

UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS - 2018
OCTOBER 1- 15 (Part – I)
HINDU & PIB IN DEPTH ANALYSIS



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GENERAL STUDIES - 1

[GEOGRAPHY]

➤ Early Warning for Tsunami and Earthquake

IN NEWS:

- **Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre (ITEWC)**, which is based at & operated by **Indian National Center for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Hyderabad** has all necessary infrastructure and capabilities to give tsunami advisories to India as well as to Indian Ocean countries

IN DEPTH:

What is ITEWC?

- ITEWC is providing **tsunami warnings** and related services **to all countries in the Indian Ocean Rim** (24 Countries) beyond fully serving the India's coastline / Islands.
- The centre is capable of detecting tsunamigenic earthquakes occurring in the Indian Ocean as well as in the Global Oceans within 10 minutes of their occurrence.
- As soon as the earthquake is detected, warning centre transmits information about location of earthquake, its magnitude, depth and other characters of the event.

IOWave 18

- India, along with 23 other Indian Ocean Nations, participated in a major Indian ocean-wide tsunami mock exercise (drill) on 4th & 5th September, 2018.
- The Exercise, known as **IOWave18**, was organized by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO, which coordinated the setting up of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (IOTWMS) in the aftermath of the 26 December 2004 tsunami.
- The end-to-end warning system from tsunami detection and forecast, threat evaluation and alert formulation, alert dissemination to public and their awareness and response was put to test during this exercise. Where possible states participated up to community-level with practice evacuations. 44 Coastal Districts of 9 States/UTs are participated up to community level.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

1) Consider the following statements about Indian National Center for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)

1. It is under the aegis of Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)
2. It is a permanent member of the Indian delegation to Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO

Select the correct statements

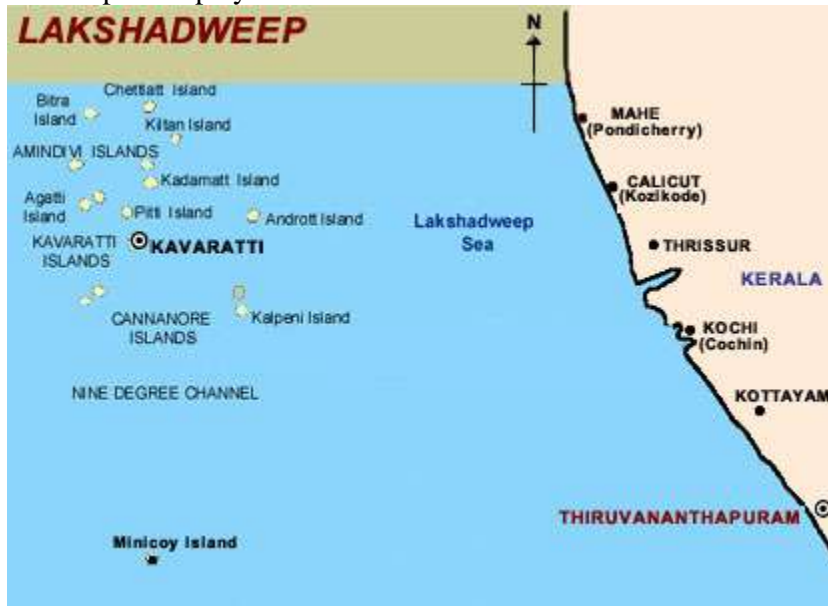
- a. 1 Only
- b. 2 Only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

CORRECT OPTION: C

➤ Lagoon villas for Lakshadweep soon

IN NEWS:

- NITI Aayog plans to boost island tourism (especially Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar Islands)
- Government plans to make Lakshadweep – a popular alternative to leading destinations such as Mauritius and Maldives
- Government to grant licenses to build villas and attract tourists from across the globe. These will mainly be eco-cottages, for which private players can bid to build.



IN DEPTH:

NITI Aayog Strategy to boost Tourism

- NITI Aayog through its plan for “holistic development of the islands” is set to boost eco tourism in Lakshadweep lagoons.
- It is planning to set up island water villas which in turn will be a popular alternative to leading destinations such as Mauritius and Maldives.
- The apex planning body, along with other stakeholders, including the Island Development Agency (IDA) is conducting a technical feasibility study for the project.
- These will mainly be eco-cottages for which private players can bid to build. The projects will add about 700 rooms.
- Ecological concerns and tribal-related issues are fully taken care of.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

- 1) Examine the origin of Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar islands and explain the distinct features of both island groups.

➤ Odisha, Andhra on red alert as cyclone Titli inches close

IN NEWS:

- India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued red alert to Odisha and Andhra.
- It said the deep depression over the Bay of Bengal has intensified into cyclonic storm 'Titli' and is moving towards the Odisha-Andhra Pradesh coast.

IN DEPTH:

What is Tropical cyclones?

- Tropical cyclones are violent storms that originate over oceans in **tropical areas** and move over to the coastal areas bringing about large scale destruction due to violent winds (squalls), very heavy rainfall (torrential rainfall) and **storm surge**.
- They are irregular wind movements involving **closed circulation** of air around a low pressure center. This closed air circulation (whirling motion) is a result of **rapid upward movement of hot air** which is subjected to **Coriolis force**. The low pressure at the center is responsible for the wind speeds.

Prerequisite for a cyclone:

- Large sea surface with temperature higher than **27° C**,
- Presence of the Coriolis force enough to create a cyclonic vortex,
- Small variations in the vertical wind speed,
- A pre-existing weak low-pressure area or low-level-cyclonic circulation,
- Upper divergence above the sea level system

NATIONAL CYCLONE RISK MITIGATION PROJECT

- **OBJECTIVE** of the National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project ('NCRMP') is to minimize vulnerability to cyclones and make people and infrastructure disaster resilient in harmony with conservation of the coastal eco-system in the cyclone hazard prone States and Union Territories of India.
- The NDMA under the aegis of MHA will implement the project in collaboration with the Governments of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa
- This project is proposed as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with 75% contribution (for Component B of the Project) by the Central Government, as grant-in-aid and a matching 25% contribution by State Governments. Other components will be completely funded by the Central Government, as grant-in-aid.
- The project is currently being implemented in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

- 1) **What are the conditions necessary for formation of cyclones? Explain why cyclones that emerge in Bay of Bengal are much more destructive than the ones that emerge in Arabian Sea?(250 words)**

GENERAL STUDIES - 2

[GOVERNANCE-POLICIES]

➤ **SATAT initiative**

IN NEWS:

- SATAT is an initiative aimed at providing a **Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT)** as a developmental effort that would benefit both vehicle-users as well as farmers and entrepreneurs.
- It is a joint initiative of Indian Oil, BPCL and HPCL **to turn waste into green energy**.
- Petroleum Ministry with PSU Oil Marketing Companies inviting Expression of Interest (EoI) from potential entrepreneurs to set up Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) production plants and make available CBG in the market for use in automotive fuels.

IN DEPTH:

Objective of SATAT:

- To boost availability of more affordable transport fuels, better use of agricultural residue, cattle dung and municipal solid waste, as well as to provide an additional revenue source to farmers.
- To be launched on the penultimate day of the ongoing *Swachhta Hi Seva* fortnight, a mass movement to fulfill Mahatma Gandhi's vision of a Clean India,
- This initiative holds great promise for efficient municipal solid waste management and in tackling the problem of polluted urban air due to farm stubble-burning and carbon emissions.
- Use of CBG will also help bring down dependency on crude oil imports and in realising the Prime Minister's vision of enhancing farmers' income, rural employment and entrepreneurship.

Benefits from SATAT:

- converting agricultural residue, cattle dung and municipal solid waste into CBG on a commercial scale:
- Responsible waste management, reduction in carbon emissions and pollution
- Additional revenue source for farmers
- Boost to entrepreneurship, rural economy and employment
- Support to national commitments in achieving climate change goals
- Reduction in import of natural gas and crude oil
- Buffer against crude oil/gas price fluctuations

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

1) SATAT is an initiative associated with –

- a. Rural Electrification
- b. Solar Pumps
- c. Compressed Bio-Gas
- d. Sustainable and Affordable Housing

CORRECT OPTION: C

➤ Centre begins work to widen pension cover under NSAP

IN NEWS:

- Union government taking measures to **double the number of people** covered by its pension scheme (**National Social Assistance Programme**) from the current 3.09 crore to more than six crores .
- The measure is in line with proposals made in the last budget.

IN DEPTH:

About National Social Assistance Programme:

- It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**.
- It provides **financial assistance** to the elderly, widows and persons with disabilities in the form of social pensions.
- It is a welfare programme being administered by the **Ministry of Rural Development**.
- However, this programme is being implemented in rural areas as well as urban areas.
- **The National Assistance Program consists of five sub-schemes:**
 1. Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS)
 2. Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS)
 3. Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS)
 4. National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS)
 5. Annapurna

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

- 1) Critically analyse the performance and implementation of social security schemes by the government of India.

➤ National Nutrition Mission soon to become mass movement in India

IN NEWS:

- NITI Aayog member, Dr Vinod Kumar Paul expressed the hope that the National Nutrition Mission will soon become a mass movement in the country.
- September 2018 was celebrated as Rashtriya Poshan Maah under POSHAN Abhiyaan.
- **POSHAN Abhiyaan** is India's flagship programme to improve nutritional outcomes for children, adolescents, pregnant women and lactating mothers by leveraging technology, a targeted approach and convergence.
- **The Ministry of Women and Child Development** is the concerned ministry.

IN DEPTH:

About National Nutrition Mission

Objective:

- To reduce the level of stunting, under-nutrition, anemia and low birth weight babies.
- It will create synergy, ensure better monitoring, issue alerts for timely action, and encourage States/UTs to perform
- guide and supervise the line Ministries and States/UTs to achieve the targeted goals.

Salient features of the Mission are:

- It aims **to bring down anaemia** among young children, women and adolescent girls by three per cent per year.
- Under NNM, the ministries of women and child development, health and family welfare, and water and sanitation will work together.
- The mission will form an apex body that would **fix targets and monitor**, supervise and guide nutrition-related interventions across the ministries.
- The mission would include **several components** like an ICT (information and communications technology)-based real-time monitoring system, incentivizing of states and Union territories to meet their targets, social audits, and setting up of nutrition resource centres.
- Anganwadi workers will also be **offered incentives** for using IT-based tools such as smart phones.
- **Aadhaar card** is a **mandatory** requirement to avail the benefits of the mission.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:**1) Which of the following are the objectives of ‘National Nutrition Mission’?**

1. To create awareness relating to malnutrition among pregnant women and lactating mothers.
2. To reduce the incidence of anaemia among young children, adolescent girls and women.
3. To promote the consumption of millets, coarse cereals and unpolished rice.
4. To promote the consumption of poultry eggs.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (d) 3 and 4 only

CORRECT OPTION: A

➤ Global Hunger Index 2018

IN NEWS:

Global hunger index 2018 has been released

- 1 in 5 Indian children under the age of five have extremely low weight for their height, reflecting acute **under-nutrition**.

-Overall, India has been ranked at 103 out of 119 countries in the Index, with hunger levels in the country categorised as “serious”

IN DEPTH:

What is global hunger index?

- It presents a **multidimensional measure** of national, regional, and global hunger by assigning a numerical score based on several aspects of hunger

- joint project of Welthungerhilfe and Concern Worldwide

Main indicators

Four main indicators are used to calculate hunger levels in the report –

1. Undernourished population (1/3rd weight),
2. Child wasting (1/6th weight),
3. Child stunting (1/6th weight) and (iii) Child stunting (1/6th weight) and
4. Infant mortality rate (1/3rd weight)

Report about india:

India has shown improvement in three of the indicators during 2013-2017

- undernourished people -dropped -18.2% in 2000 to 14.8% in 2018.
- child mortality rate -9.2% to 4.3%
- child stunting -dropped -54.2% to 38.4%.
- child wasting has actually worsened 17.1% in 2000, and 2018 at 21%.

Steps taken by Indian government:

- Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)
- National Health Mission (NHM)
- Mid-Day Meal Scheme
- Rajiv Gandhi Schemes for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG) namely SABLA
- Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojna (IGMSY)

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

1. Mothers absolute affection (MAA) programme of government relates to which of the following ?

- a. Promoting institutional deliveries
- b. Giving cash benefits to mothers for childcare
- c. Promoting breastfeeding
- d. none of the above

CORRECT OPTION: c

➤ Illegal sale of antibiotics to grow farm animals – raise superbug risk

IN NEWS:

- Zoetis, the world's biggest animal drugs company, has been accused of double standards and of exposing consumers in India to "higher levels of risk" by selling antibiotics for purposes now banned in Europe and the U.S.

IN DEPTH:

problem associated with illegal use of antibiotics

- Zoetis is supplying Indian farmers with **antibiotics** to help their animals grow faster.
- The practice should be banned worldwide, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), because it increases the prevalence of resistant bacteria that can infect humans and cause deadly and untreatable infections.
- This is not currently against Indian law although the government has called for it to end and Maharashtra banned the indiscriminate use of antibiotics in agriculture.
- WHO, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) have called for a worldwide ban on the use of antibiotics to fatten farm animals — a practice already banned in the EU and U.S. — in an attempt to stem the rising threat of resistance.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

1) What are the risks associated with illegal use of antibiotics to animals?

➤ Panel to study issues raised by #MeTooIndia

IN NEWS:

- Ministry for Women and Child Development to constitute group of legal experts to examine the existing legal and institutional framework to deal with complaints of sexual harassment at the workplace
- **OBJECTIVE** : The expert committee is expected to advise the Ministry to strengthen the existing framework.

IN DEPTH: [STEPS TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT ON WOMENS SAFETY]

VISHAKA GUIDELINES:

- In 1997 Supreme Court delivered the verdict laying down legally binding obligations on institutions regarding prohibition, prevention and redressal of sexual harassment at workplace.
- These guidelines, the foundation for the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013, came into force in connection with a PIL in the alleged gangrape of Bhanwari Devi, a social worker from Rajasthan.
- In 1992, she had prevented the marriage of a one-year-old girl, leading to her rape as an act of revenge.
- These guidelines were recommended for somebody who was harassed in the present. It had not considered incidents of sexual harassment that took place in the past — like those that have now been reported.

Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013

a legislative act in India that seeks to protect women from sexual harassment at their place of work.

- The Act came into force from 9 December 2013. This statute superseded the Vishakha Guidelines for prevention of sexual harassment introduced by the Supreme Court of India.
- The Bill defines sexual harassment at the work place and creates a mechanism for redressal of complaints. It also provides safeguards against false or malicious charges.
- Every employer is required to constitute an Internal Complaints Committee at each office or branch with 10 or more employees. The District Officer is required to constitute a Local Complaints Committee at each district, and if required at the block level.
- The Complaints Committees have the powers of civil courts for gathering evidence.

Justice J.S. Verma Committee recommendations:**What Verma panel said**

- Proposed forming an employment tribunal to receive and adjudicate all complaints
- Tribunal should be appointed by a collegium headed by the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court
- Should comprise two retired judges with at least one of them being a woman, two eminent sociologists and one social activist with experience in the field of gender-based discrimination



- To ensure speedy disposal of complaints, the tribunal should not function as a civil court but may choose its own procedure to deal with each complaint

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

1 . Evaluate the METOO movement in India, whether these movements take us closer towards gender equality?

➤ Silver Jubilee celebrations of NHRC

IN NEWS:

- PM Modi inaugurated Silver Jubilee celebrations of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and said it has an important role to play in government's efforts to achieve sustainable development goals.

IN DEPTH:**ABOUT NHRC:**

What is National Human Rights Commission ?

- Statutory body, 1993 under the Protection of Human Rights Act, passed by Parliament.
- responsible for the protection and promotion of human rights
- protection of life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in the International Covenants".

The NHRC consists of:

- **CHAIRPERSON** - retired Chief Justice of India
- **MEMBERS:**
 - Judge of the Supreme Court of India
 - Chief Justice of a High Court
 - Two members -knowledge of, or practical experience in, matters relating to human rights
 - In addition, the Chairpersons of four National Commissions (Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Women and Minorities) serve as ex officio members.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:**1) Consider the following with regard to National Human Rights Commission:**

- 1) National Human Rights Commission is a non-constitutional body.
- 2) They intervene in any proceeding involving allegation of violation of human rights pending before a court.

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

CORRECT OPTION : C

2) Critically evaluate the role of NHRC in investigating violations of human rights?

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

➤ India and China: “Wuhan spirit”

IN NEWS:

- After the Wuhan summit, mutual confidence between China and India was promoted.
- Experts and academicians feel – “China and India can cooperate under two-plus-one formula” to bring development in countries such as Maldives, Afghanistan and Nepal.
- The 2+1 mechanism (Wuhan Spirit) was proposed by China at Wuhan, where New Delhi and Beijing would coordinate their responses while engaging a third country in South Asia.
- The mechanism can enhance mutual trust between China and India and may also prevent other South Asian countries from being caught in between.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:**1) What is wuhan summit? How it enhance our relationship with china in future?**

➤ India, Russia sign S-400 missile deal

IN NEWS:

- India and Russia concluded the contract for five S-400 ‘Triumf’ missile systems.
- S-400 is a long range surface to air missile.
- However, the two sides failed to conclude two other major deals, for stealth frigates and assault rifles.
- Meanwhile, U.S. issued a statement warning that any waiver for the S-400 deal would be considered on only a “transaction-by-transaction basis.”

IN DEPTH:

Everything about s-400 missile:

Defender of the skies

India is looking to acquire five S-400 air defence systems for the Air Force at an estimated cost of ₹39,000 crore. The focus during the annual summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin on October 5 is the deal for the defence systems

▪ Despite the threat of U.S. sanctions, expectations are high that India would sign the deal during the summit

▪ In October 2016, India and Russia signed an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) for five S-400 systems. Negotiations began later to conclude a commercial contract

▪ The deal does not have an offset clause

POLITICAL POWERPLAY

▪ The U.S. has passed the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) law, under which sanctions will be imposed on countries having significant defence cooperation with Russia

▪ The U.S. has particularly said that S-400 systems would be a problem

▪ Last month, the U.S imposed sanctions on some entities and individuals in China as it took delivery of Su-35 fighter jets and S-400 systems

▪ Last December, Turkey signed a deal to acquire the S-400 systems

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

400 km
Horizontal range

30 km
Vertical range

8

Launchers

1

Control
centre

1

Radar

16

Missiles



POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

1) Describe the implications of CAATSA waiver of U.S on defence relationship between India and Russia?

GENERAL STUDIES 3

[ECONOMY]

➤ IL&FS Crisis and role of National Company Law Tribunal

IN NEWS:

- IL&FS Group sent shock waves through credit markets when it began missing debt repayments.
- The IL&FS, India's leading infrastructure finance company, is facing a serious liquidity crisis and has failed to make over a dozen payments.
- IL&FS' problems could threaten India's economic growth as lenders cut exposure to non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) or shadow banks.
- More concerning is that potential defaults at so-called shadow banks could cripple many mutual funds that are heavily invested in their commercial paper.
- Government intervenes in the IL&FS crisis.
- The government moved National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) to supersede the IL&FS board and change the company management.
- The interlinkages between IL&FS and other financial sector entities such as banks, mutual funds and infrastructure players are too strong and the company would have taken them all down with it if it were allowed to fail.

IN DEPTH:**About National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)**

- The Central Government has constituted National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) under section 408 of the Companies Act, 2013.
- NCLT is a quasi-judicial body, exercising equitable jurisdiction, which was earlier being exercised by the High Court or the Central Government. The Tribunal has powers to regulate its own procedures.

Powers of NCLT

- Most of the powers of the Company Law Board under the Companies Act, 1956.
- All the powers of BIFR for revival and rehabilitation of sick industrial companies;
- Power of High Court in the matters of mergers, demergers, amalgamations, winding up, etc.;
- Power to order repayment of deposits accepted by Non-Banking Financial Companies as provided in section 45QA of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934;
- Power to wind up companies;
- Power to Review its own orders.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

1) Examine the issues that the collapse of IL&FS highlights and discuss steps that are needed for course correction?

➤ Overhaul GDP norms:

IN NEWS:

Report by Estimates Committee of Parliament says –The current manner in which the GDP is measured **needs an overhaul** as it provides an **incomplete estimation of economic activity**.

IN DEPTH:**WHAT IS GDP?**


Gross domestic product (**GDP**) is the monetary value of all the finished goods and services produced within a country's borders in a specific time period.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE REPORT:

Need for change

Why the committee insists that the measurement of India's Gross Domestic Product needs an overhaul? A look at the reasons cited:

- It does not measure the depletion of natural resources
- It ignores the economic contribution of women in running households
- It does not factor the change in the output quality
- due to technological advances
- It does not factor the impact of artificial intelligence in employment
- It does not measure whether GDP adds to happiness of the citizens



POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:**1. Consider the following statements:**

1. Real GDP is calculate the goods and services are evaluated at constant prices.
2. Nominal GDP is the value of GDP at the current prevailing prices.
3. The ratio of Real GDP to Nominal is known as Index of prices (GDP Deflator)

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3only

- (c) 1, 2 and 3
(d) 1 and 3 only

CORRECT OPTION: C

AGRICULTURE

➤ Drought: govt. asks farmers to go for short duration crops

IN NEWS:

- Some of the state governments have suggested its farmers to cultivate short duration crops to save themselves against impact of drought.
- Short duration crops include varieties like jowar, horsegram, cowpea, korra, red, green and black gram.
- Due to the drought conditions and deficient rainfall in some states, the farmers have lost four months of kharif season. Hence, long duration crops like paddy, cotton and red gram are not practical.
- Even if a farmer goes for long duration variety, the yield cannot be expected. Hence, the push for millets and pulses

IN DEPTH:

What is zeba?

- As part of drought mitigation measures, **the Zeba, a chemical product**, is being used to enhancing the moisture retention capacity of soil on a pilot basis in selected districts of the Andhra Pradesh state.
- It is being given to the farmers under 100% subsidy during kharif.
- The Zeba is expected to help during water-stress periods and overcome the problems caused by deficit rainfall.

Role of zeba:

- The Zeba granules slowly release just the right amount of encapsulated moisture in response to plant root suction. The granules easily rehydrate and store more water as moisture enters the soil. This process is repeated hundreds of times over a growing season.
- Zeba maximizes plant growth by not only storing water, but also slowing water movement through the soil, and adding anionic attraction to the area around the roots
- This helps reduce the movement of many crop inputs through the system and creates a healthy microenvironment in the plant root zone. The result is faster germination, quicker emergence, consistent growth and higher, better quality plants and yields.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

- 1) Analyse the statement “DROUGHT a serious problem that affects the Indian economy more worse”?

ENVIRONMENT

➤ Mansar Lake

IN NEWS:

- Mansar Lake is one of the largest freshwater lakes in the Shivalik range of the Jammu region.
- The lake is facing an existential threat due to human intervention and climate change.

IN DEPTH:

- **Mansar Lake** is situated 62 km (39 mi) from Jammu,
- Mansar is a lake fringed by forest-covered hills, over a mile in length by half-a-mile in width. Surinsar-Mansar Lakes is designated as Ramsar Convention in November 2005.
- Besides being a popular excursion destination in Jammu, it is also a holy site, sharing the legend and sanctity of Lake Manasarovar. On the Eastern Bank of the Lake there is a shrine to Sheshnag, a snake with six heads.
- Two ancient temples of Umapati Mahadev & Narsimha as also a temple of Durga are situated in the vicinity of the Mansar lake. People take a holy dip in the water of the lake on festive occasions

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

1) Consider the following statements:

1. Mansar Lake is one of the largest freshwater lakes in the Shivalik range of the Jammu region.
2. Surinsar-Mansar Lakes is designated as Ramsar Convention.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both
- d. None

CORRECT OPTION : C

➤ River under threat: Musi River

IN NEWS:

- Musi River – is a tributary of the Krishna River in the Deccan Plateau flowing through Telangana state in India.

- Due to indiscriminate urbanization and lack of planning, the river has become a receptacle of untreated domestic and industrial waste dumping out of Hyderabad.
- The river water downstream of the cities remains highly polluted, considered a major disaster in Hyderabad.

IN DEPTH:

- **Musi River** or Musinuru is a tributary of the Krishna River in the Deccan Plateau flowing through Telangana state in India. Hyderabad stands on the banks of Musi river, which divides the historic old city and the new city.
- Himayat Sagar and Osman Sagar are dams built on it which used to act as source of water for Hyderabad. The river was known as Nerva during Qutub Shahi period.

➤ **Gir sees 21 lion deaths in 19 days****IN NEWS:**

- As many as 21 lions have died in Gujarat's Gir forest since September 12.
- Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) has confirmed that the **Canine Distemper Virus (CDV)** was responsible for lion deaths in the Gir forest of Gujarat
- It recommended that the remaining lions be vaccinated to prevent further outbreaks.

IN DEPTH:

- Gir is considered as only abode of Asiatic lions in the world.
- Gir is home to India's entire population of around 500 wild Asiatic lions.
- Relentless development near Gir — roads through the forest in the 1,400-square kilometre-wildlife sanctuary, expanding villages and illegal mining — is also forcing animal-human proximity.
- **IUCN Status:** Endangered
- The lion is one of five pantherine cats inhabiting India, along with the Bengal tiger, Indian leopard, snow leopard and clouded leopard.
- It was also known as "**Indian lion**" and "**Persian lion**".
- Nearly all wild lions live in Sub-Saharan Africa, but one small population of Asiatic lions exist in India's Gir Forest
- Asiatic lions and African lions are subspecies of the same species

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:**1) Consider the following statements with reference to Asiatic Lion:**

1. The species are listed as 'Critically Endangered' on IUCN Red List.
2. The lions face threat from poaching and habitat fragmentation.
3. Currently, these are protected only in the Gir National Park.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

CORRECT OPTION: C

➤ India faces threat of deadly heat waves

IN NEWS:

According to recent UN climate report –

- India to face threat of deadly heat waves
- If the average global temperature rises by more than one degree Celsius from the present, India could “annually” expect conditions like the 2015 heat wave that killed at least 2,000
- The report stated that capping the rise in temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius would require “rapid and far-reaching” transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport and cities.

IN DEPTH:

Heat Wave

A Heat Wave is a period of abnormally high temperatures, more than the normal maximum temperature that occurs during the summer season in the North-Western parts of India. Heat Waves typically occur between March and June, and in some rare cases even extend till July.

Health Impacts of Heat Waves

The health impacts of Heat Waves typically involve dehydration, heat cramps, heat exhaustion and/or heat stroke. The signs and symptoms are as follows:

- Heat Cramps: Edema (swelling) and Syncope (Fainting) generally accompanied by fever below 39°C i.e. 102°F.
- Heat Exhaustion: Fatigue, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea, vomiting, muscle cramps and sweating.
- Heat Stroke: Body temperatures of 40°C i.e. 104°F or more along with delirium, seizures or coma. This is a potential fatal condition

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

1) What causes heat waves in India? How should India cope with increasing intensity and frequency of heat waves?

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

➤ “Digi Yatra” facility

IN NEWS:

- The government unveiled the Digi Yatra initiative under which the flyers can soon use **facial recognition technology** to enter the airport.

IN DEPTH:

- Travellers **can skip long queues** and zip through various check points at airports.
- Digi Yatra initiative also has biometric-enabled digital processing technique that would enable travellers to enter the airport building by **scanning a QR code** on their mobile phones, after undergoing facial recognition.

Face value

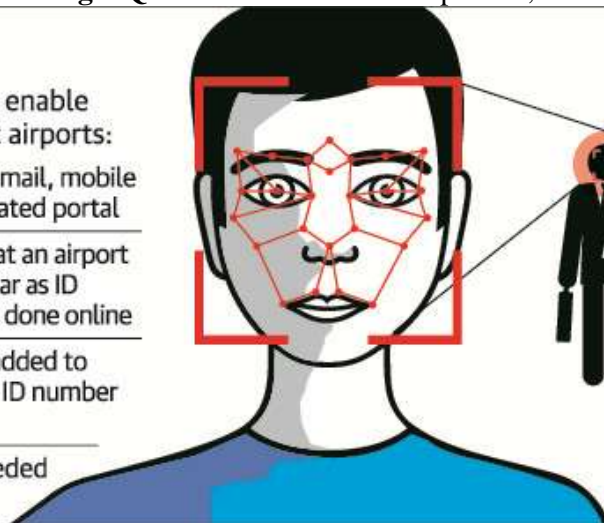
A step-by-step process to enable yourself for facial scans at airports:

Step 1 Register your name, e-mail, mobile number, ID proof on a designated portal

Step 2 One-time verification at an airport is a must and if you use Aadhaar as ID proof, then verification can be done online

Step 3 Your photo has to be added to your Digi Yatra profile and an ID number should be generated

Step 4 This ID number is needed while booking tickets



Step 5 Scan QR code and undergo facial recognition before entering airports. Facial ID along with ticket PNR is made into a single token

Step 6 Carry out self check-in, drop baggage & access security and embarkation area with a facial scan

➤ Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (STIAC)

IN NEWS:

- Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (STIAC) held its first meeting.
- Key decision – India is planning a major mission to sequence the genes of a “large” group of Indians — akin to projects in the U.K., China, Japan and Australia
- use this to improve the health of the population.
- The Health and Family Welfare Ministry and the Biotechnology Department will be closely associated with the project.

IN DEPTH:

What is SITAC?

- 21-member committee has been set up to advise Prime Minister Narendra Modi on **science, technology and innovations**.
- The committee's main task is **to advise** the prime minister on science, technology and innovations.

About GenomeAsia 100k:

- Genome Asia 100k is a **non-profit consortium** with a mission to generate genomic information for Asian populations and to promote genetic understanding of Asian populations to support research and discovery for healthy living and longevity.
- Genome Asia 100k , announced an ambitious plan to sequence 100,000 individuals. It is intended to initially include populations from 12 South Asian countries and at least 7 of North and East Asian countries.
- Key goal of the consortium is to accelerate precision medicine applications for Asian patients. It will also build advanced analytical capabilities to parse ‘big-data’ sets, leveraging advances in data science and artificial intelligence.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

1) Which of the following statements about Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC) is/are correct?

1. It will be chaired by Prime Minister.
2. It is set to act as a high-level advisory body to several ministries and execute mission-oriented programmes for these ministries.

Select the correct codes from the given options:

- a. Only 1
- b. Only 2
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. None of the above

CORRECT OPTION :B

DEFENCE

➤ Upgraded MiG-29 adds to air power

IN NEWS:



- The Indian Air Force's beast — **MiG-29** — has gained in strength and ferocity after an upgrade, giving the force, battling a shortage of fighter aircraft, a much-needed boost.
- The **Russian-origin aircraft**, now capable of effecting mid-air refuelling, is compatible with latest missiles and can launch multi-dimensional attacks.

IN DEPTH:

- Even in the previous 'legacy version', the aircraft played an important role as the IAF stamped its supremacy over the Pakistani force during the Kargil War of 1999.
- With the upgrade, as compared to the previous 'legacy version' of the MiG-29 bought under emergency clause in early 1980s, the fighter jets are capable to give a befitting response.

- The upgraded MiG-29 has Multi-Functional Display (MFD) screen.
- With air-to-air refuelling feature, the upgraded MiG-29 can cover larger distance as compared to the previous aircraft and destroy the enemy.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

1) Critically analyse readiness and capability of the Indian Air Force (IAF) in securing India's security interests.

➤ 17th CHG meeting of SCO to be held Tajikistan

IN NEWS:

- 17th Council of Heads of Government (CHG) meeting of SCO to be held Dushanbe, Tajikistan.
- This will be the second CHG meeting since India became a full member of SCO in June 2017. Last year, CHG meeting was held in Sochi, Russia.
- The SCO CHG meeting is a forum that enables India to engage with SCO member countries and Observer states of Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran and Mongolia. It is the first major meeting since Kyrgyzstan took over as chair of the Organisation.

IN DEPTH:

- The **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**, or **Shanghai Pact** is a Eurasian political, economic, and security alliance,
- the creation of which was announced on 15 June 2001 in Shanghai, China by the leaders of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan
- the organisation has expanded its membership to eight countries when India and Pakistan joined SCO as full members on 9 June 2017 at a summit in Astana, Kazakhstan.
- The Heads of State Council (HSC) is the supreme decision-making body in the SCO, it meets once a year and adopts decisions and guidelines on all important matters of the organisation.
- Military exercises are also regularly conducted among members to promote cooperation and coordination against terrorism and other external threats, and to maintain regional peace and stability

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

1) SCO provides immense opportunities for India provided India understands the dynamics of the region and of individual nations of SCO. Critically analyze the statement in light of the recently held SCO summit?

INTERNAL SECURITY

➤ Gorkhaland issue: Tripartite meeting soon

IN NEWS:

- The Centre has agreed for a **tripartite meeting** to discuss various political issues concerning the Gurkhas, including the demand for a separate State of Gorkhaland.
- Large-scale violence was reported in Darjeeling in West Bengal and nearby areas controlled by the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) in June last year.

IN DEPTH:

What is the Gorkhaland Issue?

- Gorkhaland consists of Nepali-speaking people of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong and other hilly districts of West-Bengal. The people belonging to these areas have ethical, cultural and language differences with the Bengali community of West-Bengal.
- The demand of Darjeeling as a separate administrative region dates back to 1907. But, the term “**Gorkhaland**” was coined recently, in the 1980s, by Subhash Ghising, the founder of Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF).
- The Gorkhaland Movement is a movement mainly focused in the Darjeeling Hills of West Bengal, which demands the creation of a separate state of Gorkhaland.
- The area covers Duars and Terai region of West Bengal. And is famous for its tea and beauty, which are the main sources of its income.

Why is there a demand for separate statehood for Gorkhaland?

- The main reason for the separate Gorkhaland movement is due to the differences in ethnicity, culture and language.
- The people of **Nepali-Indian Gorkha ethnic origin** on the Northern part of West Bengal demands a state on basis of their cultural identity, which is very different from Bengali culture.
- In addition to an **identity crisis**, there is also an issue of poverty, under-development and politicisation of the issue.
- According to Rajat Ganguli (author of ‘Poverty, Malgovernance and Ethnopolitical Mobilization: Gorkha Nationalism and the Gorkhaland Agitation in India’). It was a failure of governance combined with politicisation that bred the Gorkhaland issue. He cites the historical trend, especially post-independence, where the issue erupts only when it’s pampered by political aspirations.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

1) Discuss the roots and causes of the current Gorkhaland agitation in Darjeeling.

➤ NRC in Tripura soon?

IN NEWS:

- Supreme Court issued notice to the government on a public interest litigation petition to update the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Tripura, as is being done in Assam.
- NRC is being updated to weed out illegal immigration from Bangladesh and neighbouring regions.
- The petition contended the “influx” of illegal immigrants into Tripura amounted to ‘external aggression’ under **Article 355** of the Constitution.

IN DEPTH:

Article 355 entrusts the duty upon Union to protect the states against “external aggression” and “internal disturbance” to ensure that the government of every State is carried on in accordance with the provisions of Constitution.

National Register of Citizens

- The **National Register of Citizens (NRC)** is a register containing names of all genuine Indian citizens RESIDING IN ASSAM. The register was first prepared after the 1951
- The NRC is now being updated in Assam to include the names of those persons (or their descendants) who appear in the NRC, 1951, or in any of the Electoral Rolls up to the midnight of 24 March 1971 or in any one of the other admissible documents issued up to mid-night of 24 March 1971, which would prove their presence in Assam or in any part of India on or before 24 March 1971.
- The update process of NRC started in the year 2013 under the strict monitoring of Supreme Court of India. On the midnight of 31 December 2017, Part Draft NRC was released and subsequently on 30 July 2018, the Complete Draft NRC was released.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

1) Throw light on the nature of migration in Assam. Examine whether the National Register of Citizens will address the issues arising there under?