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GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1. Nagaland's version of NRC triggers concern

What's in News?

An apex body of Naga tribes has asked the Nagaland government not to be hasty with the exercise to prepare the Register of Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland (RIIN).

- RIIN is seen by the Naga tribes as a variant of Assam's National Register of Citizens.

Background:

- The Nagaland government has reportedly been trying to revive the RIIN exercise that was launched in July 2019 with the stated objective of preventing outsiders from obtaining fake indigenous certificates for seeking jobs and benefits of government schemes.
- The State government had formed a three-member panel headed by retired bureaucrat Banuo Z. Jamir for examining and advising on the implementation of RIIN. But the exercise was suspended following protests from community-based and extremist organisations.

Details:

- The Naga Hoho, the apex tribal body that had objected to the RIIN in 2019, has reacted to the State government's alleged bid to implement RIIN with a tentative timetable for different stages of the updating process.
- The tribal body is apprehensive of dreadful consequences if the advocates of RIIN implement the process with December 1, 1963 (the day Nagaland attained statehood) as the cut-off date.
- This date is likely to exclude Nagas who have come from beyond the boundaries of Nagaland.
- According to the Naga Hoho, Naga tribes living in Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh in India and in Myanmar have a legitimate claim to their ancestral homeland.

2. BIMSTEC needs to reinvent itself

Context:

The foreign ministers of BIMSTEC (the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) met virtually on April 1, 2021.

- The last ministerial meeting was held in August 2018.
- Their major task was to pave the way for the next summit (the grouping's fifth) due to be held in Sri Lanka.

BIMSTEC:

- BIMSTEC was established as a grouping of four nations – India, Thailand, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka through the Bangkok Declaration of 1997 to promote rapid economic development.
- BIMSTEC was expanded later to include three more countries – Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan.
- It moved at a leisurely pace during its first 20 years with only three summits held and a record of modest achievements.

Unfolding rejuvenation:

- The grouping suddenly received special attention as India chose to treat it as a more practical instrument for regional cooperation over a faltering SAARC.
- The BIMSTEC Leaders' Retreat, followed by their Outreach Summit with the BRICS leaders in Goa in October 2016, drew considerable international limelight to the low-profile regional grouping. This also opened up the path for its rejuvenation.
- The fourth leaders' summit, held in Kathmandu in 2018, devised an ambitious plan for institutional reform and renewal that would encompass economic and security cooperation.
 - It took the important decision to craft a charter to provide BIMSTEC with a more formal and stronger foundation.
 - The shared goal now is to head towards "a Peaceful, Prosperous and Sustainable Bay of Bengal Region".
- India's External Affairs Minister observed that India saw a mix of "energy, mindset and possibility" in BIMSTEC.

Recent decisions:

- The foreign ministers cleared the draft for the BIMSTEC charter, recommending its early adoption.
- They endorsed the rationalisation of sectors and sub-sectors of activity, with each member-state serving as a lead for the assigned areas of special interest.
- The ministers also conveyed their support for the Master Plan for Transport Connectivity.
 - This will be adopted at the next summit.

- Preparations have been completed for the signing of three agreements relating to:
 - Mutual legal assistance in criminal matters
 - Cooperation between diplomatic academies
 - Establishment of a technology transfer facility in Colombo.

Issue:

- On certain fronts, BIMSTEC remains a work in progress.
- A January 2018 study by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry had suggested that BIMSTEC urgently needed a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement to be a real game-changer. Ideally, it should:
 - Cover trade in goods, services and investment.
 - Promote regulatory harmonisation.
 - Adopt policies that develop regional value chains.
 - Eliminate non-tariff barriers.
- An effort to enthuse and engage the vibrant business communities of these seven countries, and expand their dialogue, interactions and transactions is lacking.
- Over 20 rounds of negotiations to operationalise the BIMSTEC Free Trade Area Framework Agreement, signed in 2004, are yet to bear fruit.
- Uncertainties over SAARC hovers, complicating matters.
 - Both Kathmandu and Colombo want the SAARC summit revived, even as they cooperate within BIMSTEC, with diluted zeal.
- China's decisive intrusion in the South-Southeast Asian space has cast dark shadows.
- The military coup in Myanmar, brutal crackdown of protesters and continuation of popular resistance resulting in a protracted impasse have produced a new set of challenges.

Achievements:

- Much has been achieved in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief and security, including counterterrorism, cybersecurity, and coastal security cooperation.
- India has led through constant focus and follow-up – to the extent that some member-states have complained about the over-securitisation of BIMSTEC.
- While national business chambers are yet to be optimally engaged with the BIMSTEC project, the academic and strategic community has shown ample enthusiasm through the BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks and other fora.

Way Forward:

- The trick to ensuring balance is not to go slow on security but to accelerate the pace of forging solid arrangements for economic cooperation.
- The goal now should be to overcome the obstacles leading to BIMSTEC's success.
- The trajectory of India-Nepal, India-Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh-Myanmar ties in recent years is an impediment to the grouping. A strong BIMSTEC needs cordial and tension-free bilateral relations among all its member-states.

3. Centre fast-tracks approval for more vaccine candidates

Context:

In a major shift in vaccine approval policy, the government has decided to fast track approvals for COVID-19 vaccines that have been developed outside India and have been granted emergency use authorisation (EUA) by other drug regulatory agencies.

Details:

- The decision was taken based on the recommendation made by the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 (NEGVAC) to expand the basket of vaccines for domestic use and hasten the pace and coverage.
- The vaccines that would be eligible for the fast-track approval will include those that have been granted an EUA by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), European Medicines Agency (EMA), the U.K. Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and the Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency (PMDA) of Japan, or those that have been prequalified by the WHO for emergency use.
- Under the fast-track approval process, bridging studies will take place in parallel to mass vaccination.

What is Emergency Use Authorisation?

- Vaccines and medicines, and even diagnostic tests and medical devices, require the approval of a regulatory authority before they can be administered.
- In India, the regulatory authority is the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO).
 - Drugs Controller General of India is the head of department of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization.
- For vaccines and medicines, approval is granted after an assessment of their safety and effectiveness, based on data from trials. Approval from the

regulator is required at every stage of these trials which is a long process, designed to ensure that a medicine or vaccine is absolutely safe and effective.

- The fastest approval for any vaccine until now was for the mumps vaccine in the 1960s which took about four-and-a-half years after it was developed.
- In emergency situations, like the current one (COVID-19 pandemic), regulatory authorities around the world have developed mechanisms to grant interim approvals if there is sufficient evidence to suggest a medical product is safe and effective.
- Final approval is granted only after completion of the trials and analysis of full data; until then, emergency use authorisation (EUA) allows the medicine or the vaccine to be used on the public.

The circumstances that allow health regulators to issue accelerated approvals under EUA are:

- Rare Diseases
- Massive disease outbreak
- No proven vaccine or drug available
- Evidence of a drug or vaccine that is tested in a country and has yielded desired results
- A country neither has the financial resources nor the personnel to conduct solid clinical trials to a drug/vaccine that has undergone thorough clinical trials in another country

Note:

- There is no explicit mention of EUA in India, however, there is a provision under the New Drugs and Clinical Trials, 2019.
- New Drugs and Clinical Trials, 2019 mentions an 'accelerated approval process', depending on the severity, urgency and lack of alternatives.
- In the event of the above-mentioned grounds, the regulator can overrule the need to have local clinical trials if the drug has been approved elsewhere.

4. Another beginning

Context:

The Drug Controller General of India has formally approved another vaccine candidate "Sputnik V" under emergency use authorisation.

Issue:

- The recent approval comes as India grapples with a vaccine shortage.

- India is in a crisis. When it had the opportunity to conduct clinical trials in the right way, in the case of Covaxin and even Covishield, India rushed through its regulatory process.
 - This contributed to the hesitancy surrounding these vaccines.
- It is still a mystery why India did not plan for enough stocks like the U.K. and the U.S. did.
- In addition, the paucity of hospital beds, ventilators, black marketing of drugs are now being replayed in worrying proportions.

Way Forward:

- India must take a cue from countries like the U.K. and the U.S that no country can be entirely 'atmanirbhar' in vaccinating its population.
- While there are several vaccine candidates at various stages of approval that India can choose from, it must not repeat the same mistake of assuming that choice translates into immediate availability.
- All of the Indian companies that have tied up with foreign vaccine companies are private players.
 - While they may promise vaccines in the millions, it will always be the case that priority will be accorded to the highest global bidders.
- India must compete to ensure that vaccine is available to a large fraction of its adult population in quick time.
- The pandemic wave seems to have ebbed in the U.S., to some extent, because at least 30% of its adults have got one dose. For India, this job of scaling up was always going to be uphill.
- With more vaccines come inevitably more complications associated with adverse events and rare side effects. This is where India's pharmacovigilance programme must step up.
- India must constantly monitor the effects of medical drugs after they have been licensed for use, especially in order to identify and evaluate previously unreported adverse reactions.
- The easing up on conditions for facilitating more vaccines must be seen as a new beginning.

5. Gyanvapi Masjid: HC moved against lower court's order

Context:

The managing committee of the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi and the Uttar Pradesh Sunni Central Waqf Board have moved the Allahabad High Court to restrain the proceedings of a local court which recently directed the Archaeological

Survey of India (ASI) to conduct a physical survey of the mosque compound adjacent to the Kashi Vishwanath temple.

Concerns:

- This unconscionable intervention would open the floodgates for another prolonged religious dispute.
- The order, apparently is in gross violation of the explicit legislative prohibition on any litigation over the status of places of worship.
- The order has been issued despite the fact that the Allahabad High Court reserved its order on the maintainability of the suit and is yet to pronounce its ruling.

Details:

- By an order in 1997, the civil court had decided that the suit was not barred by the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, which said all pending suits concerning the status of places of worship will abate and that none can be instituted.
- The 1991 Act froze the status of all places of worship, barring the then disputed site in Ayodhya, as on August 15, 1947.
- There was another exception – any place of worship that was an archaeological site or ancient monument covered by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.

Conclusion:

- This concerns peace and harmony in the country.
- Regardless of the merits of either side's case, it ought to be clear that the attempt to resurrect disputes buried by law is a serious setback to the cause of secularism and peaceful coexistence.
- New challenges emerging to the wisdom of Parliament in giving a statutory expiration to disputes over religious sites is deeply disturbing.

6. 'Global cooperation benefits India, world'

Context:

India's External Affairs Minister's comments at Raisina Dialogue.

Raisina Dialogue:

- This is an annual geopolitical event, hosted by the Ministry of External Affairs and Observer Research Foundation (ORF).
- It is designed to explore prospects and opportunities for Asian integration as well as Asia's integration with the larger world.

- Every year, leaders in politics, business, media, and civil society converge in New Delhi to discuss the state of the world and explore opportunities for cooperation on a wide range of contemporary matters.
- The Dialogue is structured as a multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral discussion.

Details:

- India's External Affairs Minister said that the cooperation to counter global challenges such as the current pandemic is advantageous to both India and the rest of the world, highlighting India's recent initiatives to provide vaccines to a large number of developing countries to help them fight COVID-19.
- He argued that as a result of international partnership and research, India was able to increase the manufacturing of vaccines developed elsewhere while also developing indigenous vaccines in the country.

Note:

- India has been the first responder on a number of crisis situations in the neighbourhood and beyond and the response to the pandemic is part of that same chain of initiatives.
- In terms of humanitarian assistance, whether it was an earthquake in Nepal, or a civil war in Yemen, or a cyclone in Mozambique, or a typhoon in Fiji, or a mudslide in Sri Lanka, or whether it is taking the Paris agenda forward through initiatives like the International Solar Alliance, or how to respond collectively towards disaster resilience, India has been proactive in taking measures.

GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology, Environment

7. Last two rhinos translocated under IRV 2020

What's in News?

The ambitious Indian Rhino Vision 2020 (IRV 2020) came to a close with the release of two rhinos in Assam's Manas National Park transported from Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary.

Indian Rhino Vision 2020:

- Indian Rhino Vision 2020 was a partnership among the Government of Assam, the International Rhino Foundation, and the World Wide Fund for Nature, the Bodoland Territorial Council, and the U.S. Fish & World Wildlife

Foundation that aims to attain a population of 3,000 wild greater one-horned rhinos in seven of Assam's protected areas by the year 2020.

- Designed in 2005, the IRV 2020 is believed to have achieved its target of attaining a population of 3,000 rhinos in Assam.
- However, the plan to spread the *Rhinoceros unicornis* across four protected areas beyond Kaziranga National Park, Orang National Park and Pobitora could not materialise.

Note:

- Assam had at least five rhino-bearing areas till the 1980s.
- Better conservation efforts helped maintain the population of the one-horned herbivore in Kaziranga, Orang and Pobitora, but encroachment and poaching wiped the animal out of Manas and Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Manas, in focus for the near-extinction of the pygmy hog, lost the World Heritage Site tag it had received in 1985 along with Kaziranga from the UNESCO.
- But, the translocated rhinos helped Manas National Park get back its World Heritage Site status in 2011.

8. WHO urges halt on sale of live wild mammals in markets

Context:

The World Health Organization called for a halt to the sale of live wild mammals in food markets to prevent the emergence of new diseases such as COVID-19.

Details:

- Fresh guidance has been drawn up by the WHO in conjunction with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- They called on all national competent authorities to suspend the trade in live caught wild animals of mammalian species for food or breeding and close sections of food markets selling live caught wild animals of mammalian species as an emergency measure unless demonstrable effective regulations and adequate risk assessment are in place.
- The agencies recalled that some of the earliest known cases of COVID-19 had links to a wholesale food market in Wuhan.

Significance:

- Animals, particularly wild animals, are the source of more than 70% of all emerging infectious diseases in humans, many of which are caused by novel viruses.
- Wild mammals, in particular, pose a risk for the emergence of new diseases.
- Because traditional markets play a central role in providing food and livelihoods for large populations, banning the sale of live wild mammals could protect the health of market workers and customers alike.

9. In climate change noise, India's role as conductor

Issue:

- Climate action and climate leadership are being increasingly measured against a planetary imperative of emissions reducing to net-zero by 2050.
- In this backdrop, developing countries like India are faced with a dilemma.
 - They need the carbon space to develop but they are also among the most vulnerable countries to climate change.

India's Concern:

- When the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 was adopted at the Paris Conference, the Prime Minister of India stressed a reframing of climate change to climate justice.
- He argued that just when countries such as India were becoming major industrial and middle-class nations, they should not pay the price for the pollution caused by the West.
- The Paris Agreement, explicitly recognises that peaking will take longer for such countries and is to be achieved in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty.
- This balance is now being upset for a common target and timetable.

Treaty's inequity:

The pressure arises from the way the agenda has been set.

- First, inequity is built into the Climate Treaty.
 - Annual emissions make India the fourth largest emitter, even though climate is impacted by cumulative emissions, with India contributing a mere 3% compared with 26% for the United States and 13% for China.
 - According to the United Nations, while the richest 1% of the global population emits more than two times the emissions of the bottom 50%, India has just half its population in the middle class and per capita emissions are an eighth of those in the U.S. and less than a third of those of China.

- The diplomatic history of climate negotiations shows that longer-term goals without the strategy to achieve them solve a political problem and not the problem itself. Eg: As in the case of finance and technology transfer.
 - The current framework considers symptoms, emissions of carbon dioxide, and was forced onto developing countries to keep the discussion away from the causes of the problem – the earlier excessive use of energy for high levels of well-being.
- Models on which global policy recommendations for developing countries are based consider achieving ‘reasonable’, not ‘comparable’ levels of well-being to show that early capping of energy use will not affect their growth ignoring costs on the poor.
 - The rising prosperity of the world’s poor does not endanger the planet. The challenge is to change wasteful behaviour in the West.

Role of infrastructure:

- Infrastructure has a defining role because of the services it provides outside the market and the way it shapes demand distinct from production and consumption.
- The vaguely worded ‘net zero’ emissions, balancing emissions and removals, could be disastrous for development latecomers like India.
 - It fails to recognise that more than half the global cumulative emissions arose from infrastructure, essential for urban well-being.
- For developed countries, the peaking of emissions came some 20 years after infrastructure saturation levels were reached and net-zero emissions are being considered some two decades even later to take advantage of ageing populations and technology.
- Because of its young population and late development, much of the future emissions in India will come from infrastructure, buildings and industry, and the trajectory cannot be shifted to reach comparable levels of well-being with major economies.

Way Forward:

New framework:

- A global goal-shaping national strategy requires a new understanding.
- India must highlight unique national circumstances with respect to the food, energy and transportation systems that have to change.
 - Eg: consumption of meat contributes to a third of global emissions. Indians consume much less meat a year compared with European Union and the U.S.

- Transport emissions account for a quarter of global emissions, are the fastest-growing emissions worldwide and have surpassed emissions from the generation of electricity in the U.S., but are not on the global agenda.

Coal use:

- Coal accounts for a quarter of global energy use.
- Rising Asia uses three-quarters of it as coal drives industry and supports the renewable energy push into cities.
- India with abundant reserves and per-capita electricity use that is a tenth that of the U.S. is under pressure to stop using coal, even though the U.S. currently uses more coal.
- India wants to eliminate the use of oil instead with renewable energy and hydrogen as a fuel for electrification, whose acceleration requires international cooperation around technology development and transfer.

Conclusion:

- In the Paris Agreement, climate justice was downgraded to the preamble as a political, not policy, statement.
- There is a need for a reframing of the global concern in terms of sustainable development for countries with per capita emissions below the global average, in line with the Paris Agreement.
- The verifiable measure should be well-being within ecological limits.
- International cooperation should centre on sharing technology of electric vehicles and hydrogen as a fuel, as they are the most effective response to climate change.

THE INDIAN EXPRESS

GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1.India Energy Dashboards Version 2.0

Why in News

Recently, the government think tank NITI Aayog has launched **India Energy Dashboards (IED) Version 2.0**.

- NITI Aayog launched the **Version 1.0 in May 2017**.

Key Points

- **About:**
 - India Energy Dashboards (IED) is an endeavour **to provide single-window access to the energy data for the country**.
 - It is **an initial step towards building a comprehensive, open, and freely accessible energy data portal for India**.
 - Energy data published/provided by **Central Electricity Authority, Coal Controller's Organisation, and Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas** is compiled in the Dashboards.
 - The IED Provides **time series data from FY 2005-06 until FY 2019-20**.
 - IED **provides data at sub-yearly frequencies** as well. This includes **monthly data and API (Application Programming Interface) linked data** from some portals maintained by the government agencies.
 - API linked data from **Saubhagya, UJALA, PRAAPTI, and Vidyut PRAVAH** has been incorporated in the dashboards.

Saubhagya Scheme

- **Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana - 'Saubhagya'** was launched in September, 2017 with a target to electrify all households by December 2018.
- All the states had declared on Saubhagya portal that all the willing un-electrified households had been electrified as on 31st March 2019, except 18,734 households in **LWE (left wing extremist)** affected areas of Chhattisgarh.

UJALA Scheme

- **UJALA (Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All)** is a **zero-subsidy scheme** launched by the Government in 2015.
- It is touted as the **world's largest domestic lighting project**.
- Every domestic household having a metered connection from their respective Electricity Distribution Company is eligible to get the LED bulbs under the Scheme.

PRAAPTI

- It is a web portal launched in 2018 by the Ministry of Power.
- 'PRAAPTI' stands for Payment Ratification and Analysis in Power Procurement for bringing transparency in invoicing of generators.
- The power distribution companies are able to clear the invoices and reply to claims raised by the generators on this portal.

Vidyut PRAVAH

- The Mobile/Web App provides real-time information of current demand met, shortages if any, surplus power available and the prices in Power Exchange.

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2.Traditional New Year Festivals

Why in News

The Vice President of India greeted the people on festivals 'Chaitra Sukladi, Gudi Padwa, Ugadi, Cheti Chand, Vaisakhi, Vishu, Puthandu, and Bohag Bihu'.

- These festivals of the spring season mark the beginning of the **traditional new year in India**.

Key Points

- **Chaitra Sukladi:**
 - It marks the **beginning of the new year of the Vikram Samvat** also known as the Vedic [Hindu] calendar.
 - Vikram Samvat is **based on the day when the emperor Vikramaditya defeated Sakas**, invaded Ujjain and called for a new era.
 - Under his supervision, astronomers formed **a new calendar based on the luni-solar system** that is still followed in the northern regions of India.
 - It is the **first day during the waxing phase** (in which the visible side of moon is getting bigger every night) **of the moon in the Chaitra** (first month of Hindu calendar).
- **Gudi Padwa and Ugadi:**
 - These festivals are **celebrated by the people in the Deccan region** including Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.
 - The common practice in the celebrations of both the festivals is the festive food that is prepared with a mix of sweet and bitter.
 - A famous concoction served is jaggery (sweet) and neem (bitter), called **bevu-bella** in the South, signifying that life brings both happiness and sorrows.

- **Gudi** is a doll prepared in **Maharashtrian** homes.
 - A bamboo stick is adorned with green or red brocade to make the gudi. This gudi is placed prominently in the house or outside a window/ door for all to see.
- For **Ugadi**, doors in homes are adorned with **mango leaf decorations** called **toranalu** or **Torana** in Kannada.
- **Cheti Chand:**
 - **Sindhis** celebrate the new year as **Cheti Chand**. Chaitra month is called 'Chet' in Sindhi.
 - The day **commemorates the birth anniversary of Uderolal/Jhulelal**, the patron saint of Sindhis.
- **Navreh:**
 - It is the **lunar new year that is celebrated in Kashmir**.
 - It is the Sanskrit word 'Nav-Varsha' from where the word 'Navreh' has been derived.
 - It **falls on the first day of the Chaitra Navratri**.
 - On this day, Kashmiri pandits look at a **bowl of rice** which is considered as a symbol of riches and fertility.
- **Vaishakhi:**
 - It is also pronounced as **Baisakhi**, observed by **Hindus and Sikhs**.
 - It marks the **beginning of Hindu Solar New year**.
 - It commemorates the formation of **Khalsa panth** of warriors under **Guru Gobind Singh in 1699**.
 - Baisakhi was also the day when colonial British empire officials committed the **Jallianwala Bagh massacre** at a gathering, an event influential to the Indian movement against colonial rule.
- **Vishu:**
 - It is a **Hindu festival celebrated in the Indian state of Kerala, Tulu Nadu region in Karnataka, Mahé district of Union Territory of Pondicherry**, neighbouring areas of Tamil Nadu and their diaspora communities.

- The festival marks the first day of **Medam**, the **ninth month in the solar calendar** followed in Kerala.
- It therefore always falls in the middle of April in the Gregorian calendar on **14th or 15th April** every year.
- **Puthandu:**
 - **Also known as Puthuvarudam or Tamil New Year**, is the first day of the year on the Tamil calendar and traditionally celebrated as a festival.
 - The festival date is set with the solar cycle of the lunisolar Hindu calendar, as the first day of the Tamil month Chithirai.
 - It therefore falls on or about 14th April every year on the Gregorian calendar.
- **Bohag Bihu:**
 - **Bohag Bihu or Rongali Bihu** also called **Xaat Bihu** (seven Bihus) is a traditional aboriginal ethnic festival celebrated in the state of **Assam** and other parts of northeastern India by the indigenous ethnic groups of Assam.
 - It marks the beginning of the **Assamese New Year**.
 - It usually falls in the **2nd week of April**, historically signifying the time of harvest.

3. Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

Why in News

The Prime Minister of India **commemorated 102 years** of the **Jallianwala Bagh tragedy** that took the lives of hundreds of innocent Indians.

- Recently, on the occasion of **130th Foundation Day of the National Archives of India**, an exhibition "**Jallianwala Bagh**" was inaugurated, to mark the **Jallianwala Bagh massacre centenary**.

Key Points

- **About:**
 - The Jallianwala Bagh massacre took place on **13th April 1919 in Amritsar, Punjab**.
 - The tragedy, also known as the **Massacre of Amritsar** exposed the inhuman approach of the British when the British troops under **General Reginald Edward Dyer** opened fire into an unarmed crowd.

▪ **Preclude to the Event:**

- The massacre of **April 1919 wasn't an isolated incident**, rather an incident that happened with a multitude of factors working in the background.
- During **World War I (1914–18)** the British government of India enacted a series of **repressive emergency powers** that were intended to combat subversive activities.
- The **Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act of 1919** popularly known as **Rowlatt Act (Black Act)** which was passed on 10th March, 1919, authorized the government to imprison or confine, **without a trial**, any person associated with seditious activities which led to nationwide unrest.
- On 13th April 1919, a crowd of at least 10,000 men, women and children gathered in Jallianwala Bagh to request the release of **Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal**.
- The two prominent leaders who were a symbol of Hindu-muslim unity, organised a peaceful protest against the Rowlatt act. They were arrested and taken out of the city.
- **Brigadier-General Dyer** on hearing about the meeting, deployed his troops and ordered them to open fire. The only exit to the park was sealed and indiscriminate firing took place killing hundreds of innocent civilians.

▪ **Post Jallianwala Bagh Incident:**

- The shooting was followed by the **proclamation of martial law in the Punjab** that included public floggings and other humiliations. Indian outrage grew as news of the shooting and subsequent British actions spread throughout the subcontinent.
- The **Bengali poet and Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore renounced the knighthood** that he had received in 1915.
- Mahatma Gandhi gave up the title of **Kaiser-i-Hind**, bestowed by the British for his work during the **Boer War**.
- On October 14, 1919, the **Disorders Inquiry Committee** was formed to inquire about the massacre. It later came to be known as the **Hunter Commission** after the name of **chairman, Lord William Hunter**. It also had Indian members.
- The Hunter Commission in 1920 censured Dyer for his actions and was directed to resign from his appointment as Brigade Commander.

- The Indian National Congress appointed its own non-official committee that included **Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, Abbas Tyabji, M.R. Jayakar, and Gandhi** to look into the shootings.
- Gandhi soon began organizing his first large-scale and sustained nonviolent protest (satyagraha) campaign, the **Non Cooperation Movement (1920–22)** which proved a step in the direction of ending the British rule of India 25 years later.

4. National Mission on Sustaining Himalayan Ecosystem

Why in News

Scientists, with support from the **National Mission on Sustaining Himalayan Ecosystem (NMSHE)** Programme, have been able to disseminate available scientific information to the farmers to enable sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture in the Leh region.

- NMSHE is one of the eight missions under the **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)**.

Key Points

- **About:**
 - It was **launched in 2010** but was formally **approved by the government in 2014**.
 - It is a **multi-pronged, cross-cutting mission** across various sectors.
 - It **contributes to the sustainable development of the country** by enhancing the understanding of climate change, its likely impacts and adaptation actions required for the Himalayas- a region on which a significant proportion of India's population depends for sustenance.
- **States Covered:**
 - **Eleven states:** Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya, Assam and West Bengal.
 - **Two Union Territories:** Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.
- **Objective:**
 - To **facilitate formulation of appropriate policy** measures and time-bound action programmes to sustain ecological resilience and ensure the continued provisions of key **ecosystem services** in the Himalayas.

- To **evolve suitable management and policy measures** for sustaining and safeguarding the Himalayan ecosystem along with developing capacities at the national level to continuously assess its health status.
- To **address a variety of important issues**, including studying the **Himalayan glaciers** and **associated hydrological consequences** and prediction and management of natural hazards.
- **Himalayas:**
 - **About:**
 - The Himalayas are the **highest and the youngest fold mountain ranges** of the world.
 - Their geological structure is young, weak and flexible since the Himalayan uplift is an ongoing process, making them **one of the highest earthquake-prone regions of the world**.
 - It separates India, along its north-central and northeastern frontier, from China (Tibet).
 - **Area:**
 - The Indian part of Himalayas covers an area about **5 lakh km² (about 16.2% of the country's total geographical area)** and forms the northern boundary of the country.
 - The region is **responsible for providing water to a large part of the Indian subcontinent**. Many rivers considered holy like the Ganga and Yamuna flow from the Himalayas.
 - **Ranges:**
 - The Himalayas are a **series of parallel mountain ranges** extending along the North-West to the South-East direction (known as the Strike of the Himalayas). These ranges are separated by longitudinal valleys. They include,
 - Trans-Himalayas
 - The Greater Himalayas or Himadri
 - The Lesser Himalayas or Himachal
 - Shiwaliks or the Outer Himalayas
 - The Eastern Hills or Purvanchal

National Action Plan on Climate Change

▪ **About:**

- It was **launched in 2008** by the Prime Minister's Council on **Climate Change**.
- The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** is the coordinating Ministry of NAPCC.

▪ **Aim:**

- Creating awareness among the representatives of the public, different agencies of the government, scientists, industry and the communities on the threat posed by climate change and the steps to counter it.

▪ **Missions:**

- There are 8 national missions forming the core of the NAPCC which represent multi-pronged, long term and integrated strategies for achieving key goals in climate change.
 - **National Solar Mission:** This initiative started in 2010 to promote the use of solar power.
 - **National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency:** The initiative was undertaken in 2009 to promote the market for energy efficiency by fostering innovative policies and effective market instruments.
 - **National Mission on Sustainable Habitat:** Approved in 2011, it aims to make cities sustainable through improvements in energy efficiency in buildings, management of solid waste and shift to public transport.
 - **National Water Mission:** The mission was put in place to ensure integrated water resource management helping to conserve water, minimize wastage and ensure more equitable distribution both across and within states.
 - **National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem:** It is aimed at protecting the Himalayas, it has mapped institutes and civil society organisations working on the Himalayan ecology for ease of coordination between governmental and non-governmental agencies.
 - **National Mission for A Green India:** It aims at protecting; restoring and enhancing India's diminishing forest cover and responding to climate change by a combination of adaptation and mitigation measures. It was started in 2014.
 - **National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture:** It has been formulated for enhancing agricultural productivity especially in rain-fed areas focusing on integrated farming, water use efficiency, soil health management and synergizing resource conservation. It was started in 2010.

- **National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change:** It seeks to build a dynamic and vibrant knowledge system that informs and supports national policy and action for responding effectively to climate change challenges, while not compromising on the nation's growth goals.

5. Reducing Risk of Zoonosis in Food Production

Why in News

The **World Health Organization (WHO)**, **World Organization for Animal Health** and the **United Nations Environment Programme** have laid down **fresh guidelines** for governments to **reduce the risk of transmission of zoonotic pathogens to humans** in food production and marketing chains.

- **Covid-19** has brought new attention to this threat, given the magnitude of its consequences.

Key Points

- **Zoonosis:**
 - A **zoonosis** is an infectious disease that jumps from a non-human animal to humans.
 - Zoonotic pathogens may be bacterial, viral or parasitic.
 - They can spread to humans through direct contact or through food, water and the environment.
- **Concern:**
 - Animals, particularly **wild animals**, are the source of **more than 70%** of all emerging infectious diseases in humans, many of which are caused by **novel viruses**.
 - Most emerging infectious diseases – such as **Lassa fever, Marburg hemorrhagic fever, Nipah viral infections** and other viral diseases – have wildlife origins.
 - Significant **problems can arise when traditional food markets allow the sale and slaughter of live animals**, especially wild animals, which cannot be properly assessed for potential risks – in areas open to the public.
- Such environments provide the opportunity for animal viruses, including coronaviruses, to amplify themselves and transmit to new hosts, including humans.

▪ **WHO Guidelines:**

- Emergency **regulations to suspend live wild animal sales in traditional food markets.**
- **Conducting risk assessments** for developing regulations to control the risks of transmission of zoonotic microorganisms from **farmed wild animals and caught wild animals.**
- **Ensuring** that food inspectors are **adequately trained** to ensure that businesses comply with regulations to protect **consumers' health and are held accountable.**
- Strengthening **surveillance systems for zoonotic pathogens.**

Indian Scenario

▪ **Zoonotic Diseases:**

- India is **among the top geographical hotspots** where zoonotic diseases are a major public health issue causing high burden of morbidity and mortality.
- **Major public health zoonotic diseases in India** include Rabies, Brucellosis, Toxoplasmosis, Cysticercosis, Echinococcosis, Japanese Encephalitis (JE), Plague, Leptospirosis, Scrub typhus, Nipah, Trypanosomiasis, Kyasanur forest disease (KFD) and Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF).

▪ **Challenges:**

- **Large human population** and its frequent interactions with animals.
- **Poverty:** Leads to increased dependence on animal rearing as a means of livelihood. The intimate human-animal contact puts them at risk for this category of diseases.
- **Unawareness:** Large part of population remains unaware of the basic hygiene routine to be followed.
- **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR):** AMR occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites change over time and no longer respond to medicines making infections harder to treat and increasing the risk of disease spread, severe illness and death.
- **Lack of proper vaccination programmes,** poor sero-surveillance and lack of diagnostic facilities make the preventive and precautionary approach more difficult.

▪ **Measures Taken:**

- Following Programmes have been launched under **National Centre for Disease Control**:
 - Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP).
 - National Programme for Containment of Antimicrobial Resistance.
 - National Viral Hepatitis Surveillance Programme.
 - Strengthening Inter-sectoral coordination for prevention and control of Zoonotic Diseases of Public Health Importance.
 - National Rabies control programme.
 - Programme for prevention and control of Leptospirosis.
- Further, experts have underscored the need for the **One Health framework** in the country. One Health is a collaborative, multisectoral, and transdisciplinary approach linking human, animal, and environmental health.

GS 3 :Economy, Science and Technology,Environment

6. HGCO19: mRNA Vaccine Candidate

Why in News

India's **mRNA-based Covid-19 vaccine candidate-HGCO19** has received additional government funding for its clinical studies.

- This funding has been awarded under the '**Mission Covid Suraksha**'.

Key Points

- **HGCO19**:
 - The novel **mRNA vaccine candidate, HGCO19** has been developed by **Pune-based biotechnology company Gennova Biopharmaceuticals Ltd.** in collaboration with **HDT Biotech Corporation, USA**.
 - HGCO19 has already demonstrated safety, immunogenicity, neutralization antibody activity in the rodent and non-human primate models.
 - Gennova has initiated the enrolment of volunteers for **Phase 1/2 clinical trials** for its vaccine candidate HGCO19.
- **mRNA Vaccine vs Traditional Vaccines**:

- Vaccines work by training the body to recognise and respond to the proteins produced by disease-causing organisms, such as a virus or bacteria.
- **Traditional vaccines** are made up of small or inactivated doses of the whole disease-causing organism, or the proteins that it produces, which are introduced into the body to provoke the immune system into mounting a response.
- **mRNA vaccines** tricks the body into producing some of the viral proteins itself.
 - They work by using mRNA, or messenger RNA, which is the molecule that essentially puts DNA instructions into action. Inside a cell, mRNA is used as a template to build a protein.
- **Functioning of mRNA Vaccines:**
 - To produce a mRNA vaccine, scientists produce a synthetic version of the mRNA that a virus uses to build its infectious proteins.
 - This mRNA is delivered into the human body, whose cells read it as instructions to build that viral protein, and therefore create some of the virus's molecules themselves.
 - These proteins are solitary, so they do not assemble to form a virus.
 - The immune system then detects these viral proteins and starts to produce a defensive response to them.
- **Advantages of Using mRNA based Vaccines:**
 - mRNA vaccines **are considered safe** as mRNA is non-infectious, non-integrating in nature, and degraded by standard cellular mechanisms.
 - They **are highly efficacious** because of their inherent capability of being translatable into the protein structure inside the cell cytoplasm.
 - Additionally, **mRNA vaccines are fully synthetic** and do not require a host for growth, e.g., eggs or bacteria. Therefore, they can be quickly manufactured inexpensively to ensure their "availability" and "accessibility" for mass vaccination on a sustainable basis.

Mission Covid Suraksha

- Mission Covid Suraksha is India's targeted effort to enable the development of indigenous, affordable and accessible vaccines for the country.
- The Centre had announced this package during the **third economic stimulus**.

- The Mission with its end-to-end focus from preclinical development through clinical development and manufacturing and regulatory facilitation for deployment consolidate all available and funded resources towards accelerated product development.
- It is led by the Department of Biotechnology and implemented by a dedicated Mission Implementation Unit at **Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)**.

BIRAC

- Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) is a not-for-profit **Section 8, Schedule B, Public Sector Enterprise**.
- It has been set up by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) as an Interface Agency to strengthen and empower the emerging Biotech enterprise to undertake strategic research and innovation, addressing nationally relevant product development needs.

8. e-SANTA

Why in News

Recently the Union Commerce and Industry Minister has inaugurated an **electronic platform** named **e-SANTA**, which will connect **aqua farmers and the buyers**.

Key Points

- **About:**
 - The term **e-SANTA** was coined for the web portal, meaning **Electronic Solution for Augmenting NaCSA farmers' Trade in Aquaculture**.
 - e-SANTA is a **digital bridge** to end the market divide and will act as an alternative marketing tool between farmers & buyers by eliminating middlemen.
 - The farmers can **freely list their produce and quote their price** while the exporters have the freedom to list their requirements and also to choose the products based on their requirements such as desired size, location, harvest dates etc.
 - The Platform is available in **many languages**, which will help the local population.

- **Significance:**
 - e-SANTA will **RAISE** income, lifestyle, self-reliance, quality levels, traceability, and provide new options for aqua farmers by:
 - Reducing Risk
 - Awareness of Products & Markets
 - Increase in Income
 - Shielding Against Wrong Practice
 - Ease of Processes
 - It will enable the farmers and buyers to have greater control over the trade and enables them to make informed decisions.
 - It will provide a cashless, contactless and paperless electronic trade platform between farmers and exporters.
 - e-SANTA can become a tool to advertise collectively the kind of products the buyers, fishermen & fish producing organisations are harvesting.
 - It will help people in India & internationally to know about the products availability and has the potential of becoming an auction platform in future.

National Centre for Sustainable Aquaculture

- National Centre for Sustainable Aquaculture (NaCSA) is an extension arm of **Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA)**, Ministry of Commerce & Industry Govt. of India.
- The objectives of NaCSA are to **encourage and uplift the small and marginal farmers** through organization of clusters and maintaining Best Management Practices in shrimp culture.
- The primary advantage of cluster approach to shrimp farming is that it contributes to substantial reduction in cost of production.
- It also enables participating farmers to organize:
 - The schedule of farm operations,
 - Quality seed procurement,
 - Simultaneous stocking,
 - Water exchange
 - Harvesting regimes

Prelims Practice Questions

1. Which of the following are classified under the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG)?

1. Toda
2. Kattunayakan
3. Onges
4. Reangs

Choose the correct option:

- a. 2 only
- b. 1 and 2 only
- c. 3 and 4 only
- d. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Particularly vulnerable tribal group is a government of India classification created with the purpose of enabling improvement in the conditions of certain communities with particularly low development indices.
- Kattunayakan is a designated Scheduled Tribe in the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. They are classified as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- Todas are classified as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups in Tamil Nadu.
- Reangs are the only Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group in Tripura.
- Great Andamanese, Jarawas, Onges, Sentinelese and Shom Pens are PVTGs in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

2. Ratle Hydro Electric (HE) Project is located on which of the following rivers?

- a. River Kosi
- b. River Chenab
- c. River Hooghly
- d. River Subansiri

Answer : b

Explanation:

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has given its approval for the investment of Rs. 5281 Crore for 850 MW Ratle Hydro Electric (HE) Project.

Ratle Hydro Electric Project

- It is located on river Chenab, in Kishtwar district of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The Power generated from the Project will help in providing balancing of Grid and will improve the power supply position.

3. "Sanaa" recently in news is located in:

- a. Yemen
- b. Saudi Arabia
- c. Azerbaijan
- d. Iran

Answer: a

Explanation:

- Sanaa is the largest city in Yemen and the centre of Sanaa Governorate.
- The city is not part of the Governorate, but forms the separate administrative district of "Amanat Al-Asemah".
- Under the Yemeni constitution, Sanaa is the capital of the country, although the seat of the Yemeni government moved to Aden, the former capital of South Yemen in the aftermath of the Houthi occupation.
- Aden was declared as the temporary capital by President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi in March 2015.
- Aden, the temporary capital of Yemen, is near the eastern approach to the Red Sea.

4. Project Sea Bird, often seen in the news recently, refers to?

- a. Oil drilling in Indian Ocean
- b. Naval Infrastructure Project in Karnataka
- c. Conservation of sea gulls in Gulf of Mannar
- d. Translocation of Great Indian Bustard to Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary

Answer : b

Explanation:

- Project Sea bird is the largest naval infrastructure project for India in Karwar, Karnataka.
- It involves creation of a naval base at Karwar on the west coast of India.
- Upon completion, the program will provide Indian Navy with its largest naval base on the west coast and also the largest naval base east of the Suez Canal.

5. Consider the following pairs

1. S-400 Air Defence Missile – Russia
2. Shaheen-III Missile – Iran
3. Rudram Anti-Radiation Missile – India

Which of the pair(s) given above is/are correctly matched?

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

Answer : b

Explanation:

S-400

- A group of Indian military personnel is leaving for Russia to undergo training on key operational aspects of the S-400 air defence systems as Moscow looks at supplying the first batch of the missile to India later this year.

Rudram Anti-Radiation Missile

- Flight Lieutenant Bhawana Kanth, one of the first women fighter pilots in IAF, will be a part of the air force's tableau in the Republic Day Parade that will showcase mock-ups of the light combat aircraft (LCA), light combat helicopter and the Sukhoi-30 fighter plane.
- The LCA model would be equipped with indigenous Rudram Next Generation Anti-Radiation Missile (NGRAM) and LCH model would be equipped with Dhruvastra, indigenous helicopter fired anti-tank guided missile both of which are under development.

- The SU-30MKI would be equipped with the indigenous Astra Beyond Visual Range (BVR) Air to Air missile.
- The recently inducted Rafale fighter jet will also fly over the Rajpath during the Republic Day parade.

Shaheen-III Missile

- Pakistan has successfully test-fired a nuclear-capable surface-to-surface ballistic missile recently.
- The missile can strike targets up to 2,750 km.

6. Which of the following statements are correct with respect to Iron Ore Policy 2021

1. It is drafted and released by Ministry of Earth Sciences.
2. It gives higher priority to movement of iron-ore traffic for export purposes.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

Answer : d

Explanation:

Iron Ore Policy 2021

- Recently, the Ministry of Railways has rolled out Iron-ore Policy 2021.
- Under the policy Categorization of Priority of movement of Iron Ore has now been based on the availability of Railway infrastructure developed by the customer for loading/unloading and the nature of movement between various types of sidings with a view to maximize iron-ore movement by rail.
- Higher priority given to movement of iron-ore traffic for domestic manufacturing activity.
- Higher priority given to movement of iron-ore traffic for domestic manufacturing activity.
- It aims to provide total logistics support to steel industry to meet the competitive challenges domestically and globally.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q1. Citizen's Charter seeks to continuously improve the quality of public services for the people so as to respond to their needs and wishes. In the light of the statement discuss the foundational features of a citizen's charter and what do citizens expect out of it.

Approach

- Start the answer by defining the concept of the Citizen's Charter
- Discuss the foundational features of a citizen's charter and what do citizens expect out of it.
- Conclude suitably.

Q2. "Building of social capital plays a crucial role in good governance, economic development and social harmony of the nation". Discuss (250 Words)

Approach

- Briefly define the term social capital in the introduction.
- In body discuss the types of social capital along with its significance.
- Discuss how social capital can play a role in the governance of the country.
- Conclude the answer by stating the need for the inclusion of the deprived and vulnerable sections of society under social capital.