

ISSUE - 23

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HISTORY, ART & CULTURE

LPG reforms in India

(Source: ET)

Manifest pedagogy: LPG reforms of 1991 is a strategic shift in Indian economy which changed the very Nature of Indian reality today. This topic forms the foundation for Indian Economy today. Having a fair idea about the change it brought in Indian economy and international events which lead to it is important for the Mains across disciplines.

Placing it in syllabus:

- Indian economy and LPG reforms

Static dimensions:

- Nature of Indian economy in the pre reform era
- Factors which led to 1991 economic reforms
- International events associated with Indian reforms

Current dimensions:

- Nature and scope of reforms
- Outcome of the LPG reforms

Content:

Nature of Indian economy in the pre reform era:

Indian economic policy after independence was influenced by the colonial experience, which emphasised on industrialization under state monitoring, state intervention in labour and financial markets, a large public sector, business regulation, and central planning.

Indian economy was a closed one. Licence Raj was prevalent to set up business in India. The Indian rupee was inconvertible and high tariffs and import licensing prevented foreign goods reaching the market.

The central pillar of the policy was import substitution, the belief that India needed to rely on internal markets for development, not international trade. There was restriction of foreign investment and technology and government controlled finance and capital markets.

There were high duties and taxes with multiple rates and large dispersion. PSUs were considered as the engine of growth. There were restrictions on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Multinational corporations (MNCs).

Factors which lead to 1991 economic reforms:

- **Rise in Prices:** The inflation rate increased from 6.7% to 16.7% due to rapid increase in money supply and the country's economic position became worse.
- **Rise in Fiscal Deficit:** Due to increase in non-development expenditure fiscal deficit of the government increased. Due to rise in fiscal deficit there was a rise in public debt and interest. In 1991 interest liability became 36.4% of total government expenditure.
- **Increase in Adverse Balance of Payments:** In 1980-81 it was Rs. 2214 crore and rose in 1990- 91 to Rs. 17,367 crores. To cover this deficit large amount of foreign loans had to be obtained and the interest payment got increased.
- **Iraq War:** In 1990-91, war in Iraq broke, which led to a rise in petrol prices. The flow of foreign currency from Gulf countries stopped and this further aggravated the problem.
- **Dismal Performance of PSUs:** These were not performing well due to political interference and became big liability for government.
- **Fall in Foreign Exchange Reserves:** India's foreign exchange reserve fell to low ebb in

1990-91 and it was insufficient to pay for an import bill for 2 weeks.

International events associated with Indian reforms:

- The **Soviet Union was collapsing** at the time, proving that more socialism could not be the solution for India's ills.
- **Deng Xiaoping had revolutionized China with market-friendly reforms.**
- **1990-91 Iraq war** led to the stoppage of flow of foreign currency from Gulf countries.
- To tide over the Balance of Payment (**BoP**) issues, India borrowed huge amount from **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**.
- The **Asian financial crisis of 1997-99** laid India low.
- The **dot-com collapse and global recession of 2001**, and the huge global uncertainty created in the run-up to the **invasion of Iraq in 2003**.
- The **global boom of 2003-08 spearheaded by China**.

Nature and scope of reforms:

India's New Economic Policy was **announced on July 24, 1991 known as the LPG** or Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation model.



- **Liberalization-** It refers to the process of making policies less constraining of economic activity and also reduction of tariff or removal of non-tariff barriers.
- **Privatization-** It refers to the transfer of ownership of property or business from a government to a privately owned entity.
- **Globalization-** It refers to the expansion of economic activities across political boundaries of nation states.

The **main objective** was to plunge Indian economy into the arena of "Globalization" and to give it a new thrust on market orientation. The policy was intended to move **towards higher economic growth rate** and to build sufficient foreign exchange reserves.

It wanted to achieve **economic stabilization** and to convert the economy into a **market economy** by removing all kinds of unnecessary restrictions. The policy aimed at increasing the **participation of private players in all sectors** of the economy.

Salient features of LPG Policy:

- Abolition of Industrial licensing/ Permit Raj
- Public sector role diluted
- MRTP limit goes
- Beginning of privatisation
- Free entry to foreign investment and technology
- Industrial location policy liberalized
- Abolition of phased manufacturing programmes for new projects
- Removal of mandatory convertibility cause
- Reduction in import tariffs
- Deregulation of markets
- Reduction of taxes

Outcome of the LPG reforms:

Positive outcomes:

- **India's GDP growth rate increased.** During 1990-91 India's GDP growth rate was only 1.1% but after 1991 reforms GDP growth rate increased year by year and in 2015-16 it was estimated to be 7.5% by IMF.
- Since 1991, India has firmly established itself as a lucrative foreign investment destination and **FDI equity inflows in India** in 2019-20 (till August) stood at US\$ 19.33 billion.
- In 1991 the unemployment rate was high but after India adopted new LPG policy **more employment got generated** as new foreign companies came to India and due to liberalisation many new entrepreneurs started companies.
- **Per Capita income increased** due to an increase in employment.

- **Exports** have increased and stood at USD 26.38 billion as of October, 2019.

Negative outcomes:

- In 1991, agriculture provided employment to 72 percent of the population and contributed 29.02 percent of the GDP. Now the **share of agriculture in the GDP has gone down drastically to 18 percent**. This has resulted in a lowering the per capita income of the farmers and increasing the rural indebtedness.
- Due to opening up of the Indian economy to foreign competition, **more MNCs are competing local businesses and companies** which are facing problems due to financial constraints, lack of advanced technology and production inefficiencies.

- Globalization has also contributed to the **destruction of the environment** through pollution by emissions from manufacturing plants and clearing of vegetation cover. It further affects the health of people.
- LPG policies have lead to **widening income gaps within the country**. The higher growth rate is achieved by an economy at the expense of declining incomes of people who may be rendered redundant.

Mould your thoughts:

1. What were the factors that led to the economic reforms of 1991 in India? How have they fared till now?

INDIAN SOCIETY

National Family Health survey (NFHS)

(Source: The Hindu)

Manifest pedagogy: NFHS is an important statistic collecting organisation of India. Its sample surveys are used as a marker for key health statistics in India. It indicates the true side of Indian Inclusive and Sustainable Growth. This survey and its key findings act as great enrichers in Mains answers. The trends in these statistics also help in giving a comprehensive picture on health in India.

In news:

- National Family Health Survey celebrates 25 years

Placing it in syllabus:

- Health sector

Static dimensions:

- NFHS origin and evolution

Current dimensions:

- NFHS-4 findings and achievements
- WHO recommendations
- NFHS-5

Content:

NFHS origin and its evolution:

- The National Family Health Survey (NFHS) is a large-scale, multi-round survey conducted in a representative sample of households throughout India.
- It is a collaborative project of the International Institute for Population Sciences(IIPS), Mumbai, India, ORC Macro, Calverton, Maryland, USA and the East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA.

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW), Government of India, designated IIPS as the nodal agency, responsible for providing coordination and technical guidance for the NFHS.
- NFHS was funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) with supplementary support from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

- IIPS collaborated with a number of Field Organizations (FO) where each FO was responsible for conducting survey activities in one or more states covered by the NFHS.
- The First National Family Health Survey (NFHS-1) was conducted in 1992-93.
- The survey collected extensive information on population, health, and nutrition, with an emphasis on women and young children.
- The NFHS-2 was conducted in 1998-99 in 26 states of India with added features on the quality of health and family planning services, domestic violence, reproductive health, anaemia, the nutrition of women and the status of women.
- The NFHS-3 was carried out in 2005-2006 in 29 states of India.

NFHS-4:

- The Fourth National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) was carried out in 2014-2015.
- NFHS-4 is the **first of the NFHS series that collected data in each of India's 29 States and 7 Union Territories.**
- It, for the **first time, provided estimates of most indicators at the district level for all 640 districts** of the country included in the 2011 Census.

Findings and achievements:

- All States/UTs have Infant mortality rates (IMR) below 51 deaths per 1,000 live births.
- The proportion of women (aged 15-49) who received antenatal care rose from 80 per cent in 2005-06 to 84 per cent in 2015-16. Deliveries at health facilities has increased from 39 per cent to 79 per cent.
- The total fertility rates range from 1.2 in Sikkim to 3.4 in Bihar. All states except Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Meghalaya have either achieved or maintained replacement level of fertility.
- Full immunisation coverage in India has increased to 62% in 2015-16 compared to 44% in 2005-06.
- 38 per cent of children under the age of 5 were stunted for their age, 21 per cent were thin for their height, 36 per cent were underweight and 2 per cent were overweight.

- Though anaemia has declined, it still remains widespread. More than half of children and women are anaemic.
- Over two-thirds of households in every State/UT have access to an improved source of drinking water.
- More than 50% of households have access to improved sanitation facilities in all states/UTs except Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.
- Tobacco use among men has fallen from 50 per cent in 2005-06 to 47 per cent in 2015. Similarly, alcohol consumption among men has fallen from 38 per cent to 34 per cent.
- Of those interviewed for the survey, 86 per cent of the men and 68 per cent women were literate.
- 75 per cent of the men were employed as compared to 24 per cent of women.
- Less than 29 per cent of the households surveyed had at least one member covered by health insurance or under a health scheme.
- 69 per cent of the population had an Aadhaar card.
- The prevalence of HIV among women and men (aged 15-49) decreased from 0.28 per cent to 0.24 per cent and 0.36 per cent to 0.25 per cent between 2005-06 and 2015-16 respectively.
- The prevalence of tuberculosis was higher among women (389 per 100,000) than among men (220 per 100,000).

Though NFHS-4 results demonstrate improvements over NFHS-3 in many key indicators, there are considerable rural, urban and inter State disparities. The lag in improvement of indicators is linked to low baselines, limited investment and inefficiencies in spending by States.

Hence the actions require significant multi-sectoral convergence. Under the National Health Mission (NHM), support is provided to the States/UTs to strengthen their health care system based on the requirements proposed by them under Programme Implementation Plans.

WHO recommendations for NFHS:

1. **India should have a single major national health survey at five-year intervals.** This could provide data on additional major causes

of disease burden and their risk factors and include adult mortality rate estimation.

2. The sample sizes should aim to provide **state-level estimates for all indicators and district-level estimates for crucial indicators** to capture the key features of health status heterogeneity across the country.
3. **Data collection on the key variables should be standardized** to meet monitoring standards and to provide comparable data over time.
4. **Effective partnerships with a larger range of relevant stakeholders**, including the academic community, should be established.

Individual-level data from these surveys should be made publicly available as soon as possible so that it can be used in the urgent tasks of informing policy and developing a more effective health system.

Linking household survey data with health service use and administrative data, preferably using geospatial coding methods could be considered.

NFHS-5:

- The process of collecting data for NFHS-5 has been started.

- **All household members will be considered for certain biomarkers** such as determining haemoglobin levels (earlier members of 15 plus age was considered).
- The survey **covers a sample size of 0.7 million households.**
- In the **first phase, 50% of the 36 States and UTs** will be covered.
- **By mid 2020, the survey results** for NFHS-5 are expected to be **released.**
- Special arrangements have been made to avoid discrepancies while collecting data which includes **67 indicators.**
- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in partnership **with Population Council of India**, has **launched the National Data Quality Forum (NDQF)** that aims to strengthen the data ecosystem in the country and generating reliable data to help in policy-making.

Mould your thoughts:

1. Explain the importance of National Family Health Survey (NFHS). How can it be made better?

Sexual violence as a social issue

(Source: The Hindu)

Manifest pedagogy: Disha Gangrape and Murder have shaken the collective conscience of our society. It has led to a people's movement against the perpetrators. This social anger finally leads to the Extra Judicial killing of the perpetrators. The entire episode raises some pertinent questions about the continuing sexual violence against women along with the social and political measures required to counter these Ghastly incidents. A brief History of similar issues along with recommendations of Justice Verma Commission add Value to the article.

In news:

- A series of brutal rape cases have shocked India.

Placing it in syllabus:

- Social issues

Static dimensions:

- Rape and sexual violence as a social issue

Current dimensions:

- IPC sections against them
- Justice Verma committee recommendations
- Various acts and provisions
- Social measures needed

Content:**Rape and sexual violence as a social issue:**

- Cases of violence against women and girls in India has continued to rise. They are supported by the **persistence of patriarchal gender and social norms**. The indicators of violence against women are a **reflection of the structural and institutional inequality**.
- India's **average rate of reported rape cases** is about 6.3 per 100,000 of the population. The **extent of under-reporting** tends to be higher on average in **states with a low female literacy**.
- The increasing frequency of such gory cases depict the **barbaric mentality of revenge against women and girls**. The persistence of harmful practices, **pervasive gender stereotypes and objectification of women** and her treatment as the "weaker sex", in schools or university, at work, in the family, in the community is a serious concern.
- The widespread **socio-economic dependency of women** along with the **fear of social exclusion and banishment** and the **lack of effective response to violence** have made women face continuing violence and intimidation. In some countries, **violence against women is estimated to cost countries up to 3.7 percent of their GDP** (World Bank, 2018).
- Women who experience violence are more at risk of **unwanted pregnancies, maternal and infant mortality, and sexually transmitted infections**, as well as **mental health consequences**. In society many women who are raped or sexually abused are stigmatised and isolated, which **impacts not only their well-being, but also their social participation, opportunities and quality of life**.

Facts:

- India is the most dangerous country for sexual violence against women (Thomson Reuters Foundation 2018 survey).
- India is placed 131st of 152 countries in the Georgetown Institute's global ranking of women's inclusion and well-being.

- India's **NCRB reported 338,954 crimes against women** – including **38,947 rapes in 2016**.
- Uttar Pradesh topped the list followed by Maharashtra.
- Out of 48 percent female population in India, **women hold just under 12 percent of seats in the national legislature**.
- The **National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4)** suggests that 30 percent of women in India in the age group of 15-49 have experienced physical violence since the age of 15 and about 31 percent of married women have experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence by their spouses.
- As per 2011 census, an **effective literacy rate for men was 82.14% whereas for women it was 65.46%**.

IPC sections against them:

- **Section 354** of the IPC criminalises any act by a person that assaults or uses criminal force against a woman with the intention or knowledge that it will **outrage her modesty**.
- **Sexual harassment** is defined under **Section 354 A** of the IPC as a man committing any of the following acts:
 1. physical contact and advances involving unwelcome and explicit sexual overtures; or
 2. a demand or request for sexual favours; or
 3. showing pornography against the will of a woman; or
 4. making sexually coloured remarks
- **Section 354B** of the IPC criminalises assault or use of criminal force against a woman with the **intention of disrobing** her.
- **Section 354C** of the IPC criminalises the act of **voyeurism**.
- **Section 354D** of the IPC criminalises **stalking of a woman by a man**. It also includes acts of monitoring a woman's electronic communication.
- **Section 370** of the IPC defines **human trafficking** as the action or practice of transporting people illegally or without their

consent across areas mainly to be used in the labour or commercial sex industry.

- **Section 375** of the IPC make punishable the act of sex by a man with a woman if it was done against her will or without her consent. The definition of rape also include sex when her consent has been obtained by putting her or any person in whom she is interested, in fear of death or of hurt.
- The Supreme court in **Independent Thought vs Union of India and Anr (2017)** has **criminalised sexual intercourse with a minor wife aged between 15 and 18 years.**
- **Section 376** provides for seven years of jail term to life imprisonment to whoever commits the offence of rape.

Special provisions are provided for **cases of aggravated rape** under the IPC, as amended by the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013. A person accused of aggravated rape can be imprisoned from ten years to life along with a fine.

Justice Verma committee and its recommendations:

On December 23, 2012 a three member Committee headed by Justice J.S. Verma, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, was constituted to recommend amendments to the Criminal Law and the Committee submitted its report on January 23, 2013.

- The Committee recommended that the **gradation of sexual offences should be retained** in the IPC, 1860.
- Any **non-consensual penetration** of a sexual nature should be included in the definition of rape.
- The **exception to marital rape** under IPC should be removed.
- The **offence of sexual assault** should be defined so as to include all forms of non-consensual non-penetrative touching of a sexual nature.
- Use of criminal force to disrobe a woman should be punishable with 3 to 7 years of imprisonment.
- The **use of words, acts or gestures that create an unwelcome threat of a sexual**

nature should be termed as sexual assault and be punishable for 1 year imprisonment or fine or both.

- The central and state government should create a **corpus to compensate victims of crimes against women.**
- The requirement of sanction for prosecution of armed forces personnel under **Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA)** should be specifically excluded when a sexual offence is alleged.
- The Committee **rejected the proposal for chemical castration** as it fails to treat the social foundations of rape.
- It opined that death penalty should not be awarded for the offence of rape and **recommended life imprisonment for rape.**
- The Committee has recommended the **discontinuation of the two-finger test** for medical examination of rape victim.
- A **Rape Crisis Cell** should be set up and should be immediately notified when an FIR in relation to sexual assault is made. The Cell must provide legal assistance to the victim.

Various acts and provisions:

Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 (Nirbhaya Act):

It is an Indian legislation which provides for amendment of Indian Penal Code, Indian Evidence Act, and Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 on laws related to sexual offences.



Honourable President Ram Nath Kovind gave assent to the **Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018**, which came into force on the 21 April, 2018.

- It that provides for stringent punishment, including death penalty for those convicted of raping girls below the age of 12 years.
- The minimum punishment in case of rape of women has been increased from rigorous imprisonment of seven years to 10 years, extendable to life imprisonment.
- In case of rape of a girl under 16 years, the minimum punishment has been increased from 10 years to 20 years, extendable to imprisonment for rest of life.
- The deadline for the completion of trial in all rape cases will be two months.
- A six-month time limit for the disposal of appeals in rape cases has also been prescribed.
- There will also be no provision for anticipatory bail for a person accused of rape or gang rape of a girl under 16 years.

At least four states – Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana and Arunachal Pradesh have introduced the death penalty for rapes of minors, defined as below 12 years of age.

Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013:

- It is a legislative act in India that seeks to protect women from sexual harassment at their place of work which came into force from 9 December 2013.
- This statute superseded the **Vishakha Guidelines** for prevention of sexual harassment introduced by the Supreme Court of India.
- The Act **defines sexual harassment at the work place and creates a mechanism for redressal of complaints.**
- It provides safeguards against false or malicious charges.
- The Act also **covers concepts of 'quid pro quo harassment' and 'hostile work environment' as forms of sexual harassment** if it occurs in connection with an act or behaviour of sexual harassment.

- The **definition of "aggrieved woman"**, under the Act covers all women, irrespective of her age or employment status, whether in the organised or unorganised sectors, public or private and covers clients, customers and domestic workers as well.
- Every employer is required to constitute an **Internal Complaints Committee** at each office or branch with 10 or more employees and these committees have the powers of civil courts.
- The Committee is required to complete the inquiry within a time period of 90 days.
- **Employers who fail to comply** will be punished with a **fine of up to 50,000 rupees.**

Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012:

- The Act defines a child as any person below eighteen years of age.
- It defines different forms of sexual abuse, including penetrative and non-penetrative assault, as well as sexual harassment and pornography.
- It deems a sexual assault to be "aggravated" under circumstances such as when the abused child is mentally ill or when the abuse is committed by a person in a position of trust vis-à-vis the child, like a family member, police officer, teacher, or doctor.
- People who traffic children for sexual purposes are also punishable under the provisions relating to abetment in the Act.
- The Act prescribes stringent punishment with a maximum term of rigorous imprisonment for life and fine.

Social measures needed:

- Prevention should start early in life, by educating and working with young boys and girls promoting respectful relationships and gender equality.
- Addressing the deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes of the people, police and judicial officers that continues to contribute to low reporting and conviction rates.
- Bridging the gap between gender based violence (GBV) laws and its correlated areas

such as legal rights to property, land, inheritance, employment and income.

- **Systematic intervention for multi sectoral linkages** between Health sector (medical and psychosocial support), Social Welfare sector (Shelters, counselling and economic support/skill) and Legal (legal aid).
- **Recognize sexual and reproductive health rights of women** by promotion and protection and decide freely over matters related to their sexuality, family-planning choices and access to comprehensive sexuality education.
- **Use of technology and emerging concepts** such as Smart City in urban policy making for ensuring safer and gender friendly infrastructures and spaces that prevents GBV.
- Making the home and public spaces safer for women and girls, ensuring women's economic autonomy and security, and increasing women's participation and decision-making powers, in private, public life as well as politics.
- **Awareness-raising and community mobilization**, including through the media and social media, is another important component of an effective prevention strategy.

- Research demonstrates that governments that include representatives from across society – of different political parties, races, classes, genders, geographies and religions produce better quality of life for citizens than less inclusive governments.

UN Women initiatives:

In partnership with the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) UN Women has developed a **global non-formal education curriculum "Voices against Violence"** to engage young people (age groups ranging from 5 to 25 years) in efforts to prevent and end violence against girls and women.

Partners for Prevention (P4P), is a regional UN joint programme for Asia and the Pacific whose long-term goal is to reduce the prevalence of gender-based violence in the region through behaviour and attitudinal change among boys and men, increase institutional capacity and facilitate policy enhancements.

Mould your thoughts:

1. What social measures are needed to combat the issue of sexual violence? Brief about the recommendations of Justice J.S. Verma committee.

GEOGRAPHY

Geography of Indian Ocean - I

(Source: The Hindu)

Manifest pedagogy: Many of the geopolitical issues of world as part of world geography at the mains. Indian ocean is emerging as the hub of geopolitical events. The overall profile, resources and issues related to geopolitics will help in answering mains and prelims orientated questions.

Placing it in syllabus:

- World's physical geography

Static dimensions:

- Locational aspect of Indian Ocean
- Resources of Indian Ocean
- Ecological threats

Current dimensions:

- India-China and Indian ocean

Content:

Locational aspect of Indian Ocean:

- The Indian Ocean is the **third largest body of water in the world**, covering about 20% of the Earth's water surface.

- It is **bounded on the north by Southern Asia (including the Indian subcontinent), on the west by the Arabian Peninsula and Africa, on the east by the Malay Peninsula, the Sunda Islands, and Australia and on the south by the Southern Ocean.**
- It is separated from the Atlantic Ocean by the **20° east meridian** and from the Pacific by the **147° east meridian.**
- The **northernmost extent of the Indian Ocean is approximately 30° north latitude in the Persian Gulf.**
- Major **choke points** include Bab el Mandeb, Strait of Hormuz, Strait of Malacca, southern access to the Suez Canal, and the Lombok Strait.
- **South of the equator, the Indian Ocean circulates in a counter clockwise direction.**
- In the **northern portion of the Indian Ocean, the monsoon**, a seasonal wind reversal found in tropical areas, dominates the circulation patterns.
- It provides **major sea routes** connecting the Middle East, Africa, and East Asia with Europe and the Americas.

Resources of Indian Ocean:

- The **biogenic deposits** in the Indian Ocean comprise the **corals** on shallow banks and on the continental shelves and the **oozes** in the deep sea.
- The **authigenic deposits** in the Indian Ocean comprise the **phosphorites and the polymetallic nodules.**
- **Large reserves of hydrocarbons** are being tapped in the offshore areas of Saudi Arabia, Iran, India, and Western Australia.
- An estimated **40% of the world's offshore oil production** comes from the Indian Ocean.
- **Fishing** in the Indian Ocean now accounts for almost **15 percent of the world's total fish production.**
- **Beach sands rich in heavy minerals and offshore placer deposits** are actively exploited by bordering countries, particularly India, South Africa, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

- Mineral resources are widely distributed with **nodules containing nickel, cobalt, and iron and massive sulphide deposits of manganese, copper, iron, zinc, silver, and gold** present in sizeable quantities on the sea bed.
- Additionally, various **rare earth elements** are present, even though their commercial extraction is not yet feasible.

Ecological threats:

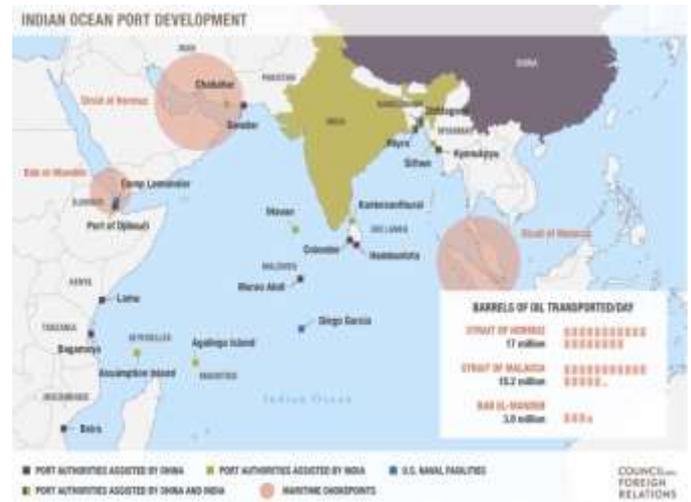
- **Ocean Dumping:** Oceans have been targeted as a dumping site of sewage, chemicals, industrial waste, garbage, hazardous waste and other debris from the land.
- **Land Runoff:** Surface runoff from both agricultural land and areas that carry soil and particles mixed with carbon, phosphorus, nitrogen and minerals, pose a threat to the marine life and result in harmful algal blooms.
- **Dredging:** As dredging removes the deposits submerged underwater, the activity alters the pre-disposed composition of soil, leading to the destruction of habitat of creatures and organisms.
- **NO_x and SO_x:** Nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and Sulfur oxides (SO_x) are the two main pollutants found in shipping emissions that has badly affected both marine environment and the ozone layer.
- **Ocean Acidification:** It is the continuing decrease of seawater pH caused by the absorption of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere which affects the behaviour of several marine species, putting them at life-threatening risks.
- **Sea Water Level Rising:** Global warming is alarmingly increasing seawater levels, which means more wetland flooding, destructive erosion and agricultural land contamination.
- **Ozone Depleting Substances:** These substances omitted by ships across the world include Methyl CFCs, Halon, Chloroform, Methyl Bromide, Bromo- chloro di-fluoro methane and Bromo trifluoro methane etc.
- **Waste Pollution from Ships:** Both solid and liquid waste in the form of ballast water, grey water, food waste, dunnage and packing material, paper products and cleaning material

and rags etc... pollutes the seawater and badly affects marine lives.

- **Oil Spills:** Oil spills have resulted in the extreme pollution of the marine ecosystem, which destroys the insulating ability of several marine species and also the water repellency of bird's feathers, exposing these creatures to life-threatening risks.
- **Plastic Pollution:** The plastic bags, fishing nets and other debris-chokes tens and thousands of seabirds and sea turtles every year. The ingestion of micro plastics by fish and other species also pose a risk to their life as well as humans.

India-China and Indian ocean:

- China and India are dependent on energy resources transported via the secure sealanes in the Indian Ocean to fuel their economies.
- Along with this, China's growing global influence and India's rapid economic rise have heightened the ocean's strategic value.
- China's ties with regional states have deepened, including the influx of Chinese capital into construction projects in Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.
- China has also undertaken efforts to modernize its military, particularly its naval deployment capabilities and has outlined Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
- Chinese navy has already acquired a logistic base at Djibouti besides acquisition of the Hambantota port in Sri Lanka on a 99-year lease.
- The presence of an estimated six to eight Chinese naval ships in the northern part of the Indian Ocean at any given time as well as submarines is a cause of concern for India.



- The construction of military bases, modernized equipment and fleets, new maritime assets, and the expansion of security ties are all part of New Delhi's push to assert itself as the region's leader.
- India and France in 2018 signed a strategic pact opening up their naval bases to each other's warships across the Indian Ocean.
- It grants the Indian navy access to strategically important French ports – including one in Djibouti, home to China's single overseas military base.
- A similar deal was made with the United States before which signifies a web of strategic trust to thwart Beijing's expansion into India's traditional area of influence.
- An agreement for a new base in the Seychelles has been finalised and military access to naval facilities at Oman's port and airfields has been negotiated.
- A pact allowing deployments from each other's naval facilities was signed with Singapore in 2017.
- With expanded bases on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands at the end of the Malacca Strait, India is raising the stakes in the fight over the waters of Southeast Asia.
- India's "Act East" policy and Washington's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" concept are starting points for pushing into China's traditional waters in return.

China and India have expressed eagerness to assume greater responsibility in policing maritime global commons and to be recognized as major powers. Broader initiatives like the BRICS

Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) are also pulling India into to a larger leadership role alongside China.

Mould your thoughts:

1. What are the ecological threats to Indian Ocean? Analyse the importance of Indian Ocean region (IOR) to India and China.

Geopolitics of Indian Ocean - II

(Source: The Hindu)

Manifest pedagogy: Many of the geopolitical issues of world as part of world geography at the mains. Indian Ocean is emerging as the hub of geopolitical events. The overall profile, resources and issues related to geopolitics will help in answering mains and prelims orientated questions.

Placing it in syllabus:

- World's physical geography

Dimensions:

- Maritime issues of India
- Geopolitics of Indian Ocean

Content:

India has a long coastline of nearly 7500 km and Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) of nearly 23 lakh square kilometers and shares its maritime boundary with 7 countries (Pakistan, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia).

Maritime disputes:

Maritime issues of India with Pakistan:

- India's maritime dispute with Pakistan involves the **demarcation of boundary along Sir Creek** which also provides the reference point for demarcation of maritime boundary.
- Sir Creek is a **tidal estuary** which exist on the border of India and Pakistan (Gujarat state and Sind Province).
- The **land boundary between the countries upto Western Terminus** were **fixed by UN Tribunal**, but it left the boundary from thereon undemarcated.



Now the dispute is mainly on 3 issues:

- Demarcation of maritime boundary between India and Pakistan in Arabian Sea.
- The actual demarcation "from the mouth of Sir Creek to the top of Sir Creek".
- The actual demarcation "from the top of Sir Creek eastward to a point on the line designated on the Western Terminus".

As per the **Pakistan views**, boundary lies to the eastern flank of creek (i.e. creek part of Pakistan) and shows the **agreement signed in 1914 between Government of Sindh and Rao Maharaj of Kutch** to prove its point.

India has used the same document and '**Thalweg doctrine**' to claim the boundary which says that, boundary line must be midway through a navigable channel. India argues that **as per 1914 document the creek is navigable during high tides and pillars which were installed in 1924 were along the midcourse**.

As Sir Creek frequently changes its course and this creates difficulty in demarcation of boundaries.

Maritime issues of India with Bangladesh:

There are three issues between the two nations that impede a settlement.

- The first dispute is **over the ownership of New Moore (South Talpatti) island** which emerged in the estuary of the border river, **Haribhanga** after the cyclone and tidal bore of 1970 and is still in formation stage.

- The second issue is over the **flow of the river Haribhanga**. India claims that the **main channel of the river flows to the east** of the new island, whereas **Bangladesh maintains that it flows to the west**, thus making the island an integral part of the Bangladesh territory.
- The third issue is related to **demarcation of Sea Boundary** due to which the demarcation of territorial waters, the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and continental shelves also got delayed.

Bangladesh went in for arbitration over the delimitation of maritime boundary under the UNCLOS on October 8, 2009. The Hague-based **Permanent Court of Attribution (PCA)** in 2014 awarded 19,467 square kilometers, **four-fifth of the total disputed area of 25,602 sq km in the Bay of Bengal to Bangladesh.**

While India wanted the determination of the boundary on '**equidistance**' method (means a nation's maritime boundaries should conform to a median line equidistant from the shores of neighboring nation-states), Bangladesh's claim was that it should be resolved on "**equity principle**" meaning that the countries adjacent to the Bay of Bengal would get proportional areas in the zone.

India's maritime issue with Sri Lanka:

Though India has successfully demarcated its maritime boundary with Sri Lanka through **1974 and 1976 agreements**, some issues are still there regarding the fishermen and Kachchatheevu Island.

Kachchatheevu issue:

- As per 1974 Agreement, Kachchatheevu Island was given to Sri Lanka and special provisions like pilgrimage rights were included but fishing was not explicitly mentioned.
- Indian fisherman has claimed their traditional fishing rights in the region which have been denied by the Sri Lankan authorities.
- In 2014, Tamil Nadu Government pleaded in SC to cancel the ceding of island to Sri Lanka, Indian government clarified that, island was a disputed territory and therefore was given during boundary settlement process. (In Berubari Union case it has been decided that settling of territorial disputes does not require Parliamentary approval.)

Fisherman's issue:

- Sri Lankan Navy started exercising greater control and vigilance over Palk Strait since Tamil Elam war.
- During the process many a times they had fired on Indian fisherman who had strayed into Sri Lankan waters which had infuriated dispute.
- Along with this the ease on the restriction on Sri Lankan fisherman, use of high end technology by Indian fisherman has complicated the issue.

In recent times, the Indian Ocean littoral has seen a great deal of **conflict, especially in the Persian Gulf**. It has also been **afflicted by piracy in the Red Sea and Horn of Africa**. The **major priority for Indian** strategic planning is protecting the **Sea lines of Communications (SLOCs)**, through which **83 per cent of India's crude oil comes.**

Geopolitics of Indian ocean:

- The geo-political significance of the Indian Ocean stems from the fact that it is a centre piece in the wider **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**. The countries bordering the Indian Ocean are home to 2.5 billion people, which is **one-third of the world's population.**
- The Indian Ocean is the third largest water body in the world that has **vital sea lanes of communication**. Around **80 percent of the world's seaborne oil trade** passes through the **choke points** of this ocean which includes the **Strait of Hormuz**, which provides the only sea passage from the Persian Gulf to the open ocean.
- The combination of economic growth and slowdown, military expansion, increasing demand for natural resources, demographics, variances in regional structures of governance highlights the geo-political significance of this area.
- There has been a gradual to an accelerated **expansion of maritime forces** and their capabilities in the region. The growing presence of extra regional powers and **nuclear capable nations** has further altered the existing security framework.
- Politically, the Indian Ocean is becoming a pivotal zone of **strategic competition**. China is investing hundreds of billions of dollars in infrastructure projects across the region as part

of its **Belt and Road initiative (BRI)**. Chinese state-backed firms are also investing in infrastructure and ports in Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Bangladesh.

- **Western powers**, including Australia and the US, have sought to **counter-balance China's growing influence** across the region by launching their own infrastructure funds.
- In security terms, **piracy, unregulated migration, and the continued presence of extremist groups** in Somalia, Bangladesh, and parts of Indonesia pose significant threats to Indian Ocean countries.

- For the betterment of IOR, countries in the region need to collaborate to build economic strength and address geopolitical risks. Broader groups like Bay of **Bengal Initiative for Multisectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)**, **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)** have emerged which seeks to promote sustainable economic growth, trade liberalisation, and security.

Mould your thoughts:

1. What are the factors responsible for shaping geo-politics of Indian Ocean in recent times?

INDIAN POLITY

Section 12 of Transaction of Business Rules, 1961

(Source: The Hindu)

Manifest pedagogy: The use of article 356 (President's Rule) is one of the most controversial in Indian polity and so far has been one of the major imbalancing acts in Indian federalism. In light of recent developments, UPSC may question the procedure and rules followed in due process of declaring President's rule.

In news:

- Rule 12 of the Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rules, 1961 was used by the Centre to revoke President's Rule in Maharashtra.

Placing it in syllabus: Centre state relations (Indian Polity)

Static dimensions:

- What is it?
- When was it used?
- In what conditions can it be used?

Current dimensions:

- Criticisms of its recent use

Content:

To revoke President's Rule in Maharashtra, recently the government used a special Section in the Union government's Transaction of Business Rules, which allows for revocation of President's Rule without Cabinet approval if the Prime Minister "deems it necessary".

What is it?

- Under PART V of the Indian Constitution, Article 77 deals with the Conduct of business of the Government of India.
- Clause 3 of Article 77 states that "the President shall make rules for the more convenient transaction of the business of the government of India, and for the allocation among Ministers of the said business".

- The Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rules 1961 has been framed under Article 77(3).
- Rule 12 of the Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rules, 1961, allows the Prime Minister to depart from laid down norms at his discretion without the approval of the Cabinet.
- It says, "The Prime Minister may, in case or classes of cases permit or condone a departure from these rules, to the extent he deems necessary."
- The Cabinet can subsequently give post-facto approval for any decision taken under Rule 12.

When was it used?

- Recently the state of Jammu and Kashmir was reorganised into the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh on October 31, 2019.
- The proclamations dividing various districts between the two Union Territories were issued under Rule 12 by the President.
- The Cabinet gave post-facto approval to the same on November 20, 2019.
- Then in case of Maharashtra, tussle for power among BJP, Congress, Shivsena and NCP continued for weeks post the assembly election results.
- Since every party had failed to prove the majority, President's rule was imposed on November 12, 2019.
- On November 22 night, though there were reports that an alliance of Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress will soon form the government, on November 23, BJP formed government claiming support from NCP MLAs.
- Hours before the Oath Ceremony, President's rule was revoked at 5:47 am under Rule 12 of the Government of India (Transaction of Business) 1961.

In what conditions can it be used?

- Rule 12 is not ideally used to arrive at very key decisions by the government.
- It has been generally used in matters such as withdrawal of an office memorandum or signing of MoUs in the past.

The following guidelines are required to be followed in cases where rule 12 is proposed to be invoked:

1. Proposals shall be moved only by the administrative Ministry/ Department concerned with the subject.
2. Proposals shall be accompanied by a detailed justification clearly bringing out the urgency involved in the matter and the exceptional circumstances that require it to be processed under Rule 12.
3. Secretary of the Department/Ministry will ensure that all essential requirements including inter-ministerial consultations have been met.
4. Ministry/Department concerned shall route the proposal through the Cabinet Secretary after obtaining the approval of the Minister-in-charge in all cases or other concerned Ministers, where the subject matter impinges on their business".

Criticisms of its recent use:

The **approval of the Union Cabinet** for the revocation of the President's rule in Maharashtra **was given by the central government by invoking Rule 12** and there was no meeting of the Union Cabinet.

After the President's signature on the proclamation, a **gazette notification to this effect was issued by Union Home Secretary at 5.47 AM** putting an end to the President's rule and facilitating the formation of a **government in Maharashtra by BJP's Devendra Fadnavis** who took oath as chief minister.

The **Congress demanded to know the details of the Cabinet meeting, its time and attendees**, which recommended to the President that President's Rule should be revoked. Also the

invoking of Rule 12 in early morning to allow formation of BJP government in the state was criticised.

Mould your thoughts:

Aatish Taseer OCI status cancelled:

(Source: The Hindu)

Manifest pedagogy: OCI and PIO cards are issues with great technical details with respect to the provisions for eligibility and removal criteria. They make for brilliant prelims questions. As the issue of OCI has been triggered again it is better to have a look at the provisions.

Content:

Author Aatish Taseer has accused the government of **cancelling his** Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) card **“by Twitter”**. But the Home Ministry has accused him of **“concealment of material facts” and “false representation”** when he applied for his original Person of Indian Origin (PIO) status in 2000. In 2016, Mr. Taseer had procured his OCI card.

He had not revealed that **his biological father**, former Governor of Pakistan’s Punjab province Salman Taseer, **had British and Pakistani citizenship**. The government officials have told that “due process” has been followed and **his request for a review had been dismissed by the “competent authority”**.

What is OCI?

- The OCI Scheme was **introduced** by amending the Citizenship Act, 1955 in **August 2005**.
- It was **launched during the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention 2006** at Hyderabad.
- The Scheme provides for registration as OCI of all PIOs

who were citizens of India on 26th January, 1950 or thereafter or

were eligible to become citizens of India on 26th January, 1950 except who is or had been a citizen of Pakistan, Bangladesh or such other country as the Central Government may specify.

1. Discuss the importance of Rule 12 of the Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rules, 1961. When was it used recently?

In news:

- Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) card of Aatish Taseer has been cancelled.

Placing it in syllabus:

- Citizenship Act

Dimensions:

- What is OCI?
- Conditions to get OCI
- On what conditions can it be cancelled?
- It is **not** to be misinterpreted as **'dual citizenship'**.
- It **does not confer political rights**.
- He/she shall **not be entitled** to the rights conferred under **article 16** of the Constitution.
- A registered OCI is **granted multiple entry, multi purpose, life-long visa** for visiting India.
- He/she is **exempted from registration** with Foreign Regional Registration Officer.
- He/she is entitled to **general 'parity with Non-Resident Indians (NRIs)** in respect of all facilities available to them in economic, financial and educational fields.

Conditions to get OCI card:

The below mentioned shall be eligible for registration as an OCI.

- any person of full age and capacity who is a citizen of another country, but was a citizen of India at the time of or after the commencement of the Constitution.
- who is a citizen of another country, but was eligible to become a citizen of India at the time of the commencement of the Constitution.
- who is a citizen of another country, but belonged to a territory that became part of India after the 15th day of August, 1947.
- who is a child or a grand-child of such a citizen.

- a person, who is a minor child of a person mentioned in clause (a) provided that no person, who is or had been a citizen of Pakistan, Bangladesh or such other country as the Central Government may specify.

On what conditions can it be cancelled?

- If any overseas citizen of India of full age and capacity makes a declaration renouncing his OCI in a prescribed manner and such declaration shall be registered by the Central Government.
- In that case, every minor child of that person registered as an overseas citizen of India, shall thereupon cease to be an overseas citizen of India.

The Central Government may, by order, cancel the registration if it is satisfied that-

- the registration as an overseas citizen of India was obtained by means of fraud, false representation or concealment of any material fact.
- He/she has shown disaffection towards the Constitution of India as by law established.
- He/she has, during any war in which India may be engaged, unlawfully traded or communicated with an enemy or associated with any commercial activity so as to assist an enemy in that war.
- He/she, within five years after registration has been sentenced to imprisonment for a term of not less than two years.

Mould your thoughts:

What are the conditions to obtain Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) card? In what circumstances such registration can be cancelled?

Online portal for political party registration

(Source: The Hindu)

Manifest pedagogy: Elections in India and issues regards to functioning of political parties have remained in the limelight in the recent past. Controversies such as symbols, functioning, women representation and electoral bonds demand transparency and accountability on the part of parties in larger national interests. Thus, a system of registration is a step in that endeavor and important for governance and Indian polity.

In news:

- Election commission of India (ECI) to launch online portal for Political Parties registration

Placing it in syllabus:

- Salient features of the Representation of the People's Act (RPA).

Static dimensions:

- Difference between Registered and Recognized parties
- Benefits enjoyed by them

Current dimensions: What is the online portal all about?
Registration process at present under RPA

Content:

Difference between Registered and Recognized parties:

An association or body of individual citizens of India calling itself a political party and intending to avail itself of the provisions of **Part-IVA** of the RPA (relating to registration of political parties) is required to get itself registered with the ECI.

In order to be recognised as a State party, the political party should fulfill any of the following conditions:

- At General Elections or Legislative Assembly elections, the party has won 3% of seats in the legislative assembly of the State (subject to a minimum of 3 seats), OR
- At a Lok Sabha General Elections, the party has won 1 Lok Sabha seat for every 25 Lok Sabha seats allotted for the State, OR

- At a General Election to Lok Sabha or Legislative Assembly, the party has polled a minimum of 6% of votes in a State and in addition it has won 1 Lok Sabha or 2 Legislative Assembly seats, OR
- At a General Election to Lok Sabha or Legislative Assembly, the party has polled 8% of votes in a State.

For National Status:

- The party wins 2% of seats in the Lok Sabha (11 seats) from at least 3 different States, OR
- At a General Election to Lok Sabha or Legislative Assembly, the party polls 6% of votes in four States and in addition it wins 4 Lok Sabha seats, OR
- A party gets recognition as State Party in four or more States.

The registered but unrecognised political parties do not have the privilege of contesting elections on a fixed symbol of their own. They have to choose from a list of 'free symbols' issued by the poll panel.

A recognized National or State party can have a maximum of 40 "Star campaigners" and a registered unrecognised party can nominate a maximum of 20 'Star Campaigners'.

Benefits enjoyed by registered political parties:

- RPA allows them to **accept contributions voluntarily** offered to it by any person or company other than a government company.
- Candidates of registered parties get **preference in allotment of election symbols**.
- Registered political parties, in course of time, **can get recognition as 'State Party' or National Party'** subject to the fulfillment of the conditions prescribed by the Commission in the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968.
- If a party is recognised as a State Party', it is entitled for **exclusive allotment of its reserved symbol to the candidates** set up by it in the State in which it is so recognised.
- If a party is recognised as a 'National Party' it is entitled for exclusive allotment of its reserved symbol to the candidates set up by it throughout India.

- Recognised 'State' and 'National' parties **need only one proposer for filing the nomination**.
- They are **entitled for two sets of electoral rolls free of cost** at the time of revision of rolls and their candidates get one copy of electoral roll free of cost during General Elections.
- They get **broadcast/telecast facilities over Akashvani/Doordarshan** during general elections.
- Political parties are **entitled to nominate "Star Campaigners"** during General Elections.

As per the Election Commission of India's latest data, India is having a total of 2,293 political parties. They include seven "recognised national" and 59 "recognised state" parties.

What is the online portal all about?

The Registration of Political Parties is governed by the provisions of **Section 29A** of the RPA.

- ECI has now reviewed the system and process of registration of political parties.
- The **new guidelines will be effective from 1st January, 2020**.
- The "**Political Parties Registration Tracking Management System**" (PPRTMS) will be implemented through an **online portal**, to facilitate **tracking of status of application by applicants**.
- The salient feature in PPRTMS is that the applicant (who is applying for party registration from 1st January, 2020 onwards) will be able to track the progress of his / her application and will get status updates through SMS and email.
- The applicant should provide **contact mobile number and email address of the party / applicant in his application**.

Registration process at present under RPA:

- A party seeking registration has to **submit an application** to the Commission **within a period of 30 days** following the date of its formation.
- The **application should be in prescribed format with basic particulars** about the party such as name, address, membership details of various units, names of office bearers, etc, as required under sub-section (4) of Section 29A.

The **application along with all the below mentioned documents** should reach the Secretary to the Commission within 30 days following the date of formation of the party.

1. A **demand draft for Rs. 10,000/-** on account of processing fee which is non-refundable should be submitted.
2. A **printed copy of the memorandum and regulations of the Party** containing a specific provision as required under sub-section (5) of Section 29A of the RPA should be included.
3. There should be a **specific provision** in the Constitution and memorandum of the party **regarding organizational elections and their periodicity** at different levels and terms of office of the office-bearers of the party.
4. The **procedure to be adopted in the case of merger/dissolution** should be specifically provided in the Constitution and memorandum.

5. **Certified extracts from the latest electoral rolls** in respect of at least 100 members of the party to show that they are registered electors.
6. An **affidavit duly signed by the President/General Secretary of the party** and sworn before a First Class Magistrate/Notary to the effect that no member of the party is a member of any other political party registered with the Commission.
7. **Particulars of Bank accounts and Permanent Account Number**, if any, in the name of the party.
8. Any application made after the said period will be time-barred.

Mould your thoughts:

1. As per Election commission of India proposal, how will the political parties be registered hereafter? What are the privileges enjoyed by recognised political parties?

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, ISSUES & INSTITUTIONS

India-Sri Lanka Relations

(Source: The Hindu)

Manifest pedagogy: The recent visit by Sri Lankan President elect is significant in view of Chinese influence in the region and India's national Interests. Moreover, maritime interests coupled with other ethnic and historical concerns need to be highlighted in Indo-Lankan relations.

In news:

- Srilankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa visited India

Placing it in syllabus:

- India- Srilanka bilateral relations

Dimensions:

- Agreements signed
- Concerns between the two countries and solutions
- Way forward

Content:

Agreements signed:

- India has announced a special **Line of Credit of \$50 million** for strengthening Sri Lanka's abilities to **counter terror threats**.

- Both countries have agreed to cooperate on counter-terrorism.
- **Sri Lankan police officers** in major Indian institutions are already receiving the **counter terrorist training**.

- India has announced **\$400 million Line of Credit** for **infrastructure development** in Srilanka.
- Sri Lankan President assured that Colombo will take **steps to release the boats of Indian fishermen in Sri Lankan custody.**
- Under the **Indian Housing Project**, 46,000 houses have been constructed for the internally displaced in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka and **14,000 houses for Tamils of Indian origin in the Up-Country region is in progress.**
- The two leaders have decided to utilise the \$100 million credit line earlier announced for **setting up solar projects in Srilanka.**

Mr. Rajapaksa **extended an invite to Mr. Modi to visit Sri Lanka** as the first foreign head of government to be hosted by the new presidency.

Concerns:

Fishermen issue:

- Indian boats have been fishing in the troubled waters of Palk Strait and the Gulf of Mannar for centuries.
- In **1974 and 1976 treaties** were signed between the two countries to demarcate **International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL).**
- However, the treaties failed to factor in the **hardship of thousands of traditional fishermen** who were forced to restrict themselves to a meagre area in their fishing forays.
- The **small islet of Katchatheevu**, used by them for sorting their catch and drying their nets, **fell on the other side of the IMBL.**



- Fishermen often risk their lives and cross the IMBL rather than return empty-handed.
- However, the high alert Sri Lankan Navy have either arrested or destroyed fishing nets and vessels of those who have crossed the line.

Solutions:

To deal with the issue of detention of fishermen in a humane manner, India and Sri Lanka have set up a **Joint Working Group (JWG) on Fisheries** as the mechanism to help find a permanent solution. The first meeting took place in December 2016 in New Delhi and second meeting in Colombo on April 07, 2017. The next round of Ministerial-level talks and JWG meetings were held during October 2017 at New Delhi.

China factor:

- In recent years, China has extended billions of dollars of loans to the Sri Lankan government for new infrastructure projects.
- This is not good for India's strategic depth in Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- Sri Lanka handed over the strategic port of Hambantota, which is expected to play a key role in China's Belt and Road Initiative, to China on a 99-year lease.
- It has also been supplying arms to Srilanka.
- China has invested sufficiently in building Colombo international container terminal by China Harbor Corporation.

Solutions:

- In order to allay Indian concerns the Sri Lankan government has sought to **limit China's role to**

running commercial operations at the Hambantota port while it retains oversight of security operations. **India is also investing into Sri Lanka's infrastructure development** in the Northern and Eastern provinces. India is also **planning to build Trincomalee Port** to counterweight the Chinese developments at Hambantota Port.

13th amendment:

- On 29 July 1987, Indo-Sri Lanka Accord was signed between Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lankan President J.R. Jayewardene.
- On 14 November 1987, the Sri Lankan Parliament passed the 13th Amendment to the 1978 Constitution of Sri Lanka and the Provincial Councils Act No. 42 of 1987 to establish provincial councils.
- The amendment aims at creating provincial councils in Sri Lanka and enable Sinhalese and Tamil as national languages while preserving English as the link language.
- Since all the provisions of the 13th amendment were not implemented, it is called 13-Minus.
- 13 Minus implies that Police, Land and Financial powers have not been devolved.
- Government has stressed that the structure that is implemented should be acceptable to all parts of the country.
- In 2007, the North and East were demerged and this was followed by more centralized powers in the hands of President, thus eroding whatsoever autonomy was with the provinces.

Solutions:

In February 2016, the Chief Minister of Sri Lanka's Northern Province, C.V. Wigneswaran sought India's direct intervention in the complete implementation of the amendment.

During Gotabaya's visit, PM Modi has reiterated for the early implementation of the 13th amendment.

Way forward:

- The Sri Lankan President has described India as **"our closest neighbour and long-standing friend"**. He assured that **cooperation with India is multifaceted with priority** given to security-related matters while cooperation with other countries are largely economic and commercial.
- Given the mutual trust and historical ties, both countries should work together to strengthen their multi-dimensional partnership. In line with **India's 'neighbourhood first' policy and SAGAR doctrine**, primacy should be given to relationship with Sri Lanka.
- Meanwhile Sri Lanka should carry forward the **process of reconciliation**, to fulfill the aspirations of the Tamils for equality, justice, peace and respect. **Counter-terrorism will be a big area of cooperation** between Colombo and New Delhi which requires **detailed intelligence sharing**.
- A **permanent solution to the issue of fishermen** needs to be worked out through bilateral engagements. **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** must be signed to improve the economic cooperation between both countries.
- The biggest advantage that India has over China when it comes to bilateral ties with Sri Lanka is its **deep civilizational and cultural connect**. Sri Lanka's first nuclear partnership with any country was signed with India.
- **Chinese funding in infrastructure projects** is blamed of **lacking transparency**, pushing participating smaller nations in a **debt-trap** (e.g. Hambantota port deal), having **devastating social and environmental impact** and even serving to **undermine sovereignty**.
- It is here that **India carries a greater goodwill and trust over China**. Hence if it manages to wisely invest in infrastructure projects abroad, along with **ensuring timely execution of projects** that are already undergoing, India may benefit from the trust deficit that South

Asian nations suffer from when it comes to China.

Mould your thoughts:

1. Given the historical ties and geopolitical considerations, how has the strategic

partnership between India and Srilanka evolved? What are the areas of concern between the two countries?

INDIAN ECONOMY

Chit funds amendment bill, 2019

(Source: Economic Times)

Manifest pedagogy: Chit Funds and other forms of alternative investment schemes have been a gateway to financial savings and thus, are required to be a fail safe for people to meet exigencies, in light of such arguments, it is expedient to have proper legal and institutional regulations for these products.

In news:

- The Parliament has passed the Chit Funds (Amendment) Bill, 2019.

Placing it in syllabus:

- Micro finance institutions (explicitly mentioned)

Static dimensions:

- What is a chit fund?
- What are alternative investment schemes?
- Regulation of chit funds in India

Current dimensions:

- Scams in chit funds
- Chit funds amendment bill

Content:

What is a chit fund?

- Chit fund is defined as per Section 2(b) of the Chit Fund Act, 1982.
- Chit funds are often microfinance institutions.
- Chit Funds are also known as the Chitty, Kuree, chit.
- It is a type of rotating savings and agreement among different persons to subscribe a certain sum of money for a specified period of time.
- After specified period the amount is returned to the subscribers with interest.
- Chit fund helps in collecting the small savings of the individuals.
- It helps small traders and businessmen save excess cash on a daily or monthly basis.

- Chit companies are more active in rural and town areas.

What are alternative investment funds (AIFs)?

- Alternative investment funds are defined in Regulation 2(1)(b) of the SEBI (Alternative Investment Funds) Regulations, 2012.
- It refers to any privately pooled investment fund, (whether from Indian or foreign sources), in the form of a trust or a company or a body corporate or a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP).
- Hence AIFs are private funds which are otherwise not coming under the jurisdiction of any regulatory agency in India.
- AIFs shall seek registration in one of the three categories

1. **Category I:** Mainly invests in start-ups, SMEs or any other sector which Government considers economically and socially viable.
2. **Category II:** These include private equity funds or debt funds for which no specific incentives or concessions are given by the government or any other Regulator. Category I and II are close ended, tenure shall be for a minimum of three years.
3. **Category III:** Hedge funds or funds which trade with a view to make short term returns or such other funds which are open ended. They may also be close ended.

Regulation of chit funds in India:

- The Chit Funds in India are regulated by the Chit Fund Act, 1982.
- Under this law, registration of the chit fund business can be done only by the respective state governments.
- The Chit Registrar is appointed by the Government under section 61 of Chit Fund Act, 1982.
- If the chit is not registered with the registrar of chits then neither it is legal nor bound to pay the deposited amount of the subscribers.
- The approval of a chit scheme may be refused by the registrar if
 1. the chit organiser has been convicted of any offence under the Act or
 2. has defaulted in the payment of fees or
 3. has been convicted of any offence and sentenced to imprisonment and a period of 5 years has not been lapsed since the release.
- **All the banks** (including co-operative banks) are **prohibited from conducting chit business** as per **Section 86** of the Chit Fund Act, 1982.

Scams in chit funds:

Saradha chit fund scam:

- Saradha Group chit fund scandal duped 1.4 million investors in West Bengal and neighbouring states.
- As much as Rs 1,200 crore was raised through its illicit money pooling schemes before the company collapsed in April 2013.

- The group used collections from new investors to make payments to the previously-enrolled members, rather than from income generated through investments.
- The activities of these companies were found to be in serious violations of the Companies Act, SEBI Act and several provisions of the Indian Penal Code.
- It was alleged that the Mamata Banerjee led West Bengal government had a direct link with Sudipta Sen, the Chairman of the chit fund group.
- Following the unearthing of the scam in April 2013, Mamata Banerjee-led West Bengal government set up a Rs 500 crore relief fund for small investors who had put money in the scheme.
- Of the list of 87 such companies presented in Parliament, against whom complaints had been received for indulging in Ponzi schemes, seventy-three were from West Bengal.
- On April 23, 2013, Sudipta Sen, along with Debjani Mukherjee and Arvind Singh Chauhan, were arrested from Kashmir.
- After serious allegations of international money laundering, the case was transferred to the CBI by the Supreme Court of India in 2014.
- By the time the CBI took over the case, the Special Investigation team (SIT) had arrested 11 people, traced 224 immovable properties, seized 54 vehicles and had filed chargesheets in nearly 300 cases.

Rose Valley chit fund scam:

- Rose Valley scam is the financial fraud which rocked state of **West Bengal in 2013**.
- As per **Enforcement Directorate (ED)** estimates **Rs 17,520 crore** was reportedly raised from investors across India.
- The **All India Small Depositors Association pegged the amount at Rs 40,000 crore**.
- The Rose Valley group had allegedly floated a **total of 27 companies** for running the alleged chit fund operations of which **only half a dozen were active**.
- It is alleged that the **company had made "cross investments" in its various sister**

firms to suppress its liabilities towards investors.

- According to ED, a portion of the money was also used to **bribe politicians so that the scam could run smoothly.**
- In 2015, Rose Valley **chairman Gautam Kundu was arrested.**
- The **government froze all the 2,600 bank accounts of the Rose Valley Group**, which held around Rs 800 to 1,000 crore.
- On January 25, 2019, CBI arrested Bengali film producer Srikant mohta for duping rose Valley group by Rs 25 crore.

Chit funds amendment bill:

- The Act specifies various names to refer to a chit fund such as chit, kuri. The bill additionally inserts 'fraternity fund' and 'rotating savings and credit institution' to this list.
- The Bill changes the names of the terms 'chit amount', 'dividend', 'prize amount' mentioned in the Act to 'gross chit amount', 'share of discount' and 'net chit amount', respectively.
- The Act specifies that a chit will be drawn in the presence of at least two subscribers. The Bill seeks to allow these subscribers to join via video-conferencing.

- The Bill seeks to increase the commission of foreman from 5% to 7% and allows the foreman a right to a lien against the credit balance from subscribers. (*Lien is right to keep possession of property belonging to another person until a debt owed by that person is discharged*).
- The Act specifies the maximum amount of chit funds as
 1. one lakh rupees for chits conducted by individuals and for every individual in a firm with less than four partners
 2. six lakh rupees for firms with four or more partners.

The Bill increases these limits to three lakh rupees and 18 lakh rupees, respectively.

1. The Act does not apply to:

- any chit started before it was enacted
- any chit where the amount is less than Rs 100

The Bill removes the limit of Rs 100 and allows the state governments to specify the base amount over which the provisions of the Act will apply.

Mould your thoughts:

How are chit funds regulated in India? What are the salient features of Chit funds amendment bill, 2019?

Bond Exchange traded funds (ETFs)

(Source: The Hindu)

Manifest pedagogy: The development of a long term capital market for private borrowing and deepening of capital markets has been a key bottleneck in financial sector in India. The steps taken by government hold promise for the development of bond markets and thereby, UPSC may focus on broader aspects of financial sector reforms as a whole in the recent past.

In news: Cabinet okays bond ETFs

Placing it in syllabus: Capital market in India

Static dimensions:

- Capital market in India
- Development of long term bond markets in India

Current dimensions:

- Bharat bond ETF
- Mandatory 25% borrowing from capital markets
- Recapitalisation bonds under Indradhanush

Content:

Capital markets in India:

- The Indian capital market refers to the facilities and institutional arrangements **for borrowing and lending 'term funds', medium and long.**
- It **does not deal in capital goods**, but is concerned with raising money capital or purpose of investment.



The capital market in India includes the following institutions:

- Commercial Banks;
 - Insurance Companies (LIC and GIC);
 - Specialised financial institutions like IFCI, IDBI, ICICI, SIDCS etc..
 - Provident Fund Societies;
 - Merchant Banking Agencies;
 - Credit Guarantee Corporations
1. Individuals who invest directly on their own in securities are also suppliers of funds to the capital market.
 2. The Indian capital market is divided into gilt-edged market and the industrial securities market.
 - The gilt-edged market refers to the market for government and semi-government securities, backed by the RBI.
 - The industrial securities market refers to the market for shares and debentures of old and new companies. This market is further divided into the new issues market and old capital market.
 - The new issue market refers to the raising of new capital in the form of shares and debentures.
 - The old capital market deals with securities already issued by companies.

- The capital market is also divided in primary capital market and secondary capital market.

Development of long term bond markets in India:

- Honourable Prime Minister has underlined the importance of bond markets for infrastructure financing in India.
- Currently all infrastructure financing is done either by the Government or World Bank loans or public sector banks.
- Hence it is opined that bond markets should enable long-term borrowing.
- Even excluding their borrowings for financing infrastructure, India's government(s) are the biggest and most influential participants in the domestic bond markets.
- They have borrowed and continue to borrow the largest amounts for the longest maturities.
- They also have a perennial borrowing presence in the markets.
- In order to borrow long, there should be some investors willing to lend money for the long term.
- The investor should be incentivised monetarily in yield terms — to lend long term relative to short-term lending, to compensate for the significant risks he would be exposed to like credit and inflation risks.
- At present, there is no specific compensation for the higher level of risks inherent in long-term investing.
- Hence the investor is better off making short-term investments and rolling them over.

Bharat bond ETF:

- On December 4, 2019 the government approved the launch of the **first corporate bond ETF - Bharat Bond ETF.**
- It is an **exchange-traded mutual fund** that will **invest one's money in bonds issued by public sector companies.**
- **Edelweiss AMC** has received the mandate to launch the ETF.
- The bond ETF will be **open for subscription from December 12-20, 2019.**

- The ETF will have a **base size of Rs 7,000 crore**, with a likely green shoe option of Rs 8,000 crore.
- **ETF will invest only in AAA-rated bonds** issued by public sector companies maturing on or before the maturity of the ETF.
- Any **issuer** that ceases to be a CPSE, CPFI or statutory body or the rating is **downgraded below AAA, shall be removed from the index** on the next rebalancing date.
- Each ETF will have a **fixed maturity date** and different indices tracking specific maturity years.
- As of now, it **will have 2 maturity series - 3 and 10 years** - NIFTY Bharat Bond Index - April 2023 and NIFTY Bharat Bond Index - April 2030.
- The **unit value** of the Bharat Bond ETF will be **capped at Rs 1,000**.
- As many as 12 central government companies may borrow via the ETF.

Benefits:

1. Bond ETF will provide safety as underlying bonds are issued by CPSEs and other government-owned entities.
2. It will have predictable tax-efficient returns due to a target maturity structure.
3. It will also provide access to retail investors to invest in bonds with smaller amount of as low as Rs 1,000, providing easy and low-cost access to bond markets.
4. Bond ETFs are taxed with the benefit of indexation which significantly reduces the tax on capital gains for investors.

Mandatory 25% borrowing from capital markets:

- SEBI has come out with a proposal that will require large corporates to raise 25% borrowings through corporate bonds from next fiscal.
- For entities following April-March as their financial year, the framework will come into effect from April 1, 2019, and for firms that follow calendar year as their financial year, it will be effective from January 1, 2020.

- The large corporates identified as on 31 March 2019 will have to garner at least 25% of their borrowings made in 2019-20 through bond market.
- This is part of an effort to reduce reliance on banks for financing corporates and simultaneously developing a liquid and vibrant corporate bond market.
- Sebi has defined "large corporates" as such firms who need to have
 1. an outstanding long term borrowing of at least ₹ 100 crore;
 2. a credit rating of "AA and above";
 3. target to finance themselves with long-term borrowings (above 1 year).
- A "comply or explain" approach would be applicable for the initial two years of implementation.
- From 2021-22 the requirement of bond borrowings shall be tested for a **contiguous block of two years 2021- 22 and 2022-23**.
- At the end of block, **if there is any deficiency** in the requisite bond borrowing, a **monetary penalty in the range of 0.2% to 0.3% of the shortfall will be levied**.

Recapitalisation bonds under Indradhanush:

- Government announced Indradhanush plan for revamping Public Sector Banks (PSBs) in August 2015.
- The plan envisaged, infusion of capital in PSBs by the Government to the tune of Rs. 70,000 crore over a period of four financial years.
- Government recently announced its decision to **further recapitalise PSBs to the tune of Rs. 2,11,000 crore, through recapitalisation bonds of Rs. 1,35,000 crore**.
- Though the structure of the bonds has not been worked out, it is expected that the **bonds will be bought by the banks** themselves.
- In effect, the recapitalisation bonds **will be exchanged for equity shares**.
- This is not the first time that the bank recapitalisation bond will be issued in India. **In the year 1994, India had sold about 48**

billion rupees of 12-year recapitalisation bonds at a coupon rate of 10 %.

- Under standard international accounting practices, **recapitalisation bonds are classified as 'below the line' financing and not included in the fiscal deficit.**

Benefits:

- The massive recapitalisation will strengthen the capital base of the banks.

- It will help banks to write-off its bad loans and subsequently increase its lending capacity.
- According to Goldman Sachs, it could boost credit growth by up to 10 %.

Mould your thoughts:

1. Discuss the features of newly launched Bharat bond ETFs. What are the benefits of recapitalisation bonds?

AGRICULTURE

Seeds bill

(Source: The Hindu)

Manifest pedagogy: Agriculture productivity has been a key tool in road to doubling farmers income. Seeds and productivity go hand in hand be it seed replacement rate, varietal replacement for diversification or farm saved seeds. UPSC has increasingly focused on agriculture and rural development strategies in which strengthening the seeds act is one.

In news: Seeds bill, 2019 is under Parliament's consideration

Placing it in syllabus: Agriculture

Static dimensions:

- Types of seeds
- GM seeds
- Seeds regulation in India

Current dimensions:

- Seeds bill
- Advantages and Disadvantages

Content:

Types of seeds:

There are **four** generally recognized classes of seeds:

- Breeder seed
- Foundation seed
- Registered seed
- Certified seed

The basis of seed multiplication of all notified varieties/hybrids is the **Nucleus seed** which is the **hundred percent genetically pure seed with physical purity** and produced by the original breeder/Institute /State Agriculture University (SAU) from basic nucleus seed stock.

Breeder seed :

- The **progeny of nucleus seed multiplied in large area** under supervision of plant breeder / institute / SAUs and monitored by a committee consisting of the representatives of state seed certification agency, national / state seed corporations, ICAR nominee and concerned breeder.
- This is also a **hundred percent physical and genetic pure seed** for production of foundation seed.
- A **golden yellow colour certificate** is issued for this category of seed by producing breeder.

Foundation seed:

- The **progeny of breeder seed produced by recognized seed producing agencies in public and private sector**, under supervision of seed certification agencies and its quality is

maintained according to prescribed field and seed standards.

- A **white colour certificate** is issued.

Registered seed :

- It shall be the **progeny of foundation seed** that is so handled as to **maintain its genetic identity and purity** according to standard specified for the particular crop being certified.
- A **purple colour certificate** is issued.

Certified seed :

- The **progeny of foundation seed produced by registered seed growers** under supervision of seed certification agencies to maintain the seed quality as per minimum seed certification standards.
- A **blue colour certificate** is issued.

Note: **India's Seed Vault is located at Chang La (Ladakh) in the Himalayas**, at a height of 17,300 feet, there is a **storage facility with over 5,000 seed accessions**. One accession consists of a set of seeds of one species collected from different locations or different populations.

It is a **joint venture** of the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (which comes under the ICAR) and the Defence Institute of High Altitude Research (under DRDO).

GM seeds:

- Genetically-modified (GM) seeds are seeds that have been **modified to contain specific characteristics** such as resistance to herbicides or resistance to pests.
- During genetic modification of a plant, a foreign gene called "**transgene**" is inserted in the plant's own genes.
- This could be **introduced from one plant to another plant, from a plant to an animal, or from a microorganism to a plant**.
- **Benefits of GM seeds** include increased crop yields, diminished use of pesticides and herbicides, and increased profits.
- **Concerns** include the private contractual relations between farmers and seed companies, the environmental impacts of the technology and the potential impacts of consumer concerns on the market for GM products.

- Another concern is related to possible harm of GM seeds and crops to other, beneficial organisms.

India ranks fifth in global cultivation of GM crops. Bt cotton is the only GM crop approved for commercial cultivation.

Seeds regulation in India:

The seed industry in India has been **governed by following legislative & policy frameworks** such as Seed Act (1966), Seed Rules (1968), Seed (Control) Order (1983), New Policy on Seed Development (1988), Plants, Fruits & Seeds (Regulation of Import into India) Order (1989), Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Right Act (2001), and the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 including Seeds (1955), National Seed Policy (2002), and Seed Bill (2004).

Seeds Act (1966):

It was enacted by Parliament for the whole of India to regulate seeds.

- Seeds of food crops, oil crops, cotton seeds, seeds of cattle fodder and all types of vegetative propagating material are included.
- Constitution of a **Central Seed Committee** which may notify any seed variety found suitable as per the Act.
- Establishing a **Central Seed Laboratory as well as State Seed Laboratory** to carry out seed analysis of notified variety.
- Empowerment of the **committee to fix the minimum limits of germination and purity of seed** for a variety to be notified as well as for **marking or labeling a seed lot** to be sold commercially.
- Constituting a **certification agency** for undertaking the process of certification and **grant of notification certificate** provided the seed meets minimum limits of germination and purity.
- Appointment of a **seed analyst** to undertake seed testing.
- Appointment of **seed inspector** who is authorised to draw samples from any seller or a purchaser and verify the quality by sending samples to a seed analyst in the seed testing laboratory.

- Responsibility of Seed analyst is to report the results in a specified format after analysis of the seed samples to Seed Inspector as well as the seller/ purchase.
- **Complainant if dissatisfied with the result can apply to the court** for sending samples to Central Seed Testing Laboratory.
- **Restriction on import and export of seeds of notified varieties.** Any variety imported or exported should meet the minimum limits of seed germination and purity marked or labeled on the container.
- **Recognition of seed certification agencies of foreign countries** for the purpose of this act.
- **Penalty or punishment** or both for those who do not comply with the provisions of the act.
- **Forfeiture of seeds** belonging to any person convicted under this act due to contravention of the procedures under this act.
- **Punishment for offences committed by companies** or any body corporate.

Seeds bill, 2019:

The new bill aims to foster competition by updating the Seed Act 1966 and Seed Rules 1968.

Features:

- The Bill authorizes the Central government to **reconstitute a Central Seed Committee.**
- **All varieties of seeds for sale have to be registered** and are required to meet certain prescribed minimum standards. For instance, for transgenic varieties of seeds, registration is to be obtained under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- **Farmers are exempted from obtaining registration for varieties developed by them.** But if the farmer sells such seeds for a **monetary consideration**, then that sale **needs to be registered.**
- Farmers are allowed to **sow, exchange or sell their farm seeds and planting material** without having to conform to the prescribed minimum limits of germination, physical purity and genetic purity. However, **farmers cannot sell any seed under a brand name.**
- The bill has proposed a **differentiation between the seed producer, seed processor**

and seed dealer for the purpose of licensing. However, there is **no recognition of National Level Integrated Seed Companies** with R&D capabilities.

- The Bill insists on **compulsory registration of seeds.** (Currently, a large percentage of seed is sold under a self-certification programme called *Truthfully Labelled (TL) seeds*).
- **Licences/ registration of fruit nurseries.**
- Bill empowers the **government to fix prices of selected varieties in case of "emergent situations"** such as seed shortage, abnormal increase in price, monopolistic pricing, profiteering etc..
- **Consumer Protection Act, 1986** to be used to deal with complaints related to the non-performance of seed.
- Bill **differentiates** the agronomic performance of the seed, its physical quality and the supply of spurious seed **and consequently penalizes the offences** and prescribes punishment.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the bill:

- The **major deficiencies in the 1966 Act** such as lack of licensing provisions and lack of varietal registration prior to sale, is now **incorporated in the new Seed Bill.**
- Seeds Act, 1966 was inspired by the US systems where the variety registration is left to the discretion of the developer, while the **new bill resembles that of EU which define parameters and procedures** for the release of new varieties.
- The new bill has provisions like **compulsory registration** of seed varieties **based on VCU (value for cultivation and use)**, evaluation and **licensing of seed producers and seed processors.**
- The new bill **differentiates between** the Seed Producer, Processor and the Seed Dealer for the purpose of licensing.

Disadvantages:

1. The Seeds Bill insists on compulsory registration of seeds. However, the Protection of Plant Variety and Farmers Right Act, 2001 (PPVFR Act) was based on voluntary registration.

2. As per the PPVFR Act, all applications for registration should contain the complete data of the parental lines from which the seed variety was derived, including contributions made by farmers. But Seeds Bill demands no such information while registering a new variety. Thus, the contributions of farmers is overlooked and private companies are left free to claim a derived variety as their own.
3. The PPVFR Act, which is based on an IPR like breeders' rights, does not allow re-registration of seeds after the validity period. But as per the Seeds Bill private seed companies can re-register their seeds an infinite number of times after the validity period. Due to this "ever-greening" provision, many seed varieties may never enter the open domain for free use.
4. The new bill proposes compulsory registration of varieties/hybrids. Given that India has more

than 100 crops, 5 geographical regions and hundreds of seed companies with R&D, the workload for nationwide evaluation as compared to the current workload will be more than 100 times greater.

5. The disputes on compensation have to be decided as per the Consumer Protection Act 1986. The Consumer courts are not ideal and farmer friendly institutions.
6. The provision on price regulation during "emergency situations" might create uncertainty for seed companies and ad hocism in the price policy. It can stifle innovation and result in a scale back of research investments.

Mould your thoughts:

1. Discuss the key features of the Seed bill, 2019. What are the concerns?

ENVIRONMENT & DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Marine pollution

(Source: The Hindu)

Manifest pedagogy: Many of environment related questions have been asked as part geography mains.

Environmental geography is significant both from prelims and mains perspective. Issues of marine ecosystem and threats to it have been asked earlier and may be repeated in future.

In news:

- Marine pollution

Placing it in syllabus:

- Marine ecology

Static dimensions:

- Marine ecosystem
- Mangroves and Marine ecology

Current dimensions:

- Marine pollution
- Way forward

Content:

Marine ecosystem:

- Marine ecosystems are aquatic ecosystems whose waters possess a high salt content.
- Out of all of the types of ecosystems on the planet, marine ecosystems are the most

prevalent and provide nearly half of the Earth's oxygen.

- The marine ecosystems are classified into six main categories:
- **Open Marine Ecosystems:** Many creatures living in the open ocean inhabit the **upper layer of the ocean where the sun's rays**

penetrate. This is known as the euphotic zone. Sea life that float or swim, such as algae, plankton, jellyfish and whales live here.

- **Ocean Floor Ecosystems:** At **greater depths sunlight cannot penetrate**, and organisms inhabiting this deep water rely on the sinking of organic matter above for survival. Certain types of fish, crustaceans, clams, oysters, urchins, seaweed live here.
- **Coral Reef Ecosystems:** Found only in **warm tropical waters and at relatively shallow depths**, they themselves are produced by simple animals that build external skeletons around themselves. A plethora of species like snails, sponges and seahorses inhabit coral reefs.
- **Estuary Ecosystems:** These are the **shallow, sheltered area of a river mouth where freshwater intermingled with saltwater enters the sea.** It also includes lagoons or glades. The organisms inhabiting estuaries are specially adapted to these distinct conditions and hence the **diversity of species tends to be lower than in the open ocean.**
- **Saltwater Wetland Estuary Ecosystems:** They consist of a **transition zone between land and sea.** Additionally, wetlands serve as a protective barrier to inland ecosystems, as they provide a buffer from storm surges.
- **Mangrove Ecosystems:** Some tropical and subtropical coastal areas are home to special types of **saltwater swamps** known as mangroves.

Mangroves and Marine ecology:

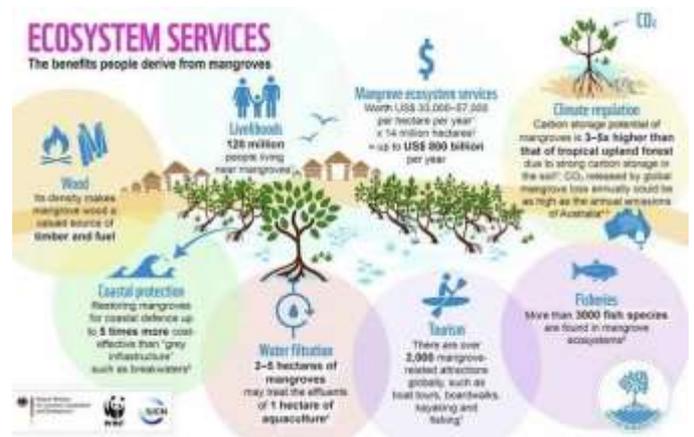
- Mangroves are a critical forest ecosystem, dominating coastlines.
- As the primary species involved in forming mangrove forests prefer very warm, wet conditions, they are restricted to **tropical and warm temperate latitudes** around the world.
- Mangrove swamps are characterized by **trees that tolerate a saline environment**, whose **roots systems extend above the water line** to obtain oxygen, presenting a maze like web.
- There are **54-75 species of true mangroves, which are found only in the intertidal zones**

of coasts, and are taxonomically isolated from terrestrial counterparts.

- **Spatial variation, or zonation**, is a **common trait** for mangrove forests both horizontally and vertically.
- Mangrove height ranges from only a **few feet to over one hundred feet** and species exhibit **different adaptations to salinity.**

Services provided by Mangroves:

- Networks of these sediment-trapping forests **buffer the coastline against wave-induced erosion** and provide coastal ecosystems and coastal communities a vital line of **defense against strong, tropical storms.**
- They act as **bio filters for nutrients** in upland runoff, such as nitrogen and phosphorous.
- They form **habitat for commercially important species** in the world.
- Mangroves are **incredible carbon sinks**, sequestering more carbon (nearly 1.5 metric tons/hectare/yr of carbon) than any of their terrestrial counterparts.
- Mangrove substrate may contain 20-25% carbon, which contributes to the **high productivity and biodiversity** of these ecosystems where wide array of **species use them as refuges, migration sites, and nurseries.**



Mangrove Ecology:

- Many **threatened and endangered species** are native to mangrove forests, which provide critical habitat for diverse marine and terrestrial flora and fauna, such as **Manatees, Crab-eating monkeys, Fishing cats, Monitor**

lizards, Sea turtles, Royal Bengal tigers, Mud-skipper fish.

- Mangroves are **prime nesting and migratory resting** and feeding sites for hundreds of **bird species**.
- Many species of tropical and subtropical **marine species**, such as fish and crustaceans, spend some part of their **lives in mangrove wetlands as juveniles**.

Clear cutting for coastal development projects including construction of shrimp farms, hotels, and other structures, harvesting for wood and pollution threaten mangrove forests throughout their range.

Marine pollution:

The main causes of marine pollution include:

- **Oil spills** cause huge damage to the marine environment. E.g. In December, 2014, a wrecked tanker released approximately 94,000 gallons (78,271 Imperial gallons) of **heavy fuel oil** into the **Shela River**, which runs through the **Sundarbans**, shared between India and Bangladesh in the Bay of Bengal.
- **Fertilizer runoff** from farms and lawns into coastal bodies cause **eutrophication**. E.g. Eutrophication has created enormous **dead zones in** several parts of the world, including the **Gulf of Mexico and the Baltic Sea**.
- **Solid garbage** also makes its way to the ocean in the form of plastic bags, balloons, glass bottles, shoes, packaging material etc...
- In many parts of the world, **sewage flows untreated, or under-treated**, into the ocean. E.g. 80% of urban sewage discharged into the Mediterranean Sea is untreated.
- **Man-made chemicals** such as pesticides and chemicals and **radioactive wastes** enter the sea through deliberate dumping.
- **Chemicals also enter the sea from land-based activities**. E.g. they can escape into water during their manufacture, use, or disposal, as well as from accidental leaks or fires in products containing these chemicals.
- **Plastic garbage** including plastic rings of bottles have been found blocking the breathing passages and stomachs of many marine species.

- Small organisms feed on tiny bits of broken-down plastic, called **micro plastics** and absorb the chemicals from the plastic into their tissues. Micro plastics are **less than five millimeters (0.2 inches) in diameter** and they migrate up the **food chain**, eventually becoming part of the food that humans eat.

Way forward:

Nordic countries made a declaration in April, 2019 and have called for a global treaty to tackle the crisis of marine pollution. This demand has also been sent to the European Union, United Nations Environment Programme, the G7 and the G20 groups.

In India, the Coast Guard Act 1978 states that the preservation and protection of the marine environment and control of marine pollution is the function of the Indian Coast Guard (ICG).

Additionally, below measures would help tackle marine pollution:

- **Ban single use plastic** and adopting litter control policies.
- Encourage **reduction** of use of non-biodegradable products or packaging as well as reuse of plastic items.
- Increase treatment, **recycling and reuse of wastewater**.
- Identify chemical pollutants hotspots, control the use and release of chemicals in mining, **promote recycling of used oil** in urban areas.
- Increase funding for marine pollution prevention and control by introducing market-based incentives, applying the **"polluter pays" principle**.
- Reinforce **institutional and legal framework** to address marine pollution at regional and national levels.
- National policies and legislation should be aligned with international commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (**SDG 14**).
- **Public-private partnerships** should also be established to provide financing, improve public awareness and develop innovative approaches to reduce marine pollution.

Mould your thoughts: Explain the importance of mangrove ecosystem. Suggest measures to tackle

the marine pollution.

INTERNAL SECURITY & DEFENCE

SPG Amendment Bill, 2019

(Source: The Hindu)

Manifest pedagogy: Security forces under Internal Security sections is an important aspect for Mains. Studying the forces which are in news becomes compulsory.

In news:

- Lok Sabha has passed Special Protection Group (SPG) amendment bill, 2019

Placing it in syllabus:

- Security forces and agencies

Dimensions:

- What is SPG and who all are covered under it?
- Why Gandhis were given SPG protection?
- Other protection troops for VIP
- SPG amendment bill provisions

Content:

What is SPG and who all are covered under it?

- Based on the **Birbal Nath Committee recommendations** the Special Protection Group (SPG) **came into being in April 1985** in the wake of the killing of PM Indira Gandhi in 1984.
- It was raised with the **intention to provide proximate security cover to the Prime Minister and his family members.**
- For three years, SPG functioned under executive orders.
- An **SPG Act** of the Parliament of India was **enacted in 1988.**
- Then, the Act did not include former prime ministers.
- After Rajiv's assassination in 1991, the SPG Act was amended to offer protection to all former PMs and their families for at least 10 years.
- Then the Act was **amended in 1994, 1999 and 2003.**
- **Cabinet Secretariat** of India is its **governing body.**

- SPG adopts innovative methods and **collaborates with the IB and State / UT police forces** to provide overall security arrangements.
- **At present, it provides security only to the Prime Minister of India and their immediate family members** residing with them at the official residence.
- The **former prime ministers and their family members** are given **Z+ security cover.**
- The SPG protectees travel in special bullet proof or armoured cars and are entitled to use special choppers or aircraft of the Indian Air Force for transport.
- Under the SPG Act, the **state governments are bound to meet the security cover demands of the SPG.**

Why Gandhis were given SPG protection?

- Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi, were given the SPG protection because, two of their family members, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, both former Prime Ministers of India, were assassinated.
- On 8th November 2019, Government of India decided to withdraw SPG Cover from Gandhi Family and accorded them with Z+ Security.

- Now CRPF is in charge of providing security to Gandhis and former prime minister Manmohan Singh and his wife Gursharan Kaur as per Z+ security norms.
- As of now, CRPF is using the vehicles, equipment and technical gadgets that were used by the SPG to provide security to these members.
- While an SPG protectee is guarded by nearly 100 SPG commandos, the one with Z+ cover is guarded by a team of 55, which includes at least 10 National Security Guard (NSG) commandos.

Other protection troops for VIP:

- The **Home Ministry takes the decision of level of protection** an individual needs, based on inputs of threat from intelligence agencies.
- Certain individuals, by **dint of their position in government, are automatically entitled** to security cover like the Prime Minister and his immediate family, Home Minister and officials such as the National Security Adviser.

There are largely six types of security covers: X, Y, Y plus, Z, Z plus and SPG.

- The **X category** on an average entails just one gunman protecting the individual.
- **Y** has one gunman for mobile security and one (plus four on rotation) for static security.
- **Y plus** has two policemen on rotation for security and one (plus four on rotation) for residence security.
- **Z** has six gunmen for mobile security and two (plus eight) for residence security.

- **Z plus** has 10 security personnel for mobile security and two (plus eight) for residence security.

The **various kinds of cover** within these levels include security of residence, mobile security, office security and inter-state security.

National Security Guard (NSG) is a **special commando unit for surgical strikes against organised terrorist attacks** within the country. It has **two groups of personnel and officers**: Special Action Group (SAG) and the Special Ranger Group (SRG). Out of these two, **SRG is used for VIP security**.

SPG bill, 2019 provisions:

- The SPG will provide security to Prime Minister and members of his immediate family residing with him at his official residence.
- It will also provide security to former prime ministers, and his immediate family members residing with him at the residence allotted to him for a period of five years.
- When the proximate security is withdrawn from a former Prime Minister, such proximate security shall also stand withdrawn from members of his or her immediate family.

Mould your thoughts:

What is the importance of Special Protection Group (SPG) in providing high end security? What are the changes proposed in the new SPG amendment bill, 2019?

Personal Data Protection Bill, 2018

(Source: The Hindu)

Manifest pedagogy:

Data protection, storing and sharing are very important aspects as far as India's voluminous data is concerned. In the era of huge mobile and internet users there should be a law, which takes care of all above aspects. The provisions (For both Prelims and Mains) and the concerns (For Mains) of the bill should be studied in detail.

In news:

- Union cabinet has given its approval to the Personal Data Protection Bill.

Placing it in syllabus:

- Data security

Dimensions:

- Key provisions of the bill

- Concerns regarding the bill

Content:

- Data protection refers to **policies and procedures seeking to minimise intrusion into the privacy of an individual** caused by collection and usage of their personal data. In India, usage of personal data or information of citizens is regulated by the **Information Technology Rules, 2011** and under **Section 43A of the Information Technology Act, 2000**.
- In August 2017, a nine-judge bench of the Supreme Court declared privacy as a fundamental right of Indian citizens. The Court also observed that 'informational privacy', or the privacy of personal data and facts, is an essential facet of the right to privacy.
- The Personal Data Protection Bill, 2018, was prepared by a **high-level expert group headed by** former Supreme Court judge **B.N. Srikrishna**.
- It is the first step in developing a privacy **framework to preserve the sanctity of "consent" in data sharing** and penalize those breaching privacy norms.

Provisions of the bill:

- The bill categorizes data into **three categories** - critical, sensitive and general.
- **Sensitive data** - financial, health, sexual orientation, biometrics, transgender status, religious or political beliefs and affiliation **can be stored only in India**.
- Such sensitive personal data can be processed only with the **explicit consent of the person which is informed, clear, and specific**.
- **Critical data will be defined by the government from time to time** and has to be stored and processed in India.
- Any data that is non-critical and non-sensitive will be categorized as **general data with no restriction on where it is stored or processed**.
- It has a provision for the **right to be forgotten**, where the person "shall have the right to restrict or prevent continuing disclosure of personal data".
- The government is entitled to direct a **fiduciary** (entity or individual who decides the means

and purposes of processing data) to get access to non-personal data to provide better services to citizens. E.g. the government can use non-personal or anonymous data for research.

- It provides for the appointment of **data protection officers** and the creation of an **independent national-level Data Protection Authority (DPA)** to supervise and regulate data fiduciaries.
- The DPA shall have a **separate adjudication wing to impose penalties** and award compensation.
- The **DPA may levy penalties** on the fiduciary for various contraventions to the law like failure to comply with (i) data processing obligations, (ii) directions issued by the DPA, and (iii) cross-border data storage and transfer requirements.
- In certain circumstances, **processing of data may be permitted without the consent of the individual**. These include (i) any function of Parliament or state legislature (ii) compliance with any court judgement, (iii) to respond to a medical emergency, or a breakdown of public order, (iv) purposes related to employment, (v) for reasonable purposes specified by the DPA.
- In the interest of national security, certain **government agencies can have access to personal data** for any investigation pertaining to offences.
- It proposes **social media platforms** to create a **voluntary verifiable account mechanism** for every user who registers or uses their service from India.

Decoding the data protection bill

WHAT IT MEANS FOR CONSUMERS

- **DATA** can be processed or shared by any entity only after consent.
- **SAFEGUARDS**, including penalties, introduced to prevent misuse of personal data.
- **ALL** data to be categorized under three heads— general, sensitive and critical.

THE GOVERNMENT & REGULATORY ROLE

- **GOVT** will have the power to obtain any user's non-personal data from companies.
- **THE** bill mandates that all financial and critical data has to be stored in India.
- **SENSITIVE** data has to be stored in India but can be processed outside with consent.

WHAT COMPANIES HAVE TO DO

- **SOCIAL** media firms to formulate a voluntary verification process for users.
- **SHARING** data without consent will entail a fine of ₹15 crore or 4% of global turnover.
- **DATA** breach or inaction will entail a fine of ₹5 crore or 2% of global turnover.

Source: Mint research

- Personal data is to be stored in India, but can be processed outside with the consent of the person.
- Penalties for data breach will be Rs. 5 crore or 2% of turnover, whichever is higher.
- In case of major violations such as data processed or shared without consent, there will be a penalty of Rs. 15 crore or 4% of global turnover.
- **Any person who obtains, discloses, transfers, sells or offers to sell personal and sensitive personal data shall be punishable with imprisonment ranging up to five years or a fine of up to three lakh rupees.**

Concerns:

1. While processing the data, the fiduciary is obligated to ensure that data is processed 'in a fair and reasonable manner that respects the privacy of the individual'. The **bill does not specify any guidelines for what constitutes a 'fair and reasonable' manner of personal data processing.** The absence of guiding principles may allow fiduciaries in the same industry to develop and follow different standards.
2. As per the bill, wherever the **government** finds it is necessary it **can direct that all or any of the provisions of this Act shall not apply to any agency of the government** in respect of the processing of such personal data.

3. It seeks to allow the **use of personal and non-personal data of users in cases where data is processed for the purposes of** (i) national security, (ii) prevention, investigation and prosecution of violations of a law, (iii) legal proceedings, (iv) personal or domestic purposes and (v) research and journalistic purposes. It is unclear whether the requirements laid out by the Supreme Court in **Puttaswamy vs UoI case** are met by the exemptions for research and journalistic purposes.
4. **Localisation of data will likely make India an infeasible market for services that cannot offset the financial or logistical costs of localisation.** It may prevent Indian start-ups or the services industry from expanding globally. **Additional costs may be passed down to consumers** for certain digital services.
5. The **Bill mandates storage of a copy of personal data within India** to expedite law enforcement's access to data. This purpose may not be served in some cases, such as when the **fiduciary is registered as an entity in a foreign country.**
6. DPA has powers to **arrest and detain violators of the law in prison**, without approval or order of a court.
7. The Bill states that every data fiduciary shall keep a 'serving copy' of all personal and sensitive personal data in a server in India. The government may notify certain 'critical personal data' which shall be processed only in servers located in India. However, the **definitions of 'serving copy' and 'critical personal data' are not provided.**

Mould your thoughts:

1. How is the personal information of citizens regulated in India? Discuss the provisions of Personal data protection bill, 2018.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Cartosat-3

(Source: The Hindu)

Manifest pedagogy: As per the trend of UPSC prelims question on Science and Technology, studying the satellites launched by ISRO, their specifications and applications is helpful. The previous year examples are: IRNSS features in CSP-2018 and applications of Remote sensing satellites in CSP-2019.

In news:

- ISRO recently launched advanced earth imaging and mapping satellite CARTOSAT-3.

Placing it in syllabus:

- Achievements of India in Space technology

Static dimensions:

- What are cartosat satellites?
- History of cartosat series

Current dimensions:

- Specifications of cartosat 3
- Applications of cartosat

Content:

What are cartosat satellites?

- The Cartosat satellites are a series of Indian optical earth observation satellites.
- They are built and operated by ISRO.
- The series is a part of the Indian Remote Sensing Program.
- They are used for Earth's resource management, defence services and monitoring.
- The Department of Space (DoS) had launched and managed the IRS series of remote sensing satellites.
- Considering increased demand for large scale and topographic mapping data, the DoS launched the expanded Cartosat series.

History of Cartosat series:

CARTOSAT-1:

- It is the first Indian Remote Sensing Satellite **capable of providing in-orbit stereo images.**
- It was **launched** in May **2005** by **PSLV- C6.**
- The images were **used for Cartographic applications** meeting the global requirements.

- **Cameras** of this satellite had a **resolution of 2.5m.**
- It provided stereo pairs required for generating Digital Elevation Models, Ortho Image products and **value added products for various applications of Geographical Information System (GIS).**

CARTOSAT-2:

- It is an advanced remote sensing satellite with a **single panchromatic camera (PAN)** capable of **providing scene-specific spot imageries** for cartographic applications.
- The camera is designed to provide **imagery with better than one meter spatial resolution.**
- **New technologies** like two mirror on axis single camera, Carbon Fabric Reinforced Plastic based electro optic structure, JPEG like data compression, advanced solid state recorder and high performance star sensors are being employed in Cartosat-2.
- Cartosat-2 suffered from some problems after launch.

- **An improved Cartosat 2A was launched in 2008.**
- **Cartosat 2B** was launched in 2010.
- **Cartosat 2C** was launched in June 2016.
- **Cartosat 2D and Cartosat 2E** followed in 2017 and **Cartosat 2F** was launched in **January 2018.**

Specifications of Cartosat 3:

- ISRO launched advanced earth imaging and mapping satellite **CARTOSAT-3 along with 13 other commercial nano-satellites for the US** using **PSLV-C47** on November 27, 2019.
- It is the **most advanced earth observation satellite built by ISRO.**



- CARTOSAT-3 is the ninth in the series, which is a third-generation agile satellite with high-resolution imaging capabilities.

- It has an overall mass of over 1,600 kilograms with mission life of about five years.
- 13 Commercial Nanosatellites from USA were launched under commercial arrangements with New Space India Limited (NSIL), the commercial arm of ISRO.
- According to ISRO, the satellite will replace the IRS series.

Features:

- It has an imaging payload with a ground resolution of
 1. 0.25 m with 16 km swath in the panchromatic mode,
 2. 1.13 m with 16 km swath in 4 band multispectral mode,
 3. 12 m with 5 km in hyperspectral mode.
- It features a MWIR Camera with 5.7 m resolution.
- New elements have been developed like highly agile structural platform, payload platform, higher rate data handling and transmission systems, advanced onboard computer and new power electronics, dual gimbal antenna etc...

Applications of Cartosat:

Cartosat-3 will address the increased user's demands for:

- large scale urban planning,
- rural resource and infrastructure development,
- coastal land use and land cover,
- cartography (map-making applications),
- road-network monitoring,
- changing detection in bringing out geographical and man-made features.

Mould your thoughts:

1. What are the features of newly launched Cartosat-3 satellite? What are its applications?