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GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1. Myanmar border shut amid strains over refugee crisis

Context:

India has sealed all entry points along the border with Myanmar and is closely monitoring them to prevent any Myanmar national from entering the country.

Details:

- People belonging to Myanmar's Chin community were seeking to migrate to Mizoram to escape a military crackdown.
- There is considerable support and sympathy among the people of Mizoram over the situation in Myanmar as many have relations across the border.
- The tussle between the Centre and Mizoram on the issue has created a tough time for New Delhi and security agencies in handling the situation on the ground.
- Mizoram CM had written to the centre asserting that India cannot turn a blind eye to the humanitarian crisis unfolding in our own backyard (Myanmar).
- "Myanmar area bordering Mizoram is inhabited by Chin communities, who are ethnically our brethren with whom we have been having close contacts throughout all these years even before India became independent", he stated in the letter.

Note:

- India and Myanmar have an arrangement called the Free Movement Regime (FMR).
- In March 2020, FMR was suspended due to COVID-19 and no one has been allowed since.
- The fallout of this was that there has been an increase in smuggling across the border as the livelihood of people has been disrupted due to the pandemic.
- The Myanmar border is unfenced and completely blocking incursions is not possible given the tough terrain.

Free Movement Regime

- India has a 1,643-km border with Myanmar.

- Mizoram shares a 510-km-long border with Myanmar.
- It has a visa-free movement regime for people living within 16 km on either side of the border known as FMR.
- “Free movement regime” is a bilateral agreement with Myanmar that allows free movement of Indian and Myanmar citizens within 16 km of the border.
- This regime has been in place keeping in view the traditional social relations among the border people. It helps genuine people living in close proximity to the border.

2. Philippines accuses China of ‘incursion’ in disputed sea

What’s in News?

The Philippines has accused China of incursion after more than 200 militia boats were spotted near a disputed reef in the South China Sea.

- The Philippine coast guard detected the boats in line formation at the boomerang-shaped Whitsun Reef, around 320 km (175 nautical miles) west of Palawan Island.
- Philippines Defence Secretary asserted that these territories were well within Philippine Exclusive Economic Zone and called on the Chinese to stop the incursion and immediately recall the boats violating maritime rights and encroaching into their sovereign territory.

Also, the U.S. had previously accused China of using maritime militia to intimidate, coerce and threaten other nations over its claims to almost the entire South China Sea.

3. Corrective voice from top court against stereotyping women

Context:

Recently, the Supreme Court in a judgement forbade judges from making gender-stereotypical comments.

Details:

- A judgment by the Supreme Court forbidding judges from making gender-stereotypical comments came as a corrective voice from within the highest level of judiciary in India.
- The judgment stopped courts from trying to mandate marriage or compromise between a sex offender and his victim.

- It is one among a series of interventions with which the top court has clamped down on abuse and sex stereotyping of women.

Note:

- Some notable judgments which have lashed out at sex stereotyping include:
 - The framing of the Vishaka Guidelines on sexual harassment of women at workplaces.
 - Justice D.Y. Chandrachud's historic judgment giving women Armed Forces officers equal access to Permanent Commission while debunking the establishment's claim that women were physiologically weaker than men.
 - In the Anuj Garg case, the Supreme Court had rebuked the notion of romantic paternalism, which, in practical effect, put women, not on a pedestal, but in a cage.

4. How to treat unpaid work

Introduction

- Women everywhere carry a disproportionately higher burden of unpaid work, namely, unpaid domestic services as well as unpaid care of children, the old and the disabled for their respective households.
 - Unpaid work can be understood to comprise all productive activities outside the official labour market done by individuals for their own households or for others.
- Women do this job not necessarily because they like it or are efficient in it, but because it is imposed on them by patriarchal norms, which are the roots of all pervasive gender inequalities.
- Though this work contributes to overall well-being at the household level and collectively at the national level, it is invisible in the national database and particularly in national policies.

This unequal division of unpaid work between women and men is unfair and unjust and it deprives women of equal opportunities as men.

What the government could do?

- First, the government should recognise unpaid work in the national database by a sound time-use survey and use the data in national policies.
 - The most obvious and simple measures are data collection, presentation and analysis.
- A second step in making visible the importance of unpaid work for society as a whole is imputing its value in monetary terms.

- Imputing a monetary value for unpaid work is a necessary condition for its inclusion in national accounts.
- Third, they could relieve women's burden of unpaid work by improving technology (e.g. better fuel for cooking), better infrastructure (e.g. water at the doorstep), shifting some unpaid work to the mainstream economy (e.g. childcare, care of the disabled, and care of the chronically sick), and by making basic services (e.g. health and transportation) accessible to women.
- Also, they could redistribute the work between men and women by providing different incentives and disincentives to men (e.g. mandatory training of men in housework, childcare, etc.) and financial incentives for sharing housework.
- The government can also look at the payment of pension to old women (60+ years).

Indirect policies relating to unpaid work

- A well-known indirect way of recognizing unpaid work is granting to the male breadwinner/head of the household a (minimum) wage level that is supposed to include some 'reward' for his wife's unpaid household work and a compensation for the fact that he has to support his 'non-earning' wife.

Way forward

- The concept of unpaid work and its place in the economy at large deserves more in-depth research and analysis.

Conclusion

- The reality of the huge unpaid contribution of households to economic value needs to be accepted. If policy-makers became aware of all these effects and took them into account, unpaid work would be 'mainstreamed' as a regular element in the policy-making process.
- Therefore, measures have to be taken to give free time to women, so that new opportunities can strengthen their progress.

5. SC walks a tightrope over vacancies

Context:

The Supreme Court Collegium is striving to reach a consensus on recommendations to fill the five vacancies.

Details:

- The names of several High Court judges are in the zone of consideration.
- The Collegium is discussing diverse opinions from within on issues like proportionate representation from various High Courts and seniority among High Court judges before finalising the names to recommend to the government for appointment.
- Proportionate representation from High Courts and seniority carry weight during the appointment process.
 - However, these are only conventions and not constitutional or legal mandates.

Issue:

- The past several months have seen the Supreme Court function under a series of challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, even as its judicial strength faded to 29 with the retirement of Justice Indu Malhotra.
 - The maximum possible strength is 34.
- The year 2021 will see four retirements in the top court.
 - As per the Constitution of India, judges of the Supreme Court retire at the age of 65.

Appointment of Judges to the Supreme Court:

- The Collegium System of the Supreme court of India deals with the appointment and transfer of judges.
- Memorandum of Procedure (MoP) is an agreement between the Government and the judiciary that has a set of guidelines for the appointment of judges of the Supreme Court.
- The MoP was formulated after the Third Judges Case in order to govern the process of how the Collegium System would make recommendations to the executive.

GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology, Environment

6. Doubling down on a resilient India

Context

- The article speaks about India's investment climate.

FDI inflows

- Despite India experiencing economic contractions due to covid-19, India saw the fastest growth in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows among all the major economies in 2020.
- Google, Facebook, Walmart, Samsung, Foxconn, and Silver are some of the companies which have placed trust in the Indian markets.

But India still remains a complex place to do business.

Challenges

- Companies usually are concerned about market access as they encounter obstacles or conditions which are tough for them to achieve when it comes to operating in India.
- Policies change quite often which shows a lack of planning and frequent changes in rules, laws, create a complex environment for executing an action plan.
- The government's push to build a "self-reliant" India has rattled investors.
- Smaller companies lack the resources and monetary advantages to navigate on-the-ground hurdles.

Still, leading corporate investors see the Indian market differently. They have the vision to understand that these are risks worth taking given the scale of the India Opportunity.

India an essential part of their growth story

1. **First, sheer demographics.**

- What India offers through its nearly 1.4 billion people and their growing purchasing power is uniquely valuable for multinationals with global ambitions.
- No other country outside of China has a market that houses nearly one in six people on the planet and a rising middle class of 600 million.

2. **Second, shifting geopolitics.**

- Trade war and rising tensions between the USA and China are making companies rethink on its strategies as they are moving to different production hubs.
- Savvy countries such as Vietnam have capitalised on this opportunity to great effect, but India is only finally getting serious about attracting large-scale production and exports.

- Major multinational companies such as Samsung have invested billions in the Indian market, and manufacturers such as Cisco, Nokia, Ericsson, and Flex are reportedly weighing new investments that take advantage of fresh incentive programs.
3. **Third, rising digital connectivity.**
- India's digital landscape has further expanded due to cheap mobile data and India has an estimated 700 million active internet users.
 - This is the primary reason why leading global tech companies are investing in India and weathering acute policy pressure.
 - Domestic Indian companies have also demonstrated their ability to innovate and deliver high-quality services at scale.
 - The partnerships and FDI flows linking multinationals and Indian tech firms will continue to unlock shared market opportunities for years to come.
4. **Fourth, national resilience.**
- Despite facing the scourge of the novel coronavirus head-on, India has managed the pandemic better than many of its western peers and restored economic activity even before implementing a mass vaccination programme.

Way forward

- Companies should continuously demonstrate their commitment to India.
 - Successful companies do this by placing shared value creation at the heart of their business strategy. They tie corporate success to India's growth and development.
 - They forge enduring partnerships and lasting relationships, elevate and invest in Indian talent, align products with Indian tastes, and ultimately tackle the hardest problems facing India today.

7. CPWD to lay three roads near China border in Ladakh

Context:

The Central Public Works Department (CPWD) has floated tenders worth a total of ₹212.99 crore for laying and maintenance of three high-altitude roads near the India-China border in Ladakh.

Details:

- The projects are titled as roads to “Indo-China Border” from the Indo-Tibetan Border Police bases at Shilung La, Nyakmikle and Hena.
- The three tender documents said: “All the three roads would be single lane projects as per the relevant specifications of National Highways.”

Note:

The Ministry of Home Affairs has made it clear that 57 roads along the India-China border were being constructed, as well as 47 outposts, 32 helipads and 18 foot tracks in Arunachal Pradesh.

THE INDIAN EXPRESS

GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1. Global Water Crisis: UNICEF

Why in News

According to a new report released by the **United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)**, **one in five children** worldwide reside in areas of **high or extremely high water vulnerability**.

- The Report was released ahead of **World Water Day (22nd March)**.

Key Points

- **About the Report :**
 - The new report is **part of UNICEF’s ‘Water security for all’** initiative that identifies areas where physical water scarcity risks overlap with poor water service levels.
 - The **initiative aims to mobilise resources, partnerships, innovation and global response to identified hot spots**.
 - UNICEF identified **37 hot-spot countries** where children faced especially distressing circumstances in terms of absolute numbers, where global resources, support and urgent action had to be mobilised.
 - Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Haiti, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Sudan, Tanzania and Yemen were especially vulnerable.

- **Findings:**
 - **Children in more than 80 countries** live in areas with high or extremely high water vulnerability.
 - **Eastern and Southern Africa** has the **highest proportion** of children living in such areas, with more than half of children – **58%** – facing difficulty accessing sufficient water every day.
 - It is followed by **West and Central Africa (31%), South Asia (25%),** and the **Middle East (23%)**.
 - **More than 155 million children in South Asia** lived in areas with high or even extremely high water vulnerability.
- **Water Crisis in India:**
 - India has **4% of the world's freshwater** which has to cater to **17% of the world's population**.
 - As per **NITI Aayog report** released in June 2018, India is facing the worst-ever water crisis in history. Approximately 600 million people or roughly around **45% of the population in India is facing high to severe water stress**.
 - The report says that nearly **40% of the population will have absolutely no access to drinking water by 2030** and **6% of India's GDP will be lost by 2050 due to the water crisis**.
- **Causes of Water Crisis in India:**
 - The Central Groundwater Board's estimates show that the **groundwater table in most parts of the country has been declining every year** because of over-exploitation.
 - If the groundwater continues to decline unabated, meeting the country's agricultural and drinking water requirements will become a big challenge.
 - 85% of rural water supply, 45% of urban water supply and over 64% of irrigation now rely on groundwater.
 - Due to **accumulation of sediments in the water storage area of major and medium irrigation dams** that are currently in use, the **total storage capacity has fallen significantly**.
 - This is clearly underlined in the **report 'Compendium of Silting of Reservoirs in India'**, released by the Central Water Commission in 2020.
 - **Climate change** is causing major changes in rainfall levels.
- **Measures Taken by the Central Government:**
 - **"Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain" Campaign:**
 - The campaign will be implemented during the period 22nd March, 2021 to 30th November, 2021 - the **pre-monsoon and monsoon period** in the country.
 - The campaign is **intended to nudge the State and all stakeholders to create Rain Water Harvesting Structures**

(RWHS) suitable to the climatic conditions and subsoil strata to ensure storage of rainwater.

- Rains falling in the four/five months of monsoon are the only source of water for most parts of the country.
- **Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM):**
 - In the Budget 2021-22, **Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban)** has been announced under the Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry to provide universal coverage of water supply to all households through functional taps in all statutory towns in accordance with **Sustainable Development Goal- 6**.
 - It complements the **Jal Jeevan Mission (Rural)** which envisages supply of 55 litres of water per person per day to every rural household through Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) by 2024.
- **Ministry of Jal Shakti:**
 - The Government of India **established the Ministry of Jal Shakti in 2019** to consolidate interrelated functions pertaining to water management.
 - The Ministry **launched Jal Shakti Abhiyan** – a campaign for water conservation and water security.
- **Measures Taken by State Governments:**
 - Uttar Pradesh – Jakhni Village (water village), Bundelkhand
 - Punjab – Pani Bachao Paise Kamao
 - Madhya Pradesh – Kapil Dhara Yojana
 - Gujarat – Sujalam Sufalam Yojana
 - Telangana – Mission Kakatiya Program
 - Maharashtra – Jalyukt Shivar Abhiyan
 - Andhra Pradesh – Neeru Chettu Programme
 - Rajasthan – Mukhya Mantri Jal Swalambhan Abhiyan (MJSA)

World Water Day

- **About:**
 - It is observed annually across the globe on **22nd March**, with the purpose of highlighting the importance of water, and raising awareness about the water crisis that the world faces.
 - According to the **United Nations (UN)** website, the main focus of the day is to support the achievement of **sustainable development goals (SDG) 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030**.
- **History:**
 - The resolution to observe World Water Day was first adopted by the UN General Assembly on **22nd December 1992**.

- After which **22nd March** was declared as **World Water Day** and is being celebrated around the world since **1993**.
- **Theme of World Water Day 2021:**
 - **“Valuing Water”** - To highlight the value of water in our daily lives.
- A new **World Water Development Report** is released each year on or near World Water Day, to provide decision-makers with tools to formulate and implement sustainable water policies. This report is coordinated by UNESCO’s World Water Development Programme (WWAP) on behalf of UN-Water.

UNICEF

- United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) is a **special program of the United Nations (UN)** devoted to aiding national efforts to improve the health, nutrition, education, and general welfare of children.
- UNICEF was **created in 1946 as the International Children’s Emergency Fund (ICEF)** by the UN relief Rehabilitation Administration to help children affected by World War II.
- UNICEF **became a permanent part of the United Nations in 1953**.
 - The name was shortened to the United Nations Children’s Fund but it is still referred to as UNICEF.
- UNICEF is **guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989**.
 - It strives to establish children’s rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children.
- **Awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1965** for “promotion of brotherhood among the nations”.
- **Headquarters:** New York City.
 - It works in over 190 countries and territories with 7 regional offices.

2. Rising Cases of Diphtheria

Why in News

A recent study has found that Diphtheria, which is a relatively easily-preventable infection, could become a **major global threat**.

Key Points

- **Data:**
 - **Global Rise:** The number of diphtheria cases reported globally has been increasing gradually. In **2018, there were 16,651** reported cases, more than double the yearly average for **1996-2017 (8,105 cases)**.

- **Indian Scenario:** According to the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, India reported **2,365 cases in 2015**. However, in 2016, 2017 and 2018, the numbers rose successively to 3,380, 5,293 and 8,788.
 - As per the WHO, **India accounted for 60% of all diphtheria cases globally in 2017**.
 - In 2018, Delhi witnessed the death of more than 50 children because of Diphtheria.
- **Reasons:**
 - **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR):** Diphtheria has started to become resistant to several classes of antibiotics.
 - Antimicrobial resistance is the resistance acquired by **any microorganism (bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasite, etc.)** against **antimicrobial drugs (such as antibiotics, antifungals, antivirals, antimalarials, and anthelmintics)** that are used to treat infections.
 - **Covid-19 Impact:** Covid-19 has severely impacted vaccination schedules in different parts of the world.
 - According to the recently released **UN Report on the Impact of Covid-19 on Children**, suspension of immunization campaigns will set back the decades-long effort to eliminate various diseases.
 - **Misunderstanding of Disease:** Parents often misunderstand the disease as usual cough and cold and take medicines from a physician. Since the child has not been given diphtheria shots, with the passage of time, the toxin released from the bacteria starts hampering the functioning of the kidney, heart and nervous system.
 - **Vaccine Hesitancy:** It refers to delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccines despite availability of vaccine services. It is complex and context specific varying across time, place and vaccine.
 - It is influenced by factors such as complacency, convenience and confidence.

Diphtheria

- **Caused by Bacteria:**
 - Diphtheria is primarily caused by the **bacterium Corynebacterium diphtheriae**.
- **Symptoms:**
 - Common cold, fever, chills, swollen gland in neck, sore throat, bluish skin etc.
- **Impact:**
 - The primary infection is in the **throat and upper airways**. Produces a toxin affecting other organs.

- One type of diphtheria affects the **throat and sometimes the tonsils**.
- Another type causes **ulcers on the skin**.
- **Spread:**
 - It is mainly spread by coughs and sneezes, or through close contact with someone infected.
- **Target Population:**
 - Diphtheria particularly affects children **aged 1 to 5 years**.
 - Occurrence of diphtheria cases in under-five children reflects **low coverage** of primary diphtheria vaccination.
- **Fatality Rate:**
 - Diphtheria is fatal in only 5-10% cases.
 - **Fatality Rate** is the proportion of people **who die from a specified disease among all individuals diagnosed with the disease** over a certain period of time.
- **Treatment:**
 - Administering **diphtheria antitoxin** to neutralize the effects of the toxin, as well as antibiotics to kill the bacteria.
 - Diphtheria is preventable with use of **antibiotics and vaccines**.
- **Vaccination:**
 - The diphtheria vaccine is among the oldest vaccines in India's Universal Immunisation Programme. As per data from the **National Family Health Survey-4**, the coverage of **diphtheria vaccine is 78.4%**.
 - In 1978, India launched the **Expanded Programme on Immunisation**.
 - The **first three vaccines** in the programme were **BCG (against TB), DPT (diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus) and cholera**.
 - In 1985, the programme was converted to the **Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP)**. DPT continues to be a part of UIP, which now includes 12 vaccines.
 - It is now **incorporated as a pentavalent vaccine** (containing a vaccine against **diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, Hepatitis B and Haemophilus influenzae type B**).
 - It is also included among the combination of **eight vaccine doses** which are administered in the first year of life under the **full immunisation programme**.
 - Recently, the **Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 3.0** scheme has been rolled out to cover children and pregnant women who missed routine immunisation during the Covid-19 pandemic.

3. Tomar king Anangpal II and his connection with Delhi

The Union government has recently formed a committee to popularize the legacy of 11th-century Tomar king, Anangpal II.

Who was Anangpal II?

- Anangpal II, popularly known as Anangpal Tomar, belonged to the Tomar dynasty that ruled parts of present-day Delhi and Haryana between the 8th and 12th centuries.
- The capital of Tomars changed many times from being initially at Anangpur (near Faridabad) during the reign of Anangpal I (who founded the Tomar dynasty in the 8th century), to Dhillikapuri (Delhi) during the reign of Anangpal II.
- The Tomar rule over the region is attested by multiple inscriptions and coins, and their ancestry can be traced to the Pandavas (of the Mahabharata).
- Anangpal Tomar II was succeeded by his grandson Prithviraj Chauhan, who was defeated by the Ghurid forces in the Battle of Tarain (present-day Haryana) after which the Delhi Sultanate was established in 1192.

His connection with Delhi

- Anangpal II is credited to have established and populated Delhi during his reign in the 11th century.
- He was instrumental in populating Indraprastha and giving it its present name, Delhi.
- The region was in ruins when he ascended the throne in the 11th century, it was he who built Lal Kot fort and Anangtal Baoli.
- He was the founder of Dhillikapuri, which eventually became Delhi.

4. Jaapi, Xorai and Gamosa in Assam

As the polling date draws closer, decorative jaapis (field hats), hand-woven gamosas and bell-metal xorais are making frequent appearances in Assam.

Jaapi

- The jaapi is a conical hat made of bamboo and covered with dried tokou (a palm tree found in rainforests of Upper Assam) leaves.
- It is most often used in official functions to felicitate guests.
- The landscape of rural Assam features a more utilitarian version, which farmers wear to protect themselves from the harsh weather, both sun and rain, while working in the fields.

- The first possible recorded use of jaapi dates back to the Ahom-era buranjis, or chronicles. Kings and ministers would wear them then.

Gamosa

- The Gamosa, which literally translates to a cloth to wipe one's body, is omnipresent in Assam, with wide-ranging uses.
- It can be used at home as a towel (uka gamosa) or in public functions (phulam/floral gamosa) to felicitate dignitaries or celebrities.
- The popularity of the gamosa has now traveled beyond Assam and is often used by a number of public figures.
- It was during the anti-foreigner Assam Agitation of the early 1980s, when Assamese nationalism reached its crescendo, that the gamosa assumed a new role.

Xorai

- Made of bell-metal, the xorai – essentially a tray with a stand at the bottom, with or without a cover – can be found in every Assamese household.
- While it is primarily used as an offering tray during prayers, or to serve tamale-paan (betel-nut) to guests, a xorai is also presented along with the jaapi and gamosa while felicitating someone.
- The bulk of xorais in Assam are made in the state's bell metal hub Sarthebari in Bajali district.

GS 3 :Economy, Science and Technology,Environment

5. GRAM UJALA

Why in News

Recently, the Government has launched the **Gram UJALA** Programme - **an ambitious scheme offering the world's cheapest LED bulbs in rural areas at a mere Rs. 10.**

Key Points

- **Coverage:** In its first phase launched from Arrah in Bihar, **15 million LED bulbs** will be distributed **across villages of 5 districts** - Aarah (Bihar), Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Vijayawada (Andhra Pradesh), Nagpur (Maharashtra), and villages in western Gujarat.
 - The light-emitting diode (LED) is one of today's most energy-efficient and rapidly-developing lighting technologies.
- **Implementation:**
 - **7 watt and 12-watt LED bulbs with 3 years warranty** will be given to rural consumers **against submission of working Incandescent bulbs**.
 - Each **household** will get **up to 5 LEDs**.
 - Participating rural households **will also have metres installed in their houses** to account for usage.
 - The **LED bulbs are offered** by state-run **Energy Efficiency Services Ltd's (EESL's) subsidiary Convergence Energy Services Ltd (CESL)**.
 - EESL is a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) under the **Ministry of Power**.
- **Financing Mechanism:**
 - The programme will be financed **entirely through carbon credits** and will be the **first such programme** in India.
 - The **revenue earned from carbon credits** will contribute Rs. 60 per LED bulb piece, with the balance Rs. 10 to be paid by the rural consumer.
 - **Carbon credit (or "carbon offsets")** are certificates generated by projects or activities that reduce, avoid, or destroy greenhouse gases.
 - Project owners, such as solar and wind energy developers, or protectors of endangered forestlands can sell these certificates to an individual or a company to earn revenues to keep expanding their projects into the future.
 - When one purchases carbon offsets, one is funding the reduction or elimination of carbon.
 - Further on, **carbon credit documentation** will be **sent to United Nations (UN) accredited validators** for inclusion into the **Shine Program of activities**.
 - Carbon credits will be prepared under the Shine Program of Activities with an option for verifying under the Voluntary Carbon Standard, depending on the needs of buyers.
 - Carbon Credit Buyers will also be sought through an open process based on initial discussions with the market.
- **Significance:**
 - Help in meeting **intended nationally determined contributions** under **paris climate accord**.
 - If all 300 million lights in India were replaced, the total energy savings would be 40,743 million kWh/year, avoiding peak

- demand of 22,743MW/year and CO₂ reductions of 37 million tons per year.
- Through extra carbon credit, India will **boost its position in global carbon trade.**
 - Boost to efforts to **ensure 24-hour power supply.**
 - The Prime Minister of India, in his Independence Day speech of 2015, promised that all villages where electricity was yet to reach, will have power within 1,000 days.
 - To create basic power infrastructure and connectivity, the government had announced a scheme - the **Deendayal Upadhyay Gram Jyoti Yojana.**
 - Help in the **growth of domestic LED markets.**
 - Meet the benefit of **sustainable development goals (SDG).**
 - Specially **SDG7:** To ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services.
 - **Other Schemes for Encouraging Use of LED Bulbs:**
 - **Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA).**
 - Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP).

Prelims Practice Questions

1. Which of the following statement/s is/are correct with respect to the 'Ease of Doing Business' reforms??

1. It is stipulated by the Department of Expenditure, Finance ministry.
2. States completing the reforms are eligible for additional borrowing of 0.25% of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP).

Options:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: c

Explanation:

- The Finance ministry has recently stated that as many as 20 States having successfully completed ease of doing business reforms. Recently, five more States namely, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Meghalaya and Tripura have completed the 'Ease of Doing Business' reforms stipulated by the Department of Expenditure.
 - The ease of doing business is an important indicator of the investment friendly business climate in the country. Improvements in the ease of doing business will enable faster future growth of the state economy.
- States completing the reforms are eligible for additional borrowing of 0.25% of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) through Open Market Borrowings.

2. Consider the following statements about Ethiopia:

1. Ethiopia is a landlocked country sharing borders with Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya and Somalia.
2. The country has recently declared war with its enemy state of Eritrea.

Which of the statements given above is/are not correct?

- A 1 only
- B 2 only
- C Both 1 and 2
- D Neither 1 nor 2

Answer : B

Explanation

- Ethiopia is a country on the Horn of Africa. The capital is Addis Ababa ("New Flower"), located almost at the centre of the country.
 - Ethiopia is bounded by Eritrea to the north, Djibouti to the northeast, **Somalia** to the east, **Kenya** to the south, and **South Sudan** and **Sudan** to the west. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Abiy Ahmed, after becoming Ethiopia's Prime Minister in April 2018, reached out to the political opposition, ushered democratic reforms, lifted curbs on the media and **made peace with Eritrea** - moves that won him the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- Abiy has declared war on the country's Tigray region, which is ruled by the powerful Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), in response to its attack on a federal military base in Tigray.
 - **Eritrea is a sworn enemy of the TPLF**, which shares a long border with the Tigray region.

3. Which of the following of NASA's mission is aiming to study the interior structure of planet mars?

- a. Insights mission
- b. MAVEN
- c. Phoenix
- d. Perseverance

Answer: a

Explanation:

InSight (Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport) is a NASA Discovery Program mission that will place a single geophysical lander on Mars to study its deep interior.

4. Consider the following statements:

- 1. Inflation signifies decrease in the purchasing power of currency.
- 2. Inflation of any form is not good for the economy.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A 1 only
- B 2 only
- C Both 1 and 2
- D Neither 1 and 2

Answer : A

Explanation

- Inflation refers to the rise in the prices of most goods and services of daily or common use, such as food, clothing, housing, recreation, transport, consumer staples, etc.
 - It measures the average price change in a basket of commodities and services over time.

- It is indicative of the decrease in the purchasing power of a unit of a country's currency. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Decrease in the purchasing power, due to inflation, could lead to a deceleration in economic growth. However, **a moderate level of inflation is required in the economy to ensure that production is promoted.**
 - Therefore, mild inflation is seen as “greasing the wheels of commerce”. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**

5. The Asola-Bhati wildlife sanctuary is located on the border of which of the following?

- a. Delhi and Haryana
- b. Haryana and Punjab
- c. Uttar Pradesh and Bihar
- d. Bihar and West Bengal

Answer: a

Explanation:

- Asola-Bhati Wildlife Sanctuary on the Southern Delhi Ridge of Aravalli hill range on Delhi-Haryana border lies in Southern Delhi as well as northern parts of Faridabad and Gurugram districts of Haryana state.

6. Which of the following statement/s is/are correct with respect to Galathea National park?

1. It is located in the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India.
2. It is located on the island of Great Nicobar.
3. It is home to Nicobarese megapode and pigeon.

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Galathea National Park is a National Park located in the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India. It is located on the island of Great Nicobar in the Nicobar Islands, which lie in the eastern Indian Ocean (Bay of Bengal).
- The total area of this park is some 110 square kilometers, and it was gazetted as a National Park of India in 1992. Galathea forms part of what has been designated as the Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve, which also includes the larger Campbell Bay National Park, separated from Galathea by a 12-km forest buffer zone.
- Many unique and rare species of plants and animals are found in the park, a number of which are endemic to the islands including the Nicobarese Megapode and the Nicobar Pigeon.

Mains Practice Questions

1. "The agriculture sector is critical for India from a consistent growth and food security perspective". Discuss the steps to be taken to revitalise the agricultural sector. (250 words)

Approach

- Introduce by explaining the given statement and showing how the agriculture sector is critical for India for consistent growth and food security.
- Discuss in brief the main issues faced by the agriculture sector in India.
- Discuss the steps to be taken to revitalise the sector.
- Conclude with an emphasis on adopting sustainable agriculture for sustainable development.

2. "The poverty line in India may not permit a comfortable existence, but allows above subsistence existence". Critically examine the concept of poverty line in India. (250 words)

Approach

- Give a brief introduction of the concept of poverty line in India.
- Discuss the significance and issues related with the concept of poverty line.
- Provide a way forward to solve the problem of malnutrition and poverty.
- Conclude suitably.

