

**CURRENT EVENTS  
AND  
ANALYSIS  
(September 2019)**

**Editor**

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# CURRENT EVENTS AND ANALYSIS

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# **ECONOMY**

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## ***MEASURES TO BOOST INDIAN ECONOMY :***

### **Union Government Reduces Corporate Tax Rates**

On September 20, 2019, the Union Government reduced

- corporate tax rate on domestic companies to 22 per cent from the existing 30 per cent
- corporate tax on new companies which are setup after October 1, 2019 to 15 per cent from 25 per cent.
- Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT) to 15 per cent from 18.5 per cent.
- The Government issued an ordinance in this regard amending the Income Tax Act of 1961 and the Finance Act of 2019.
- These tax rates would be effective retrospectively from April 1, 2019.

#### **Reasons for reduction of Tax Rates :**

1. Indian economy registered a lower growth rate of 5 per cent in first quarter of 2019-20 (April-June) financial year which is the lowest in the last 6 years.
2. High unemployment rate of 6.1 per cent in 2017-18 which is the highest in last 45 years.
3. India has relatively high tax structure when compared with south asian and south east asian countries which is a disadvantage for making investments.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Corporate Tax (in per cent)</b>
Hong Kong	16.5
Singapore	17
China, South Korea and Indonesia	25
Malaysia	24
Thailand and Vietnam	20

#### **Objectives of reduced tax rates are to**

1. make India an investment destination,
2. attract foreign companies to set up units in India,
3. generate more jobs in the country, and
4. promote economic growth.

#### **Impact on Fiscal Deficit:**

- Revenue loss for the Government is expected at around Rs. 1,45,000 crores annually.
- This would make it difficult for the Government to check the fiscal deficit.
- For 2019-20, Fiscal Deficit has been targeted at 3.3 per cent

#### **Government's Stand:**

More investments due to lower tax rate will lead to

- more jobs, and
- more economic activity. These will increase the revenues for the Government.

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### **Reduced Corporate Tax Rates:**

#### **Domestic Companies:**

- Corporate income tax rate on domestic companies has been reduced to 22% from 30%.
- These companies should not avail any other tax incentives or exemptions.
- Effective tax rate for such firms will be 25.17%, including all surcharges and cess.

#### **New Manufacturing Companies:**

- For new manufacturing companies corporate tax has been reduced to 15% from 25%.
- new domestic companies incorporated from 1st October 2019 and their production before 31st March, 2023 would be eligible for this 15 per cent corporate tax.
- The effective tax rate for these companies will be 17.01% after surcharge & cess.

#### **Reduction of Minimum Alternate Tax to 15 per cent:**

- To provide relief to companies which continue to avail exemptions/incentives, the government has reduced the rate of Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT) to 15% from 18.5%.

#### **Other Measures:**

##### **Roll Back of Surcharge:**

- The government rolled back increased surcharge introduced in the Budget 2019-20 on capital gains arising on sale of equity share in a company or a unit of an equity oriented fund or a unit of a business trust liable for securities transaction tax. Objective is to increase the flow of funds into capital markets.
- The enhanced surcharge will also not apply to capital gains arising on sale of any security including derivatives, in the hands of **Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs)**.
- The effective tax rates on such transactions will now be restored to 11.96% for Long Term Capital Gains (LTCG) and 17.94% for Short Term Capital Gains (STCG).
- However, the enhanced surcharge will continue to apply on individuals on capital gains on sale of unlisted securities, derivatives and sale of property. This is because surcharge has been enhanced to generate additional revenues for the Government and completely rolling back enhanced surcharge would reduce the revenues for the Government, Moreover, investments made into unlisted securities and sale of property of property are not part of capital market transactions i.e not traded in stock exchanges and the selective roll back of enhanced surcharge was meant only to increase the flow of funds to capital market which began to witness reversal with enhancement of surcharge.

##### **Enhanced surcharge:**

Surcharge rate was increased in the Budget 2019-20 on individuals earning more than Rs 2 crore. For individuals earning more than Rs 2 crore but less than Rs 5 crore, the surcharge is levied at the rate of 25 per cent. For those earning more than Rs 5 crore, the surcharge of 37 per cent is levied for FY 2019-20

##### **Exemption from Buy Back Tax:**

- The government exempted listed companies from buyback tax if they had announced share buyback before 5th July 2019.

This will benefit IT companies like Infosys and Wipro. Infosys concluded a buyback of Rs 8,260 crore in August 2019, but the announcement of which was made in January 2019. Similarly, Wipro concluded a buyback of Rs 10,500 crore, which was announced on June 5, 2019.

##### **Analysis of Government Measures:**

- The decisions announced by the Government may boost the investor confidence, and

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fresh investment cycle may start. If this happens, new jobs would be generated in the country and slowing growth rate in Indian economy (5 per cent in first quarter of 2019-20 i.e. April-June 2019) may recover and register higher growth rates.

- High tax structure in the country (30 per cent tax on domestic companies) is also seen for a long time as one of the major structural constraints in our economy as neighboring south Asian countries have lesser tax rates than India. The present reduction has brought the tax rate on par with these countries to attract investments.

Particularly, the 15 per cent tax would be highly attractive for setting up new manufacturing companies as no south Asian or south East Asian country has this rate.

15 per cent tax would also make India a better competitor to China in attracting new foreign investments as the tax rate in that country is high i.e. 25 per cent.

- Roll back of enhanced surcharge may lead to revival of domestic and foreign institutional investments in the capital market which witnessed flight of capital after the enhancement of surcharge.

**Criticism:**

- These decisions have been criticised for putting more money in the hands of corporates who may or may not invest because for realising profits demand for purchasing goods and services produced by investors is equally important. Moreover, decline in growth at present in India is more because of decline in demand. Hence, demand side problems should be addressed more. For example, automobile industry is in crisis not because of investment, but because of inadequate demand due to multiple reasons.

**Additional Information:**

**What is a Domestic Company?**

**According to Income Tax Act of India**

- "Domestic Company" means an Indian company (i.e. a company registered under the Companies Act, 1956), or any other company including a foreign company which pays dividends in India on its income.
- Thus, all Indian Companies are treated as Domestic Companies but all Domestic Companies are not Indian Companies.
- If a Foreign Company makes prescribed arrangements for payment of dividends in India it shall be treated as Domestic Company.

**What is a Foreign Company?**

- Foreign company means a company whose control and management are situated wholly outside India, and which has not made the prescribed arrangements for declaration and payment of dividends within India.

**Provisions relating to taxation of a Company:**

- Indian companies are taxable in India on their worldwide income, irrespective of its source and origin.
- Foreign companies are taxed only on income which arises from operations carried out in India or, in certain cases, on income which is deemed to have arisen in India. The latter includes royalty, fees for technical services, interest, gains from sale of capital assets situated in India (including gains from sale of shares in an Indian company) and dividends from Indian companies if they have made investments in them.

**What is Minimum Alternate Tax?**

- Normally, a company is liable to pay tax in accordance with the provisions of the Income Tax Act.
- However, in the past, a large number of companies showed profits on their profit and loss account under the Companies Act and distributed huge dividends. However, these companies did not pay any tax to the government as they reported either nil or negative income under the provisions of the Income Tax Act. These companies were popularly known as 'zero-tax' companies.

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- Companies avoided paying taxes by taking advantage of depreciation, deductions, exemptions, etc. in the Income Tax Act.
  - So the Government introduced a Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT) on these companies.
  - It was introduced in the year 1987 and implemented from the following year. However, it was repealed in 1990 and was re-inducted again in 1997. With MAT, companies have to pay up a minimum amount of tax to the government.
  - Now, all companies that record a book profit shall have to pay a minimum alternate tax @18.5% (plus surcharge and cess as applicable) under the Companies Act.
  - 18.5 per cent (plus surcharge and cess as applicable) has been reduced to 15 per cent (plus surcharge and cess as applicable) on September 20, 2019. However, this would be effective retrospectively from April 1, 2019 (the starting day of the financial year 2019-20).

#### **What Buyback Tax?**

- **Buy Back Tax was introduced in 2013 for unlisted companies.**
- **For listed companies, Buy Back Tax was announced in the Budget 2019-20.**
- It is an anti-abuse tax measure to check the practice by unlisted companies and listed companies to distribute accumulated profits through the buyback route rather than the dividend declaration route in order to avoid paying dividend distribution tax (DDT).

#### **Why Companies try to avoid dividend distribution Tax?**

- Typically, companies distribute dividends or buy back shares from investors using their post-tax income.
- Though the dividends are paid out of the income on which tax has already been charged, the government imposes yet another tax namely dividend distribution tax (DDT- at an effective rate of 20% on the company.

After this tax is paid, shareholders who get more than Rs. 10 lakh in dividends per annum need to pay another 10% tax. The 10% additional tax on dividends was introduced in Budget 2016 to extract a larger tax pie from promoters, who are also investors, and high networth individuals (HNIs).

- To blunt the impact of dividend distribution tax and additional 10 per cent tax (on investors getting more than Rs. 10 lakhs through dividends), more and more companies started offering buybacks rather than distributing dividends.
- Companies preferred buybacks instead of dividends since the tax rate for capital gains is lower than the rate of dividend distribution.
- In the last three years, more than 170 companies, mainly in the IT sector, have bought back shares worth Rs 1.33 lakh crore. A number of IT sector companies, including Infosys, Wipro, and Tata Consultancy Service, have in the recent past announced big buybacks.
- Hence, the Government, through Union Budget 2019-20, made it mandatory for listed companies to pay an additional tax at 20 per cent on share buybacks. The move, aimed at discouraging the practice of avoiding the dividend distribution tax, came into effect on July 5, 2019.

#### **What is Surcharge?**

- Surcharge' is an additional charge or tax levied on the amount of tax to be paid.
- It is levied as a percentage on the income tax payable.

In case no tax is due for a financial year, then no surcharge is levied.

- The revenue earned via surcharge is solely retained by the Centre and, unlike other tax revenues, is not shared with States.
- Collections from surcharge flow into the Consolidated Fund of India.

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### **Objective of Surcharge is**

- to make the taxation system more 'progressive'.
- It ensures that the rich contribute more to the tax kitty than the poor.

Increases in surcharge are also usually easy to push through than across-the-board increases in tax rates, as they only impact a small, more affluent segment.

### **What is a Cess?**

- Cess is also an additional charge or tax levied on the amount of tax to be paid.
- It is levied as a percentage on the income tax payable (including surcharge).
- However, it is temporary in nature.

A cess is usually imposed additionally when the central government wants to raise funds for specific purposes. For example, the Central Government levies an education cess to generate additional revenue for funding primary, secondary, and higher education. At present, the Central Government levies 4% Health & Education Cess on income tax payable (including applicable surcharge). Thus, it is collected as a per centage of amount to be paid paid as income tax and surcharge.

For instance, if the Government levies a tax of 20 per cent on an income of Rs. 100, the tax to be paid is Rs. 20. If 10 per cent surcharge is levied on this tax amount, the total tax would become Rs. 22 (10 per cent of Rs. 20 i.e Rs. 2 added to Rs. 20). If a cess of 10 per cent is also levied on this Rs. 22, then the total tax would be 24.2 (10 per cent of Rs. 22 i.e Rs. 2.2 has to be added to Rs. 22).

- However, cess is not a permanent source of revenue for the government, and it is discontinued once the purpose of levying it is fulfilled.

### **Difference Between Cess and Surcharge?**

- A cess is meant to raise revenue for a temporary need while surcharge is usually permanent in nature.

## **Union Government Announces Measures to Boost Housing Sector**

On September 14, 2019, the Union Government announced the following measures to give a boost to housing sector.

### **1. Special Window for affordable and middle income Housing**

- A Special Window would be set up to provide last mile funding for housing projects in the affordable and middle income category (i.e housing units valued upto Rs 45 lakh).
- The size of the Special Window would be Rs. 20,000 crores.
- Government would contribute Rs.10, 000 crores and equal amount would be contributed by public and private institutions (like Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), Sovereign wealth funds, etc.)
- The objective is to focus on construction of unfinished units which are facing last-mile funding problem due to lack of working capital.
- Hence, only projects which are not categorised as Non-Performing Assets (NPA's) or under reference to the National Company Law Tribunal for resolution or liquidation will be eligible for funding.
- Nearly 3.5 lakh housing units (non NPA and non NCLT) in the country which are nearing completion but are struck up due to lack of working capital will get benefitted.

#### **Benefits of the Special Window:**

- Projects would not be struck up due to lack of working capital.
- It would increase the availability of houses to the middle class in the affordable housing segment (housing units valued upto Rs 45 lakh).

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## 2. Relaxation of ECB guidelines for Affordable Housing:

- Banks, Housing Finance Institutions will be allowed to access External Commercial Borrowings (ECB's) for financing of home buyers who are eligible under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY). The RBI would issue guidelines in this regard.
- At present, Banks and Housing Finance Institutions can use External Commercial Borrowings (ECB's) for affordable housing.

## 3. House Building Advance

- The interest rate charged on House Building Advance will be lowered and linked with the 10 Year G - Sec (Government Securities) Yields.
- House Building Advance (HBA) is available to central government and state government employees for constructing a new house. Maximum of Rs 25 lakh is given under this provision.
- Linking their loans to the 10 Year G Sec (Government Securities) Yields will make the advance cheaper and is likely to boost the demand for housing. Currently, the rate of interest on Housing Building Advance is at 8.50 per cent while, at present, 10 year government bond is trading at 6.64 per cent.

## Other recent initiatives to promote demand for housing under the 'Housing for All' of the Government:

- The Government also provides tax incentives to buyers and developers in the affordable housing category (housing units valued upto Rs 45 lakh) like
  - enhanced interest deduction up to Rs 3.5 lakh on home loans taken upto 31st March 2020 by first time home owners, and
  - tax holiday on profits earned by developers of affordable housing.
- Additional liquidity support to the Housing Finance Companies (HFCs) has been increased to Rs. 30,000 crore from Rs. 20,000 crore.

## Significance of Ensuring Flow of Funds to the Housing Sector:

- Flow of funds into the housing sector has multiplier effect on the economy due to its strong linkages with other industries.
- Increase in demand in the construction sector leads to an increase in overall output of the economy due to its **strong backward linkages with ancillary and complementary industries** such as cement, steel, iron, bricks, sand, chemicals, heavy machines and equipment, sanitary ware, wood, electrical and other fixtures, paints, etc.

## Government Announces Measures to Boost Exports

On September 14, 2019, the Union Government announced the following measures to give a boost to exports and housing sector.

### Highlights: **RC REDDY IAS STUDY CIRCLE**

- Introduction of fully automated Input Tax Credit in Goods and Services Tax (GST) to speed up refunds,
- introduction of a new scheme 'Remission of Duties or Taxes on Export Products (RoDTEP) in place of the current Merchandise Exports from India scheme (MEIS) which would provide higher incentives and cover all sectors,
- expansion of the coverage of insurance under export credit guarantee corporation to 90 per cent from the existing 60 per cent,
- revision of Priority Sector Lending (PSL) norms for Export credit by the Reserve bank of India (RBI) to provide more credit to exporters,
- holding of annual mega shopping festivals in India to promote exports of Gems and Jewellery (G&J), Handicrafts/Yoga/Tourism, Textiles and Leather,

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- special dispensation for facilitating and on-boarding **handicrafts artisans** and **handicraft cooperatives** directly on e-commerce portals and enable seamless exports.
  - setting up of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Utilisation Mission, headed by a Senior officer in Department of Commerce, to enhance awareness of preferential duty benefits under FTAs for importers and exporters, and
  - leveraging technology to reduce "Time to export" - through seamless process digitization of all export clearances (port/airport/customs, etc) and elimination of offline/manual services.

**Details:**

**1. Refund of Input Tax Credit to be Fully Automated:**

- Input Tax Credit in Goods and Services Tax (GST) will be fully automated through electronic refund by the end of September 2019.
- This will enable speeding up Input Tax Credit refunds and also ensure better monitoring of the refund process.

**What is Input Tax Credit?**

- Under Goods and Services Tax (GST), businesses/individuals are liable to pay GST on goods/services that are used as inputs.
- The input tax credit mechanism allows GST registered businesses to receive refunds on GST paid for the purchase of such inputs.
- Input tax is refunded to prevent the cascading tax on goods and services.

**2. Scheme of Reimbursement of Taxes & Duties:**

- Remission of Duties or Taxes on Export Products (RoDTEP), a new scheme, was announced. This would replace the existing Merchandise Exports from India scheme (MEIS) for all goods exported.
- Incentives to exporters would be more than those under the existing Merchandise Exports from India scheme (MEIS) and the scheme would cover all sectors.
- The Government would forgo revenue of Rs. 50,000 crores under the new scheme.

**3. Expanding scope of Export Credit Insurance Scheme (ECIS):**

- The Government expanded the coverage of insurance under export credit guarantee corporation to 90 per cent from the existing 60 per cent.
- These incentives will cost Rs 1,700 crore a year for the Government.

**4. Revised Priority Sector Lending (PSL) norms for Export Credit:**

- Priority Sector Lending (PSL) norms for Export credit would be revised by the Reserve bank of India (RBI) to provide more credit to exporters.
- This will release an additional Rs. 36,000 crores to Rs 68,000 crores as export credit under priority sector.

**5. Monitoring of Export Financing by Department of Commerce:**

- Data on Export Finance is regularly published by RBI
- Export Finance will be actively monitored by an Inter Ministerial Working Group in Department of Commerce, tracked through a dashboard, reviewed with institutions and active intervention carried out.

**6. Leverage technology to reduce "Time to Export or Turn-around time":**

- Technology will be further leveraged by timely completion of ongoing initiatives to further reduce "Time to export" - through seamless process digitization of all export clearances (port/airport/customs, etc) and elimination of offline/manual services.

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- An action plan to reduce Time to export/turn-around time in airports and ports benchmarked to international standards will be implemented by December 2019.
  - Actual turnaround times will be published in real time for each port and airport to push them to improve performance
  - An Inter-Ministerial Group will be made accountable for this.

#### **7. Annual mega shopping festivals:**

- Annual mega shopping festivals in India will be organized in 4 places across 2020 March in 4 themes i.e 1. Gems and Jewellery (G&J), 2. Handicrafts/Yoga/Tourism, 3. Textiles and 4. Leather.

#### **8. Special FTA Utilisation Mission:**

- Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Utilisation Mission, headed by a Senior officer in Department of Commerce, will be set up.

It would

- work with Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) and export houses to utilise concessional tariffs in each FTA,
- enhance awareness of preferential duty benefits among MSMEs, disseminate and facilitate compliance requirements (Rules of Origin/ Certificate of Origin, etc.) under FTAs for importers and exporters,
- set goals for FTA utilization and put in place an effective FTA monitoring system.

#### **9. Online “Origin Management System:**

- An Online “Origin Management System” for exporters to enable them to obtain Certificates of Origin – CoO (under Rules of Origin) will be launched by Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) in collaboration with Exports Inspection Council.
- This is expected to significantly improve ease of doing business for exporters.

#### **10. Time bound adoption of mandatory Technical Standards:**

- Government would emphasise time bound adoption by Industry of all necessary mandatory technical standards and their effective enforcement to improve the quality and performance ecosystem, enhance competitiveness and address the issue of sub-standard imports.
- A Working Group on Standards will be set up in Department of Commerce to work with industry and lay down a roadmap for adoption of Standards, time lines and enforcement.
- This is expected to be a big boost in enabling Indian products overcome Non-tariff barriers in exports.

#### **11. Affordable testing and certification infrastructure:**

- Affordable testing and certification infrastructure will be adequately expanded and developed in Public–Private Partnership (PPP) mode to enable exporters to get all internationally accepted tests and certification done within India.
- This will reduce costs of adoption of standards and certification for Indian exporters to meet national standards of FTA partners

#### **12. Enable handicrafts industry to effectively harness e-commerce for exports:**

- Special dispensation would be set up for facilitating and on-boarding **handicrafts artisans** and **handicraft cooperatives** directly on e-commerce portals and enable seamless exports.
- Mass enrolment of artisans across India with help of Ministry of Textile and organisations like Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED), Cottage Industries Exposition (CIE), etc. would be undertaken.

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**MONETARY POLICY :**

**Banking :**

**RBI Makes It Mandatory for Banks to Link Interest Rates of Retail Loans for Housing, MSMEs with External Benchmarks like Repo Rate**

On September 5, 2019, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced that

- all **new floating rate personal or retail loans (housing, auto, etc.) and floating rate loans to Micro and Small Enterprises** extended by banks with effect from October 01, 2019 should follow any **one of the following external benchmarks**.
  - a) Reserve Bank of India policy repo rate.
  - b) Government of India 3-Months Treasury Bill yield published by the Financial Benchmarks India Private Ltd (FBIL).
  - c) Government of India 6-Months Treasury Bill yield published by the FBIL.
  - d) Any other benchmark market interest rate published by the FBIL.

**Revision of rates every 3 months:**

- Banks should also reset the interest rate under external benchmark once in three months.

**Objective of Linking Loans to External benchmarks is**

- to ensure faster transmission of monetary policy rate cuts to borrowers
- Internal benchmarks such as the Base rate/Marginal Cost of Funds based Lending Rate (MCLR) followed by banks have not delivered effective transmission of monetary policy.

In 2019, the Reserve Bank has already reduced the repo or short-term lending rate by 110 basis points (till September 2019), but the banks have reportedly passed on only up to 40 bps to borrowers.

**Impact of the RBI's Decision:**

Switching to external benchmarks by banks for lending might lead to

- reduction in borrowing costs of the consumers, and
- give a boost to the consumer demand for the goods, since the external benchmark interest rates are lower than the Marginal Cost of Funds based Lending Rate (MCLR) followed by Banks, and confirm to the highest standards of integrity, transparency and precision.

**Background Information:**

**Floating Interest Rates and Fixed Interest Rates:**

- Banks generally offer two types interest rates on loans availed by the customers namely Fixed interest rate, and Floating interest rate.
- A **fixed rate of interest on a loan means** equated monthly installments (EMIs) would remain constant over the tenure of the loan.
- On the other hand for **floating interest rates**, the EMIs would fluctuate as per the market dynamics i.e when interest rates in the interest rates increase in the market, then interest rate on loans increases when interest rates in the interest rates decrease in the market, then interest rate on loans also decreases.

**Fixed Interest Rates:**

**Advantages:**

- Interest rate remains fixed irrespective of market conditions.
- Hence, there is no risk of higher interest payments.

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- There will be a sense of certainty on the amounts to be paid.
  - Hence, this type of loan is chosen by those who don't want to take risk of possibility of higher interest rates and prefer a fixed monthly repayment schedule.

**Disadvantages:**

- Fixed interest rates are usually 1-2.5 percentage points higher than the floating rate.
- If the interest rate in the market decreases, the fixed rate on loans does not get reduced rates and the borrower has to repay the same amount every month.
- Hence, the borrower would have to pay higher amount as interest in the fixed loan even if the interest rate in the market declines.

**Floating Interest Rates:**

**Advantages:**

- Floating interest rates offered by banks offer are cheaper than fixed interest rates.
- This is because borrower takes the risk of higher interest rates in future.

**Disadvantages:**

- Floating interest rates lead to uneven nature of monthly installments (EMIs).
- If there is a hike in floating home loan interest rates, the borrowers would have to allocate extra money every month for EMIs.

**Which Loan is Better? Fixed Interest Loan or Floating Interest Loan?**

- Fixed rates are a better option if the economic scenario promises a rise in interest rates in the near future.
- Floating rates are a better option if the economic scenario promises a decline in interest rates in the near future.

**About Financial Benchmarks India Private Ltd (FBIL):**

- It is an **independent benchmark administrator of interest rates and foreign exchange**.
- Reserve Bank of India set up a Committee on Financial Benchmarks in June 2013 to review the existing systems governing major financial benchmarks in India.

The Committee headed by Shri Vijaya Bhaskar, the then Executive Director, Reserve Bank of India made wide-ranging recommendations to reform the benchmark administration in India. These were accepted by the Reserve Bank of India in early 2014.

The Committee identified Fixed Income Money Market & Derivative Association of India (FIMMDA) and Foreign Exchange Dealers' Association of India (FEDAI) as the benchmark administrators for the Indian rupee interest rates and Forex benchmarks respectively.

It suggested that these associations may jointly or independently form a separate entity to administer the benchmarks. This is the first major step for formation of Financial Benchmark India Pvt. Ltd (FBIL) as an **independent benchmark administrator for interest rates and foreign exchange**.

- The FBIL, jointly owned by FIMMDA, FEDAI and Indian Banks Association (IBA), was formed in December 2014 as a private limited company under the Companies Act 2013.
- The FBIL develops and administers benchmarks relating to money market, government securities, and foreign exchange in India.

It is responsible for all the aspects relating to the benchmarks to be issued by it, namely, collection and submission of market data and information, formulation, adoption and periodic review of benchmark calculation methodologies, calculation, publication and administration of benchmarks conforming to the highest standards of integrity, transparency and precision.

- Thus, the FBIL provides financial benchmarks that are (i) free from bias, (ii) backed by robust data driven research and (iii) compliant with global best practice.

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## ***SOCIAL SECTOR :***

### ***Insurance:***

#### **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana Launched**

On September 12, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana, a pension scheme for farmers, at Ranchi, the Capital of Jharkhand.

#### **Salient Features of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana:**

- The scheme is **voluntary** and **contributory** for farmers in the age group of 18 to 40 years.
- Farmers will have to make a monthly contribution of Rs.55 to Rs.200, depending on their age of entry, in the Pension Fund till they reach the retirement date i.e. the age of 60 years.
- The Central Government will also make an equal contribution of the same amount in the pension fund.
- A monthly pension of Rs. 3000/- will be provided to them on attaining the age of 60 years.
- In case of **death of the farmer before retirement date**, the spouse may continue in the scheme by paying the remaining contributions till the remaining age of the deceased farmer.

If the spouse does not wish to continue, the total contribution made by the farmer along with interest will be paid to the spouse. If there is no spouse, then total contribution along with interest will be paid to the nominee.

- **If the farmer dies after the retirement date**, the spouse will receive 50% of the pension as Family Pension.
- After the death of both the farmer and the spouse, the accumulated corpus shall be credited back to the Pension Fund.
- The spouse is also eligible to get a separate pension of Rs.3000/- upon making separate contributions to the Fund.

#### **Exit Option:**

- The beneficiaries may opt voluntarily to exit the scheme after a minimum period of 5 years of regular contributions.
- On exit, their entire contribution shall be returned by LIC with an interest equivalent to prevailing saving bank rates.

The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) shall be the Pension Fund Manager and responsible for Pension pay out.

#### **Payment Options:**

- The farmers, who are also beneficiaries of PM-Kisan Scheme, will have the option to allow their contribution debited from the benefit of that Scheme directly.

( Under the PM-Kisan Scheme, an income support of Rs.6000/- per year in three equal instalments is provided to small and marginal farmer families having combined land holding/ownership of upto 2 hectares. Later, this was extended to cover all farmers in the country irrespective of the size of their land holdings. At present, it covers 14.5 crore farmers.)

- In case of default in making regular contributions, the beneficiaries are allowed to regularize the contributions by paying the outstanding dues along with prescribed interest.

#### **Process of Enrolment:**

- The initial enrollment to the Scheme is being done through the Common Service Centres in various states.
- Later on alternative facility of enrollment through the PM-Kisan State Nodal Officers or by any other means or online enrollment will also be made available.
- The enrollment is free of cost.
- The Common Service Centres will charge Rs.30/- per enrolment which will be borne by the Government.

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## **NATIONAL POLITY**

### ***JUDICIARY :***

#### ***Collegium System :***

### **Collegium System and Its Drawbacks**

#### **Context:**

- Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, Justice Vijaya Kamlesh Tahilramani, was transferred to the Meghalaya High Court in August 28, 2019. She requested the Supreme Court to reconsider her transfer. The 'Collegium' headed by the Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi, and four senior-most judges of the Supreme Court rejected her request and stated that the transfer was made due to 'cogent reasons' and these were not disclosed to the public in the interest of the institution.
- Justice Vijaya Kamlesh Tahilramani resigned on September 6, 2019 without stating the reasons for her resignation public, but humiliation and demoralisation due to transfer to small High Court (Meghalaya) which has just three judges including Chief Justice from a prestigious High Court i.e Tamil Nadu High Court which has a sanctioned strength of 75 High Court Judges are being perceived as the reasons for her resignation. Moreover, she has just about a year of service left and is the senior-most High Court Judge in the country. Transferring to a small High Court was criticised as unfair.
- This issue has once again brought to the fore a long-standing debate on the functioning of the 'Collegium' System of Supreme Court that makes appointments and transfers in the higher judiciary (High Courts and Supreme Court).

#### **What is Collegium System?**

- It is a system under which judges are appointed by an institution comprising judges.
- **All appointments and transfers** of judges in High courts and Supreme Courts are done by the Collegium.
- It comprises of the Chief Justice of India along with four other senior judges.
- However, the Collegium System does not figure in the Constitution.
- It is Supreme Court's innovation and outcome of three court cases in the Supreme Court namely the 'First Judges Case' (1981), 'Second Judges Case' (1993), and 'Third Judges Case' (1998).
- The Constitution merely states that judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts are appointed by the President through a process of consultation.

#### **What are the Reasons for the emergence of Collegium?**

- The Union Government through President of India had its say in the appointment of and transfer of Judges of Supreme Court and High Court.
- But this led to **arbitrary actions** by the Union Government in appointment and transfer of judges in High courts and Supreme Courts in the 1970's.

Some judges were superseded in the appointment of the Chief Justice of India in the 1970s, and attempts made subsequently to effect a mass transfer of High Court judges across the country.

- These actions threatened the independent working of judiciary in the country, and
- led to three cases in Supreme Court which resulted to the emergence of Collegium System.

#### **Three Cases:**

##### **First Judges Case' (1981):**

- The 'First Judges Case' (1981) ruled that the "consultation" with the CJI in the matter of appointments must be full and effective. However, it rejected the idea that the CJI's opinion, albeit carrying great weight, should have primacy.

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### **Second Judges Case (1993):**

- The Second Judges Case (1993) introduced the Collegium system, holding that “consultation” really meant “concurrence”. It added that it was not the CJI’s individual opinion, but **an institutional opinion** formed **in consultation** with the two senior-most judges in the Supreme Court.

### **Third Judges Case (1998):**

- On a Presidential Reference for its opinion, the Supreme Court, in the Third Judges Case (1998), expanded the Collegium to a five-member body, comprising the CJI and four of his senior-most colleagues.

### **What are the Drawbacks in Collegium System?**

The working of Collegium System has been criticised for the following reasons:

1. Judges appointing themselves is against the checks and balances system, an important part of the Constitution,
  2. opaqueness and a lack of transparency in the process of appointment of Judges,
  3. scope for nepotism (many appointees hail from families of retired judges), and
  4. wrong appointments due to “limited zone of consideration” in the appointment process.
- In the year 2009, Law Commission of India said that nepotism and personal patronage is prevalent in the functioning of the Collegium System.
  - Retired SC judge Justice Ruma Pal stated that the small base from which the selections were made and the secrecy and confidentiality ensured that the process may on occasions, make wrong appointments and, worse still, lend itself to nepotism.

### **Attempts to reform the Collegium System by Government?**

- The Union Government attempted to replace the Collegium system with a ‘National Judicial Appointments Commission’ but the enabling Act (The National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, 2014) was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2015 on the ground that

Collegium system is only way to ensure judicial independence against an increasingly powerful political executive, and

‘National Judicial Appointments Commission’ posed a threat to the independence of the judiciary as it gives a role to the government in the appointment of judges

### **Willing to Improve the working of Collegium System: SC**

On Collegium System, the Supreme Court stated that

- all is not well even with the collegium system of “judges appointing judges”, and
- it is willing to improve the Collegium system by working with the Government and address the concerns of transparency.

### **Analysis:**

- India is one of the few countries where judges have the last word on judicial appointments through the mechanism of the Collegium.
- Argument that Collegium System is the only permissible method to secure judicial independence has been criticised as self-serving to make itself immune from transparency.
- If the Supreme Court has instituted a process of appointment that makes itself the final arbiter of judicial appointments, then it must also ensure that that same process meets the standards of accountability in a democratic republic.

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- Transparency in appointments is integral to the process. In the United States, for example, candidates for judicial appointments in the federal judiciary are subjected to public confirmation hearings by the Senate. In Kenya and South Africa, the interviews of candidates taken by judicial appointments commissions are broadcast live. The public, thus, is in a position to judge for itself the selection process. This is crucial for maintaining public faith in the impartiality of the institution.

But, in India the nomination process is secret, the deliberations are secret, the reasons for elevation or non-elevation are secret. These raise the questions of lack of competency, nepotism, arbitrariness in selection, etc. Hence, evolving a transparent process in judicial appointments and transfers is important as ultimately judicial legitimacy/ power rests on people's confidence in courts.

### **Background Information:**

#### **How the Collegium System Works?**

##### **Supreme Court:**

The President of India appoints the Judges of the Supreme Court on the recommendation of the Collegium.

As far as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court is concerned, the outgoing Chief Justice of India (CJI) recommends his successor to the Law Minister. (In practice, it has been strictly by seniority ever since the supersession controversy of the 1970s). The Union Law Minister forwards the recommendation to the Prime Minister who, in turn, advises the President.

For other judges of the top court, the proposal is initiated by the Chief Justice of India (CJI). The CJI consults the rest of the Collegium members, as well as the senior-most judge of the court hailing from the High Court to which the recommended person belongs. The consultees must record their opinions in writing and it should form part of the file. The Collegium sends the recommendation to the Law Minister, who forwards it to the Prime Minister to advise the President.

##### **High Courts:**

The Chief Justice of High Court is appointed as per the policy of having Chief Justice from outside the respective State. The Collegium takes the call on the elevation.

High Court judges are recommended by a Collegium comprising the CJI and two senior-most judges. The proposal, however, is initiated by the Chief Justice of the High Court concerned in consultation with two senior-most colleagues. The recommendation is sent to the Chief Minister, who advises the Governor to send the proposal to the Union Law Minister.

However, the entire process of appointing the Judges of Supreme Court and High Courts is confidential and not disclosed to the public.

##### **Transfers :**

The Collegium also recommends the transfer of Chief Justices of High Courts and other judges of High Courts.

Article 222 of the Constitution provides for the transfer of a judge from one High Court to another.

When a CJ is transferred, a replacement must also be simultaneously found for the High Court concerned. There can be an acting CJ in a High Court for not more than a month.

In matters of transfers, the opinion of the Chief Justice of Supreme Court of India (CJI) "is determinative", and the consent of the judge concerned is not required. However, the CJI should take into account the views of the CJ of the High Court concerned and the views of one or more SC judges who are in a position to do so. All transfers must be made in the public interest, that is, "for the betterment of the administration of justice".

The entire process of transferring Chief Justices of High Courts and other judges of High Courts is also confidential and not disclosed to the public.

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## **Uniform Civil Code :**

### **Government Has Failed to Bring in Uniform Civil Code:Supreme Court**

On September 13, 2019, the Supreme Court expressed dismay over the failure of successive governments to enact a uniform civil code despite repeated appeals from the court.

The Supreme Court of India in the case of Shah Bano in 1985 exhorted the Union Government to bring in Uniform Civil Code in the Country.

#### **What is Uniform Civil Code?**

- A Uniform Civil Code replaces personal laws based on the scriptures and customs of various religious communities, with a common set of rules governing every citizen of the country.
- A Uniform Civil Code would cover
  - marriage,
  - divorce,
  - adoption,
  - inheritance, etc.

#### **Why Uniform Civil Code?**

1. For ensuring **gender justice** and **gender equality**, guaranteed under Articles 14-15 of the Constitution. Marriage and succession largely **impact** women and girl children **unequally** in all **religious** groups.
2. **Marriage, divorce, maintenance, adoption and inheritance** are all **secular matters** associated with religion and are not part of religious freedom guaranteed by the Constitution.
3. **Article 44 of the Constitution** lists Uniform Civil Code as one of the Directive Principles of State Policy. Article 44 is based on the premise that there was no necessary connection between religious and personal law in a civilised society.
4. It will help the cause of **national integration** by removing disparate loyalties to law which having conflicting ideologies.
5. **Hindu laws** were **codified** in the year 1956. But, there has been no attempt to frame a Uniform Civil Code applicable to all citizens of the country.
6. Muslim countries like **Turkey, Egypt, etc.** have made laws governing inheritance, succession and marriage,

#### **Why is Uniform Civil Code not being implemented ?**

1. It would be seen an **majoritarianism** i.e majority imposing their views in the form Uniform Civil Code on minorities.
2. There is also opinion that reform should not be imposed from outside and start with in i.e among the minority community through dialogue and debate.
3. It is against cultural diversity or the different ways of life in India.

#### **Goa implementing Uniform Civil Code:**

- In India, Goa has a common civil code since 1965, which is applicable to **all of its residents**, and it is the **only state to have it as of now**.
- Goa was under Portuguese rule after Indian Independence. It became a part of India in 1961.
- After becoming part of India, the state adopted the Portuguese Civil Code, 1867 which was in existence till then.

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- Under this Code practised in Goa,
    - a Muslim man whose marriage is registered in the State cannot practice polygamy;
    - a married couple share property equally;
    - pre-nuptial agreements are also allowed; and
    - assets are divided equally between the man and woman on divorce.

**Uniform Civil Code and Constitution:**

- While the Constitution guarantees freedom of conscience and of religion, it seeks to divest religion from personal law and social relations and from laws governing inheritance, succession and marriage.
- The founders of the Constitution of India had penned their hope that a uniform set of rules would replace the distinct personal laws of marriage, divorce, etc. based on customs of each religion.
- Hence, Article 44 casts an obligation on the state : "The State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India."

**Law Commission's stand:**

- In 2018, a Law Commission of India consultation paper had however said the Uniform Civil Code is "neither necessary nor desirable at this stage" in the country.
- The Commission said secularism cannot contradict the plurality prevalent in the country.

***EXECUTIVE :***

***Official Language :***

**Union Home Minister Suggests Hindi as a National Language**

Speaking on the Hindi Diwas on September 14, 2019, organised by the Department of Languages in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Union Home Minister Mr. Amit Shah expressed the following views.

- It is absolutely essential that the entire country has one language that becomes the identity of the nation in the world, and
- only Hindi could unite the entire nation.
- He stated that it is a national responsibility that Hindi expands and prospers.

The Home Minister also stated that

- there is so much influence of English on us that we cannot talk in Hindi without its help, and
- if Hindi is promoted as national language, foreign languages (English) do not get space in India.

**Criticism:**

The Union Home Minister's statements on Hindi as a national language drew sharp criticism from the opposition particularly those in the south like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka which have strong sentiments attached to the local language. They countered Mr. Amit Shah's views.

- India is a country with linguistic diversity (and cultural diversity), and
- the Union Government cannot impose Hindi on non-Hindi speaking states.
- The concept of 'one nation, one language and one religion' is a construct of 19th century European nationalism to promote unity and this is not relevant to multi-lingual country like India.
- Pluralism is India's biggest strength and unity in diversity is its cultural identity.
- Making Hindi as the national language would make non-Hindi speaking people secondary citizens and undermine the unity.

It may be noted that promotion of Hindi as India's national language is an ideological project of the Rashtriya Sangh Parivar and BJP.

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### **Union Home Minister's Clarification:**

- Reacting to the criticism of his view on Hindi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah stated that he never asked for imposing Hindi over other regional languages and had only requested for learning Hindi as the second language after one's mother tongue.

### **About Hindi Diwas:**

- Hindi Divas is observed on September 14th every year to mark the decision of the Constituent Assembly on September 14, 1949 to extend official language status to Hindi, and promote the use of Hindi in the official business of the Union.
- In 1975, the Union Government set up Department of Official Language as an independent department of the Ministry of Home Affairs for promoting the use of Hindi in the official business of the Union.

### **Background Information:**

#### **Debate in Constituent Assembly on National Language:**

There was intense debate in the Constituent Assembly on designation of Hindi as a National language (and also the use of Hindi numerals) for the following reasons.

- English is a colonial language and with the advent of freedom Hindi should replace English at the earliest.
- No nation can become great on the basis of a foreign language.
- There should be one language for entire country which is essential for unity and Hindi should be that 'one language' since it is spoken by majority people in the country.
- Hence, Hindi should become the national language of India and it should be India's national identity.

#### **Opposition to Hindi:**

However, adoption of Hindi as a national language was opposed by southern states on the following grounds.

- Adoption of Hindi as a National Language would limit the role for the non-Hindi speaking south Indians in the Union government, and bureaucracy at the Union level.

#### **Alternate Views:**

- A national language has to evolve itself and it should not to be created artificially. The national language for a great country like India should be capable of expressing all the needs of modern civilisation and it should have a lore of scientific literature. (PT Chacko).
- Any language should not be forced down on the people or group who resist through authoritarianism on the basis of majority. This would not only be an incorrect approach, but a dangerous approach. (Jawaharlal Nehru).
- A declaration of an All India language all at once. English should continue as the official language for all purposes for which it was being used, till a time when an All India language is evolved, which will be capable of expressing the thoughts and ideas on various subjects, scientific, mathematical, literary, historical, philosophical, political, etc. (Naziruddin Ahmad).

#### **Constitutional Provisions Regarding Languages:**

- The above views reflected in the Constitution of India which came into force on January 26, 1950.
- Hence, the **Constitution of India did not specify any national language for India.**
- Article 343 of the Indian Constitution deals with only official language of the Union Government.

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### Article 351:

- However, Article 351 states that 'it is the duty of the Union to promote the spread of the Hindi Language and to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India'.

### Article 343 Provisions:

- "Official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script. But, for a period of fifteen years from the commencement of this Constitution, English language shall continue to be used for all the official purposes of the Union for which it was being used immediately before such commencement".
- Parliament was given the power to make law after 15 years whether to continue English language or not.

### Official Languages Act, 1963:

- In 1963, the Parliament passed the **Official Languages Act, 1963**. It provided that even after fifteen years from the commencement of the Constitution, the **English language may** continue to be used in **addition to Hindi**, for

all the official purposes of the Union for which it was being used immediately before that day; and transaction of business in Parliament.

English language shall be used for purpose of communication between the Union and a State which has not adopted Hindi as its Official Language.

Where Hindi is used for purposes of communication between one State which has adopted Hindi as its official language and another State which has not adopted Hindi as its Official Language, such communication in Hindi shall be accompanied by a translation of the same in the English language.

### Anti Hindi Agitations:

- Tamil Nadu witnessed anti-Hindi agitations in the pre independence period.

For the first time, in 1937, the newly elected Congress government headed by Rajaji, issued a Government Order (GO) making **Hindi compulsory** in state government schools.

Periyar EV Ramasamy's Self Respect Movement and the Justice Party protested the move, and led agitations against it.

More than 1,100 people, including Periyar and CN Annadurai were arrested. Two of those jailed – Natarajan from Chennai and Thalamuthu from Kumbakonam – died in prison due to illness. This inflamed the agitation further.

In February 1940, the British government issued a press release withdrawing compulsory Hindi in schools and made it optional.

### 1965 Agitations:

- For implementing the Constitutional provision (Article 343) which provided for making Hindi the official language of the Union after 15 years, the Official Languages Act, 1963 was enacted. This led to the revival of anti-Hindi agitations in Tamil Nadu.
- CN Annadurai, the lone representative of DMK in Rajya Sabha, spoke vehemently against the Act. He wanted an indefinite continuation of English as Official Language as it would 'distribute advantages and disadvantages evenly' among Hindi and non-Hindi speakers.
- The Act started with "Notwithstanding the expiration of the period of fifteen years from the commencement of the Constitution, the English language may, as from the appointed day, continue to be used in addition to Hindi..."

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### **Agitation Launched:**

Anna argued against the use of 'may', saying it gives an option for 'may not' too. He **wanted 'may' to be replaced with 'shall'**. But the brute majority of Congress Party ensured that the Act was passed without any change.

Anna promptly launched an agitation as he had warned, and was arrested along with his party members. At this point, then-Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru promised that English would continue as an Official Language.

- After the death of Jawaharlal Nehru in 1964, Tamils were apprehensive that his assurances of continuation of English as an Official Language would not be kept. It was further strengthened when the state government under Congress' M Bhaktavatsalam introduced the Three-Language Formula (English-Hindi-Tamil) in Madras Legislative Assembly.
- Anti-Hindi imposition protests spread across the state, with college students at the forefront.
- Chinnasamy of Tiruchi was the first person to immolate himself against imposition of Hindi. This led to a spate of self-immolations against imposition of Hindi. Anna announced that Jan 26, 1965 (when the Official Languages Act came into force) will be observed as a day of mourning. When the Chief Minister M Bhaktavatsalam called it a blasphemy, Anna advanced the protest to Jan 25, 1965. Anna, along with 3,000 DMK members, were taken into preventive custody to foil the protests. A clash between agitating students and Congress workers in Madurai turned into a riot that spread to other parts of the state.
- The impact of 1965 agitation was felt in 1967 elections when the Congress government lost power in Tamil Nadu. DMK led by Annadurai captured power. Many student leaders of the agitation became political leaders later.
- After the DMK government came to power in 1967, the State Assembly, in January 1968, adopted a resolution, repealing the **three-language formula** of the Central government and adopting the policy of teaching Tamil and English in schools. To this day, the two-language formula has been the policy of the State government, regardless of the party in power. In 2006, the then DMK government adopted the Tamil Learning Act, incorporating the two-language formula, and in September 2014, the AIADMK regime extended its reach to other boards such as the CBSE.

### **Official Languages Resolution, 1968 Passed by Parliament:**

- In 1968, the Parliament adopted the **Official Languages Resolution, 1968** with the following.

#### **1. Promotion of Hindi:**

- A more intensive and comprehensive programme shall be prepared and implemented by the Government of India for accelerating the spread and development of Hindi and its progressive use for the various official purposes of the Union.

An annual assessment report giving details of the measures taken and the progress achieved shall be laid on the Table of both Houses of Parliament and sent to all State Governments.

#### **2. Promotion of Other Languages:**

- The Eighth Schedule of the Constitution specifies 14 major languages of India (21 at present) besides Hindi. It is necessary in the interest of the educational and cultural advancement of the country that concerted measures should be taken for the full development of these languages.
- A programme shall be prepared and implemented by the Government of India, in collaboration with the State Governments for the coordinated development of all these languages, alongside Hindi so that they grow rapidly in richness and become effective means of communicating modern knowledge.

#### **3. Three Languages Formula:**

- Promoting the sense of unity and facilitating communication between people in different parts of the country is necessary. So, effective steps should be taken for implementing fully in all States the **three-language formula** evolved by the Government of India in consultation with the State Governments
- Arrangements should be made in accordance with that formula for the study of a modern Indian language, preferably one of the Southern languages, apart from Hindi and English in the Hindi speaking areas and of Hindi along with the regional languages and English in the non-Hindi speaking areas.

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#### 4. Public Services of the Union Government:

Safeguarding just claims and interest of people belonging to different parts of the country in regard to the public services of the Union:

- Compulsory knowledge of either Hindi or English shall be required at the stage of selection of candidates for recruitment to the Union services or posts except in respect of any special services or posts for which a high standard of knowledge of English alone or Hindi alone, or both, as the case may be, is considered essential for the satisfactory performance of the duties of any such service or post; and
- The languages included in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution and English shall be permitted as alternative media for the All India and higher Central Services examinations after ascertaining the views of the Union Public Service Commission on the future scheme of the examinations, the procedural aspects and the timing.

#### Facts about Languages in India:

- As per census 2011, there are 121 languages which are spoken by 10,000 or more people in India.
- Out of this 22 are Scheduled languages listed under the eighth schedule of the Constitution and 99 non-scheduled languages.
- Of the total population of India, 96.71 percent have one of the Scheduled languages as their mother tongue, the remaining 3.29 per cent is accounted for by other languages.

#### Scheduled languages:

- There are 22 Scheduled languages in India listed under the eighth schedule of the Constitution of India.
- These are (1) Assamese, (2) Bengali, (3) Gujarati, (4) Hindi, (5) Kannada, (6) Kashmiri, (7) Konkani, (8) Malayalam, (9) Manipuri, (10) Marathi, (11) Nepali, (12) Oriya, (13) Punjabi, (14) Sanskrit, (15) Sindhi, (16) Tamil, (17) Telugu, (18) Urdu (19) Bodo, (20) Santhali, (21) Maithili and (22) Dogri.

Of these languages, 14 were initially included in the Constitution. Sindhi language was added in 1967. Thereafter three more languages viz., Konkani, Manipuri and Nepali were included in 1992. Subsequently Bodo, Dogri, Maithili and Santhali were added in 2004.

#### Top 10 Languages Spoken in India:

- Hindi occupied the first place as the most spoken language (mother tongue) in India.
- Bengal occupied the second place.
- Marathi occupied the third place.
- Mother tongue is the language spoken in childhood by the person's mother to the person

Rank	Language	People Speaking it as mother tongue	Percentage of Total Population
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1	Hindi	52,83,47,193	43.63
2	Bengali	9,72,37,669	8.03
3	Marathi	8,30,26,680	6.86
4	Telugu	8,11,27,740	6.70
5	Tamil	6,90,26,881	5.70
6	Gujarati	5,54,92,554	4.58
7	Urdu	5,07,72,631	4.19
8	Kannada	4,37,06,512	3.61
9	Odia	3,75,21,324	3.10
10	Malayalam	3,48,38,819	2.88

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## **SOCIAL SECTOR**

### **HEALTH :**

#### **Malnutrition Still Leading Risk Factor for Death of Children Under 5 years of Age in India**

On September 18, 2019, **India State Level Disease Burden Initiative** released a report called "**The burden of child and maternal malnutrition and trends in its indicators in the states of India: the Global Burden of Disease Study 1990-2017**" in a medical peer reviewed journal called 'The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health'.

- India State level disease burden initiative is a collaboration between Indian Council for Medical Research(ICMR), Public Health Foundation of India (PHI), Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare along with experts and stakeholders associated with over 100 Indian institutions, involving many leading health scientists and policy makers from India.

#### **What did the report analyse?**

- The report analysed **the disease burden attributable to maternal and child malnutrition** using all accessible data from 1990 to 2017 in all the states of India.
- The **states were categorized into three groups (low SDI, middle SDI and high SDI)** based on their **Socio-Demographic Index (SDI)** calculated using per capita income, mean education, and fertility rate in women younger than 25 years.

#### **What is Disease Burden?**

- **Disease burden is the number of years a person loses due to a particular disease.** It is the sum of Years of life lost (when a person dies early due to a disease) and Years of life lived with disability caused by the disease.
- **Disease burden or Disability adjusted life years (DALYs)= Years of life lost due to the disease+ Years of life lived with disability because of the disease.**

#### **What did the report find?**

- For the year 2017, **Malnutrition accounted for 68.2% of deaths in children below 5 in India.**
- Malnutrition is **still the biggest risk factor for death in children below 5 years of age in all the states of India** though it has decreased substantially from 1990 to 2017.
- Malnutrition was also found to be the **leading risk factor for health loss of all ages.**
- Malnutrition was found to be **the reason for 17.3% of total disease burden or Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs).**

#### **States which showed high DALY(Disability Adjusted Life Years)?**

- Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, and Rajasthan.
- **States with low SDI (Socio Demographic Index) had a high DALY or disease burden** caused due to malnutrition.

#### **Prevalence of malnutrition indicators in India in 2017 :**

#### **What is Prevalence?**

- Prevalence is the **proportion of a particular population found to be affected by a medical condition.**

<b>Malnutrition Indicator</b>	<b>Prevalence of malnutrition indicator in India in 2017</b>
<b>Low Birthweight</b> (A birth weight of less than 2500grams as per WHO)	21.4%
<b>Child Stunting</b> (A child whose height-for-age is less than WHO standards is considered stunted)	39.3%
<b>Child Wasting</b> (A Child whose weight-for-height is less than WHO standards is considered wasted)	15.7%
<b>Child Underweight</b> (A child who is less than five years of age and whose weight is below the median of a standard population in the same age group)	32.7%
<b>Anemia in Children</b> (A condition where the number of red blood cells or their oxygen carrying capacity is insufficient to meet physiological needs-varies by age)	59.7%
<b>Anemia in Women</b> (A condition where the number of red blood cells or their oxygen carrying capacity is insufficient to meet physiological needs-varies by age and pregnancy)	54.4%
<b>Exclusive Breastfeeding</b> (Infants should be exclusively breastfed for the first 6 months and thereafter should receive nutritionally adequate, safe complimentary foods while breastfeeding continues up to 2 years of age or beyond)	53.3%
<b>Child Overweight</b> (Abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that presents a risk to health)	11.5%

#### **Estimation of future trends of malnutrition indicators based on data from 1990 to 2017:**

- The report summarized that **if the trends found of malnutrition indicators upto 2017 continue in the future then the estimated targets for malnutrition indicators in India for the year 2022 by NNM (National Nutrition Mission) cannot be met.**
- The report stated that there would be 8-9% excess prevalence for low birthweight, 9-6% for stunting, 4-8% for underweight, 11-7% for anemia in children, and 13-8% for anemia in women relative to the NNM(National Nutrition Mission) 2022 targets.

#### **Key takeaways for malnutrition indicators suggested by experts based on this report:**

- **All the gaps in all malnutrition indicators need to be addressed but low birth weight** needs particular **policy attention** in India as it is **the biggest contributor to child death** among all malnutrition indicators and **its rate of decline is among the lowest.**
- **Overweight** among children is becoming a significant public health problem as it is increasing rapidly across all states.
- There is a **need for an integrated nutrition policy** to effectively **address the broader determinants of malnutrition** across the life cycle of the population of India.
- The integrated nutrition policy must address major determinants of malnutrition **like provision of clean drinking water, reducing open defecation, improving women's educational status, and food and nutrition security for the most vulnerable families.**

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## **The Union Cabinet of India Bans Electronic Cigarettes in India through Ordinance**

- On **September 18, 2019** the Union cabinet of India approved the **Prohibition of Electronic-Cigarettes Ordinance 2019**.
- The **prohibition** or ban makes the **production, manufacture, import, export, transport, sale, distribution, storage and advertisement of E-Cigarettes a punishable offence**.
- The **offence of violating prohibition of E-Cigarettes** in any of the above-mentioned forms except storage is punishable with an **imprisonment of one year or a fine up to Rs. 1 lakh or both for the first offence**,
- and an **imprisonment of up to three years and fine up to Rs. 5 lakh for a subsequent offence**.
- The **storage of electronic-cigarettes** shall be **punishable with an imprisonment upto 6 months or fine up to Rs 50,000 or both**.
- **The owners of E-Cigarettes are to declare and deposit any stock of E-Cigarettes to the Sub-Inspector of the nearest police station** on the date of commencement of the ordinance.
- The **ordinance will have to be approved by the Indian Parliament when it meets in November 2019**.

### **What are Electronic Cigarettes?**

- **Electronic Cigarettes**, also scientifically called as **ENDS(Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems)** are **battery powered devices that produce aerosol by heating nicotine contained solutions**.
- Excessive inhaling of aerosols can cause allergic reactions, asthma and breathing difficulties.
- E-Cigarettes which **originated in China in the year 2003** were **touted as an alternative to combustible cigarettes or a weaning or cessation aid** to help smokers give up smoking because combustible cigarettes contain high amounts of nicotine which affects the area of brain responsible for attention, memory, learning and can cause cancer.
- **World Health Organization in 2008** declared that **E-cigarettes are not legitimate smoking cessation aids** because of **lack of scientific evidence to prove that they help smokers quit smoking**.

### **Why did the Union Cabinet ban E-Cigarettes?**

The Union cabinet decided to ban E- Cigarettes because

- of the **adverse effects on the health of youth and adults caused by aerosols containing nicotine** and other psychoactive substances delivered through E-Cigarettes.
- **E-Cigarette use has reached epidemic proportions in the past few years** due to lack of country wide regulations against their use.
- The device was being marketed as a smoking cessation(withdrawal) aid to help smokers quit smoking but **its efficiency as a quitting aid is not established**.
- Its **widespread use especially among youth** is causing a **serious public health concern**.
- It **will decrease disease burden on the government**.

### **What is the opinion of Medical institutions on use of e-cigarettes?**

- In 2016, the U.S. Surgeon General had concluded that the use of nicotine during adolescence can cause addiction and harm the developing brain.
- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) on May 31 ,2019 also recommended a complete ban on e-cigarettes based on currently available scientific evidence by releasing a white paper on E-Cigarette usage.

### **Were any previous bans issued at the state level?**

- **In 2018** the government of India has issued an advisory to the states to consider banning e-cigarettes.

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- 16 states(Punjab, Karnataka, Mizoram, Kerala, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Meghalaya, Odisha, Nagaland) and 1 Union Territory (Puducherry) have banned e-cigarettes in their jurisdiction.

#### **Who is opposing the ban on e-cigarettes and why?**

- **E-Cigarette manufactures and Association of Vapors India** (an organization that supports e-cigarettes) **opposed the move by the Indian government to ban e-cigarettes as it deprives millions of combustible adult smokers a less harmful alternative.**
- These **organizations recommend regulations against e-cigarettes but not a complete ban** because they believe it will create a black market for e-cigarettes and that it will defeat the purpose of the ban.

#### **EDUCATION :**

### **Kerala Tops NITI Aayog's Education Index**

- Niti Aayog's School Education Quality Index (SEQI) released on September 30, 2019 showed a huge disparity in the performance of the States in school education across the country.
- Kerala bagged the top spot with 76.6 per cent.
- Uttar Pradesh with 36.4 per cent scored the lowest for 2016-17.
- Among the small States,  
Manipur (68.8 per cent) emerged as the top performer while  
Arunachal Pradesh (24.6 per cent) came last in the category.
- Rajasthan bagged the second position among the large States with 72 per cent, followed by Karnataka with 70 per cent and Andhra Pradesh-69 per cent respectively.

#### **About the School Education Quality Index (SEQI) :**

- The index was developed to evaluate the performance of States and Union Territories (UTs) in the school education sector, and  
bring an outcomes focus to education policy by providing States and UTs with a platform to identify their strengths and weaknesses and undertake requisite course corrections and policy interventions.
- Performance of the States was measured using two parameters - **outcomes** and **governance process** aiding outcomes.  
Outcomes include learning outcomes, access to schools, school infrastructure, etc. **Governance process** aiding outcomes include student and teacher attendance, teacher availability, training of teachers, etc.
- The data for the index was collected for three categories: large states, small states and Union Territories (UTs) for the ease of mapping and reducing uneven comparison among regions and states.
- NITI Aayog considered 2016-17 as the reference year for the index.
- NITI Aayog chief executive Amitabh Kant stated that the data will be used for incentivizing states in budgetary allocations.

### **2020 Rankings of World Universities by Times Higher Education**

- **First rank** was secured by **University of Oxford (UK)**,
- **second** by **California Institute of Technology (USA)**,
- **third** by **University of Cambridge (UK)**,
- **fourth** by **Stanford University (USA)** and
- **fifth** by **Massachusetts institute of technology (USA)** as per the 2020 rankings

- announced by **Times Higher Education on September 11, 2019.**
- **1400 universities of 92 countries** were assessed by Times Higher Education.

**Top five Universities in India:**

2020 Rank	University
301-350	Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore
301-350	IIT Ropar, Punjab
351-400	IIT Indore, MP
401-500	IIT Bombay
401-500	IIT Delhi

**Poor Performance of Indian universities in the Times Higher Education (THE) 2020 rankings**

- None of the Indian Universities managed to enter the top 300 university rankings
- Indian Institute of Sciences (IISc) Bangalore rank dropped from the 251-300 group to the 301-350 group. The reason for the drop of IISc ranking is a fall in its research citation impact score.
- IIT Indore and IIT Ropar which are the second generation IITs started in 2008-2009 appeared in the 301-350 group.
- Lack of funding to hire International staff in Indian Institutions also contributed to the universities not being able to fare well in the top ranks

**Criteria for Ranking :**

- The rankings are based on 13 performance indicators that measure an institution's performance across 5 categories.

Category	Definition of category	Performance indicators	Overall weightage in rank
Teaching	The quality and knowledge of teaching staff and the learning environment.	Reputation survey Staff to student ratio Doctorate to bachelor's ratio Doctorates awarded to academic staff ratio Institutional Income	30%
Research	Quality and volume of research at the institution.	Reputation survey Research Income Research productivity	30%
Citations/ Research Influence	Citations or references of the institution's academic research by other scholars	Number of times research cited by other scholars	30%
International Outlook	Global presence on campus	International to domestic student ratio International to domestic staff ratio International collaboration	7.5%
Industry Income	Commercial impact of an institution's research	Industrial value of the research	2.5%

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### **Countries with highest number of universities in the top 200:**

#### **USA:**

- USA continues to maintain the highest number of universities (60) among the top 200 in the world.

#### **United Kingdom (UK):**

- UK comes second with 28 top universities among the top 200.
- University of Oxford ranked number one for the fourth consecutive year. However other UK universities have fallen in their position compared to their 2019 ranks.
- Funding gap between UK universities and universities of other countries with higher ranks has led to UK's decline in rankings.

#### **Germany:**

- Germany has succeeded to increase its number of universities in the top 200 universities in the past 5 years from 3 to 23 due to an increase in research funding in their universities since 2009.

#### **Australia:**

- Australia has improved its number from 5 to 7 in the top 200 in the past five years due to its increased research funding contributed by international student fees.

#### **China:**

- China has advanced its number from 5 to 7 in the top 200 in the past five years.

#### **Japan:**

" Japan now has 110 ranked universities overall when compared to UK which now has 100.

### **What is Times Higher Education (THE)?**

- Times Higher Education (THE) is a UK based organization that ranks world universities based on their performance.
- The ranking is done using its data analytics tool called Data points.
- The data provided by the organization is being used by students to make informed decisions in choosing the right university for their educational goals and is also helping universities plan their growth strategically based on measured metrics of performance.

### **IIT-Madras, Delhi University, Three Others Get 'Institution of Eminence Status'**

In September 2019, the Union Government awarded the status of 'Institute of Eminence' to the following public institutions.

- IIT-Madras,
- IIT-Kharagpur,
- Delhi University,
- Benares Hindu University, and
- University of Hyderabad.

The following private universities were also issued Letters of Intent to grant them the status.

- Vellore Institute of Technology,
- Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham,
- Jamia Hamdard University and the
- Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology.
- Bharti Institute, a project of Airtel's Satya Bharti Foundation which is new greenfield institute.

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### **About 'Institutes of Eminence':**

- These were announced by the Government in Budget 2016-17.
- 10 public and 10 private Institutions would be empowered to emerge as World Class Teaching and Research Institutions,

### **Objectives of 'Institutes of Eminence' are to**

- provide world class teaching and research facilities to Indian students within the country and enhance general level of education of the country, and
- bring them in top 500 of world ranking in the next 10 years and in top 100 eventually overtime.

### **Benefits of 'Institute of Eminence' Status:**

These Institutions shall be provided with

- greater autonomy to admit foreign students up to 30% of admitted students,
- freedom to  
recruit of foreign faculty upto 25% of faculty strength,  
offer online courses upto 20% of its programmes,  
enter into academic collaboration with top 500 in the world ranking Institutions without permission of UGC,  
fix and collect fees from foreign students without restriction,
- flexibility of course structure in terms of number of credit hours and years to take a degree,
- complete flexibility in fixing of curriculum and syllabus, among others.

### **Government Funding:**

- Each public Institution selected as 'Institution of Eminence' will be provided a financial assistance up to Rs. 1000 Crore over the period of five years under this scheme.
- In case of the private institutions proposed as Institutions of Eminence, there will be no financial support, but they will be entitled for more autonomy as a special category Deemed University.

## **Companies Can Use Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Funds to Fund Research**

- On September 20, 2019, the Union Government **amended the rules governing** the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) spending norms to  
pave the way for greater investment into research, a parameter the country fares poorly globally.
- Now companies can use their CSR funds for setting up publicly-funded incubators and contribute to research efforts in **science, technology, medicine and engineering.**

### **Institutes likely to get Benefitted**

- Public funded universities, IITs, national laboratories and autonomous bodies established under the auspices of

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR),  
Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR),  
Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR),  
Department of Atomic Energy (DAE),  
Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO),  
Department of Science and Technology (DST), and  
Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

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### Why CSR Funds into Research?

- India's spending on Research and Development (R&D) activities has been stagnant at 0.6 to 0.7 per cent of the GDP for the last two decades.
- India's spending on R&D (about 0.6 percent of GDP) is well below that in major nations such as the US (2.8), China (2.1), Israel (4.3) and Korea (4.2).
- Private sector contributes less than half of India's spending on research.

### What are the Benefits of CSR Funds in Research?

- Science, technology, and innovation are key drivers of economic performance and social well-being.
- Investments in these areas lead to innovations and these open new business opportunities for the country.
- New business opportunities create new job opportunities, increase the incomes of the companies and increase the GDP of a country.

### What is Corporate Social Responsibility?

- The term **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** was coined by Harvard economist **Howard Bowen** in 1953 in his book 'Social Responsibility of Businessmen'.
- In India, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was voluntary. It was **made mandatory** under Companies Act, 2013.
- According to the Companies Act, 2013, the following companies are required to spend 2% of their average net profit of the preceding three years on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities.  
firms with net worth of Rs. 500 crore or more, or  
a turnover of Rs. 1,000 crore or more, or  
net profit of Rs. 5 crore or more.

### Why Corporate Social Responsibility?

- Corporates make profits due to purchase of goods and services by members of society.
- Hence, it is their moral responsibility to give back to society and contribute to reducing inequalities in society through CSR activities.
- Companies in India spend their CSR funds on the following areas:  
Education,  
Healthcare,  
Environment,  
Skill Development,  
Rural Areas Development,  
Slum Development in urban areas, etc.

### **SOCIAL ISSUES :**

#### **Terrorism :**

### **Masood Azhar, Hafiz Saeed, Lakhvi, and Dawood Ibrahim Declared Terrorists**

On September 4, 2019, the Union Government designated the following as 'Terrorists' under the section 35 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967.

- Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) chief Masood Azhar,
- Hafiz Saeed, founder of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), and his deputy Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, and

- 
- underworld don Dawood Ibrahim.

The above are the first four persons designated as "terrorists" under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967 which was amended in August 2019 to designate individuals as Terrorists. Earlier, only an Organisation could be designated as 'terrorist' organisation.

#### **Impact of Designation:**

- National Investigation Agency (NIA) can attach properties acquired by terrorists from proceeds of terrorism.
- Government can impose a travel ban on individuals who have been designated as "terrorists".

Individuals designated as terrorists can appeal to the Union Home Secretary, who has to dispose of the plea within 45 days. In addition to this, they can also approach a review committee comprising a sitting or retired judge and at least two retired secretaries of the government.

If the review committee re-confirms decision, the decision can be challenged in court.

The **objectives** of designating individuals as terrorists is to

- ensure zero tolerance towards terrorism,
- nip terrorism in the bud, and

(The Government opines that individual's psychology is the birth place of terrorism and if an individual is stopped from attracting other individuals into terrorism by providing ideological and financial support, this menace can be stopped.)

- bring Indian laws on par with European Union (EU) countries, the U.S.A., China, Israel, etc. which provide for designation of Individuals as terrorists.

#### **Reasons for Designation:**

- Hafiz Saeed has been designated as a terrorist for his involvement in four cases - Red Fort attack (2000), Rampur attack (2008), 26/11 Mumbai attack (2008) and attack on a BSF convoy at Udhampur in Jammu & Kashmir (2015).
- Maulana Masood Azhar is accused in attack on the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly complex in 2001, attack on Parliament in 2001, attack on Pathankot airbase in 2016, attacks on BSF camp in Srinagar in 2017 and explosion of a CRPF bus at Pulwama.

Saeed, also the founder of Jamat-ud-Dawa (JuD), was designated as a global terrorist by the United Nations in 2008.

- Dawood Ibrahim is accused in planning and execution of the 1993 Mumbai serial blasts.

He is also involved in perpetrating acts of terror, promoting religious fundamentalism, terror financing, arms smuggling, circulation of counterfeit currency, money laundering, narcotics, extortion and benami real estate business in India and abroad.

Dawood was designated as a global terrorist by the UN and he is also listed in al-Qaeda sanction list on November 3, 2003.

#### **U.S Backs India's Decision:**

- The United States on Thursday backed India designating four Pakistan based criminals as terrorists under the amended Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and stated that it would expand possibilities of cooperation between U.S.A and India in fighting terrorism.
- It may be noted that India has issued red corner notices against the above accused individuals.

A Red Corner Notice is a request to law enforcement agencies worldwide to locate and provisionally arrest a person pending extradition, surrender, or similar legal action.

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**Corruption :**

**15 Tax Officials Compulsorily Retired**

- In September 2019, the Union Government compulsorily retired 15 senior Income Tax officials on charges of corruption and malpractices.
- This is the fourth instance of the Union overnment sacking tax officials en masse since June 2019. As many as 49 high-ranking tax officers, including 12 from the Central Board of Direct Taxes, were compulsorily retired in the three previous rounds on charges of corruption, collecting and giving bribes, smuggling and criminal conspiracy.
- The latest compulsory retirements ordered are for senior officers, ranging from the rank of Deputy Commissioner of Income Tax to Additional Commissioner of Income Tax, and several commissioners and Principal commissioners of Income Tax.

**Prime Minister's Promise:**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi promised to cleanse the system of errant officials. In his Independence Day address also he reiterated that the errant behaviour of the tax officials would not be tolerataed and announced that his government is zeroing in on tax officials who have misused their powers or targeted honest taxpayers over minor missteps.

**Rules for Compulsory Retirement:**

- These officers for compulsory retirement were identified under Fundamental Rule 56(j) of Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules, 1972.
- Rule 56 (j) provides for compulsory retirement of government staff, who are facing serious allegations of corruption. in public interest
- Rule 56 (j) covers Group 'A & B' officers who entered service before 35 years of age and have attained 50 years of age.
- A review is carried out on a quarterly basis on officials and employees facing serious allegations of corruption. If the review committee finds the allegations to be true, it recommends compulsory retirement and the order is then signed by the President.
- The compulsorily retired officials will be paid a sum equivalent to their pay and allowances of three months, calculated at the same rate at which s/he was drawing them immediately before retirement.
- At present, the retirement age is 60 years. The loss of 10 years of service means loss in terms of the benefits and perks for that period and, more importantly, a lifelong loss of honour.
- Though 56(j) that provides for compulsory retirement of government staff in public interest has existed for several decades, it has sparingly been invoked.

**Impact of the Decision:**

The fear of compulsory retirement will

- instill fear in the civil servants and promote good conduct,
- protects the citizens form harassment of errant civil servants, and
- uphold probity in Governance.

**Additional Information on Officers Compulsorily Retired:**

- Some compulsorily retired officials are Anup Srivastava (Principal Commissioner), Atul Dikshit (Commissioner), Sansar Chand (Commissioner), G Sree Harsha (Commissisoner), Vinay Brij Singh (Commissioner) and ten others.
- There are serious charges against these officials. For example, the CBI registered a case against Principal Commissioner Anup Srivastava alleging that he had entered into a criminal conspiracy to favour a realtor and obtain illegal gratification.
- Another case against Mr. Anup Srivastava, Principal Commissioner by the CBI alleges bribery by an importer to cover up a case of duty evasion. Srivastava was arrested in 2012 and subsequently released on bail.
- Similarly, there are two CBI cases against Commissioner Atul Dixit and he was under suspension. Sansar Chand, G Sree Harsha and Vinay Brij Singh are also facing CBI cases.

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## STATES

### Jammu & Kashmir :

#### Farooq Abdullah Detained under Public Safety Act

Mr. Farooq Abdullah, former chief minister and National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah, was detained under the Public Safety Act, 1978 on September 15, 2019 and his residence was declared as a subsidiary jail. Abdullah will continue to stay at this house. There is, however, no bar on meeting relatives and friends.

#### **Public Safety Act, 1978:**

- The Public Safety Act, 1978 allows the central government to **detain a person for two years without trial**, if he or she is perceived to be a threat to public safety.
- He is the first political leader to be detained under the under the stringent Act after the abrogation of Jammu and Kashmir's (J&K's) special status under Article 370 of the Constitution of India.

On August 5, 2019, the Union Government abrogated the provisions of Article 370 and ended J&K's special status. Jammu and Kashmir was also split into two Union Territories namely 1. Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir, and 2. Union Territory of Ladakh

**Reasons** given by the Union Government for his detention are

- misuse of freedom of speech,
- making statements aimed at inciting violence,
- propagating secessionist ideology with his appeal to Hurriyat for freedom struggle,
- mobilising people to disrupt public order, and
- glorifying terrorists in his statements.

#### **Criticism:**

The arrest of Farooq Abdullah under the Public Safety Act has been criticised on the following grounds.

- It is an overreach of state power to curtail individual liberty in Kashmir.
- Farooq Abdullah has been the face of moderate politics in Kashmir.

Despite his declining popularity in Kashmir with the emergence of Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Farooq Abdullah continued to argue that Kashmir's destiny was with secular, and pluralist India.

(Farooq Abdullah father and National Conference founder, Sheikh Abdullah, led Kashmir's Muslim population in rejecting the two-nation theory that led to Partition and the formation of Pakistan in 1947.)

- Hence, such acts will lead to marginalising the moderate voices of mainstream politicians and may finally lead to political vacuum which could be exploited by extremists.

Almost all Kashmir's political leaders are in jail, including former Chief Minister and PDP leader Mehbooba Mufti and the IAS officer-turned-politician Shah Faesal. These politicians have kept the political process alive in Kashmir against all odds, and despite threats from extremists.

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## **FOREIGN RELATIONS**

### **Indo-Russia :**

#### **Prime Minister's Visit to Russia**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Russia from September 4 to 5, 2019 on the invitation of President of Russia Mr. Vladimir Putin to attend the 20th India - Russia Annual Summit held in Vladivostok and the 5th Eastern Economic Forum as the Chief Guest.

Russia is a major supplier of India's defence equipment and both countries have strong cooperation in energy sector (civil nuclear energy and oil and natural gas).

#### **Details:**

##### **Defence:**

- Cooperation in defence is an important pillar of India-Russia bilateral Partnership.
- Russia agreed for joint manufacturing of spare parts, components, aggregates and other products for maintenance of Russian origin Arms and defense equipment in India. For this purpose, joint ventures would be set up through transfer of technology by Russia.

##### **Trade and Investment:**

- Both the countries agreed to take bilateral trade to US \$ 30 billion by 2025 from the current \$11 billion,.
- They agreed to mutually expand business opportunities by expanding the participation of Russian business in "Make in India" program and that of Indian companies in investment projects in Russia.
- In this context, they agreed to sign **India-Russia Intergovernmental Agreement on Promotion and Mutual Protection of Investments** at the earliest.

##### ***Investments in Russia's Far East:***

- India is making efforts at enhancing cooperation with the Russian Far East.
- Several Indian companies have been successfully set up in the Far East region, such as M/s KGK in Vladivostok in the field of diamond cutting and M/s Tata Power in Krutogorovo in Kamchatka in coal mining. Russia welcomed the intent of the India to expand its economic and investment presence in the Far Eastern region and Siberia.
- As a first step, for the first time ever a delegation of four Chief Ministers of Indian states led by the Commerce and Industry Minister of India visited Vladivostok on 12-13 August 2019 to explore avenues of greater bilateral engagement.
- Russia's Far East is facing shortage of skilled manpower (doctors, engineers, teachers, etc.). Russia agreed to consider India's request for allowing skilled manpower from India to work in Russia's Far East.

##### **Cooperation in Energy Sector:**

- The energy industry has traditionally been a key area of interaction between the two countries. This is an area where Indian and Russian economies complement each other beneficially.

##### **Civil Nuclear Cooperation:**

- Civil nuclear cooperation between India and Russia is an important component of strategic partnership. Russia is helping India by setting up a nuclear power plant at Kudankulam in Tamilnadu. The plant will consist of six units, each with an installed capacity of 1000 megawatts.

##### **Oil and Natural Gas:**

- Both the countries agreed to cooperate in supply of coking coal from Russian Far East to India.
- The leaders agreed to forge cooperation in geological exploration and joint development of oil and gas fields in Russia and India, including offshore fields.

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- They agreed to work to develop the ways of delivering energy resources from Russia to India, including a long-term agreement for sourcing Russian crude oil, the possible use of the Northern Sea Route and a pipeline system.
  - India and Russia agreed to consider the prospects for expanding cooperation in hydro and thermal power, energy efficiency as well as for designing and constructing facilities that generate energy from non-conventional sources.

#### **Transport Infrastructure:**

- To promote further development of trade and economic ties between India and Russia, both the countries agreed to work on improving the transport infrastructure. They attached great importance to the development of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).
- Russia expressed its readiness to participate in major infrastructural and other projects in India.
- Both the countries also agreed to explore possibility of expanding direct passenger and cargo flights including flights between various regions of both the countries.

#### **Aviation and Space:**

- Both the countries agreed to explore the prospects of establishing joint ventures in India for the development and production of civil aircraft .
- They agreed that it was necessary to exploit the potential of India and Russia in launch vehicles development, construction and utilization of spacecraft for different applications, as well as research and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, including planetary exploration.

#### **Reform of UN Security Council:**

- Both Sides called for reform of the UNSC to reflect contemporary global realities and to make it more representative, effective and efficient in dealing with issues of international peace and security.

Russia stated that it will continue to support India's candidacy for the permanent membership of a reformed UN Security Council.

#### **Terrorism:**

- The leaders strongly condemned terrorism and called on the international community to set up a united front to fight against this evil. They reaffirmed their commitment to undertake all measures to prevent and combat terrorism.
- To address the threat of chemical and biological terrorism, both sides emphasized the need to launch multilateral negotiations on an international convention for the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism at the Conference on Disarmament.

#### **Membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group.**

- Russia expressed its strong support for India's membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

### **India Launches 'Act Far East' Policy**

- On September 5, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched India's 'Act Far East' Policy while addressing the 5th Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok, Russia.

#### **What is India's 'Act Far East' Policy?**

- It is the commitment of India to Russia to assist in the development of Russia's Far East region, which is less developed when compared with eastern part of Russia, by providing development assistance through Line of Credit (LoC), and encouraging Indian industries to explore business opportunities in that region which has vast natural resources.

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### **\$ One Billion Line of Credit Announced:**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a \$ one billion line of credit for the development of the far east region of Russia ( this is the first region-specific line of credit that India has extended to any country), and
- asserted that India will walk shoulder-to-shoulder with Russia in its development of the Russia's Far East.

### **Maritime Route between the Ports of Chennai and Vladivostok:**

- India and Russia also agreed to open a maritime route between the ports of Chennai and Vladivostok (a city in Russia's Far East) to ensure connectivity between the two countries. This would allow India access to Russia's Far East in 24 days, compared to the 40 days taken by the current route via Suez Canal (Africa) and Europe.

### **About Russia's Far East:**

- Russia's Far East refers to the eastern part of the Russia.
- Russia is a huge country geographically (as big as the whole of South American continent) and its area straddles both the continents Europe and Asia.
- The western part of Russia which borders Europe is more developed.
- The eastern part though rich in natural resources ( oil, natural gas, wood, diamonds, iron ore, coal, gold, silver, lead, and zinc) is relatively less developed.
- Hence, Russia is making conscious efforts to develop the eastern part of the country by attracting investments from across the world.
- In 2015, Russia set up a Eastern Economic Forum to attract investments and improve the living standards of the people in the Russia's Far East region. Russia provides targeted infrastructural and financial support to the investors. At least 17 countries have already invested in the Far East.

### **Importance of Russia's Far East for India?**

The region is rich in energy resources (Oil and Natural gas) but underdeveloped. The region is approximately twice the size of India, with a population of only 6 million. Through 'Act Far East Policy'

- India can diversify its energy sources and reduce its dependence on West Asia which is facing political unstably off late.
- India demonstrated its commitment to develop an area of concern for Moscow.

### **Strategic Importance:**

- The region is also strategically important because new trade routes in the Arctic are opening up due to global warming. These routes would dramatically reduce journey time between Europe and Asia.
- At present, maximum trade between Europe and Asian countries has to pass through Suez canal in Africa and reach Asian countries.
- The Northern Sea Route (NSR) which runs from the Barents Sea, near Russia's border with Norway, to the Bering Strait between Siberia and Alaska is a potential rival to the Suez Canal.
- For example, a ship travelling from South Korea to Germany would take roughly 34 days via the Suez Canal and 23 via the Northern Sea Route (NSR).

### **Additional Information:**

#### **What is Line of Credit?**

- The Line of Credit is not a grant, but a '**soft loan**' provided by India on concessional interest rates to **developing countries**.
- It has to be repaid by the borrowing government.

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- The LOCs also help to promote exports of Indian goods and services, as 75% of the value of the contract must be sourced from India.
  - The projects under LOCs are spread over different sectors like Agriculture, Infrastructure, Telecom, Railway, Transmission/Power, Renewable Energy, etc.

### **Indo-Mongolia :**

## **President of Mongolia Visits India**

President of Mongolia, Mr. Khaltmaagiin Battulga, visited India from September 19 to 23, 2019 during which both the countries signed agreements for cooperation in

- space,
- disaster management, and
- cultural exchanges (in the field of music, dance, theater, arts, museums, etc.)

### **Other Details:**

- On Mongolian request, India announced an additional 236 million dollars Line of Credit for the ongoing **Petrochemical Refinery Project in Mongolia**. This takes the Government of India's total commitment for the project to US\$ 1.236 billion.
- India decided to introduce **e-Visa facility** for Mongolian short-term visitors. Mongolia also announced a "visa on arrival" scheme arrangement for Indian short-term visitors to encourage mutual tourism.
- Mongolia also welcomed the opening of the membership of the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** to UN member countries lying beyond the tropics and conveyed its interest to join the ISA. India invited Mongolia to join International Solar Alliance.
- India renewed its offer to Mongolia to provide assistance in digitisation of Buddhist manuscripts at various Mongolian institutions like the National Mongolian Library, as part of the commitment to preserve and promote the common Buddhist heritage. Mongolia welcomed this offer.
- To encourage student exchanges and promote interaction among youth, India announced 10 scholarships to Mongolian students wishing to undertake Buddhist monastic studies in India, while the Mongolia announced two scholarships for Indian students interested in pursuing Mongolian studies.

### **Indo-Pacific Vision:**

- India explained its "**Indo-Pacific Vision**", which would endeavour to create an open, free and inclusive architecture in the Indo-Pacific region through inclusive and collective efforts, considering the legitimate interests of all States in the region and guided by respect for a rules-based system and international law.

Mongolia expressed its support to the "Indo-Pacific Vision" and stated that it aimed at bringing stability and prosperity across the Indo-Pacific region through inclusive and collective efforts so that all nations are able to pursue economic growth.

### **Both the countries**

- emphasized the importance of an early reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), in permanent and non-permanent membership categories, so that it reflects the current realities and functions in an accountable, representative and effective manner,
- acknowledged that there was considerable untapped potential for further development of bilateral trade and investment, especially in the field of agricultural commodities, dairy products and animal husbandry, mining, information technology, pharmaceuticals, tourism, etc., and
- agreed to continue the negotiations and work towards early conclusion of the Bilateral Agreement on Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investment Agreement.

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## **Indo-South Korea :**

### **Defence Minister's Visit to South Korea**

Defence Minister of India, Mr. Rajnath Singh, visited South Korea from September 4 to 6, 2019 during which

India and South Korea

- signed a naval logistics sharing pact under which navies of the two countries will have freedom to use each other's naval bases for logistics support, and
- formulated a road map for joint production and research for military systems

Korean companies have been active in the Indian defence sector - the K9 Vajra mobile artillery guns are being made by L&T in collaboration with Hanwha Land Systems.

Mr. Rajnath Singh stated that India offers tremendous business opportunity to Korean defence industries and new initiatives like the defence industrial corridors are being promoted by the government. He also stated that India's vision in the defence sector is to become a hub for arms exports to friendly nations in the region.

#### **Other Details:**

##### **Seoul Defence Dialogue 2019:**

The Defence Minister delivered keynote address at the 'Seoul Defence Dialogue 2019' with the theme, 'Building Peace Together: Challenges and Vision'.

##### **Global and Regional Challenges to International Peace and Security.**

Mr. Rajnath Singh said that world politics today is in a state of flux and this has **aggravated global and regional challenges to international peace and security**. He added that new and emerging technologies have impacted the regional as well as global security environment. Particularly, the Indo-Pacific region is confronted with numerous traditional and non-traditional security threats such as **terrorism, conflicts, transnational crimes, maritime threats**, as well as the challenges of **sustainable development**, including the lack of energy, low intra-regional trade and lack of connectivity.

##### **Terrorism:**

Mr. Rajnath Singh also called for a collective international action to check perpetrators of terrorism and advocated strong measures against those who support and finance terrorism and provide sanctuary to terrorists.

He stated that of the numerous security challenges that the world is facing, the gravest is that of terrorism. No country in the world is safe from terrorism and India has been actively pursuing counter terrorism cooperation bilaterally, regionally and globally through UN and other fora, he added.

Mr. Rajnath Singh emphasised that good relations with neighbours - both immediate and extended - are a priority for India's foreign policy as part of its Neighbourhood First Policy. A key feature of India's Neighbourhood First Policy is also its engagement with its neighbours in sub-regional groupings of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and Bay of Bengal initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), apart from a trilateral maritime co-operation format with Sri Lanka and Maldives to improve Maritime Domain Awareness and co-operation, he added.

##### **Indo-Pacific Region:**

The Defence Minister stated that our quest for common prosperity and security requires us to **evolve a common rules-based order for the Indo-Pacific region**. This order must be based on sovereignty and territorial integrity and equality of all nations, irrespective of size and strength. These rules and norms must be based on the consent of all, he stated.

He stated that India has strengthened co-operative engagements in the Indo-Pacific region on the basis of the principle of "**SAGAR – Security and Growth for All in the Region**", a principle that remains the **cornerstone of India's outlook** for the Indo-Pacific region.

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He advocated for an open and inclusive architecture for the Indo-Pacific region with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) centrality, equal access to the global commons, freedom of navigation in the seas and in the air and unimpeded commerce, the importance of connectivity, a rules-based order and dialogue as the means to resolve disputes.

Mr. Rajnath Singh said that Asia can make **21st century as century of peace and holistic development**, where the nations can tackle the common challenges of **poverty, disease, illiteracy and terrorism**. He stressed the five principles of Indian thought - Samman (respect), Samvad (dialogue), Sahayog (cooperation), Shanti (peace) and Samridhi (prosperity) - to achieve this goal.

#### **Areas of Cooperation between India-South Korea:**

The Defence Minister stated that India and South Korea play a stellar role in bringing about peace, progress, prosperity, riding on twin pillars of economic and security partnership. He said bilateral co-operation can be instrumental in

- ensuring rules-based order in the region,
- fighting terrorism, piracy, and transnational crimes, and
- collaboration on issues such as Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) , Cyber Security and other maritime related threats.

#### **Peace and Stability in the Korean Peninsula:**

Mr. Rajnath Singh **expressed India's support for peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula and its denuclearisation** through **dialogue** and **diplomacy**.

#### **Indo-Japan :**

### **Japan-India Annual Defence Ministerial Dialogue**

Defence Minister of India Mr. Rajnath Singh visited Japan from September 2 to 3, 2019 at the invitation of Takeshi Iwaya, Defence Minister of Japan for the Japan-India Annual Defence Ministerial Dialogue.

#### **Highlights:**

Both the countries

- expressed their satisfaction at the progress made in fostering defence cooperation for shared security, and reaffirmed their desire to further deepen the strategic and defence cooperation between Japan and India,
- recognised that peace and stability of the Indian and Pacific Oceans are crucial for ensuring prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region and the entire world,
- reiterated their unwavering commitment to working together towards a free and open Indo-Pacific region,
- agreed to explore cooperation with countries in the Indo-Pacific region through various initiatives that would further the shared vision of peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region, and
- exchanged on the current security situation in the Indo-Pacific region, including developments on the Korean Peninsula and in the South China Sea.

#### **Indian Diaspora :**

### **Indian Diaspora Largest in the World: UN Report**

- India is the leading country of origin of international migrants in 2019 with a 17.5 million strong diaspora, according to 'International Migrant Stock, 2019' released by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) on September 17, 2019.
- United States of America hosts the largest number of international migrants (51 million).

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**Top Ten Countries of Origin of international migrants:**

<u>Country</u>	<u>Diaspora (in Millions)</u>
India	17.5
Mexico	11.8
China	10.7
Russia	10.5
Syria	8.2
Bangladesh	7.8
Pakistan	6.3
Ukraine	5.9
Philippines	5.4
Afghanistan	5.1

**Total international migrants : 272 million**

**Other Facts:**

- The number of international migrants globally reached an estimated 272 million in 2019, an increase of 51 million since 2010.
- Currently, international migrants comprise 3.5 per cent of the global population, compared to 2.8 per cent in the year 2000.

**Top ten countries hosting migrants:**

- At the country level, about half of all international migrants reside in just 10 countries.
- United States of America (U.S.A) hosts the largest number of international migrants (51 million), equal to about 19 per cent of the world's total.

<u>Country</u>	<u>International migrants residing (in millions)</u>
U.S.A	51
Germany	13
Saudi Arabia	13
Russia	12
United Kingdom	10
United Arab Emirates	9
France	8
Canada	8
Australia	8
Italy	6

**Region wise:**

- Regionally, Europe hosts the largest number of international migrants (82 million), followed by Northern America (59 million) and Northern Africa and Western Asia (49 million).

<u>Region</u>	<u>Migrants</u>
Europe	82
North America	59
Northern Africa & West Asia	49

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### Share of international migrants in total population:

- The share of international migrants in total population varies considerably across geographic regions with the highest proportions recorded in Oceania (including Australia and New Zealand) (21.2%) and Northern America (16.0%) and the lowest in Latin America and the Caribbean (1.8%), Central and Southern Asia (1.0%) and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (0.8%).

### Pattern of Migration:

- Most international migrants move between countries located within the same region.
- A majority of international migrants in sub-Saharan Africa (89%), Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (83%), Latin America and the Caribbean (73%), and Central and Southern Asia (63 %) originated from the region in which they reside.
- By contrast, most of the international migrants that lived in Northern America (98%), Oceania (88%) and Northern Africa and Western Asia (59%) were born outside their region of residence.

### Forced displacements:

- Forced displacements across international borders continues to rise.
- Between 2010 and 2017, the global number of refugees and asylum seekers increased by about 13 million, accounting for close to a quarter of the increase in the number of all international migrants.
- Northern Africa and Western Asia hosted around 46 per cent of the global number of refugees and asylum seekers, followed by sub-Saharan Africa (21%).

### Gender Composition:

- Women comprise slightly less than half of all international migrants in 2019. The share of women and girls in the global number of international migrants fell slightly, from 49 per cent in 2000 to 48 per cent in 2019.

### Age composition:

- In terms of age, one out of every seven international migrants is below the age of 20 years.
- 38 million international migrants, equivalent to 14 per cent of global migrant population, were under 20 years of age.
- Three out of every four international migrants are of working age (20-64 years). 202 million international migrants, equivalent to 74 per cent of the global migrant population, were between the ages of 20 and 64.

### India-UN :

#### **Prime Minister's Address at the United Nations General Assembly**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his address at the 74th Session of the United Nations on September 27, 2019, stated that 2019 year is a very special because the entire world is celebrating the **150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi**. His message of truth and non-violence is very relevant even today for peace, development and progress in the world, the Prime Minister stated.

The Prime Minister stated that India has an **inspirational message** for many countries in the world with the successful implementation of the

- **world's biggest sanitation campaign** (Swachh Bharat) by building over 110 million toilets in just 5 years for its countrymen,
- **world's biggest health insurance scheme** (Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, giving 500 million people the facility of an annual health cover of 500,000 Rs for free treatment,
- **world's biggest financial inclusion scheme** under which more than 370 million bank accounts for the poor were opened in just 5 years, and

- 
- **world's biggest digital identification program**(Adhaar), giving citizens biometric identity , thereby ensuring that they can avail their rights, while the Government saves more than 20 billion dollars by checking bogus beneficiaries.

#### **What India is Going to Do :**

The Prime Minister stated that in the next 5 years, India is going to

- ensure water supply to 150 million homes apart from promoting water conservation, and
- build over 125,000 kilometers of new roads.

Similarly,

- by the year 2022, when India celebrates its 75th Independence day, India plans to build **20 million houses for the poor**,
- Though the world may have set itself the target of eradicating **Tuberculosis (TB)** by 2030, India is working towards **eradicating it by 2025**.

He stated that india's endeavours are centered on 1.3 billion Indians. But the dreams that these efforts are trying to fulfill are the same dreams that the entire world has, that every country has, and that every society has.

The Prime Minister stated that India is making progress on many fronts due to collective efforts and public participation. He stated that India's endeavours are inspired by a sense of duty.

#### **Global Warming:**

- The Prime Minister stated that from a historic and per capita emission perspective, India's contribution to Global Warming is very low. However, India is one of the leading nations when it comes to taking steps to address this issue.
- On one hand, India is working towards achieving the target of **450 Giga Watts of renewable energy** by 2030, and on the other hand, India has also taken the initiative to create the **International Solar Alliance**.

#### **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure” (CDRI)**

- One of the effects of Global Warming is the **increasing number** and **severity of natural disasters**, and at the same time they are appearing in new areas. In view of this, India has initiated the formation of the **"Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure” (CDRI)**. This coalition will help build infrastructure which can withstand natural disasters.

#### **India has Given the World Buddha's message of peace:**

- The **largest number of sacrifices made by soldiers of any country** for UN Peace keeping missions is from **India**. We belong to a country, that has **given the world, not war, but Buddha's message of peace**, the Prime Minister stated. And that is the reason why, India's voice against terrorism, to alert the world about this evil, rings with seriousness and outrage.
- The Prime Minister stated that India believes that terrorism is one of the biggest challenges, not for any single country, but for the entire world and humanity. The lack of unanimity amongst us on the issue of terrorism, dents those very principles, that are the basis for the creation of the U.N, the Prime Minister stated.

He stated that **for the sake of humanity it is absolutely imperative that the world unites against terrorism**, and that the world stands as one against terrorism.

#### **Message to the World:**

- The Prime Minister stated that modern technology in the 21st Century is bringing about sweeping changes in social life, personal life, economy, security, connectivity and international relations. In such a situation, a fragmented world is in the interest of no one. We do not have the option to confine ourselves within our boundaries. In this new era, we will have to give new direction and energy to multilateralism, and to the United Nations.

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- The Prime Minister stated that 125 years ago, the great Spiritual Guru, Swami Vivekananda, gave the message of "Harmony and Peace.... And NOT Dissension" to the world during the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago. Today, the message from the world's largest democracy, for the International community is still the same: "**Harmony and Peace**", the Prime Minister stated in his conclusion.

### **No First Use Policy of Nuclear Weapons :**

## **India's 'No First Use' Policy of Nuclear Weapons**

On August 16, 2019, the Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh announced that

- India's adherence to the principle of 'No First Use' Policy of Nuclear Weapons is not sacrosanct, and
- India has strictly adhered to this doctrine till now but what happens in future depends on the circumstances.

(August 16, 2019, marks the first death anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, under whose government India conducted nuclear tests in 1998.)

### **'No First Use' Policy of India on Nuclear Weapons:**

After the 1998 nuclear test

- India declared itself a nuclear weapon state, and
- enunciated a doctrine of 'no first use' of nuclear weapons.

### **What is 'No First Use Policy'?**

- India would not use the nuclear weapons first against an adversary in any conflict.
- Nuclear weapons would be used only for retaliatory attacks.
- Once attacked, India's response would be massive through retaliatory attacks.
- For the purpose of retaliatory attacks, India would only maintain only minimum number of nuclear weapons in its stockpile.

No First Use Policy was later made part of 'India's Nuclear Doctrine' formulated in 2003. (Details given in additional information.)

### **Demands for Revoking 'No First Use' Policy:**

But, off late, there has been a demand that India should revoke its 'No First Use' Policy on nuclear weapons for the following reasons.

- India's restraint through 'No First Use' Policy gives Pakistan an edge.

Pakistan has officially stated that it retains the right to strike first with nuclear weapons due to India's edge in conventional military attack by armed forces. Hence, Pakistan may use nuclear weapons in case of a conventional Indian military attack.

- There is also increasing asymmetry in conventional military power between India and China i.e China has more armed forces than India which gives it an edge in conventional military wars.

### **What is 'First Use' Policy:**

- A country fearing an adversary would attack it with nuclear weapons would pre-empt that attack with a nuclear first strike to destroy as much of the adversary's nuclear arsenal as possible. (or)
- A country in danger of conventional military defeat on the battlefield would employ tactical nuclear weapons against adversary military forces to forestall that defeat.

Tactical nuclear weapons are short-range nuclear weapons, such as artillery shells, and short-range missiles, deployed for use only in battlefield operations while nuclear weapons can be used for large scale destruction.

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### **Advantages of 'No First Use' Policy:**

After the first nuclear test in 1974, India faced lot of international isolation with denial of transfer of advanced technologies to India.

However, the 'No First Use' Policy' announced by India after the 1998 tests helped India in the following ways.

- India got the image of responsible nuclear power and has been accepted in the global nuclear order
- Countries like U.S.A, and France agreed to transfer civilian nuclear technology (for setting up nuclear power plants) to India.
- India is also now a member of most of the technology control regimes such as the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Wassenaar Arrangement.
- It is also actively pursuing full membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

### **Consequences of Revoking 'No First Use' Policy:**

If India revokes the 'no first use' pledge and opts for first use of nuclear weapons

- It might harm India's image worldwide as responsible nuclear power.
- It could spark off a nuclear arms race with India's neighbours: Pakistan and China
- Retaliatory attack requires maintenance of only limited nuclear weapons. But adopting a 'first use' of nuclear weapons would require a far bigger inventory of nuclear weapons particularly as eliminating adversaries' nuclear capabilities would require targeting of its nuclear assets involving multiple warheads.
- It also requires massive investment not only in weapons and delivery systems but also intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) infrastructure.

### **Additional Information:**

#### **India's Test of Nuclear Weapons:**

- So far, India conducted nuclear weapons tests two times i.e 1974 and 1998.
- Both the tests were conducted in Pokhran, a desert area in Rajasthan.
- Hence, these tests are called Pokhran-I and Pokhran-II tests.
- Pokhran-I was codenamed 'Operation Smiling Budha' while Pokhran-II was codenamed 'Operation Shakti-98'.

#### **Objective of the tests is**

- to ensure self-defence and national security.
- India has two belligerent neighbours i.e China and Pakistan with which it has territorial disputes.
- Infact, India decided to test nuclear weapons in response to China which become a nuclear state in the 1960s. It conducted nuclear weapons tests in 1964 and 1967 and declared itself a nuclear state.
- However, in response to Pokhran-II tests conducted by India in 1998, Pakistan also conducted nuclear weapons tests and declared itself a nuclear state.
- But unlike India, Pakistan has not officially announced 'no first use' policy because India has an edge in conventional military attack by armed forces.
- However, this has led to demands in India that India also should revoke its 'no first use' policy.

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### About India's Nuclear Doctrine:

India's Nuclear doctrine was adopted formally on January 4, 2003. The major components of the doctrine are

- No First Use,
- Credible Minimum Deterrent, and
- vesting decision making powers regarding use of nuclear weapons in political leadership.

### Details:

1. The basic principle of India's nuclear doctrine is "**No First Use**". According to this policy, nuclear weapons will only be used in retaliation against a nuclear attack on Indian Territory or on Indian forces anywhere.
2. India would build and maintain a **Credible Minimum Deterrent**. This includes
  - (i). Sufficient and survivable nuclear forces to inflict unacceptable damage to the enemy,
  - (ii). Nuclear Forces must be operationally prepared at all times.
  - (iii). Effective Intelligence and Early Warning Capabilities.
  - (iv). Communication of Deterrence Capability to the enemy.
3. If a country invades India by nuclear missile, its retaliation will be that much massive and terrible that the enemy experiences an unacceptable damage and would not be able to recover easily.
4. The right to take nuclear action against the enemy will only be taken by the **political leadership** of the country through the Nuclear Command Authority headed by the Prime Minister.

The Nuclear Command Authority (NCA) comprises of an Executive Council and a Political Council. The Executive Council is headed by the National Security Advisor (NSA) provides the inputs for decision to be taken by the Political Council.
5. Nuclear weapons will **not be used against non-nuclear state**.
6. If there is any chemical or biological attack against India or Indian security forces, then India will keep the option of nuclear attack open in its response.
7. India would continue **moratorium on nuclear tests**.
8. India is committed to the goal of a nuclear weapon free world, through global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament.

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## **INTERNATIONAL POLITY**

### ***Saudi Arabia :***

#### **Two Major Saudi Arabian Oil Installations Hit by Drone Strike**

Two key oil installations in **Aramco facility in Abqaiq, Saudi Arabia** were hit by **Drone attacks** on September 14, 2019. Saudi Arabia is the world's largest oil exporter. Oil and gas sector accounts for about 50 per cent of gross domestic product, and about 70 per cent of export earnings.

#### **Impact:**

- The targeted oil facilities can process 8.45 million barrels of crude oil a day, the bulk of production in Saudi Arabia.
- The attacks damaged facilities that process the vast quantity of the Saudi Arabia's crude output, and
- raised the risk of a disruption in world oil supplies.

#### **Houthi Rebels Claim Responsibility:**

- Yemen's Houthi rebels claimed the responsibility for the attacks. The Houthis have attacked Saudi infrastructure earlier also, primarily with less accurate ballistic missiles.
- The Houthis stated that they had launched the aerial attacks with 10 drones as **a retaliation on Saudi Arabia for its intervention in Yemen's civil war** more than four years ago.
- The war in Yemen began in 2014, when the Houthi rebels seized control of the capital and most of Yemen's northwest, sending the government into exile. A coalition of Arab nations led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, with some support from the United States, began bombing Yemen in 2015, hoping to push the Houthis back and restore the government.
- Saudi Arabia thought a bombing campaign would quickly crush its enemies in Yemen. But even after four years, the Houthis did not give up.
- The war has settled into a **stalemate**, and the **Houthis** have **developed** increasingly **sophisticated ways of striking back** at Saudi Arabia, most **notably with drones**.
- In **July 2019**, in a major blow to the Saudi-led coalition, the **United Arab Emirates**, which had been providing arms, money and, crucially, ground troops in Yemen, **announced a rapid pullout** from a conflict as it had become too costly.
- Although the Trump administration has been a vocal supporter of Saudi efforts to deter Iran and its allies in the region, congressional opposition to the sale of arms and the deployment of extra troops in Saudi Arabia has limited the scope of support from the United States. This move leaves Saudi Arabia to continue the war on its own.
- The **conflict in Yemen** has **killed thousands of civilians**, many of them in Saudi airstrikes. The Saudi-led bombing devastated the **impoverished country** and **exacerbated the world's worst humanitarian crisis** with **millions at risk of starvation** and **millions of others homeless**.
- In a report presented to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva in September 2019, a panel of experts said both sides in the conflict were committing horrific human rights abuses, including arbitrary killings, rape and torture. The atrocities underscored the collective failure of the international community, the panel said.

#### **U.S blames Iran:**

- However, United States, a close ally of Saudi Arabia, accused Iran of being behind the attacks and offered support for Saudi Arabia's self defense.
- Houthis managed to hit facilities deep in Saudi territory, some 500 miles from Yemeni soil. American and Saudi officials suspect that Iran has dispatched technicians to Yemen to train the Houthis on drone and missile technology.

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- The **Houthis** are part of a regional network of militant groups aligned with and **backed** by **Iran, Saudi Arabia's regional rival**.
  - Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps has been training its militia proxies in the region, from Lebanon to Yemen, in more sophisticated warfare using drones. In Yemen, for example, after Houthi missiles targeting Saudi Arabia were intercepted, Iran moved to train Houthis in drone technology, taking groups to Iran to master assembling, managing and repairing drones.

#### **Saudi Arabia's Vulnerability Exposed:**

- The attacks exposed a Saudi vulnerability in the war against the Houthis.
- They also demonstrated how relatively cheap it has become to stage such high-profile strikes. The drones used may have cost \$15,000 or less to build.

Saudi Arabia has vast financial, military and intelligence capabilities. It is the world's third-highest spender on military equipment in 2018. On the other hand, Houthis do not have significant financial resources, but drones give them a cheap and effective way to hurt Saudi Arabia.

- **Drone attacks** not only damage vital economic infrastructure, but can also increase security costs for Saudi Arabia, and **disrupt energy markets**.

#### **UN Human Rights :**

### **UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Asks India to End Lockdown in Jammu & Kashmir**

Addressing the 42nd Session of the U.N Human Rights Council (HRC) on September 9, 2019, Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, urged India

- to end the lockdown in Kashmir, and
- restore basic communications services.
- She noted the situation in Kashmir and Assam, where lakhs have been excluded from the National Register of Citizens, and asked the Indian government to respect civil rights.
- She expressed deep concern about the impact of recent actions by the Government of India on the human rights of Kashmiris, including restrictions on internet communications and peaceful assembly, and the detention of local political leaders and activists.
- She stated that it is important that the people of Kashmir are consulted and engaged in any decision-making processes that have an impact on their future.
- India ended the special status for the State of Jammu and Kashmir guaranteed under Article 370 of the Constitution and put the newly created Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir in a state of indefinite curfew.

#### **On Assam NRC:**

Michelle Bachelet

- stated that exclusion of 1.9 million nationals from the exercise of the NRC of Assam has caused great uncertainty and anxiety among the people, and
- appealed to the Government to ensure due process during the appeals process, prevent deportation or detention, and ensure people are protected from statelessness.

#### **India's Response:**

India stated that

- it has free media, vibrant civil society and institutional framework that upholds human rights in the country,
- cross border terrorism emanating from Pakistan has hurt India and terrorism is the worst form of human rights abuse, and

- 
- restrictions are being eased gradually.

Jammu and Kashmir's Civil Administration is ensuring basic services, essential supplies, normal functioning of institutions.

- India also called on the UNHRC to seek global action against terrorists and state sponsors of terror groups as global silence only emboldens terrorists.

**On NRC of Assam:**

- India stated that National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam is a "statutory, transparent and non discriminatory" process and the outcome of this judiciary supervised mechanism will conform to Indian Law and will be consistent with India's democratic traditions.

**About UN Human Rights Council:**

- It is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations.
- It was set up in 2006 replacing United Nations Commission on Human Rights, and
- consists of 47 states elected by the UN General Assembly based on geographic quotas. Elected states have a three year term.

**Responsibilities** are

- promotion and protection of human rights around the globe, and
- addressing situations of human rights violations by making recommendations on them.

**Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland.

**Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN Human Rights) :**

- It acts as the Secretariat of the UN Human rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland. It is headed by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- It was set up by U.N in 1993.
- **Head of the Organisation** is called UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- The High Commissioner for Human Rights is the principal human rights official of the United Nations.

**Responsibilities:**

- promote and protect the enjoyment and full realization, by all people, of all rights established in the Charter of the United Nations and in international human rights laws and treaties.
- provides assistance in the form of technical expertise and capacity-development to countries in order to support the implementation of international human rights.
- speaks out objectively on human rights violations.

**Current Head:** Michelle Bachelet of Chile.

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## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### ENVIRONMENT :

#### 14<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Held in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh

- 14<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of Parties to United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was held in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh from September 2 to 13, 2019.
- 1. Member countries to the Convention adopted Delhi Declaration in which they recognized that land degradation/desertification leads to major economic, social and environmental problems such as poverty, lack of food security, biodiversity loss, water scarcity, reduced resilience to climate change and forced migration, and agreed to achieve 'land degradation neutrality' by 2030 to save productive land from degradation.
- 2. All the member countries will have national targets for action on 'land degradation neutrality'
- 3. The framework used for reporting action will be also improved to ensure that it captures the progress of member countries.

#### **A Sustainable Development Goal:**

- Achieving 'Land Degradation Neutrality' is also one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) adopted by United Nations for global action.
- Goal 15 of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) calls for combating desertification, restoring degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world by 2030.

#### **What is Land Degradation Neutrality :**

**According to UNCCD** definition, Land Degradation Neutrality is

- a state whereby the **amount and quality of land resources**, necessary to support ecosystem functions and services and enhance food security, **remains stable or increases** within specified temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems.

#### **What is Land Degradation?**

- Land degradation is defined as the temporary or permanent decline in the productive capacity of the land.

#### **What are the causes for Land Degradation?**

- Deforestation,
- shifting cultivation,
- salinization,
- acidification,
- loss of soil cover due to rainfall and surface run off,
- wind erosion, etc.

#### **Impact of Land Degradation:**

1. Loss of livelihood to the people dependent on land,  
(Globally 2.6 billion people depend directly on agriculture for a living)
2. loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services (land is source of food, water)
3. leads to increase in global warming as soil performs carbon absorption and storage functions.

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Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary of UNCCD, stated that land restoration, at scale, is one of the cheapest solutions to address the global crises of climate and biodiversity loss.

**Extent of Land Degradation in India:**

- Nearly 30 per cent of India is degraded or facing desertification.
- Of India's total geographical area of 328.72 million hectares (MHA), 96.4 MHA is under desertification.
- In eight states - Rajasthan, Delhi, Goa, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Nagaland, Tripura and Himachal Pradesh - around 40 to 70 per cent of land has undergone desertification.

**India's Commitments:**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who addressed the Conference, stated that India would restore 26 Million Hectares degraded land by 2030.

**Call for 'Global Water Action Agenda':**

- The Prime Minister stated that desertification affects over two third of countries of the world, and
- called for creating a '**Global Water Action Agenda**' by UNCCD
- He stated that when we address degraded lands we also address water scarcity issue. Augmenting water supply, enhancing water recharge, slowing down water run off and retaining moisture in the soil are all parts of a holistic land and water strategy. Hence, creating a 'Global Water Action Agenda' is central to the land degradation neutrality strategy, the Prime Minister stated.

**Centres of Excellence:**

- India would also set up a centre for excellence in India at the Indian Council for Forest Research and Education to further develop a scientific approach and facilitate induction of technology to land degradation issues.
- These Centres will also help UNCCD Member countries to access knowledge, technology and train their manpower to address land degradation related issues.

**About United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD):**

- It was established in 1994.
- Member countries: 197.
- **Objective:**  
combat land degradation, desertification and mitigate the effects of drought in countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification.
- The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) plays a central role in addressing the above issues through  
awareness-raising,  
capacity-building, **REDDY IAS STUDY CIRCLE**  
sharing of successful experiences,  
technology transfer,  
provision of scientific support,  
mobilization of resources and provision of assistance to countries in implementing policies at national, subregional, regional and international levels.

**Additional Information:**

**UNCCD Part of Rio Conventions:**

- UNCCD was one of the three conventions of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit called 'Rio Conventions' namely

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Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD),  
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and  
United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

**1. Convention on Biological Diversity:**

- The objectives of the CBD are the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and

fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from commercial and other utilization of genetic resources.

The agreement covers all ecosystems, species, and genetic resources.

**2. United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification:**

- The UNCCD aims to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought in countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification through effective actions at all levels, supported by international co-operation and partnership arrangements.

**3. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change:**

- The UNFCCC sets an overall framework for intergovernmental efforts to tackle the challenge posed by climate change.

- Its objectives are to

stabilize greenhouse-gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system, within a time-frame, and

enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner.

### **Global Climate Strike**

- On **20th September 2019**, millions of people around the world participated in a **global climate strike** calling for immediate action on climate change from world leaders.
- In **New York**, 16-year-old **Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg** led young people in the protest.
- The strike came **days before the UN Climate Summit** held on 23rd September, in New York.

### **Climate Change Report Highlights the Urgent need for Solid Actions to Combat Climate Change**

- A landmark report on climate change called "**United in Science**" was released by **United Nations on 22nd September, 2019** to inform the **UN Climate Action Summit** held on **23rd September, 2019**.
- The report is a **synthesis of key findings** by the **world's leading climate science organizations (World Meteorological Organization, Global Atmosphere Watch, Global Carbon Project, etc.)** which highlights the **immediate need for concrete action plans to stop global warming and the catastrophic effects of climate change**

**Highlights of the Report:**

**1. Climate during 2015 - 2019:**

**2015 - 2019 is the warmest five-year period on record:**

- The average **global temperatures during the five years 2015 - 2019 is on track to be the hottest compared to any other five-year period on record.**
- It is estimated to be **1.1°Celsius (± 0.1°C)** above pre-industrial (1850-1900) and **0.2 Celsius warmer than 2011-2015.**

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#### The decrease in sea ice and ice mass continues:

- **Glacier mass loss for 2015-2019 is the highest compared to any five-year period on record.**
- **Arctic summer sea-ice has decreased by approximately 12% per decade in the last 40 years (1979-2018).**
- Winter sea-ice extent's four lowest values were between 2015 and 2019.
- The quantity of ice lost per annum from the Antarctic ice sheet increased at least six times between 1979 and 2017.

#### Accelerated sea-level rise and more acidic seawater:

- The rate of global mean sea-level rise increased from 3.04 millimeters per year (mm/yr) during the period 1997-2006 to 4mm/yr during the period 2007-2016 due to accelerated ocean warming and melting of the West Antarctica and Greenland ice sheets.
- Ocean acidity increased by 26% since the beginning of the industrial era.

#### 2. Record Greenhouse Gas levels in the Atmosphere:

- **In 2018, global carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) concentration was 407.8 parts per million (ppm), 2.2 ppm higher than 2017.**
- **The last time Earth's atmosphere contained 400 parts per million CO<sub>2</sub> was about 3-5 million years ago** when global mean surface temperatures were 2 to 3°C warmer than today.
- Amount of the leading greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) in the atmosphere reached record levels.

#### 3. Global Carbon Budget

- **Carbon dioxide emissions grew 2%, reaching a record high of 37 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2018.**
- The annual rise in global energy use is higher than the rise in the amount of renewable energy leading to growth in fossil fuel use.

### United Nations Climate Action Summit 2019

- **The UN Climate Action Summit** was held on **23rd September 2019** in **New York City** to **bring momentum to global action against climate change** as greenhouse gases and global temperatures continue to rise, and the impacts of climate change are already a reality.

#### Highlights of Secretary-General Antonio Guterres's Speech :

- The Secretary-General said that it is **time for climate action, not climate talk or negotiations.**
- reminded the "**Global warming of 1.5 degree Celsius**" report released in **October 2018 by the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)**, which tells that any long-term rise of global temperature more than 1.5 degree Celsius over pre-industrial levels will lead to irreversible damage to our ecosystems.
- (Currently, Global warming is estimated to be 1.1°Celsius (± 0.1°C) above pre-industrial level and is projected to reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate.)
- He also **reminded that, according to the report, it is still possible to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius** only by rapidly transforming all fundamental aspects of society and pursuing new models of development that align to limiting global warming.

#### Greta Thunberg's Speech:

- 16-year-old Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg spoke at the Summit condemning the world leaders for not doing enough to combat climate change

#### Significant Commitments Made by Various Countries:

- **China** declared that it would cut emissions by over 12 billion tons annually and would pursue a low carbon development.

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- **France** declared that it would not enter into any trade agreement with countries that have policies that oppose the Paris Agreement
  - **Germany** committed to carbon neutrality by 2050
  - (What is **Carbon Neutrality**? It refers to attaining net-zero carbon emissions by balancing out the amount of carbon emitted into the atmosphere and the amount of carbon removed from the atmosphere—through planting trees, carbon offsetting, etc. **Carbon offsetting** is a way/method for individuals, companies, and governments to offset their carbon emissions to achieve carbon neutrality when they are unable to reduce/avoid/remove carbon emissions by themselves. The method involves buying carbon offsets to financially support projects that are reducing greenhouse gases ex: renewable energy projects. Offsets are measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide - equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e). Buying one tonne of carbon offset is equal to reducing one tonne of carbon dioxide or its equivalent in other greenhouse gases.)
  - **India** promised to increase its renewable energy capacity beyond 175GW and to 450 GW later (The timeframe for 450 GW target is not mentioned) and announced that 80 countries had joined the International Solar Alliance initiated by India.
  - **Pakistan** announced that it would plant more than 10 billion trees over the next five years.
  - **The European Union** announced that at least 25% of the next EU budget would be allotted to climate-related projects.
  - **The Russian Federation** announced that they will enter the Paris Agreement.
  - **The United Kingdom** doubled its total international climate finance to 11.6 billion pounds for the period 2020 to 2025
  - **12 countries** pledged financial contributions to the Green Climate Fund (The official financial fund to help developing countries to fight climate change).

### **Prime Minister Modi Pledges to Increase India's Non Fossil Fuel Capacity to 175 GW by 2022**

- **On September 23, 2016**, while addressing the **UN Climate Summit in New York**, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** has **called for a global people's movement** to bring behavioral change to address climate change and **announced India's ongoing and upcoming commitments to combat climate change.**

#### **Highlights of the Speech:**

##### **National Level:**

- Announced that **India's non-fossil Fuel target (renewable energy) will be increased beyond 175 GW by 2022** and later to 450 GW (The timeframe for 450 GW target is not mentioned)
- Announced plans **to make Indian transport sector green through e-mobility (electric powered).**
- Announced that **India is working to substantially increase the percentage of biofuel blend in petrol and diesel.**
- Mentioned providing **clean cooking gas (LPG- Liquefied Petroleum Gas) to 150 million families in India**
- Mentioned the **launch of Jal Jeevan mission** under which India plans to spend approximately 50 billion dollars **for water conservation, rainwater harvesting, and the development of water resources.**
- Mentioned encouraging a people's movement in India to end single-use plastic use on the eve of Indian Independence Day on 15 August 2019.

##### **International Level:**

- Mentioned the **International Solar Alliance campaign leadership group** that **India and Sweden with other countries** are launching. The intention is to **provide governments and the private sector**

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with a platform for cooperation in technology innovation to develop low carbon pathways for the industry. **80 countries joined the campaign.**

- **Invited the UN member states to join the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure that India is launching to make infrastructure disaster resilient.**
- **Mentioned the 1-million-dollar funding by India for solar panels on the roof of the UN building.**

### **IPCC Report Warns of Serious Effects of Global Warming on the Oceans**

- **On 25th September 2019, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has released a special report called "Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate" which highlights the grave impact of global warming on the oceans and cryosphere (cryosphere constitutes glaciers, sea ice, and permafrost - any ground that remains frozen for at least two consecutive years)**

**What is the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)?**

- IPCC is an **international body of scientists that assess scientific research related to climate change.**
- IPCC's report **summaries inform governments necessary information to make policy decisions.**
- It was formed in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), and The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

**Highlights of the Report:**

- **The impact of global warming is here and is felt from the top of the mountains to the oceans.**

- **Human-caused global warming is already**

- 1. rapidly melting glaciers on the mountains to ice sheets in the polar regions**

- 2. warming up the oceans causing extreme impacts like frequent and extreme El Niño and La Niña events, marine heatwaves and severe cyclones (El Niño - warmer than the average surface temperature in the central and east-central Pacific Ocean. La Niña -cooler than normal surface water temperature in the central and eastern equatorial pacific)**

- 1. Rapidly melting glaciers in the mountains to ice sheets in the polar regions:**

- a. Melting Glaciers in the mountains:**

**Impact:**

- **Will affect millions of people's water resources:** people in the mountains and downstream, who get fresh water from the glaciers have to adapt to the changes in the amount of meltwater and water quality.
- **Rise in the amount of melt water causes flooding, changes in avalanches, landslides, and ground stabilization, which impacts the infrastructure, cultural, recreational, and tourism assets.**

- b. Melting Ice Sheets (Ice sheets are continental glaciers that cover large areas of land in the polar regions)**

- **Melting of Greenland and Antarctica ice sheets are the major cause of the rising sea levels all over the world at 1.8 millimeters per year.**

**Impact:**

- **Rising sea levels have a serious impact on coastal communities**
- **For some major coastal cities, especially in tropical regions, 100-year floods could become annual events by 2050**

- 2. Warming Oceans and its extreme impact:**

- **The oceans have continuously absorbed more than 90% of the excess heat trapped in the atmosphere since the 1970s due to the increase in the greenhouse gases**

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- The rate of ocean warming doubled since 1993
  - This heat absorption is causing ocean warming which is resulting in extreme impacts on the ocean like
    - a. **extreme and frequent El Niño and La Niña events**
    - b. **marine heatwaves, surface acidification, oxygen decline and**
    - c. **extremely severe cyclones**
  - a. **Extreme and Frequent El Niño and La Niña events:**
    - Extreme El Niños and La Niña are likely to become more frequent

#### **What are El Niño and La Niña events?**

- El Niño and La Niña events are **a natural phenomenon that occur in the Pacific Ocean every 2 to 7 years that cause changes in temperature and rainfall globally.**

#### **El Niño Event:**

- Characterized by **warmer than the average surface temperature in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean**
- Occurs every 2 to 7 years

#### **Impact of frequent and extreme El Niños on the world:**

- Depending on the season, **extreme El Niño events can cause extreme rainfall** in some regions like **northwestern South America (Ecuador and Peru)** and **severe droughts** in **other parts of the world like eastern and southern Africa and some parts of Asia-Pacific region.**
- The extreme El Niño in 2015-16 hit Ethiopia and South Africa with severe heatwaves and one of the worst droughts in 50 years resulting in extensive food grain shortages.

#### **Impact on India:**

- **Frequent and extreme El Niño events will adversely affect Indian monsoons resulting in severe droughts.** For example, during the extreme El Niño in 2015-16 India experienced droughts
- **A moderate El Niño can result in an erratic and deficit monsoon in India.**

#### **La Niña Event:**

- It is the **opposite of El Niño event** and causes the opposite effects like **cooler than normal ocean temperatures in eastern and equatorial central Pacific Ocean.**

#### **b. Marine Heatwaves, Acidification and Oxygen Decline:**

##### **What are marine heatwaves?**

- **Abnormally warm seawater temperatures for a prolonged period.**
- Marine heat waves are a **relatively new phenomenon.**
- They are a **result of the warming oceans**

##### **What does the report say?**

- Marine heatwaves have doubled in frequency and are becoming more intense since 1982

##### **Global Impact:**

- Marine heatwaves **adversely affect sea life**
- Frequent marine heatwaves could **kill the coral reefs** which are home to 21% of marine life and act as barriers that reduce the intensity of storms and waves for the coastal communities.
- Already 60% of the world's coral reefs are threatened, and 30% are near breaking point.
- Marine heatwaves combined with increased ocean acidification (due to absorption of CO<sub>2</sub> from atmosphere) and reduction of oxygen in the ocean water (caused due to warming of the oceans),

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**deplete fisheries, which are an important source of food and livelihood in the coastal communities.**

- A range of marine species have been already migrating in search of cooler water

**Impact on India:**

- In recent years, **fish mortality due to heat waves caused substantial damage to aquaculture industries along the Indian Ocean-rim.**

**c. Extremely Severe and Frequent Cyclones:**

**Global Impact:**

- **Warmer oceans increase moisture in the atmosphere leading to intense rainfall and stronger cyclones (cyclone wind speeds increase with increase in ocean temperature)**

**Impact on India:**

- Increases the chances of extremely severe cyclones in the Arabian Sea, post-monsoon
- Ex: Cyclone Nilofar in 2014 was the first extremely severe recorded cyclone in the Arabian sea that caused heavy rainfall on the western coast of India, though it did not make landfall.

**SPACE :**

**Discovery of Evidence of Water in the Atmosphere of Exoplanet K2-18b**

- **On Sep 11,2019 a team of researchers at University College London in UK for the first time found spectroscopic evidence of water vapour in the atmosphere of an exoplanet K2-18b orbiting a Red Dwarf Star (A star with a much lesser mass than the Sun) using the data from Hubble Telescope recorded in 2017 and 2018.**
- K2-18b is an exoplanet in the habitable zone of a Red Dwarf Star which is in the Leo constellation at a distance of 110 light years from earth.
- Habitable zone of a star is the area surrounding the star that has the right temperatures for liquid water to exist.
- K2-18b exoplanet has eight times the mass of earth.

**What are exoplanets?**

- **Exoplanets are planets which orbit a star outside the solar system.**
- According to NASA 4000 exoplanets were discovered so far since the 1900s and the existence of at least 3000 other potential exoplanets is yet to be confirmed.

**What space devices were used to discover exoplanets?**

- **Kepler Space Telescope launched by NASA in 2009 accounts for the most exoplanet discoveries so far.**
- **TESS (Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite) is the most recent two-year survey satellite launched by NASA on April 18, 2018** which is performing an all sky survey to search for exoplanets that are transiting nearby stars.
- **James Webb Space Telescope will be the future exoplanet survey telescope to be launched by NASA in 2021.**

**ISRO Launched Project NETRA to Protect Indian Space Assets from Space Debris and Other Threats**

- **In August 2019, ISRO has launched "Project NETRA," a Space Situational Awareness (SSA) System to predict threats from space debris and others to Indian satellites.**

**Significance of Project NETRA (Network for space object Tracking and Analysis):**

- **Project NETRA gives India capability in Space Situational Awareness (SSA)**

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- **India gets access to precise and comprehensive data on space debris and other threats to the satellites as India joins the efforts of the global network in tracking space debris, warning, and avoiding collisions.**
  - (India has been using the selective data, which may not be comprehensive, shared by the NOARD (North American Aerospace Command) and other public domains to assess space debris threats and carry out collision avoidance maneuvers of Indian satellites).
  - NOARD is a combined initiative of USA and Canada.
  - **Strengthens India's National Security: Project NETRA can also be used to detect any missile or other space attacks on India**
  - (NOARD also uses its observation facilities like satellites, ground and air radars for warnings against attacks on USA and Canada from space, air or sea)

#### **Project NETRA Details:**

- **Under NETRA, the initial focus of SSA will be on Low- Earth Orbits (LEO)**
- **ISRO is setting up a network of observational facilities under Project NETRA, which includes telescopes, connected radars, data processing, and control centers for identifying, tracking ,and cataloging space debris and other objects as small as 10 cm up to a range of 3400 Km.**
- Eventually, the aim is to expand the SSA to geostationary orbit (GEO) at 36,000 Km high where communication satellites are present.
- The estimated project cost is Rupees 400 crore

#### **What is Space Debris/ Space Junk?**

- **Space debris consists of both natural and manmade particles/objects.**
- Natural space debris: meteoroids, and pieces of asteroids.
- **Manmade space debris: Manmade objects in space that are currently of no use.** Ranges from paint fragments from manmade objects in space to dead satellites, old and abandoned spacecraft and launch vehicle stages, and debris from space missions.
- **Manmade space debris is also called orbital debris as they orbit around the Earth.**
- Natural space debris, like meteoroids, orbit around the sun.

#### **Effects of Space Debris:**

- **Space debris poses a serious threat to satellites, and astronauts in International Space Station (ISS).** Threats range from causing damage to a satellite making it nonfunctional or destroying it to catastrophic collision with ISS threatening the safety of astronauts.
- **Even a small fragment of space debris can cause damage to satellites, and spacecrafts, when collided as space debris can travel at very high speeds up to 17,500 mph.**
- In 2009, a dead Russian satellite (space debris) accidentally collided with and destroyed a live **U.S. Iridium commercial satellite, which lead to more than 2,000 pieces of space debris.**
- There are 500,000 pieces of space debris of the size of a marble (about 1cm) or larger and millions of pieces of debris that are not trackable due to their tiny size.
- **For example, when space debris collision with International Space Station (ISS) or a satellite is predicted, debris avoidance maneuvers are performed where the orbit of ISS/ satellite is changed slightly to avoid collision with space debris.**

#### **India's Satellites:**

- 15 communication satellites in the geostationary orbit (GEO)
- 13 remote sensing satellites in the Lower Earth Orbit (LEO)
- 8 navigation satellites in the Medium Earth Orbit (MEO)

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## **Mangalyaan Mission Completes Five Years**

- **On September 24 2019, India's Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM, also called Mangalyaan, which was designed to last for six months, has completed five years of orbiting Mars and is predicted to last for some more time.**
- **The extended life of the mission is attributed to effective control of the mission that led to fuel saving.** Usually, some fuel is allotted for rectification purposes/corrections when encountered with non-normal situations, but as the mission launch was perfect, the fuel was saved, leading to longer than planned mission life.

### **Mangalyaan mission:**

- It is India's first interplanetary mission
- Launched on November 5 2013 and orbiting Mars since September 24 2014
- Lauded for its cost-effectiveness

### **Important Finding from the mission:**

- **Martian dust storms could rise to hundreds of kilometers.**

### **Data Collected :**

- The thousands of images from the Orbiter helped ISRO prepare a Martian Atlas.
- The two moons of Mars, Phobos, and Deimos were also imaged by the Mars Color Camera (MCC), which is one of the five payloads on the Orbiter.
- **Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM) is the only Mars orbiter that could image the full planetary disc of Mars (the full circular shape of Mars) in one view frame and the far side of Deimos.**
- " The data collected was also useful in preparing 23 publications in peer-reviewed journals.

## **Chandrayaan-2 Orbiter Successfully Placed in the Lunar Orbit, but Vikram Lander failed to Soft-Land on the Moon**

- On September 2, 2019, Vikram Lander was detached from the Orbiter in preparation for landing.
- The Orbiter continues to orbit the moon as planned.
- On September, 2019, ISRO lost contact with the Vikram lander at an altitude of 2.1 km from the landing location on the Lunar South Pole, minutes before the planned soft landing.
- ISRO and NASA have confirmed that the **Vikram lander has hard landed which might have damaged it.**
- **ISRO could not regain contact with the lander** even after repeated attempts.
- **NASA** directed its **Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO)** to fly over Vikram's planned landing site on September 17, 2019 but could not get clear images due to large shadows as it was dusk in lunar time. (Daylight on the Moon lasts for 14 Earth days, followed by darkness for 14 Earth days)
- ISRO's chief, K.Sivan, has called the mission a 98% success as the **orbiter is expected to send back data for at least one year or even up to seven years**

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## **PERSONS, AWARDS & SPORTS (August & September 2019)**

### **INTERNATIONAL PERSONS**

**Jacques Chirac (86)**, a two-term French president, the first leader to acknowledge France's role in the Holocaust and defiantly opposed the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, died on September 26, 2019. He served as President from 1995 to 2007 - making him France's second longest serving post-war president after his immediate Socialist predecessor Francois Mitterrand.

He was champion of European Union and took France into the single European currency. Among his major domestic political reforms was a reduction of the presidential term of office from seven to five years, and the abolition of compulsory military service.

In 1995, Chirac became the first French leader to recognise the country's role in the deportation of Jews to death camps during World War Two.

**Robert Mugabe (95)**, Zimbabwe's former president, died in Singapore on September 6, 2019. He was undergoing medical treatment in Singapore since April 2019. He was ousted in a military coup in 2017 after 37 years in power.

The former president is praised for broadening access to health and education for the black majority in Zimbabwe after becoming the President in 1980. But, later years were marked by violent repression of his political opponents and Zimbabwe's economic ruin.

**Toni Morrison (88)**, a Nobel laureate who chronicled the African American experience in fiction over five decades, died in New York on August 5, 2019. She wrote 11 novels, nine non-fiction works, five children's books, two short stories, and two plays throughout her 88 years of life.

She is the first black woman to receive the Nobel literature prize. She also won the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for her fictional work 'Beloved' in which she examines the destructive legacy of slavery in USA as it chronicles the life of a black woman named Sethe, from her pre-Civil War days as a slave in Kentucky to her time in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1873.

**David Koch (79)**, a billionaire American industrialist and influential donor, died on August 23, 2019. Mr. Koch retired in 2018 as Executive Vice President of Koch Industries, the conglomerate he co-owned with Mr. Charles and built into the second largest family-owned company in the U.S. which has vast holdings in oil refineries, paper mills, fertiliser plants, cattle ranches and other ventures.

He is also known for his philanthropy. He gave millions of dollars to Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, the M D Anderson Cancer in Houston and other institutions.

David Koch and his brother Charles, each with an estimated net worth of USD 50.5 billion, were tied for 11th place in 2019 on the Forbes 500 list of the nation's richest men.

### **NATIONAL PERSONS**

**Ram Jethmalani (95)**, eminent Supreme Court lawyer and former union law minister, passed away on September 8, 2019. He fought several high-profile cases in the Supreme Court, high courts and trial courts.

One of the cases for which he will be remembered for is the KM Nanavati vs State of Maharashtra case in which he was the prosecutor.

Mr. Jethmalani has fought several other high-profile cases which included the defence of Rajiv Gandhi's killer in Madras High Court in 2001. He also defended Harshad Mehta and Ketan Parekh in the Securities scam of 1992. Jethmalani had also defended the death sentence given to Afzal Guru and represented Manu Sharma in the Jessica Lall murder case.

Jethmalani was also elected as a BJP MP from Mumbai in the sixth and seventh Lok Sabha. Apart from Union law minister, he also held the portfolio of urban development in Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led NDA government.

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**BN Yugandhar (82)**, former bureaucrat and the father of Microsoft Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Satya Nadella, died in Hyderabad , Telangana on September 13, 2019.

Yugandhar, a 1962-batch IAS officer, had served in the Prime Minister's Office under PV Narasimha Rao. He also served as Director of Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration from 1988 to 1993.

He was a member of the Planning Commission during 2004-2009 and was instrumental in ensuring the inclusion of a chapter on disability issues in the Plan. He is also credited with pushing through guidelines which would institutionalise money flow for watershed development directly to districts from the Central government, bypassing states.

He hailed from Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh and also worked for the development of his village Bukkapuram.

**Vijaya Kamlesh Tahilramani**, Madras High Court Chief Justice, resigned on September 6, 2019, following orders of her transfer to Meghalaya High Court. The Supreme Court collegium headed by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi had on August 28, 2019 ordered the transfer of the CJ from Madras to Meghalaya. The Collegium had rejected her appeal asking for reconsideration of the transfer.

Justice Tahilramani was elevated as Chief Justice of the High Court last August. Her retirement was due on October 2, 2020.

**Air Chief Marshal Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria** took charge as the 26th Chief of the Indian Air Force on September 30, 2019. He succeeded Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa, who retired after 41 years of service in the IAF.

An alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Bhadauria was joined the IAF in June 1980 and won the coveted 'Sword of Honour' for standing first in the overall order of merit. During his 39-year-long career, RKS Bhadauria was awarded several medals including the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, the Vayu Sena Medal, and the Param Vishisht Seva Medal.

**Kiran Nagarkar (77)**, Sahitya Akademi Award-winning writer, died in Mumbai on September 5, 2019. His works were critical of majoritarianism and fundamentalism. He spoke out against intolerance and warned about the dangers of jingoism.

Nagarkar wrote his first book Saat Sakkam Trechalis in 1974 in his mother tongue, Marathi. Its English translation (Seven Sixes are Forty Three) was published in 1980 and then re-released in 2017 as a paperback version by Harper Collins.

His historical fiction, Cuckold (1997), for which he was awarded the 2001 Sahitya Akademi Award in English firmly established Nagarkar's reputation as a novelist unafraid to tackle politics, bigotry and extremism. He also got recognition for his trilogy- Ravan And Eddie (1994), followed by The Extras (2012) and Rest In Peace (2015).

**Sushma Swaraj (67)**, former External Affairs Minister and veteran BJP leader, died after cardiac arrest on August 6, 2019. Swaraj served as the Minister of External Affairs of India from May 26 , 2014 to May 30, 2019. She was elected seven times as a member of parliament and three times as a member of the legislative assembly. She was the youngest cabinet minister at 25 when she joined the Haryana government in 1977 and the first woman chief minister of Delhi. She was also the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha between 2009-14.

**Arun Jaitley (66)**, former Finance Minister of India, passed away on August 24, 2019, after a prolonged illness. Mr. Jaitley was having diabetes, had undergone a bariatric surgery, and later a transplant of the kidney. Recently, he had developed cancer and was undergoing treatment for the same. Ptime Minister Narendra Modi stated that Mr. Jaitley was multi-faceted, having impeccable knowledge about Constitution, history, public policy, governance and administration.

During his term as Finance Minister in the previous term of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government (2014-19), Jaitley presided over the rollout of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), which is considered as the biggest tax reform in independent India. He also led efforts to reform India's ineffective laws dealing with industrial sickness with a new bankruptcy code.

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**Jagannath Mishra (82)**, former Bihar Chief Minister, passed away in a hospital in Delhi on August 19, 2019. Dr. Mishra was Chief Minister of the State in 1975, 1980 and in 1989-90. He also served as Agriculture Minister in Prime Minister P.V. Narsimha Rao Cabinet at the Center in 1995.

Mishra was the last Congress chief minister of Bihar between December 1989 and March 1990, and one of the biggest mass leaders before 'Mandal politics' pushed the Congress to the political margins in the state.

## **INTERNATIONAL AWARDS**

### **Global Goalkeeper Award:**

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** was conferred the "Global Goalkeeper" award in September 2019 by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for his leadership and commitment to the Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan.

Swachh Bharat Mission was launched on October 2, 2014. The ambitious mission aims at accelerating the efforts to achieve universal sanitation coverage in the country by October 2019 as a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his 150th birth anniversary.

So far, 90 million toilets have been built to eliminate open defecation and currently 98 per cent of India's villages have rural sanitation coverage compared to 38 per cent in 2014.

### **2019 Right Livelihood Award:**

The Right Livelihood Award, widely known as the 'Alternative Nobel Prize', was announced in on September 25, 2019. The 2019 Award was given to Aminatou Haidar (Western Sahara), Guo Jianmei (China), Greta Thunberg (Sweden) and Davi Kopenawa / Hutukara Yanomami Association (Brazil).

Each awardee will receive 1 million SEK (94,000 EUR). The international jury considered 142 nominations from 59 countries, after an open nomination process. The prize money is designated to support the Laureates' work and it is not for personal use.

1. The human rights defender **Aminatou Haidar (Western Sahara)** received the Right Livelihood Award "for her steadfast nonviolent action, despite imprisonment and torture, in pursuit of justice and self-determination for the people of Western Sahara".

Over 30 years of peaceful campaigning for the independence of her homeland earned Haidar the byname "Sahrawi Gandhi". Her dignity and resolve make her one of the most respected leaders among the Sahrawis. It is the first time that a Right Livelihood Award goes to a Laureate from Western Sahara.

2. Lawyer **Guo Jianmei (China)** received the Right Livelihood Award "for her pioneering and persistent work in securing women's rights in China". Guo is one of the most distinguished lawyers in the field of women's rights in China. Throughout her career, she has helped thousands of disadvantaged women in getting access to justice.
3. Climate activist **Greta Thunberg (Sweden)** received the Right Livelihood Award "for inspiring and amplifying political demands for urgent climate action reflecting scientific facts".

Thunberg is the powerful voice of a young generation that will have to bear the consequences of today's political failure to stop climate change. Her resolve to not put up with the looming climate disaster has inspired millions of peers to also raise their voices and demand immediate climate action.

4. Indigenous leader **Davi Kopenawa of the Yanomami people, and the Hutukara Yanomami Association (Brazil)** jointly received the Right Livelihood Award "for their courageous determination to protect the forests and biodiversity of the Amazon, and the lands and culture of its indigenous peoples".

Kopenawa is one of the most respected indigenous leaders in Brazil. He has dedicated his life to protecting Yanomami rights, their culture and lands in the Amazon. Kopenawa is co-founder and President of the Hutukara Yanomami Association which is conserving the rainforest and advancing rights of indigenous people in Brazil.

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### **Ramon Magsaysay Awards 2019:**

#### **List of Awardees:**

1. **Ravish Kumar:** Journalist Ravish Kumar, Senior Executive Editor at NDTV India, has been awarded Ramon Magsaysay Award 2019 "for harnessing journalism to give voice to the voiceless".
2. **Angkhana Neelapaijit** from Thailand founded the Justice for Peace Foundation (JPF) in 2006. It is a network of human rights and peace advocates that documents the human rights situation in southern Thailand, providing legal assistance to victims of human rights violations. It also educates women about human rights.
3. **Kim Jong-Ki** from South Korea established the Foundation for Preventing Youth Violence (FPYV) after his own son committed suicide. South Korea has one of the highest suicide rates among the world's developed countries and the incidence of teenage suicides is particularly disturbing. The foundation addresses school violence as a systemic social problem that in turn affects the students, families, school, and the community.
4. **Ko Swe Win** from Myanmar is the editor-in-chief of 'Myanmar Now', an independent online news site focused on investigative journalism in both Burmese and English. 'Myanmar Now' has built a strong reputation for well-researched, in-depth articles on critically selected, underreported human rights and social justice issues.

Myanmar has one of the most challenging environments for the practice of journalism in Asia. With its history of military rule and weak civic institutions, the effort to build a strong, independent, and socially responsible press has to contend with draconian laws, rabid intolerance, repression and persecution. It is an environment that calls for journalists of uncommon will, professional independence, and a strong sense of justice.

5. **Raymundo "Ryan" Pujante Cayabyab** from Philippines is a Filipino musician, composer, and conductor who is known in the industry and beyond as Mr C. The 65-year-old Ryan was given the award for his passion to mentor, educate, and contribute to the flourishing of Filipino musical talent.

As a Child, Mr. Ryan has an interest in music but her mother, herself an opera singer and music teacher, advised him against taking music as a career as it is financially unrewarding career. Heeding to her mother's advise, Ryan took up a business management course, but to help pay for his university studies he took on side jobs as pianist or accompanist for musical artists. The parents of one such artist were so impressed with his talent that they gave Ryan a full scholarship to pursue a degree in music instead. From this point on, music became his life-work.

Versatile, a consummate professional, and universally liked, Ryan Cayabyab is virtually omnipresent in the Philippine music industry today. For over four decades, his contributions as a composer, arranger, music director, conductor, performer, and educator have been huge.

#### **About the Award:**

- The Ramon Magsaysay Award is Asia's premier prize and highest honor. It celebrates greatness of spirit and transformative leadership in Asia.
- The trustees of the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation annually select the awardees. Awardees are presented with a certificate and a medallion with an embossed image of Ramon Magsaysay facing right in profile.
- The Award is presented to them in formal ceremonies in Manila, Philippines on August 31st, the birth anniversary of the much-esteemed Philippine President whose ideals inspired the Award's creation in 1957.

#### **The Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation**

- The Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation manages the Ramon Magsaysay Award program.
- The Foundation is composed of seven Filipinos and two foreign Awardees serving staggered four-year terms.

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### **About Ramon Magsaysay:**

- The Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation was created in 1957, in memory of the late president of Philippines Ramon Magsaysay who died in a plane crash. He is well-loved for his simplicity and humility, his passion for justice, particularly for the poor, and his advancement of human dignity.

His beliefs and values are found in '**The Magsaysay Credo**' some of which are as follows.

All human beings are born with the right to live in liberty and happiness.

Government should start at the bottom and move upward, for government exists for the welfare of the masses of the nation.

One who has less in life should have more in law.

A high and unwavering sense of morality should pervade all spheres of governmental activity.

The President should set the example of a big heart, an honest mind, sound instincts, the virtue of healthy impatience and an abiding love for the common man.

### **Order of Zayed Award:**

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi** was honoured with the 'Order of Zayed', the UAE's highest civilian award in August 2019, as a mark of appreciation for his efforts to boost bilateral ties between the two nations. In the past, the award has earlier been bestowed on several world leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, Queen Elizabeth II and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

The award in the name of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the founding father of the UAE, acquires special significance as it was awarded to Prime Minister Modi in the year of the birth centenary of Sheikh Zayed.

### **'FANS Living Legend Award' :**

**Coluthur Gopalan**, Nutrition scientist regarded the father of nutrition research in India, was conferred with the first 'FANS Living Legend Award' by Federation of Asian Nutrition Societies (FANS) at its meeting held during the 13th Asian Congress of Nutrition in Bali in August 2019

Dr. Gopalan has served as Director of ICMR-National Institute of Nutrition (ICMR-NIN) from 1961-1973 with research under his leadership forming the basis for major national nutrition programmes initiated in the 1970s.

## **NATIONAL AWARDS**

### **66th National Film Awards:**

The **66th National Film Awards** were announced in New Delhi on August 9, 2019.

#### ***List of winners in some of the major categories:***

Best Feature Film: Helaru (Gujarati). This film is a strong statement on women empowerment against patriarchal Society.

Best Actor: Jointly awarded to Ayushmann Khurrana (Movie:Andhadhun), Vicky Kaushal (Movie: Uri: The Surgical Strike)

Best Actress: Keerthy Suresh (Mahanati)

Best Direction: Aditya Dhar for (Uri: The Surgical Strike)

Nargis Dutt Award for National Integration: Ondanya Eradalu (Kannada Film)

Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment: Badhaai Ho

Indira Gandhi Award for Best Debut Film of a Director: Sudhakar Reddy Yakkanti for 'Naal' (Marathi Film)

Best Children's Film: Sarkari Hiriya Prathamika Shale, Kasaragodu

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Best Film on Social Issues: Pad Man  
Best Film on Environment Conservation: Paani  
Best Original Screenplay: Chi Arjun La Sow  
Best Adapted Screenplay: Andhadhun  
Best Supporting Actress: Surekha Sikri (Badhaai Ho)  
Best Supporting Actor: Swanand Kirkire (Chumbak)  
Best Female Playback singer: Bindu Mani for Mayavi Manave from Nathicharami  
Best Male Playback Singer: Arijit Singh for Binte Dil from Padmaavat  
Best Choreography: Padmaavat, Ghoomar  
Best Special Effects: Awe, KGF  
Best Music Direction: Sanjay Leela Bhasali, Padmaavat  
Best Action: KGF  
Best Lyrics: Manjutha for Nathicharami  
Best Production Design: Kammara Sambhavam  
Best Editing: Nathicharami  
Best Regional Films:

**Feature Films Category**

Best Hindi Film: Andhadhun  
Best Rajasthani Film: Turtle  
Best Panchanga Film: In The Land Of Poisonous Women  
Best Garo Film: Anna  
Best Marathi Film: Bhonga  
Best Tamil Film: Baram  
Best Urdu Film: Hamid  
Best Bengali Film: Ek Je Chhilo Raja  
Best Malayalam Film: Sudani From Nigeria  
Best Telugu Film: Mahanati  
Best Kannada Film: Nathicharami  
Best Konkani Film: Amori  
Best Assamese Film: Bulbul Can Sing  
Best Punjabi Film: Harjeeta  
Best Gujarati Film: Reva

*About National Film Awards:*

Every year the winners of the awards are announced in April and the presentation ceremony is held on May 3 as India's first feature film is said to have its theatrical release in May 3, 1913. However, in April 2019 the ministry announced that the National Film Awards would be declared after the Lok Sabha elections.

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## **SPORTS AWARDS**

### **International Federation of Association Football ( FIFA) Awards 2019:**

International Federation of Association Football ( FIFA) Awards 2019 were announced in September 2019.

List of all the winners:

Best men's player: Lionel Messi (ARG/Barcelona)

Best women's player: Megan Rapinoe (USA/Reign FC)

Best men's goalkeeper: Alisson Becker (BRA/Liverpool)

Best women's goalkeeper: Sari van Veenendaal (NED/Atletico Madrid)

Men's coach: Jurgen Klopp (Liverpool)

Women's coach: Jill Ellis (USA)

Puskas Award best goal: Daniel Zsori (HUN/Debrecen)

Fair-play award: Marcelo Bielsa and Leeds United

### **National Sports Awards 2019 and National Adventure Awards 2018:**

President of India Mr. Ram Nath Kovind conferred National Sports Awards 2019 and National Adventure Awards, 2018 in a ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhawan on August 2019.

#### **Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna 2019:**

1. Ms. Deepa Malik - Para Athletics

#### **Dronacharya Awards for the year 2019:**

##### **Regular Category**

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Name of the Coach</b>	<b>Discipline</b>
1.	Sh. Vimal Kumar	Badminton
2.	Sh. Sandeep Gupta	Table tennis

##### **Life-Time Category**

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Name of the Coach</b>	<b>Discipline</b>
1.	Sh. Merzban Patel	Hockey
2.	Sh. Rambir Singh Khokhar	Kabaddi
3.	Sh. Sanjay Bhardwaj	Cricket

#### **Arjuna Awards for the year 2019:**

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Name of the Sportsperson</b>	<b>Discipline</b>
1.	Sh. S. Bhaskaran	Body Building
2.	Ms. Sonia Lather	Boxing
3.	Sh. Chinglensana Singh Kangujam	Hockey
4.	Sh. Ajay Thakur	Kabaddi
5.	Sh. Gaurav Singh Gill	Motor Sports
6.	Sh. Pramod Bhagat	Para Sports (Badminton)
7.	Sh. Harmeet Rajul Desai	Table Tennis
8.	Ms. Pooja Dhanda	Wrestling

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9.	Sh. Fouaad Mirza	Equestrian
10.	Sh. Gurpreet Singh Sandhu	Football
11.	Ms. Poonam Yadav	Cricket
12.	Ms. Swapna Barman	Athletics
13.	Sh. Bhamidipati Sai Praneeth	Badminton
14.	Sh. Simran Singh Shergill	Polo

**Dhyan Chand Awards for the year 2019:**

S.No	Name	Discipline
1.	Sh. Manuel Fredricks	Hockey
2.	Sh. Arup Basak Table	Tennis
3.	Sh. Manoj Kumar	Wrestling
4.	Sh. NittenKirrtane	Tennis
5.	Sh. C. Lalremsanga	Archery

**Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar for the year 2019.**

S. No.	Category	Entity recommended
1.	Identification and Nurturing of Budding and Young Talent'	(i) GaganNarang Sports Promotion Foundation (ii) GoSports Foundation
2.	Sports for Development	Rayalaseema Development Trust

**MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD (MAKA) TROPHY, 2019** has been conferred on Punjab University, Chandigarh.

**Prize Details:**

- Apart from a medal and a citation, Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Awardees receive a cash prize of Rs. 7.5 lakh.
- Arjuna, Dronacharya and Dhyan Chand Awardees receive statuettes, certificates and cash prize of Rs. 5 lakh each.
- A trophy and citation is given to the entity in the Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar, 2019.
- Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Awardees receive a statuette, certificates and cash award of Rs. 5 lakh each.
- Punjab University which is overall top performing university in inter-university tournaments was given MAKA Trophy, award money of Rs. 15 lakh and certificate.

**About the Awards:**

- Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award is given for the spectacular and most outstanding performance in the field of sports by a sportsperson over a period of four year.
- Arjuna Award is given for consistency outstanding performance for four years.
- Dronacharya Award is given for coaches for producing medal winners at prestigious International sports events.
- Dhyan Chand Award is given for life time contribution to sports development.
- Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar is given to the corporate entities (both in private and public sector) and individuals who have played a visible role in the area of sports promotion and development.
- Overall top performing university in inter-university tournaments is given Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy.

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**Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Awards, 2018** were conferred on the following:

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Category</b>
1.	Ms. Aparna Kumar	Land Adventure
2.	Late Shri Dipankar Ghosh	Land Adventure
3.	Shri Manikandan K.	Land Adventure
4.	Shri Prabhat Raju Koli	Water Adventure
5.	Shri RameshwerJangra	Air Adventure
6.	Shri Wangchuk Sherpa	Life Time Achievement

***About the Award:***

- Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Awards, on par with Arjun Awards, are given every year by the President of India on the recommendation of the Ministry of youth Affairs to recognize the achievements of persons in the fields of adventure and encourage young people to develop the spirit of endurance, risk-taking, cooperative teamwork and quick, ready and effective reflexes in challenging situations.
- The award is given in four categories : Land Adventure, Water Adventure, Air Adventure and Life Time Achievement.
- The awardees are given statuettes, certificates and award money of Rs. 5 lakh each.

**Vir Chakra (VrC) Award for Wing Commander Abhinandan:**

President of India Mr. Ram Nath Kovind, who is also the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, approved 132 Awards to Armed Forces Personnel and members of Paramilitary Forces on August 14, 2019. The awards include two Kirti Chakras, one Vir Chakra, 14 Shaurya Chakras, eight Bar to Sena Medals (Gallantry), 90 Sena Medals (Gallantry), five Nao Sena Medals (Gallantry), seven Vayu Sena Medals (Gallantry) and five Yudh Seva Medals.

**Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman**, who was caught by Pakistan after his MiG-21 Bison fighter jet went down across the Line of Control (LoC) on February 27, 2019 and was returned three days later, has been awarded Vir Chakra (VrC), the **country's third-highest gallantry award**.

During a dogfight with Pakistan Air Force jets on February 27, 2019, he shot down a Pakistani F-16 but his jet was shot down soon after. He was handed over by Pakistan to India at the Wagah-Attari border crossing on March 1, 2019.

**Kirti Chakra**, the **second-highest peacetime gallantry award**, was **posthumously** awarded to **Sapper Prakash Jadhav** for his role in counter-insurgency operations in Kashmir.

## **SPORTS**

### **TENNIS**

#### **U.S. Open ( New York, September 2019)**

##### **Women's Singles:**

Bianca Andreescu (Canada) - Winner

Serena Williams (USA) - Runner

It was the first time a Canadian tennis player claimed the Grand Slam singles title.

##### **Men's Singles:**

Rafael Nadal (Spain) - Winner

Daniil Medvedev (Russia) - Runner

It was Raael Nadal fourth US Open title and 19th Grand Slam title.

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**Men's Doubles:**

Juan Sebastian Cabal (Colombia) and Robert Farah (Colombia) - Winner

Marcel Granollers (Spain) and Horacio Zeballos (Argentina) - Runner

**Women's Doubles:**

Elise Mertens (Belgian) and Aryna Sabalenka (Belarus) - Winner

Ashleigh Barty (Australia) and Victoria Azarenka (Belarus) - Runner

**Mixed Doubles:**

Bethanie Mattek-Sands (USA) and Jamie Murray (UK) - Winner

Chan Haoching (Taiwan) and Michael Venus (New Zealand) - Runner

**BADMINTON****World Championship (Basel (Switzerland), August 2019)****Women's Singles:**

P.V.Sindhu (India) - Winner

Nozomi Okuhara (Japan) - Runner

Sindhu became the first Indian to win this championships. It was third time lucky for Sindhu who had lost to Okuhara and Carolina Marin of Spain respectively in the 2017 and 2018 finals to bad a silver twice. She had won bronze each in the 2013 and 2014 editions.

Sindhu is now the joint highest medal winner in women's singles in the World Championships history with former Olympic champion Zhang Ning of China who has won an identical one gold. Two silver and two bronze between 2001 and 2007.

**Men's Singles:**

Kento Momota (Japan) : Winner

Anders Antonsen (Denmark) : Runner

**Women Doubles:**

Mayu Matsumoto, Wakana Nagahara - Winners

Yuki Fukushima, Sayaka Hirota - Runners

**Men's Doubles:**

Mohammad Ahsan, Hendra Setiawan - Winner

Takuro Hoki, Yugo Kobayashi - Runner

**Mixed Doubles:**

Zheng Si Wei, Huang Ya Qiong - Winner

Dechapol Puavaranukroh, Sapsiree Taerattanachai

**Korea Open (Incheon, South Korea, September 2019)****Men's Singles:**

Kento Momota (Japan) - Winner

Chou Tien-chen (Taiwan) - Runner

**Women's Singles:**

China's He Bingjiao (China) - Winner

Ratchanok Intanon (Thailand ) - Runner

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**Women's Doubles:**

Kim So-yeong and Kong Hee-yong (South Korea) - Winner

Lee So-hee and Shin Seung-chan (South Korea) - Runner

**Men's Doubles:**

Indonesian pair Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Rian Ardianto (Indonesia) - Winner

Takeshi Kamura and Keigo Sonoda (Japan) - Runner

**Mixed Doubles:**

Dechapol Puavaranukroh and SapsireeTaerattanachai (Thailand) - Winner

Zheng Siwei and Huang Yaqion (China) - Runner

**Hyderabad Open (Hyderabad, August 2019)**

**Men's Singles:**

Sourabh Verma (India) - Winner

Loh Kean Yew (Singapore) - Runner

**Men's Doubles:**

Muhammad Shohibil Fikri & Bagas Maulana (India) - Winner

Na Sung Seung & Wang Chan (Korea) - Runner

**Women's Singles:**

Yeo Jia Min (Singapore) - Winner

An Se Young (Korea) - Runner

**Women's Doubles:**

Baek Ha Na & Jung Kyung Eun (Korea) - Winner

Ashwini Ponnappa & N. Sikki Reddy (India) - Runner

**Mixed doubles:**

Hoo Pang Ron & Cheah Yee See (Malaysia) - Winner

Adnan Maulana & Mychelle Crhystine Bandaso (India) - Runner

**Thailand Open (Bangkok, August 2019)**

**Men's Singles:**

Chou Tien Chen (Taiwan) - Winner

NG Ka Long Angus (Hong Kong) - Runner

**Women's Singles:**

Chen Yu fei (China) - Winner

Ralchanok Intanon (Thailand) - Runner

**Men's Doubles:**

Satwiksairaj Ranki reddy, Chirag Shetty (India) - Winner

U Jun Hui, UU Yu Chen (China) - Runner

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**Women's Doubles:**

Shiho Tanaka, Koharu Yonemoto - Winner

Du Yue, U Yin Hui - Runner

**Mixed Double:**

Wang Yi Lyu, Huang Dong ping - Winner

Yula Watanabe, Arisa Higashino - Runner

**CRICKET**

**Duleep Trophy (Bengaluru, September 2019)**

India Red - Winner

India Green - Runner

**Under-19 Asia Cup (Colombo, September 2019)**

India - Winner

Bangladesh - Runner

**BILLIARDS**

**IDSF World Billiards Championship (Mandalay, September 2019)**

Pankaj Advani (India) - Winner

Nay Thway Oo (Myanmar) - Runner

**CHESS**

**FIDE Women's Grand Prix (Skolkovo (Russia), September 2019)**

GM Koneru Humpy (India) - Winner

Ju Wenjun (China) - Runner

**CARROM**

**US Open (Richmond, September 2019)**

**Men's Singles Title:**

R.D.Dinesh Babu (India) - Winner

P. Anil Kumar (India) - Runner

**SNOOKER**

**IBSF World Snooker Team Event (Myanmar, September 2019)**

India - Winner

Thailand - Runner

**FOOTBALL :**

**Durand Cup (Kolkata, August 2019)**

Gokulam Kerala FC - Winner

Mohun Bagan - Runner