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GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1. Evaluate the Ladakh crisis, keep China at bay

Context:

- Ongoing Ladakh stand-off between India and China.

Background:

Unresolved issues:

- After over a year, the stand-off between Indian and Chinese troops in eastern Ladakh shows no signs of resolution. **Disengagement has stalled**, China continues to reinforce its troops, and talks have been fruitless.

Implications on the bilateral relation:

- **The India-China bilateral relationship has ruptured** and is marked by **increasing hostility and distrust**.
- India has reversed its long-held policy and has stated that it will no longer overlook the problematic border dispute for the sake of a potentially lucrative wider relationship with China.
- Even if disengagement happens it is very likely that the relationship will remain vulnerable to destabilising disruptions along the LAC.

Details:

- The Ladakh crisis offers India **three key lessons in managing the intensifying strategic competition with China**.

Revamping military strategies:

- The Indian military's standing doctrine calls for deterring adversaries with the threat of massive punitive retaliation for any aggression, capturing enemy territory as bargaining leverage in post-war talks.
- However, the experience from the Ladakh stand-off seems to indicate that **military strategies based on denial are more useful than strategies based on punishment**.
 - The threat of retaliation did not deter China from launching unprecedented incursions in May 2020.

- The Indian military's occupation of the heights on the Kailash Range on its side of the LAC in late August, an act of denial, helped deny key terrain to the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), and gave the Indian Army a stronger defensive position from which it could credibly defend a larger segment of its front line.
- The doctrine of denial will serve the following benefits for India.
 - The focus on denial will give the Indian military greater capacity to **thwart future land grabs across the LAC.**
 - This strategy is also more likely than punishment to **preserve crisis stability.**
 - In the long term, improved denial capabilities may allow India to **reduce the resource drain of the increased militarisation of the LAC.**

Imposing political costs on China:

- Given the fact that **China's defence budget is three to four times larger than India's**, the material burden of the crisis is unlikely to disrupt China's existing priorities along the LAC, which is aimed at making small tactical gains along the disputed border to ensure a stronger say in the negotiations.
- **China is more likely to be deterred or coerced with the threat of political costs, rather than material costs.**
- India successfully raised the risks of the crisis for China through its threat of a political rupture by **restricting bilateral trade and investment** while also indicating India's inclination towards **greater participation with the Quad.**
- The prospect of a permanently hostile India seems to be a very high price for China given the rising anti-Chinese sentiments.
- Given the limits of individual nations, even large powers such as India, to tackle the increasing assertiveness of China, should **focus on coordinated or collective action with other like-minded countries.**

Focus on Indian Ocean Region:

- The Ladakh crisis, by prompting an increased militarisation of the LAC, may prompt India to defer long-overdue military modernisation and maritime expansion into the Indian Ocean. This is a cause of concern.
- India should rather consider accepting more risk on the LAC in exchange for long-term leverage and influence in the Indian Ocean Region due to the following reasons.
 - **India has traditionally been the dominant power in the Indian Ocean Region** and stands to cede significant political influence and security if it fails to counter the rapid expansion of Chinese military power in the region.

- The difficult terrain and more even balance of military force means that China could only eke out minor, strategically modest gains at best.

Conclusion:

- The measures as recommended on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and beyond, will help ensure that India is better postured to meet the challenge posed by an increasingly assertive China and manage the strategic competition with it.

2. What's happening in Jerusalem?

Context:

- **The Israeli armed forces stormed Al-Aqsa Mosque in the Haram esh-Sharif in Jerusalem**, ahead of a march by Zionist nationalists commemorating Israel's capture of the eastern half of the city in 1967, injuring more than 300 Palestinians in the raid.
- **In retaliation, Hamas**, the Islamist militant group that runs Gaza, **fired dozens of rockets**.
- **Israel launched an airstrike on Gaza in response**.

What led to escalation?

- Tensions have been building up since April 2021 when the **Israeli police set up barricades** at the Damascus Gate outside the occupied Old City, **preventing Palestinians from gathering there**.
- The **threatened eviction of dozens of Palestinian families in the East Jerusalem** neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah **escalated the crisis further**.

Sheikh Jarrah dispute:

- **Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were forced out of their homes when the State of Israel was created in historic Palestine in 1948** (the Palestinians call the events 'Nakba', or catastrophe).
 - **Twenty-eight of those Palestinian families moved to Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem** to settle there.
- In **1956**, when East Jerusalem was ruled by Jordan, the **Jordanian Ministry of Construction and Development and the UN Relief and Works Agency facilitated the construction of houses** for these families in Sheikh Jarrah.
 - **But Israel captured East Jerusalem from Jordan in 1967**.
 - **By the early 1970s, Jewish agencies started demanding the families leave the land**.

- **Jewish committees** claimed that **the houses sat on land they purchased in 1885** (when Jews, facing persecution in Europe, were migrating to historic Palestine that was part of the Ottoman Empire).
- In 2021, the **Central Court in East Jerusalem** upheld a decision to **evict four Palestinian families** from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah in favour of Jewish settlers. The Israeli Supreme Court is yet to hear the case. **The issue remains unresolved.**

Why Jerusalem?

- **Jerusalem has been at the centre of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.**
- According to the original **1947 UN Partition Plan**, **Jerusalem was proposed to be an international city.**
 - But in the **first Arab Israel war of 1948**, the **Israelis captured the western half** of the city, and **Jordan took the eastern part**, including the Old City that houses Haram esh-Sharif.
 - Al-Aqsa Mosque (**Islam's third holiest site**) and the **Dome of the Rock** are situated within Haram esh-Sharif.
 - One side of the compound, called Temple Mount by the Jews, is the Wailing Wall (**Western Wall**), which is **believed to be the remains of the Second Jewish Temple, the holiest site in Judaism.**
- **Israel captured East Jerusalem from Jordan in the 1967 Six-Day War** and annexed it later.
- Since its annexation, Israel has expanded settlements in East Jerusalem. It is now home to some 220,000 Jews.
 - Jews born in East Jerusalem are Israeli citizens.
 - Palestinians in the city are given conditional residency permits.
- Palestinians in East Jerusalem, unlike other parts of the occupied West Bank, can apply for Israeli citizenship. Very few Palestinians have done so.
- **Israel sees the whole city as its "unified, eternal capital".**
 - This **claim was endorsed by Donald Trump** when he was U.S. President but **not recognised by most other countries.**
 - Palestinian leaders across the political spectrum have maintained that they would **not accept any compromise formula for a future Palestinian state unless East Jerusalem is its capital.**

What Next?

- In a further sign of rising tensions, Israel signalled it is **widening its military campaign.**
- The military said it is sending **troop reinforcements to the Gaza border** and the Defence Minister ordered the mobilisation of 5,000 reserve soldiers.

- But, in a potentially positive sign, Egyptian and Palestinian officials said **Egypt was working on brokering a cease-fire.**

3. How to adopt a child legally

- According to UNICEF, India has over 30 million orphan and abandoned children.
- The prospective adoptive parents must register on the **Child Adoption Resource Information and Guidance System (CARINGS).**
- The **Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)** is a statutory body for the regulation, monitoring and control of all intra-country and inter-country adoptions.
 - The Juvenile Justice Rules of 2016 based on **the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act** and the Adoption Regulations of 2017 mandate the creation of CARA.
- CARA grants a 'no objection' certificate for all inter-country adoptions, pursuant to India becoming a signatory to the **Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoptions.**
- Rehabilitation of all orphaned, abandoned and surrendered children is regulated by the strict mandatory procedures of the Adoption Regulations.
- India is a signatory to the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.**

4. Saudi aid worth \$123 mn announced for Pakistan

What's in News?

Imran Khan's 2-day visit to Riyadh.

- **Saudi Arabia has announced 118 humanitarian projects** worth over \$123 million **for Pakistan** in food security, health, education and water.
- It has **provided medical and preventive aid** worth over \$1.5 million to **combat the pandemic.**
- Also, the Pakistan Prime Minister met the Secretary-General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and discussed developments in the Islamic world, the situation of Muslims in non-OIC countries and the issues on the OIC's agenda, in particular combating Islamophobia.

OIC Details

- OIC was established on the 25th of September 1969 when an Islamic Conference took place with 24 members. The catalyst that led to this conference was a fire on the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.
- The OIC was officially founded in 1972.

- It is headquartered in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.
- It has 57 members spread over 4 continents.
- Its official languages are Arabic, English and French.
- The membership spans roughly 1.81 million people.
- The organisation was set up to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslims in the world and also to promote international peace and harmony among various people of the world.
- OIC expresses solidarity with conflict-hit Muslim regions such as Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and Bosnia, as well as with the peoples of the Turkish Cypriot state, Kosovo and Jammu and Kashmir.
- There are OIC permanent delegations to the UN and the EU.
- The OIC has many organs and universities under its wing.

India and OIC

India had expressed its desire to be a member in the OIC during its formation in 1969. But this was bitterly opposed by Pakistan. India has a significant minority population of Muslims. But Pakistan's opposition to India's entry has prevented it from being a part of the body. Pakistan also argues that India's entry will violate a rule of the OIC that a state that wished to be a part of the OIC should not have conflicts with any member-state.

5. A matter of concern

Context:

- The **Indian variant, B.1.617** and its family of related coronaviruses have been categorized as a **Variant of Concern (VOC) by the World Health Organization**.
 - The present 'variants of interest', include the U.K. variant (B.1.1.7), the South Africa variant (B.1.351) and the Brazilian variant (P2).

Background:

Factors that are considered to categorize as VOC:

- A variant of concern (VOC) is classified so if it has been demonstrated to be associated with:
 - Increase in transmissibility or detrimental change in COVID-19 epidemiology (associated with **increased transmission**)
 - Increase in virulence or change in clinical disease presentation (associated with more **severe disease**)

- Decrease in effectiveness of public health and social measures or available diagnostics, vaccines, therapeutics (**evading detection by diagnostic tests, ineffectiveness of the available medicines**)

Significance of classification as VOC:

- The classification as a variant of concern helps **focus attention and resources on the variants with the highest public health implications**, while reducing noise and unwarranted diversion of limited resources.
- The classification as a Variant of Concern (VOC) will now prompt **greater international scrutiny** of those who test positive overseas.

Double mutant virus:

- The **Indian SARS-CoV2 Genomic Consortia (INSACOG)** had flagged a variant with two concerning mutations, E484Q and L452R, that separately had been found in other variants elsewhere.
- Later these two mutations appeared together on a variant that began to be called 'double mutant' or even 'triple mutant' (as it also had another important mutation, P614R).
- In early April this variant became formally classified as a lineage, B.1.617.

Details:

- The WHO has said the predominant lineage of B.1.617 was first identified in India last December, although an earlier version was spotted in October 2020.
- It was found to be **transmitting more easily** than the original version of the virus. Leading scientists have expressed concerns that the B.1.617 may be playing a role in disease spread in India.
- The variant has already spread to other countries, and many nations have moved to cut or restrict movements from India.

Concerns:

- While laboratory studies show that vaccines continue to be effective, some of the emerging variants do **seem to be better at evading antibodies**.
- The **inability to diagnose the new variant** in some cases will lead to the **unimpeded spread of the disease** and also lead to a sense of false assurance for such patients which can add to the number of mortalities.
- The new variant can lead to **new pandemic waves in other countries**.
- The emergences of such variants of concern indicate that while vaccines are an important defence in the fight against the pandemic it might not be the ultimate solution for stemming the pandemic.

Recommendations:

- The vaccine companies will have to **check whether their vaccines continue to be effective against the new variant.**
- Along with monitoring reinfections and cases of breakthrough infections (testing positive after being double inoculated), flagging variants must be seen as a crucial health response.
- Though the detection of new variants may not always merit radical changes in public health response, they are a strong indication of the need for the people and the health authorities to remain vigilant.

6. Rajasthan to use MLA fund for vaccination

What's in News?

As part of the efforts to mobilise financial resources for the COVID-19 vaccination of people in the age group of 18 to 44 years, Rajasthan Chief Minister **has approved a proposal to provide ₹3 crore each from the MLA Local Area Development (LAD) Fund.**

- For meeting the expenses, the **fund for each legislator has been increased from ₹2.25 crore to ₹5 crore a year.**
- The **200 MLAs in the State will contribute a total of ₹600 crore to the vaccination fund account under the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.**
- From the remaining ₹2 crore in the MLA-LAD Fund, ₹1 crore will be spent on strengthening the medical infrastructure, purchase of equipment and setting up of model community health centres.

GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology, Environment

7. Moody's lowers India's growth projection to 9.3%

What's in News?

Moody's Investors Service has **sharply scaled down the growth projection for India to 9.3%** from its earlier estimate of 13.7%.

- Moody's cited the **negative impact of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic** for scaling down the growth projections.
- It has warned that the **spread of the coronavirus, as well as the rate of vaccinations, will have a direct impact on economic outcomes.**

It suggested that **spending will have to be redirected towards healthcare and virus response** relative to what the government had budgeted for the FY-2021-22.

8. MFI sector urges RBI backing for emergency credit support

Context:

In the backdrop of the second wave of the pandemic, the microfinance sector has reached out to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for support.

Recommendations:

- Sa-Dhan has sought an **emergency credit line of up to 25% of their outstandings** with the lending banks to enable microfinance institutions (MFIs) to mobilise ₹15,000 crore.
- It has also sought help **in creating awareness** among State governments on the ill effects of **loan waivers**.
- It recommended the introduction of a partial **Credit Guarantee Scheme 3.0**.
 - This may help boost the confidence of banks in uncertain times' to lend to the microfinance sector, especially MFIs with relatively lower credit ratings.
- Other recommendations include **assessment of MFI cash flow by banks and developmental finance institutions** and **providing them moratorium or restructuring support for 6-12 months**.

Sa-Dhan:

- Sa-Dhan is an **association of microfinance institutions (MFIs) recognized by the RBI**.
- It is also recognized as a **National Support Organization (NSO) by National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)**.
- Sa-Dhan was founded in 1999 as the Association of Community Development Finance Institutions by SEWA Bank, BASIX, Dhan Foundation and others.
- Its mission is to build the field of community development finance in India to help its members better serve low-income households, particularly women, in both rural and urban India.
- It was **given the status of a self-regulatory organization (SRO) by RBI in 2015**.
 - This gave it the powers to monitor MFIs and ensure the lenders are in compliance with the rules.
 - In October 2010, RBI had formed a committee under financial sector expert Y.H. Malegam that recommended an SRO framework for MFIs to regulate the sector.

- Sa-Dhan was the second association in the business of micro-lending to be given the SRO status by RBI.
 - The **first one to be given SRO status was the Microfinance Institutions Network (MFIN)**.
 - MFIN is an association of MFIs operating as non-banking financial companies (NBFCs).

Note:

MFIs advance small loans to low-income borrowers who typically are **not covered** by the formal banking system.

9. Not all crises are opportunities for reforms

- In its recent research report, **Pew Research Center** observes that a large section of India's population would be pushed into poverty as a fallout of the economic crisis driven by the novel coronavirus.
- **The number of people who are poor in India (with incomes of \$2 or less a day) is estimated to have increased by 75 million because of the COVID-19 recession.**
- This accounts for nearly 60% of the global increase in poverty.

GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1) Biodegradable Yoga Mat

Why in News

Recently, six young girls from the fishing community from **Assam** have developed a **biodegradable and compostable yoga mat** called '**Moorhen Yoga Mat**'.

- The intervention was triggered through an initiative by **North East Centre for Technology Application and Reach (NECTAR)**.
- **NECTAR** is an autonomous society, set up under the Department of Science & Technology, with its headquarter at Shillong, Meghalaya.

Key Points

- **About the Mat:**
 - The '**Moorhen Yoga mat**' is **named after Kam Sorai** (Purple moorhen, a resident bird of Deepor Beel Wildlife sanctuary).
 - It is a **hand-woven 100% biodegradable and 100% compostable mat developed from water hyacinth**.
 - The mat could **improve the aquatic ecosystem of the wetland (Deepor Beel) through removal of water hyacinth, help sustainable production of utility products** with community engagement and generate **livelihood for indigenous communities** to become completely '**Atamanirbhar**'.
- **Water Hyacinth:**
 - Water hyacinth is a **type of invasive floating plant** found in water bodies across the world.
 - These **invasive species** block the sunlight reaching and oxygen level in water systems, which results in damaging water quality and seriously affecting various life forms in the ecosystem.
 - It is **also referred to as the terror of Bengal** given its effect on the local ecology and lives of the people.
 - It has an effect on irrigation, hydroelectric generation and navigation.
 - It also leads to a drastic reduction in fish production, aquatic crops and an increase in diseases caused by mosquitoes.
- **Deepor Beel:**

- Deepor Beel (Beel means wetland or large aquatic body in Assamese) **located about 10 km Southwest of Guwahati city is considered one of the large and important riverine wetlands in the Brahmaputra Valley of lower Assam.**
- Deepor Beel has both biological and environmental importance besides being the **only major storm-water storage basin** for Guwahati city.
- It is considered **one of the staging sites for migratory birds in India;** and some of the large congregations of aquatic birds in Assam during winter.
- Because of the richness of avian fauna it enjoys, Deepor Beel has been selected as **one of the Important Bird Area (IBA) sites** by Birdlife International.
- Deepor Beel has also been designated as a **Ramsar Site** in November 2002.

2)4th India-Swiss Financial Dialogue

Why in News

The 4th **India-Swiss Financial Dialogue** was held virtually through video conferencing.

Key Points

- **Highlights from the Dialogue:**
 - Talks for collaboration on various aspects including **investments, International Financial Services Centre Authority (IFSCA), National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF), Fin Tech, sustainable finance and cross border financial services.**
 - The matters relating to **G20, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and tax challenges arising from the digitalisation of the economy** were discussed along with **infrastructure financing.**
 - Emphasised the importance of **coordinated bilateral action on a clean and resilient post-Covid world.**
- **India-Switzerland Relations:**
 - **Political Relations:**
 - A **Treaty of Friendship** between India and Switzerland was signed at New Delhi in 1948.
 - India's **policy of non-alignment** and Switzerland's traditional **policy of neutrality** has led to a close understanding between the two countries.
 - **Economic Relations:**
 - India-Switzerland **Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT)** is under negotiation.

- Negotiations are also taking place on **India-EFTA Trade & Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA)**.
 - The **European Free Trade Association (EFTA)** is the intergovernmental organisation of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.
 - These countries are not part of the European Union (EU) with which India is negotiating a separate trade agreement called the India-EU Broad-based Trade and Investment Agreement.
- **Cooperation in Other Areas:**
 - An **Indo-Swiss Joint Research Programme (ISJRP)** was launched in 2005.
 - **Skill Training:** Several Institutes from both the countries have collaborated to impart the highest standards of skill training in India. E.g.:
 - Bharatiya Skill Development Campus and University, Jaipur.
 - Indo-Swiss Centre of Excellence, Pune.
 - Vocational Training Center, Andhra Pradesh.
 - **Capacity Building for Low Carbon and Climate Resilient City Development (CapaCITIES):**
 - The **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)** is supporting the implementation of the CapaCITIES project in Indian cities.
 - The CapaCITIES project aims to strengthen the capacities of Indian cities, to identify, plan and implement measures for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and for enhancing resilience to climate change in an integrated manner.

3) NASA's OSIRIS-REx Mission

Why in News

Recently, NASA's OSIRIS-REx spacecraft departed from asteroid Benu, and started its two-year long journey **back to Earth**.

- **OSIRIS-REx is NASA's first mission to visit a near-Earth asteroid**, survey its surface and collect a sample from it.

Key Points

- **About OSIRIS-REx Mission:**

- It is the **United States' first asteroid sample return mission**, aiming to collect and carry a pristine, unaltered sample from an asteroid back to earth for scientific study.
- The **OSIRIS-REx (Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, Security, Regolith Explorer) spacecraft was launched in 2016** for the journey to Benu.
- The mission is essentially a **seven-year-long voyage** and will conclude when **at least 60 grams of samples are delivered back to the Earth (in 2023)**.
- As per the **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)**, the mission promises to bring the largest amount of extraterrestrial material back to the Earth since the **Apollo era**.
 - **Apollo** was the NASA program that resulted in American astronauts' making a total of 11 space flights and walking on the moon (1968-72).
- The spacecraft **contains five instruments meant to explore Benu** including cameras, a spectrometer and a laser altimeter.
- Recently, the **spacecraft's robotic arm called the Touch-And-Go Sample Acquisition Mechanism (TAGSAM)**, made an attempt to "TAG" the asteroid at a sample site and **collected a sample**.
- **Significance:**
 - Scientists will use the asteroid samples **to study the formation of the solar system and of habitable planets such as Earth**.
 - NASA will also **distribute a part of the samples to laboratories worldwide** and will **reserve about 75% of the samples for future generations** who can study it with technologies not yet created.
- **Asteroid Benu:**
 - Benu is an **ancient asteroid**, currently **more than 200 million miles from Earth**.
 - It is about **as tall as the Empire State Building (US)** and is **named after an Egyptian deity**.
 - The asteroid was **discovered** by a team from the NASA-funded **Lincoln Near-Earth Asteroid Research team in 1999**.
 - It is known that this asteroid is a **B-type asteroid**, implying that it contains significant amounts of carbon and various other minerals.
 - Because of its high carbon content, it reflects about 4% of the light that hits it, which is very low when compared with a planet like Venus, which reflects about 65% of the light that hits it. Earth reflects about 30%.
 - **Around 20-40% of Benu's interior is empty space** and scientists believe that it was formed in the first 10 million years of the solar system's formation, implying that it is **roughly 4.5 billion years old**.

- There is a slight **possibility** that Benu, which is **classified as a Near Earth Object (NEO)**, might **strike the Earth** in the next century, between the **years 2175 and 2199**.
 - **NEOs** are comets and asteroids nudged by the gravitational attraction of nearby planets into orbits which allows them to enter the Earth's neighbourhood.
- Benu is believed to have been **born in the Main Asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter** and because of gravitational tugs from other celestial objects and the slight push asteroids get when they release absorbed sunlight, the asteroid is coming closer to Earth.
- Benu **offers scientists a window into the early solar system** as it was first taking shape billions of years ago and tossing ingredients that could have helped seed life on Earth.
 - Significantly, Benu hasn't undergone drastic changes since its formation over billions of years ago and therefore it contains chemicals and rocks dating back to the birth of the solar system. It is also relatively close to the Earth.

Asteroids

- These are **rocky objects that orbit the Sun**, much smaller than planets. They are also called **minor planets**.
- According to NASA, **9,94,383 is the count of known asteroids**, the remnants from the formation of the solar system over 4.6 billion years ago.
- Asteroids are **divided into three classes**:
 - **First**, those found in the **main asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter**, which is estimated to contain somewhere between **1.1-1.9 million asteroids**.
 - The **second group** is that of **trojans**, which are **asteroids that share an orbit with a larger planet**.
 - The **third classification is Near-Earth Asteroids (NEA)**, which have orbits that pass close by the Earth. Those that cross the Earth's orbit are called **Earth-crossers**.
 - More than 10,000 such asteroids are known, out of which over 1,400 are classified as **Potentially Hazardous Asteroids (PHAs)**.
 - **PHAs** are currently defined based on parameters that measure the asteroid's potential to make threatening close approaches to the Earth.
 - Specifically, all asteroids with an Earth **Minimum Orbit Intersection Distance (MOID) of 0.05 au or less** and an **absolute magnitude (H) of 22.0 or less** are considered PHAs.

GS 3 :Economy, Science and Technology,Environment

4)Proposal for Changing Promoters to Person in Control: SEBI

Why in News

Recently, the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has **proposed doing away with the concept of promoters and moving to 'person in control.'**

- It has also suggested **reducing the minimum lock-in periods** post a public issue for promoters and pre-Initial Public Offering (IPO) shareholders.

SEBI

- SEBI is a statutory body **established in April, 1992** in accordance with the provisions of the **Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992.**
- The basic functions of the Securities and Exchange Board of India is **to protect the interests of investors in securities and to promote and regulate the securities market.**

Key Points

- **Promoter:**
 - The meaning of 'promoter' and 'promoter group' is **defined in Companies Act, 2013 and SEBI (ICDR) Regulations, 2018.**
 - Generally, a **promoter conceives an idea for setting-up a particular business** at a given place and performs various formalities required for starting a company.
 - **Promoter group** includes:
 - **Any body corporate** in which a **group of individuals or companies or combinations thereof acting in concert, which hold 20% or more of the equity share capital** in that body corporate **and**
 - Such a group of individuals or companies or combinations thereof **also holds 20% or more of the equity share capital of the issuer** and are also acting in concert.
 - An **issuer** is a legal entity that develops, registers and sells securities to finance its operations.
- **Promoter to Person in Control Concept:**
 - **Need:**
 - The shift is necessitated by the **changing investor landscape in India where concentration of ownership and controlling rights**

- do not vest completely in the hands of the promoters or promoter group because of the emergence of new shareholders such as private equity and institutional investors.
- Investor focus on the quality of board and management has increased, thereby reducing the relevance of the concept of promoter.
- The current definition focuses on capturing holdings by a common group of individuals or persons and often results in capturing unrelated companies with common financial investors.
- **Significance:**
 - This move will lighten the disclosure burden for firms.
 - The changes in nature of ownership could lead to situations where the persons with no controlling rights and minority shareholding continue to be classified as a promoter.
 - By virtue of being called promoters, such persons may have influence over the listed entity disproportionate to their economic interest, which may not be in the interests of all stakeholders.
- **Transition Period:**
 - A three-year transition period for moving from the promoter to person in control concept has been suggested.
- **Reducing the Locking Period of IPOs:**
 - If the object of the issue involves an offer for sale or financing other than for capital expenditure for a project, then the minimum promoters' contribution of 20% should be locked-in for one year from the date of allotment in the IPO.
 - Currently, the lock-in period is three years.

Initial Public Offering

- IPO is the selling of securities to the public in the primary market.
 - Primary market deals with new securities being issued for the first time. It is also known as the new issues market.
 - It is different from the secondary market where existing securities are bought and sold. It is also known as the stock market or stock exchange.
- It is when an unlisted company makes either a fresh issue of securities or an offer for sale of its existing securities or both for the first time to the public.
 - Unlisted companies are companies that are not listed on the stock exchange.

- It is **generally used by new and medium-sized firms** that are looking for funds to grow and expand their business.

IPO-Locking Period

- It is a caveat outlining a **period of time after a company has gone public when major shareholders are prohibited from selling their shares.**

Offer For Sale

- Under this method, **securities are not issued directly to the public but are offered for sale through intermediaries** like issuing houses or stock brokers.
- In this case, a company sells securities enbloc at an agreed price to brokers who, in turn, resell them to the investing public.

5) Beema Bamboo

Why in News

The **Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU)** has designed an 'oxygen park' within its premises at Coimbatore with **Beema Bamboo**.

Key Points

- **About Beema Bamboo:**
 - **Beema or Bheema Bamboo** is a superior clone, selected from **Bambusa balcooa**, a higher biomass yielding bamboo species. This bamboo clone has been developed by the conventional breeding method.
 - This species is **considered to be one of the fastest-growing plants**. It **grows one-and-a-half feet per day** under tropical conditions.
 - It is said to be the **best 'carbon sink'** to mitigate carbon dioxide emissions.

Bambusa balcooa

- **Bambusa balcooa** is a very large, thick-walled, clumping bamboo, growing up to a height of 25 metres, and a thickness of 150 millimetres.
- The **length and strength** of **Bambusa balcooa** make it **a useful material for the construction industry**.
- It is a **drought-resistant species** with low rainfall requirements and can reach yields upwards of 100 metric tons per hectare.
- **Importance:**
 - **Permanent Green Cover:**

- As it is **sterile**, this bamboo does not produce any seed and does not die also for several hundred years and keeps growing without death. As a result, this particular bamboo species is **able to establish permanent green cover**.
- **Does Not Require Replanting for Decades:**
 - Since the plants are produced **through tissue culture**, the **culms grow almost solid and adapt** to different soil and climatic conditions. After every harvest cycle, it re-grows and does not require replanting for decades.
 - A culm is the hollow stem of a grass or cereal plant, especially that bearing the flower.
- **Can Mitigate Global Warming and Climate Change:**
 - As its rhizome and root formation provide a strong foundation, the plant becomes robust against natural forces and plays a major role in mitigating global warming and climate change.
- **Diverse Uses:**
 - **The bamboo's calorific value is equal to that of coal.** Cement industries are buying this bamboo species for their boilers. Bamboo fibre is used by the textile industry for making fabric and garments.
 - Experts from the Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology (VNIT), Nagpur, are working on the **design of crash barriers** made of beema bamboo and coir.

Government Initiatives Related to Bamboo

- **Bamboo Clusters:**
 - Recently, the Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare has virtually inaugurated **22 bamboo clusters in 9 states** viz. Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Assam, Nagaland, Tripura, Uttarakhand and Karnataka.
- **National Bamboo Mission (NBM):**
 - **The restructured NBM** was launched in **2018-19** for the holistic development of the **complete value chain of the bamboo** sector and is being implemented in a **hub (industry) and spoke model**.
 - It aims at **connecting farmers** to markets so as to enable farmer producers to get a ready market for the bamboo grown and to increase the **supply of appropriate raw material** to the domestic industry.
- **Removal of Bamboo from 'Tree' Category:**
 - The **Indian Forest Act 1927** was **amended in 2017** to remove bamboo for the category of trees.
 - As a result, anyone can undertake cultivation and business in bamboo and its products without the need of a felling and transit permission.

Way Forward

- There are about **3 trillion trees** on earth and there is enough space on the planet for planting an additional **1.2 trillion trees** that would have huge benefits in terms of absorbing atmospheric carbon dioxide.
- The **Beema Bamboo** can be an excellent choice for making the earth greener and mitigating climate change.

6) National Technology Day

Why in News

India observes its **National Technology Day on 11th May** every year.

Key Points

- **About:**
 - The day, which was **first observed on 11th May, 1999**, aims to **commemorate the scientific and technological achievements of Indian scientists, engineers.**
 - The day was **named by the former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.**
 - Every year, the **Technology Development Board of India** celebrates the day by **awarding individuals with the National Award for their contribution to science and technology in India.**
 - **Technology Development Board** is a **statutory body of Government of India** functioning under the **Department of Science and Technology.**
 - It **provides financial assistance** to Indian industrial concerns and other agencies, **for commercialization of indigenized technologies or adaptation of imported technologies** for wider domestic applications.
- **2021 Theme:**
 - Science and Technology for a Sustainable Future.
- **Significance:**
 - It is the day India successfully **tested nuclear bombs in Pokhran on 11th May, 1998.**
 - India successfully test-fired its **Shakti-1** nuclear missile in an operation called **Pokhran-II**, also codenamed as **Operation Shakti** which was led by late president **Dr APJ Abdul Kalam.**
 - The nuclear missile was tested at the Indian Army's Pokhran Test Range in Rajasthan. This was the second test which was conducted after Pokhran-I codenamed **Operation Smiling Buddha**, in May 1974.

- On the same day, India performed a successful test firing of the **Trishul Missile (surface to air short range missile)** and had test flown the **first indigenous aircraft - 'Hansa - 3'**.



Prelims Practice Questions

1) “SwasthVayu”, often seen in the news recently, is a BiPAP Non-Invasive ventilator developed by?

- a. CSIR-National Physical Laboratory
- b. CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories
- c. CSIR-Centre for Cellular Molecular Biology
- d. CSIR-Central Scientific Instruments Organisation

Answer : b

Explanation:

- **CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL) Bangalore**, a constituent of lab of CSIR has developed a Non Invasive BiPAP Ventilator, “**Swasth Vayu**” in a record time of 36 days to treat COVID-19 patients.
- BiPAP Non-Invasive ventilator is a microcontroller-based precise closed-loop adaptive control system with a built-in biocompatible “3D printed manifold & coupler” with HEPA filter (Highly Efficient Particulate Air Filter).
- These unique features help to alleviate the fear of the virus spread.
- The major advantage of this machine is that it is simple to use without any specialized nursing, cost effective, compact and configured with majority of indigenous components.
- This is ideal for treating COVID -19 patients in Wards, Make shift Hospitals, dispensaries and home in current Indian COVID 19 scenario.

2) Consider the following statements with respect to “Kalapani region”:

1. It is manned by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP).
2. River Mahakali flows through the region.
3. China has ongoing claims to the Kalapani territory.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Since 1962, Kalapani has been manned by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP).
- River Mahakali, earlier known as river Kali (also known as Kali Ganga in Uttarakhand), flows through Kalapani.
- Nepal has ongoing claims to Kalapani territory, which is controlled by India.

3) Which of the following pairs are correctly matched?

1. Nathu la – Sikkim
2. Lipulekh Pass – Himachal Pradesh
3. Jelep la – Arunachal Pradesh

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Nathu la – Sikkim
- Lipulekh Pass – Uttarakhand
- Jelep la – Sikkim

4) Which of the following organizations have released Conflict and Conservation Report?

- a. UN- Environment Program (UNEP)
- b. World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)
- c. International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- d. Wild Life Conservation Society (WCS)

Answer : c

Explanation:

Conflict and Conservation Report

- It is released by International Union for Conservation of nature (IUCN) release a report titles.

- It focuses on the complex relationships between nature and armed conflict.
- Objective of the report is to help bring the importance of nature conservation into mainstream political and economic decision making.
- Major threats posed by the conflict are as follows

1. Direct killing of wildlife for food
2. Degradation of ecosystems
3. Disruption of conservation efforts

- Key highlights of the report are as follows

1. Armed conflicts were particularly prevalent in some of the world's more biodiverse regions
2. Conflicts were less frequent within the boundaries of natural reserves and other protected areas
3. Degradation of nature was associated with increased risk of conflict

5) Paediatric Task Force is constituted by which one of the following states?

- a. Tamil Nadu
- b. Gujarat
- c. Kerala
- d. Maharashtra

Answer : d

Explanation:

Paediatric Task Force

- Recently, the Maharashtra government has constituted a nine-member committee called Paediatric Task Force.
- The task force has been set up under the chairmanship of Dr Suhas Prabhu in an attempt to brace for the next wave.
- The special paediatric task force will be responsible for procuring medicines for children, paediatric ventilators and building Covid-19 care centres for children.
- It aims to develop a comprehensive plan for treating children affected with Covid-19.
- It will set up more sick new born care units (SNCUs), more ventilators suited for infants and prepare a separate line of medication for them.
- It has recommended setting up fever clinics with paediatricians or trained staff to screen children with Covid symptoms.

6) Which of the following statement(s) is/ are correct with respect to NASA's Artemis mission?

1. It aims to send humans to Mars for exploring "Life on Mars".
2. It will deploy the Star ship lander and launch vehicle for this mission built by Space X organization.

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 : b

Explanation:

NASA's Artemis mission

- The Artemis Program is a United States-led international human spaceflight program launched in 2017 to return humans to the Moon, specifically at the lunar South Pole region, in the mid-2020s.
- It was originally going to happen in 2024, but delays changed that.
- The Artemis programme was initiated by the administration of former President Donald Trump.

SpaceX's Starship

- The Starship is a spacecraft and super-heavy booster rocket designed by SpaceX.
- The spacecraft is meant to act as a reusable transportation system for crew and cargo to the Earth's orbit, Moon and Mars.
- The SpaceX has described Starship as "the world's most powerful launch vehicle" with an ability to carry over 100 metric tonnes to the Earth's orbit.
- The Starship has been under development since 2012 and is a part of Space X's central mission to make interplanetary travel accessible and affordable.
- The Starship system is expected to replace SpaceX's partially reusable Falcon rockets that are currently operational.
- The Starship can deliver satellites further and at lower marginal costs than Falcon vehicles.
- It can ferry both cargo and crew to the International Space Station (ISS).
- It is expected to help carry large amounts of cargo to the Moon, for human spaceflight development and research.

- It is expected to enter Mars's atmosphere at a speed of 7.5 km per second and will be designed to withstand multiple entries.



Mains Practice Questions

1Q. Ordinances though were meant to be temporary, but repromulgation sidesteps this limitation and makes them permanent. Discuss.

Approach

- Start the answer by mentioning the context of the frequent use of ordinance routes
- Mention the associated issues with the repromulgation of ordinance.
- Conclude Suitably.

2Q. One Health concept is ever more relevant as the world is facing a second wave of Covid-19 pandemic. Comment.

Approach

- Start the answer by defining the One health approach
- Mention the need and steps to implement the One Health approach.
- Conclude Suitably.