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**OCTOBER**

**19.10.2021**

# **CURRENT AFFAIRS**

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

**1. Russia breaks diplomatic ties with NATO**

Russia has decided that it would halt the activities of its diplomatic mission to NATO after it expelled eight Russian diplomats in a row over spying.

**Why such move?**

- NATO had set up a prohibitive regime for Russian diplomats in Brussels by banning them from its headquarters building.
- Relations between Moscow and the West have been strained for years, but the immediate impetus for the Russian move was a spy scandal.
- Military tensions have also escalated in recent years, including last spring when Russian troops massed along Ukraine's border (probably for invasion).

**Significance of the move**

- The decision will end a post-Cold War experiment, never very successful, in building trust between Russia and the Western alliance.
- It was established decades ago to contain the Soviet Union, which officials in Moscow accused of later encroaching on former Soviet territory.

**About North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**

- NATO is a military alliance established by the North Atlantic Treaty (also called the Washington Treaty) of April 4, 1949.
- It sought to create a counterweight to Soviet armies stationed in Central and Eastern Europe after World War II.
- Its original members were Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- NATO has spread a web of partners, namely Egypt, Israel, Sweden, Austria, Switzerland and Finland.

**Ideology of NATO**

- NATO ensures that the security of its European member countries is inseparably linked to that of its North American member countries.
- It commits the Allies to democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law, as well as to the peaceful resolution of disputes.

- It also provides a unique forum for dialogue and cooperation across the Atlantic.

### The Article 5

- The heart of NATO is expressed in Article 5, in which the signatory members agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all.

### Why in news now?

- The relationship between NATO and Russia is at its lowest point since the end of the Cold War.
- The NATO (rather US) sees their aggressive actions, not least against Ukraine, but also the significant military buildup and violations of important arms control agreements.
- NATO suspended practical cooperation with Russia in 2014 after it annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula.

## 2. International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL)

The Tamil Nadu police have issued an alert on the possibility of an attack on fishermen crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) for fishing in Sri Lankan waters.

### About International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL)

- A maritime boundary is a conceptual division of the Earth's water surface areas using physiographic or geopolitical criteria.
- As such, it usually bounds areas of exclusive national rights over mineral and biological resources, encompassing maritime features, limits and zones.
- Generally, a maritime boundary is delineated at a particular distance from a jurisdiction's coastline.
- Although in some countries the term maritime boundary represents borders of a maritime nation that are recognized by the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea**.
- The terminology does not encompass lake or river boundaries, which are considered within the context of land boundaries.

The delineation of maritime boundaries has strategic, economic, and environmental implications.

## Classification

Maritime spaces can be divided into the following groups based on their legal status:

1. **Under the sovereignty and authority (exercising power) of a coastal State:** internal waters, territorial sea, and archipelagic waters,
2. **With mixed legal regime, which fall under both the jurisdiction of the coastal State and under the international law:** contiguous zone, the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone, and
3. **That can be used by all States (including land-locked ones) on an equal basis:** high seas.

## Zones

The zones of maritime boundaries are expressed in concentric limits surrounding coastal and feature baselines.

1. **Inland waters**—the zone inside the baseline.
2. **Territorial sea**—the zone extending 12 nm. from the baseline
3. **Contiguous zone**—the area extending 24 nm. from the baseline
4. **Exclusive Economic Zone**—the area extending 200 nm from the baseline except when the space between two countries is less than 400 nm

## 3. Anticipatory bail

### Context:

The Supreme Court has held that **a superior court can set aside an anticipatory bail order** if there was enough material to suggest that factors like gravity of the offence and the role of the accused in the crime were not considered by the lower court.

### The concept of anticipatory bail:

- The provision of anticipatory bail under **Section 438** was introduced when CrPC was amended in 1973.
- **As opposed to ordinary bail**, which is granted to a person who is under arrest, in anticipatory bail, a person is directed to be released on bail even before arrest made.
- **Time limit:** The Supreme Court (SC) in **Sushila Aggarwal v. State of NCT of Delhi (2020)** case delivered a significant verdict, ruling that no time limit can be set while granting anticipatory Bail and it can continue even until the end of the trial.

- It is issued only by the Sessions Court and High Court.

### Significance:

- The reason for enactment of Section 438 in the Code was parliamentary acceptance of the crucial underpinning of **personal liberty in a free and democratic country**.
- Parliament wished to foster **respect for personal liberty and accord primacy to a fundamental tenet of criminal jurisprudence**, that everyone is presumed to be innocent till he or she is found guilty.

### Recent observations made by the Supreme Court on its usage?

1. HCs and SC are given powers to grant anticipatory bail to the accused because of the premium that the Constitution places on **the right to liberty guaranteed under Article 21**.
2. The grant or rejection of an application under CrPC has a direct bearing on **the right to life and liberty of an individual**. Therefore, the provision needs to be read liberally, and considering its beneficial nature. The courts must not read in restrictions that the legislature have not explicitly provided for.
3. In doing so, the court may also exercise its powers under **Article 142 of the Constitution** to pass such an order.

### Need for such protection:

An accused, besides being an accused, may also be **the primary caregiver or sole breadwinner of the family**. His arrest may leave his loved ones in a state of starvation and neglect.

- In the **1980 Gurbaksh Singh Sibbia vs State of Punjab case**, a five-judge Supreme Court bench led by then Chief Justice Y V Chandrachud ruled that **438 (1) is to be interpreted in the light of Article 21 of the Constitution (protection of life and personal liberty)**.

## 4. A shadow foreign policy for the first time

### In News:

- The Centre for Policy Research (CPR) has come out with the document titled **'India's Path to Power: Strategy in a world adrift'**, outlining an

alternative to the present foreign and defence policies of the government of the day.

### Evaluation of India's recent foreign policy:

#### Success in foreign relations:

- India has adopted an **innovative, bold and assertive foreign policy** in recent times.
- India has been able to overcome the hesitations of history and has adopted a more pragmatic approach to its foreign policy. It has broken out from traditional moulds of non-alignment and adopted a **strategic multi-alignment strategy** keeping in mind the national interest.
- After the failure of peace initiatives with Pakistan, India has adopted a firm stand against state-sponsored terrorism originating from Pakistan and has been able to convince international organizations and several countries to exert pressure on Pakistan. The sanctioning by the FATF of Pakistan has forced Pakistan to take some measures to dismantle terror networks in the country.
- **India's relations with Israel and the Arab countries have become productive.**
- India has been able to ensure the **deepening of its ties with the U.S.** despite a political change in the U.S.

#### Failures in foreign policy:

- The **efforts to strengthen relations with the neighbours have not materialised for India.** Its relationship with countries like Nepal, Sri Lanka continues to be at an all-time low. China's influence in these countries seems to be growing at the cost of India's.
- **China's incursion into Ladakh** marks a failure of India's attempts to contain the increasingly assertive nature of China.

#### Details:

- The document is critical of the foreign and defence policies of the current government and argues that such policy is not conducive to finding a path to power for India in the post-pandemic world.
- The document notes with concern that **domestic issues have impacted foreign policy** and suggests that India should set its house in order to stem the tide of international reaction. It warns against the perverse impact of domestic political and ideological factors driving India's foreign policy. It warns that political polarisation and majoritarianism could **diminish India's strength on the international stage.**

- The foundational source of India's influence in the world is the power it enjoys and this rests on **four pillars, domestic economic growth, social inclusion, political democracy and a broadly liberal constitutional order.**
- The report criticizes the **omni-directional Indian foreign policy.**

### **Recommendations:**

- The document calls for a change in India's foreign policy and makes the following recommendations.

### **Increasing multilateral engagement:**

- The document warns that it would be **incorrect and counterproductive for India to turn its back on globalisation** and in this direction it calls on India to intensify its multilateral engagement.
- The document suggests that **SAARC** should be revived and that India should rejoin the **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership** and continue its long-standing quest for membership in the **Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.**

### **Maintaining strategic autonomy:**

- The report stresses the importance of strategic autonomy in the ever-changing world. It **suggests maintaining good relations individually with both the U.S. and China.**

### **China Policy:**

- The report acknowledging the influence of China on India's external environment suggests a **combination of engagement and competition with China.**

### **Pakistan policy:**

- The report suggests the **resumption of dialogue and a gradual revival of trade, transport and other links with Pakistan.**

### **Conclusion:**

- Though the suggestions made by the report are open to deliberation, the significance of the report is that it reveals the end of the era of consensus foreign policy and presents a **shadow foreign policy for the first time in India.**

- The **shadow cabinet** is a feature of the **Westminster system of government**. It consists of a group of opposition spokespeople who, under the leadership of the Leader of the Opposition, form an alternative cabinet to that of the government.
- Members of a shadow cabinet have no executive power. It is the shadow cabinet's responsibility to **scrutinise the policies and actions of the government, as well as to offer alternative policies**.
- **India does not have a tradition of shadow cabinets.**

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

### **5. Improving livestock breeding**

#### **In News**

The revised version of the Rashtriya Gokul Mission and National Livestock Mission (NLM) proposes to bring focus on entrepreneurship development and breed improvement in cattle, buffalo, poultry, sheep, goat, and piggery.

#### **Livestock breeding and challenges**

- **Unorganised in nature:** Livestock breeding in India has been **largely unorganised**.
- **Lack of linkages:** Because of this unorganised nature there have been **gaps in forward and backward integration** across the value chain.
- **Impact on quality:** The above scenario **impacts the quality of livestock that is produced** and in turn negatively impacts the return on investment for livestock farmers.
- Roughly 80% bovines in the country are low on productivity and are reared by small and marginal farmers.

#### **Entrepreneurship development through NLM and Rashtriya Gokul Mission**

- The revised version of the Rashtriya Gokul Mission and **National Livestock Mission (NLM)** proposes to bring focus on entrepreneurship development.
- **Breed improvement infrastructure:** It seeks to provide incentives to individual entrepreneurs, farmer producer organisations, farmer cooperatives, joint liability groups, self-help groups, **Section 8 companies** for entrepreneurship development and State governments for **breed improvement infrastructure**.



- The breed multiplication farm component of the **Rashtriya Gokul Mission** is going to provide for capital subsidy up to ₹200 lakh for setting up breeding farm with at least 200 milch cows/ buffalo using **latest breeding technology**.
- Moreover, the strategy of incentivising breed multiplication farm will result in the **employment of 1 lakh farmers**.
- The grassroots initiatives in this sphere will be further amplified by **web applications like e-Gopala** that provide real-time information to livestock farmers.
- **Poultry:** The **poultry entrepreneurship programme of the NLM** will provide for capital subsidy up to ₹25 lakh for the setting up of a parent farm with a capacity to rear 1,000 chicks.
- Under this model, the rural entrepreneur running the hatchery will be supplying chicks to the farmers.
- This is expected to provide employment to at least 14 lakh people.
- **Sheep and goat entrepreneurship:** In the context of sheep and goat entrepreneurship, there is a provision of capital subsidy of 50% up to 50 lakh.
- An entrepreneur under this model shall set up a breeder farm, develop the whole chain will eventually sell the animals to the farmers or in the open market.
- This model is projected to generate a net profit of more than ₹33 lakh for the entrepreneur per year.
- **Piggery:** For piggery, the NLM will provide 50% capital subsidy of up to ₹30 lakh.
- Each entrepreneur will be aided with establishment of breeder farms with 100 sows and 10 boars, expected to produce 2,400 piglets in a year.
- This model is expected to generate a profit of **₹1.37 crore after 16 months and 1.5 lakh jobs**.

## Conclusion

The revised scheme of NLM coupled with the Rashtriya Gokul Mission and the Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund has the potential to dramatically enhance the productivity and traceability standards of our livestock.

## 6. Fourth International Solar Alliance General Assembly

**In News:** The Fourth Assembly of the ISA will deliberate on

- The key initiatives around the operationalisation of the OSOWOG initiative,
- The \$1 trillion Solar Investment Roadmap for 2030
- Approval of a Blended Financial Risk Mitigation Facility

- Discuss the strategic plan of the ISA for the next five years encompassing a Country Partnership Framework, Strategy for Private Sector Engagement, and initiatives such as Viability Gap Financing scheme to facilitate affordable finance for solar energy projects across ISA's membership.
- Discuss the partnership with Global Energy Alliance (GEA) to scale up technical and financial support to LDCs and SIDS.

### **'One Sun One World One Grid' (OSOWOG) initiative proposed by India**

Proposed by India to set up a framework for facilitating global cooperation which aims at building a global ecosystem of interconnected renewable energy resources that can be easily shared

- Envisions building and scaling inter-regional energy grids to share solar energy across the globe, leveraging the differences of time zones, seasons, resources, and prices between countries and regions
- Help decarbonise energy production, which is today the largest source of global greenhouse gas emissions.
- With India's Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, the World Bank and the ISA signing a tripartite agreement on OSOWOG, the initiative could be the world's most important renewables catalyst. It can unlock unprecedented economies of scale in energy generation and transmission.
- Rigorous assessments and modelling have confirmed the initiative's technical and economic viability, building a strong business case.
- Its commercial feasibility has been further augmented by multilateral development banks such as World Bank, which are helping create markets by driving down costs of solar power.

## **7. Greenfield hopes**

**Background:**

**Uptick in investment in the Indian economy:**

- The reducing burden of COVID-19 infections, accompanied by the gradual lifting of restrictions, has not only spurred an improvement in important economic indicators but has also led to a **much-needed investment revival**.
- Recent data have shown that the investment commitments and indicators of actual capital expenditure on the ground have recorded a **more than robust growth in the second quarter (July-September quarter) after an insipid Quarter 1**.

- In fact, the fresh investments in the first half of 2021-22 have been higher than even the pre-COVID year of 2019-20.

### Significance:

- **Increased investment is inevitable for the economic growth of any country**, especially for a developing economy like India. The uptick in investments could be indicative of the prospects of the Indian economy in the medium and long term.
- While the increased public expenditure forms the major part of the investment, the **private capital outlays also amount to an impressive Rs. 4.87-lakh crore**. This is significant as it could be considered **indicative of the increasing confidence of the private sector** in the Indian economy in the post-pandemic phase.

### Governmental measures being taken:

#### PLI scheme:

- The implementation of the **“PLI” scheme to promote manufacturing investments in India** is expected to further spur more investments in textiles, pharma, electronics over the second half of this year and 2022-23. The PLI scheme could help nudge a few investments away from Vietnam, Cambodia and Bangladesh towards India.

#### Reforms in telecom sector:

- The government recently approved several measures for the ailing telecom sector. The new reforms include **nine structural reforms and five procedural reforms for the sector**. The new reforms will go a long way in addressing the telecom industry’s long-standing issues like spectrum auctioning and the AGR issue and help in its revival.

#### Other measures:

- The **disinvestment process of the public sector firm, Air India** and the **nullification of the provisions for retrospective tax** augur well for the investment climate in India as it will add to the confidence of prospective investors in India.

#### Recommendations:

- The rebound in investments must be nurtured with the right policy measures to ensure sustained economic growth in India. In this direction, the article makes the following recommendations.

### **Speedy implementation of schemes and policies:**

- Speedy implementation is essential to ensure the realization of the expected gains from the committed investments.
- Out of the 13 sectors for which PLIs have been announced, only nine have been notified so far, and the others must be spelt out quickly to ensure that global investors do not pick another destination.

### **International economic partnership:**

- India should seek to seal **economic partnership pacts and scale up its ties with key markets like the EU, the U.S. and the U.K.**

### **Improving perception of India on the international stage:**

- In a world where **capital is increasingly influenced by environmental, social and governance standards**, these factors should be given the requisite policy attention as well.
- India should focus on improving its image on key socio-economic parameters and **adherence to the 'rule of law'** while refraining from heavy-handed regulations like the draft norms for e-commerce.

**THE INDIAN EXPRESS**

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

### **1. Indo-Abrahamic Accord: A new QUAD**

The first-ever meeting between the foreign ministers of India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States is being widely perceived as a new QUAD group.

#### **Abraham Accord**

- The Israel–UAE normalization agreement is officially called the Abraham Accords Peace Agreement.
- It was initially agreed to in a joint statement by the United States, Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on August 13, 2020.
- The UAE thus became the third Arab country, after Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994, to agree to formally normalize its relationship with Israel as well as the first Persian Gulf country to do so.

- Concurrently, Israel agreed to suspend plans for annexing parts of the West Bank.
- The agreement normalized what had long been informal but robust foreign relations between the two countries.

### **The idea of the Indo-Abrahamic Accord**

- The idea of an accord between India, the UAE and Israel was first suggested by Mohammed Soliman, an Egyptian scholar based in Washington.
- The focus, then, was on India taking full advantage of the normalisation of relations between Israel and the Arabs.

### **Prospects of India joining the accord**

- Adding “Indo” to the Abrahamic Accords — from think tank level to the policy domain underlines the extraordinary churn in the geopolitics of the Middle East.
- It also points to new openings for India in the region and ever-widening possibilities for Delhi’s strategic cooperation with Washington.

### **Significance for India**

The new minilateral consultation with the US, Israel and the UAE should started breaking that political taboo by:

#### **(1) Creating a minilateral in the Middle-East:**

- Such events mark an important turning point in Delhi’s engagement with the Middle East.
- It suggests India is now ready to move from bilateral relations conducted in separate silos towards an integrated regional policy.
- As in the Indo-Pacific, so in the Middle East, regional coalitions are bound to widen Delhi’s reach and deepen its impact.

#### **(2) India bridging the Arab-Israeli rift:**

- Often the Arab nations and Israel are divided over Palestine.
- The simultaneous expansion of Delhi’s cooperation with Israel and the Arab world was considered impossible.
- However, India’s new foreign policy broke from that assessment and demonstrated the feasibility of a non-ideological engagement with the Middle East.
- This diplomatic pragmatism allows Delhi to reimagine its policies towards the Middle East.

### (3) Extension of cooperation with the US:

- Thinking of the US as a partner in the Middle East is part of the reimagination.
- For long, India defined the US, and more broadly the West, as part of the problem in the Middle East.
- As a result, Delhi kept a reasonable political distance from the US in the region.

### (4) Miscellaneous:

- India's scale with Israeli innovation and Emirati capital could produce immense benefits to all three countries.
- Add American strategic support and you would see a powerful dynamic unfolding in the region.

### Is it a new Quad in making?

- It is perhaps too early to call the new minilateral with the US, UAE and Israel the "new Quad" for the Middle East.
- It will be a while before this grouping will find its feet and evolve.
- After all, it took quite some effort to build the Quad in the east with Australia, India, Japan and the United States.

### What is the kind of agenda that this group can develop?

**Economic Cooperation:** Like the eastern Quad, it would make sense for the new Middle Eastern minilateral to focus on non-military issues like trade, energy, and environment and focus on promoting public goods.

**Technology cooperation:** Beyond trade, there is potential for India, UAE and Israel to collaborate on many areas — from semiconductor design and fabrication to space technology.

**A new geopolitical entity:** The new "Quad" in the Middle East is likely to be India's only new coalition in the region. It provides a thrust to new regionalism to the west involving India.

**'Extended' neighborhood:** This engagement will open the door for extending the collaboration with other common regional partners like Egypt (better call it Suez Canal), who will lend great strategic depth to the Indo-Abrahamic accords.

### Conclusion

- This engagement has thus opened up a new opportunity for India to go for deeper engagement with Israel without risking its relations with the other Arab states of the Persian Gulf.

- In the evolving scenario, there seems much scope for a profitable trilateral synergy, but India cannot take its preponderance as a given.
- There is much to be done in realizing the full potential of the “Indo-Abrahamic Accords”.

## 2. eSanjeevani

**In News:** eSanjeevani, India’s leading telemedicine service, under the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, clocked 1.4 crore consultations.

Operating in two variants i.e., eSanjeevaniAB-HWC and eSanjeevaniOPD, this initiative has over the time gained immense popularity in being able to deliver healthcare services through digital platforms.

### eSanjeevani AB-HWC, a Doctor-to-Doctor teleconsultation system

- Launched with an intent to alleviate the Urban-Rural divide in terms of health services
- Works on Hub-and-Spoke Model
- The ‘Ayushman Bharat-Health and Wellness Centres’ (HWCs) set up at State Level, act as Spokes, which are mapped with the HUB (comprising MBBS/Specialty/Super-Specialty doctors) at Zonal level. This enables a patient residing in rural areas to avail quality health services.

### eSanjeevani OPD

- Launched in 2021
- Aims to provide safe Doctor-to-Patient consultations
- Has continued to grow in demand as it allows citizens to consult doctors from the comfort and in the confines of their homes, bypassing wait time, travel, risks of infection etc.

### Significance

- Addressing the shortage of doctors and specialists at the ground levels
- Reducing the burden on secondary and tertiary level hospitals
- Aims to constantly improve the digital health infrastructure of the country

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

### 3. Species in news: Bengal Florican

Environmentalists have recently written to the Assam government on the urgent need to prevent land-use changes at Kokilabari Seed Farm in the state to protect Bengal floricans and other species.

#### Bengal Florican

- The Bengal florican also called Bengal bustard, is a bustard species native to the Indian subcontinent, Cambodia, and Vietnam.
- Fewer than 1,000 individuals were estimated to be alive as of 2017.
- It has two disjunct populations, one in the Indian subcontinent, another in Southeast Asia.
- The former occurs from Uttar Pradesh (India) through the Terai of Nepal to Assam (where it is called ulu mora) and Arunachal Pradesh in India, and historically to Bangladesh.
- It has a very small, rapidly declining population largely as a result of the widespread loss of its grassland habitat.

#### Conservation status

- **IUCN Red List Status:** Critically Endangered
- **CITES:** Appendix I
- **Wildlife Protection Act of India, 1972:** Schedule I

### 4. Geospatial Energy Map of India

The NITI Aayog has launched the Geospatial Energy Map of India.

#### GIS Energy Map

- NITI Aayog in collaboration with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has developed a comprehensive Geographic Information System (GIS) Energy Map of India.
- The GIS map provides a holistic picture of all energy resources of the country.
- It enables visualization of energy installations such as conventional power plants, oil and gas wells, petroleum refineries, coal fields and coal blocks.
- It also provides district-wise data on renewable energy power plants and renewable energy resource potential, etc through 27 thematic layers.



### Significance of the map

- The map attempts to identify and locate all primary and secondary sources of energy and their transportation/transmission networks.
- It is a unique effort aimed at integrating energy data scattered across multiple organizations and presenting it in a consolidated, visually appealing graphical manner.
- It leverages the latest advancements in web-GIS technology and open-source software to make it interactive and user-friendly.

### Benefits offered

- The map would provide a comprehensive view of energy production and distribution in a country.
- It will be useful in planning and making investment decisions.
- It will also aid in disaster management using available energy assets.
- This may also help in resource and environmental conservation measures, inter-state coordination on infrastructure planning including different corridors of energy and road transport highways.

### 5. Exercise Cambrian Patrol

A team from Gorkha Rifles which represented the Indian Army at the prestigious Cambrian Patrol Exercise at Brecon, Wales, UK, has been awarded a Gold medal.

#### Ex Cambrian Patrol

- Organized by the UK Army, this exercise is considered the ultimate test of human endurance, team spirit and is sometimes referred as the **Olympics of Military Patrolling**.
- The aim of The Cambrian Patrol is to provide a challenging patrols exercise in order to enhance operational capability.
- The event has evolved into a cost-effective, ready-made exercise that Commanding Officers can use to test the basic training standards of their soldiers, in preparation for future operations.
- It is mission-focused and scenario-based with role players used to enhance the training benefit.

#### How it is conducted?

- During the exercise, teams are assessed for their performance under harsh terrain and inclement cold weather conditions.

- They undergo various challenges in addition to the complex real-world situations painted to them so as to assess their reactions in combat settings.

## 6. Keravan Kerala project

**Context** Kerala has recently launched its tourism project on Caravans – Keravan Kerala.

- It is an unique initiative to promote stakeholder-friendly Caravan Tourism.

### Features of the project

- The caravan parks will be located in natural settings.
- Emphasis on the safety and security of tourists.
- Sustainable use of local resources in creating caravan parks.
- Each caravan park will have a sewage treatment plant.
- The **basic theme** of the project is to club the luxury of caravan with the natural look of the park.
- Attractive incentives, including investment subsidy for purchase of caravan vehicles.
- Caravan parks can be developed in the private, public or joint sector.
- Operational 24x7 during the tourist season.
- Connected with fair-weather roads from the main road.

## 7. Tamil Nadu Urban Employment Scheme

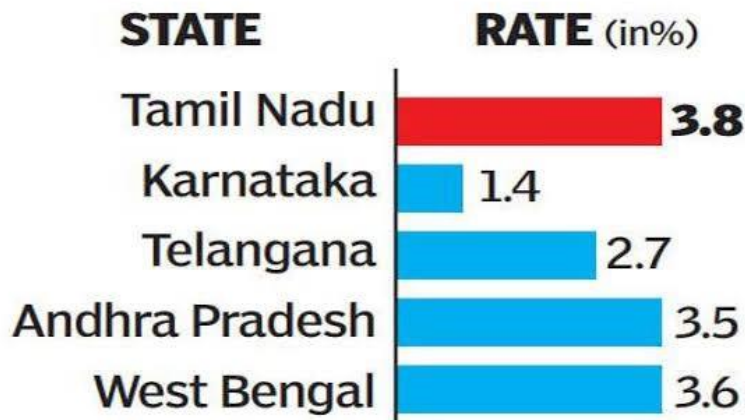
### Context:

Tamil Nadu government has issued orders to implement the urban employment scheme in the state on a pilot basis.

- The scheme is aimed at **providing livelihood and social security by increasing job opportunities and through creation and maintenance of public assets.**

# NOT HIRING

## Unemployment rate in Tamil Nadu during 2015-16 compared to other states



Source: E&U Surveys of Labour Bureau

### About the scheme:

This is an **urban employment scheme** to be implemented by Tamil Nadu Government on the lines of the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)**.

- It seeks to improve the livelihood of urban poor.

### Need for:

- Unlike other States, the urban population in Tamil Nadu is growing fast and it would reach 60% of the total population by 2036.
- A total of four crore people are now living in urban areas, accounting for 53% of the total population.

But, many of them had lost their jobs because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Implementation and key features:

- Under the scheme, workers will be used for activities such as desilting of water bodies and maintenance of public parks and other places.
- **50% of the total person-days under the scheme would be earmarked for women.**
- Women and men would be **paid the same wages for the same unskilled and semiskilled work.**
- The TN Urban Employment Scheme is based on the recommendations made by a committee led by former Reserve Bank of India Governor C. Rangarajan.

## MGNREGA

The scheme was introduced in 2005 as a social measure that **guarantees “the right to work”**.

- The key tenet of this social measure and labour law is that the local government will have to legally provide **at least 100 days of wage employment in rural India to enhance their quality of life.**



### Key objectives:

1. Generation of paid rural employment of not less than 100 days for each worker who volunteers for unskilled labour.

2. Proactively ensuring social inclusion by strengthening the livelihood base of rural poor.
3. Creation of durable assets in rural areas such as wells, ponds, roads and canals.
4. Reduce urban migration from rural areas.
5. Create rural infrastructure by using untapped rural labour.

**The following are the eligibility criteria for receiving the benefits under MGNREGA scheme:**

1. Must be Citizen of India to seek MGNREGA benefits.
2. Job seeker has completed 18 years of age at the time of application.
3. The applicant must be part of a local household (i.e. application must be made with local Gram Panchayat).
4. Applicants must volunteer for unskilled labour.

**Implementation of the scheme:**

1. Within 15 days of submitting the application or from the day work is demanded, wage employment will be provided to the applicant.
2. Right to get unemployment allowance in case employment is not provided within fifteen days of submitting the application or from the date when work is sought.
3. Social Audit of MGNREGA works is mandatory, which lends to accountability and transparency.
4. The Gram Sabha is the principal forum for wage seekers to raise their voices and make demands.
5. It is the Gram Sabha and the Gram Panchayat which approves the shelf of works under MGNREGA and fix their priority.

**Prelims Practice Questions**

**1. The World Energy Outlook Report has been in the news. It is being launched by which of the following institutions?**

- A International Atomic Energy Agency
- B International Energy Agency
- C United Nations Environment Programme
- D United Nations Development Programme

Answer : B

Explanation

- The World Energy Outlook (WEO) Report is released by the International Energy Agency (IEA).
- The WEO provides critical analysis and insights on trends in energy demand and supply.
- It is published every year.
- The 2021 report signalled pressure on governments **to push for greater climate action at the Conference of Parties (COP26) summit** (in Glasgow, UK).
- **Hence, option B is correct.**

**2. Consider the following statements**

1. New Development Bank has been set up by APEC.
2. The headquarters of New Development Bank is in Shanghai.

**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: b**

**Explanation:**

- The New Development Bank (NDB), formerly referred to as the BRICS Development Bank, is a multilateral development bank established by the BRICS states (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa).
- The headquarters of New Development Bank is in Shanghai.

### 3. Which of the following best describes 'MITRA SHAKTI'?

- A It is a bilateral army exercise between India and Nepal.  
B It is a trilateral naval exercise between India, Mauritius and Seychelles.  
C It is a trilateral army exercise between India, Sri Lanka and Seychelles.  
D It is a bilateral army exercise between India and Sri Lanka.

Answer : D

Explanation

- Recently, the 8<sup>th</sup> Edition of joint military exercise between the **Indian Army and the Sri Lankan Army, Exercise MITRA SHAKTI** was conducted in Sri Lanka.
  - It is based on counter insurgency and counter terrorism operations in semi urban terrain.
- It is the **largest bilateral exercise being undertaken by the Sri Lankan Army** and it forms a major part of India and Sri Lanka's growing defence partnership.
  - The joint exercise is designed for incorporating the current dynamics of United Nations' peacekeeping operations through tactical exercises and practical discussions.
- Other Exercises with Sri Lanka: Naval exercise (SLINEX).
- **Hence, option D is correct.**

### 4. Marib, recently seen in the news, is in which country?

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

Answer: c

**Explanation:**

Marib is a city in Yemen. The Saudi-led military coalition supporting Yemen's government has said that it has killed hundreds of Houthi rebels in strikes south of Marib.

**5. Consider the following statements:**

1. Hypersonic speeds are 5 or more times the Mach speed.
2. Mach number describes an aircraft's speed compared with the speed of sound in air.

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

- Mach Number describes an **aircraft's speed compared with the speed of sound in air**, with Mach 1 equating to the speed of sound i.e. 343 metre per second. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- **Hypersonic speeds are 5 or more times the Mach or speed of sound. Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - Types (2):
    - Hypersonic cruise missiles: These are the ones that use rocket or jet propellant through their flight and are regarded as being just faster versions of existing cruise missiles.
    - Hypersonic Glide Vehicle (HGV): These missiles first go up into the atmosphere on a conventional rocket before being launched towards their target.

**6. With reference to the 'Malé Declaration', consider the following statements:**



1. It was signed by the members of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) in 1998.
2. India became a signatory to the Malé Declaration in 2017.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A 1 only
- B 2 only
- C Both 1 and 2
- D None

Answer : C

Explanation

- The '**Malé Declaration** on Control and Prevention of Air Pollution and its likely Transboundary Effects for South Asia is an intergovernmental network involving Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, the Republic of Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. It is the only inter-governmental agreement of its kind covering the eight countries.
  - It was signed in 1998 by the members of the **South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP)** in Male, capital of the Maldives. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - Together with UNEP, this initiative was **funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)** as part of the Regional Air Pollution in Developing Countries (RAPIDC) programme.
- In the context of **Green and Climate Resilient Healthcare Facilities**, India became signatory to the **Malé Declaration in 2017** and agreed to **promote climate-resilient healthcare facilities** to be able to withstand any climatic event. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

## **Mains Practice Questions**

**1Q. Indian constitution is federal in nature, but unitary in soul. Examine (150 words)**

### **Approach**

- Write the meaning of federal and unitary system of government in the introduction
- Describe the federal and unitary characteristics of Indian constitution.
- Examine how the centre government is more powerful than states.

**2Q. Discuss the advantages of river linking projects and its possible impact on the environment. (150 words)**

### **Approach**

- Introduce by explaining about the river interlinking project.
- Discuss advantages of the project.
- Enumerate possible impacts of the project on the environment.