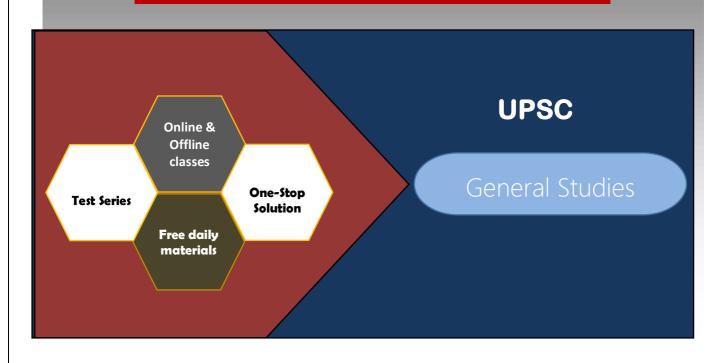# VISHNU I A S

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GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1. Recast this apples-and-oranges ranking method

This article critically evaluates the ranking of State-run Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

NIRF

- The National Institute Ranking Framework, or NIRF, is the government's first attempt to rate the country's higher education institutions (HEIs).
- While participation in the NIRF was initially voluntary, it became mandatory in 2018 for all government-run educational institutions.

Why did the Union government decide to rank HEIs?

- The origins of the NIRF concept may be traced back to worldwide rankings.
- The union government and government-run higher education institutions were dissatisfied with their rankings in the QS World University Rankings and the Times Higher Education World University Rankings.
- To address this, India opted to follow China's example. When China faced the same dilemma around two decades ago, they replied by creating their own university rating system. The Shanghai Rankings, created by Shanghai Jiao Tong University in 2003, arose from this.

Critical Evaluation of NIRF Ranking:

1. **Deficiencies in the focus**

- The financial condition of state-sponsored higher education institutions is a well-kept secret, with wage and pension commitments barely kept under check.
- As a result, comparing such organisations to centrally sponsored institutions is pointless.
- On economic indicators, nobody does a cost-benefit analysis of state vs centrally sponsored HEIs.

2. **Structural Issues:**

- Given the challenges that State HEIs encounter on a daily basis, the NIRF appears to have focused solely on institutional strength while entirely ignoring the concerns.
- It prevents state universities and colleges from competing on an equal footing with their state-sponsored equivalents.
- Due to a lack of resources and scepticism on the part of governments, such institutions are unable to compete with centrally financed and strategically placed HEIs.

3. **Struggle of State HEIs**

- Artificial intelligence, machine learning, blockchains, smart boards, portable computing devices, and other new technologies are proving difficult for state HEIs to embrace.
- They also struggle to adapt to various types of educational software/hardware in order to stay current with the New Education Policy.

Conclusion:

- It is time for the NIRF to devise a framework for evaluating institutions' production and performance in light of their limits and resources.
- It is critical for policymakers to refocus resource allocation techniques toward state-run higher education institutions.

2. No move for e-voting, Rijiju tells Lok Sabha

The Law Minister cleared that there is no proposal to introduce electronic voting in the upcoming general elections.

Details:

1. **What is E-Voting?**

- E-voting is a voting technique that allows voters to cast a secret ballot that is then electronically processed.
- It refers to electronic voting that makes use of the internet, specialised kiosks, scanning technologies, or digital telephone networks to allow people to vote in elections.

2. **Need of e-Voting:**

- To eliminate the need for paper in voting. This includes sending out notifications and ballot papers, as well as obtaining the results of those ballot votes.
- Facilitate electronic voting in a fair and transparent way.
- Allow people to vote from wherever they want.
- Postal and other natural impediments that obstruct postal balloting should be eliminated.
- Increase the number of voters who can participate in the voting process remotely.

3. **India's position on e-Voting:**

- India has reacted positively to the prospect of using blockchain networks in a variety of industries, including electoral systems.
- The Telangana government is one of the most prominent examples, as it plans to undertake an experimental run of e-voting.
- The use of biometric facial recognition technologies (FRT) for voter identity authentication, as well as connecting the voter's phone number and International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) to voter ID for verification in rural voting systems, was advocated in a 2019 'Blockchain Policy Report' (BPR).
- The Election Commission and the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IIT-M) partnered in 2020 to create a new technology that would allow voters to vote from far distant cities.

4. **International Perspective**

1. **US:** Third-party applications like Votem and Voatz have aided in polling operations in the United States by offering voters a blockchain framework with biometric identity verification, built-in fingerprint scanners, and face recognition to verify voters.
2. **Argentina:** Democracy Earth, a local party start-up in Argentina, developed a blockchain voting system prototype based on an open-source concept.
3. **South Korea:** By authorising a pilot of a blockchain-based voting system through the National Election Commission, South Korea intends to investigate blockchain in online voting.

Way Forward

- India should focus on making the EVM safer and more secure, while also learning from other countries' blockchain election experiences and deploying them when we are far better suited as a country.

- In order to adopt e-voting, India must assure technology stability and resource abundance.
- In a democracy, there are two basic factors that assure electoral success: a) voter knowledge and b) infrastructure stability.
- India should be sensible to take gradual efforts to improve our standing in both areas.

3. Tharoor moves Bill for permanent HC Benches

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor introduced a private member's bill in the Lok Sabha proposing the establishment of a High Court Bench in the state capitals.

Background:

- "Establishment of permanent benches of high courts at state capitals Bill" aims to provide for the establishment of permanent Benches of the High Courts in State Capitals.
- It will be formed where the High Court's major seat or a permanent bench is located somewhere other than the State Capital, and for cases related to it.

Permanent Bench: The creation of permanent Benches would mean that judges will sit there on a permanent basis ending inconvenience to them, advocates and litigants.

What is a Private Member's Bill?

A member of parliament (MP) who is not a minister is a private member. Know more about private member's bill in the linked article.

GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology,Environment

4. Species in news: Lesser Florican

In a major discovery, the longest in-country migration route of lesser floricans, the endangered birds of the bustard group, has been tracked for the first time from Rajasthan to Maharashtra's Ahmednagar district.

Lesser Florican

- The lesser florican (Sypheotides indicus), also known as the likh or kharmore, is the smallest in the bustard family.
- It is endemic to the Indian Subcontinent where it is found in tall grasslands and is best known for the leaping breeding displays made by the males during the monsoon season.
- The male has a contrasting black and white breeding plumage and distinctive elongated head feathers that extend behind the neck.
- These bustards are found mainly in northwestern and central India during the summer but are found more widely distributed across India in winter.
- The only similar species is the Bengal florican (Houbarobsis bengalensis) which is larger and lacks the white throat, collar and elongated plumes.

Conservation status

- The Lesser Florican is protected under **Schedule 1** of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, Lesser Florican
- The bird is listed as "**Critically Endangered**" on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species.

Threats

- It is threatened both by hunting and habitat degradation.
- The species is highly endangered and has been officially hunted to extinction in some parts of its range such as Pakistan.

5. India revokes PepsiCo's potato patent

The Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers Rights' Authority (PPV&FRA) revoked PepsiCo India's potato patent.

Background:

- PepsiCo India sparked outrage when it filed a lawsuit against nine Gujarati farmers for allegedly infringing on patent rights by producing a registered potato variety.
- The Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers Rights' Authority has now withdrawn the company's registration of the potato variety.
- This decision is a watershed moment for India's farmers.

- It should also prohibit any other seed or food firm in India from infringing on the lawfully guaranteed seed freedoms of Indian farmers.

The Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights (PPV&FR) Act, 2001

- Using a sui generis approach, the Indian government adopted "The Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights (PPV&FR) Act, 2001."
- The legislation acknowledges the contributions of both commercial plant breeders and farmers in plant breeding activities.
- It also focuses on the need to implement TRIPS in a way that supports the specific socio-economic interests of all stakeholders.

Farmers' Rights under PPV&FR Act, 2001

- A farmer who has evolved or developed a new variety has the same rights to registration and protection as a breeder of a variety;
- A farmer's variety can also be registered as an extant variety;
- A farmer can save, use, sow, re-sow, exchange, share, or sell his farm produce, including seed, protected under the PPV&FR Act, 2001.
- Section 39 (2) of the Act of 2001 also includes a provision for compensation to farmers in the event of a variety's failure to perform.
- Farmers are not required to pay any fees in any proceedings before the Authority, Registrar, Tribunal, or High Court under the Act.

6. COP27, in Egypt, must focus on food systems

This article discusses the challenges of climate crisis and hunger in the light of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) held in Glasgow.

Background

- The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the number of people suffering from chronic hunger from 130 million to 270 million.
- According to the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), a 2°C increase in average global temperature from pre-industrial levels will result in an additional 189 million people becoming hungry.
- The 2030 objective to eradicate global hunger and malnutrition in all forms faces significant challenges, including the climate crisis and hunger, which are intricately intertwined.

Challenges of Climate Crisis and Hunger

- Food insecurity is forced to rely on humanitarian help due to a lack of social protection mechanisms such as food security nets.
- Climate change will continue to have a negative influence on agriculture, fisheries, and livestock. Those who rely on subsistence farming are particularly vulnerable.
- The poor and vulnerable are still the ones that suffer the most. People in low-income nations bear the brunt of the consequences, although contributing the least to greenhouse gas emissions.
- According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the climate crisis will have an influence on food production and livelihoods, as well as threaten nutrition through multi-breadbasket failures.

Solutions to Tackle Twin Problem of Climate Crisis and Hunger

1. **Adaptation And Resilience:**

- Food security necessitates adaptation and resilience-building for poor and vulnerable populations.
- However, the focus has been on lowering emissions and meeting associated objectives, as they are critical for millions of people's livelihoods and food security.

2. **Adaptation Finance**

- The present climate financing and stakeholder base are insufficient to respond to the worsening effects of climate change.
- The COP26 called for multilateral development banks, other financial institutions, and the private sector to increase fund mobilisation in order to deliver resources required to implement climate programmes, notably for adaptation.

3. **Fixing Broken Food Systems**

- Land and crops are destroyed, livestock is killed, fisheries are depleted, and transportation to markets is shut off as a result of the climate crisis.
- This has an influence on food production, diversity, accessibility, and safety. Food systems, on the other hand, have an environmental impact and are a cause of climate change.
- COP26 followed the groundbreaking UN Food Systems Summit, which served as a wake-up call that the world's food systems are unfair, resulting in 811 million people going to bed hungry.
- Agnes Kalibata, the UN Special Envoy for the Food Systems Summit, has called for unprecedented attention on food systems, including food and agriculture, by ensuring that COP27 has a particular focus on this.

Lessons for India:

- India can play a significant role in ensuring food security by implementing climate resilience policies at the national and state levels.
- Climate change consequences, response choices, and adaptation needs must all be better understood via adaptation strategies at the global, regional, and local levels.
- With possible help from the Adaptation Fund, the World Food Programme (WFP) and India's Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, and Forestry intend to build a best practice model on adaptation and mitigation.

7. Implement panel's anti-pollution steps: SC to Centre, Delhi Govt.

The Supreme Court approved the measures taken by the Centre's Air Quality Commission to create an 'Enforcement Task Force' and flying squads in Delhi NCR.

Flying Squad:

- The Flying Squad is a small standby squad of people who have been organised to respond rapidly in the event of an emergency.
- It was established to take disciplinary action against offenders.
- The flying squads would report directly to the commission's 'Enforcement Task Force.'

THE INDIAN EXPRESS

GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1. What the NFHS data reveals about inequality in India

The release of the NFHS data (and the Niti Aayog's study on developing a multi-dimensional index of poverty — MPI) has led to a considerable amount of discussion, and justifiably so.

Understanding the progress and development: MPI

- The MPI is an **Oxford-based initiative** that develops an exclusive broadly **non-monetary living standard index** of poverty.

- MPI indices are the **third in the series of global studies** on poverty.
- **Global studies on poverty:** Global studies started with the World Bank's income/consumption-based measure of absolute poverty.
- The UN expanded the monetary index **adding health and education indicators** via the **Human Development Index (HDI).**

Evolution of poverty over time

- Like with the other poverty indices (World Bank and HDI), most information and useful policy analysis comes via a study of the **inter-temporal evolution of poverty.**
- **Regional inequality:** Ajit Ranade acknowledges that **regional inequality** has existed for some time, but he argues that poverty incidence across Indian states even as per the MPI is astoundingly unequal.
- T N Ninan talks about the **simultaneous existence of Africa's Sahel region and the Philippines in India**.
- He finds that the two Indias are not getting any closer.
- Indeed, India's development trajectory has not been uniform, but the **regional imbalance of development** cannot be viewed at a fixed point in time.

Analysing the NHFS data

- A detailed examination of the summary statistics reported in the NFHS data (large and small states of India for the two years 2015-16 and 2019-21), reveals the opposite result.
- **Convergence:** The analysis reveals remarkable **convergence in living standards,** a convergence possibly unparalleled in Indian history and in the space of just five years.
- NFHS reports the averages for all states, and for **131 variables,** for two years 2015-16 and 2020-21.
- Seventeen of these 131 welfare indicators are used to construct **indices under four classifications.**
- **Improvement in lives of girls/women:** The first classification concerns itself with the **improvement in the lives of girls/women** (five indicators, for example, sex ratio, fertility, female education).
- **Housing conditions:** The second bucket consists of **housing conditions** (three indicators, for example, improved sanitation, clean fuel).
- **Children's welfare:** The third list consists of **children's welfare** (four indicators such as adequate diet, stunting)
- **Women's welfare:** The fourth classification includes **women's empowerment** (five indicators, for example, owning a house, less spousal violence).

- Given that Niti Aayog's report primarily relies on the NFHS-4, these findings can be used as the baseline scenario to evaluate the delta — that is, the **per cent change in indicators between NFHS-4 and NFHS-5.**
- The table reports the results for several states.

- Seventeen indicators imply a **maximum possible score of 1,700.**
- Kerala performs the best with an aggregate index of 1,300 in NFHS-5 — a very small 1.5 per cent increase from its 2015-16 value.
- In contrast, Bihar **increases its index by 56 per cent**.
- Punjab does better than Tamil Nadu and today has a higher index – 1,240 versus 1,178 in 2020-21.
- UP (along with Rajasthan and MP) **performs the best — a 60 plus per cent increase in the welfare index,** more than five times the increase in the rich states.

Major findings from the NHFS data

- **Convergence:** Higher improvement by less developed states is evidence in support of catch-up, which suggests that **regional imbalances are reducing**, and in some indicators, rapidly so.
- States such as UP, Bihar and Jharkhand are fast approaching similar standards for select indicators as some of the "developed" states.
- **Result of targeted intervention:** This acceleration in catch up is no coincidence, but rather an outcome of an approach that involves targeted interventions to improve developmental outcomes.
- The approach was not just limited to sanitation, proper fuel or electricity — interventions that are targeted to an individual household — but also to the holistic development of an entire region.

Conclusion

India has been, and was, not one but several Indias. What is remarkable about its recent history is the rapid process of uneven change — where progress is considerably higher for the poorer states — the convergent, and inclusive pattern of development. That is the real story behind the NFHS-4 and NFHS-5 numbers.

2. How MPs' Questions are allowed, disallowed

Over the last few sessions of Parliament, MPs mainly from the Opposition have often alleged that their questions have been intentionally disallowed.

What are the categories of Questions?

(1) Starred Question

- The member desires an oral answer from the minister.
- Such a question is distinguished by the MP with an asterisk.
- The answer can also be followed by supplementary questions from members.

(2) Unstarred Question

- The MP seeks a written answer, which is deemed to be laid on the table of the House by the concerned minister.

(3) Short Notice Question

- These are on an urgent matter of public importance, and an oral answer is sought.
- A notice of less than 10 days is prescribed as the minimum period for asking such a question.

(4) Question to a Private Member

- A question can be addressed to a private member under Rule 40 of Lok Sabha's Rules of Procedure, or under Rule 48 of Rajya Sabha's Rules.
- Such question deals with a subject relating to some Bill, resolution or other matter for which that member is responsible.

When are the questions asked?

Ans. Question Hour

- In both Houses, the first hour of every sitting is usually devoted to asking and answering of questions, and this is referred to as the 'Question Hour'.
- The total number of questions for any day is limited to 175.
- These includes 15 questions for oral answers, questions postponed from one list to another for written answers, and 15 questions pertaining to states under President's Rule.

How are questions admitted?

- In both Houses, elected members enjoy the right to seek information from various ministries and departments in the form of questions.

- The Rajya Sabha Chairman or the Lok Sabha Speaker has the authority to decide whether a question or a part is or is not admissible under the norms of the House, and disallow any question or a part.
- Usually, MPs' questions form a long list, which then go through a rigorous process of clearance.
- Once a question that fulfils the conditions of admissibility is received, the Secretariat sends it to the ministry concerned.
- Once the facts are received from the ministry, the question is further examined for admissibility.
- A final list of questions is circulated to ministers, on the basis of which they frame their answers.

Answering the Questions

- For answering the questions, ministries and departments have been divided into five groups (I to V) that have been allotted Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays respectively.
- The grouping has been done in such a way that each minister has one fixed day in the week for answering questions in Rajya Sabha and another fixed day for answering questions in Lok Sabha.

What kind of questions can be asked?

(A) Rajya Sabha

- The question shall be pointed, specific and confined to one issue only
- It shall not bring in any name or statement not strictly necessary to make the question intelligible
- If it contains a statement the member shall make himself responsible for the accuracy of the statement
- It shall not contain arguments, inferences, ironical expressions, imputations, epithets or defamatory statements

(B) Lok Sabha

Questions that are not admitted include:

- Those that are repetitive or have been answered previously and
- Matters that are pending for judgment before any court of law or under consideration before a Parliamentary Committee

3. Demand for Greater Tipraland in Tripura

Several tribal outfits in Tripura have joined hands to push their demand for a separate state called Greater Tipraland for indigenous communities in the region.

Demand for Greater Tipraland

- The Protestants are demanding a separate state of 'Greater Tipraland' for the indigenous communities of the north-eastern state.
- They want the Centre to carve out a separate state under Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution.
- Greater Tipraland envisages a situation in which the entire Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTADC) area will be a separate state.
- It also proposes dedicated bodies to secure the rights of the Tripuris and other aboriginal communities living outside Tripura.

What does the Constitution say?

- Article 2 of the Indian Constitution deals with the admission or establishment of new states.
- Parliament may by law admit into the Union, or establish, new States on such terms and conditions, as it thinks fit," it states.
- Article 3 comes into play in the case of "formation of new States and alteration of areas, boundaries or names of existing States" by the Parliament.

How did the demand originate?

- **Accessed state:** Tripura was a kingdom ruled by the Manikya dynasty from the late 13th century until the signing of the Instrument of Accession with the Indian government on October 15, 1949.
- **Demographic changes:** There is an anxiety among the indigenous communities in connection with the change in the demographics of the state due to the displacements from the erstwhile East Pakistan.
- **Existential threats:** From 63.77 per cent in 1881, the population of the tribals in Tripura was down to 31.80 per cent by 2011.
- **Ethnic conflicts:** In the intervening decades, ethnic conflict and insurgency gripped the state, which shares a nearly 860-km long boundary with Bangladesh.

What has been done to address the grievances of indigenous communities?

- The TTADC was formed under the sixth schedule to ensure development and secure the rights and cultural heritage of the tribal communities.

- The TTADC, which has legislative and executive powers, covers nearly two-third of the state's geographical area.

Back2Basics: Autonomous District Council

- The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India allows for the formation of autonomous administrative divisions which have been given autonomy within their respective states.
- Most of these autonomous district councils are located in North East India but two are in Ladakh, a region administered by India as a union territory.
- Presently, 10 Autonomous Councils in Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura are formed by virtue of the Sixth Schedule with the rest being formed as a result of other legislation.

Powers and competencies

Under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule, autonomous district councils can make laws, rules and regulations in the following areas:

- Land management
- Forest management
- Water resources
- Agriculture and cultivation
- Formation of village councils
- Public health
- Sanitation
- Village and town level policing
- Appointment of traditional chiefs and headmen
- Inheritance of property
- Marriage and divorce
- Social customs
- Money lending and trading
- Mining and minerals

Judicial powers

- Autonomous district councils have powers to form courts to hear cases where both parties are members of Scheduled Tribes and the maximum sentence is less than 5 years in prison.

Taxation and revenue

- Autonomous district councils have powers to levy taxes, fees and tolls on; building and land, animals, vehicles, boats, entry of goods into the area, roads, ferries, bridges, employment and income and general taxes for the maintenance of schools and roads.

4. CSR funds for monuments:

A private member's Bill has been introduced in Parliament mandating that **25% of all corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds be used for restoration, management and maintenance of ancient monuments and archaeological sites.**

- While some members supported **the Companies (Amendment) Bill, 2019,** few others disagreed with the mandatory provision.

Need for more resources:

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the National Monuments Authority (NMA) and other agencies tasked with looking after monuments lacked the resources needed for the upkeep of the sites.

Opposition to the Bill:

The aim of CSR is to benefit local communities. Therefore, the funds should not be diverted.

What is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)?

It is the integration of socially beneficial programs and practices into a corporation's business model and culture.

How is it regulated in India?

India is one of the first countries in the world to make CSR mandatory for companies following an amendment to **the Companies Act, 2013 (Companies Act) in 2014.**

- Under the Companies Act, businesses can invest their profits in areas such as promoting rural development in terms of healthcare, sanitation, education including skill development, environmental sustainability, etc.

Section 135(1) of the Act prescribes thresholds to identify companies which are required to constitute a CSR Committee – those, in the immediately preceding financial year of which:

1. net worth is Rs 500 Crore or more; or.
2. turnover is Rs 1000 Crore or more; or.
3. net profit amounts to Rs 5 Crore or more.

As per the Companies (Amendment) Act, 2019, **CSR is applicable to companies before completion of 3 financial years.**

Amount to be spent:

- Companies are required to spend, in every financial year, at least 2% of their average net profits generated during the 3 immediately preceding financial years.
- For companies that have not completed 3 financial years, average net profits generated in the preceding financial years shall be factored in.

Treatment of unspent amounts:

- Amounts to be utilised towards a CSR activity, but unspent must be parked in a special account as prescribed under the provision within 30 days of the end of the relevant financial year.
- The unspent amount must be utilised by the company for the particular CSR activity within a period of 3 financial years from the date of such transfer, failing which, it must be transferred to any fund provided for in schedule VII of the Companies Act namely inter alia the Clean Ganga Fund, Swachh Baharat Kosh, Prime Minister's National Relief Fund.
- Any unspent amount which does not relate to an ongoing CSR activity must be transferred to a fund provided for in Schedule VII within a span of 6 months of the end of the relevant financial year.

Social responsibility has a strategic importance for two reasons:

- A healthy business can only succeed in a healthy society. Thus, it is in the best interest of a company to produce only goods and services which strengthen the health of society.
- If the company wants to succeed in the long term it needs to have the acceptance—or licence to operate—from social actors affected by the company's' operations.

5. Poshan Tracker:

The Ministry of Women and Child Development has spent over ₹1,000 crore on its **Poshan or Nutrition Tracker,** which records real-time data on malnourished and 'severe acute malnourished' children in each anganwadi. But four years since its launch, the Government is yet to make the data public.

Concerns:

Government officials have cited privacy concerns as a reason for keeping the data under lock and key but experts say it can easily be anonymised as is the case with data for several other government schemes.

About the Poshan Tracker:

- The **Poshan Tracker,** known as **the ICDS-CAS (Integrated Child Development Services-Common Application Software)** in its earlier avatar, was set up with the aim of tracking and improving various services delivered at anganwadis and to ensure nutritional management of beneficiaries.
- This real-time monitoring system is one of the key pillars of **Poshan Abhiyan or Nutrition Mission** approved by the Union Cabinet in November 2017 with a financial outlay of ₹9,000 crore for three years.

About Poshan Abhiyaan:

- The programme seeks to improve nutritional outcomes for **children, pregnant women and lactating mothers.**

- Launched in 2018 with specific targets to be achieved by 2022.

It aims to reduce:

- Stunting and wasting by 2% a year (total 6% until 2022) among children.
- Anaemia by 3% a year (total 9%) among children, adolescent girls and pregnant women and lactating mothers.

The target of the mission is to bring down stunting among children in the age group 0-6 years from 38.4% to 25% by 2022.

Background:

More than a third of the children under five face stunting and wasting and 40% aged between one and four are anaemic. Over 50% of pregnant and other women were found to be anaemic, said the National Family Health Survey 4 released in 2016.

GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology,Environment

6. Cyclone Jawad:

A deep depression in the Bay of Bengal has intensified into cyclonic storm Jawad and is likely to make landfall near Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.

The name was given by?

- Saudi Arabia has given the **cyclone** its name 'Jawad'. The meaning 'Jawad' is liberal or merciful. The carries significance as this cyclonic storm will not be as severe as the previous ones.

How are cyclones formed?

Cyclones are **formed over the oceanic water in the tropical region.**

In this region, the sunlight is highest which results in warming of land and water surface. Due to warming of the surface, the warm moist air over the ocean rises upwards following which cool air rushes in to fill the void, they too get warm and rise — the cycle continues.

But what creates the spin?

Wind always blows from **high pressure to low pressure areas.** High pressure areas are created in the cold region while low is created in the warm regions. Polar regions are high pressure areas as the amount of sunlight here is less than the tropical region. So, wind blows from polar regions to tropical regions.

- Then comes **the Earth's movement,** which is west to east. The Earth's rotation on its axis causes deflection of the wind (in the tropical region as the speed of spinning of Earth is higher compared to polar sides due to its spherical shape — blowing from both the polar regions. Wind coming from the Arctic is deflected to the right while Antarctic wind deflects to the left side.
- So, wind is already blowing in a direction. But when it reaches the warmer place, cool air starts getting attracted to the centre to fill the gap. So while moving to the centre, cool air keeps getting deflected resulting in circulation of wind movement — this process continues until the cyclone hits the land.

What happens when a cyclone hits the land?

Cyclone dissipates when it hits the land as the warm water that rises and creates space for cool water is no longer available on land. Also, the moist air that rises up forms clouds leading to rains that accompany gusting winds during cyclones.

7.Why has the Northeast monsoon remained subdued this year?

Faced with the fourth consecutive year of flooding and landslips since 2018, two months of the northeast monsoon alone has caused massive losses in terms of damage to life, property, and crops.

- The overall estimated damage caused by the rain in October and November alone has been pegged at ₹11,916.3 crore and as per the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) norms, ₹1,281.92 crore.

What is the Northeast monsoon?

- Occurs during October to December, and is a small-scale monsoon compared to South- West Monsoon.
- It is confined to the Southern peninsula.
- The rainfall associated with the Northeast monsoon is important for Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Yanam, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, north interior Karnataka, Mahe and Lakshadweep.
- Some South Asian countries such as Maldives, Sri Lanka and Myanmar, too, record rainfall during October to December.

How is La Niña linked with the Northeast monsoon?

While La Niña conditions enhance the rainfall associated with the Southwest monsoon, it has a negative impact on rainfall associated with the Northeast monsoon.

During La Niña years, the synoptic systems — low pressure or cyclones — formed in the Bay of Bengal remain significantly to the north of their normal position.

- Besides, instead of moving westwards, these systems recurve. As they lie to the north of their normal position, not much rainfall occurs over southern regions like Tamil Nadu.

Prelims Practice Questions

1. With reference to Indian freedom struggle, consider the following events:

1. Mutiny in Royal Indian Navy
2. Quit India Movement launched
3. Second Round Table Conference

What is the correct chronological sequence of the above events?

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Second Round Table Conference – 1931.
- Quit India Movement was launched on 8 August 1942.
- The Royal Indian Navy mutiny or revolt, also called the 1946 Naval Uprising, was an insurrection of Indian naval ratings, soldiers, police personnel and civilians against the British government in India.

2. Consider the following statements:

1. Nagaland does not share borders with Tripura.
2. Garos are the largest tribe of Nagaland.

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

- **Nagaland** is a state in the Northeast region of India which was granted statehood by the State of Nagaland Act, 1962.
- It is **bounded by the Indian states of Arunachal Pradesh** to the northeast, **Manipur** to the south, and **Assam** to the west and northwest and the country of **Myanmar** (Burma) to the east. The state capital is Kohima, located in the southern part of Nagaland. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The main occupation of the state is agriculture which employs about nine-tenths of the population.
  - Rice, corn (maize), small millets, pulses (legumes), oilseeds, fibres, sugarcane, potato, and tobacco are the principal crops.
- The **Konyaks are the largest tribe** of Nagaland, followed by the Aos, Tangkhuls, Semas, and Angamis. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
  - Other tribes include the Lothas, Sangtams, Phoms, Changs, Khiem Hungama, Yimchunger, Zeliangs, Chakhesangs (Chokri), and Rengmas.

3. Donbas conflict is a dispute between

    a. Greece and Turkey
    b. France and United Kingdom
    c. Russia and Ukraine
    d. Belarus and Poland

Answer: c

Explanation:

- The Donbas region is a conflict zone where Ukraine has been battling Russia-backed separatists.

4. PM Mitra Parks has been recently in the news. It is related to which of the following?

A Textiles
B Skill Development
C District Mineral Funds.
D Solar Energy

Answer : A

Explanation

- The Government has approved the setting up of **7 PM Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) Parks** in Greenfield/Brownfield sites within a period of **seven years up to 2027-28.**
- These parks will be developed by **a Special Purpose Vehicle** which will be owned by the Central and State Government and in a **Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Mode**.
- Each Park will have an **incubation centre, a common processing house and a common effluent treatment plant** and other textile related facilities such as **design centres and testing centres.**
- **Hence, option A is correct.**

5. With reference to extra-tropical cyclones, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. They have a clear frontal system which is not present in tropical cyclones.
2. They can originate over both land and sea.
3. They move from west to east.

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Extratropical cyclone, also called wave cyclone or midlatitude cyclone, is a type of storm system formed in middle or high latitudes, in regions of large horizontal temperature variations called frontal zones.

6. Consider the following statements regarding the Worldwide Cost of Living report:

1. The report is compiled by the World Economic Forum (WEF).
2. Tel Aviv is the world's most expensive city to live in.
3. Ahmedabad has been listed in the top ten cheapest cities.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer : C

Explanation

- Recently, the **Worldwide Cost of Living report** has been released highlighting that **Tel Aviv (Israel's capital)** is the world's most expensive city to live in. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
    - Paris and Singapore came joint second, followed by Zurich and Hong Kong. New York was in sixth, with Geneva in seventh.
- The report is compiled by the **Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).** It compares the cost of living indices in different cities. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
    - The index is **benchmarked against prices in New York City**, hence **cities with currencies that are stronger against the US dollar are likely to appear higher in the rankings.**
- In India, **Ahmedabad, Gujarat has been listed in the top ten cheapest cities** of the survey. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
    - Among the cheapest cities, Damascus (capital of Syria) is at the top. It is followed by Tripoli (Libya,) Tashkent (Uzbekistan), Tunis (Tunisia) and Almaty (Kazakhstan') in the ranking of cheapest cities.

Mains Practice Questions

1Q. Account for the present location of iron and steel industries away from the source of raw material, by giving examples.

Approach

- Start the answer by briefly discussing major location factors for the iron and steel industries.
- Discuss the present location factors of iron and steel industries away from the source of raw material
- Conclude suitably.

2Q. "A governor should be discharging his/her duty in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution, not just be an agent of the centre". Discuss the statement in the light of the role of governor in the Indian polity. (250 words)

Approach

- Introduce by defining the constitutional position of governor.
- Briefly mention the role and responsibility of the governor.
- Discuss various issues related to the governor's role as merely an agent of the centre.
- Suggest what should be the way ahead.
- Conclude suitably.