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**GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations**

**1. First Human Case of H10N3 Bird Flu**

**Why in News**

Recently, **China** has reported the **first case of human infection with the H10N3 strain of bird flu** in Jiangsu province.

**Key Points**

- **H10N3 is a subtype of the Influenza A virus which is commonly known as the bird flu virus.**
- **It is a low pathogenic, or relatively less severe, strain of the virus in poultry and the risk of it spreading on a large scale is very low.**
  - Among animals, it can **spread through respiratory droplets**, similar to **flu and Covid-19**.
- **The strain is not a very common virus, only about 160 isolates of the virus have been reported in the past 40 years (till 2018), that too, mostly in wild birds or waterfowl in Asia and some parts of North America.**
  - **None** had been detected **in chickens as of now**.
- **There are many different strains of avian influenza in China and some sporadically infect people**, generally those working with poultry.
  - However, there have been **no significant numbers of human infections with bird flu since the H7N9 strain** killed around 300 people **during 2016-2017**.

**Bird Flu**

- **About:**
  - **Bird flu**, also known as **Avian influenza (AI)**, is a highly contagious viral disease affecting several species of **food-producing birds** (chickens, turkeys, quails, guinea fowl, etc.) as well as **pet birds and wild birds**.
  - Occasionally **mammals, including humans**, may contract avian influenza.
- **Types of Influenza Viruses:**
  - Influenza viruses are grouped into three types; **A, B, and C**.

- **Only type A** is known to **infect animals** and is **zoonotic**, meaning it can also infect humans.
  - **Avian influenza virus subtypes** include A(H5N1), A(H7N9), A(H9N2) and A(H10N3).
- **Type B and C** **mostly infect humans** and typically cause mild disease.
- **Classification:**
  - **Influenza viruses** are classified into subtypes based on **two surface proteins, Hemagglutinin (HA) and Neuraminidase (NA)**.
    - For example, a virus that has an HA 7 protein and NA 9 protein is designated as subtype H7N9.
  - **Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) A(H5N1)** virus occurs mainly in birds and is highly contagious among them.
  - **HPAI Asian H5N1** is especially deadly for poultry.
- **Impact:**
  - Avian Influenza outbreaks can lead to devastating consequences for the country, particularly the poultry industry.
  - Farmers might experience a high level of mortality in their flocks, with rates often around 50%.
- **Prevention:**
  - Strict **biosecurity measures** and **good hygiene** are essential in protecting against disease outbreaks.
- **Eradication:**
  - If the infection is detected in animals, a **policy of culling infected and contact animals** is normally used in an effort to rapidly contain, control and eradicate the disease.
- **India's Status:**
  - **Fresh cases of bird flu** were reported in different states of India **between December 2020-January 2021** causing alarm across the country.
  - **Previously in 2019**, India was **declared free from Avian Influenza (H5N1)**, which had also been **notified to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)**.
    - The **OIE** is an intergovernmental organisation responsible for improving animal health worldwide. It is headquartered in Paris, France.

## 2. Cabinet gives nod to Model Tenancy Act

### Context:

The Union Cabinet approved the Model Tenancy Act.

### Details:

- The model Act, if passed by the States and UTs, would **prescribe the norms for lease agreements, deposits, dispute handling** and other aspects of rental properties.
- States and Union Territories **can adopt the Model Tenancy Act by enacting fresh legislation** or they can **amend their existing rental laws**.
- **Separate rent authorities, courts and tribunals** will be set up in districts to protect the interests of both the owner and the tenant.

#### Significance:

- It will help **overhaul the legal framework** with respect to rental housing across the country, which would help **spur its overall growth**.
- It will enable the **institutionalisation of rental housing** by shifting it towards the formal market.
  - Through this, vacant houses could be unlocked for rental housing purposes.
- It will enable the **creation of adequate rental housing stock** for all the income groups thereby **addressing the issue of homelessness**.
- It is expected to give a fillip to **private participation in rental housing as a business model** for addressing the huge housing shortage.

### 3. Close the vaccination gap, in global lockstep

#### Vaccination apartheid:

- There is a **huge vaccination gap between advanced economies and developing countries**.
  - While the advanced countries like the U.S. have been able to vaccinate a substantial proportion of their adult population and hold large stockpiles of vaccines, only 2.1% of Africans have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by the end of May 2021 and continue to be exclusively dependant on imports for their vaccination programmes.
- There is an urgent need to address this issue as doing so is not only morally right but would also be in everyone's interest.

#### Negative impact of vaccination apartheid:

#### Increasing mutations:

- The global vaccination programme is progressing at a very low pace and at the current pace, the whole world will not be vaccinated before 2023. The lack of a fully vaccinated world will only aid the **multiplication of variants which could be not only more contagious and deadly but would also render the existing vaccines ineffective**.

### **Economic disruption and its impact:**

- The lack of an adequately vaccinated population will lead to periodic spikes in cases necessitating lockdowns and restrictions on movement. These lockdowns are **disrupting economic activity and people's livelihood, thus pushing millions into poverty**. If the vaccination gap persists, it risks reversing the trend in recent decades of declining poverty.
- It will also widen the existing inequalities between the haves and the have nots.

### **Widening existing inequalities:**

- The economic disruption caused by the pandemic while affecting all countries will be **more severe on developing countries** since the advanced countries can rely on existing social security mechanisms and economic policy levers to limit the impact of the pandemic on their citizens. If the vaccination gap persists, it could lead to the widening of global inequalities.

### **Fuel geopolitical tensions:**

- The economic turmoil will invariably increase geopolitical tensions.

### **Efforts at ensuring universal vaccination:**

#### **EU:**

- In 2020, the EU supported the research and development of vaccines on a large scale and contributed significantly to the new generation of mRNA vaccines.
- The EU has been exporting large volumes of vaccines and contributing substantially to the vaccine roll-out in low-income countries even as it has undertaken vaccination of its own population.
- The EU with its member states and financial institutions has also been donating vaccines to neighbours in need. It also aims to donate more vaccines to low- and middle-income countries before the end of 2021.
- The EU has also been the main contributor to the **COVAX facility**, with around one-third of all COVAX doses delivered so far having been financed by the EU.
- The European industrial partners have committed to deliver 1.3 billion doses of vaccines before the end of 2021 to low-income countries at no-profit, and to middle-income countries at lower prices.

### India:

- India's "Vaccine Maitri" is an example of global solidarity on ensuring universal vaccination.
- Vaccine Maitri is a humanitarian and commercial initiative undertaken by the Indian government to provide COVID-19 vaccines to countries around the world.

### Multilateral institutions:

- The **International Monetary Fund** has proposed a \$50 billion plan to vaccinate 40% of the world population in 2021 and 60% by mid-2022.

### Recommendations:

- Countries with the requisite knowledge and means should **increase their production capacities**, so that they can both vaccinate their own populations and export more vaccines.
- International organizations should facilitate the **transfer of knowledge and technology**, so that more countries can produce vaccines.
- Available **flexibilities within the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement framework of the World Trade Organization** should be made use of. Avenues like **voluntary licensing** should be encouraged and suitably incentivized. If that fails, other avenues like **compulsory licensing** should be activated.
- All countries must avoid restrictive measures that affect vaccine supply chains. The countries must **avoid resorting to "vaccine nationalism"** and should instead focus on closely coordinated multilateral action for the benefit of all. There is the **need for global multilateral action** to increase the production of vaccines and accelerate the roll-out worldwide as noted by the G20 leaders at the recently held Global Health Summit in Rome.

### Conclusion:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has reiterated the fact that **health is a global public good**.
- The common global COVID-19 vaccine action to close the vaccination gap must be the first step toward genuine global health cooperation, as foreseen by the **Rome Declaration** recently adopted at the Global Health Summit.
- Universal vaccination of the world population is the only way to end the current pandemic.

### Additional information:



### Rome Declaration:

- The Rome Declaration was adopted at the **Global Health Summit 2021**.
- The Global Health Summit was organised by Italy in its role as president of the G20 in partnership with the European Commission.
- The Rome Declaration is made up of 16 mutually agreed principles. These principles aim at **guiding joint action to prevent future health crises and to build a safer, fairer and more equitable and sustainable world**.

## 4. The surprise visitor in Walong

### What's in News?

The rare subspecies of the **male Koklass pheasant** called the **Pucrasia macrolopha meyeri** has been photographed for the first time in India.

### Koklass pheasant:

- **Koklass pheasant** is described as a **resident bird of the Western Himalayas**.
- They are **not known for migration** and are essentially residential birds of mid-altitude dense forests in the Himalayas.
- Of the **nine subspecies** identified across the world, **four are found in the states of Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh** in India.
- The male subspecies – meyeri – had not been recorded outside China and Tibet.
  - The bird has a **distinctive golden ring** and its **emerald green head distinguishes it from the female**.
- The bird has been declared extinct in Tibet.
- The **golden collar is not seen in the other subspecies found in India**.

### Other rare sightings in the Northeast:

- Of the 1,293 species of birds, over 900 are found in the Northeast parts of India.
- The rare **Mandarin duck** showed up after a century in **Assam's Maguri Motapung wetland** in February 2021 and was also spotted at **Siikhe lake, Ziro in Arunachal Pradesh**.
- In January 2021, the rare **Indian golden oriole** was spotted in Assam.
- A pair of **black-necked cranes** was also sighted on the outskirts of the **Panbari range of Manas National Park**, for the first time in Assam.

## 5. Remembering the Tulsa race massacre 100 years later

### Context:

The U.S. President Joe Biden officially recognised one of the **worst incidents of violent racial hate** in the country's modern history – the **Tulsa Race Massacre of May-June 1921**.

### **Tulsa:**

- Tulsa was the affluent, predominantly **African American neighbourhood** of Greenwood, **founded by descendants of slaves**.
  - It had earned a reputation as the “Black Wall Street” of the U.S.
- Tulsa was especially known for being an **unofficial sanctuary city for African Americans** suffering the consequences of harsh segregation in pre-civil rights America.

### **Tulsa Race Massacre:**

- There were **widespread killings and damage to property** in Tulsa, Oklahoma, **targeting relatively well-to-do African Americans** by rampaging **white mobs**.
- The lethal violence resulted in the **deaths of hundreds**, bodily injury to thousands and millions of dollars of **damage to the homes and neighbourhoods burned down**.
- Survivors, fearing reprisals had to hold on with an elaborate attempt to **cover up the massacre and protect the perpetrators**.
- For years, **the massacre was barely mentioned** in government circles, and in newspapers and textbooks.
- The **Tulsa “Race Riot” Commission** was formed to investigate the events in 1997 and officially released a report in 2001.
- The U.S President has now **recognised the massacre**. By doing so, he became the **first sitting American head of state to recognise the incident**.

### **Way Forward:**

- This gives an opportunity to introspect the policy actions that have sought to bridge **the racial discord that continues to haunt American society**.
- The greater challenge for Mr. Biden's government is to take a step beyond the question of reparations to survivors and **address the root causes of disparity that continue to plague American society**.
- The President has planned to address racial discrimination:
  - In the housing market by issuing new rules on fair housing practices and curbing inequities in the home appraisal process.
  - By directing more federal spending to small and minority-owned businesses.



- By closing the wealth gap between the African American community and others through new initiatives focused on economic opportunities for minorities.

## 6. Palestine flays India's abstention

### Context:

Palestine has expressed concern on India's abstention on a resolution in the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to set up a permanent commission to probe abuses in Occupied Palestinian Territory including East Jerusalem and in Israel.

### Background:

- India abstained in the voting on the resolution at the UNHRC that came up against the backdrop of the latest round of conflict between Israel and the Gaza strip, the coastal part of the Palestinian territories.
- The resolution was titled "Ensuring respect for international human rights law and humanitarian law in Occupied Palestinian Territory including East Jerusalem and in Israel".
- The resolution is aimed at securing Israel's compliance with international human rights.
- India has maintained that a two-state solution to equal sovereign rights is the way forward to resolve the century-old crisis.

### Details:

- Palestine said that India's abstention stifles international efforts to protect the human rights of the Palestinian people.
- It said that India missed an opportunity to join the international community at the turning point on the path to justice and peace.

### Note:

- The resolution was adopted with the vote of 24 members.
- The passing of the resolution led to the setting up of an independent commission of inquiry to investigate the violation of international law by Israel.

## GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology, Environment

### 7. 'Raise ethanol blending in surplus States'

#### Context:

The Indian Sugar Mills' Association (ISMA) has said that to **achieve the target of 8-8.5% ethanol blending**, it is important to increase the blending level to at least 12% in surplus States and adjoining ones.

#### Ethanol:

- Ethanol is a biofuel and a common by-product of biomass left by agricultural feedstock such as corn, sugarcane, hemp, potato, etc.
- It is produced mainly from molasses, a byproduct of sugar manufacture.
- Ethanol is basically alcohol of 99%-plus purity, which can be used for blending with petrol.
- Ethanol being a less polluting fuel will cut down carbon emissions.

#### Benefits of Ethanol blending:

- India is 83% dependent on imports for meeting its oil needs. Doping petrol with ethanol will cut down the import requirement.
- Ethanol being a less polluting fuel will cut down carbon emissions.
- Ethanol is a green fuel & its blending with petrol also saves the country's foreign exchange.
- The move to raise ethanol content in petrol will also provide an alternate source of revenue for sugar mills and help them clear farm dues.

#### Steps taken by the government:

- To encourage sugar mills to divert excess sugarcane to produce ethanol for blending with petrol, the government has allowed the production of ethanol from B-Heavy Molasses, sugarcane juice, sugar syrup and sugar; and has also fixed the remunerative ex-mill price of ethanol derived from these feed-stocks.
- Sugar mills having distillation capacity have been advised to divert B-heavy molasses and sugar syrup for producing ethanol to utilize their capacity to maximum extent; and those sugar mills which do not have distillation capacity should produce B-Heavy molasses and should tie up with distilleries which can produce ethanol from B-Heavy molasses.
- States have also been requested to ensure smooth movement of molasses & ethanol.

## 8. HC dismisses Juhi Chawla's plea on 5G

### Context:

The Delhi High Court has termed the petition filed by actor Juhi Chawla against the roll-out of 5G technology in India as **defective and done for media publicity**.

### Background:

- The actor had moved the Delhi High Court **against the rollout of 5G technology** in India.
- In her plea, she alleged that **no person, animal, bird, insect & plant will be able to avoid exposure to levels of RF radiation** that are 10 to 100 times greater than what exists today.
- The plea also demanded that the department concerned should certify that 5G technology is safe for humans and also animals and birds.
- This recent lawsuit by the actor and environmental activist has **rekindled the debate on the possible harmful effect of 5G on humans**.

### What is 5G technology, and how is it different?

- 5G stands for **5th generation mobile network**.
- It is a new global wireless standard after 1G, 2G, 3G, and 4G networks.
- The new network has been designed for **enhanced connectivity across devices** – cell phone or an IoT device in a smart home.
- The wireless technology is **meant to deliver much higher data transfer speeds** than what was possible on 4G. Also, **5G uses higher frequency waves than earlier mobile networks**.
- Higher frequency means a shorter wavelength.
  - 5G waves are able to travel a shorter distance than 4G waves.
  - Therefore, an extensive network of 5G requires more ground-based transmitters.

### What are the concerns?

- 5G emits its own electromagnetic radiation like all other radio waves. The concern is that these radiations can be harmful to humans and other organisms.
- Besides, critics and studies claim that the **increased number of transmitters** will further **increase exposure** to the radiation, potentially **impacting a much wider number of people and animals**.

### Arguments against the claims:

- Though the studies are accurate in their own regard, **none of them conclusively points out an impact to humans from Radio Frequency Radiations.**
- While the case that 5G is harmful to humans is not as strong, there are concrete understandings of radiations that suggest **no such connection is possible.**
  - Radio wave band that is used for mobile phone networks (including 5G) is **non-ionising**. Such radio waves **lack sufficient energy to cause cellular damage** by breaking DNA apart.

#### Existing guidelines:

- **Higher energy radiation** levels such as medical x-rays and gamma rays are known to **have health risks with extended exposure.**
  - For such energy waves, there are **strict advisory limits for exposure.**
- Guidelines on the use of radio waves are also in place, and the 5G spectrum falls easily under those limits.

#### 9. A far-reaching tax measure

##### Context:

- The **U.S. proposal to impose a global minimum tax on foreign income earned by U.S. corporations** aimed to disincentivise American companies from moving their commercial functions out of the U.S. due to the increase in the U.S. corporate tax rate.

##### Background:

##### Base erosion and profit shifting:

- Base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS) refers to corporate tax planning strategies used by multinationals to **“shift” profits from higher-tax jurisdictions to lower-tax jurisdictions, thus “eroding” the “tax base” of the higher-tax jurisdictions.**
- Such BEPS strategies aim at **exploiting gaps and mismatches in tax rules** to avoid paying tax.
- Developing countries suffer from BEPS disproportionately. BEPS practices cost countries USD 100-240 billion in lost revenue annually.
- Working together within **OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework on BEPS**, over 135 countries and jurisdictions are collaborating on the implementation of 15 measures to tackle tax avoidance, improve the coherence of international tax rules and ensure a more transparent tax environment.

### Addressing tax challenges posed by digitalization of the economy:

- As part of its global efforts to address the challenge posed by BEPS, in May 2019, the Inclusive Framework agreed to a Programme of Work for Addressing the Tax Challenges of the Digitalisation of the Economy.
- The Programme of Work is divided into two pillars:
  - **Pillar One addresses the allocation of taxing rights between jurisdictions** and considers various proposals for new profit allocation and nexus rules based on the concepts of “significant economic presence”.
  - **Pillar Two (also referred to as the “Global Anti-Base Erosion” or “GloBE” proposal)** calls for the development of a coordinated set of rules to address ongoing risks from structures that allow MNEs to shift profit to jurisdictions where they are subject to no or very low taxation.

### Global minimum corporate tax:

- The Pillar Two proposal aims to provide **jurisdictions with the right to “tax back”** where other jurisdictions have either not exercised their primary taxing right or have exercised it at low levels of effective taxation and in this direction recommends **a global minimum corporate tax**.
- This move intends to achieve minimum effective taxation of more than 10%.

### Details:

- The recent U.S. proposal is similar to Pillar Two, except for the rate of the effective minimum tax. While the OECD was considering a 10-12% rate, the U.S. has proposed a 21% rate.
- The U.S. proposal indicates that the U.S. is pushing the OECD to swiftly achieve consensus on the global minimum tax rate, in the absence of which the U.S. proposes to apply its domestic law version of Pillar Two at a rate of 21%.

### Significance of global minimum corporate tax:

#### Curtail tax evasion:

- A global corporate minimum tax will help curb tax base erosion and profit shifting.
  - Some of the world’s biggest corporations, including digital giants such as Apple, Alphabet and Facebook, as well as major corporations such as Nike and Starbucks **pay very low effective rates of tax**. These companies use their subsidiaries to shift profits out of major markets into low-tax countries.

### Impetus to more sustainable reforms:

- A global minimum corporate tax will neutralize the impact of tax incentives and ensure that companies choose to be situated in a particular country based on other commercial benefits.
- With tax incentives neutralised, countries may have to compete on other factors like **better regulatory regimes, ease of doing business, access to global talent**, among others. Hence the countries will be incentivized to undertake such more meaningful and sustainable reforms.

### Concerns associated with global minimum corporate tax:

#### Against the autonomy of nations:

- The calls for a global minimum corporate tax have been criticized by countries such as Ireland, which argue that this provision **goes against the principle of fiscal autonomy**. The proposal infringes upon the tax sovereignty of nations.

#### Render small economies uncompetitive:

- The global minimum tax rates would also **render the smaller jurisdictions and economies incapable of competing with larger economies**. In a world where there are income inequalities across geographies, a minimum global corporation tax rate could **crowd out investment opportunities for developing economies and play to the advantage of advanced economies**.
- They argue that the fight against unfair tax competition envisioned through the global minimum corporate tax has become a **fight against competitive tax systems which could actually prove beneficial for economic growth**.

#### Scope for disagreements and implications:

- The U.S. push for a global minimum corporate tax at a 15% rate can cause international disagreements. Several countries have taken a different approach to the rate of global minimum tax. While France and Germany have expressed support, the EU has raised concerns regarding the high rate proposed by the United States.
- The disagreements on tax allocations may actually **lead to a tax-related trade war or entrenchment of unilateral levies** which will only further harm both global and national economies already struggling amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Impact on India:



- India has been part of the Pillar Two discussions and has not objected in principle to the proposal.

#### Positive:

- The proposal will help **increase India's tax revenues** since the proposal would also cover offshore structures set up by Indian companies.
  - Start-ups and large Indian conglomerates commonly use offshore structures for conducting global operations. Revenue from such operations is often retained offshore and not repatriated to India.
  - The State of Tax Justice report of 2020 notes that **India loses over \$10 billion in tax revenue due to the use of offshore structures**, particularly through investments made by Indian residents through Mauritius, Singapore and the Netherlands.

#### Negative:

- **The lower tax rate tool often used by India to attract foreign investment into India may become ineffective** with the introduction of a global minimum corporate tax rate.

## **GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations**

### **1. Model Tenancy Act**

#### **Why in News**

The Union Cabinet has approved the **Model Tenancy Act** to be sent to the States and Union Territories to **enact legislation or amend laws on rental properties**.

- The **draft Act** had been published by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** in 2019.

#### **Key Points**

- **Some Provisions:**
  - **Written Agreement is Mandatory:**
    - Mandatory for there to be a **written agreement** between the property owner and the tenant.
  - **Establishes Independent Authority and Rent Court:**
    - Establishes an independent authority in every state and UT for **registration of tenancy agreements** and even a separate court to **take up tenancy related disputes**.
  - **Maximum Limit for Security Deposit:**
    - Limit the **tenant's advance security deposit to a maximum of two months rent** for residential purposes and to a **maximum of six months** for non-residential purposes.
  - **Describes Rights and Obligations of both Landlord and Tenant:**
    - The **landlord** will be responsible for activities like structural repairs except those necessitated by damage caused by the tenant, whitewashing of walls and painting of doors and windows, etc.
    - The **tenant** will be responsible for drain cleaning, switches and socket repairs, kitchen fixtures repairs, replacement of glass panels in windows, doors and maintenance of gardens and open spaces, among others.
  - **24-hour Prior Notice by the Landlord:**
    - A landowner will have to give **24-hour prior notice before entering the rented premises** to carry out repairs or replacement.
  - **Mechanism for Vacating the Premises:**

- If a landlord has **fulfilled all the conditions** stated in the rent agreement - giving notice etc.- and the **tenant fails to vacate the premises** on the expiration of the period of tenancy or termination of tenancy, the landlord is **entitled to double the monthly rent for two months** and four times after that.
- **Coverage:**
  - It will **apply** to premises let out for **residential, commercial or educational use**, but **not for industrial use**.
  - It **also won't cover** hotels, lodging houses, inns, etc.
  - It will be applied prospectively and **will not affect existing tenancies**.
- **Need:**
  - As per **Census 2011**, nearly **1.1 crore houses** were lying vacant in the country and making these houses available on rent will complement the vision of '**Housing for All**' by 2022.
- **Significance:**
  - The authority will provide a **speedy mechanism in resolving disputes** and other related matters.
  - It will help overhaul the **legal framework** with respect to rental housing across the country.
  - It will enable creation of **adequate rental housing stock** for all the income groups thereby addressing the **issue of homelessness**.
  - It will enable **institutionalisation of rental housing** by gradually shifting it towards the formal market.
  - It is expected to give a **fillip to private participation in rental housing** as a business model for addressing the huge housing shortage.
- **Challenges:**
  - The Act is **not binding on the states** as **land and urban development remain state subjects**.
  - Like in the case with **RERA** (Real Estate (Regulation and Development Act), the fear is that states may choose not to follow guidelines, diluting the essence of the Model Act.

## 2. New Pension Rules for Civil Servants

### Why in News

Recently, the **Central Government has amended its pension rules** putting new restrictions on officials of intelligence and security organisations after retirement.

- The government has **amended Rule-8(3)(a) of the CCS (Central Civil Services) Pension Rules-1972**.
- The Centre has notified **Central Civil Services (Pension) Amendment Rules, 2020**.

## Key Points

- **Background:**
  - The said rules were **first drafted in 1972** and have been **amended 47 times**.
  - In **2008**, **Rule 8** pertaining to “**pension subject to future good conduct**” was first **amended** by inserting the condition that **retired intelligence and security officials will not publish any material that affects the “sovereignty and integrity of India, the security, strategic, scientific or economic interests of the State, or relation with a foreign State or which would lead to incitement of an offence”**.
- **Amended Rule-8(3)(a):**
  - **Officials retired from certain intelligence or security establishments (included under 2<sup>nd</sup> schedule of RTI Act) will not be allowed to write anything about their organisation** without permission.
    - The **Second Schedule of the Right to Information (RTI) Act 2005** covers **26 organisations** including the Intelligence Bureau, R&AW, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, CBI, NCB, BSF, CRPF, ITBP and CISF.
  - Requires the **retired officials to sign an undertaking - Form 26 - and declare that without the prior approval of the competent authority they will not publish any information** related to the “domain of the organisation and obtained by virtue of my working in the said organisation”.
  - The **amendment expands the scope** to include any information related to “domain of the organisation, any reference or information about any personnel and his designation, and expertise or knowledge gained by virtue of working in that organisation.”
- **Purpose of the Amendment:**
  - The amendment was in process for around four years after the **Committee of Secretaries recommended it**.
  - The move was **prompted by concerns** arising out of the fact that some high-profile retired officers had written books on their tenure, and some of these had revealed information.
- **Implications:**
  - This amendment to Rule 8 means that **pension can be withheld or withdrawn if the pensioner disobeys the rules**.
  - This change in rules is **likely to impact retired officials of security and intelligence organisations who write in newspapers** and magazines or author books on their former organisations and experiences.

## Rules Pertaining to Government Servants

- **Rule 9 of CCS Pension Rules-1972 (Departmental Proceeding after Retirement):**
  - It says that if any government official has **committed any misconduct and retires**, he or she **may face departmental proceedings only until four years** after the date of committing that misconduct.
- **Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964:**
  - It puts **some restrictions on Government Employees while in Service.**
    - **Rule 7:** It restricts government servants from resorting to or abetting any form of **strike or coercion.**
    - **Rule 8:** It restricts them, except with government sanction, from **owning or participating in the editing or management of any newspaper** or other periodical publication or electronic media.
    - **Rule 9:** It restricts a government servant from **making statements of fact or opinion** in writing or in a telecast or a broadcast “which has the effect of an **adverse criticism of any current or recent policy** or action of the Central Government or a State Government”.
  - **Restriction on Political Activity while in Service:**
    - The **Conduct Rules bars government servants** from being associated with any political party or organisation, and from taking part or assisting any political activity.
    - An **amendment in 2014** said, “Every government employee shall at all times maintain political neutrality” and “commit himself to and uphold the supremacy of the Constitution and democratic values”
- **Rule 26, All India Services (Death-cum-Retirement Benefits Rules) 1958 (Employment after Retirement):**
  - It **restricts a pensioner from any commercial employment for one year** (until 2007 it was 2 years) after retirement, except with previous sanction of the central government.
  - **Non-compliance** can lead the central government declaring that the employee “shall not be entitled to the whole or such part of the pension and for such period as may be specified”.
- **Joining Politics after Retirement:**
  - There is **no rule** to stop government servants from joining politics after their retirement.
  - In 2013, the **Election Commission** had written to the **DoPT** (Department of Personnel and Training) and **Law Ministry**, suggesting a **cooling-off period** for bureaucrats joining politics after retirement, but it was rejected.

- The Legislative Department of the Ministry of Law advised “that **any such restriction** (against officials joining politics or contesting polls) **may not stand the test of valid classification under Article 14** (equality before the law) **of the Constitution of India**”. And the DoPT told the EC that its suggestions “may not be appropriate and feasible.”

### 3. PM-CARES for Children scheme

#### In news

- The Central government has announced the “**PM-CARES for Children**” scheme for **all those children orphaned due to Covid-19**.
- Also, the Supreme Court has ordered the district authorities to upload the details of children in need of care and protection on NCPCR (National Commission for Protection of Child Rights) portal Bal Swaraj.

#### Salient features of the Scheme

- **Corpus of Rs. 10 Lakh:**
  - A corpus of Rs. 10 lakh will be allocated to each of these children from the **PM CARES fund**.
  - It will provide monthly stipend from 18 years of age.
  - On attaining 23 years, he/she will get the corpus amount.
- **Education to the Children (under 10 years):**
  - Ensure admission to Kendriya Vidyalayas/ private schools.
  - PM CARES will pay for the uniform text books and notebooks
  - If the child is admitted in a private school the fees as per the RTE norms will be provided
- **Education to the Children (11-18 years):**
  - 
  - The child will be given admission in any Central Government Residential School
  - 
  - In case the child is to be continued under the care of **guardian**, he/she will be given admission in the nearest Kendriya Vidyalaya/private school



- **Higher education:**
  - - Provision of either a scholarship equivalent to the tuition fees/ educational loans.
    - Interest on the loan will be paid by the PM-CARES fund.
- **Health Insurance:**
  - All children will be enrolled as a beneficiary under **Ayushman Bharat Scheme**
  - The premium amount will be paid by PM-CARES till a child turns 18.

## GS 3 :Economy, Science and Technology,Environment

### 4. Global minimum tax may help India but can cause international disagreements

#### The US proposal for global minimum tax

- In its recent proposal, the U.S. sought to impose a global minimum tax **on foreign income earned by U.S. corporations.**
- The proposal is intended to disincentivise American companies from **inverting their structures** due to the increase in the U.S. corporate tax rate.
- The U.S. is now **discussing a floor of 15% for the minimum tax rate.**
- The proposal is similar to Pillar Two, except for the rate of the effective minimum tax.

#### Similarity with Pillar Two Proposal

- **The Pillar Two proposal** was the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) plan to plug the remaining **Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS)** issues
- It provide jurisdictions **the right to "tax back"** where other jurisdictions have either not exercised their primary taxing right or have exercised it at low levels of effective taxation.
- For instance, if an **Indian-headquartered multinational corporation (MNC)** has an entity in Singapore or the Netherlands **through which global operations are run**, and its income from global operations is not taxed at an effective rate of 10% or 15%, then it can be taxed in India.
- **India has been part of the Pillar Two** discussions and has not objected in principle to the proposal.

## How Global Minimum Tax would benefit India?

- The proposal, along with the increased tax bill for U.S. companies, may benefit the Indian revenue department.
- The State of Tax Justice report of 2020 notes that **India loses over \$10 billion in tax revenue** due to the use of offshore structures, particularly through investments made by Indian residents through Mauritius, Singapore and the Netherlands.
- This is supported by the **overseas direct investment (ODI) data** from 2000 to 2021 published by the Reserve Bank of India.
- **Start-ups and large Indian conglomerates** commonly use **offshore structures** for conducting global operations.
- Revenue from such operations is often **retained offshore** and not repatriated to India.
- **Tax advantages incentivise such structures**, due to which taxes on such income are not paid in India.
- Once these proposals are implemented, **Indian companies would have to pay additional taxes on their offshore structures** to the extent that the **effective rate of tax is lower than the global minimum tax rate.**

## Challenges

- **Lack of consensus:** Several countries have taken a **different approach to the rate of global minimum tax.**
- While France and Germany have expressed support, the EU has raised concerns regarding the **high rate proposed by the United States.**
- **Tax sovereignty issue:** Countries have stated that the proposal infringes upon their **tax sovereignty** and that the fight against unfair tax competition should not become a fight against competitive tax systems.

## Conclusion

As economies struggle amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the necessity of encouraging trade and economic activity should be prioritised over disagreements on tax allocations. A tax-related trade war or entrenchment of unilateral levies may further harm both global and national economies.

## 5. Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) 4.0

### In news

- Government has increased the scope of the **Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS)** for three more months.
- **Why was it extended?**

- To help businesses across several sectors affected by the second wave of COVID 19.

### About ECLGS 4.0

- **100% guarantee cover** to be provided on loans, in hospitals/nursing clinics/medical colleges/homes, up to Rs.2 crore.
- Loan can be utilized to **set up on-site oxygen generation plants**.
- **Additional ECLGS assistance up to 10% of outstanding as on February 2020** to borrowers who are covered under ECLGS 1.0.
- **Ceiling of Rs. 500 Cr. of loan outstanding is removed**. Assistance will be limited to 40% or Rs.200 crore, whichever is lower.
- **Civil Aviation sector** will be **eligible** under ECLGS 3.0.
- **Validity** of ECLGS extended to Sept 30 2021 or till guarantees for ₹3 trillion are issues

### Significance of the move

- ECLGS 4.0 will **enhance the utility and impact** of ECLGS by providing additional support to MSMEs.
- It will **safeguard livelihoods**.
- It will help in the **resumption of business activity**.
- It will facilitate **flow of institutional credit** at reasonable terms.

### Important value additions

#### Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS)

- ECLGS was launched **under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan** in May 2020.
- **Objective:** To overcome the distress caused on economy due to lockdown.
- It helped different sectors by providing credit to them.
- Credit was provided to them for four years besides one year moratorium period on principled repayment.

## 6. New Missions to Venus: NASA

### Why in News

Recently, the **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** announced **two new robotic missions to Venus**.

- Earlier, scientists obtained **new data about Venus by bouncing radio waves** off the planet.

## Key Points

- **Aim:**
  - The two sister missions aim to **understand how Venus became an inferno-like world capable of melting lead at the surface.**
- **About:**
  - **DaVinci Plus:**
    - It will be the first of the two, **it will analyze the thick, cloudy Venusian atmosphere** in an attempt to **determine whether the inferno planet ever had an ocean and was possibly habitable.** A small craft will plunge through the atmosphere to measure the gases.
  - **Veritas:**
    - It will be the second one seeking a **geologic history by mapping the rocky planet's surface.**
- **Significance:**
  - The new missions will **give fresh views of the planet's atmosphere, made up mostly of carbon dioxide, down to the core.**
- **Previous Missions:**
  - **US:**
    - **Mariner** series 1962-1974, **Pioneer** Venus 1 and Pioneer Venus 2 in 1978, Magellan in 1989.
  - **Russia:**
    - **Venera** series of space crafts 1967-1983, **Vegas** 1 and 2 in 1985.
  - **Japan:**
    - **Akatsuki** in 2015.
  - **Europe:**
    - **Venus Express** in 2005.
- **Indian Initiative:**
  - India plans to launch a new orbiter named **Shukrayaan** to Venus in 2024.

## Venus

- **About:**
  - It is named after the Roman goddess of love and beauty. It is the **second planet from the Sun and sixth in the solar system in size and mass.**
  - It is the **second brightest** natural object in the night sky **after the Moon**, probably that is the reason why it was the **first planet to have its motions plotted across the sky**, as early as the second millennium BC.
  - Unlike the other planets in our solar system, **Venus and Uranus spin clockwise** on their axis.

- It is the **hottest planet** in the solar system because of the **high concentration of carbon dioxide** which works to produce an intense **greenhouse effect**.
- A **day on Venus is longer than a year**. It takes Venus **longer to rotate once on its axis than to complete one orbit of the Sun**.
  - That's **243 Earth days to rotate once** - the longest rotation of any planet in the Solar System - and only **224.7 Earth days to complete one orbit of the Sun**.

#### □ **Venus & Earth:**

- Venus has been called **Earth's twin** because of the **similarities in their masses, sizes, and densities and their similar relative locations** in the solar system.
- No planet approaches closer to Earth than Venus; at its nearest **it is the closest large body to Earth other than the Moon**.
- Venus has **90 times the atmospheric pressure of Earth**.

#### □ **Reason For Studying Venus:**

- It will help to learn **how Earth-like planets evolve and what conditions exist on Earth-sized exoplanets** (planets that orbit a star other than our sun).
- It will help in modelling **Earth's climate**, and serves as a cautionary tale on how dramatically a planet's climate can change.

## Prelims Practice Questions

### 1. Consider the following statements:

1. It is binding on the President to nominate 12 members to Rajya Sabha.
2. The nomination of members is a discretionary power of the President.
3. A member cannot be renominated after the term is over.

### Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

- a. 1 & 2 only
- b. 2 & 3 only
- c. Only 3
- d. All of the above

**Answer: b**

### Explanation:

- Article 80(3) of the Constitution of India authorizes the President of India to nominate a maximum of 12 members to the Rajya Sabha and the members nominated shall have special knowledge or practical experience in the fields of Literature, Science, Art & Social Service.
  - It is binding on the President to nominate 12 members to Rajya Sabha.
  - Only in the appointment of the Prime Minister, the President enjoys discretionary power.
- The President nominates 12 members to Rajya Sabha on the advice of the Centre (government of the day).
- They are nominated for a six-year term and are eligible to be renominated after their term is over.

### 2. Consider the following statements:

1. Operation Flood in India was launched to increase milk production.
2. India is the world's second largest milk producer after Brazil.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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



Answer : A

**Explanation:**

- The **Operation Flood (White Revolution)** in India was the brainchild of Dr Verghese Kurein. Under him many important institutions were established like the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd and the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB).
  - The White Revolution was started by the NDDB in the 1970s and the bedrock of the revolution has been the village milk producers' cooperatives.
- **Objectives:**
  - **Increase milk production** ("a flood of milk"). **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - Increase rural incomes.
  - Reasonable prices for consumers.
- **Significance:**
  - It helped dairy farmers direct their own development, placing control of the resources they create in their own hands.
  - It has helped **India become the largest producer of milk in the world in 2016-17.**
  - Currently, **India with 22% of global production is the world's largest milk producer** followed by the **United States of America, China, Pakistan and Brazil. Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**

**3. Vande Bharat Mission is related to:**

- a. Bringing back stranded Indians from foreign after suspension of regular international flights
- b. Evacuation of Indian citizens from South Sudan
- c. India's role in anti-piracy operations in Djibouti
- d. None of the Above

Answer: a

**Explanation:**

In an effort to bring back its stranded citizens abroad due to the spread of the novel coronavirus and the resulting lockdown thereof, India rolled out the massive evacuation plan called 'Vande Bharat Mission'.

4. 'Van Dhan Yojana' deals with:

- a. Financial inclusion
- b. Tax relief for street vendors
- c. The six-month moratorium on term loans announced by the Reserve Bank of India during Covid-19 lockdown
- d. Economic development of tribals

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) launched the Van Dhan scheme in 2018 intending to improve the tribal income through the value addition of tribal products.
- The scheme aims at the economic development of tribals involved in the collection of Minor Food Produces (MFPs) by helping them in optimum utilization of natural resources and providing them with a sustainable livelihood.
- Under this scheme, the Van Dhan Vikas Kendras constituted, provide skill up-gradation and capacity building training and setting up of primary processing and value addition facilities.

5. With reference to 'One Nation One Standard Mission', consider the following statements:

1. It was conceived in order to ensure quality products in the country.
2. The mission was collectively launched by the NITI Ayog and the Ministry of science and technology.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?

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

**Answer : A**

**Explanation**

- The idea of **One Nation One Standard Mission** was first conceived in 2019, it was envisioned on the line of one nation, one ration card scheme in **order to ensure quality products in the country. Hence, statement 1 is correct.**

- Recently, the Research Design & Standards Organization (RDSO) of Indian Railways has become the first Institution to be declared a Standard Developing Organization (SDO) under One Nation One Standard mission of **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)**
  - To attain the One Nation One Standard vision of the Government of India, **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)** launched a scheme which provides for Recognition of SDO.
  - The recognition is valid for 3 years and will require renewal after completion of the validity period.
  - **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**

**6. Govind Pashu Vihar National Park is situated in which of the following states?**

- a. Haryana
- b. Uttarakhand
- c. Punjab
- d. Himachal Pradesh

**Answer : b**

**Explanation:**

**Govind Pashu Vihar National Park**

- It is located in the Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand, which includes mountains like Swargarohini, Black Peak, and Bandarpunch.
- It creates an upper water catchment of River Tons.
- It is named after a prominent Indian freedom fighter and politician Govind Ballabh Pant.

## **Mains Practice Questions**

**1Q. Discuss the internal structure of the Earth and comment on S and P-waves shadow zones with suitable diagrams.**

### **Approach**

- Start the answer by briefly mentioning the interior of earth.
- Discuss the differentiation of layers of earth and role of seismic waves in the study of the interior of earth.
- Conclude Suitably.

**2Q. What do you understand by the term 'distributive justice'? How can it be a better philosophy to bring social justice? (150 words)**

### **Approach**

- Give the definition of distributive justice and different types of distributive norms.
- Give the definition of social justice.
- Explain how distributive justice can support social justice.
- Explain how distributive justice and social justice are in opposition.
- Give way forward or conclusion giving a balanced approach.