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GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1. U.S. and China need each other

Context:

- U.S.-China Foreign Ministers' meeting in March at Alaska.

Background:

Increasing clout of China:

- China will surpass the U.S. as the world's largest economy, has established a worldwide network of economic ties and **set up multilateral and financial institutions** like the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, New Development Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank to compete with the West-dominated International Monetary Fund and World Bank.
- It has been successful in countering American increases in military funding by **expanding its own military power**.
- China has extended its influence globally. Some of the U.S.'s formal allies have re-shaped their foreign and economic relations with China deepening their own bilateral relationship with China.

Confrontation and competition between U.S. and China:

- The rising U.S.-China tension may be attributed to China's rise that is transforming power settings and the U.S.'s attempts to constrict China before it becomes a peer competitor.
- Former U.S. President Donald Trump had **accused China of unfair trade practices** and pursued a dual policy of offering deals and threatening sanctions.
- The current U.S. President, Joe Biden has **censured China for human rights abuses in Hong Kong and Xinjiang, aggression in the South and East China Seas, intimidation of Taiwan, intellectual property theft, currency manipulation, and cyberattacks**.
- The U.S. and Europe have imposed sanctions against China and others.

Details:

- The beginning of the Alaska meeting between the foreign ministers was marked by a war of words between the representatives of the two countries.
 - The U.S. Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, blamed China for attacks on global values; posing threats to a rules-based order that maintains global stability and economic coercion against U.S. allies.
 - China countered by strongly opposing U.S.'s interference in China's internal affairs, and asked the U.S. to introspect on its own track record of the poor treatment of minorities, and **criticised U.S. policies seeking military and financial hegemony.**

Interdependency:

- Confrontation and competition between the U.S. and China will dominate this century.
- Despite the constant war of words between the U.S. and China, interdependence between the two superpowers makes the war of words confined to rhetoric.

Economic interdependency:

- Both countries need each other for **economic growth, supply chains, jobs, services, investments and market access.**

Strategic dependency:

- Despite the confrontation and competition between the two countries, the Americans require the Chinese to work together on **issues like climate change, COVID-19, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and G-20, health, cyber-security, the Iran nuclear issue, Afghanistan, Korea and Myanmar.**

2. 'India delayed second wave, can contain economic impact'

What's in News?

While India is in the middle of the second wave of COVID-19 infections, the Finance Ministry stressed that the country had been able to delay the onset of the second wave and was well armed to cope with downside risks to the economy.

- The gap between the first peak to start of the second wave has been 151 days in India, while it was much lower in other countries.
- India is emphasising a five-fold strategy to curb the tide of new cases:
 - Exponential increase in testing

- Effective isolation and contact tracing of those infected
- Reinvigoration of public and private healthcare resources
- Ensuring COVID-appropriate behaviour
- Targeted approach to vaccination in districts reporting large numbers

3. Putin signs law that could keep him in office till 2036

Context:

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a law allowing him to potentially hold onto power until 2036.

Background:

- New constitutional amendments were proposed to Russia's Constitution.
- A national referendum had asked voters to decide whether to approve 206 constitutional amendments.
- In the referendum, both turnout and popular support for the amendments were higher than when Russians voted to adopt the current Constitution itself in 1993.
- Nearly 78% of voters approved the constitutional amendments during the balloting.

Amendments:

- The amendments strengthen presidential and parliamentary powers.
- The amendments would allow Putin to run for two more six-year terms, in 2024 and 2030.
 - The Russian Constitution bars more than two consecutive presidential terms.
 - The new Constitution doesn't change the two-term limit in theory, but in practice, it resets Mr Putin's terms so that it will be the first election under the new Constitution for him, to be held in 2024.
- The amendments also place strict limitations on Russians who hold foreign citizenship or residency from serving public office. It blocks any individual who has ever held foreign residency or citizenship from ever running for President.
- The constitutional amendments also emphasised the primacy of Russian law over international norms, outlawed same-sex marriages and mentioned "a belief in God" as a core value.

Details:

- This move formalises constitutional changes endorsed in a vote in 2020.

- Following the vote, Russian lawmakers have methodically modified the national legislation, approving the relevant laws.
- Putin has argued that resetting the term count was necessary to keep his lieutenants focused on their work instead of “darting their eyes in search for successors.”

4. Govt. amends nine laws via ordinance

Context:

The government has amended nine laws via ordinance.

Details:

- Through the promulgation of the Tribunal Reforms (Rationalisation and Conditions of Service) Ordinance 2021, the Centre has replaced the existing appellate authorities and vested those powers in the High Courts.
- The tenures of chairpersons and members of tribunals were also amended.
 - The tenure of a chairperson has been fixed for a term of four years or till the age of 70, whichever is earlier.

Which are the nine laws?

These laws are Cinematograph Act; Copyright Act; Customs Act; Patents Act; Airports Authority of India Act; Trade Marks Act; Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act; Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers Rights Act and Control of National Highways (Land and Traffic) Act.

5. Free and unhindered justice

Context:

- The article argues for the continuation of the **virtual hearing in the Supreme Court**.

Background:

Virtual hearing during the pandemic:

- With the pandemic necessitating social distancing and the need to keep access to the judiciary open, the Supreme Court had allowed for virtual hearings.

Location of Supreme Court:

- Geographical access to the Supreme Court has been flagged as a concern even during the constituent assembly debates. However, the Drafting Committee was of the view that the Court must have a specified place of sitting to ensure that the litigants know where to go for an appeal.
- The framers of the Constitution also agreed that the volume of litigation from different parts of the country may require the Supreme Court to increase its reach and hold court elsewhere. Accordingly, in recognition of the same, the **Constitution empowered the Chief Justice to hold sittings of the Supreme Court through Circuit Benches in places other than Delhi as well.**
- However, despite an increasing caseload and repeated pleas by litigants and governments, successive Chief Justices have refused to invoke this constitutional power.
- More than one **Law Commission and Parliamentary Committee have recommended Circuit Benches of the Supreme Court to be set up around the country.**

Concerns associated with the Supreme Court assembling exclusively in Delhi:

Limited access to Supreme Court:

- In India, given the **unified, single-pyramidal structure of the judicial system**, all types of cases can potentially make their way to the Supreme Court, irrespective of the place or forum of the original institution.
- The right to fair and equal access to the Supreme Court for all citizens of India is curtailed by the Supreme Court assembling exclusively in Delhi.
 - Several studies have pointed out the fact that a disproportionately high number of cases filed in the Supreme Court originated in High Courts closer to Delhi pointing out to geographical constraints posed by the location of the Supreme Court.

Cost of access:

- Geographical constraints have also meant that appearing before the Supreme Court has inescapably become the domain of a select few lawyers in and around Delhi.
- Such implied exclusivity consequently translates into steep and often **prohibitive monetary costs for litigants.**
- The litigants are forced to choose from what the Bar in Delhi offers, both in terms of quality and costs.

Significance of virtual hearing:

- The virtual hearing provision opened new vistas for litigants and lawyers across India to approach, through technology, the country's highest court

with relative ease. **Access to the Supreme Court has been made easier with virtual hearings.**

- The virtual hearings provision has helped **open up avenues for advocates from all over India.**
- Litigants now have the option to engage a local lawyer of their own choice and convenience, including the same lawyer who argued their case before the lower court.

Conclusion:

- There have been demands for a return to physical hearings by the Bar in Delhi even as there have been calls for virtual access to the Supreme Court to continue.
- Although virtual hearings may not be the perfect alternative, the imperfections associated with virtual hearings must be preferred over denial of the right to access justice itself. It is very important to acknowledge the **significance of fair and equal access to the Supreme Court for all citizens of India.**

GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology, Environment

6. Persistent mindlessness

- Over 20 paramilitary personnel were killed in an encounter with Maoists in the **Tarrem area near Chhattisgarh's Sukma district.**
- The encounter has raised the number of security forces killed in Bastar to more than 175 since the **killing of 76 CRPF personnel in the Chintalnar attack in April 2010.**
- Naxalism related violence has claimed more than 10,000 lives since 2000 alone, according to the South Asia Terrorism Portal.
- **The Tarrem attacks indicate that the weakened Maoists remain a strong military threat** despite facing losses to its cadre and leadership across central and east India.

7. Manufacturing PMI dips to 7-month low

What's in News?

Nikkei Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index declined to a seven-month low of 55.4.

- It was indicated that demand growth was constrained by the escalation of the COVID-19 pandemic, while the rise in input buying was curtailed by an intensification of cost pressures.
- Although India's economy was predicted to grow at a faster pace in FY 2021-22 than previously thought a significant majority of economists said a surge in coronavirus cases was the biggest risk to the outlook.

Purchasing Managers' Index:

- Nikkei Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index is compiled by IHS Markit.
- The Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) is an index of the prevailing direction of economic trends in the manufacturing sector.
- It consists of a diffusion index that summarizes whether market conditions, as viewed by purchasing managers, are expanding, staying the same, or contracting.

Note:

- The headline PMI is a number from 0 to 100.
 - A PMI above 50 represents an expansion when compared with the previous month.
 - A PMI reading under 50 represents a contraction, and a reading at 50 indicates no change.

8. The pillars of an equitable post-COVID India

Context:

- Impact of the pandemic on the existing **inequalities in India**.

Details:

Economic shock of the pandemic:

- The economic shock due to the pandemic has been much more severe for India for two reasons. First, **pre-COVID-19, the economy was already slowing down**, compounding existing problems of unemployment, low incomes, rural distress, malnutrition, and widespread inequality. Second, **India's large informal sector** is particularly vulnerable.

Impact of the pandemic on economic inequality:

- India has been witnessing growing inequalities and the COVID-19 pandemic has only accelerated the trend.
- The share of wages declined as compared to that of profits implying the increasing profits being cornered by the investors as compared to wages being earned by the workers.
 - The big companies and a large part of the corporate sector were able to manage the pandemic. The quarterly net profit of the BSE200 companies reached a record high of Rs. 1.67 trillion in the third quarter of FY21 and was up by 57% year-on-year.
 - The **informal sector and workers have suffered a lot with the loss of incomes and employment** in the last year.
 - **Women lost more jobs** and many are out of the workforce. Inequalities have increased in the health care and education sectors too.
- The **economic recovery has been more k-shaped** with rising inequalities.
- Many economic experts and reports have pointed out the uneven impact of the pandemic.
 - International organisations like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the International Labour Organization have warned about rising inequalities in several countries including India due to the pandemic.
 - The **Pew Research Report** shows that India's middle class may have shrunk by a third, while the number of poor people earning less than Rs. 150 per day more than doubled due to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Need to address the issue of inequality:

- Reduction in inequalities is important for its own sake and for **improving demand** which can raise private investment, consumption and exports for higher and **sustainable economic growth**.
- In the post-COVID-19 world, addressing inequality is important for higher and sustainable economic growth and the **well-being of the population**.

Way forward:

- The author suggests the following approach for reducing inequalities.

Employment and wages:

- The creation of quality and well-paying employment is central to the **inclusive growth approach**.
- This would necessitate the **need to improve the investment rate in the economy**.

- The investment rate declined from 39% in 2011-12 to 31.7% in 2018-19.
- **Investment in infrastructure** including construction can create employment. The central government's move to focus on capital expenditure for infrastructure in the recent budget is a step in the right direction.
- The main challenges with respect to employment generation which would have to be addressed include the following:
 - Creating productive jobs for seven to eight million per year
 - Correcting the **mismatch between demand and supply of labour** – only 2.3% of India's workforce has formal skill training
 - **Structural change challenge** – While the service sector continues to expand and contribute an ever-increasing share in the GDP matrix, ideally, manufacturing should be the engine of growth. Labour-intensive exports need to be promoted
 - Need to balance the objective of promoting growth of micro, small & medium enterprises and informal sectors by improving ease of doing business even while upholding the rights of workers
 - Need to be well prepared for **automation and technology revolution**
 - Need to ensure social security and decent working conditions for all
 - Work towards raising real wages of rural and urban workers and guaranteeing **minimum wages**

Focussing on human development:

- The state should focus on creating equality of opportunity by improving human development through **increased public expenditure on health and education**.
- Education and health achievements are essential for reducing inequality of opportunities.
- India should move towards universal health care and **spend 2%-3% of GDP on health**.
- The main concerns associated with the health and education sector are as follows:
 - Public expenditure on health is only 1.5% of GDP.
 - In education, there are islands of excellence that can compete internationally even as a vast majority of masses of children are churned out with **poor learning achievement**. The pandemic also brought to light the **digital gap in education**.

Social security net:

- An important intervention in addressing the inequalities would involve **providing a quasi-universal basic income and other safety nets to the most vulnerable sections of the population**.

- This could include providing a minimum income for the poor and the vulnerable based on cash transfers; expanding the number of days provided under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and a national employment guarantee scheme for urban areas.
- Schemes and interventions in the agri sector aimed at doubling the income of the farmers would play a critical role in reducing inequalities.
- These measures would help **provide income support to the needy**.

Addressing the financial aspects:

- Enhancing tax and non-tax revenues of the government is needed to spend on the above-discussed priorities.
- **The tax/GDP ratio has to be raised, with a wider tax base. Richer sections have to pay more taxes.**
- **The inequalities between the Centre and States in finances should be reduced.** State budgets must be strengthened to improve capital expenditures on physical infrastructure and spending on health, education and social safety nets.

Non-economic factors:

- Unequal distribution of development is rooted in the inequalities of political, social and economic power.
- Apart from economic factors, non-economic factors such as **deepening democracy and decentralisation** can help in reducing inequalities.

9. 'Less-industrialised States lead power demand recovery'

What's in News?

As per the analysis of government data, India's less industrialised States have led a recovery in electricity demand.

- Power use in less industrialised States such as Bihar and Chhattisgarh in the East, and Uttar Pradesh and Punjab in the North, grew at more than 10% each compared with the previous year, both for the quarter and the six months ending on March 31, 2021.
- All these States which have high agricultural and residential power consumption, consumed more electricity than in the previous year (2020-21).
- However, India's annual power demand fell for the first time in at least 35 years in 2020-21.

Why did the power demand fall?

- Industries and offices account for half the country's annual electricity consumption. More industrialised States such as Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat witnessed a decline in annual electricity use.
- The imposition of COVID-19 lockdowns resulted in a fall in electricity consumption for six straight months through August.
- But consumption has since risen for seven consecutive months, with usage in March 2021 rising at the fastest pace in 11 years.

10. Govt. amends IBC for MSME resolution

Context:

An ordinance was promulgated to amend the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

Details:

- The government has amended the insolvency law to provide for a pre-packaged resolution process for micro, small and medium enterprises.
- The amendment allows the Centre to notify the minimum amount of default value, not more than Rs 1 crore, for pre-packaged insolvency resolution process.
- As per the ordinance, it is considered expedient to provide an alternative resolution process to ensure quicker and value-maximising outcomes for all stakeholders, in a manner least disruptive to the continuity of their businesses and which preserves jobs.
- The Ordinance said MSMEs are critical for India's economy as they contribute significantly to its gross domestic product and provide employment to a sizeable population, and it is considered necessary to urgently address the specific requirements of MSMEs relating to the resolution of their insolvency.

Note:

- The government had suspended fresh insolvency proceedings for six months from March 25, 2020, when a nationwide lockdown was imposed to curb the spread of coronavirus infections.
- The suspension was extended till March 24, 2021.

11. Flexible inflation targeting working well, says FinMin

Context:

The Finance Ministry recently announced that the inflation target for the five years between April 2021 and March 2026 will remain unchanged at 4%, with an upper tolerance level of 6% and a lower tolerance level of 2%.

Details:

- Explaining its decision to stick to the same 'tried and tested' model, the Finance Ministry said that the flexible inflation targeting monetary policy regime has been successful in leashing the inflation rate within a range along with providing a favourable environment for economic growth.
- The flexible inflation targeting led to a decline in price fluctuations, halved the volatility of core inflation, and moderated the median inflation expectations of urban households over a one-year ahead horizon, it said.
- It was highlighted that the volatility in the interest rate and exchange rate also decreased during 2017-20.

Significance:

- **The inflation targeting monetary policy framework has worked reasonably well** in keeping inflation in check over the last five years. Experts have attributed the few recent instances when the upper target was breached to the exceptional nature of the COVID-19 shock.
- The RBI has also previously sought a continuance of the 4% target with the flexible tolerance limits of 2%. **The Central bank has asserted that accepting inflation levels beyond 6% would hurt the country's growth prospects.**
- The inflation target **helps ensure consumer friendly policies** given that appropriate measures would be taken to keep retail prices within acceptable levels.
- The move marks a continuance of the policy adopted by many developed countries which have adopted an inflation-rate focus as an anchor for policy formulation for interest rates rather than past fixations with metrics like the currency exchange rate or controlling money supply growth. Emerging economies have also been gradually adopting this approach.

THE INDIAN EXPRESS

GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1. Babu Jagjivan Ram

Why in News

Recently, the Prime Minister paid tributes to **freedom fighter and former Deputy Prime Minister Babu Jagjivan Ram** on his **113th birth anniversary**.

- Jagjivan Ram, **popularly known as Babuji**, was a national leader, a freedom fighter, a crusader of social justice, a champion of depressed classes and an outstanding Parliamentarian.

Key Points

- **Birth:**
 - Jagjivan Ram was born on **5th April 1908** in **Chandwa in Bihar** to a Dalit family.
- **Early Life and Education:**
 - He pursued his schooling at the **nearby town of Arrah** where he faced discrimination for the first time.
 - He was considered **'untouchable'** and had to drink water from a different pot. Jagjivan Ram protested against this by breaking the pot. The principal then had to remove the separate pot from the school.
 - **In 1925**, Jagjivan Ram met scholar **Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya** and was greatly inspired by him. On Malaviya's invitation, he **joined the Banaras Hindu University**.
 - Even **at the university, Jagjivan Ram faced discrimination**. This inspired him to protest against such social boycotts of a section of society.
 - He also **organised the scheduled castes to protest against injustice**.
 - After his stint at BHU, he joined the **University of Calcutta** from where he secured a **B.Sc. degree in 1931**.

- Jagjivan Ram had organized a number of Ravidas Sammelans and had **celebrated Guru Ravidas Jayanti** in different areas of Calcutta (Kolkata).
- **Pre Independence Contributions:**
 - In 1931, he became a member of the **Indian National Congress** (Congress Party).
 - He was instrumental in the foundation of the **All India Depressed Classes League**, an organisation dedicated to attaining equality for **untouchables**, in 1934-35.
 - He was a champion of **social equality and equal rights for the Depressed Classes**.
 - In 1935, he proposed at a session of the **Hindu Mahasabha** that drinking water wells and temples be open to untouchables.
 - In 1935, Babuji also **appeared before the Hammond Commission** at Ranchi and demanded, for the first time, **voting rights for the Dalits**.
 - He was **jailed twice** in the early 1940s for his political activities associated with the **Quit India movement** against British rule.
- **Post Independence Contributions:**
 - When Jawaharlal Nehru formed the provisional government, **Jagjivan Ram became its youngest minister**.
 - After independence he held the **labour portfolio until 1952**. Thereafter he served in Nehru's cabinet in the posts of **minister for communications (1952-56)**, **transport and railways (1956-62)**, and **transport and communications (1962-63)**.
 - He served as **minister for food and agriculture (1967-70)**, and in 1970 **he was made minister of defence**.
 - The **Indo-Pakistan War of 1971** was fought when he was the **defence minister**.
 - He left Congress in 1977 and joined the Janata Party alliance, along with his Congress for Democracy (new party). He later served as the **Deputy Prime Minister of India (1977-79)**.
 - Jagjivan Ram was a **member of the Parliament uninterrupted from 1936 to 1986 (40 years) and this is a world record**.
 - He also holds another record for **being the longest-serving cabinet minister in India (30 years)**.
- **Death:**
 - He died on **6th July 1986 at New Delhi**.
 - His memorial at his cremation place is named **Samta Sthal (Place of Equality)**.

2. National Maritime Day 2021

Why in News

Recently, the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways celebrated the **58th National Maritime Day (5th April)**.

- **Maritime India Vision-2030**, was also discussed at the occasion.

Key Points

- **About:**
 - National Maritime Day is celebrated **every year on 5th April** to commemorate the maiden voyage of the **first Indian flag merchant vessel 'S.S LOYALTY'** from Mumbai to London, on **April 5th, 1919**.
- **2021 Theme:**
 - **'Sustainable Shipping beyond Covid-19'**.
- **Significance:**
 - It is celebrated to **encourage the merchant shipping industry of India**. Shipping contributes a lot to the country's economy.
 - At present, **90% of India's international trade in terms of volume and 77% in terms of value is moved by sea**.
- **Other Initiatives:**
 - **Sagarmala Initiative:**
 - The **Sagarmala Programme** was approved by the Union Cabinet in 2015 which **aims at holistic port infrastructure development along the 7,516-km long coastline through modernisation, mechanisation and computerisation**.
 - **Project Unnati:**
 - The shipping ministry launched Project Unnati in 2014 under which efficiency of equipment was studied and every activity was scrutinised to identify excesses/mistakes.
 - **Blue Economy Policy:**
 - The policy document highlights the **blue economy** as one of the ten core dimensions for national growth and It **emphasizes policies across several key sectors to achieve holistic growth of India's economy**.
 - **Joined International Maritime Organization:**
 - India is also a member of the **International Maritime Organization (IMO)**.
 - IMO is a specialized agency of the **United Nations (UN)**. It is a global standard-setting authority with responsibility to improve the safety and security of international shipping and prevention of marine and atmospheric pollution by ships.

- **National Waterways:**
 - As per the **National Waterways Act 2016**, 111 waterways have been declared as National Waterways (NWs).
- **The Sagar-Manthan:**
 - Mercantile Marine Domain Awareness Centre has been launched.
 - It is an information system **for enhancing maritime safety, search and rescue capabilities, security and marine environment protection.**
- **Ship Repair Clusters:**
 - They will be developed along both coasts by **2022.**
- **Ship Recycling:**
 - Domestic ship recycling industry will also be promoted to create '**Wealth from Waste**'.
 - India has enacted **Recycling of Ships Act, 2019** and agreed to the **Hong Kong Convention for Ship Recycling.**

Maritime India Vision 2030

- **About:**
 - It is a **ten-year blueprint for the maritime sector** which was released by the Prime Minister of India at the **Maritime India Summit 2021.**
 - It will supersede the **Sagarmala initiative** and aims to boost **waterways**, give a fillip to the shipbuilding industry and encourage cruise tourism in India.
- **Policy Initiatives and Development Projects:**
 - **Maritime Development Fund:**
 - A **Rs. 25,000-crore fund**, which will provide low cost, long-tenure financing to the sector with the Centre contributing Rs. 2,500 crore over seven years.
 - **Port Regulatory Authority:**
 - A **pan-India port authority** will be set up under the new Indian Ports Act (to replace the old Indian Ports Act 1908) for enabling oversight across major and non-major ports, enhance institutional coverage for ports and provide for structured growth of the ports sector to boost investor confidence.
 - **Eastern Waterways Connectivity Transport Grid Project:**
 - It aims to **develop regional connectivity** with Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar.
 - **Riverine Development Fund:**
 - Calls for extending low cost, long-term financing for inland vessels with the support of a **Riverine Development Fund (RDF)** and for extending the coverage of the **tonnage tax scheme**

(applicable to ocean-going ships and dredgers) to inland vessels to enhance the availability of such vessels.

- **Rationalisation of Port Charges:**
 - It will make them more competitive, besides doing away with all hidden charges levied by ship liners to bring in more transparency.
- **Promotion of Water Transport:**
 - For decongestion of urban areas, and **developing waterways as an alternative means of urban transport.**

3. Sankalp Se Siddhi: TRIFED

Why in News

The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED), under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, has launched “Sankalp se Siddhi” - Village and Digital Connect Drive.

- The main aim of this drive is to activate the Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs) in the villages.

Key Points

- **About Sankalp se Siddhi Drive:**
 - The drive will entail 150 teams (10 in each region from TRIFED and State Implementation Agencies/Mentoring Agencies/Partners) visiting ten villages each.
 - Thus, 100 villages in each region and 1500 villages in the country will be covered.
 - The visiting teams will also **identify locations and shortlist potential Van Dhan Vikas Kendras** for clustering as TRIFOOD, and SFURTI units as larger enterprises.
 - **Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI)** is a scheme of the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME).
 - **Rs. 200 crore Sales during the next 12 months is targeted** as a result of this initiative once the VDVVKs are activated in these 1500 villages.
 - The teams will also **identify tribal artisans and other groups** and empanel them as suppliers so that they can have access to larger markets through the **Tribes India network** - both **physical outlets and TribesIndia.com.**
- **Other Involvements of the TRIFED:**
 - **Village and Digital Connect Initiative:**

- To ensure that existing schemes and initiatives reach the **tribals**, TRIFED's regional officials across the country have been visiting identified villages with a significant tribal population.
- **Schemes for Ensuring Fair Prices to Tribals:**
 - Schemes such as **Mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) Through Minimum Support Price (MSP) and Development of Value Chain for MFP** provide **MSP to gatherers of forest produces**.
 - The schemes **ensure sustainability of the resource base** by addressing the problems that tribals face such as perishable nature of the produce, lack of holding capacity, lack of marketing infrastructure, exploitation by middlemen, etc.
- **Tech For Tribals:**
 - Tech For Tribals program aims to **transform 5 crore Tribal Entrepreneurs** by capacity building and imparting entrepreneurship skills to tribal forest produce gatherers enrolled under the **Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana (PMVDY)**.
 - The Van Dhan Vikas Yojana is an initiative of the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED**. It was launched to improve tribal incomes through value addition of tribal products.
 - The program will ensure higher success rate of the Tribal Entrepreneurs by enabling and empowering them to run their business with marketable products with quality certifications.
- **Van Dhan Vikas Kendras:**
 - Van Dhan Vikas Kendras have been provided by **Van Dhan Vikas Yojana**.
 - Van Dhan Vikas Kendra (VDVKs) are for providing **skill upgradation and capacity building training** to tribals and setting up of primary processing and value addition facilities.
 - Tribals are trained here and then provided with working capital to add value to the products, which they collect from the jungle.
- **TRIFOOD Scheme:**
 - It is a **joint initiative of the Ministry of Food Processing Industry, Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED** and it promotes value addition to MFP.

4. Multilateral Maritime Exercise La Perouse

Why in News

Indian Navy Ships INS Satpura and INS Kiltan alongwith P8I Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft are participating, for the first time in multilateral

maritime exercise **La Pérouse**, being conducted in the Eastern Indian Ocean Region from 5th to 7th April 2021.

- Post conduct of **La Perouse**, the **Indo-French Naval** exercise “**Varuna**” is scheduled in the **Western Indian Ocean**, wherein **UAE** too shall be participating.

Key Points

- **About the Exercise:**
 - The first edition of **La Pérouse** joint exercise, **initiated by France in 2019**, included ships from Australia, Japan and the US.
 - The exercise is **named after the eighteenth century French Naval explorer**.
 - **India's participation in 2021 completed the QUAD force representation** in the French led Naval Exercise.
 - **QUAD is a grouping of India, USA, Australia and Japan** which aims to safeguard the interests of democratic nations in the Indo-Pacific region and address global challenges.
 - It will witness complex and advanced naval operations including **surface warfare, anti-air warfare and air defence exercises, weapon firing exercises, cross deck flying operations, tactical manoeuvres and seamanship evolutions** such as replenishment at sea.
 - It will provide an opportunity for these five like-minded, high-end naval forces to develop closer links, sharpen their skills, and promote maritime cooperation throughout a free and open Indo-Pacific.
- **Naval Significance of Indo-Pacific:**
 - The **Indo-Pacific is slowly but surely turning into a serious Naval Theatre for multi-national activities** with a vision to establish a free, open, inclusive and a rule-based ordering of the Indo-Pacific to support the freedom of navigation and peaceful cooperative use of the seas.
 - The goal is to respect and adhere to the international laws like the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)** and peaceful resolution of territorial sea disputes.
 - **The role of the QUAD navies in the IOR (Indian Ocean Region)** has been well illustrated by the effective cooperative engagement capabilities of the multi-national Naval powers through naval exercises like formation sailing, live fire drills, Search and Rescue (SAR) operations etc.
 - Navies of member countries of **QUAD** participated in **Malabar wargaming exercise** in November 2020.

- On the other hand, **China endeavours to establish a defensive perimeter around its seas (Yellow Sea, East China Sea and part of South China Sea)** by following a sea denial policy in these regions.
- **QUAD+ France Pacific Ocean Concerns:**
 - The **region of Pacific Islands** stretches from Hawaii in the north to Tonga in the south, and Easter Island in the east to New Caledonia in the west.
 - **US interest in the Indo-Pacific region** has always been well illustrated with the fact that **US Indo-Pacific Command** established after World War II is the largest unified command.
 - **France has a direct strategic and economic stake in New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and Wallis and Futuna.** France is a member of the Pacific Community and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).
 - **Japan** although has trade ties with China but has always been **suspicious of China's growth as a military power.** China's assertiveness closer to Japanese waters and airspace have been a testing time for Japan.
 - **Indian Navy** has always maintained a tactical advantage over the IOR to ensure compliance to the internationally established Rules of the Road (ROR) for the seas.
 - This has been respected by the world (like declaration of warships transiting IOR etc.), but Indian Navy has **observed and reported multiple sightings of undeclared Chinese ships and submarines** suspiciously lurking within the IOR.

Indo-French Joint Exercises

- **Desert Knight-21** and **Garuda** (Air exercise)
- **Varuna** (Naval exercise)
- **Shakti** (Army exercise)

5. Challenges with National Security Act, 1980

Why in News

In some cases it has been found that the **National Security Act-1980 (NSA)** was invoked to prevent the person from being released from judicial custody even if the accused had got bail.

- The NSA empowers the state to detain a person without a formal charge and without trial.

Key Points

- **About the National Security Act, 1980:**
 - The NSA is a **preventive detention law**.
 - Preventive Detention involves the **detainment of a person in order to keep him/her from committing future crimes** and/or from escaping future prosecution.
 - **Article 22 (3) (b) of the Constitution** allows for preventive detention and restriction on personal liberty for reasons of state security and public order.
 - Further, **Article 22 (4)** states that no law providing for preventive detention shall authorise the detention of a person for a longer period than three months unless:
 - An Advisory Board reports sufficient cause for extended detention.
 - Such a person is detained in accordance with the provisions of any law made by the Parliament.
 - **Gives Power to the Government:**
 - The NSA **empowers the Centre or a State government** to detain a person to prevent him from acting in any manner prejudicial to national security.
 - The government can also detain a person to prevent him from disrupting public order or for maintenance of supplies and services essential to the community.
 - **Period of Confinement:** The maximum period for which one may be detained is **12 months**. But the term can be extended if the government finds fresh evidence.
- **Issues with the Act:**
 - It is an **administrative** order passed either by the Divisional Commissioner or the District Magistrate (DM) and **not detention ordered by police** based on specific allegations or for a specific violation of the law.
 - **Conditions when NSA can be evoked:**
 - Even if a **person is in police custody**, the DM can invoke NSA against him.
 - If a person has been **granted bail by a trial court**, he can be immediately detained under the NSA.
 - If the person has been **acquitted by the court**, the same person can be detained under the NSA.
 - **Against the Constitutional Right:** The law also takes away an individual's **constitutional right (Article 22 of Indian Constitution)** to be produced before the magistrate within 24 hours as is the case when the accused is in police custody.

- The detained person also **does not have the right to move a bail application before a criminal court.**
- **Immunity for Passing and Carrying Out Order:** The DM who passed the detention order is protected under the Act, no prosecution or any legal proceeding can be initiated against the official who carried out the orders.
- **Supreme Court Observation:**
 - The Court has held that the preventive detention under NSA has to be strictly maintained with the **delicate balance between social security and citizen freedom.**
 - It also held that to prevent “**misuse of this potentially dangerous power, the law of preventive detention has to be strictly construed**” and “**meticulous compliance with the procedural safeguards**” has to be ensured.
- **Safeguard Against the Act:**
 - Procedural safeguard under the NSA is granted under **Article 22 (5)**, where all the detained persons have the **right to make an effective representation before an independent advisory board.**
 - This advisory board consists of three members and the board is chaired by a member who is a judge of a High Court.
 - **The writ of Habeas Corpus is also the protection** guaranteed under the Constitution against the unchecked state power of taking people into custody under the NSA.

GS 3 :Economy, Science and Technology,Environment

6. Understanding the issues with bond market in India

How the government's cost of borrowing matter

- Interest on government debt is a **transfer from taxpayers to savers** who own government bonds.
- As the government bondholders are primarily domestic, interest paid by the government is just a transfer from one hand to the other within the economy.
- However, the government's **cost of borrowing does matter.**
- The large increase in interest costs limits the government's **ability to spend elsewhere.**
- But more importantly, this rate **also affects the cost of borrowing for large parts of the economy.**

Understanding the term premium and credit spread

- The RBI sets the repo rate, which is the **short-term risk-free rate**.
- That is, the loan must be repaid in a few days and **there is almost no risk of default**.
- The rate at which the **government borrows** is the **long-term risk-free rate**.
- But the lender wants higher returns given the **longer duration of the loan**.
- **The difference between the repo rate and government's borrowing cost, say on a 10-year loan, is called the term premium.**
- When a private firm takes a 10-year loan, **it would have some credit risk too**, which means a **credit spread is added to the 10-year risk-free rate**.

Challenge posed by term premium

- From an **average rate of 73 basis points** since 2011 (one basis point is one-hundredth of a per cent), and 120 basis points in 2018 and 2019, the **10-year term premium is currently 215 basis points**.
- In other words, the interest rate for a 10-year period borrowing is 2.15 per cent higher **than the current repo rate**.

How this is related to dysfunction in bond market in India

- Financial markets are **forward-looking**, and as the collective expression of the views of thousands of participants, efficient ones can occasionally "predict" what comes next.
- But the Indian bond market is not one such: The view some hold, that the **rise in term premium reflects future rate hikes by the monetary policy committee (MPC), is mistaken**.
- The Indian bond market is still **too illiquid and not diverse enough** to predict future trends.
- Even though some pandemic-driven measures are being withdrawn, the MPC continues to be accommodative, and for several months at least, **headline inflation is unlikely to force an abrupt change**.
- In any case, the spurt in yields after the budget points to the **causality being fiscal instead of inflation-related**.
- But even the fiscal rationale seems weak.
- The Centre's tax collection for FY2020-21 has been substantially ahead of target, and state governments have also borrowed Rs 60,000 crore less than expected.
- Also, the 14 states, accounting for three-fourths of all state deficits, have budgeted FY2021-22 deficits at 3.3 per cent, far lower than the 4 per cent average expected earlier.

- Just these factors suggest that total bonds issued by the central and state governments **should be lower than what the market had feared before** the union budget was presented.
- And yet, government borrowing costs have not returned to pre-budget levels.
- **This reflects dysfunction in the market.**
- Why else would a government be **borrowing at a higher cost than a mortgage on a house?**

What is the reason for dysfunction in bond market

- Dysfunction can be traced to residential mortgages being among the **most competitive of loan categories.**
- On the other hand, there is a **structural shortage in demand for government bonds.**
- In such a market where there is a **structural shortage in demand** the **marginal buyer holds all the cards**, and as any buyer would, demands higher returns.
- Over 15 years, the share of banks in the ownership of outstanding central government bonds has **fallen from 53 per cent to 40 per cent now.**
- But **no alternative buyer of size** has emerged to fill the space vacated.
- The RBI **sometimes buys bonds to inject money** into the economy, but of late this **space has been used to buy dollars to save the rupee from appreciation.**

Solutions

- The solution to the problem of bond market may lie in **getting new types of buyers.**
- The RBI opening up **direct purchases by retail investors** is a step in this direction, though it may not become meaningful for a few years.
- That leaves us with **tapping foreign savings.**
- The limit on share of government bonds that foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) can buy has been raised steadily.
- But **without Indian bonds being included in global bond indices**, these flows may not be meaningful, and would be volatile, as they have been over the past year.
- To enable inclusion in bond indices, the RBI and the government have **earmarked special-category bonds which are fully accessible (FAR) by foreign investors.**
- The FTSE putting India on a watch-list for “potential future inclusion” in the **Emerging Markets Government Bonds Index** is a step forward, and, one hopes, triggers similar actions by other index providers.

Conclusion

- The issues with bond markets in India highlights the urgency to find new buyers for government bond as it has implications not just for the government's own fiscal space, but also for the cost of borrowing in the economy.

7. What is the Pre-pack under Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code?

The central government has promulgated an ordinance allowing the use of pre-packs as an insolvency resolution mechanism for MSMEs with defaults up to Rs 1 crore, under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.

What are Pre-packs?

- A pre-pack is the resolution of the debt of a distressed company through an agreement between secured creditors and investors instead of a public bidding process.
- This system of insolvency proceedings has become an increasingly popular mechanism for insolvency resolution in the UK and Europe over the past decade.
- Under the pre-pack system, financial creditors will agree to terms with a potential investor and seek approval of the resolution plan from the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).
- The approval of a minimum of 66 percent of financial creditors that are unrelated to the corporate debtor would be required before a resolution plan is submitted to the NCLT.
- Further NCLTs are also required to either accept or reject any application for a pre-pack insolvency proceeding before considering a petition for a CIRP.

Benefits of pre-packs over the CIRP

- One of the key criticisms of the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) has been the time taken for resolution.
- One of the key reasons behind delays in the CIRPs is prolonged litigations by erstwhile promoters and potential bidders.
- The pre-pack in contrast is limited to a maximum of 120 days with only 90 days available to the stakeholders to bring the resolution plan to the NCLT.
- The existing management retains control in the case of pre-packs while a resolution professional takes control of the debtor as a representative of creditors in the case of CIRP.
- This allows for minimal disruption of operations relative to a CIRP.

What is the key motivation behind the introduction of the pre-pack?

- Pre-packs are largely aimed at providing MSMEs with an opportunity to restructure their liabilities and start with a clean slate.
- It provides adequate protections so that the system is not misused by firms to avoid making payments to creditors.
- Pre-packs help corporate debtors to enter into consensual restructuring with lenders and address the entire liability side of the company.

How are creditors protected?

- The pre-pack also provides adequate protection to ensure the provisions were not misused by errant promoters.
- The pre-pack mechanism allows for a swiss challenge for any resolution plans which proved less than full recovery of dues for operational creditors.
- Under the swiss challenge mechanism, any third party would be permitted to submit a resolution plan for the distressed company and the original applicant would have to either match the improved resolution plan or forego the investment.
- Creditors are also permitted to seek resolution plans from any third party if they are not satisfied with the resolution plan put forth by the promoter.

8. Forest Fires: A Very Big Concern

Why in News

Since the advent of the year 2021, there has been a series of forest fires in many states of India, including in Wildlife Sanctuaries.

Key Points

- **Forest Fires:**
 - Also called **bush or vegetation fire or wildfire**, it can be described as **any uncontrolled and non-prescribed combustion or burning of plants in a natural setting** such as a forest, grassland, brush land or tundra, which consumes the natural fuels and spreads based on environmental conditions (e.g., wind, topography).
 - Forest Fires **can be incited by human actions**, such as land clearing, extreme drought or in rare cases by lightning.
 - There are **three conditions** that need to be present in order for a wildfire to burn: fuel, oxygen, and a heat source.
- **Instances of Forest Fires in 2021:**
 - January saw prolonged fires in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh (Kullu Valley) and Nagaland-Manipur border (**Dzukou Valley**).
 - The **Simlipal National Park in Odisha** saw a major fire between February-end and early March.

- Recent fires also include those in **Bandhavgarh Forest Reserve in Madhya Pradesh**, and in **sanctuaries for the Asiatic lion and the great Indian bustard in Gujarat**.
- **Vulnerability of India's Forests to Fires:**
 - As of 2019, **about 21.67% (7,12,249 sq km) of the country's geographical area is identified as forest**, according to the **India State of Forest Report 2019 (ISFR)** released by the Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun.
 - Tree cover makes up another 2.89% (95, 027 sq km).
 - Based on previous fire incidents and records, **forests of the Northeast and central India regions are the most vulnerable** areas to forest fires.
 - Forests in Assam, Mizoram and Tripura have been identified as **'extremely prone'** to forest fire.
 - **States with large forest areas under the 'very highly prone' category** include Andhra Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Maharashtra, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.
 - As per the 2020-2021 annual report of the MoEFCC, Western Maharashtra, Southern Chhattisgarh and areas of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, along with central Odisha, are turning into **'extremely prone' forest fire hotspots**.
 - Areas under the **'highly prone' and 'moderately prone' categories make up about 26.2% of the total forest cover** – a whopping 1,72,374 sq km.
- **Cause of Forest Fires:**
 - Forest fires can be caused by a number of natural causes, but **many major fires in India are triggered mainly by human activities**.
 - Emerging studies **link climate change to rising instances of fires globally**, especially the massive **fires of the Amazon forests in Brazil and in Australia** in the last two years.
 - Fires of longer duration, increasing intensity, higher frequency and highly inflammable nature are all being linked to climate change.
 - In India, forest fires are most commonly reported during **March and April**, when the ground has large quantities of **dry wood, logs, dead leaves, stumps, dry grass and weeds** that can make forests easily go up in flames if there is a trigger.
 - In **Uttarakhand**, the **lack of soil moisture** too is being seen as a key factor. In two consecutive monsoon seasons (2019 and 2020), rainfall has been deficient by 18% and 20% of the seasonal average, respectively.
 - Most fires are **man-made**, sometimes even **deliberately caused**. For example, in Odisha, which saw a major fire last month in Simlipal

forest, villagers are known to set dry leaves to fire in order to collect mahua flowers, which go into preparation of a local drink.

▪ **Impact of Forest Fire:**

- Forest fires can have **multiple adverse effects on the forest cover, soil, tree growth, vegetation, and the overall flora and fauna.**
- Fires render several hectares of forest useless and leave behind ash, making it unfit for any vegetation growth.
- Heat generated during the fire **destroys animal habitats.**
 - Soil quality decreases with the alteration in their compositions.
 - Soil moisture and fertility, too, is affected.
 - Forests can shrink in size.
 - The trees that survive fire often remain stunted and growth is severely affected.

▪ **Importance of Forests:**

- Forests play an important role in **mitigation and adaptation to climate change.**
- They act as a **sink, reservoir and source of carbon.**
 - A healthy forest stores and sequesters more carbon than any other terrestrial ecosystem.
- In India, with 1.70 lakh villages in close proximity to forests (Census 2011), the **livelihood of several crores of people is dependent** on fuelwood, bamboo, fodder, and small timber.

▪ **Efforts to Mitigate Forest Fires:**

- Since 2004, the **FSI (Forest Survey of India)** developed the **Forest Fire Alert System** to monitor forest fires in real time.
 - In its advanced version launched in January 2019, the system now uses satellite information gathered from **NASA** and **ISRO**.
- **National Action Plan on Forest Fires (NAPFF) 2018** and **Forest Fire Prevention and Management Scheme.**

Prelims Practice Questions

1. The Global Gender Gap Report is published by:

- World Economic Forum
- Welthungerhilfe and Concern Worldwide
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- International Monetary Fund

Answer: a

Explanation

Global Gender Gap Report is published by the World Economic Forum.

2. Consider the following statements:

- India's Forex Reserves include the Foreign Currency Assets (FCA) and Gold reserves only.
- The Foreign Currency Assets are expressed in dollar terms.

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 : B

Explanation

- Foreign exchange reserves** are assets held on reserve by a central bank in foreign currencies, which can include bonds, treasury bills and other government securities.
- India's Forex Reserve include:
 - Foreign Currency Assets
 - Gold reserves
 - Special Drawing Rights
 - Reserve position with the IMF.
 - Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**

- Foreign Currency Assets are assets that are valued based on a currency other than the country's own currency.
 - FCA is the largest component of the forex reserve. It is **expressed in dollar terms. Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
 - The FCAs also include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

3. Consider the following statements about Odia language:

1. It is the oldest language of the eastern Indo-Aryan Family.
2. It is derived from the Sanskrit language.
3. Adikabi Sarala Das wrote Mahabharata in Odia.

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

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

Answer : B

Explanation

- Odia is the oldest language of the eastern group of the Indo-Aryan family. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
 - It is derived from **Ardha Magadhi Prakrit. Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- Odia is one of the six languages that got Classical Status in India.
 - It is one of the officially “scheduled” languages of the Indian constitution.
- It is also the main official language of the Indian state of Odisha.
- **Adikabi Sarala Das** was one of the great scholars of Odia literature and the first one to write his works in Odia in 15th century A.D.
 - He was best known for three Odia books, **Mahabharata**, Vilanka Ramayana and Chandi Purana. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
 - He also wrote the book Laxmi Narayana Vachanika.

4. With reference to the Special Drawing Rights (SDR), consider the following statements:

1. It is an international reserve asset, created by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

2. The value of the SDR is calculated from a weighted basket of major currencies.

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

- The **Special Drawing Rights (SDR)** is an **international reserve asset, created by the International Monetary Fund (IMF)** in 1969 to supplement its member countries' official reserves. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The SDR is neither a currency nor a claim on the IMF. Rather, it is a potential claim on the freely usable currencies of IMF members. SDRs can be exchanged for these currencies.
- The value of the SDR is calculated from a **weighted basket of major currencies**, including the US dollar, the euro, Japanese yen, Chinese yuan, and British pound. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The interest rate on SDRs or (SDRi) is the interest paid to members on their SDR holdings.

5. With reference to Rare disease, consider the following statements:

1. Rare diseases have low prevalence but are not life threatening.
2. All the rare diseases have genetic origin.
3. There is no treatment available for rare diseases.

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

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

Answer : D

Explanation

- A rare disease is a health condition of low prevalence that affects a small number of people compared with other prevalent diseases in the general population.
- There is no universally accepted definition of rare diseases and the definitions usually vary across different countries.
- Rare diseases **have low prevalence and are also life threatening or chronically debilitating diseases. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- About **80% of the rare diseases are of genetic origin** and a large chunk of rare diseases patients are children. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- About 95% rare diseases have no approved treatment. However, **less than 1 in 10 patients receive disease-specific treatment. Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**

6. With reference to the Godavari River, consider the following statements:

1. It rises from Trimbakeshwar near Nasik in Maharashtra and flows into the Bay of Bengal.
2. Its drainage basin extends over the states of Maharashtra, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh only.

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 Godavari is the largest Peninsular river system. It is also called the Dakshin Ganga.
 - It rises from **Trimbakeshwar near Nasik** in Maharashtra and flows for a length of about 1465 km before outfalling into the Bay of Bengal. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
 - The **Godavari basin extends** over states of **Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh** and **Odisha** in addition to smaller parts in **Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka** and **Union territory of Puducherry.** **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- Tributaries: Pravara, Purna, Manjra, Penganga, Wardha, Wainganga, Pranhita (combined flow of Wainganga, Penganga, Wardha), Indravati, Maner and the Sabri.

Mains Practice Questions

1Q. Which are the institutions in India that promote ethical accountability in public service and what are the challenges in ensuring it? (250 words)

Approach

- Explain in brief about 'Accountability' in the introduction.
- Examine the institutions in India that promote ethical accountability in public service
- Explain the challenges in ensuring accountability.
- Give a way forward.

2Q. What do you understand by "gig economy"? What are its advantages and challenges over traditional economy? (250 words)

Approach

- Define gig economy, its manifestations followed by definition of traditional economy.
- Discuss the advantages of the gig economy in comparison with traditional economy. Substantiate with examples.
- Discuss the various challenges - in process of being tackled and untackled.
- Provide a brief conclusion summing up your response with an optional way forward.