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# **CURRENT AFFAIRS**

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

**1. The fall of Kabul, the future of regional geopolitics**

**Context**

The fall of Kabul in the wake of the American withdrawal from Afghanistan will prove to be a defining moment for the region and the future shape of its geopolitics.

**Implications of the US withdrawal for India**

**1) Increase in threat from China**

- The manner in which the United States withdrew from Afghanistan created the regional power vacuum in the Eurasian heartland.
- An axis of regional powers such as China, Pakistan, Iran, Russia, and the Taliban, have already started filling this power vacuum.
- **Advantageous for China:** The post-American power vacuum in the region will be primarily advantageous to China and its grand strategic plans for the region.
- **BRI expansion:** Beijing will further strengthen its efforts to bring every country in the region, except India, **on the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative** bandwagon, thereby altering the geopolitical and geo-economic foundations of the region
- The much-feared **Chinese encirclement of India** will become ever more pronounced.
- Even in trade, given the sorry state of the post-COVID-19 Indian economy, India needs trade with China more than the other way round.
- Unless India can find ways of ensuring a rapprochement with China, it must expect Beijing to challenge India on occasion, and be prepared for it.

**2) Terror and extremism**

- The U.S. presence in Afghanistan, international pressure on the Taliban and **Financial Action Task Force worries in Pakistan** had a relatively moderating effect on the region's terror ecosystem.
- There is little appetite for a **regional approach to curbing terrorism** from a Taliban-led Afghanistan.
- This enables the Taliban to engage in a selective treatment towards terror outfits present there or they have relations with.

- It is unlikely that the Taliban will proactively export terror to other countries unless of course for tactical purposes by, say for instance, Pakistan against India.
- The real worry, however, is the inspiration that disgruntled elements in the region will draw from the Taliban's victory against the world's sole superpower.

### 3) Impact on India's regional interests and outreach to Central Asia

- The return of the Taliban to Kabul has effectively laid India's 'mission Central Asia' to rest.
- India's diplomatic and civilian presence as well as its civilian investments will now be at the mercy of the Taliban, and to some extent Pakistan.
- Had India cultivated deeper relations with the Taliban, Indian interests would have been more secure in a post-American Afghanistan.

### 4) Impact on India's foreign policy choices

- **Shift to Indo-Pacific:** Given the little physical access India has to its north-western landmass, its focus is bound to shift more to the Indo-Pacific even though a maritime grand strategy may not necessarily be an answer to its continental challenges.
- **Improving relations with neighbours:** India might also seek to cultivate more friendly relations with its neighbours.
- India has already indicated that it would not challenge the junta on the coup and its widespread human rights violations.
- The last thing India needs now is an angry neighbour rushing to China.
- **Stability in relations with Pakistan:** The developments in Afghanistan could nudge India to seek stability, if not peace, with Pakistan.
- Both sides might refrain from indulging in competitive risk-taking unless something dramatic happens which is always a possibility between the two rivals.
- That said, stability between India and Pakistan depends a great deal on how politics in Kashmir plays out, and whether India is able to pacify the aggrieved sections in the Valley.

### Conclusion

The lesson for India in the wake of these developments is clear: It will have to fight its own battles. So it must make enemies wisely, choose friends carefully, rekindle flickering friendships, and make peace while it can.

## 2. Arrest is not always a must, says Supreme Court

The Supreme Court has held that merely because the law allows arrest does not mean the State can use the power indiscriminately to crush personal liberty.

### What is an Arrest?

- An arrest is a procedure in a criminal justice system.
- It is the act of apprehending and taking a person into custody (legal protection or control), usually because the person has been suspected of or observed committing a crime.
- After being taken into custody, the person can be questioned further and/or charged.

### Distinction between arrest and detention

- There exists a distinction between an investigatory stop or detention and an arrest.
- The distinction tends to be whether or not the stop is “brief and cursory” in nature, and whether or not a reasonable individual would feel free to leave.

### Logic behind arresting

The Supreme Court has noted that:

- The occasion to arrest an accused during investigation arises when the custodial investigation becomes necessary.
- Or it is a heinous crime or where there is a possibility of influencing the witnesses or accused may abscond.
- The court was emphatic that a distinction must be made between the existence of the power to arrest and the justification for the exercise of this power.

### Sanctions for arrest as outlined by the Supreme Court

The Supreme Court clarified that:

#### (A) Avoiding arrests

- **Arrest isn't a compulsion:** Merely because an arrest can be made because it is lawful does not mandate that arrest must be made.
- **Justification for arrest:** A distinction must be made between the existence of the power to arrest and the justification for the exercise of it, it noted.

- **Dignity of the undertrial:** If an arrest is made routine, it can cause incalculable harm to the reputation and self-esteem of a person.
- **Evidence protection:** There should not be a compulsion on the officer to arrest the accused since many times there is no apprehension that an accused would abscond or tamper with evidence.

### (B) Broad implications of Sec. 170 CrPC

- **Narrow interpretation:** Section 170 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) has been wrongly interpreted by the police and trial courts to make an arrest of the accused mandatory at the time of filing of the charge sheet.
- **Custody, not arrest:** The word “custody” in Section 170 had been wrongly interpreted as ‘arrest’. The word ‘custody’ appearing in Section 170 does not contemplate either police or judicial custody.

### 3. Arrest is not always a must, says Supreme Court

#### Context:

- Supreme Court bench’s observation on the **issue of unwarranted arrests of accused during investigation process.**

#### Details:

- The Supreme Court criticizing the rampant misuse of the powers to arrest even in situations where it is not necessary has held that **merely because law allows arrest it does not mean the State can use the power indiscriminately.**
- The Supreme Court bench has called for a distinction between the existence of the power to arrest and the justification for exercise of it.

#### Concerns with unwarranted arrests:

- Unwarranted arrests can cause **great harm to the reputation and self-esteem of a person.**
- It goes **against the right to personal liberty** which is an important aspect of the Indian constitution under Article 21.

#### Legitimate grounds for arrest of an accused:

- Custodial investigation being necessary
- If the accused has committed a heinous crime

- There being a possibility of the accused influencing the witnesses or tampering evidence
- Possibility of the accused going absconding

#### 4. Faith and marriage

##### Issue:

- In the recent past, several states have enacted laws that criminalise inter-faith marriages.
- For instance, Uttar Pradesh enacted a law criminalising inter-faith marriages.

##### Context:

- In its interim order protecting parties to inter-religious marriages from needless harassment, the Gujarat HC has made it clear that the rigours of the State's amendments will not apply to marriages that do not involve any fraud, force or allurement.
- Thereby it has stopped the initiation of criminal proceedings against those who have married across religious faiths, unless there was any of these illegal elements.
- The court said, "A plain reading of Section 3 would indicate that any conversion on account of marriage is also prohibited."
  - The wording of the amendment, makes conversion "by marriage" or "by getting a person married" or "by aiding a person to get married" an offence.
- A Bench has rejected the State government's attempt to adopt an innocent reading of the provisions of the Gujarat Freedom of Religion (Amendment) Act, 2021, by claiming that inter-faith marriages that did not involve fraud or coercion and leading to conversion would not attract the penal provisions.

##### Concerns:

- A regressive feature of recent anti-conversion laws enacted by different States is the criminalisation of inter-faith marriages by treating them as a means to convert one of the parties from one religion to another.
- While anti-conversion laws, euphemistically called in some States as laws on 'freedom of religion', have always sought to criminalise conversions obtained through fraud, force or allurement.
- The recent acts or amendments have created "conversion by marriage" as one of the illegal forms of conversion.
- Such laws mock the right to privacy and violates the right to life, liberty and dignity.

- It vilifies all inter-faith marriages and places unreasonable obstacles on consenting adults in exercising their personal choice of a partner.
- The consequence of such laws range from intimidation, bullying to arbitrary arrests.

Vague legislations must not be used to criminalise inter-faith marriages. Interference by the State in consenting adults' rights in exercising their personal choice to love and marry will have 'chilling effect' on their freedoms.

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

### **5. RBI, IRDAI nod must for FDI in bank-led insurance**

Applications for foreign direct investment in an insurance company promoted by a private bank would be cleared by the RBI and IRDAI to ensure that the 74% limit of overseas investment is not breached.

#### **What does one mean by Insurance?**

- Insurance is a contract, represented by a policy, in which an individual or entity receives financial protection or reimbursement against losses from an insurance company.
- The company pools clients' risks to make payments more affordable for the insured.
- Insurance is a capital-intensive business so has to maintain a solvency ratio. The solvency ratio is the excess of assets over liabilities.
- Simply put, as an insurance company sells more policies and collects premiums from policyholders, it needs higher capital to ensure that it is able to meet future claims.
- In addition, insurance is a long gestation business. It takes companies 7-10 years to break even and start becoming profitable.

#### **Types of Insurance**

## Insurance sector of India

- The insurance regulator, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), mandates that insurers should maintain a solvency ratio of at least 150 percent.
- The insurance industry of India has 57 insurance companies 24 are in the life insurance business, while 34 are non-life insurers.
- Among the life insurers, Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) is the sole public sector company.
- In addition to these, there is a sole national re-insurer, namely the General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC Re).
- Other stakeholders in the Indian Insurance market include agents (individual and corporate), brokers, surveyors, and third-party administrators servicing health insurance claims.
- In India, the overall market size of the insurance sector is expected to US\$ 280 billion in 2020.

## Recent developments

The chronological order of events:

1. Nationalization of life (LIC Act 1956) and non-life sectors (GIC Act 1972)
2. Constitution of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) in 1999
3. Opening up of the sector to both private and foreign players in 2000
4. Increase in the foreign investment cap to 26% from 49% in 2015
5. Increase in FDI limit from 49% to 74% in March 2020

## Issues with India's insurance sector

Insurance is considered a sensitive sector as it holds the long-term money of people. Various attempts were made in the past to open up the sector but without much success.

- Lower insurance penetration due to various economic reasons such as poverty, etc.
- Domination of the Public Sector ex. LIC
- Trust issues in private insurances due to insolvency of private players
- Saving habits of the public

## Significance of the recent amendment

- The current amendment is an enabling amendment that gives companies access to foreign capital if they need it.



- It is an important shift in stance as the increase in the FDI cap means insurance companies can now be foreign-owned and -controlled as against the current situation wherein they are only Indian-owned and -controlled.
- The move is expected to increase India's insurance penetration or premiums as a percentage of GDP, which is currently only 3.76 per cent, as against a global average of more than 7 per cent.

### **What does this mean for Indian insurance companies?**

- India has more than 60 insurance companies specializing in life insurance, non-life insurance and health insurance.
- The number of state-owned firms are only six and the remaining are in the private sector.
- A higher FDI limit will help insurance companies access foreign capital to meet their growth requirements.

### **How this impacts Indian promoters of insurance companies?**

- Most of the Indian promoters of insurance companies are either Indian business houses or financial institutions like banks.
- Many entered into the insurance space when they were financially strong but are now struggling to cater to the constant need to infuse capital into their insurance joint ventures.
- Over the years, the sector has seen large-scale consolidation and exits of many promoters.
- A higher FDI cap will mean that more promoters could now completely exit or bring down their stakes in their insurance joint ventures.

### **What higher does FDI mean for policyholders?**

- Higher FDI limits could see more global insurance firms and their best practices entering India.
- This could mean higher competition and better pricing of insurance products.
- Policyholders will get a wide choice, access to more innovative products, and a better customer service and claims settlement experience.

## **6. MPC's Varma flags risks of policy stance**

### **Background:**

- The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) in its latest meeting had decided to **keep the repo rate unchanged at 4%**.
- The majority of the members of the MPC also agreed to **retain the accommodative stance** as long as necessary to help the economy recover from the economic shock of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Details:

- Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) member Jayanth Varma has expressed serious **reservations about the RBI's protracted "accommodative" policy stance** and has argued that the MPC's forward guidance and stance were in fact becoming "counter productive" for the Indian economy based on the following arguments.
  - The easy monetary policy has given rise to **persistent inflationary pressures** in the economy.
  - The MPC's accommodative stance despite the relatively high inflation levels would create the erroneous perception that the MPC is no longer concerned about inflation and is focused exclusively on growth. This could lead to the **risk of inflationary expectations being disanchored**.
  - There seems to be **limited ability of the monetary policy to mitigate the economic impact of the pandemic**. The monetary policy is much less effective than fiscal policy for providing targeted relief to the worst affected segments of the economy.
  - Also given the high possibility of the COVID-19 pandemic persisting for another 3-5 years through the mutations, **keeping monetary policy highly accommodative for such a long horizon would be unviable and counter-productive**.
- The MPC member's line of argument has been that at a time when the economic recovery is still nascent, it is extremely **important that monetary policy serves as an anchor of macroeconomic stability**. That would reduce the inflation risk premium and stabilise long-term rates in the economy which is a necessity for sustainable economic recovery.

## **7. The rumbling hills of Himachal Pradesh**

The article throws light upon how hydropower projects, dams and construction activities are affecting the fragile Himalayan region making them susceptible to disasters.

### Context:

In the recent past, several landslides have been reported in Himachal Pradesh, especially in the tribal districts of Lahaul-Spiti and Kinnaur which have seen incessant rains.

**Issue:**

- Deforestation, landslides, land degradation, desertification and Glacier Lake Outbursts Floods are some of the common but critical environmental issues in the Himalayan region and the environment is facing major challenges given the escalation of such issues due to changes in the atmosphere and anthropogenic activities.
- While the dams and hydro power projects have brought prosperity to the region, they have also brought suffering.
- During the construction of power projects and dams, the use of rock blasting and heavy machinery in construction sites, besides tree felling, have damaged the fragile hills.
- Besides, scientific disposal of construction debris is not followed.
  - The entire stretch of the Sutlej is filled with debris that is thrown into the river from construction sites of power projects, dams and roads.
- There are 932 hydropower projects in Himachal Pradesh, which include mini, small, large, and mega projects. Most of these projects are in Kinnaur, Chamba and Shimla districts.
  - While there is plenty of evidence on how these calamities are not natural but such evidence is not considered in policy decisions. Which is why governments continue pushing for more hydro power projects and four-lane highways.

**Way Forward:**

- Though a small Himalayan State, Himachal Pradesh, is playing a very crucial role in sustaining the livelihoods of downstream areas.
- The conservation, sustenance of these ecologically fragile regions is the biggest challenge being faced at the moment which can get further aggravated due to financial constraints and limited resources.
- Development has become a double-edged sword.
- While it is a fact that road connectivity is the key for the tourism sector to flourish, converting single roads into double lanes could not be the best way forward.
- Additionally, when roads are constructed, debris is thrown into the valley and falls into the rivers.
  - The government should focus on the maintenance of existing roads instead of opting for unregulated development.
  - Scientific disposal of debris is also very important.

- The government to review its policy on hydro power projects.
- While the decision to set up power projects is taken in national interest, the concerns of people are to be understood and addressed. A balance has to be struck between national interest and the concerns of the local people. There is a need for a consensus with the locals before setting up a project.

## THE INDIAN EXPRESS

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

#### 1. How are Rajya Sabha members punished for misconduct in the House?

##### Context

The Chairman of the Rajya Sabha is reportedly contemplating action against MPs who, he thinks, were involved in the fracas in the House.

##### Provisions in House Rules of Rajya Sabha for punishing members

##### 1) For conduct inside the House

- **Ground for punishment:** Rule 256 of the **Rajya Sabha's Rules of Procedure** specifies the acts of misconduct: Disregarding the authority of the chair, abusing the rules of the council by persistently and willfully obstructing the business thereof.
- However, the **power to suspend a member** is vested in the House, not in the chairman.
- Under the rule, **the maximum period of suspension** is for the remainder of the session.
- By convention, a suspended member loses his right to get replies to his questions.
- Thus, suspension from the service of the House is regarded as a serious punishment.
- But, surprisingly, **the rules do not spell out the disabilities of a suspended member.**
- These are imposed on them as per conventions or precedent.

- Suspension for the remainder of the session makes sense only when they are **suspended immediately after the misconduct** has been noticed by the chair.
- The rules of the House do not empower Parliament to inflict any punishment on its members other than suspension for creating disorder in the House.

## 2) Misconduct outside the House

- For the acts of misconduct by the MPs outside the House, which constitute a **breach of privilege or contempt of the House**, usually the privilege committee investigates the matter and recommends the course of action and the House acts on it.
- A special committee is appointed usually when the misconduct is so serious that the House may **consider expelling the member**.
- Special committee was appointed in 2005 to inquire into the issue of MPs accepting money for raising questions in Parliament.
- So, special ad-hoc committees are appointed only to investigate serious misconduct by MPs outside the House.

### Issue in the present context

- It appears that the Rajya Sabha secretariat has prepared a report on the incident in the Rajya Sabha, which accuses some MPs of assaulting security personnel.
- But special ad-hoc committees are appointed only to investigate serious **misconduct by MPs outside the House**.
- No special committee is required to go into what happens before the eyes of the presiding officer inside the House.
- As per the rules of the House, they need to be dealt with then and there.
- The rules do not recognise any punishment other than suspension for a specific period and in this case, the Session is already over.
- **Article 20 of the Constitution** prohibits a greater penalty than what the law provided at the time of committing the offence.

### Conclusion

Punishing the MPs for their misconduct in the House is restricted by the provision in the House rules. These restrictions need to be looked into in the face of growing disruption by the members.

## 2. What is Shariah Law?

The Taliban have pledged that women in Afghanistan will have rights “within the bounds of Islamic law,” or Shariah, under their newly established rule. This seems

### What is Shariah?

- Shariah is based on the Quran, stories of the Prophet Muhammad’s life and the rulings of religious scholars, forming the moral and legal framework of Islam.
- The Quran details a path to a moral life, but not a specific set of laws.

### Interpreting Shariah

- The interpretations of Shariah are a matter of debate across the Muslim world, and all groups and governments that base their legal systems on Shariah have done so differently.
- One interpretation of Shariah could afford women extensive rights, while another could leave women with few.
- Critics have said that some of the Taliban restrictions on women under the guise of Islamic law actually went beyond the bounds of Shariah.
- When the Taliban say they are instituting Shariah law, that does not mean they are doing so in ways that Islamic scholars or other Islamic authorities would agree with.

### What does Shariah prescribe?

- Shariah lists some specific crimes, such as theft and adultery, and punishments if accusations meet a standard of proof.
- It also offers moral and spiritual guidance, such as when and how to pray, or how to marry and divorce.
- It does not forbid women to leave home without a male escort or bar them from working in most jobs.

### How have the Taliban previously interpreted Shariah?

- When the Taliban controlled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001, they banned television and most musical instruments.
- They established a department for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice based on a Saudi model.

## Restrictions imposed on Women

- Restrictions on behavior, dress and movement were enforced by morality police officers, who drove around in pickup trucks, publicly humiliating and whipping women who did not adhere to their rules.
- In 1996, a woman in Kabul, Afghanistan, had the end of her thumb cut off for wearing nail polish, according to Amnesty International.
- Other restrictions include a ban on schooling for girls, and publicly bashing people who violated the group's morality code.
- Women accused of adultery are stoned to death.

## 3. Uttarakhand's Narayankoti Temple: Adopt a Heritage Project

### Why in News

Recently, the Narayankoti temple (Uttarakhand) has been included under the Centre's **Adopt a Heritage project**.

### Key Points

- **Adopt a Heritage Project:**
  - **About:**
    - Launched on 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 (**World Tourism Day**), it is a **collaborative effort by the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Culture and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), State/UTs Governments.**
  - **Aim:**
    - To **develop tourism amenities** at heritage/ natural/ tourist sites spread across India to make them tourist friendly, in a planned and phased manner.
  - **Implementation:**
    - The **sites/monuments are selected on the basis of tourist footfall and visibility** and can be **adopted by private and public sector companies and individuals** – known as **Monument Mitras** – **for an initial period of five years.**
    - The Monument Mitras are **selected by the 'oversight and vision committee,'** co-chaired by the **Tourism Secretary and the Culture Secretary,** on the basis of the bidder's 'vision' for development of all amenities at the heritage site.
      - There is **no financial bid involved.**
    - The corporate sector is expected to use **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** funds for the upkeep of the site.

## Other Related Schemes

- DekhoApnaDesh
- Iconic Tourist Sites
- Swadesh Darshan
- Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD)
- Narayankoti Temple:
  - The temple is a **group of ancient temples**, about 2 km from Guptkashi on the **Rudraprayag-Gaurikund highway**.
  - This is the **only place in the country which has nine planetary temples in a group** that are a “symbol of nine planets”.
  - It is devoted to **Lakshmi Narayana** who is associated with Pandavas.
  - It is believed that these temples were **constructed in the 9<sup>th</sup> century**.

## Other Important Places in Uttarakhand

- **Chardham** - Gangotri, Yamunotri, Badrinath (on the bank of River Alaknanda, dedicated to Lord Vishnu), Kedarnath (dedicated to Lord Shiva), collectively known as Char dham.
  - Under the **Chardham Pariyojana**, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is aiming to improve the connectivity for Chardham.
- **Hemkund Sahib**: Formerly known as Gurudwara Shri Hemkund Sahib Ji, it is a Sikh place of worship and pilgrimage site in Chamoli district. It is devoted to **Guru Gobind Singh**, the tenth Sikh Guru, and finds mention in Dasam Granth, a work dictated by Guruji himself.
- **UNESCO World Heritage Site** of Valley of Flowers and Nanda Devi (National Parks).
- **Jim Corbett National Park** (oldest national park of the country) and **Rajaji Tiger Reserve**.

## 4.Reservation Applicable in Either of States after Division: SC

### Why in News

Recently, the **Supreme Court (SC)** has ruled that a **person belonging to a reserved category in an undivided state** is entitled to **claim benefit of reservation in either of the successor States**.

- The ruling came after a resident (**Scheduled Caste**) of Jharkhand, filed an **appeal against the High Court order denying him appointment** in state civil



service examination of 2007 on the ground that his address proof showed that he was a permanent resident of Patna, Bihar.

- Under the **Bihar Reorganisation Act, 2000** passed by the parliament a new state, Jharkhand was created from a portion of Bihar.
  - **Article 3** empowers the Parliament to make law relating to the formation of new states and alteration of existing states.

## Key Points

- **Reservation:**
  - The SC has ruled that a **person belonging to a reserved category is entitled to claim benefit of reservation in either of the successor States** of Bihar or Jharkhand.
  - However he/she **cannot claim benefit of the quota simultaneously in both the successor States** upon their reorganisation in November, 2000. As it will defeat the mandate of Articles 341(1) and 342(1) of the Constitution.
    - **Article 341:** The President may with respect to any State or Union territory, and where it is a State after consultation with the Governor thereof, by public notification, **specify the castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within castes, races or tribes** which shall for the purposes of this Constitution be **deemed to be Scheduled Castes in relation to that State or Union territory**, as the case may be.
    - **Article 342:** The President may with respect to any State or Union territory, and where it is a State, after consultation with the Governor thereof, by public notification, **specify the tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities** which shall for the purposes of this Constitution be deemed to be **Scheduled Tribes(ST) in relation to that State or Union territory**, as the case may be
- **Other State Migrants:**
  - Members of the reserved category, who are **residents of the successor State of Bihar**, while participating in open selection **in Jharkhand shall be treated to be migrants** and they can participate in the general category without claiming the benefit of reservation and vice-versa.

## Constitutional Provisions Governing Reservation in India

- **Part XVI** deals with reservation of SC and ST in Central and State legislatures.
- **Article 15(4) and 16(4)** of the Constitution enabled the State and Central Governments to reserve seats in government services for the members of the SC and ST.

- The Constitution was amended by the **Constitution (77<sup>th</sup> Amendment) Act, 1995** and a new clause (4A) was inserted in **Article 16** to enable the government to provide reservation in promotion.
- Later, **clause (4A)** was modified by the **Constitution (85<sup>th</sup> Amendment) Act, 2001** to provide consequential seniority to SC and ST candidates promoted by giving reservation.
- **Constitutional 81<sup>st</sup> Amendment Act, 2000** inserted **Article 16 (4 B)** which enables the state to fill the unfilled vacancies of a year which are reserved for SCs/STs in the succeeding year, thereby nullifying the ceiling of fifty percent reservation on total number of vacancies of that year.
- **Article 330 and 332** provides for specific representation through reservation of seats for SCs and STs in the Parliament and in the State Legislative Assemblies respectively.
- **Article 243D** provides reservation of seats for SCs and STs in every **Panchayat**.
- **Article 233T** provides reservation of seats for SCs and STs in every **Municipality**.
- **Article 335** of the constitution says that the claims of **STs and STs shall be taken into consideration constitutently** with the maintenance of efficacy of the administration.
- The **103<sup>rd</sup> Constitution Amendment Act, 2019**, empowered both Centre and the states to provide **10% reservation to the EWS (Economically Weaker Section) category of society** in government jobs and education institutions.

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

### **5. Malabar Rebellion of 1921**

This August 20, marked the centenary of the Malabar rebellion, which is also known as the Moplah riots.

#### **Malabar Rebellion**

- The Malabar Rebellion in 1921 started as resistance against the British colonial rule and the feudal system in southern Malabar but ended in communal violence between Hindus and Muslims.

- There were a series of clashes between Mappila peasantry and their landlords, supported by the British, throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries.
- It began as a reaction against a heavy-handed crackdown on the Khilafat Movement, a campaign in defence of the Ottoman Caliphate by the British authorities in the Eranad and Valluvanad taluks of Malabar.
- The Mappilas attacked and took control of police stations, British government offices, courts and government treasuries.

### Who was Variyankunna Kunjahammed Haji?

- He was one of the leaders of the Malabar Rebellion of 1921.
- He raised 75000 natives, seized control of large territory from the British rule and set up a parallel government.
- In January 1922, under the guise of a treaty, the British betrayed Haji through his close friend Unyan Musaliyar, arresting him from his hideout and producing him before a British judge.
- He was sentenced to death along with his compatriots.

### 6. Melting of the Greenland's Snow Cover

Recently the summit of Greenland received rain and not snow. This has sparked fear as scientists are pointing to it as evidence that Greenland is warming rapidly.

#### About Greenland

- Greenland is the world's largest island located between the Arctic and Atlantic oceans, east of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago.
- It is an autonomous territory within the Kingdom of Denmark.
- Though physiographically a part of the continent of North America, Greenland has been politically and culturally associated with Europe (specifically Norway and Denmark, the colonial powers).
- The majority of its residents are Inuit, whose ancestors migrated from Alaska through Northern Canada, gradually settling across the island by the 13th century.
- It has three-quarters of its surface covered with a permanent ice sheet, which is increasingly coming under threat because of climate change.

## Rain at Greenland: A rarest phenomenon

- At the highest point on Greenland's ice sheet, US maintains a Summit Station, a research facility that observes changes occurring over the island as well as in Arctic weather.
- Researchers observed rain at the normally frigid summit, with the precipitation extending up to Greenland's southeast coast.
- The rain, coupled with warm conditions, caused a major melting event at the summit.
- This led to rapid ice melting running off into the ocean in volumes, thus accelerating global sea-level rise.

## A cause of worry

- Greenland, which is two-thirds the size of India, already witnessed one of its most severe melting events.
- It has lost 8.5 billion tons of surface mass in one day- the third such extreme event in the past decade.
- The UN's "code red" climate report released last week concluded that the burning of fossil fuels led to Greenland melting in the last 20 years.
- The rapid melting is also threatening polar bears, which now have to make their way hundreds of kilometers towards Greenland's interior from the coasts, where they usually find enough food.

## 7. Tungabhadra Dam

### Why in News

Recently, the Vice President visited the Tungabhadra dam in Karnataka.

### Key Point

- **About:**
  - Tungabhadra dam also **known as Pampa Sagar** is a multipurpose dam built across **Tungabhadra River** in Hosapete, Ballari district of Karnataka. It was built by Dr. Thirumalai Iyengar in 1953.
  - Tungabhadra reservoir has a storage capacity of 101 TMC (Thousand Million Cubic feet) with **catchment area spreading to 28000 square kms**. It is about **49.5 meters in height**.
- **Importance:**
  - It is the **life-line of 6 chronically drought prone districts** of Bellary, Koppal and Raichur in **Karnataka** (popularly known as the **rice bowl of Karnataka**) and Anantapur, Cuddapah and Kurnool in neighbouring **Andhra Pradesh**.

- Besides irrigating vast patches of land in the two states, it also **generates hydel power and helps prevent floods.**

### Tungabhadra River

- It is a sacred river in southern India that **flows through the state of Karnataka to Andhra Pradesh.** The ancient name of the river was **Pampa.** The river is approximately 710 km long, and it drains an area of 72,200 sq km.
- It is **formed by the confluence of two rivers, the Tunga River and the Bhadra River.** Both Tunga & Bhadra Rivers originate on the eastern slopes of the **Western Ghats.**
- The greater part of the Tungabhadra's course **lies in the southern part of the Deccan plateau.** The river is fed mainly by rain, and it has a monsoonal regimen with summer high water.
- It's **Major tributaries** are the **Bhadra, the Haridra, the Vedavati, the Tunga, the Varda and the Kumdavathi.**
- It **flows in a more or less northwest direction** before joining the eastern river **Krishna.** The Krishna River finally ends into the Bay of Bengal.

### 8.PM-KUSUM and Rooftop Solar Programme Phase-II

#### Why in News

Recently, the **Ministry of New and Renewable (MNRE)** has conducted a review of implementation of **Prime Minister's Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Utthan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM) scheme** and **Rooftop Solar Programme Phase-II** and suggested measures for expansion of the schemes.

#### Key Points

- **About PM-KUSUM:**
  - The PM-KUSUM scheme was launched by the MNRE in 2019, **to support installation of off-grid solar pumps in rural areas** and reduce dependence on grid, in grid-connected areas.
  - The objective of the scheme is to **enable farmers to set up solar power generation capacity on their barren lands and to sell it to the grid.**
  - The government's **Budget for 2020-21** expanded the scope for the scheme with **20 lakh farmers** to be provided assistance to install standalone solar pumps; another 15 lakh farmers to be given help to solarise their grid-connected pump sets.
- **Intended Benefits of the PM- KUSUM Scheme:**
  - **Helping Farmers:**

- It ensures **water-security** to farmers by providing a day-time reliable source of power for irrigation activities.
- It also incentivises the farmers **to sell surplus solar energy to the states**, which in turn will augment their income.
- **Helping Environment:**
  - If farmers are able to sell surplus power, they will be incentivised to save power and, in turn, it will mean the **reasonable and efficient use of groundwater**.
  - Also, expansion of the irrigation cover by providing decentralized solar-based irrigation and **moving away from polluting diesel**.
- **Helping Discoms:**
  - As farmers will be less dependent on subsidized electricity, the PM KUSUM scheme will support the financial health of electricity distribution companies (discoms) by reducing the burden of subsidy to the agriculture sector.
  - Help them meet the **RPO (Renewable Purchase Obligation) targets**.
- **Helping States:**
  - **Promotes decentralised solar power production**, and reduces transmission losses.
  - A potential way to reduce their subsidy outlay towards irrigation.
- **About Rooftop Solar Programme Phase II:**
  - The **aim** is to achieve a **cumulative capacity of 40,000 MW from Rooftop Solar Projects by the year 2022**.
  - In a grid-connected rooftop or small Solar Voltaic Panel system, the DC power generated from the Solar Voltaic panel is converted to AC power using the power conditioning unit and is fed to the grid.
  - This scheme is being **implemented in the states by distribution companies (DISCOMs)**.
  - The **MNRE is providing a 40% subsidy** for the first 3 kW and 20% subsidy beyond 3 kW and upto 10 kW of solar panel capacity.
- **Objectives of the Rooftop Solar Programme:**
  - To promote the **grid-connected SPV rooftop** and small SPV power generating plants among the residential, community, institutional, industrial and commercial establishments.
  - To mitigate the **dependence on fossil fuel** based electricity generation and encourage environment-friendly Solar electricity generation.
  - To create **an enabling environment for investment in the solar energy sector** by the private sector, state government and the individuals.
  - To create an enabling environment for the **supply of solar power from rooftop and small plants to the grid**.

- Therefore, the installation of rooftop solar will **bring down the electricity consumption** of the households and **save electricity expenditure**.

### Other Schemes for Promoting Solar Energy

- **Scheme for Development of Ultra Mega Renewable Energy Power Parks:** It is a scheme to develop Ultra Mega Renewable Energy Power Parks (UMREPPs) under the existing Solar Park Scheme.
- **National Wind-Solar Hybrid Policy 2018:** The main objective of the Policy is to provide a framework for promotion of large grid connected wind-solar PV hybrid systems for optimal and efficient utilization of wind and solar resources, transmission infrastructure and land.
- **Atal Jyoti Yojana:** The AJAY scheme was launched in September 2016 for the installation of solar street lighting (SSL) systems in states with less than 50% households covered with grid power (as per Census 2011).
- **International Solar Alliance (ISA):** The ISA, is an Indian initiative that was launched by the Prime Minister of India and the President of France on 30th November 2015 in Paris, France on the side-lines of the Conference of the Parties (COP-21), with 121 solar resource rich countries lying fully or partially between the tropic of Cancer and tropic of Capricorn as prospective members.
- **One Sun, One World, One Grid (OSOWOG):** It focuses on a framework for facilitating global cooperation, building a global ecosystem of interconnected renewable energy resources (mainly solar energy) that can be seamlessly shared.
- **National Solar Mission:** It is a part of the **National Action Plan on Climate Change**.
- **Suryamitra Skill Development Programme:** To provide skill training to rural youth in handling solar installations.

**Prelims Practice Questions**

**1. Which of the following is/are famous for Sun temples?**

1. Arasavalli
2. Amarakantak
3. Omkareshwar

**Select the correct answer using the code given below:**

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

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

- Arasavalli in the Srikakulam district of the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh is famous for its Suryanarayana temple dedicated to Lord Surya (sun god).
- Amarkantak is a well-frequented Hindu pilgrimage centre that is popularly known as “Teerthraj” - “the king of pilgrimages”. It is popular for its ancient temples of Kalachuri and the Sarvodaya Jain temple. Three rivers - the holy Narmada, the Sone and the Johila emerge here from the womb of Amarkantak. A rising stream of Narmada can be seen at the Narmada Udgam Temple which is the most visited place in Amarkantak.
- Omkareshwar is a Hindu temple dedicated to God Shiva.

**2. This port is strategically located on South Eastern coastline of Oman. It straddles along critical sea lanes in Arabian Sea and Gulf of Aden. In 2018, India secured access to this Port for military use and logistical support.**

**The port being talked about is:**

- a. Port of Khasab
- b. Chabahar Port
- c. Duqm Port
- d. Bandar Abbas Port

**Answer: c**



**Explanation:**

- Al Duqm Port is a seaport located in Oman. The Port of Duqm is situated on the southeastern seaboard of Oman, overlooking the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.

**3. The Indian Navy undertook bilateral exercise 'Zayed Talwar 2021' with**

- a. Saudi Arabia
- b. United Arab Emirates
- c. Qatar
- d. Bahrain

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- Indian Navy recently undertook bilateral exercise 'Zayed Talwar 2021' with UAE Navy off the coast of Abu Dhabi.

**4. With reference to the Nuclear Fusion, Consider the following statements:**

1. Heavy isotopes split apart to produce Energy.
2. It is the process that powers the Sun.
3. It takes place in a state of matter called plasma.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer : C

Explanation

**About Nuclear Fusion:**

- Nuclear fusion is defined as the **combining of several small nuclei into one large nucleus** with the subsequent release of huge amounts of energy.

- It is the **opposite reaction of fission**, where heavy isotopes are split apart. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- Harnessing fusion, **the process that powers the Sun**, could provide a limitless, clean energy source.
  - In the sun, the extreme pressure produced by its immense gravity creates the conditions for fusion to happen. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Fusion reactions **take place in a state of matter called plasma**. Plasma is a hot, charged gas made of positive ions and free-moving electrons that has unique properties distinct from solids, liquids and gases.
  - At high temperatures, electrons are ripped from atom's nuclei and become a plasma or an ionised state of matter. Plasma is also known as the **fourth state of matter**. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**

**5. Which of the following is not a quantitative instrument of monetary policy of the RBI?**

- A Bank Rate
- B Cash Reserve Ratio
- C Open Market Operations
- D Imposing Margin Requirements on Secured Loans

Answer : D

Explanation

- **Monetary policy** is the macroeconomic policy laid down by the central bank. It involves management of money supply and interest rate and is the demand side economic policy used by the government of a country to achieve macroeconomic objectives like inflation, consumption, growth and liquidity.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) controls the money supply in the economy in various ways. The tools used by the Central bank to control money supply can be quantitative or qualitative.
- **Quantitative tools** control the extent of money supply by changing the **Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR), or Bank Rate or Open Market Operations (OMOs)**.
  - Qualitative tools include persuasion by the Central bank in order to make commercial banks discourage or encourage lending which is done through moral suasion, margin requirement, etc.
- **Hence, Option D is correct.**

6. With reference to the Adi Cascade Frog, consider the following statements:

1. It has been named after the indigenous Adi tribe living in the Adi hills of Arunachal Pradesh.
2. Cascade frogs are named so because of their preference of oceans and large water bodies.

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

- Recently, a team of researchers have discovered a new species of cascade frog in **Arunachal Pradesh** named Adi Cascade Frog.
- It has been **named** Adi Cascade Frog (*Amolops Adicola*) **after the indigenous Adi tribe** living in the Adi hills of Arunachal Pradesh. The literal meaning of Adi is “hill” or “mountain top. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Cascade frogs are named so because of their **preference of small waterfalls or cascades** in flowing hill streams. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**

## Mains Practice Questions

**1. Explain intra-generational and inter-generational issues of equity from the perspective of inclusive growth and sustainable development. (150 words)**

### Approach

- Start the answer by briefly mentioning the meaning of intra-generational and inter-generational equity.
- Separately explain what the intra-generational and inter-generational issues of equity are.
- Conclude your answer by mentioning the significance of inclusive growth and sustainable development.

**2. In India it is said that the wealth hierarchy mimics the caste hierarchy. In the light of this statement establish the relationship between caste and economic inequality in India and highlight the initiatives taken to address the caste inequality.**

### Approach

- Introduce by explaining the given statement with relevant facts and data.
- Discuss the relationship between caste and economic inequality in India.
- Highlight the policy measures and other initiatives designed to address caste inequality.