Hydro Electric Projects (HEPs)** with an installed capacity of 2351 MW are **under construction** on the river Ganga and its tributaries.
- They are: **Tehri PSP, Tapovan Vishnugad, Lata tapovan, Shrinagar Ganga, Phata Byung, Singoli Bhatwari in Uttarakhand and Swara Kuddu and Tangu Romai- I in HP.**
- The Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF) accords environment & forest clearances to HEPs as per defined procedures based on **Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) studies** / Environment Management Plan (EMP).

- The **six proposed hydro-electricity projects in Uttarakhand** are:



- Recently an Inter-Ministerial Group of the Union government took a decision to deny

permission to new hydroelectric projects on the Ganga and its tributaries.

- This is said to be a precursor to a formal ban on all construction on the river.
- In the past few decades, hydropower projects have become controversial as they are justifiably derided for their substantial social and environmental costs.
- On the other hand, run-of-the-river projects can be relatively more agreeable with nature as they divert water more than obstructs it and submergence can be minimal.

Pollution of river Ganga and need for e-flow

- River Ganga is highly polluted. The river is contaminated by industrial wastes and human wastes. Nearly 38% of population in India is dependent on river Ganga. Pollutants of river Ganga are cause of concern for human health and environment.
- Initiatives to clean the Ganga began with the Ganga Action Plan I in 1986.
- Till 2014, over Rs 4,000 crore had been spent. But the river has remained dirty. In 2015 Namami Gange was launched with financial outlay of 20,000 cr. Namami Gange is implemented by NMCG(National Mission for Clean Ganga)
- Uninterrupted flow of water in any river is important to keep it clean through its natural ecological functions and processes. In order to restore and maintain continuous flow of river Ganga, the Centre has notified minimum environmental flow (e-flow) for the river that has to be maintained at various locations.

Environmental flow for clean Ganga:

- To speed up the Ganga rejuvenation process, all existing projects in the upper Ganga basin will have to **ensure desired environmental flow (e-flow) in the river by December 15, 2019** as per NMCG new notification dated October, 2018.
- **20%** of the monthly average flow of the preceding 10 days between **November and March (dry season)**;
- **25%** of the average in **October, April and May (lean season)**;

- **30%** of the monthly average during the **monsoon months** of June-September.
- Earlier compliance exemption given to them was till October 8, 2021.
- Over 75% of the 784 dams, 66 barrages, 92 weirs and 45 functional lift schemes are located in the upper Ganga river basin.
- **Non-adherence to minimum flow** by many major dams and barrages, **leaves the river without adequate flow**, making it **difficult to maintain its natural process of cleaning** round the year.
- After analysing latest ground report of the Central Water Commission (CWC), the **'Jal Shakti' (water resources) ministry** has amended its previous order.
- The new compliance date will **apply to hydro-power, irrigation and other major projects** in the upper reaches of the river in Uttarakhand up to main stem of the river in Unnao district of Uttar Pradesh.
- **Mini and micro projects** have been **exempted** from these e-flow norms.
- The CWC has recommended that all existing projects have provisions for releasing the mandated e-flow **through controlled gated spillways or waterways** and "structural modifications in the body of the project may not be required".

Objection by power firms for changes in the notification:

- The **Alaknanda Hydropower Company (AHC)** has filed a case in the court against the Union Water Ministry and the Uttarakhand State government, following a 2018 notification by the NMCG, that ensures desired e-flow in the river by hydropower companies located on the Ganga and its tributaries.
- AHC is located on the Alaknanda river which is a **330 MW run-of-the-river project commissioned in 2014**.
- It is expected to supply 12% of the energy to the Government of Uttarakhand for free and balance 88% power generated will go to the Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited under a Power Purchase Agreement.
- Companies are of the opinion that this move would require existing and upcoming projects

- to change their design to accommodate greater flows.
- Companies are reluctant to release water because it impedes power generation.
- The notification is said to be financially detrimental to the company and that the government ought to be compensating it for the losses that would accrue due to the notification.
- The **AHC says that it is only required to release 15% flows as e-flows according to an Uttarakhand High Court order** in June 2018.
- But the new **NMCG order requires it to release 25% flows.**

- The parent company GVK has claimed losses of nearly Rs. 4,000 crore.
- AHC filed its petition in July, 2019 but has not been reported on.
- Future dates on the case hearings are unavailable.

Mould your thoughts:

1. Discuss the new environmental flow (e-flow) notification issued by NMCG for clean Ganga. What are the objections raised by the hydropower companies regarding the same?

AGRICULTURE

Survey of milk safety

Source: The Hindu

Manifest pedagogy: More than hunger, malnutrition has become key issue especially among the infants. Nutritional safety can ensure drastic reduction in IMR. Issues of healthy society is impossible without food safety. Adulteration has emerged a key challenge in ensuring food safety. Legislation backed with effective implementation will be the right step in that direction. The probability of asking the provisions of food safety and its shortcomings is higher in both prelims and mains.

In news:

- “National Milk Safety and Quality Survey, 2018” has been released.

Placing it in syllabus:

- Agriculture

Static dimensions:

- FSSAI
- Food adulteration in india

Current dimensions:

- F+ (Food fortification label)
- Food labeling standards
- Highlights of the survey

Content:

FSSAI:

- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has been established under **Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.**
- It has been **created for laying down science based standards** for articles of food and to

regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import.

- Ministry of Health & Family Welfare**, is the administrative ministry for the implementation of FSSAI.

Functions:

- Framing of Regulations to lay down the Standards and guidelines in relation to articles of food.
- Laying down mechanisms and guidelines for accreditation of certification bodies engaged in certification of food safety management system.
- Laying down procedures and guidelines for accreditation of laboratories and notification of the accredited laboratories.
- To provide scientific advice and technical support to Central Government and State Governments in the matters of food safety and nutrition.
- Collect and collate data regarding food consumption, incidence and prevalence of biological risk, contaminants in food, residues of various, identification of emerging risks and introduction of rapid alert system.
- Provide training programmes for persons who are involved or intend to get involved in food businesses.

Food adulteration in india:

- Adulteration is the **process of adding unwanted substances to the food**, with similar appearance/colour for making profits.
- Adulteration **lowers the quality of food** and toxic chemicals are also added which can be **hazardous to health**.
- The **Annual Public Laboratory Testing Report for 2014-15** of FSSAI says that of the 49,290 samples of food items it tested, nearly one-fifth, were found adulterated or misbranded.
- In 2019, **Rajasthan** has topped in registering cases under Food adulteration act, 1954.

Most common adulterants in India:

Milk - water, chalk, urea, caustic soda and skimmed milk.

Tea/Coffee - Tea leaves are usually adulterated with same coloured leaves, and Coffee seeds are adulterated with tamarind seeds, mustard seeds.

Vegetables and fruits - malachite green, a chemical dye, oxytocin saccharin, wax, calcium carbide and copper sulphate.

Sweets - Khoya and chenna in sweets are adulterated with starch. Sugar used in making sweets might be adulterated with tar dye.

Honey - molasses sugar

Dal - arhar dal is usually adulterated with metanil yellow which is a non-permitted food colour

Spices -

turmeric → metanil yellow

Asafoetida → Soap stone or other earthy material

Black pepper → Papaya seeds, black berries

Red chilli powder → brick powder and artificial colours like Sudan Red

Saffron → coloured dried tendrils of maize cob

Ice cream - pepperoni, ethyl acetate, butyraldehyde, emil acetate, nitrate, washing powder.

F+ (Food fortification label):

- Fortification is the **addition of key vitamins and minerals** such as Iron, Iodine, Zinc, Vitamins A & D **to staple foods** such as rice, wheat, oil, milk and salt to improve their nutritional content.
- These **nutrients may or may not have been originally present** in the food before processing or may have been lost during processing.
- **Micronutrient malnutrition, also known as hidden hunger** is a serious health risk.
- Sometimes due to **lack of consumption of a balanced diet, lack of variety in the diet or unavailability of food** one does not get adequate micronutrients.
- Hence fortification of food is a safe method of improving nutrition among people as the **addition of micronutrients to food does not pose a health risk** to people.
- It **does not alter the characteristics of the food** like the taste, aroma or the texture of the food.

According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4)

- 58.4 percent of children (6-59 months) are anaemic.
- 53.1 percent of women in the reproductive age group are anaemic.

- 35.7 percent of children under 5 are underweight.

In August, 2018, FSSAI introduced the **Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2018**, to regulate the provisions regarding fortified food.

Features:

- It **prescribes the standards of addition of micronutrients** for the purpose of food fortification. The manufacturers of the fortified food have to provide a quality assurance undertaking.
- **Packaging and labelling has to state the food fortificant added, +F logo and the tagline "Sampoorna Poshan Swasth Jeevan"**.
- It should be in **compliance to** the Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labeling) Regulations, 2011.

Fortified salt: In 1950, Indians were among the first countries in Asia to implement mandatory salt iodisation. It is fortified with Iodine.

Fortified wheat: The flour is fortified with iron, vitamin A and folic acid.

Fortified rice: Iron, Folic Acid, Vitamin B12.

Fortified milk: Studies suggest the intake of fortified milk by children not only increased mean serum vitamin D levels but also decreased morbidity rates. It is fortified with Vitamin A, Vitamin D.

Fortified oil: Is fortified with vitamin A and D.

Food labeling standards:

According to "**FSSAI Guidelines on Labelling of Food Products**", the various characteristics which should be mentioned are:

- Name of the food product: It should be in clear format on the packaged product in clear font.
- List of Ingredients: Means the elements which have been utilized for making the final product.
- Nutritional Information: Means the calories which one gets from fats, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrates, dietary fiber, sugars, protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium and iron present in the product.
- Declaration regarding Vegetarian or Non-Vegetarian: Green colour small sign present on

the corner of the label indicates the product being vegetarian and red colour indicates that the product is non-vegetarian.

- Declaration regarding Food Additives: These are substances which are added to food to preserve flavor or enhance its taste and appearance.
- Name and Address of the Manufacturer
- Net Quantity: It refers to the weight of the product combined with the packaging weight.
- Code No./Lot No./Batch No: It is a mark of recognition through which the food can be found in the manufacture and even recognized in the distribution.
- Date of Manufacture and Best Before & Use By Date
- Country of Origin for Imported Food
- Instructions for Use

Highlights of the survey:

The "**most comprehensive and representative**" milk safety and quality survey was undertaken on samples picked from over 1,100 town/cities with over 50,000 population collected between May and October, 2018. It was **conducted by an independent agency** at the behest of FSSAI.

Findings:

- 12 out of 6,432 samples of milk tested were adulterated.
- Six samples were found adulterated with hydrogen peroxide, three with detergents, two with urea and one sample was found to have neutralizers.
- Out of 12 adulterated samples, nine were in Telangana, two from Madhya Pradesh and one from Kerala.
- Presence of Aflatoxin M1 residues beyond permissible limits in 368 samples, that is 5.7% of the samples was detected.
- Aflatoxin M1 was more widely present in processed milk samples than in raw milk.
- This is the first time that such a detailed survey of presence of Aflatoxin M1 in milk has been done.

- Amongst the top three States with the highest levels of Aflatoxin M1 residues are Tamil Nadu, Delhi and Kerala.
- Around 1.2 % of the samples had residues of antibiotics above the permissible limits.
- Amongst the top three States with the highest levels of Antibiotics residues are Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and UP.
- Only one raw milk sample in Kerala was found to contain pesticide residue above the permissible level.
- *About 41% samples, though safe, fall short of one or another quality parameter.*
- Maltodextrin and sugar which are added to raise the level of fat and SNF (Solid Non-fat) were present in processed milk.

FSSAI Survey has clearly shown that **milk being sold in India is largely safe for consumption.** While combatting adulteration requires more vigilant citizens and enforcement machinery, contamination in milk requires systemic improvements through the supply chain.

Ease of Doing business (EoDB), 2020:

- India has **moved to 63rd slot from 77 last year** (an improvement of 14 places), in the World Bank's EoDB.
- The country's score improved from 67.3 last year to 71.0 this year.
- Doing Business 2020 measures regulations across **190 economies in 12 business regulatory areas** to assess the business environment in each economy.
- Ten of these indicators were used to estimate an ease of doing business score this year, over the 12 months ending April 30, 2019.



- A total of 294 reforms had been enacted by 115 countries.
- New Zealand, Singapore and Hong Kong has topped the list and Somalia has retained 190th spot.

- For 11 countries, two cities were selected to construct the indicator – **Delhi and Mumbai in the case of India.**
- India also featured, for the third consecutive year, in the list of 10 economies where business climates had improved the most.
- This list comprises Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Togo, Bahrain, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Kuwait, China, India and Nigeria.
- The commonalities among economies that ranked highest included the “widespread” use of electronic systems and online platforms for facilitating regulatory requirements.
- **The report called India's reform efforts “particularly commendable”** given the country's size.

Rankings of India's neighbours:

China	31
Pakistan	108
Bangladesh	173
Nepal	93
Srilanka	99
Russia	28
Bhutan	89

What led to improvement in the ranking?

- The country's improved ranking was on the back of **four reforms**:
 - 1) starting a business,
 - 2) dealing with construction permits,
 - 3) trading across borders,
 - 4) resolving insolvency.
- The report said that there were improvements in the **efficiency of acquiring building permits.**
- **Imports and exports** became easier with a **single electronic platform for trade stakeholders**, improved electronic submission methods for documents and **upgrades to port infrastructure.**
- Delhi and Mumbai showed improvements in the 'starting a business', 'trading across borders' and 'resolving insolvency' dimensions.

- On the 'dealing with construction permits' front, both cities streamlined and made less expensive the process of getting a permit.
- Delhi also improved professional certification requirements for constructing buildings.
- The report noted that the 'Make in India' programme and the government's attention to the EoDB indicator were a means to demonstrate 'tangible progress'.
- World Bank and Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) had jointly released a **separate EoDB index at the state level** in July 2018.
- In November, 2018, PM Modi had launched the **EoDB Grand Challenge** and invited ideas to

amend government processes using new-age technologies such as artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, Big Data analytics and blockchain.

The report has noted the Indian government's goal of making it to the top 50 list by 2020. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said that from the coming year, **Kolkata and Bengaluru will be added to the list** of cities surveyed.

Mould your thoughts:

1. What is food fortification label? Highlight the findings of a recently released National Milk Safety and Quality Survey, 2018.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Google's Sycamore Machine and Quantum Computing

Source: The Hindu

Manifest pedagogy: Quantum Computing is the next big thing and the first breakthrough has been applauded unequivocally. Such breakthroughs are the important areas for Prelims. Quantum computing and its relative analysis with normal computing and supercomputing is fodder for Mains.

In news:

- Google has claimed "quantum supremacy" over the most powerful supercomputers in the world.

Placing it in syllabus:

- Recent developments in S&T

Dimensions:

- What is quantum computing?
- What is Sycamore and Google's claim?
- Way ahead in quantum computing.

Content:

What is quantum computing?

A quantum computer is a machine that performs calculations **using the laws of quantum physics** to solve problems that would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for **classical, semiconductor-based computers** that behave according to the **laws of classical physics**. So a classical computer computes using bits and bits can be either 1 or 0.

Quantum supremacy is a benchmark that was set in 2012 by a physicist named John Preskill at the California Institute of Technology, Caltech. It

means a quantum computer can do something that no ordinary classical computer can match.

A **quantum computer** doesn't use bits, but **uses quantum bits or qubits**. And these qubits are made out of quantum material and a **qubit** which can **exist as both 1 and 0 simultaneously**. This bizarre consequence of quantum mechanics is called a **superposition state** and is the **key to the quantum computer's** advantage over classical computers.

The advantage is that there are **many different possible states** and when a quantum computer is doing its calculation, **each of those states has a**

probability assigned to it. A regular computer (classical computer) can only try one possible pathway at a time to get to an answer. But a quantum computer can get to the right answer more efficiently.

What is Sycamore and Google's claim?

Using the company's state-of-the-art quantum computer, called Sycamore

(developed by a team led by John Martinis), **Google** has claimed "quantum supremacy" over the most powerful supercomputers in the world by solving a problem considered virtually impossible for normal machines.

The **world's most powerful classical computer** is called **Summit owned by IBM** and it is as big as two basketball courts whereas Google's quantum computer probably fits in a room.

Sycamore was given a very specific problem to solve, called a **random circuit sampling problem** (that is, quantum equivalent of generating a very long list of random numbers and checking their values a million times over).

E.g. a pair of bits can store just one of four possible combinations of states (00, 01, 10 or 11) at any given time. A **pair of qubits can store all four combinations simultaneously**, as each qubit represents both values (0 and 1) at the same time. Google's new computer with 53 qubits can store 253 values, or more than 10 quadrillion combinations.

Another property of quantum mechanics applied here is **entangled states**. Particles that have interacted at some point in time can become entangled (Albert Einstein). By measuring the state of one particle allows us to simultaneously know the state of the other, regardless of the distance between the particles. **If the qubits of a quantum computer are entangled, they can all be measured simultaneously.**

Google's quantum computer consists of microscopic circuits of **superconducting metal that entangle 53 qubits** in a complex superposition state. Taking advantage of the quantum entanglement and superposition, Martinis' lab produced this distribution pattern using the Sycamore chip in **200 seconds**.

According to Google, the same calculation would take even the most powerful supercomputers approximately 10,000 years to finish. However, IBM, which has built its own 53-qubit processor estimated that it could simulate Sycamore in a mere 2.5 days, a millionfold improvement over Google's claim of 10,000 years.

Disadvantages:

- Whereas classical computers can stack millions of operating bits in their processors, quantum computers struggle to scale the number of qubits they can operate with.
- Entangled qubits become unentangled after short periods and are susceptible to noise and errors.
- Qubits will always prove too fragile to control.

Way ahead in quantum computing:

- A working quantum computer would have applications from **pharmaceutical drug discovery and financial modeling to breaking the internet** by undoing a common form of encryption called RSA encryption.
- Trusted random bits generated by Google's quantum supremacy experiment, are needed for various **cryptographic applications**, such as proof-of-stake cryptocurrencies (environmentally friendlier alternatives to Bitcoin).
- Next milestone would be the first use of **small quantum computers to simulate the quantum physics of chemicals** and materials in a way that's actually useful to chemists and materials scientists.
- Simulating quantum mechanics could aid in the design of everything from batteries and solar cells to fertilizers and lifesaving drugs.
- The first practical demonstration of **quantum error correction** (a technology that should be able to keep qubits alive for vastly longer amounts of time by encoding them across many physical qubits) will ultimately let quantum computers scale to the million or billion-qubit machines.

Mould your thoughts:

1. What is Sycamore? Explain Google's recent claim in quantum computing.

Physics Nobel prize, 2019

Source: The Hindu

Manifest pedagogy:

Our Nobel Prizes coverage has reached third week. Physics Nobel 2019 was shared between two topics - evolution of universe and discovery of exoplanet, on which the questions have already appeared in Prelims and Mains. Yet, the topics become important. An aspirant has to take stock of all such news.

In news:

- Nobel prize, 2019 for physics has been awarded recently.

Placing it in syllabus:

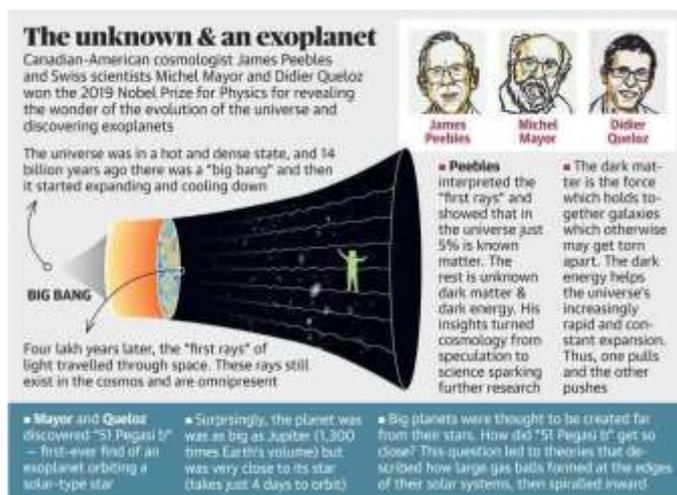
- Recent discoveries in S&T (explicitly mentioned)

Dimensions:

- Evolution of universe
- Discovery of exoplanet

Content:

Nobel Prize in Physics 2019 has been awarded to **James Peebles** "for theoretical discoveries in physical cosmology" and to **Michel Mayor and Didier Queloz** "for the discovery of an exoplanet orbiting a solar-type star".



infancy of the universe and discovered new physical processes.

- The universe in which just five per cent of its content is known which constitutes stars, planets, trees and us.
- The rest 95 per cent is unknown dark matter and dark energy.

Discovery of exoplanet:

- In October 1995, Michel Mayor and Didier Queloz announced the first discovery of a planet outside our solar system, an exoplanet, orbiting a solar-type star in the Milky Way.
- At the Haute-Provence Observatory in Southern France, using custom-made instruments, they were able to see the planet 51 Pegasi b.
- It is a gaseous ball comparable with the solar system's planet, Jupiter.
- With this discovery, we now know that quarter of all stars have a planet of Earth's size and surface temperature, with the potential of hosting liquid water and the chemistry of life on its surface.
- Over 4,000 exoplanets have since been found in the Milky Way.

Evolution of universe:

- James Peebles' theoretical framework, developed since the mid-1960s, is the basis of our contemporary ideas about the universe.
- The **importance of the cosmic radiation during birth of the Big Bang** was realized by him.
- Barely 400,000 years after the Big Bang, the universe became transparent and light rays were able to travel through space.
- Using his theoretical tools and calculations, James Peebles **interpreted traces from the**