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## GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

### 1. 'CoWIN's open-source version to be provided to 50 nations'

#### What's in News?

India will provide an open-source version of its CoWIN application to nearly 50 countries from Central Asia, Africa and Latin America that have indicated an interest in the technology.

- CoWIN is an **extension of an electronic vaccine intelligence network, eVIN**, which is used to collect real-time feedback on the vaccination programmes.
- It is a **cloud-based IT solution** for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating COVID-19 vaccination in the country.

### 2. Exercise Sea Breeze

#### Why in News

Ukraine and the United States launched **joint naval Exercise 'Sea Breeze' in the Black Sea** in a show of Western cooperation with Ukraine as it faces off with Russia.

- The drills come just days after the **British Royal Navy's HMS Defender passed near Russian-annexed Crimea** in the Black Sea.

#### Key Points

- **About the Exercise:**
  - The exercise Sea Breeze **has been held since 1997**, involving **NATO states and their allies in the Black Sea region**.
  - It has taken place **21 times since 1997**. This edition (2021) will be the **largest In Exercise's history** that will involve some 5,000 military personnel from more than 30 countries.
- **Aim of the Exercise:**
  - The drill is **aimed at improving naval and land operations** and improving cooperation among participating countries.
  - The exercise is also aimed at sending a powerful message to **maintain stability and peace in the region**.
- **Significance of Black Sea for Russia:**

- The unique geography of the Black Sea region confers several **geopolitical advantages to Russia** and thus Russia always wanted to control the region.
  - Firstly, it is an **important crossroads and strategic intersection** for the entire region. Access to the Black Sea is **vital for all littoral and neighboring states**, and greatly enhances the projection of power into several adjacent regions.
  - Secondly, the region is an **important transit corridor for goods and energy**.
  - Thirdly, the Black Sea region is **rich in cultural and ethnic diversity**, and due to geographical proximity, shares **close historical ties with Russia**.
- Following such interest, **Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014** and claims the waters around the peninsula as part of its territory.
  - Most countries do not recognise the takeover and stand behind Ukraine's claims to the waters.
- **Black Sea:**
  - This marginal sea of the Atlantic Ocean, located between Eastern Europe and Western Asia.
  - The bordering countries of Black Sea are: **Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania**.
  - The Black Sea **happens to be the largest water body with a meromictic basin**, which means the movement of water between the lower and upper layers of the sea is a rare phenomenon which is also responsible for its **Anoxic Water** (i.e. a significant absence of oxygen in the water).

### 3. Attorney General of India

#### Why in News

The central government has **extended the term of K.K. Venugopal as Attorney General (AG) for one more year**.

- This is the **second time the Centre has extended his tenure**. Venugopal received his first extension of term in 2020.
- Venugopal was appointed the **15<sup>th</sup> AG of India in 2017**. He succeeded Mukul Rohatgi who was AG from 2014-2017.
- He would be in command of the **government's legal defence in several sensitive cases** pending in the **Supreme Court**, which includes the challenge to the **abrogation of Article 370** of the Constitution and the **Citizenship Amendment Act**.

## Key Points

- **About:**
  - The Attorney General (AG) of India is a **part of the Union Executive**. AG is the **highest law officer in the country**.
  - **Article 76 of the Constitution** provides for the office of AG of India.
- **Appointment and Eligibility:**
  - AG is **appointed by the President** on the advice of the government.
  - S/he must be a person who is **qualified to be appointed a judge of the Supreme Court**, i.e. s/he must be a citizen of India and must have been a judge of some high court for five years or an advocate of some high court for ten years or an eminent jurist, in the opinion of the President.
- **Term of the Office:** Not fixed by the Constitution.
- **Removal:** Procedures and grounds for the removal of AG are not stated in the Constitution. S/he holds office during the pleasure of the President (may be removed by the President at any time).
- **Duties and Functions:**
  - To **give advice to the Government of India (GoI)** upon such legal matters, which are referred to her/him by the President.
  - To perform such other duties of a legal character that are assigned to her/him by the President.
    - To **appear on behalf of the GoI in all cases in the Supreme Court** or in any case in any High Court in which the GoI is concerned.
    - To **represent the GoI in any reference made by the President to the Supreme Court under Article 143** (Power of the President to consult the Supreme Court) of the Constitution.
  - To discharge the functions conferred on her/him by the Constitution or any other law.
- **Rights and Limitations:**
  - S/he has the **right to speak and to take part in the proceedings of both the Houses of Parliament** or their joint sitting and any committee of the Parliament of which s/he may be named a member, but **without a right to vote**.
  - S/he **enjoys all the privileges and immunities** that are available to a member of Parliament.
  - S/he does **not fall in the category of government servants**. S/he is not **debarred from private legal practice**.
  - However, s/he **should not advise or hold a brief against the GoI**.
- **Solicitor General of India and Additional Solicitor General of India assist the AG** in fulfillment of the official responsibilities.
- **Corresponding Office in the States:** Advocate General (Article 165).

#### 4. Keeping alive conversations about AIDS

##### Targets to end HIV/AIDS:

- The **2017 National Health Policy and the UN Sustainable Development Goals aim to end HIV/AIDS by 2030.**
  - The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) set a target of ending the epidemics of AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria by 2030 (SDG 3.3).

##### 90-90-90 target:

- In order to infuse energy and urgency into global efforts to combat HIV-AIDS and complement the prevention target set by the SDGs, an ambitious treatment target was also adopted through **UNAIDS, the lead UN agency that coordinates the battle against HIV.** The “90-90-90” target stated that by **2020**, 90% of those living with HIV will know their HIV status, 90% of all people with diagnosed HIV infection will receive sustained anti-retroviral therapy and 90% of all people on such therapy will have viral suppression.
- **This target has now been pushed by five years.**

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

#### 5. Reopen the files, reconsider privatisation

##### Background:

##### Pandemic induced economic crisis:

- India is currently going through its worst economic crisis.
  - The Indian economy has experienced its **highest ever GDP contraction in 2020.**
  - **Unemployment levels have risen, income levels have fallen,** estimates point to bank **non-performing assets (NPAs) rising** and the **fiscal deficit has also risen.**
- Against this backdrop, the article discusses certain aspects of the envisaged Central government policy of aggressive privatisation of public enterprises.

##### The new disinvestment policy for public sector enterprises:

- The Indian Finance Minister in her Budget speech for 2021-22, announced a **new policy for central public sector enterprises (CPSEs).**

- The policy proposes to privatize state-owned companies in the coming years and would serve as a roadmap for the disinvestment of government-owned firms across sectors.
- This policy proposes a differentiated approach to strategic and non-strategic sectors and envisages **ambitious disinvestment targets**.
  - For the financial year 2022, the government has announced a disinvestment **target of Rs 1.75 lakh crore**. This is to be raised from the stake sale in public sector companies and financial institutions.

### Arguments in favour of privatization:

#### Increase efficiency:

- There are umpteen examples around the world that show what the economy could gain by privatizing state-run businesses given that the private sector is inherently more efficient. Thus privatization marks an **important step in India's programme of reforms to achieve long-term sustainable growth**.

#### Asset recycling:

- Privatization also allows for asset recycling: the government monetizes existing infrastructure assets through their sale to the private sector, and then **invests the proceeds in new projects or long-term investment funds**.

#### Source of revenue for government:

- The privatization of state-owned companies over the years could provide the funds needed to rebuild the economy and allocate **money for infrastructure creation and welfare schemes**.
  - India has recently announced a **national asset monetization pipeline** to fund much-needed infrastructure and welfare schemes.

#### Offset debt and ensure fiscal stability:

- Privatization is also beneficial to gain long-term balance sheet stability and offset debt from the incoming revenue stream. This has become all the more important due to the **adverse economic impact of the pandemic**.

### Arguments against the present approach to privatization:

#### May not lead to new Greenfield investment:

- The taking up of stakes by the private sector in the public sector enterprises results in **no real value addition to the economy in the near term**. This only marks a transfer of ownership and results in no new greenfield investment.

#### **Lower realization of value:**

- The target-driven approach to disinvestment may result in a scenario where the government may have to **sell their stakes at fair or lower than fair valuations**.

#### **Loss of strategic control:**

- Privatization decreases the government control on strategic sectors which will allow it some leverage during crisis periods as observed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Privatization may result in a scenario where **India might lose the strategic capacity that its ownership of public enterprises provides it**.
  - In dealing with the novel coronavirus pandemic crisis, the Government has been able to use its ownership to get banks and public enterprises to do so many things on an immediate basis.
- The sale of the public sector entities to foreign entities, firms as well as funds, has adverse implications from the perspective of being 'Atma Nirbhar'.

#### **Concerns over job losses:**

- The **public sector enterprises provide for reservations** in recruitment to socially and economically backward classes. Privatization will end this affirmative intervention. Also, there are concerns that **privatization could lead to job losses**.

#### **Details:**

- The author, a former secretary of the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Government of India, suggests different approaches to different categories of public sector enterprises that face their own set of issues and hence need relevant solutions.

#### **Beyond redemption entities:**

- There exist some public sector units which have been sick for a long time. They are **plagued by multiple issues- obsolete technology, plants and machinery and inefficient managerial and human resources**.
- The article suggests **closing such enterprises in a time-bound manner** while ensuring the employees are adequately compensated.

- The **assets of such companies should be sold**. The land owned by these entities amount to their largest asset base and prudent disposal of this should be a focus.
- These enterprises may be taken away from their parent line ministries and brought under one holding company which should have the sole mandate of speedy liquidation and asset sale.

### Entities with potential for turnaround:

- There are enterprises that **have been financially sick but can be turned around**.
  - Example – Air India and the India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) hotels.
- Ministerial micromanagement is one of the major reasons for their poor performance.
- For such companies, **introducing private management** through privatisation or induction of a strategic partner is the best way forward.
- As the health of these enterprises improves over time, so will their valuation. The government can then reduce its stake further and get more money. This will ensure better revenue flows rather than outright privatization when they are in a financially weak position.
  - Under current circumstances, very few investors would be interested in taking up stakes, as is evident from the Air India example.

### Profitable enterprises:

- For profitable public sector enterprises, the article suggests adopting **the Chinese model approach**.
  - The Chinese have nurtured their state-owned enterprises to **increase their competitiveness in cost, quality, and technology**. This has allowed them to succeed in both the domestic and global markets. In the Fortune 500 list, there are 91 state-owned Chinese enterprises.
- With such profitable public enterprises, the Government can continue to reduce its shareholding by offloading shares and even reducing its stake to less than 51% while **remaining the promoter and being in control**.
- Also, **greater autonomy and flexibility** should be provided to the management. These entities should be allowed to take well-considered commercial risks and invest patient capital in strategic areas where risk-averse private investment may not be willing to invest.

### Conclusion:



- The article argues for a more **pragmatic approach to privatization** rather than one led by ideology.
- **Calibrated divestment to get maximum value over the medium term after considering market conditions should be the goal** instead of being led by strict time-bound targets for disinvestment.

## 6. Nuclear-capable Agni-P missile test-fired

### Context:

A new-generation **nuclear-capable ballistic missile, Agni-P (Prime)** has been successfully test-fired by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

### Agni-P:

- Agni-P is a **new-generation advanced variant of the Agni class of missiles.**
- Its **range capability is between 1,000 and 2,000 km.**
- The missile is fully made up of **composite material.**
  - Composites are **lightweight, have better strength and offer more design and production flexibility** over conventional materials.
- Agni Prime comes in a **canisterised configuration.**

### Canisterisation:

- In this configuration, a **missile mated with a nuclear warhead is sealed in a canister, which is placed atop a road-mobile launcher.**
- Canisterisation significantly **enhances the mobility of a missile.**
- In canisterised configuration, a missile requires **very short preparation time** and can be **launched at short notice.**
- Canisterisation also **increases the reliability of a missile and its shelf-life.**
- A canisterised missile can be **fired directly from the canister** or cylindrical container containing the missile by elevating it.

### Agni class missiles

- The Agni class of missiles are the **mainstay of India's nuclear launch capability** which also includes the **Prithvi short-range ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles and fighter aircraft.**
- The longest of the Agni series, **Agni-V, an Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM)** with a range of **over 5,000 km**, has already been tested several times and validated for induction.
- Earlier, India had tested **Agni-5 intercontinental ballistic missile in canisterised configuration.**

### Details:

- The test was conducted from the **A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Island**, Balasore, off the coast of Odisha.
- Agni-P missile would further **strengthen India's credible deterrence capabilities**.
- In the past few years, India has also operationalised its **submarine-based nuclear launch capability**, completing the **nuclear triad**.
  - This is especially important given **India's no-first-use policy** while reserving the right of massive retaliation if struck with nuclear weapons first.
  - A nuclear triad is a **three-pronged military force structure** that consists of **land-launched nuclear missiles, nuclear-missile-armed submarines, and strategic aircraft with nuclear bombs and missiles**.
- In 2020, the DRDO successfully test-fired a 3,500-km range submarine-launched ballistic missile, K-4.
  - Once inducted, these missiles will be the mainstay of the **Arihant class of indigenous ballistic missile nuclear submarines (SSBN)**.
  - It will give India the stand-off capability to launch nuclear weapons submerged in Indian waters.
- INS Arihant, the only SSBN in service, is armed with **K-15 missiles with a range of 750 km**.

## 7. Rattling foreign investors

### Background:

#### FDI into India:

- **India has been emerging as a major destination for foreign direct investment (FDI)**.
  - The Commerce Ministry recently reported India attracting the highest ever FDI of \$81.72 billion in 2020-21.

#### India's BIT disputes:

- In 2020, India lost two high-profile **bilateral investment treaty (BIT) disputes** to two leading global corporations – **Vodafone and Cairn Energy** – on retrospective taxation. India has challenged both the awards at the courts of the seat of arbitration.
- Another high-profile BIT dispute has been the one involving the cancellation of an agreement between Antrix, a commercial arm of the Indian Space Research Organisation, and **Devas Multimedia**, a Bengaluru-based start-up, for the lease of satellite spectrum.

- The agreement was arbitrarily struck down on the grounds of national security.
- India has lost all the subsequent legal disputes challenging the government's move. **The ICC arbitration tribunal** has even ordered Antrix to pay \$1.2 billion to Devas after a U.S. court confirmed the award earlier this year. India's challenge to the verdict has also been turned down.
- India seems to be dragging its feet on the issue of compliance with these verdicts.

### Concerns:

#### Impact on India's image as a favourable FDI destination:

- The article argues that the failure of India to honour its contracts and also the reluctance to enforce tribunal awards could hurt India's image as a favourable FDI destination.
- An important factor that propels investors to invest in foreign lands is the host states honouring contracts and India's approach to deliberately delaying compliance of tribunal awards is sending out a **wrong message to foreign investors**.
- Such behaviour **decreases the confidence in the host state's credibility towards the rule of law, and increases the regulatory risk enormously for the investor**.
- Such an attitude will not be helpful in attracting global corporations into India and may even push out foreign investment already in India.

#### Threat of legal proceedings:

- **Cairn has launched legal proceedings in the U.S.** to enforce the arbitral award of \$1.2 billion by seizing the assets of Air India.

### Conclusion:

- The article suggests honouring the arbitral awards and restoring India's lost credibility in the eyes of the investor community.

## 8. Govt. unveils ₹6.28 lakh crore stimulus post 2nd COVID wave

### Context:

The government has announced **measures to support the sectors hit hard by the second Covid wave**.

## Relief Measures:

### Health:

- ₹ 50,000 crore credit guarantee for new and ongoing projects outside metros.
- **Funds for public projects** to augment paediatric care, ICU beds, oxygen supply and medical personnel.
  - A new scheme for **strengthening public health infrastructure and human resources** with an outlay of Rs. 23,220 crore was also announced.
- **Interest rate capped at 7.95%.**
- A fresh loan guarantee facility of **₹1.1 lakh crore for healthcare investments in non-metropolitan areas and sectors such as tourism.**

### Economy:

- The existing **Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme** will be **expanded by ₹1.5 lakh crore.**
  - ECLGS was launched as part of the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Package in May 2020.
- A new scheme worth ₹7,500 crores announced for loans up to ₹1.25 lakh to **small borrowers through micro-finance institutions.**
- Indirect support for exports worth ₹1.21 lakh crore over the next five years.
- Under the **new Loan Guarantee Scheme for COVID-affected sectors**, working capital/personal loans will be provided to people in the tourism sector to discharge liabilities and restart businesses impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The government has also made an additional allocation of Rs 19,041 crore for the ongoing **BharatNet broadband project.**
- The government **extended the Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana**, launched in October 2020 to encourage employment generation, by nine months until March 31, 2022.
- **Free one-month visas for the first five lakh tourists.**

### Agriculture:

- New seed varieties will be made available for the farmers.
  - ICAR has developed **bio-fortified crop varieties** having high nutrients like protein, iron, zinc, vitamin-A.
  - These varieties are **tolerant to diseases, insects, pests, drought, salinity, and flooding, early maturing** and amenable to mechanical harvesting.

- A revival package of Rs 77.45 crore will be provided to North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation (NERAMAC).
- Additional Subsidy for DAP & P&K fertilizers has been announced.
- The existing sop to spur employment, where the government bears EPF contributions for new employees earning less than ₹15,000 a month for two years, has been extended till March 31, 2022.

Others:

- Extension of Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) from May to November 2021.

**Significance:**

- The focus was largely on **extending loan guarantees** and **concessional credit** for pandemic-hit sectors and **investments** to ramp up healthcare capacities.
- It is believed that these measures will help to **stimulate economic activities, boost production & exports** and **generate employment**.

## 9. Small civilian drones pose significant threat, say officials

**Context:**

Two explosions at the Jammu airbase are believed to have been **carried out using drones**.

**Concerns:**

- A **quadcopter available in the open market** for a few thousand rupees can **hit strategic targets and cause huge damage**.
- In the past couple of years, **quadcopters have been used to drop drugs, arms and ammunition from across the border in Jammu and Punjab**.

As the civilian market for drones is set to see a major expansion, **requisite measures in terms of capabilities, as well as policy measures, should be put in place**.

**Note:**

The armed forces have indicated their intent to **develop or acquire Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems capability** in the **Technology and Capability Perspective Roadmap-2018** issued by the **Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff**.

- The most popular methods of neutralising drones, as per the article, are:

- **Jamming or spoofing of the radio frequency link between the rogue UAS and its operator.**
- **Using Directed Energy Weapons such as lasers for dazzling of sensors**
- **Destructing the critical airframe components of the drone**
- **Employing guns, missiles and other hard kill options.**



## GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

### 1. National Statistics Day

#### Why in News

Every year, the Statistics Day is celebrated on **29<sup>th</sup> June**, the birth anniversary of **Prof. Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis**, to recognise his invaluable contribution in establishing the **National Statistical System**.

#### Key Points

- **Aim:**
  - To popularise the use of statistics in everyday life and sensitise the public as to how statistics help in shaping and framing policies.
- **Theme for 2021:**
  - **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)- 2** (End Hunger, Achieve Food Security and Improved Nutrition and Promote Sustainable Agriculture).
- **Related Events:**
  - **Winners of Prof. P.C. Mahalanobis National Award in Official Statistics, 2021 and Prof C. R. Rao National Award for Young Statistician, 2021** will be announced
    - In 2019, the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation** instituted Prof. P C Mahalanobis National Award in official statistics for recognizing outstanding achievement of official statisticians in central government, state governments and institutions.
    - The Ministry **also recognises the outstanding contribution for high-quality research work** in the field of applied and theoretical statistics benefitting the official statistical system through the **Prof. C R Rao and Prof. P V Sukhatme awards**, awarded in alternate years.

#### Prof. Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis (1893-1972)

- He is considered **the father of modern statistics in India**, founded the **Indian Statistical Institute (ISI)**, shaped the **Planning Commission** (which was **replaced by the NITI Aayog** on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015) and pioneered methodologies for large-scale surveys.

- He introduced **innovative techniques for conducting large-scale sample surveys, calculated acreages** and crop yields, using the method of random sampling.
  - He also devised a statistical method called '**Fractile Graphical Analysis**', used to compare socio-economic conditions of varied groups.
- **Timeline:**
  - **1930:** Proposed the Mahalanobis Distance for the first time, which is a measure of comparison between two data sets.
    - The formula is used to find the distance between a point and a distribution, based on measurements in multiple dimensions. It is widely used in the field of cluster analysis and classification.
  - **1932:** Founded the ISI in Kolkata which was declared as an institute of national importance in 1959.
  - **1933:** Launched 'Sankhya: The Indian Journal of Statistics'.
  - **1950:** Established the National Sample Survey and set up the Central Statistical Organisation to coordinate statistical activities.
  - **1955:** Became a member of the Planning Commission and continued in that capacity till 1967.
    - He was instrumental in **formulating India's second five-year-plan (1956-1961)**, which laid the blueprint for industrialisation and development in India.
  - 1968: Honoured with the **Padma Vibhushan**.
    - He was also conferred a large number of awards by international organisations.

## 2. Baihetan Dam: World's Second Biggest Hydropower Dam

### Why in News

Recently, **China** has put into operation the **Baihetan Dam, world's Second Biggest Hydropower Dam**.

- The **Three Gorges Dam** is the **largest hydropower dam in the world** and is also along **China's Yangtze River**. It began operations in 2003.

### Key Points

- **About the Dam:**
  - It is on the **Jinsha River, a tributary of the Yangtze (the longest river in Asia)**.
  - It has been built with a **total installed capacity of 16,000 megawatts**.
  - It will eventually be able to **generate enough electricity each day** once to meet the **power needs of 5,00,000 people** for an entire year.



- **Significance for China:**
  - It is part of Chinese efforts to **curb surging fossil fuel demand** by building more hydropower capacity.
    - This comes at a time when dams have fallen out of favor in other countries due to environmental complaints (such as flooding farmland and disruption of the ecology of rivers, threatening fish and other species).
  - **China's pledge in 2020** to reach **carbon neutrality by 2060** had also added urgency to the construction.
- **China's Other Upcoming Projects:**
  - China's planned **mega-dam in Tibet's Medog County**, which is set to surpass the **Three Gorges Dam in size**, has been described by analysts as a threat to Tibetan cultural heritage and a way for Beijing to effectively control a substantial portion of India's water supply.
    - The plan is to build a **dam on the lower reaches of the Brahmaputra River**.
    - The **Brahmaputra (called Yarlung Tsangpo in China)** is one of the longest rivers in the world.
    - Starting in the Himalayas in Tibet, it enters India in **Arunachal Pradesh**, then passes through **Assam, Bangladesh**, and empties **into the Bay of Bengal**.
  - The **impact of dams on China's portion of the Mekong** has also raised fears that irreversible damage is being inflicted upon a waterway which feeds 60 million people downstream as it winds through to the Vietnamese Delta.
- **Concerns:**
  - **Agriculture:**
    - A huge dam (**like on Brahmaputra**) could hold back the massive amount of silt carried by the river (Silty soil is more fertile than other types of soil and it is good for growing crops.)
    - This could **affect farming in the areas downstream**.
  - **Water Resources:**
    - India is also worried about the **release of water during the monsoons**, when north-eastern states such as Assam experience floods.
    - **Change in the flow rate during times of standoff between the countries** is also a cause of concern.
      - During the **2017 Doklam border standoff** between India and China, China stopped communication of water flow levels from its dams.
  - **Ecological Impact:**
    - The ecosystem in the **Himalayan region is already on the decline**. Several species of flora and fauna are endemic to this

part of the world and some of them are **critically endangered**. It could have disastrous consequences in this **ecologically sensitive zone**.

- The **massive engineering projects** have also **displaced** hundreds of thousands of **local communities** and prompted concern in **neighbouring countries**.

### Way Forward

- India has urged China to ensure that the interests of downstream states are not harmed by any activity in upstream areas. Meanwhile, India is considering building a 10 gigawatts (GW) hydropower project in the Dibang valley in Arunachal Pradesh, to mitigate the adverse impact of the Chinese dam.
- However, the larger point is that too much **hydro-power development is not a great idea in a fragile mountainscape**.

### 3. Gujarat Prohibition Law

#### Why in News

Recently, the **Gujarat Prohibition Act, 1949** has been challenged before the Gujarat High Court, more than seven decades after it came into effect as the **Bombay Prohibition Act**.

- The **prohibition on manufacture, sale and consumption of liquor in the state vide the Gujarat Prohibition Act, 1949**, has been challenged on grounds of 'manifest arbitrariness' and violation of 'right to privacy'.

#### Key Points

- **Background:**
  - **Bombay Abkari Act, 1878:** The first hint at the prohibition of liquor was through the Bombay Abkari Act, 1878 (in the Province of Bombay).
    - This Act dealt with levying of duties on intoxicants, among other things and aspects of prohibition via amendments made in 1939 and 1947.
  - **Bombay Prohibition Act, 1949:** There were “many lacuna” in the Bombay Abkari Act, 1878, from the point of view of the government’s decision to enforce prohibition.
    - This led to the birth of **Bombay Prohibition Act, 1949**.
    - The **Supreme Court (SC)** upheld the Act broadly barring a few sections in 1951 in the judgment of **State of Bombay and another versus FN Balsara**.

- **Gujarat Prohibition Act, 1949:**
  - Following the **reorganisation of Bombay province into the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat in 1960**, there was continued amendment and **liberalisation in the state of Maharashtra**, especially in 1963.
    - The ground for the liberalisation of the law was to check the business of illicit liquor.
  - Gujarat **adopted the prohibition policy in 1960** and subsequently chose to enforce it with greater rigidity, but also made processes easier for foreign tourists and visitors to get liquor permits.
  - In 2011, the Act was **renamed as Gujarat Prohibition Act**. In 2017, the **Gujarat Prohibition (Amendment) Act** was passed with provision of up to ten years jail for manufacturing, purchase, sale and transportation of liquor in the dry state.
- **Grounds for Challenging the Act:**
  - **The right of privacy:** Any invasion by the state in an individual's right to choice of food and beverage amounts to an unreasonable restriction and destroys the individual's decisional and bodily autonomy.
    - **Right to privacy** has been held as a fundamental right by the Supreme Court in several judgments since 2017.
  - **Ground of Manifest Arbitrariness:** It has been especially highlighted while **challenging sections pertaining to grant of health permits and temporary permits to out-of-state tourists**.
    - The petitioner says that there are no intelligible differences in the classes thus being created by the state on who gets to drink and who does not and **violates the Right to Equality under Article 14 of the Constitution**.
- **Counter Argument:**
  - **Aggravate the Sense of Violence:** Various research and studies have shown that alcohol tends to aggravate the sense of violence.
    - Most of the domestic violence crimes against women and children are committed behind closed doors.
  - **Constitutional Obligation of State:** Challenging the law, is an "attack on the constitutional obligation of the primary duty of the State as the guardian of the population to protect the health and lives of its people".
  - **National Prohibition** was advocated by **Mahatma Gandhi**.
- **Arguments Against Prohibition:**
  - **Loss of Revenue:** Tax revenues from alcohol is a major part of any government's revenues. These enable the government to finance several public welfare schemes. Absence of these revenues severely impacts state's ability to run public welfare programmes.

- **Burden on Judiciary:** Bihar introduced complete prohibition in April 2016. While it certainly has led to reduction in alcohol consumption, the related social, economic, and administrative costs have been far too much to justify gains. Prohibition crippled the judicial administration.
  - So far over 2.14 lakh cases have been registered under the Act; 2.55 lakh people have been booked and 1.67 lakh arrests have been made.
  - Ironically, liquor sales in districts in Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal bordering Bihar have seen a sharp rise.
- **Source of Employment:** Today, Indian Made Foreign Liquors (IMFL) industry contributes over 1 lakh crore in taxes every year. It supports the livelihood of 35 lakh farming families and provides direct and indirect employment to lakhs of workers employed in the industry.
- **Prohibition in Other States:**
  - Alcohol prohibition is in force in the states of **Bihar, Mizoram, Nagaland** and the **union territory of Lakshadweep**.
- **Related Constitutional Provisions:**
  - **State Subject:** Alcohol is a subject in the **State list under the seventh schedule of the Indian Constitution**.
  - **Article 47:** The **Directive Principle in the Constitution of India** states that “The state shall undertake rules to bring about prohibition of the consumption except for medicinal purposes of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health”.

### Way Forward

- Between issues such as morality, prohibition or freedom of choice, there are also **factors like economy, jobs, etc, which cannot be ignored**. What is required is an informed and constructive dialogue on the causes and effects.
- Policy makers should **focus on framing laws which encourage responsible behavior and compliance**.
  - Drinking age should be made uniform across the country and no person below that should be permitted to buy alcohol.
  - Tough laws should be made against drunken behaviour in public, domestic violence under influence, and drinking and driving.
  - The governments should set aside part of revenue earned from alcohol for social education, de-addiction, and community support.

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

### 4. Economic Relief Package after Covid- Second Wave

#### Why in News

Recently, the **Ministry of Finance** announced a slew of **measures to provide relief to diverse sectors** affected by the **second wave of Covid-19 pandemic**.

- It aims to **prepare the health systems for emergency response** and provide **impetus for growth and employment**. However it will **increase the Fiscal Deficit by 0.6%** as per a report of State Bank of India.
- A total of **17 measures amounting to Rs. 6,28,993 crore** were announced in the Economic Relief Package.

#### Key Points

- **Economic Relief from Pandemic:**
  - **Loan Guarantee Scheme for Covid Affected Sectors:**
    - Additional **credit of Rs 1.1 lakh crore** will flow to the **businesses**. This includes **Rs 50,000 crore for the health sector** and **Rs 60,000 crore for other sectors**, including tourism.
      - The health sector component is aimed at **scaling medical infrastructure targeting underserved areas** (i.e. non-metropolitan areas).
    - **Guarantee Coverage:** 50% for expansion & 75% for new projects.
      - For **aspirational districts**, the guarantee cover of 75% will be available for both new projects and expansion.
    - Maximum loan admissible under the scheme is **Rs. 100 crore** and guarantee duration is up to **3 years**.
  - **Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme:**
    - Expand the **Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS)**, launched as part of **Atmanirbhar Bharat Package** in May, 2020, by **Rs 1.5 lakh crore**.
  - **Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro Finance Institutions:**
    - It is a new scheme which **aims to benefit the smallest of the borrowers** who are served by the network of **Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs)**.
    - Guarantee will be provided to **Scheduled Commercial Banks** for loans to new or existing **Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC)-MFIs** or **MFIs for on lending upto Rs 1.25 lakh to approximately 25 lakh small borrowers**.

- **Extension of Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana (ANBRY):**
  - ANBRY incentivises employers for creation of new employment, restoration of loss of employment through **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)**.
- **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana:**
  - To the beneficiaries under the **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013**, 5 kg of food grains per month free will be provided during May-November 2021.
- **Strengthening Public Health:**
  - **New Scheme for Children and Paediatric Care:**
    - A new scheme for **strengthening public health infrastructure and human resources with outlay of Rs. 23,220 crore** was also announced.
    - It will **focus on short term emergency preparedness** with special emphasis on children and paediatric care/ paediatric beds.
- **Growth & Employment:**
  - **Free one month tourist visa** to 5 lakh tourists.
  - Additional Subsidy for **DAP & P&K fertilizers**.★
  - **Climate Resilient Special Traits Varieties:**
    - **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)** has developed **biofortified crop** varieties having high nutrients like protein, iron, zinc, vitamin-A.
    - These varieties are **tolerant to diseases, insects, pests, drought, salinity, and flooding**, early maturing and amenable to mechanical harvesting also developed.
    - 21 such varieties of **rice, peas, millet, maize, soyabean, quinoa, buckwheat, winged bean, pigeon pea & sorghum** will be dedicated to the nation.
  - **Revival of North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation :**
    - A revival package of Rs 77.45 crore will be provided to **North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation (NERAMAC)**.
    - NERAMAC has facilitated registration of 13 **Geographical Indicator (GI)** crops of North-East.
    - It has prepared a plan to give **10-15% higher price to farmers by-passing middlemen/agents**.
    - It also proposes to set up **North-Eastern Centre for Organic Cultivation**, facilitating equity finance to entrepreneurs.
  - **Boost for Project Exports:**
    - It has been decided to provide an additional corpus to the **National Export Insurance Account (NEIA)** over 5 years. This

will enable it to underwrite additional Rs. 33,000 crore of project exports.

- **NEIA Trust promotes Medium and Long Term (MLT) project exports** by extending risk covers.
- It provides cover to buyer's credit, given by **EXIM (Export-Import) Bank**, to less credit-worthy borrowers and supporting project exporters.
- **Boost to Export Insurance Cover:**
  - It has been decided to **infuse equity in Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC)** over 5 years to boost export insurance cover by Rs. 88,000 crore.
- **Digital India:**
  - Additional Rs. 19,041 crore will be provided to **implement Bharat Net in PPP model in 16 States on viability gap funding** basis.
  - This will **enable expansion and upgradation of Bharat Net to cover all Gram Panchayats and inhabited villages.**
- **Extension of PLI Scheme:**
  - Tenure of **Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for Large Scale Electronics Manufacturing** has been decided to be extended by one year i.e. till 2025-26.
- **Reform-Based Result-Linked Power Distribution Scheme:**
  - **Revamped Reforms-Based, Result-Linked power distribution scheme** of financial assistance to DISCOMS for infrastructure creation, up-gradation of system, capacity building and process improvement was announced in the **Union Budget of 2021-22.**
    - It **aims at state specific intervention** and to provide **assistance for installation of 25 crore smart meters, 10,000 feeders, 4 lakh km of LT overhead lines.**
  - The amount available under the scheme is **in addition to the allowed additional borrowing of 0.5% of Gross Domestic Product** of State which will be available to the States annually for the next four years subject to carrying out specific power sector reforms.
  - Ongoing works of **Integrated Power Development Scheme (IPDS), Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) and SAUBHAGYA** will also be merged in the scheme.
- **New streamlined process for PPP Projects and Asset Monetization:**
  - A new policy will be formulated for appraisal and approval of **Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)** proposals and monetization of core infrastructure assets, including through **Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs).**

- The policy will aim to ensure speedy clearance of projects to facilitate private sector's efficiencies in financing construction and management of infrastructure.

### Significance of the Package

- It would usher in much-needed liquidity and help revive the employment-intensive sectors such as tourism.
- It will help save livelihoods and mitigate further closures and also create new job opportunities.
- It will bolster efforts for any such healthcare challenges in the future.
- It will enable the Covid-affected Sectors to rise from the challenges they had faced over the past year and a half.
- The liquidity for small businesses could indirectly revive the fortunes of larger industries they source from and help repair broken supply chains.

### 5. India to become self-reliant in Phosphatic Fertilizers

The Department of Fertilisers is ready with an Action Plan to make India Aatmanirbhar in Rock Phosphate, the key raw material of DAP and NPK Fertilizers.

#### What are Phosphatic Fertilizers?

- Phosphorus is the eleventh most abundant element on the earth. Commercial phosphate fertilizers are manufactured using phosphate rock.
- Approximately two-thirds of the world's phosphate resources are derived from sedimentary and marine phosphate rock deposits.
- Ground rock phosphate has been used as a source of phosphorous for soils in the past.
- However, due to the low concentration of phosphorous in this native material, high transportation costs, and small crop responses, the usage of rock phosphate has reduced considerably in agriculture.
- On the other hand, the usage of phosphorous based fertilizers has grown significantly.

#### Which are the most common Ph fertilizers?

- The most commonly used phosphatic fertilizers are Diammonium Phosphate (DAP), Monoammonium Phosphate (MAP), NPKs, and SSP.
- DAP is the world's most widely used phosphorus fertilizer. It is popular due to its relatively high nutrient content and its excellent physical properties.



- DAP is an excellent source of phosphorus (P) and nitrogen (N) for plant nutrition.
- It provides the correct proportion of phosphorous and nitrogen for the farming of grains such as wheat, barley, fruits, and vegetables.
- NPKs, also called compound fertilizers, are fertilizers that contain all three nutrients, nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium in different proportions.

### Why need Phosphorus?

- Phosphorus is an essential nutrient required for plant growth. It helps in root development, plant maturation, and seed development.
- If soils are deficient in phosphorus, food production becomes restricted, unless the nutrient is added in the form of fertilizers.
- Hence, to increase food production, an adequate amount of phosphorus is required.
- Along with nitrogen and potassium, phosphorus is one of the most important elements for plant life.
- Soil gets depleted of phosphorus due to several reasons including being washed away by rain. Therefore, modern farming is reliant on the use of phosphorus-based fertilizers.

### Consumption in India

- Rock Phosphate is the key raw material for DAP and NPK fertilisers and India is 90% dependent on imports.
- Volatility in international prices affects the domestic prices of fertilisers and hinders the progress and development of the agriculture sector in the country.

## 6. Appointing Army officials as advisers for anti-Maoist operations in the Home Ministry

### Experience of CAPF

- The allegations that CAPF personnel are not well-trained falls flat when we look into the history of these paramilitary forces.
- Border Security Force (BSF) and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel were in the battlefield in the **1971 India-Pakistan war and won medals.**
- As part of the **Indian Peace Keeping Force in Sri Lanka**, CRPF personnel fought the militants there.

- In 1965, at Sardar Post in the Raan of Kutch, a small contingent of CRPF repulsed a Brigade strength attack of the Pakistan Army.
- In Punjab, it was the CRPF alongside the Punjab Police that brought the situation under control.
- Credit for peace and tranquillity in the north-eastern States goes in large measure to the CAPF personnel.

### Will appointing Army officials as advisers help?

- The Army has never fought against the Maoists.
- It is absurd to appoint Army officials as advisers for anti-Maoist operations in the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- What sort of advice can they be expected to render to the experts of the CAPFs in the field who have spent a major part of their lives combating insurgents and extremists?

### Versatile force

- The Greyhounds, a specialised commando outfit of erstwhile Andhra Pradesh, was able to inflict heavy casualties on Maoists forcing them to migrate to neighbouring States.
- The elite **Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA)** has played a stellar role in killing some top Maoist leaders and continue to be dreaded by the Maoists.
- The CAPFs have well-established training centres across the country with instructors of high calibre.

### Conclusion

The fact that they are able to tackle terrorism in Kashmir, fight the Maoists in left wing extremism-affected States, combat insurgency in the Northeast, ensure smooth conduct of elections and control riots across the country speaks volumes about their versatility .

### Prelims Practice Questions

1. With reference to Special Frontier Force (SFF), consider the following statements:

1. It was established in the year 2000 after the Kargil war.
2. SFF units are not part of the Army but they function under operational control of the Army.
3. Women soldiers are still not part of the force.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer : B

#### Explanation

- **Special Frontier Force (SFF)** was established in November 1962 in the immediate aftermath of the 1962 Sino-India war. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.
- It falls under the purview of the Cabinet Secretariat where it is headed by an Inspector General who is an Army officer of the rank of Major General.
  - The units that comprise the SFF are known as Vikas battalions.
- **SFF units are not part of the Army** but they function under operational control of the Army. Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- They are **highly trained special forces personnel** who can undertake a variety of tasks which would normally be performed by any special forces unit.
- The recruits **initially consisted of Tibetan refugees** hailing from the Khampa community (now it has a mixture of Tibetans and Gorkhas).
- **Women soldiers, too, form a part of SFF units and perform specialised tasks.** Hence, statement 3 is not correct.

2. Consider the following statements:

1. He is known as Sahitya Samrat.
2. He published his novel Anandamath depicting a Sanyasi army fighting the British soldiers.

The above statements best describe:

- a. Rabindranath Tagore
- b. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay
- c. Rash Behari Bose
- d. Chittaranjan Das

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay is known as Sahitya Samrat.
- He is widely regarded as a key figure in the literary renaissance of Bengal.
- His political novel Anandamath depicted a Sanyasi army fighting the British soldiers. It was inspired by the sanyasi rebellion.
- Anandamath is the source of the national song “Vande Mataram”.
- His other celebrated books are Kapalkundala, Mrinalini, Vishbriksha, Durgeshnandini, Rajmohan’s Wife.

**3. Consider the following statements:**

1. The Sanyasis Uprisings took place in Bengal after the great famine of 1770.
2. The Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's novel Anandamath talks of the Sanyasi Rebellion in Bengal.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Answer : C**

**Explanation**

- The **Sanyasi Uprisings took place in Bengal** between the periods of **1770-1820s**. The Sanyasis rose in rebellion after the **great famine of 1770 in Bengal** which caused acute chaos and misery. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- However, the immediate cause of the rebellion was the **restrictions imposed by the British upon pilgrims visiting holy places** among both Hindus and Muslims.
- Bankim Chandra Chatterjee epic **Novel Anandamath - set in the background of the Sanyasi Rebellion (1770-1820)**, when **Bengal** was facing a famine too - made Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay an influential figure on the Bengali renaissance. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

4. Arrange the following sectors in the decreasing order in the total share of power generated:

1. Thermal
2. Hydro
3. Nuclear
4. Renewable energy sources

Options:

- a. 1-2-3-4
- b. 2-1-4-3
- c. 1-4-2-3
- d. 4-1-2-3

Answer: c

**Explanation:**

Fuel	MW	% of Total
<b>Total Thermal</b>	2,34,728	61.3%
Coal	2,02,675	53.0%
Lignite	6,620	1.7%
Gas	24,924	6.5%
Diesel	510	0.1%
<b>Hydro (Renewable)</b>	46,209	12.2%
<b>Nuclear</b>	6,780	1.8%
<b>RES* (MNRE)</b>	95,013	24.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>382,730</b>	

\* Installed capacity in respect of RES (MNRE) as on 30.04.2021.

RES (Renewable Energy Sources) include Small Hydro Project, Biomass Gasifier, Biomass Power, Urban & Industrial Waste Power, Solar and Wind Energy.

5. Marib, recently in the news, is in which country?

- a. Syria
- b. Iran
- c. Afghanistan
- d. Yemen

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

Marib is located in Yemen.

6. Bosphorus Strait is a natural strait connecting Black Sea with which of the following Seas?

- a. Sea of Azov
- b. Sea of Marmara
- c. Aegean Sea
- d. Adriatic Sea

**Answer : b**

**Explanation:**

**Black Sea**

- The Black Sea, also known as the Euxine Sea, is one of the major water bodies and a famous inland sea of the world.
- This marginal sea of the Atlantic Ocean, located between Eastern Europe and Western Asia.
- The Turkish straits system - the Dardanelles, Bosphorus and Marmara Sea - forms a transitional zone between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.
- The Black Sea is also connected to the Sea of Azov by the Strait of Kerch.

## **Mains Practice Questions**

**1Q. Discuss the provisions related to Island Protection Zone, 2019 recently notified by the government. Critically examine their impact on the Islands of India. (250 words)**

### **Approach**

- Briefly introduce Island Protection Zone, 2019 notification.
- Describe the provisions of new notification.
- Give the impact of new notification.

**2Q. Chinese pilgrims played a key role in the exchanges between ancient India and ancient China. Comment. (250 words)**

### **Approach**

- Mention some of the key Chinese pilgrims who visited India in the introduction.
- Explain the kind of exchanges that took place and how these pilgrims played a key role.
- Give a suitable conclusion.