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GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1. China, Russia propose new security dialogue platform

Context:

China and Russia proposed the establishment of a regional security dialogue platform to converge a new consensus on resolving the security concerns of countries in the region.

Details:

- The proposal has been made to address security concerns of countries in the region, as their Foreign Ministers hit out at the United States for forming small circles to seek bloc confrontation.
- The proposal comes in the backdrop of the U.S.-China summit in Alaska and the leaders' summit of the Quad (India, Australia, Japan and the U.S.), grouping.
- The countries hit out at attempts by the West to interfere in both countries' internal affairs. They criticised the U.S. and the EU for their recent sanctions on Russia and China.
- Also, China and Russia have rejected U.S. calls for a rules-based order (a call endorsed by the Quad summit).
- Both the countries instead said that all countries must follow the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and uphold true multilateralism, make international relations more democratic, and accept and promote peaceful coexistence and common development of countries with different social systems and development paths.

Note:

China and Russia are already part of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) security grouping, which includes India.

2. India abstains in UNHRC vote on Sri Lanka

Context:

India abstained from a crucial vote on Sri Lanka's rights record at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Details:

- The resolution on 'Promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka' was adopted after 22 states of the 47-member Council voted in its favour.
- While 14 countries, including India, Japan and Nepal, abstained from voting, 11 countries, including China, Pakistan, Russia and Bangladesh voted against the resolution, and in support of the Sri Lankan government.
- Sri Lanka is resisting the process envisaged in the resolution to prosecute war criminals through an international evidence gathering and investigation mechanism.
- The Sri Lankan administration was counting on India's support and had even expressed its confidence in obtaining India's support at the Human Rights Council voting.
- On the other hand, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) sought the exact opposite outcomes on the resolution.

Note:

The Sri Lanka resolution was the first to be voted on using the extraordinary e-voting procedures established for the UNHRC's 46th Session, which was held virtually.

3. Indus water panel holds meeting

Context:

After a gap of more than two and a half years, Indian and Pakistani delegations have begun the 116th Meeting of the Permanent Indus Commission.

Details:

- The meeting is being viewed as part of the broader process of normalisation of bilateral ties between the two neighbours.
- The meeting is being led by the Indus Water Commissioners of both countries.
- The positive backdrop of the talks between the two delegations has indicated that the interaction is likely supported by the reported back-channel talks that are taking place between India and Pakistan.

Permanent Indus Commission

- The Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) is a bilateral commission comprising officials from both India and Pakistan.
- It was formed to implement the goals and objectives outlined in the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT).
- IWT was signed in 1960 with the World Bank standing guarantee for any dispute resolution. The treaty sets out a mechanism for cooperation and information exchange between the two countries regarding their use of the rivers.
 - Under the treaty, India has control over the water flowing in the eastern rivers– Beas, Ravi and Sutlej.
 - Pakistan has control over the western rivers– Indus, Chenab and Jhelum.
 - As per the treaty, the water commissioners of Pakistan and India are required to meet twice a year and arrange technical visits to projects' sites and critical river head works.

4. OTT case: SC stays all pleas in HCs

Context:

The Supreme Court has stayed the proceedings in High Courts in cases seeking regulation of content shown on over-the-top (OTT) platforms.

Details:

- While the Information and Broadcasting Ministry said that the Rules were based on a globally recognised model and keep a fine balance, it is being criticised as lacking teeth to punish violators or to screen offensive content.

Details:

- The Information Technology (Guidelines for Intermediaries and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 also mandate that social media and messaging platforms will have to adhere to new requirements in assisting investigative agencies of the government.
- The Electronics and Information Technology Minister called it a soft-touch oversight mechanism to deal with issues such as the persistent spread of fake news and other misinformation.

Broadly, what do the new rules require digital platforms to do?

- The broad themes of the guidelines revolve around grievance redressal, compliance with the law, and adherence to the media code.
- Social media platforms will have to appoint a grievance officer to deal with users' complaints.
- The platforms whose registered users in India are above the threshold notified by the government must appoint a 'Chief Compliance Officer', who will have to ensure that the rules are followed.
 - The officer shall be liable in any proceedings relating to any relevant third-party information, data or communication link made available or hosted by that intermediary.
 - The intermediaries will also have to appoint a nodal contact person for 24×7 coordination with law enforcement agencies.
- A social media intermediary would have to enable the identification of the first originator of the information on its computer resource as may be required by a judicial order.
- For digital publishers of news and current affairs as well as video streaming services, an identical three-tier structure for grievance redressal has been mandated.
 - This structure will look into grievances in relation to a Code of Ethics, which is listed in the appendix to the rules.
 - Among other things, the Code of Ethics includes the 'Norms of Journalistic Conduct' as prescribed by the Press Council of India, as also content that shall not be published and the Programme Code under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995.
 - The guidelines also require streaming services to classify content based on its nature and type.

What is the context in which these rules have been framed?

- Questions about how social media platforms can be made accountable for the spread of fake news and pornographic content have been raised in Parliament and by the Supreme Court in recent years.
- The question of stricter regulation of digital media came up in 2020 when the Supreme Court was hearing a case involving Sudarshan TV. In the course, it asked the government for suggestions to improve the self-regulatory mechanism for electronic media.
- Recently, there has also been a face-off between the government and Twitter over its non-compliance with the government order to block several hashtags and handles of journalists, activists and politicians in the backdrop of the ongoing farmers' protests.

What has changed from earlier?

- The scope of regulation of the digital space has been expanded.
- The new guidelines replace the Information Technology (Intermediaries Guidelines) Rules, 2011.
- They also regulate digital news publishers and streaming services, which was not the case earlier.
- Under Section 79 of the Information Technology Act, the intermediaries are not liable for user-generated content, provided they adhere to the rules – “an intermediary shall not be liable for any third-party information, data, or communication link made available or hosted by him,” it states. These rules have been tightened now.

Criticisms:

- For digital news media, these guidelines will subject it to governmental regulation in a way.
- The three-tier structure of regulation will entail oversight by a government committee at the highest level.
- Any grievance that does not get satisfactorily solved at the self-regulatory levels will get escalated to the government panel.
- The Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF), a digital liberties organisation, refers to this as “excessive governmental control over digital news and OTT content”.
- The other rule that has been criticised by the IFF is the requirement of traceability of the originator of a problematic message.
- The rules have also been criticised for increasing the potential for censorship and surveillance.

GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology, Environment

5. States to get 3,000 crore in GST dues

What's in News?

The Finance Minister informed the Lok Sabha that the Centre will release ₹30,000 crore as GST compensation to States from the compensation cess collections during the year.

- The GST Compensation Act, 2017 guaranteed States that they would be compensated for any loss of revenue in the first five years of GST implementation, until 2022, using a cess levied on sin and luxury goods.

- A compensation cess fund was created from which States would be paid for any shortfall.
- An additional cess would be imposed on certain items and this cess would be used to pay compensation.
- The GST Act states that the cess collected and “such other amounts as may be recommended by the [GST] Council” would be credited to the fund.
- Any unused money from the compensation fund at the end of the transition period shall be distributed between the states and the centre as per any applicable formula.

6. Market Infrastructure Institutions

Why in News

The **Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has asked **Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs)** to begin **operations from disaster recovery sites within 45 minutes** of a disruption to critical systems, including trading.

- The directive comes against the backdrop of a technical glitch at the **National Stock Exchange (NSE)** on **24th February** that halted trading for nearly four hours.

Key Points

- **SEBI's Latest Directive:**
 - **New Framework for MIIs:**
 - SEBI has come out with a new framework for **Business Continuity Plan (BCP)** and **Disaster Recovery (DR)** of **Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs)** - stock exchanges, clearing corporations and depositories.
 - Business Continuity (BC) and Disaster Recovery (DR) are closely related practices that **support an organization's ability to remain operational after an adverse event.**
 - **Guidelines:**
 - In the event of **disruption of any one or more of the 'critical systems'**, the MII would, **within 30 minutes** of the incident, **declare that incident as 'disaster'**.
 - **Critical systems for an exchange or clearing corporation** would include **trading, risk management, collateral management, clearing and settlement and index computation.**

- **Critical systems' for a depository shall include systems supporting settlement process and inter-depository transfer systems.**
- **MIIs have been directed to move to disaster recovery sites within 45 minutes** of declaring an incident a 'disaster'.
 - **A disaster recovery site** is a place that a company can temporarily relocate to following a security breach or natural disaster.
 - It ensures that **a company can continue operations until it becomes safe to resume work at its usual location** or a new permanent location.
 - **Mobile- and cloud-based disaster recovery sites** are becoming increasingly popular.
- **The new guidelines should be implemented within 90 days.**
- **Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs):**
 - **Stock exchanges, depositories and clearing corporations** are collectively referred to as securities Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs).
 - According to the **Bimal Jalan Committee (2010)**, these institutions are systemically important for the country's financial development and serve as the infrastructure necessary for the securities market.
 - The **stock exchange** in India serves as **a market where financial instruments like stocks, bonds and commodities are traded.**
 - **Depositories** may be organizations, banks, or institutions that hold securities and **assist in the trading of securities.**
 - A **clearing corporation is an organisation/entity affiliated with a stock exchange** whose primary objective is to oversee the handling of confirmation, settlement, and delivery of transactions.

SEBI

- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India** was established on 12th April, 1992 in accordance with the provisions of the **Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992.**
- Major Function:
 - To protect the interests of investors in securities.
 - To regulate the securities market.

NSE

- The **National Stock Exchange of India Limited (NSE)** is **India's largest financial market.**

- **Incorporated in 1992**, the NSE has developed into a sophisticated, electronic market, which ranked fourth in the world by **equity** trading volume.
 - NSE was the first exchange in India to provide modern, fully automated electronic trading.
 - The NSE is the largest private wide-area network in India.
- The **NIFTY 50 is the flagship index on the National Stock Exchange of India Ltd. (NSE)**. The Index tracks the behavior of a portfolio of blue chip companies, the largest and most liquid Indian securities. It includes 50 of the approximately 1600 companies listed on the NSE.

7. Skill Certification

Why in News

The **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship** has asked all government departments to ensure that workers executing government contracts must have official certification for their skills.

- Initially, up to **10% of the strength of workers** utilized in 2021-22 can be certified. This can be progressively **increased to 100% by 2026-27**.

Key Points

- **Need of the Move:**
 - **Low Level of Trained Workforce:** Only 2.4% of India's workforce is formally trained as per the **Periodic Labour Force Survey** of 2018-19.
 - India's skill regulator, the **National Council for Vocational Education and Training**, has standardised skill certification systems for 4,000-odd job roles, as part of an effort to change the labour market structure from a largely unskilled one to a predominantly formally skilled workforce.
 - **Informal and Low Wage:** Government contractors prefer to rely on informal workers with low salaries for meeting their labour needs.
 - **Paradoxical Situation:** This is a paradoxical situation wherein the government is trying to promote skilling in the workforce without insisting on the use of skilled manpower for its own project.
- **Advantage:**
 - **Increase Demand For Skill:** Demand for skilling would start coming from the industry and labour force itself, which will prefer to pay for skilling itself, doing away with the present system of the Government trying to drive skilling through funding.

- **Improvement in Wages :** Improvement in wages for the skilled manpower hired.
- **Culture of Certified Skilling:** Given the quantum of manpower engaged in government and government contract works, this would help in making skilling aspirational for our youth and spread the culture of certified skilling.
- **Enhance Productivity and Quality:** This will lead to higher productivity and output quality in government contract works.
- **Challenges:**
 - **Insufficient Training Capacity:** Insufficient job-linked training is leading to low employability rate in India.
 - **Low Industry Interface:** Low industry interface in training institutes is leading to poor placements and lower salaries.
 - **Low Student Mobilization:** The enrolment in skill institutes like ITIs, and polytechnics, remains low as compared to their enrolment capacity. This is due to low **awareness levels among youths** about the skill development programmes.
 - **Employers' Unwillingness:** India's joblessness issue is not only a skills problem, it is representative of the lack of appetite of industrialists and SMEs for recruiting.
 - Due to limited access to credit because of Banks' **Non-Performing Assets (NPAs)**, investment rate has declined and thus a negative impact on job creation.

Some Schemes Related to Skill Development

- **Industrial Training Centres (ITIs):** Conceptualized in the year 1950, aims to expand and modernize the existing Long-Term Training ecosystem in India.
- **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY):** Launched in 2015, it aims to provide free skill training avenues to youths of India.
 - **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 3.0:** It is launched 2021 in a bid to empower India's youth with employable skills by making over 300 skill courses available to them.
- **Recognition of Prior Learning:** It was launched in 2015 to recognize the prior skills acquired by individuals. It is one of the key components of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY).
 - Under this an individual with a certain set of skills or with prior learning experience is assessed and certified under RPL with grade according to the **National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF)**.
- **National Career Service Project:** Launched in 2015 to offer free online career skills training through its National Career Service (NCS) project for job-seekers registered with it.

- **Skill Management and Accreditation of Training Centres (SMART):** It provides a single window IT application that focuses on the accreditation, grading, Affiliation and Continuous monitoring of the Training Centres (TC) in the skill ecosystem.
- **Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood (SANKALP):** Its focus is on district-level skilling ecosystem through convergence and coordination. It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme which is collaborated with the World Bank.
- **Skills Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement (STRIVE):** Launched in 2016, the main focus of the scheme is to improve the performance of ITIs. Skills Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement (STRIVE) scheme is a World Bank assisted-Government of India project with the objective of improving the relevance and efficiency of skills training provided through Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and apprenticeships.
- **Pradhan Mantri YUVA Yojana (Yuva Udyamita Vikas Abhiyan):** Launched in the year 2016, it aims at creating an enabling ecosystem for Entrepreneurship development through Entrepreneurship education and training; Advocacy and easy access to entrepreneurship support network and Promoting social enterprises for inclusive growth.
- **Kaushalacharya Awards:** Launched to recognize the contribution made by skill trainers and to motivate more trainers to join the Skill India Mission.
- **Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS):** The scheme is to provide industry apprenticeship opportunities to the general graduates exiting in April 2019 through the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS).
- **Atma Nirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping (ASEEM):** Launched in 2020, it is a portal to help skilled people find sustainable livelihood opportunities.

THE INDIAN EXPRESS

GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1. Sanctions on China over Uighurs: Cause & Effect

In a coordinated move, many countries imposed sanctions on Chinese officials for human rights abuses against Uighurs and other minorities in Xinjiang province.

The Uighurs

- Xinjiang has a large number of Uighurs, Muslims of Turkic descent.
- Over the past few decades, more and more Han Chinese has settled in Xinjiang, which saw violent clashes between them and the Uighurs.

Sanctions on China

- The European Union, the US, Britain, and Canada imposed sanctions on Chinese Officials.
- Australia and New Zealand issued a joint statement welcoming the Western action, adding they were concerned about reports of abuses from Xinjiang.
- China on the other hand has consistently denied all reports of atrocities against Uighurs, maintaining it is only “deradicalising” elements of its population in the interests of security.

Retaliation by China

- Those sanctioned by China include five Members of the European Parliament and the Political and Security Committee, the EU’s main foreign policy decision-making body, among others.
- China also summoned the EU ambassador and the UK ambassador to lodge “solemn protests”.

Why these sanctions are crucial?

- This is the first time the EU has imposed sanctions on China since an arms embargo after the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown. That is still in place.
- Although the EU sanctions are not very damaging, they show a hardening of stance against its largest trading partner.
- Also significant is that the Western powers moved together, in what is being seen as a result of the US push to deal with China along with its allies.

Reasons behind: Crackdown on Uighurs

- China is accused of putting over a million people in internment camps to “de-Muslimise” them and make them integrate better in the Communist country.
- Allegations are that these people have been forced to leave behind their occupations, properties and families, to stay at the camps.
- Survivors, human rights organisations, and governments of other countries have alleged physical, psychological and sexual torture.
- People can be sent to the camps for showing any signs of “extremism” – sporting beards, fasting during Ramzan, dressing differently from the majority, sending Eid greetings, praying “too often” etc.

2. Permanent Indus Commission

Why in News

The **116th Meeting of Permanent Indus Commission (PIC)** between India and Pakistan is underway in **New Delhi**.

- The first day of the Meeting **coincided with the National Day of Pakistan** (marks **Lahore Resolution** of **23rd March, 1940**).

Key Points

- **About the Latest Meeting:**
 - The meeting is **being held after a gap of more than two-and-a-half years**, a period that witnessed:
 - **Pulwama attack** (14th February, 2019), **Balakot air strike** (26th february, 2019), and
 - **Abrogation of special provisions under Article 370** that gave special status to J&K.
 - A discussion on **Pakistan’s objections about two India Projects - Pakal Dul and Lower Kalnai** - is expected to be held.
 - India is building **Pakal Dul Hydro Electric Project** (1,000 MW) on river **Marusudar**, a tributary of the Chenab. The project is located in Kishtwar district of J&K.
 - The second project – **Lower Kalnai** – is being developed on the **Chenab**.
 - **Routine issues such as flood data exchange mechanisms** are also expected to be discussed.
 - The meeting is being seen as a positive step **after both countries agreed to “strict observance of all agreements, understanding and ceasefire along the Line of Control and all other sectors”** last month.
- **About the Permanent Indus Commission:**

- It is a **bilateral commission of officials from India and Pakistan**, created to implement and manage goals of the **Indus Waters Treaty, 1960**.
- The Commission, according to the treaty, **shall meet regularly at least once a year, alternately in India and Pakistan**.
- The **functions** of the Commission include:
 - To study and report to the two Governments on any problem relating to the development on the waters of the rivers.
 - To solve disputes arising over water sharing.
 - To arrange technical visits to projects' sites and critical river head works.
 - To undertake, once in every five years, a general tour of inspection of the Rivers for ascertaining the facts.
 - To take necessary steps for the implementation of the provisions of the treaty.
- The **115th meeting of the PIC was held in Lahore in August, 2018**.
- **Indus Water Treaty, 1960:**
 - It is a **treaty brokered by the World Bank** and signed by then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Pakistan's President Ayub Khan which **administers how the waters of the Indus and its tributaries that flow in both the countries will be utilised**.
 - According to the treaty, **waters of the eastern rivers – Sutlej, Beas and Ravi had been allocated to India**, while the western rivers – the **Indus, Jhelum and Chenab to Pakistan**.
 - Under the treaty, **India has been given the right to generate hydroelectricity through a run of the river projects on the western rivers** subject to specific criteria for design and operation.
 - **India has cleared several hydropower projects** in Ladakh: Darbuk Shyok (19 MW), Shankoo (18.5 MW), Nimu Chilling (24 MW), Rongdo (12 MW), Ratan Nag (10.5 MW) for Leh; and Mangdum Sangra (19 MW), Kargil Hunderman (25 MW) and Tamasha (12 MW) for Kargil.
 - It also **gives Pakistan the right to raise concerns** on the design of Indian hydroelectric projects on western rivers.
 - The Treaty also **provides an arbitration mechanism** to solve disputes amicably.
 - There have been **disagreements and differences between India and Pakistan over dams**. For eg. In 2010, Pakistan instituted international arbitration proceedings over India's 330-megawatt hydropower project on a small Indus tributary, the **Kishenganga (known as Neelum in Pakistan)**.

- **Though Indus originates from Tibet, China has been kept out of the Treaty.** If China decides to stop or change the flow of the river, it will affect both India and Pakistan.
- **Climate change is causing melting of ice in Tibetan plateau,** which scientists believe will affect the river in future.

Lahore Resolution

- A historic session of the **All-India Muslim League was held at Lahore in March 1940.**
 - **Muhammad Ali Jinnah** explained how Hindus and Muslims cannot co-exist peacefully.
- On 23rd March, an epoch-making resolution was moved at that session demanding that **areas of the subcontinent of India in which the Muslims were numerically** in a majority, as in the **North-Western and Eastern Zones,** should be grouped to **constitute independent States.**
- Having regard to the place of its adoption, the resolution was **originally referred to as the Lahore Resolution.** The Hindu Press, however, dubbed it as the **Pakistan Resolution** and eventually, in popular parlance, it came to be called as such.
- The Lahore Resolution was the **beginning of the end of the administrative unity of the entire sub continent,** which had been created by the Muslim Emperors and continued by the British; **within eight years of its adoption the subcontinent was partitioned and Pakistan appeared as an independent sovereign State** on its map.

3. Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia

Why in News

The Prime Minister of India paid tribute to Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia on his birth anniversary (23rd March).

Key Points

- **Birth:** 23rd March, 1910 in Akbarpur, Uttar Pradesh.
- **Brief Profile:**

□

- Indian politician and activist who was a prominent figure in socialist politics and in the movement towards Indian independence.
- Much of his career was devoted to combating injustice through the development of a distinctly Indian version of socialism.
 - **Socialism** refers to a set of political ideas that emerged as a response to the inequalities present in, and reproduced by, the industrial capitalist economy.

□ **Lohia's Idea of Socialism:**

- Lohia **identified five kinds of inequalities** that need to be fought against simultaneously:
 - Inequality between **man and woman**,
 - Inequality based on **skin colour**,
 - **Caste-based** inequality,
 - **Colonial rule** of some countries over others, and
 - **Economic** inequality.
- For him struggle against these five inequalities constituted five **revolutions**. He added two more revolutions to this list:
 - **Revolution** for civil liberties against unjust encroachments on private life and
 - **Revolution** for non-violence, for renunciation of weapons in favour of Satyagraha.
- These were the **seven revolutions or Sapta Kranti** which for Lohia was the ideal of socialism.

□ **Education:**

- **Bachelor's degree (1929)** from the **University of Calcutta** and a **doctorate (1932)** from the **University of Berlin**, where he studied economics and politics.

□ **Pre-Independence Role:**

- In 1934, he became actively involved in the **Congress Socialist Party (CSP)**, founded that year as a left-wing group within the Indian National Congress.
- A vehement **opponent of Indian participation on the side of Great Britain in World War II (1939-45)**, he was arrested for anti-British remarks in 1939 and again in 1940.
- With the emergence in **1942 of the Quit India movement** – a campaign initiated by **Mahatma Gandhi** to urge the withdrawal of British authorities from India – Lohia and other CSP leaders (such as **Jaya Prakash Narayan**)

mobilized support from the underground. For such resistance activities, he was jailed again in 1944–46.

□ **Post-Independence Role:**

- Lohia and other CSP members left the Congress in **1948**.
- He became a member of the **Praja Socialist Party** upon its formation in **1952** and served as general secretary for a brief period, but internal conflicts led to his **resignation in 1955**.
- He established a **new Socialist Party (1955)**, for which he became chairman as well as the editor of its journal, **Mankind**.
 - He advocated for various socio-political reforms in his capacity as party leader, including the **abolition of the caste system**, stronger protection of civil liberties, etc.
- **In 1963**, Lohia was elected to the **Lok Sabha**, where he was noted for his sharp criticism of government policies.

□ Some of **his works** include: 'Wheel of History', 'Marx, Gandhi and Socialism', 'Guilty Men of India's Partition', etc.

□ **Death:** 12th October, 1967.

4. Corrective voice from Supreme Court against stereotyping of women

A judgment by the Supreme Court forbidding judges from making gender-stereotypical comments came as a corrective voice

What is the news?

- The judgment came days after the CJI, during a virtual hearing reportedly asked an alleged rapist's lawyer to enquire whether his client would marry the survivor.
- His statement coincided with International Women's Day.
- Days later, a Bench of Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and S. Ravindra Bhat urged courts to avoid using reasoning/language which diminished a sexual offence and tended to trivialize the survivor.

What did the Court say?

- The greatest extent of sensitivity is to be displayed in the judicial approach, language and reasoning adopted by the judge.

- Even a solitary instance of such order or utterance in court, reflects adversely on the entire judicial system of the country, undermining the guarantee to fair justice to all, and especially to victims of sexual violence.
- This judgment is one among a series of interventions with which the apex court has clamped down on abuse and sex stereotyping of women.

SC against stereotyping

Some of the notable judgments which have lashed out at sex stereotyping include:

1. The framing of the Vishaka Guidelines on sexual harassment of women in working places, and
2. 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
3. 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"

Avoid gender stereotypes such as:

The courts should desist from expressing any stereotype opinion, in words spoken during proceedings, or in the course of a judicial order, to the effect that

- women are physically weak and need protection;
- men are the "head" of the household and should take all the decisions relating to family;
- women should be submissive and obedient according to our culture;
- "good" women are sexually chaste;
- motherhood is the duty and role of every woman and assumptions to the effect that she wants to be a mother;
- being alone at night or wearing certain clothes make women responsible for being attacked;
- lack of evidence of physical harm in sexual offence case leads to an inference of consent by the woman.

Conclusion

- Stereotyping compromises the impartiality and integrity of the justice system, which can, in turn, lead to miscarriages of justice, including the re-victimization of complainants.
- Often judges adopt rigid standards about what they consider to be appropriate behaviour for women and penalize those who do not conform to these stereotypes.

There should be gender sensitization

- The court-mandated that a module on gender sensitization is included, as part of the foundational training of every judge.
- This module must aim at imparting techniques for judges to be more sensitive in hearing and deciding cases of sexual assault, and eliminating entrenched social bias, especially misogyny.

GS 3 :Economy, Science and Technology,Environment

5. Vehicles scrappage policy: A step forward but a missed opportunity

The much-awaited draft policy on vehicle scrappage is finally out. But the draft policy also misses an opportunity: Of designing the policy as an effective stimulus programme for green recovery in the sector to achieve deeper and quicker air quality benefits.

Background

- The policy outlines the criteria for defining end-of-life vehicles and scrapping them.
- It also makes provision for scrapping facilities for safe disposal of waste and material recovery.
- This is an important step forward towards building infrastructure for organised and scientific scrapping of old vehicles.

The proposal

- This proposed policy seeks to phase out unfit vehicles to reduce vehicular pollution, meet the climate commitments, improve road safety and fuel efficiency, formalize informal vehicle scrapping industry and recover low-cost material for the automotive, steel and electronics industry.
- The policy expects to spin jobs and attract investment as well.
- It is a big positive for supporting a network of well-equipped scrappage facilities with adequate environmental safeguards to stop unsafe dismantling that contaminates the environment.

Issues with the policy

(1) Advisory nature

- This policy has only 'advised' the state governments and the automobile industry to provide voluntary incentives to the owners of old vehicles.
- The central government has not committed to make it a fiscal stimulus strategy for quicker renewal of ageing, heavy-duty vehicle fleet with BS-VI vehicles – or to link other segments with targeted electrification.

(2) Achieving fleet renewal

- The focus on targeted fleet renewal for maximum emissions gains is still weak.
- The proposed policy puts the entire onus of incentivizing fleet renewal on the state governments.
- They have been advised to waive off a big chunk of road tax and registration fees on replacement vehicles.
- These are important sources of state revenue, and the reaction of the state governments is still not known.

(3) No stimulus

- The more compelling question is whether the central government would consider a centrally supported stimulus programme for post-pandemic green recovery.
- This is the global trend wherein governments have been giving conditional bailouts or tax support linked to emissions targets.

What can be an effective strategy?

(1) Transportation vehicles

- For heavy-duty vehicles, the policy can take a more nuanced approach.
- Consider that some truck owners may want to only dispose of the very old trucks without replacing them. But others may want to scrap and replace the older trucks.
- In that case, a rebate can be given to the owners of end-of-life vehicles who are interested in 'only scrapping' the vehicle without immediately replacing them.
- And this rebate can be given based on a scrappage certificate from authorized scrappage centres.
- Old trucks with more economic life left can get a comparatively higher incentive as that will give higher emissions benefits.

(2) Personal vehicles

- For these vehicles, the central incentive can be linked with replacement with electric vehicles.
- This can be added to the normal scrapping of end-of-life vehicles as already proposed in the draft policy. This can maximise air quality gains.
- Personal vehicles are numerous and general public support for their fleet renewal can divert a lion's share of the allocated budget from the priority heavy-duty segment.
- Therefore, the public support for the personal vehicle segment can be linked only with voluntary electrification.

Build-in manufacturers' responsibility

- The new policy also needs to align with the mandate for the manufacturers to meet targets for recyclability of material.
- Make this mandatory as part of the scrapping policy.

We have AIS 129

- It is encouraging that the Automotive Industrial Standard-129 (AIS 129) on reuse, recycling and material recovery from vehicles were framed in 2015.
- This requires 80-85 per cent of the material used in vehicle manufacturing by mass to be recoverable/recyclable/reusable at the end of life.
- AIS-129 also restricts the use of heavy metals including lead, mercury, cadmium, hexavalent chromium, etc, and asks for the coding of plastics to inform dismantlers.
- The requirement of recyclability should be extended to 85-95 per cent to maximise material recovery as well as energy recovery from residual waste like used oil, non-recyclable rubber etc.

Way forward

- This first-ever formal scrapping policy in India is urgently needed to help build infrastructure for safe disposal and material recovery to minimise environmental hazards.
- But India would be adopting scrapping policy during these unprecedented pandemic times, so it is necessary to leverage this targeted fleet renewal with well-designed central support for a post-pandemic green deal.

Prelims Practice Questions

1. Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) is a permanent organ of which of the

following groupings?

- a. Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
- b. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)
- c. South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)
- d. BRICS

Answer: b

Explanation:

The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), headquartered in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, is a permanent organ of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) which serves to promote cooperation of member states against the three evils of terrorism, separatism and extremism.

2. Consider the following statements:

1. The Ken and Betwa rivers are the tributaries of river Yamuna.
2. The Ken Betwa Link Project aims to transfer surplus water from Betwa river in UP to Ken river in MP.

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

- **Ken and Betwa** rivers originate in MP and are the **tributaries of Yamuna**. Hence, **statement 1 is correct**.
 - Ken meets with Yamuna in Banda district of UP and with Betwa in Hamirpur district of UP.
- Recently, the Chief Ministers of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh signed a memorandum of agreement to implement the Ken Betwa Link Project (KBLP), the first project of the National Perspective Plan for interlinking of rivers.

- The **Ken-Betwa Link Project (KBLP)** is the river interlinking project that aims to **transfer surplus water from the Ken river in MP to Betwa in UP** to irrigate the drought-prone Bundelkhand region. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- The project involves building a 77-metre tall and a 2-km wide Dhaudhan dam and a 230-km canal.

3. World Water Development Report, 2021 was published by?

- a. UNESCO
- b. UN Environment Programme
- c. UN Development Programme
- d. Food and Agricultural Organization

Answer : a

- United Nations World Water Development Report was recently published by UNESCO on behalf of UN Water on March 22, 2021 observed as World Water Day.
- According to the report, built water reservoir capacity per person is decreasing globally as reservoir expansion has not been able to keep pace with population growth.

4. With reference to Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), consider the following statements:

1. The CDRI was launched at the UN Climate Action Summit in 2019.
2. The secretariat of CDRI is based in Paris.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?

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

Answer : A

Explanation

- The **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)** is a multi-stakeholder global partnership of national governments, UN agencies and programmes, multilateral development banks and financing mechanisms, the private sector, and knowledge institutions.
 - The **Prime Minister of India launched** CDRI during his speech at the **UN Climate Action Summit on 23rd September 2019. Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It aims to promote the resilience of new and existing infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks in support of sustainable development.
- The CDRI Secretariat is based in New Delhi, India. Hence, statement 2 is not correct.

5. With reference to the Bhagat Singh, consider the following statements:

1. He was a member of the Hindustan Republican Association (HRA).
2. He started a militant youth organisation named Naujawan Bharat Sabha.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer : C

Explanation

- Bhagat Singh belonged to a generation that was to intervene between two decisive phases of the Indian national movement - the phase of the 'Extremism' of Lal-Bal-Pal and the Gandhian phase of nonviolent mass action.
- In 1924 in Kanpur, he became a member of the **Hindustan Republican Association**, started by Sachindranath Sanyal a year earlier. The main organiser of the Association was Chandra Shekhar Azad and Bhagat Singh became very close to him. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- In 1925, Bhagat Singh returned to Lahore and within the next year he and his colleagues started a militant youth organisation called the **Naujawan Bharat Sabha. Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- In 1928, Bhagat Singh changed the name of Hindustan Republican Association to Hindustan Socialist Republic Association (HSRA). In 1930,

when Azad was shot, the HSRA collapsed. Naujawan Bharat Sabha replaced HSRA in Punjab.

6. Consider the following statements about Sheikh Mujibur Rahman:

1. He served as the first Prime Minister as well as President of Bangladesh.
2. He played a crucial role in advocating political autonomy for East Pakistan.
3. He has been chosen for Gandhi Peace Prize 2020.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A 1 and 2 only
- B 2 only
- C 2 and 3 only
- D 1, 2 and 3

Answer : D

Explanation

- Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was a Bengali leader who became the **first prime minister** of Bangladesh (1972–75) and later became the **president** of the same in 1975. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
 - He was known as Bangabandhu. Also regarded as "Jatir Janak" or "Jatir Pita" (both meaning "Father of the Nation") of Bangladesh.
- He began his formal political career in 1949 as a co-founder of the Awami League.
 - He played a crucial role in **advocating political autonomy for East Pakistan**, the detached eastern part of Pakistan (now Bangladesh). **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- He was **chosen for Gandhi Peace Prize 2020** in recognition of his outstanding contributions towards social, economic and political transformation through non-violent and other Gandhian methods. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

Mains Practice Questions

1. Climate change, overexploitation, and policy measures have combinedly turned India into a water-stressed economy. Discuss.

Approach

- Start the answer by briefly discussing about the condition of water scarcity in India.
- Discuss the reasons for water stress in India.
- Suggest some measures to address the problem of water scarcity.
- Conclude Suitably.

2. Hydrogen is being dubbed as the alternative fuel. However, there are many problems associated with the leveraging of hydrogen technology. Discuss.

Approach

- Start the answer by briefly discussing the context of using hydrogen as an alternate fuel.
- Discuss the pros and cons of hydrogen as a source of energy.
- Conclude suitably.