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GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1. Out of line

Context:

The West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar visited the areas hit by post-poll violence in Cooch Behar.

Details:

- It is opined that this act by the Governor constitutes a **grave transgression of the bounds of constitutional propriety and highlights his disregard for the principle that constitutional heads should not air their differences with the elected regimes in public.**
- Some may believe that the gubernatorial office ought not to be an impediment to the incumbent yielding to the moral urge to condemn incidents of rare enormity. Yet, the larger **principle that the Governor should not offer public comment on situations best handled by the representative regime ought to hold good in all circumstances.**

The governor of a state is a very interesting appointee of our political system. Seen as **part of the checks and balances** the Indian democracy is proud of, the post is also seen as the one that is **often able to exercise authority in contravention of an elected government.**

Role of Governor:

- The governor acts as the **nominal head** whereas the **real power lies with the Chief Ministers of the states and his/her councils of ministers.**
- The governor also acts as an **agent of the central government.**
- Therefore, the **office of governor has a dual role.**
- The primary function of the governor is to **preserve, protect and defend the Constitution and the law as incorporated in his/her oath of office under Article 159 of the Indian Constitution in the administration of State affairs.**

Conclusion:

- Regardless of one's view of a regime's inaction, there should be no departure from the principle that **any advice or warning the Governor wants to give to the elected government ought to be in private and in confidence.**

2. Govt. may notify export refund rates by May end: DGFT Yadav

What's in News?

The **delay in setting the refund rates for taxes paid on exported goods** as per the **Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) scheme** has been **affecting exporters' pricing strategies.**

- The government is yet to release the necessary funds for RoDTEP's implementation as well as to pay outstanding dues on earlier incentive schemes.

RoDTEP scheme:

- The Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products scheme **was announced by the Government of India (GOI) in September 2019.**

Need for RoDTEP Scheme

In 2018, the United States challenged five Indian export subsidy schemes in the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The five schemes were:

1. Merchandise Export from India Scheme (MEIS)
2. Export Oriented Units (EOU)
3. Electronics Hardware Technology Parks (EHTP)
4. Special Economic Zone (SEZ)
5. Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG)

In October 2019, WTO ruled that these schemes are inconsistent with the WTO agreements for providing prohibited export subsidies. The WTO panel recommended to the Indian government that these schemes should be withdrawn.

In response, the Indian government came up with the RoDTEP scheme which is WTO-compliant.

Features of RoDTEP Scheme

The following are the salient features of the RoDTEP Scheme.

- Remission of taxes/ duties/ levies
 - It covers duties and taxes levied at the central, state and local levels that are not reimbursed under any other mechanism. Items that were under the MEIS and the RoSCTL are shifted to the RoDTEP.
- Automated refund system
 - Refunds will be issued to exporters as transferable duty credit/ electronic scrips and maintained in an electronic ledger. This is keeping in line with the Digital India mission.
 - This can be used to pay basic customs duty on imported goods. The credits can also be transferred to other importers.
- Speedy clearance through digitalisation
 - Faster clearance through a digital platform will be facilitated through a monitoring & audit mechanism, with an IT-based risk management system that would physically verify the exporters' records.
- Scheme for all sectors
 - The scheme is applicable across all sectors.

RoDTEP Benefits

Being WTO-compliant, the RoDTEP scheme can make available from the government benefits to the exporters seamlessly.

- The scheme is more exhaustive in that certain taxes that were not covered under the previous scheme are also included in the list, for example, education cess, state taxes on oil, power and water.
- It will add more competitiveness in the foreign markets, with assured duty benefits by the Indian Government.
- It will also help exporters meet international standards and promote business growth.

Taxes to be reimbursed under RoDTEP:

VAT on fuel used in transportation

Mandi Tax

VAT on fuel used in generation of captive power

VAT on fuel used in the farm sector- for farm products only

Embedded SGST paid on inputs such as pesticides, fertilizers, etc. used in production of agricultural goods

Duty on electricity charges

Stamp duty on export documents

Embedded SGST in purchases from unregistered dealers

Embedded SGST on coal used in production of electricity

Embedded SGST on inputs for the transport sector

Embedded CGST paid on inputs such as fertilizers, Central Excise duty on fuel used pesticides, etc. used in production of raw materials in transportation

Embedded CGST and compensation cess on coal used in production of electricity

Embedded CGST in purchases from unregistered dealers

Embedded CGST on inputs for the transport sector

3. Lend a helping hand to children the right way

Context:

The second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic has left many children orphaned and vulnerable in India.

Details:

- Before handing over an orphan child to any agency, family or person it is important to **be aware of the laws that are prevalent and procedures with regard to the care and the protection of orphan children** rather than face legal action for violations later.
- The **non-reporting of such children is also a punishable offence under the JJA** or the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.
- Only once a **child is declared legally free for adoption by the Child Welfare Committee (CWC)**, adoption can be done either by Indian prospective adoptive parents or non-resident Indians or foreigners, in that order.
- Any voluntary or NGO which is not registered as per the requirement of the JJA cannot house children in need of care and protection.

Many options to help

1. **Emergency phone outreach service** managed by the Women and Child Development department's nodal agency, the Childline India Foundation should be used.
 - These Childline units are civil society organisations duly approved by the government.
2. **The district protection officer concerned must be informed.**
 - The contact details can be found on the National Tracking System for Missing and Vulnerable Children portal maintained by the Women and Child Development department.
3. **The nearest police station or its child welfare police officer** who is specially trained to exclusively deal with children either as victims or juvenile delinquents **must be informed.**

Court directives to police:

- Ignorance of the law is not an excuse. If an orphan child is kept by someone without lawful authority, he or she may land themselves in trouble.
- According to the **Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956, the father, and in his absence the mother, is the natural guardian.** Not even a close relative can look after the child without authorisation.
- **The Supreme Court** in Bachpan Bachao Andolan vs Union of India directed all Directors General of Police, in May 2013, **to register a first information report as a case of trafficking or abduction in every case of a missing child.**
- At least **one police officer not below the rank of assistant sub-inspector** in each police station is mandatorily required to undergo **training to deal with children in conflict with the law and in need of care and protection.**
- **Each district** is supposed to have its **special juvenile police unit**, headed by an officer not below the rank of a Deputy Superintendent of Police.

Conclusion:

Article 39 of the Constitution prohibits the tender age of children from being abused. Therefore, orphaned children who have lost both their parents or abandoned or surrendered due to the COVID-19 pandemic must not be neglected and left to face an uncertain future. They must be taken care of by the authorities entrusted with responsibilities under the JJA.

4. Bengal farmers get benefits of PM Kisan scheme

Context:

The farmers in West Bengal received the benefits of **PM Samman Kisan Nidhi (PM KISAN).**

Details:

- About 7 lakh farmers in the State got benefits of the Central scheme where ₹2,000 were transferred to their bank accounts.
- During the day, the Prime Minister released the eighth instalment of over ₹20,000 crore to more than 9.5 crore farmer-beneficiaries under the scheme.

PM KISAN Scheme:

- The **central sector scheme** under the government of India that provides **income support to the farmers and their families** was launched in 2019.

- The scheme initially provided income support to all Small and Marginal Farmers' families across the country, holding cultivable land up to 2 hectares. Its ambit was later expanded w.e.f. 01.06.2019 to **cover all farmer families in the country irrespective of the size of their landholdings.**
- Under the scheme, an amount of **Rs.6000/- per year is transferred in three quarterly instalments of Rs.2000/- directly into the bank accounts of the farmers,** subject to certain exclusion criteria relating to higher-income status.
- The **responsibility of the identification of beneficiaries rests with the State/UT Governments.**

Eligibility to avail benefits under PM-KISAN scheme

Any small or marginal farmer should not fall under the following criteria to be eligible under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana. Below are some of the categories of beneficiaries who are not eligible for benefit under this scheme:

1. Any institutional land-holders.
2. The farmer as well as any member of the family belonging to the following categories:
3. Former and present holders of constitutional posts
4. Former and present Ministers/ State Ministers
5. Former or present members of Lok Sabha/ Rajya Sabha/ State Legislative Assemblies/ State Legislative Councils
6. Former and present Mayors of Municipal Corporations
7. Former and present Chairpersons of District Panchayats.
8. Any serving or retired officers as well as employees under the Central/ State Government Ministries /Offices/Departments.
9. All retired pensioners who get a monthly pension of Rs.10,000/-or more and belonging to the above category.
10. Any individual who paid their income tax in the last assessment year is not eligible under this scheme.
11. Professionals like Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers, Chartered Accountants, and Architects registered with Professional bodies and carrying out profession by undertaking practices.

The farmers eligible under the scheme are required to produce the below-mentioned documents for their verification:

- Citizenship certificate
- Landholding papers
- Aadhaar card
- Bank account details

Advantages of PM-KISAN Scheme

Given below are the advantages and the impact of the PM-KISAN schemes:

- The direct transfer of funds is one of the biggest advantages of this scheme. On December 25, 2020, in the presence of PM Narendra Modi, Rs.18,000 crores were directly transferred to the bank accounts of 9 crore farmers
- All the records related to farmers is registered officially on a digital platform which has made the registration and fund transfer easy. The digitalised records have brought about a new start to this welfare scheme
- This scheme eases liquidity constraints of farmers
- PM-KISAN yojana is a big step towards the Government's initiatives of modernisation of agriculture
- There is no discrimination in choosing the PM-KISAN beneficiaries

5. 21 members of vulnerable tribes infected

What's in News?

With the second wave of COVID-19 sweeping across the rural heartland of Odisha, infections are being reported among the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups:

- Particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTG) (earlier: Primitive 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.**
- In 1973, the **Dhebar Commission** created Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) as a separate category, who are less developed among the tribal groups.
- PVTGs have some **basic characteristics** - they are mostly homogenous, with a small population, relatively physically isolated, social institutes cast in a simple mould, absence of written language, relatively simple technology and a slower rate of change, etc.
- There are **75 PVTGs in India.**

Note:

- **Odisha has among the largest and most diverse tribal populations in the country.**
- Of the 62 tribal groups residing in Odisha, **13 are recognised as PVTGs.**
- According to the 2011 Census, Odisha's share of the country's total tribal population was 9%.

- Tribals constitute 22.85% of the State's population.
- The PVTGs such as **Bonda, Birhor, Chuktia Bhunjia, Didayi, Dongaria Kandha, Hill Kharia, Juang, Kutia Kondh, Lanjia Saora, Lodha, Mankirdia, Paudi Bhuyan and Saora** have been identified on the basis of:
 - Stagnant or diminishing populations.
 - Subsistence level of economy associated with pre-agricultural stages of hunting, food gathering and shifting cultivation.
 - Relative physical isolation.

6. Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances

Why in News

Since the coup in Myanmar, the **United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID)** has received reports of **enforced disappearances from the family members of victims.**

- Many Asian regimes are using **enforced disappearances as a tool to suppress the people.**

Key Points

- **About:**
 - Enforced disappearance occurs when a **person is secretly abducted or imprisoned** by a state or political organization, or by a third party with the authorization, support, of a state or political organization, **followed by a refusal to acknowledge the person's fate and whereabouts**, with the intent of **placing the victim outside the protection of the law.**
 - Enforced disappearances became widely known to the world in the **1970s and the early 1980s during the 'Dirty War' in Argentina.**
 - **Dirty War**, also called **Process of National Reorganization**, was an infamous **campaign waged by Argentina's military dictatorship against suspected left-wing political opponents.**
- **Constituents of Enforced Disappearances:**
 - **Deprivation of liberty** against the will of the person.
 - **Involvement of government officials**, at least by acquiescence.
 - **Refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty** or concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person.
- **Recent Occurrences:**
 - **Myanmar:**
 - The **military is committed to suppressing the people's movement**, and the police are carrying out unimaginable acts of

violence and oppression against those demanding freedom of expression and the restoration of democracy.

- **China:**
 - Under the pretext of re-education to prevent terrorism, **Uyghur minority ethnic group members are forcibly sent to what Chinese authorities call 'vocational education and training centers'**, with no information on their whereabouts.
- **Sri Lanka:**
 - It has experienced more than three decades of **domestic conflict accompanied by various forms of enforced disappearances.**
- **Pakistan and Bangladesh:**
 - Enforced disappearances are **being committed in the name of counter-terrorism measures.**
- **Global Measures:**
 - **United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID):**
 - **About:**
 - In 1980, the **UN Commission on Human Rights** (now replaced with UN Human Rights Council) decided to "establish for a period of one year a working group consisting of five of its members, to serve as experts in their individual capacities, to examine questions relevant to enforced or involuntary disappearances of persons".
 - **Functions:**
 - **Assist Families:**
 - It assists families in determining the fate or whereabouts of their family members who have reportedly disappeared.
 - **Oblige States:**
 - It is entrusted with monitoring the progress of **States in fulfilling their obligations** deriving from the Declaration and to provide to Governments assistance in its implementation.
 - **Involves NGOs:**
 - It draws the attention of Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to different aspects of the Declaration and recommends ways of overcoming obstacles to the realization of its provisions.
 - **International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance in 2006:**
 - To protect the right to be free from enforced disappearances, the international community adopted the International

Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance in 2006.

- This became effective in 2010 and the **Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED)** was established.
- **CED and WGEID coexist side by side and seek to collaborate and coordinate** their activities with a view to strengthen the joint efforts to prevent and eradicate enforced disappearances.
- The number of **participating states is still very low** compared to other treaties.
- Among **63 member states** of the treaty, only eight states from the Asia-Pacific region have ratified or acceded to the treaty.
 - Only four East Asian states – Cambodia, Japan, Mongolia, and Sri Lanka have ratified it.
 - **India has signed but not ratified it.**
- **Relevant Indian Laws:**
 - In India there is **no specific legislation for enforced disappearances** but there are international, constitutional legal protections available for torture, extra judicial killings and forced disappearances such as the **Armed forces and special powers Act, 1958**, Prevention of torture bill, 2017, **Right to Information act 2005** etc.

Way Forward

- Enforced disappearance is a **serious crime that goes against humanity**. The pain and suffering of the family members do not end until they find out the fate or whereabouts of their loved ones.
- **Asian countries should consider their obligations and responsibilities** more seriously and reject a culture of impunity in order to eradicate enforced disappearances.
- The **domestic criminal law systems are not sufficient to deal with the crime of enforced disappearance**. It is a continuous crime that **needs a comprehensive approach to fight against it**.
- The **international community must strengthen its efforts** to eradicate enforced disappearances at the earliest.

7. In COVID storm, the key principles driven home

The article talks about **key measures that could have mitigated the traumatic fallout of the pandemic in India**.

Health care, not coverage:

- The most comprehensive document prepared so far in India, by the high-level expert group appointed by the Planning Commission, submitted in November 2011 concluded that “**progressive strengthening of public facilities**” is the only way to reach medical services to the population as a whole.
- After 2014, **insurance has been a focus** – through Ayushman Bharat.
- However, the **focus has to be strengthening public health facilities** and making that the fundamental way of ensuring a healthy life for its people.

Reason over myth:

- **Science, rationalism and expertise must** have an upper hand over false faith, unscientific claims, misinformation and myth.
- **Public allocations for science** must be increased.
- Respected scientists or public health experts must be encouraged to **educate people at large, give out advice that the public could trust** and on occasion question the policies of the government.
- **Adherence to basic scientific and rational principles** will help people, and the world beat back the disease.

Data integrity, not hesitancy:

- Not recording or diligently sharing data has consequences, for India and the world.
 - In the case of COVID-19, **India’s mortality data are many times lower than what is officially acknowledged.** This is deeply damaging to India’s international standing as a reliable recorder of information.
- Besides, **data-hesitancy** – changing baselines, withholding periodic labour force surveys or consumption survey data, not recording deaths faithfully, **has deep practical implications.**
- **Honest and accurate tracking** will pave the way to **rescue the future with accurate predictions.**

GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology, Environment

8. 186 elephants killed on rail tracks in over 10 years

Context:

According to the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**, a total of 186 elephants were killed after being hit by trains across India between 2009-10 and 2020-21.

Details:

- According to the data furnished by the **Project Elephant Division of the Ministry, Assam accounted for the highest number of elephant casualties on railway tracks (62)**, followed by West Bengal (57), and Odisha (27).

Key measures taken:

- A **Permanent Coordination Committee was constituted** between the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) and the MoEFCC for preventing elephant deaths in train accidents. Among other initiatives undertaken by the Ministry are:
 - **Clearing of vegetation along railway tracks** to enable clear view for loco pilots.
 - **Using signage boards at suitable points to alert loco pilots** about elephant presence.
 - **Moderating slopes of elevated sections of railway tracks.**
 - **Setting up underpass/overpass for safe passage of elephants.**
 - **Regulation of train speed** from sunset to sunrise in vulnerable stretches.
 - **Regular patrolling of vulnerable stretches of railway tracks** by frontline staff of the Forest Department and wildlife watchers.

9. What's Iron Dome system?

Context:

The Iron Dome aerial defence system intercepted a Hamas Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) that crossed from Gaza into Israel.

Iron Dome System:

- Iron Dome is a **multi-mission system capable of intercepting rockets, artillery, mortars and Precision Guided Munitions** like very short-range air defence (V-SHORAD) systems as well as **aircraft, helicopters and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV)** over short ranges of up to 70 km.
- It is an **all-weather system** and can **engage multiple targets simultaneously** and be **deployed over land and sea**.
- The I-DOME is the mobile variant with all components on a single truck and C-DOME is the naval version for deployment on ships.

Genesis:

- The genesis of the Iron Dome dates back to the **2006 Israeli-Lebanon war**, when Hezbollah fired thousands of rockets into Israel.
- The following year, Israel announced that its state-run **Rafael Advance Systems would come up with a new air defence system** to protect its cities and people.
- It was **developed with Israel Aerospace Industries**.
- The Iron Dome was **deployed in 2011**.

How does it work?

- An Iron Dome battery **consists of a battle management control unit, a detection and tracking radar** and a **firing unit** of three vertical launchers, with 20 interceptor missiles each.
- The interceptor missile **uses a proximity fuse to detonate the target warhead in the air**.
- One of the system's important advantages is its **ability to identify the anticipated point of impact** of the threatening rocket, to calculate whether it will fall in a built-up area or not, and to **decide on this basis whether or not to engage it**.

Limitations:

- The system has limitations when it is overwhelmed with a barrage of projectiles.
- Another limitation is the system's **inability to cope with very short-range threats** as estimates put the Iron Dome's **minimum interception range at 5-7 km**.
- Also, the **cost of interception is high**.

10. U.S. slider turtles pose a threat in Northeast

Context:

The Red-eared Sliders are threatening to invade the natural water bodies across the Northeast.

Red-eared Slider



- The red-eared slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) **derives its name from red stripes around the part where its ears would be and from its ability to slide quickly off any surface into the water.**
- It is **native to the U.S. and northern Mexico** and is **popular as a pet.**
- It is a **semiaquatic turtle.**
- They have become an **invasive species in many areas where they outcompete native species.**
- The red-eared slider is included in the **list of the world's 100 most invasive species published by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.**

Concerns:

- The red-eared sliders found in the natural water bodies grow fast, virtually leaving nothing for the native species to eat.
- The red-eared slider has already **affected states such as Karnataka and Gujarat**, where it has been found in 33 natural water bodies.
- More than elsewhere in India, preventing this invasive species from overtaking the Brahmaputra and other river ecosystems in the Northeast is crucial because the **Northeast is home to more than 72% of the turtle and tortoise species in the country.**
- The **Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary** and the **Ugratara temple pond** where red-eared sliders are found are **home to 21 of the 29 vulnerable native Indian species of freshwater turtles and tortoises.**

THE INDIAN EXPRESS

GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1. New Approach for Post-Covid Education

Why in News

Due to a **surge in Covid-19 infections** in the **Second Wave** of infections, the education of students in the entire nation is affected.

Key Points

- **Concerns:**
 - **Availability of Online Education:**
 - Online education was envisioned as an alternative means of spreading education, but it too fails, given the Indian students' conditions.
 - The **availability and affordability of this system poses a barrier.**
 - **While e-education is a privilege for the students from an upper and middle class, it has proved to be a nuisance for students from the lower middle class and people living below the poverty line.**
 - **Long-Term Exposure to Internet:**
 - There are also implications of longer exposure to the internet for these young kids.
 - This may create **impediments to the development of the thinking process** in the younger generation.
 - **Decreasing Analytical Thinking:**
 - The other important question is about the **learning outcomes of online education.**
 - Google is the prominent and only platform to all queries, and as a result of that, **students are not thinking on their own.**
 - Scientific outlook was the key parameter stressed upon since the inception of modern education in India.
 - **Increasing Student Isolation:**
 - Due to the pandemic and lack of physical classroom teaching, a peculiar **feeling of isolation is developing in the minds of students.** That's a very serious issue. The trauma of the second wave will put a deep imprint on the student's mind.

- **Physical interaction and activities have been entirely absent, and that may also be contributing to new problems.**
- **Possible Solutions:**
 - **Use of Infrastructure:**
 - The whole **infrastructure should be fully utilised**, and if necessary, many **more facilities should be invested in** (and created) to impart education.
 - As classroom teaching gives us the opportunity to impart many more things apart from information.
 - **New Content:**
 - Institutions should **contemplate new content generation for each subject** to overcome the absence of classroom teaching within the framework of the existing syllabus.
 - This content would be of a **new type, self-explanatory, and considering the lowest IQ of the class**, it has to be attractive.
 - The content **should produce the same effect on the minds of the students that the best book imparts** on the thinking faculty.
 - **Personal Supervision:**
 - The teachers and non-teaching staff should **visit the locality of the students (in and around the school area)** on a weekly basis to supervise the whole work.
 - They should **take notes on the problems faced by students** in understanding the reading material and also whether things are reaching them on time.
 - **New Evaluation System:**
 - The evaluation should be **based on the capacity of analysis, and the questions** should be framed in such a way that **students need to apply their minds** to answer the questions on each subject.
 - **Prioritizing Vaccination:**
 - In addition, the **government should take the responsibility to vaccinate the whole teaching community** as fast as possible to advance this learning process.
- **Related Government Initiatives for E-Learning:**
 - **E-PG Pathshala:**
 - An initiative of the Ministry of Human Resource Development to provide e-content for studies.
 - **SWAYAM:**
 - It provides for an integrated platform for online courses.
 - **NEAT:**
 - It aims to use **Artificial Intelligence** to make learning more personalized and customized as per the requirements of the learner

- **PRAGYATA:**
 - The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) released guidelines on **digital education** titled PRAGYATA.
 - Under the PRAGYATA guidelines, only 30 minutes of screen time per day for interacting with parents is recommended for kindergarten, nursery and pre-school.
- **National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning:**
 - The NPTEL is a project of MHRD initiated by seven Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT), along with the Indian Institute of Science Bangalore.
 - It was started in 2003 and its aim was to have **web and video courses in engineering, sciences, and management.**

Way Forward

- **Covid-19** has shown the extent to which the Indian system of education exploits inequalities.
- Thus, there is a **need for renewed commitments to the synergy between the private and public education sector.** In this context, there is a **need to make education a common good and digital innovation can help in achieving the feat.**

2. Basava Jayanti: Birth Anniversary of Guru Basaveshwara

Why in News

The Prime Minister of India paid tribute to **Jagadguru Basaveshwara** on the occasion of Basava Jayanthi.

- In November 2015, the Prime Minister of India inaugurated the **statue of Basaveshwara** along the **bank of the river Thames** at Lambeth in London.

Key Points

- **Birth**
 - He was born in Karnataka in 1131 CE.
- **About:**
 - He was an Indian 12th-century Philosopher, Statesman and a social reformer.
 - He was **Lingayat saint** in the Shiva-focussed **Bhakti movement**, and Hindu Shaivite social reformer during the reign of the **Kalyani Chalukya/Kalachuri dynasty.**
 - The Lingayats are a Hindu sect with a wide following in southern India that worships **Shiva as the only deity.**

- He is also known as **Bhakti Bhandari (literally, the treasurer of devotion), or Basaveswara (Lord Basava).**
- **Contribution:**
 - Basavanna spread social awareness through his poetry known as **Vachanaas.**
 - Several important Lingayat works are credited to Basavanna, including Vachana such as the **Shat-sthala-vachana, Kala-jnana-vachana, Mantra-gopya, Ghatna Chakra-vachana and Raja-yoga-vachana.**
 - Basavanna, like **Gautama Buddha**, taught people how to live happily in a rational social order which later came to be known as the **Sharana movement.**
 - The Sharana movement attracted people from all castes, and like most strands of the Bhakti movement, produced a corpus of literature, the vachanas, that unveiled the spiritual universe of the Veerashaiva saints.
 - Basava fought against the inhuman practice of the **caste system**, which discriminated against people based on their birth.
 - The **Anubhava Mantapa** established by Basava laid down the foundation of social democracy.
 - Basava believed that man becomes great not by his birth but by **his conduct** in the society.
 - He taught the dignity of manual labour by insisting on work as worship.
- **Death:**
 - He died in 1167 CE.

Bhakti movement

- The movement probably began in the Tamil region around the **6th and 7th century AD** and achieved a great deal of popularity through the poems of the **Alvars (devotees of Vishnu) and Nayanars (devotees of Shiva)**, the Vaishnavite and Shaivite poets.
- These saints looked upon religion not as a cold formal worship but as a loving bond based upon love between the worshipped and worshipper.
- Originally began in South India in the 9th century with **Shankaracharya** spread over all parts of India and by the 16th century was a great spiritual force to reckon with, especially after the great wave made by Kabir, Nanak and Shri Chaitanya.

3. Report On Global Remittances: World Bank

Why in News

According to the latest edition of the **World Bank's Migration and Development Brief**, despite **Covid-19**, **remittance flows** remained **resilient in 2020**, registering a smaller decline than previously projected.

Key Points

- **Remittance Inflow of India:**
 - **India** being at **top**, received over **USD 83 billion** in remittances in **2020**, a drop of just **0.2 per cent** from the **previous year**, despite a pandemic that devastated the world economy.
 - India's remittances **fell by just 0.2% in 2020**, with much of the decline due to a **17% drop in remittances from the United Arab Emirates**, which offset resilient flows from the United States and other host countries.
 - In **2019**, India had received **USD 83.3 billion** in remittances.
- **Global Remittances**
 - **China** is **second** in terms of global remittances in **2020**.
 - China received **USD 59.5 billion** in remittances in **2020**.
 - **India and China** are followed by **Mexico**, the **Philippines**, **Egypt**, **Pakistan**, **France** and **Bangladesh**.
- **Remittance outflow :**
 - **Remittance outflow** was the maximum from the **United States (USD 68 billion)**, followed by **UAE**, **Saudi Arabia**, **Switzerland**, **Germany**, and **China**.
- **Reason for the Steady Flow of Remittances:**
 - **Fiscal stimulus** that resulted in **better-than-expected economic conditions** in host countries.
 - Shift in flows from **cash to digital** and from informal to formal channels.
 - **Cyclical movements in oil prices** and **currency exchange rates**.

Remittance

- **A remittance is money** sent to another party, usually one in another country.
- The sender is typically an **immigrant** and the **recipient a relative back home**.
- Remittances represent one of the **largest sources of income** for people in **low-income and developing nations**. It often exceeds the amount of **direct investment and official development assistance**.
- Remittances help families **afford food, healthcare, and basic needs**.
- **India is the world's biggest recipient of remittances**. Remittances bolsters India's **foreign exchange reserves** and helps fund its **current account deficit**.

World Bank

- **About**
 - The **Bretton Woods Conference** held in 1944, created the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)** along with the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**.
 - The **IBRD** later became the **World Bank**.
 - The **World Bank Group** is a unique global partnership of **five institutions working for sustainable solutions** that reduce poverty and build shared prosperity in developing countries.
- **Members:**
 - It has **189 member countries**.
 - **India** is also a **member country**.
- **Major reports:**
 - **Ease of Doing Business**.
 - **Human Capital Index**.
 - **World Development Report**.
- **Its Five development institutions:**
 - **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD):** provides loans, credits, and grants.
 - **International Development Association (IDA):** provides low- or no-interest loans to low-income countries.
 - **International Finance Corporation (IFC):** provides investment, advice, and asset management to companies and governments.
 - **Multilateral Guarantee Agency (MIGA):** insures lenders and investors against political risk such as war.
 - **International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID):** settles investment-disputes between investors and countries.

World Bank's Migration and Development Brief

- This is prepared by the **Migration and Remittances Unit, Development Economics (DEC)**- the premier research and data arm of the **World Bank**.
- The brief aims to provide an update on key developments in the area of **migration and remittance flows** and related policies over the **past six months**.
- It also provides **medium-term projections of remittance flows** to developing countries..
- The brief is **produced twice a year**.

4. Covid-19 infections being reported among the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)

- Covid-19 infections are being reported among the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) of Odisha

Key takeaways

- As many as 21 tribals across eight different PVTGs in the State have so far tested positive, including two from the Bonda tribe.
- **Bonda people** live in the highlands of Malkangiri.
- Members of Dongria Kondh, another PVTG, have tested positive in Rayagada district.

Do you know?

- Odisha has among the largest and most diverse tribal populations in the country.
- Of the 62 tribal groups residing in Odisha, 13 are recognised as PVTGs.
- According to the 2011 Census, Odisha's share of the country's total tribal population was 9%.
- Tribals constitute 22.85% of the State's population.
- **PVTGs in the states:** Bonda, Birhor, Chuktia Bhunjia, Didayi, Dongaria Kandha, Hill Kharia, Juang, Kutia Kondh, Lanjia Saora, Lodha, Mankirdia, Paudi Bhuyan and Saora.
- These PVTGs have been identified on the basis of stagnant or diminishing populations, subsistence level of economy associated with pre-agricultural stages of hunting, food gathering and shifting cultivation, and relative physical isolation.

GS 3 :Economy, Science and Technology,Environment

5. Dengue: Prevention And Identification

Why in News

With multiple cities recording a high number of dengue-related cases every year, it is important to know about the disease.

Key Points

- **Dengue:**
 - Dengue is a **mosquito-borne tropical disease** caused by **the dengue virus (Genus Flavivirus)**, transmitted by several species of mosquito within the **genus Aedes**, principally **Aedes aegypti**.
 - This mosquito also transmits **chikungunya, yellow fever and Zika infection**.
 - There are 4 distinct, but closely related, serotypes (separate groups within a species of microorganisms that all share a similar characteristic) of the virus that cause dengue (**DEN-1, DEN-2, DEN-3 and DEN-4**).
- **Symptoms:**
 - Sudden high fever, severe headaches, pain behind the eyes, severe bone, joint, and muscle pain, etc.
- **Diagnosis and Treatment:**
 - Diagnosis of dengue infection is done with a blood test.
 - There is no specific medicine to treat dengue infection.
- **Status of Dengue:**
 - Incidence of dengue has **grown dramatically around the world** in recent decades, with a vast majority of cases under-reported, according to the **World Health Organization (WHO)**.
 - WHO estimates 39 crore dengue virus infections per year, of which 9.6 crore show symptoms.
 - India registered over 1 lakh dengue cases in 2018 and over 1.5 lakh cases in 2019, according to the **National Vector-Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP)**.
 - NVBDCP is the central nodal agency for prevention and control of **six vector borne diseases** i.e. Malaria, Dengue, Lymphatic Filariasis, Kala-azar, Japanese Encephalitis and Chikungunya in India. It works under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- **Controlling Dengue Using Bacteria:**
 - Recently researchers from the **World Mosquito Program** have used mosquitoes infected with **Wolbachia bacteria to successfully control dengue** in Indonesia.
 - **Method:**
 - The scientists infected some mosquitoes with Wolbachia and then released them in the city where they bred with local mosquitoes, until nearly all mosquitoes in the area were carrying Wolbachia bacteria. This is called the **Population Replacement Strategy**.
 - At the end of 27 months, the researchers found that the incidence of dengue was 77% lower in areas where Wolbachia-infected

mosquitoes had been released, as compared to areas without such deployments.

- **Dengue Vaccine:**

- The dengue vaccine CYD-TDV or **Dengvaxia** was approved by the US Food & Drug Administration in 2019, the **first dengue vaccine** to get the regulatory nod in the US.
 - Dengvaxia is basically a **live, attenuated dengue virus** which has to be administered in people of ages 9 to 16 who have laboratory-confirmed previous dengue infection and who live in endemic areas.

6. Violence between Israel- Palestine

Context: The ongoing violence between Israeli forces and Hamas – the worst fighting since 2014 – comes at a time when there seemed to be hope for a genuine easing of tensions in West Asia

What was the reason for violence?

- **Israeli Police Action during Ramzan month:** The immediate provocation for the current conflict appears to have been the action taken by Israeli police and security forces to prevent Palestinians from gathering at the Damascus gate in Jerusalem after Ramzan prayers – a long-standing tradition – in which hundreds of civilians were injured.
- **Hamas Counter:** The action allowed Hamas (largest of several Palestinian militant Islamist groups) to don the mantle of “protector” and the bombs they launched initially killed three Israeli citizens.
- **Disproportionate response by Israeli army:** The Benjamin Netanyahu government’s response was disproportionate: It carried out hundreds of airstrikes in Gaza and reportedly deployed artillery and troops as well.
- Over 100 Palestinians have been killed, at least 27 of them children. Both Hamas and Israel are attempting to use airstrikes and bombs against each other. Residential areas are bearing the brunt of Israeli attacks and there are **reports of rioting.**

Who is benefitting from the violence?

While there are no winners in war, there are certainly some who benefit from it.

- Netanyahu continues to expand the offensive against Hamas at a time when his government – which has been in a minority in the legislature – is on the brink of collapse. This stokes nationalistic feelings and yields political benefits.

- Hamas, too, finds relevance in conflict, in stoking the flames of resentment that are bound to be just under the surface in places like Gaza, where an entire generation has lived through blockades and occupation.

Implications of the recent violence

- **Erodes recent gains:** There was the softening of the hard stance vis a vis diplomatic ties with Israel by several Islamic regimes in the region (Ex: Abraham Accords.) However, the violence is a grave setback for peace in the region.
- **Deteriorating situation:** In the region, it is likely to make it harder for those trying to normalise ties with Israel.
- **Promotes Extreme Positions:** Within Israel and Palestine, it could embolden the maximalist, anti-peace voices.
- **Root problems remain unresolved:** The fundamental question of semi-legal settlements, of the differential rights enjoyed by Palestinians and Israelis, and violence as a means of political expression, remain unaddressed.

India

- India, for its part, has thus far managed to balance its historical commitment to the rights of Palestinians with its growing closeness to Israel.
- Delhi must continue to tread a fine line, without compromising either on its national and strategic interests, or its core humanitarian values.

Prelims Practice Questions

1. Satpada Island is located in which of the following state?

- A Assam
- B Odisha
- C Andaman and Nicobar
- D Karnataka

Answer : B

Explanation

- Satpada Island is located in **Chilika Lake, Odisha**. It is a major attraction because of the **Irrawady dolphins** which are often spotted off the island. **Hence, option B is the correct answer.**

2. The 'Bonn Challenge' is concerned with which of the following issue?

- a) Water scarcity challenges
- b) Climate Change
- c) Air Pollution
- d) Deforestation and Degraded Land

Answer: D

Explanation:

Solution: The Bonn Challenge is a global effort to restore 150 m hectares of deforested and degraded land by 2020 and 350 m hectares by 2030.

Enrich Your Learning:

Bonn Challenge

The Bonn Challenge is a global effort to bring 150 million hectares of the world's deforested and degraded land into restoration by 2020, and 350 million hectares by 2030. It was launched in 2011 by the Government of Germany and IUCN, and later endorsed and extended by the New York Declaration on Forests at the 2014 UN Climate Summit. It is a practical means of realizing many existing international commitments, including the CBD Aichi Target 15, the UNFCCC REDD+ goal, and the Rio+20 land degradation neutrality goal. Bonn Challenge has the underlying approach known as forest landscape restoration (FLR) approach.

Forest landscape restoration (FLR)

Forest landscape restoration (FLR) is the ongoing process of regaining ecological functionality and enhancing human well-being across deforested or degraded forest

landscapes. Besides only planting, FLR is restoring a whole landscape to meet present and future needs and to offer multiple benefits and land uses over time. FLR aims to restore ecological integrity at the same time as improving human well-being through multifunctional landscapes.

3. Which one of the following case established the Right to Livelihood as part of the Right to Life?

- a) Maneka Gandhi vs. Union of India
- b) Justice K.S. Puttuswamy vs. Union of India
- c) Olga Tellis vs Bombay Municipal Corporation
- d) Vishakha vs. the State of Rajasthan

Answer: C

Explanation

- The judgment in the Olga Tellis vs Bombay Municipal Corporation (1985) case established the Right to Livelihood as part of the Right to Life under Article 21 of the Constitution of India.

Enrich Your Learning:

Olga Tellis vs Bombay Municipal Corporation (1985)

The judgment in the case established the Right to Livelihood as part of the Right to Life.

According to judgement:

The sweep of the Right to Life, conferred by Article 21 is wide and far reaching. **'Life' means something more than mere animal existence.** It does not mean merely that life cannot be extinguished or taken away as, for example, by the imposition and execution of the death sentence, except according to procedure established by law. That is but one aspect of the Right to Life. An equally important facet of that right is the right to livelihood because **no person can live without the means of living, that is, the means of livelihood.**

4) What is the purpose of the National Register of Citizens (NRC)?

- a. To identify native and indigenous tribes and distinguish them from outsiders
- b. To document all the legal citizens so that the illegal immigrants can be identified
- c. To facilitate rehabilitation of those facing religious persecution in neighbouring countries

d. None of the above

Answer: b

Explanation:

- The main purpose of the National Register of Citizens is the identification of illegal immigrants.
- The objective of the introduction and updating of the NRC in Assam was the identification of the illegal immigrants in Assam who had migrated to Assam from Bangladesh during the 1971 war with Pakistan.

5) Which of the following is the UN theme for the World Water Day 2020?

- Leaving No One Behind
- Better Water, Better Jobs
- Water and Climate Change
- Water and Sustainable Development

Answer: c

Explanation:

- The UN theme for Water Day 2020 was '**Water and Climate Change**'.

6) Which of the following is/are correctly matched?

- Cheraw: Mizoram**
- Yakshagana: Andhra Pradesh**
- Koodiyattam: Kerala**

Choose the correct option:

- 1 only
- 2 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 2 and 3 only

Answer: c

Explanation:

Cheraw dance is a traditional cultural dance performed in Mizoram, India, consisting of mostly six to eight people holding pairs of bamboo staves on another horizontally placed bamboo on the ground. Yakshagana is a traditional Indian theatre form practised predominantly in the coastal regions of Karnataka.

Koodiyattam, also kutiyattam, is a traditional performing art form in the state of Kerala.

Mains Practice Questions

1Q. Discuss how the policies of Jawaharlal Nehru helped in the nation-building and post-independence consolidation of India.

Approach

- Start the answer by briefly explaining the challenges faced by the newly independent India.
- Discuss Nehru's role in post independence consolidation and nation building.
- Conclude Suitably.

2Q. Citizen initiatives to fight corruption come from an active social consciousness. Discuss.

Approach

- Start the answer by mentioning the ethical dimension of corruption.
- Mention measures that can promote public participation in anti-corruption drives.
- Conclude Suitably.