# INSIGHTSIAS
SIMPLIFYING IAS EXAM PREPARATION

INSTA SECURE SYNOPSIS

MAINS 2020

GS- II

JANUARY 2020

NOTE: Please remember that following *'answers' are NOT 'model answers'*. They are NOT synopsis too if we go by definition of the term. What we are providing is content that both meets demand of the question and at the same time gives you extra points in the form of background information.

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Indian Constitution- historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

Time and again conflicting liaison between the right to freedom of religion and the rights of individuals to dignity and equality has become an endless source of litigation off late. Critically comment and discuss the apex court's viewpoints on it. (250 words)

The Hindu

Why this question:
A nine-judge bench of the Supreme Court will begin hearing arguments on questions concerning the relationship between the right to freedom of religion and the rights of individuals to dignity and equality.

Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the present case and explain why there is a continuous conflict between the right to freedom of religion and rights of individuals to dignity and equality, what the causes are and what needs to be done to address the issue.

Directive:
Critically examine *– When asked to 'Examine', we have to look into the topic (content words) in detail, inspect it, investigate it and establish the key facts and issues related to the topic in question. While doing so we should explain why these facts and issues are important and their implications. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgment.*

Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Start with the background of the issue.

Body:
Such questions are best answered with relevant and recent examples such as the madesnana ritual at the Kukke Subramanya Temple in Karnataka. Female genital mutilation (FGM) practised in India by the Dawoodi Bohras. Entry of Parsi women to the Sun Temples etc.
Discuss what role does the apex court has to play.
Analyse the constitutional provisions and the breach of the same that arises due to such conflicts. Discuss what can be done and how can the issue be addressed.

Conclusion:
Conclude that one way to strike a balance between the two rights would be to check whether the effect of the disputed religious practice causes harm to individual rights or not. If it does not the religious practice can be allowed, if not it should be banned.

Introduction:

A nine-judge bench of the Supreme Court will begin hearing arguments on questions concerning the relationship between the right to freedom of religion and the rights of individuals to dignity and equality. The establishment of the nine-judge bench originated out of an order of reference made on review petitions filed against the Sabarimala judgment. The new bench will have to interpret the scope and extent of the Constitution's religious liberty clauses.

Body:

There have been many such cases in recent history which involved the often contradictory relationship between the right to freedom of religion and the rights of individuals to dignity and equality.

- **Madesnana ritual:**

- It is a 500-year-old ritual performed at the Kukke Subramanya Temple in Karnataka.

- The practice involves people mostly belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, rolling over plantain leaves left behind with food half-eaten by Brahmins. The belief is that this act would cleanse their skin of impurities.

- Following a challenge, the Supreme Court of India In December 2014 placed a temporary ban on madesnana.

- **Female genital mutilation:**

  - Female genital mutilation(FGM) is practised in India by the Dawoodi Bohras, a sect of Shia Islam with one million members in India. The procedure is generally performed when a girl is seven years old and involves the total or partial removal of the clitoral hood.

  - The petition claimed the practice violated children's rights under Article 14 (Right to Equality) and Article 21 (Right to Life) of the Constitution of India.

  - In May 2017 a public interest litigation(PIL) case was raised in India's Supreme Court, seeking a ban on FGM in India.

- **Parsi women and entry to sun temple:**

  - There is a religious custom in India of not allowing Zoroastrianwomen to enter the Fire Temple and the Tower of Silence if they marry a non-Zoroastrian person.

  - Overturning a previous a Gujarat High Court order which upheld the practice the Supreme Court has ruled that a Parsi who married outside her community must be allowed to enter fire temples and participate in other religious rituals.

  - Also, entry of menstruating women and non-Parsis is not allowed inside Fire Temple.

Freedom of Religion:

- India is a pluralist and diverse nation. The groups and communities with their diverse religious or cultural practices need to be protected, given that they have played an important role in society.
- The Constitution of India in an effort to protect the diverse practices recognizes both the freedom of religion as an individual right (Article 25), as well as the right of religious denominations to manage their own affairs in matters of religion (Article 26).

There is a need to **balance the autonomy of cultural and religious communities** and also **ensure that individual rights are not entirely compromised** due to community compulsions.

Over the years, the Supreme Court has attempted to reconcile the two impulses of respecting religious autonomy and enforcing individual rights by using the jurisprudence of **"essential practices of a religion".** The court has in its previous judgments held that only those practices that are "essential" to a religion, enjoy constitutional protection. All other rituals are considered open to the state's interference.

The Courts have struck down a number of rituals across religions on the grounds that those practices were embodiments of superstition as opposed to faith. The followers have opposed this questioning the competency of the "secular" courts to make such distinctions in religious practices.

Way forward:

▪ One way to strike a balance between the two rights would be to check whether the effect of the disputed religious practice causes harm to individual rights or not. If it does not the religious practice can be allowed, if not it should be banned.

▪ In this approach the enquiry is not whether the practice is truly religious, but whether its effect is to subordinate, exclude a section of the society.

▪ A similar approach was used by the Bombay High Court in dealing with a petition challenging the exclusion of women from the inner sanctum of the Haji Ali Dargah. The court found that this practice constituted a violation of equality for women and struck it down.

▪ Even in the Sabarimala case, both the concurring opinion of Justice D.Y. Chandrachud and the dissenting opinion of Justice Indu Malhotra agreed that the anti-exclusion principle ought to be the test of the permissibility of certain religious and cultural practices.

Conclusion:

The rights of women who have long been at the receiving end of discriminatory practices and other vulnerable groups are on stake. The constitution envisions a life of dignity and equality to all, both in the public sphere and in the sphere of community. The court's constitutional interpretation, in this case, will go a long way in guaranteeing the basic norms of fairness, equality, and freedom to members of a community.

"The conflict between agreement and disagreement is the first and foremost sign of a healthy democracy", Analyse the statement with recent examples demonstrating the above case.(250 words)

Live mint
Why this question:
The author presents a case as to how the youth have to establish harmony between their struggle and their aim.
Key demand of the question:
One needs to justify the fact that a concussion of agreement and disagreement is the first and foremost sign of a healthy democracy.
Directive:
Analyze *– When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary.*
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Define what constitutes a Democracy and explain briefly the importance of agreement and disagreement in a democracy.
Body:
Take hints from the article, and explain with suitable examples the cases wherein disagreement has been meted by sections of people in our society.
Explain the case of angrezi hatao movement of 1967 led by Ram Manohar Lohia.
Discuss then the pros and cons of youth participating in politics and relate it to the context of the question and explain its significance to Democracy.
Conclusion:
Conclude with way forward.
Introduction:

The **Right to Dissent** is an important addition of expressing one's view, and on many of its most important constituent elements. It will enable practitioners and citizens to claim their rights and participate more effectively in the project of democracy. Disagreeing with each other is a fundamental human trait. There is not a single individual who does not disagree with something or the other all the time. The apex court said, **Dissent is a safety valve for democracy**. If this safety valve is not allowed to function then the pressure cooker will burst.

Body:

Dissent is the safety valve of democracy:

- Recently, while hearing a petition on the ban of protest on the Jantar Mantar in New Delhi, the SC held that Right to peaceful protest is the fundamental right guaranteed under the constitution.
- The constitution under Article 19(1)(a) provides for freedom of speech and expression and also under Article 19(2) provides for reasonable restrictions on such freedom.
- This particular right is also subject to reasonable restrictions in the interest of sovereignty and integrity of India, as well as public order.
- A distinguishing feature of any democracy is the space offered for legitimate dissent, which cannot be trampled by any executive action.
- Thus, the Court recognises that legitimate dissent is a distinguishable feature of any democracy.
- Also observed that, every individual or a group of individuals, whether they are minority or poor or marginalised, have the right to express their dissent to the government policies and fight their social circumstances.
- Protest strengthen representative democracy by enabling direct participation in public affairs where individuals and groups are able to.

Importance of dissent:

- The importance of dissent is not just that it is good for democracy. There is also a fundamental ethical principle involved in dissent
- Any society which muzzles dissent is acting unethically.
- The first ethical principle is related to non-violence, a principle which is so integral to the unique Indian practices of dissent from ancient times to Gandhi and Ambedkar.
- The second ethical principle is that the worse off in a society have a greater right to dissent and protest even when the more privileged may not agree or sympathise with that dissent.
- Social dissent is a necessary voice for all those who are oppressed and are marginalised for various reasons. This is the only thing they have in a world which has denied them the basic dignity of a social life.
- Buddha and Mahavira were dissenters first and philosophers next. Ramayana and Mahabharata are filled with stories of dissent.
- Dissent is not just about criticism, it is also about showing new perspectives.

Way forward:

- The course of democracy anywhere in the world is defined by events that test the resilience of democracy and also add to it.
- Indeed, dissent is the quintessential part of democracy and allows people to have their opinions and to voice those without fear of intimidation.

- 'Freedom of expression, freedom of association and the right to peaceful assembly are often compartmentalised and discussed individually, with little regard to their interdependence.
- This unique guide of Protests provides activists, human rights defenders, jurists, NGOs, corporate actors, and government authorities with the tools and knowledge necessary to ensure rights, protect the lives and liberty of dissenters, enable meaningful participation in public life, and promote the rule of law.
- The philosophy of dissent and democracy has also inspired our freedom movement and defines India's constitutional democracy, which is predicated on the people's right to call state power to account, albeit within the constitutional framework.

Conclusion:

Thus, when we hear the voices of dissent from the oppressed and the marginalised, it is ethically incumbent upon those who are better off than them to give them greater space and greater freedom to dissent.

Discuss the significance of Article 131 of the Indian constitution, Can States challenge the validity of central laws under it? Justify your stand with suitable examples.(250 words)

The Hindu
Why this question:
The article discusses in depth the features and scope provided by article 131 and whether States can challenge the validity of central laws in the country.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the provisions of Article 131 and how far it has been used in the past and what benefits and disadvantages it has to offer to the States in challenging the Central laws.
Directive:
Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Define Article 131 in short.
Body:
Article 131 confers exclusive jurisdiction on the Supreme Court in disputes involving States, or the Centre on the one hand and one or more States on the other. This means no other court can entertain such a dispute. It is well-known that both High Courts and the Supreme Court have the power to adjudicate cases against the State and Central governments.
Explain what happens when a State feels its legal rights have been violated by another State or by the Centre?
Discuss the recent case of the State of Kerala; take hints from the article and present your case.
Conclusion:
Conclude with significance of such a provision in the constitution of the country.
Introduction:

Article 131 of the Constitution states that the Supreme Court has original jurisdiction to deal with any dispute between the Centre and a state; the Centre and a state on the one side and another state on the other side; and two or more states. Kerala has become the first state to challenge the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) before the Supreme Court under Article 131 of the Constitution.

Kerala claims that the Act is violative of the Doctrine of Basic Structure- as it is against the **principle of equality, freedom, and secularism** which forms part of the basic structure of the Constitution.

Body:

Besides, Chhattisgarh government has also filed a suit in the Supreme Court under Article 131, challenging the National Investigation Agency (NIA) Act on the ground that it encroaches upon the state's powers to maintain law and order.

Significance of article 131:

- The Supreme Court has original jurisdiction in any dispute:
  - between the Government of India and one or more States; or
  - between the Government of India and any State or States on one side and one or more other States on the other; or
  - between two or more States.

- The dispute must involve a question (whether of law or fact) on which the existence or extent of a legal right depends.

- Any suit brought before the Supreme Court by a private citizen against the Centre or a state cannot be entertained under this.

- The original jurisdiction of a court means the power to hear a case for the first time, as opposed to appellate jurisdiction, in which the court reviews the decision of a lower court.

Supreme court's stance on article 131:

- There have been two conflicting judgments from the Supreme Court on whether a State can file an original suit under Article 131 to challenge the constitutionality of a central law.
- The first judgment reported in 2012 – **State of Madhya Pradesh vs Union of India** – held that States cannot challenge a central law under Article 131.
- The second judgment – **State of Jharkhand Vs State of Bihar** – took the opposite view in 2015 and referred the question of law to a larger Bench of the Supreme Court for final determination. Kerala's plaint relies on the 2015 verdict.
- However, in the West Bengal government's case in 2017, the SC proclaimed that the State government cannot ask for any remedy related to Fundamental rights. The case was filed under Article 32 of the Constitution challenging the validity of the 'Aadhaar Act'. The Court also held that, "Fundamental rights are available to individuals: citizens or non-citizens against the State (under Article 32 or Article 226) and not to the State entities."

Conclusion:

Politically motivated pleas must be abandoned and must not be entertained by the SC. Instead, determined efforts must be made to resolve them within the political arena. Representatives of states must speak up in the Parliament when the laws are being framed & passed rather than making hue and cry later. Federalism is a two-way street. Both the parties to it must respect the boundaries of one another that has been drawn by the Constitution.

The right to protest is a fundamental political right basic to our democratic society, Discuss in detail the provisions regarding the right to protest peacefully enshrined in the Indian Constitution.(250 words)

The Hindu
Why this question:
The article argues for the right to protest for the citizens. Thus the question.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the background of the context of the question, explain why
Right to protest is a fundamental political right basic to our democratic society and then the constitutional provisions relating to it.
Directive:
***Discuss** – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.*
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Describe the background of the question – Recently, there have been public protests in India against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 and the proposed National Register of Citizens.
Body:
Explain that the government's handling of the protests has invited criticism from certain sections. The administrations have been blamed of arbitrary imposition of section 144.
Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) of 1973 authorizes the Executive Magistrate of any state or territory to issue an order to prohibit the assembly of four or more people in an area.
Section 144 of CrPC generally prohibits public gathering.
Section 144 has been used in the past to impose restrictions as a means to prevent protests that can lead to unrest or riots.
The administration has defended its actions, as being preventive in nature and to avoid violence and damage to public property.
Discuss the significance of right to protest as a fundamental right guaranteed by the constitution.
Conclusion:
Conclude by suggesting way forward that the people opposing the CAA have the right to protest and express their opinions. The government needs to acknowledge the right to dissent and protest for all Indians. Notably, Article 19(1)(3) states that the rights are subject to "reasonable restrictions" in the interest of public order. There is the need to ensure there is no violence or damage to public property in the protests.

Introduction:

Public protests are the hallmark of a free, democratic society, whose logic demands that the voice of the people be heard by those in power. Recently, parliament passed the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) which gave rise to the massive protests by the people across states and students across universities. In order to participate in public protest, the right to freedom of speech & expression, association and peaceful assembly are necessary. The government's handling of the protests has invited criticism from certain sections. The administrations have been blamed of arbitrary imposition of section 144.

Body:

Right to protest is a fundamental political right basic to our democratic society

▪ **Independence struggle:**

- The background of the Indian Constitution is formed by its anti-colonial struggle.

- The Indian freedom struggle involved public expression of views against colonial policies and laws, demonstrations expressing dissent and shaping of public opinion against them.

- The methods involved staging dharnas, holding large public meetings and demonstrations and even civil disobedience.

- **Post-Independence:**

  - Potti Sreeramulu undertook a satyagraha demanding for the creation of a new Telugu-speaking state of Andhra.

  - The Chipko Movement led by Gaura Devi, Chandi Prasad Bhatt, was a people's movement to save the trees in Uttarakhand. It was meant to prevent the then U.P. government from awarding contracts to commercial loggers.

- **Inclusive approach:**

  - Street protests and demonstration movements are particularly important for those outside the mainstream, or those not educated formally.

  - They provide an opportunity for even the most illiterate and powerless person to show dissent. Street protests help involve many people in the movement.

  - Abraham Lincoln had once noted that "the right of the people to peaceably assemble is a constitutional substitute for revolution".

Provisions regarding the right to protest peacefully enshrined in the Indian Constitution:

- The Right to protest peacefully is enshrined in the Indian Constitution—**Article 19(1)(a)** guarantees the freedom of speech and expression; **Article 19(1)(b)** assures citizens the right to assemble peaceably and without arms.
- **Article 19(2)** imposes reasonable restrictions on the right to assemble peaceably and without arms.
- These reasonable restrictions are imposed in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence.
- In **Ramlila Maidan Incident v. Home Secretary, Union Of India & Ors. case (2012),** the Supreme Court had stated, "Citizens have a fundamental right to assembly and peaceful protest which cannot be taken away by an arbitrary executive or legislative action."

Concerns against Right to protest:

- The right to protest, to publicly question and force the government to answer, is a fundamental political right of the people that flows directly from a democratic reading of Article 19. For this, the right to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly are necessary.
- The arbitrary restraint on the exercise of such rights by the imposition of Section 144 is a concern.
- Section 144 is to be imposed in urgent cases of nuisance or apprehended danger of events that has the potential to cause trouble or damage to human life or property thus limiting it to only emergency situations.

- The arbitrary imposition of Sec 144 highlights the inability of the government to tolerate dissent.
- It also reflects the incapacity of the government to discuss, deliberate or listen.

Way forward:

- The Right of citizens to protest and gather peacefully without arms is a fundamental aspect of India's democracy.
- While it is also the obligation of the government to protect civilians from violent protests, certain essential principles need to be kept in mind.
- The Right to protest is one of the core principles on which democracy survives and thrives.
- Article 19(1)(3) states that the rights are subject to "reasonable restrictions" in the interest of public order. There is the need to ensure there is no violence or damage to public property in the protests.
- However, when a protest turns violent, as seen in some places in recent protests, it defeats the very purpose of the protest.
- While enjoying the rights, one must adhere to one's duties and responsibilities in a democratic society.

The interpretation of the constitution by the judiciary has changed over the years in recent times, trace the change in approach of judiciary and explain with suitable examples. (250 words)

Reference: [The Hindu](#)
Why this question:
The article in essence explains that Smaller benches of judiciary are continuing to decide on substantive constitutional cases at the risk of going against the spirit of our constitution.
Key demand of the question:
Trace the change in the methods and perspectives of the Judiciary from past to present, evaluate has it changed for the god or deteriorated. Explain using suitable examples to substantiate your stand.
Directive:
Explain – *Clarify the topic by giving a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.*
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Highlight that Indian constitution was a unique experiment which affected the quality of life of Indian citizens in a positive way. Ex: Universal adult franchise, federalism, social programmes etc. The interpretation of the constitution by the Judiciary has changed over the years in recent times.
Body:
Take cues from the article and explain how it has changed from textual approach to structure approach, to perception based approach.
Use the examples such as A.K. Gopalan v. State of Madras case, Keshavananda Bharati case, striking down section 377, bringing CJI under the ambit of RTI etc.
Explain what needs to be done.
Conclusion:
Conclude with way forward.
Introduction:

The Constitution of India came into force 70 years ago, on January 26, 1950. The enactment of the Constitution was an ambitious political experiment — with universal adult franchise, federalism in a region consisting of over 550 princely States, and social revolution in a deeply unequal society.

However, it was equally a unique achievement in terms of constitutional design. Republic Day, especially this year, therefore provides us an opportunity to take a step back from political contestations about the Constitution and consider how the text has been interpreted by the courts over the last seven decades.

Body:

Role of Judiciary in interpreting constitution:

- The higher judiciary (Supreme Court and High Courts) acts as the custodian of the Constitution because it is responsible for its interpretation and enforcement. The higher judiciary also has the power to strike down laws of Parliament and actions of the Executive as invalid, if they violate the Constitution. This is called the power of judicial review.

- For example, a law may be declared as invalid if it violates the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution. A law may also be declared invalid if its subject-matter is outside Parliament's area of competence (e.g. a central law on police may be invalid because police falls within the state legislatures' domain).

- Striking down of Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, 2000: The Supreme Court exercised its power of judicial review and struck down its provision as unconstitutional. It held that Section 66A violates Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution that protects freedom of speech and expression.

- The Judiciary also exercises oversight over the Executive, when it decides matters related to constitutionality and legality of executive actions. Occasionally it has also set up investigative and monitoring committees to monitor and oversee executive decisions.

- For example, in 2011, it set up a Special Investigation Team to investigate money laundering and unaccounted money held abroad by Indians.10In another case, the Supreme Court required the state governments to report on forest conservation and industrial activities around forest.

- The Supreme Court has held that Parliament's power to amend the Constitution is limited, that is, Parliament cannot amend the 'basic structure' of the Constitution.

- The Judiciary has used its power of interpretation to identify fundamental aspects of the Constitution that cannot amended. These include 'supremacy of the Constitution', 'separation of powers', 'judicial review' and 'judicial independence'. This is an open list to which the Judiciary may add new aspects.

The interpretation of the constitution by the Judiciary has changed over the years in recent times:

The first phase of Interpretation-Focus on text:

- A textualist approach-focusing on the plain meaning of the words: In its early years, the Supreme Court adopted a textualist approach, focusing on the plain meaning of the words used in the Constitution.

- *K. Gopalan v. State of Madras (1950)* was one of the early decisions in which the Court was called upon to interpret the fundamental rights under Part III.

- The leader of the Communist Party of India claimed that preventive detention legislation under which he was detained was inconsistent with Articles 19 (the right to freedom), 21 (the right to life) and 22 (the protection against arbitrary arrest and detention).

- Fundamental rights separate from each other: The Supreme Court decided in A. K. Gopalan case that each of those articles covered entirely different subject matter, and were to be read as separate codes rather than being read together.

- Unlimited Amendment Power: In its early years, the Court read the Constitution literally, concluding that there were no limitations on the Parliament's power to amend the Constitution.

The second phase of interpretation-Focus on 'basic structure':

- **Appeals to the structure and coherence:** Appeals to the text of the Constitution were gradually overtaken by appeals to the Constitution's overall structure and coherence.

- **Limited Amendment Power-Kesavananda Bharati case:** In the leading case of Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala(1973), the Court concluded that Parliament's power to amend the Constitution did not extend to altering its "basic structure".

- **"Basic Structure"**: The basic structure is an open-ended list of features that lie within the exclusive control of the Court.

- When Parliament attempted to overturn this decision by amending the Constitution yet again, the Court, relying on structuralist justifications, decisively rejected that attempt.

Key takeaways from Kesavananda Bharati case

- **Limited Amendment Power:** In this case, the Court pronounced that Parliament's power to amend the Constitution is not unlimited.

- **Fundamental rights as a cohesive bill of rights:** In this phase, the Court also categorically rejected the Gopalan approach in favour of a structuralist one.

- **Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India (1978):** Through decision, in this case, the Court conceived of the fundamental rights as a cohesive bill of rights rather than a miscellaneous grouping of constitutional guarantees.

- **Incremental interpretation of Right to Life:** The right to life was incrementally interpreted to include a wide range of rights such as clean air, speedy trial, and free legal aid.

- **Courts playing role in governance:** The incremental interpretation of Article 21 paved the way for the Supreme Court to play an unprecedented role in the governance of the nation.

Third Phase of interpretation-Eclecticism:

- **Different opinions on the same issues:** In the third phase the Supreme Court started to give different opinions on the same issues-i.e. it engaged in eclecticism.

- **First-Change in the structure of the SC:** The changing structure of the Court, which at its inception began with eight judges, grew to a sanctioned strength of 31; it is currently 34.

- It began to sit in panels of two or three judges, effectively transforming it into a "polyvocal" group of about a dozen sub-Supreme Courts.

- **Second-expansion of own role by the SC-**The Court began deciding cases based on a certain conception of its own role -whether as a sentinel of democracy or protector of the market economy.

- The focus of the judgement on the result rather than reason: This unique decision-making process sidelined reason-giving in preference to arriving at outcomes that match the Court's perception.

Fourth phase- based on the purpose:

- **Purpose of enactment of the Constitution as critical:** In the fourth phase, the Court has acknowledged as critical to its interpretive exercise the purpose for which the Constitution has been enacted.

- **The realisation of revolutionary and transformative potential:** The Court is now beginning to interpret the Constitution in accordance with its revolutionary and transformative potential.

- **Renaissance in decisions:** With about a dozen significant Constitution Bench decisions from the Supreme Court since September 2018, there has been a renaissance in decision-making by Constitution Benches.

- The most important decisions of this period include-

- Court's decisions striking down Section 377 and the criminal offence of adultery.

- And including the office of the Chief Justice of India within the scope of the Right to Information Act.

Conclusion:

The Constitution of India keeps responding to the situations and circumstances arising from time to time. Even after so many changes in the society, the Constitution continues to work effectively because of this ability to be dynamic, to be open to interpretations and the ability to respond to the changing situation. This is a hallmark of a democratic constitution. Indian Constitution can be changed according to the requirement and the needs of the present society and its future, it is not a constant and static document rather it is fluid and it can be changed by the process of amendment.

Parliament and State Legislatures – structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

Criminalization of politics has been a deep rooted concern in our democracy, in this context discuss the reasons causing it and comment on the landmark judgments of the apex court in addressing the issue of criminalization of politics and their effectiveness.(250 words)

Reference: The Hindu
Why this question:

The Supreme Court has agreed to hear a plea from the Election Commission of India (ECI) to direct political parties to not field candidates with criminal antecedents. Thus the question.

Key demand of the question:

Discuss in detail the aspects of criminalization of politics and the efforts made through various supreme court judgments to decriminalize politics.

Directive:

Comment– *here we have to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and form an overall opinion thereupon.*

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Define what you understand by criminalization of Politics.

Body:

Discuss key facts like – The petition filed in the SC claims that 46% of Members of Parliament have criminal records. The current Lok Sabha has the highest (29%) proportion of those with serious criminal cases compared to the predecessors.

Explain the scenario; why there is ineffectiveness in the SC Judgment.

Discuss in detail the landmark judgments pertaining to the issue.

Suggest solutions as to what needs to be done.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

Criminalization of Politics means that the criminals entering the politics and contesting elections and even getting elected to the Parliament and state legislature. Criminalization of politics is the focus of public debate when discussion on electoral reforms takes place.

Data from the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) indicate that 179 out of the 543 elected MPs in the present Lok Sabha have some kind of criminal case pending against them. In the case of over 100 MPs, the cases were of a very serious nature such as crimes against women and kidnapping.

Body:

Reasons why criminalization of politics still exists in India:

Corruption:

- In every election political parties put up candidates with a criminal background.
- Evident link between criminality and the probability of winning is further reinforced when winnability of a candidate is looked into. A candidate facing criminal charges is twice as likely to win as a clean candidate.

Vote Bank:

- The political parties and independent candidates have astronomical expenditure for vote buying and other illegitimate purposes through these criminals.

Denial of Justice and Rule of Law:

- Toothless laws against convicted criminals standing for elections further encourage this process. Under current law, only people who have been convicted at least on two counts be debarred

from becoming candidates. This leaves the field open for charge sheeted criminals, many of whom are habitual offenders or history-sheeters.

- Constitution does not specify what disqualifies an individual from contesting in an election to a legislature.
- It is the Representation of People Act which specifies what can disqualify an individual from contesting an election. The law does not bar individuals who have criminal cases pending against them from contesting elections

Lack of governance:

- The root of the problem lies in the country's poor governance capacity. .

Scarcity of state capacity:

- The scarcity of state capacity is the reason for the public preferring 'strongmen' who can employ the required pulls and triggers to get things done.
- Criminality, far from deterring voters, encourages them because it signals that the candidate is capable of fulfilling his promises and securing the interests of the constituency.
- **No political party is free of this problem.** The use of muscle power along with money power is a weapon used by all political parties to maximize electoral gains.
- **With cases dragging in courts for years, a disqualification based on conviction becomes ineffective.** Low conviction rates in such cases compounds the problem; voters don't mind electing candidates facing criminal cases.
- **Voter behavior then emboldens political parties to give tickets to such candidates who can win an election on their ticket etc.**

Landmark judgments pertaining to criminalization of Politics:

- The Supreme Court has taken a timely decision by agreeing to hear a plea from the Election Commission of India (ECI) to direct political parties to not field candidates with criminal antecedents
- The immediate provocation is the finding that 46% of Members of Parliament have criminal records.
- While the number might be inflated as many politicians tend to be charged with relatively minor offences —"unlawful assembly" and "defamation" — the real worry is that the current cohort of Lok Sabha MPs has the highest (29%) proportion of those with serious declared criminal cases compared to its recent predecessors.
- **The Supreme Court has come up with a series of landmark judgments on addressing this issue**.
- It removed the statutory protection of convicted legislators from immediate disqualification in 2013, and in 2014, directed the completion of trials involving elected representatives within a year.
- In 2017, it asked the Centre to frame a scheme to appoint special courts to exclusively try cases against politicians, and for political parties to publicize pending criminal cases faced by their candidates in 2018.
- But these have not been a deterrent to legislators with dubious credentials. Perhaps what would do the trick is a rule that disallows candidates against whom charges have been framed in court for serious offences, but this is something for Parliament to consider as an amendment to the Representation of the People Act, 1951.
- This denouement, however, is still a pie in the sky given the composition of the Lower House with a number of representatives facing serious cases.

RPA Criminalization of politics:

- Currently, under the Representation of Peoples (RP) Act, lawmakers cannot contest elections only after their conviction in a criminal case.
- **Section 8 of the Representation of the People (RP) Act, 1951** disqualifies a person convicted with a sentence of two years or more from contesting elections. But those under trial continued to be eligible to contest elections. The Lily Thomas case (2013), however, ended this unfair advantage.

Challenges:

- Election Commission has limited powers to legislate on such laws.
- Public opinion too is not firm on the issue.
- A survey found that opinion was divided when people were asked whether they would vote for an honest candidate who may not get their work done, or a tainted candidate who could get their work done.
- While political parties raise concern about candidates with a tainted background contesting elections, none of them come forward to set an example for others when it is time to act.
- In the present criminal justice system it takes years, probably decades, to complete the trial against a politician.
- Those with political influence have taken full advantage by delaying hearings, obtaining repeated adjournments and filing innumerable interlocutory petitions to stall any progress.
- They also engage in corruption and infect the bureaucracy and the police.

Way Forward:-

- Law panel report bats for using the time of the framing of charges to initiate disqualification as an appropriate measure to curb the criminalization of politics.
- Political parties should themselves refuse tickets to the tainted.
- The RPA Act should be amended to debar persons against whom cases of a heinous nature are pending from contesting elections.
- Bringing greater transparency in campaign financing is going to make it less attractive for political parties to involve gangsters
- The Election Commission of India (ECI) should have the power to audit the financial accounts of political parties, or political parties' finances should be brought under the right to information (RTI) law
- Broader governance will have to improve for voters to reduce the reliance on criminal politicians.
- Fast-track courts are necessary because politicians are able to delay the judicial process and serve for decades before prosecution.
- The Election Commission must take adequate measures to break the nexus between the criminals and the politicians.
- The forms prescribed by the Election Commission for candidates disclosing their convictions, cases pending in courts and so on in their nomination papers is a step in the right direction if it applied properly.
- Addressing the entire value chain of the electoral system will be the key to solving the puzzle of minimizing criminal elements from getting elected to our legislatures. This process would involve sensitizing the electorate about the role and responsibility of the elected representatives.

- ▪ Political parties will have to be encouraged to have stronger inner party democracy to attract this new set of leaders to join the party. And finally, our judicial system will have to be overhauled drastically to ensure that justice is dispensed swiftly in all cases.

Conclusion:

While judicial pronouncements on making it difficult for criminal candidates to contest are necessary, only enhanced awareness and increased democratic participation could create the right conditions for the decriminalization of politics.

Recently the State of Andhra Pradesh was in news for the abolishment of the legislative council; going by the assertion that the 'Upper House' didn't deserve to exist if it is rejecting key bills by violating rules . In such a situation critically examine the significance of the Legislative councils in the Indian parliamentary system. (250 words)

Reference: [Live Mint](#)
Why this question:
The Andhra Pradesh assembly Monday passed the statutory resolution to abolish the state legislative council, with 133-0 votes. Thus the question aims to examine the significance of having legislative councils.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the importance of Legislative councils; explain the pros and cons associated.
Directive:
Critically examine – When asked to 'Examine', we have to look into the topic (content words) in detail, inspect it, investigate it and establish the key facts and issues related to the topic in question. While doing so we should explain why these facts and issues are important and their implications. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgment.
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Start by defining what legislative councils are.
Body:
Discuss what is a legislative council? – India has a bicameral parliamentary system, with two Houses of Parliament. So, states have a legislative assembly, and may or may not have the legislative council.
Explain that while on one hand the creation of legislative councils is supposed to put in place checks and balances for hasty decisions, on the other hand, it is often criticized for being an entry point for leaders who could not win an election.
The arguments against creation of legislative councils also centre around the financial strain that it has on a state.
Explain why some states do have it and others don't?
Discuss the role played by legislative councils.
Conclusion:
Conclude with way forward.
Introduction:

The Andhra Pradesh assembly on Monday passed a resolution to abolish the state's legislative council, with 133 legislators of the ruling YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), which has 151 seats in the 175-member assembly, backing the decision.

While the need for a bicameral legislature in the States has often been questioned, few would support the idea that the potential difficulty in getting the Council's approval should be a reason for its abolition.

Body:

Legislative Councils in various states:

- 's proposal will bear fruit only if Parliament passes a law to that effect, based on the State's request.
- CM went to the extent of saying that there was no point in spending a huge sum (Rs.60 crore per year) on the Council if it comes in the way of important government business in the Legislature.
- He also mentioned in the Assembly that only six States have Legislative Councils and he was against allowing the Legislative Council of A.P. to function with a political agenda.
- However, recent experience suggests that States without a Legislative Council favour its revival. Rajasthan, Assam, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh have passed resolutions for a revival, but are yet to get parliamentary approval.
- In Tamil Nadu, at least two erstwhile DMK regimes had favoured revival, and even parliamentary approval given in 2010 did not result in the actual re-establishment of the Council, which was dissolved in 1986. I
- It is quite clear that wherever the Council is sought to be revived or abolished, there is no consensus.

Role played by legislative councils:

India has a bicameral system i.e., two Houses of Parliament. At the state level, the equivalent of the Lok Sabha is the Vidhan Sabha or Legislative Assembly; that of the Rajya Sabha is the Vidhan Parishad or Legislative Council.

- It widens the space for representative democracy.
- The Upper house act as a check on hasty actions by Legislative Assembly.
- They provide a forum for academicians and intellectuals to contribute to the legislative process.
- Academicians and intellectuals may not be suitable for the nature of electoral politics in Legislative Assembly.
- It provides a mechanism for a more serious appraisal of legislation.
- It would allow for more debate and sharing of work between the Houses.
- To act as a check on hasty actions by the popularly elected House.
- To ensure that individuals who might not be cut out for the rough-and-tumble of direct elections too are able to contribute to the legislative process.
- Having a second chamber would allow for more debate and sharing of work between the Houses.

The arguments against creation of legislative councils:

- Rather than fulfilling the lofty objective of getting intellectuals into the legislature, the forum is likely to be used to accommodate party functionaries who fail to get elected.
- It is also an unnecessary drain on the exchequer.
- Unlike Rajya Sabha which has substantial powers to shape non-financial legislation, Legislative Councils lack the constitutional mandate to do so. Legislative Assemblies have the power to override suggestions/amendments made to a legislation by the Council.

- While Rajya Sabha MPs can vote in the election of the President and Vice-President, members of Legislative Councils can't. MLCs also can't vote in the elections of Rajya Sabha members.
- As regards Money bills, only fourteen days' delay can be caused by the Council, which is more or less a formality rather than a barrier in the way of Money Bill passed by the Assembly.
- Legislative Councils are subject to varied discussions around their creation, revival and abolishment.
- If there was any real benefit in having a Legislative Council, all States in the country would have a second chamber.
- Having only seven such Councils suggests the lack of any real advantage, apart from the absence of a broad political consensus on the issue.

Way Forward:

- A parliamentary committee recommended a national policy on having an Upper House in State legislatures to be framed by the Union government.
- It also favoured a review of the provision in the law for Councils to have seats for graduates and teachers.
- 2nd ARC recommended that role of teachers and graduates should be decreased or done away with and more say should be given to local bodies in order to strengthen the voice of local bodies.

Conclusion:

The larger question is whether the Councils are serving their intended purpose to take a considered view on matters without being influenced by electoral considerations. If the Upper Houses are used only for accommodating leaders who have lost general elections, there may not be much meaning in their existence. And there is less justification for having separate representation in Councils for graduates and local bodies when democracy has taken roots and Assemblies are representative of all sections.

Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

The concept of federalism has unrelentingly changed its contours in Indian Polity. Discuss, and examine the significant gaps in the Indian Federalism.(250 words)

The Hindu
Why this question:
The Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) has revealed some of the most significant gaps of Indian federalism. Thus the question.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the idea of Federalism enshrined in the Indian constitution and explain how the concept has been changing over time and bring out the possible threats it faces as of today.
Directive:
Discuss *– This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.*
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:

Describe what federalism means; A federal government is one in which powers are divided between the national government and the regional governments by the Constitution itself.

Body:

Explain The specific features of the federal system – dual government, written constitution, division of powers between two levels of government, supremacy of constitution, independent judiciary.

Trace first the changing nature of federalism and highlight the current trends in centre- state relations.

Discuss the recent challenges faced in this direction.

Bring out the gaps that have been witnessed and suggest what needs to be done to overcome them.

Conclusion:

Conclude that the Centre and state should work in tandem in the spirit of cooperative federalism by working within their allotted sphere determined constitutionally.

Introduction:

Federalism is a system of government in which power is divided between a central authority and constituent political units. The Constitution of India establishes a federal structure to the Indian government, declaring it to be a "Union of States". Indian model of federalism is called **quasi-federal system** as it contains major features of both a federation and union.

Body:

Significant gaps in Indian federalism:

- The recent political developments around the **Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC)** have revealed some of the most significant crevices of Indian federalism.
- The question — whether State governments are empowered to use public funds to campaign against a law made by Parliament — is open for final determination.
- The impact of a single-party dominance on the functioning of our constitutional structure, however, receives little attention.
- For instance, Parliament, the avowed **"temple of democracy",** has been reduced to a site for procedural formalities. At least the Lok Sabha appears to be an extension of the executive, rather than a mechanism for its accountability.
- **Article 256** of the Constitution obligates the State government to ensure implementation of the laws made by Parliament. If the State government fails to do so, the Government of India is empowered to give "such directions to a State as may appear… to be necessary".
- The refusal to enforce the law even after the Centre issues directions would empower the President to impose President's Rule in those States under **Articles 356 and 365.**
- The Supreme Court of India has also confirmed this reading of the law in **R. Bommai v. Union of India** — arguably the most significant case on Indian federalism.
- The brute dominance of the ruling persuasion has dwarfed any semblance of Opposition politics at the Centre. This is manifested through the absence of the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha for six years in a row.

Other issues in federalism:

- For a country like India which is divided on the linguistic and communal basis, a pure federal structure could lead to disruption and division of states.
- India's federal character has undergone, over the past sixty years, many trials and tribulations.
- **Formation of Telangana under Article 3** of the constitution raised a lot of questions against the federal nature of the polity.

- **100th amendment of the constitution** where land was transferred to Bangladesh posed as a threat to federalism in India.
- On the introduction of **GST**, critics argue on the autonomy of states.
- With too much power given to a state, it may want to shift away from the union. Jammu & Kashmir's special powers are in question in the public time and again.
- The continued existence of provisions such as Article 356 (President's rule) goes against the grain of federalism.
- States such as Karnataka, Tamil Nadu have asserted their linguistic and cultural rights in the wake of the Centre's interventions such as a promotion of Hindi.
- States perceive that their progress is being penalised: While the southern States contribute to the nation economically, they don't occupy a central space politically and are further marginalised culturally.
- Disputes between states over sharing of river water, for example between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu over Cauvery water.

Way forward:

- We need to strike a balance between both unitary and federal features of the country.
- States should be autonomous in their own sphere but they can't be wholly independent to avoid a state of tyranny in the nation.
- Long-term solution is to foster genuine fiscal federalism where states largely raise their own revenue.
- Creating a fiscal structure where the states have greater revenue-raising authority, as well as greater decision making power on spending.
- India needs to move away from centralization-decentralization thinking, and embrace genuine fiscal federalism by permanently creating a fiscal power centre in the states.

Conclusion:

The Indian Constitution is a **constitution sui generis**. On one hand, the constitution contains features which are of high importance for a federal arrangement, at the same time it contains provisions which fight for a strong Centre, thus making it quasi-federal in nature. The fact to be appreciated here is that these dual federalism provisions were deliberately incorporated to best fit a polyglot country like India.

Analyse the Supreme Court's latest decision on the Speaker as the adjudicating authority under the anti-defection law. How far is it justified?(250 words)

The Hindu
Why this question:
In a recent judgment the Supreme Court ended Speakers' freedom to do nothing in disqualification cases. Thus the question.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the pros and cons of such a judgment. Analyse how far it is justified.
Directive:
Analyze – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary.
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Briefly mention the observations made by the Apex court.
Body:

Discuss the two aspects that are clear of the judgment.
The first is that Parliament should replace the Speaker with a "permanent tribunal" or external
mechanism to render quick and impartial decisions on questions of defection. Few would disagree
with the Court's view that initial fears and doubts about whether Speakers would be impartial had
come true. The second is its extraordinary ruling that the reference by another Bench, in 2016, of a
key question to a Constitution Bench was itself unnecessary.
Take hints from the article and provide for a detailed analysis of the judgment.
Conclusion:
Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

In an important order aimed at rearming the anti-defection law, the **Supreme Court set three
months as the outer limit for the Speaker to conclude disqualification proceedings against
defectors**. The apex court also wanted **Parliament to revisit the rationale behind giving exclusive
powers to the Speaker in deciding disqualification petitions**. After all, the Speaker also belongs to a
political party and often gets caught in the power games.

Body:

'FINISH PROCEEDINGS IN 3 MTHS'

➤ SC sets **three months as the outer limit** for Speakers to **conclude disqualification proceedings** against defectors

➤ Recommends that Parliament should amend Constitution to set up a permanent tribunal to decide cases. Tribunal can be **headed by retired SC judge or HC CJ**

➤ SC emphasises that **ensuring purity of anti-defection** law under

the 10th Schedule is vital to democracy's functioning

➤ SC decision came in a case related to **Manipur Congress MLA T Shyam Kumar**, who switched to BJP and became a minister after the party formed govt in 2017

➤ A dozen pleas seeking Shyam's disqualification were filed but Speaker sat over them. SC asks Speaker to **decide in four weeks**

Supreme Court's decision of Speaker's Authority:

▪ There are two significant aspects to the Supreme Court's latest decision on the Speaker as the adjudicating authority under the anti-defection law.
▪ The first is that Parliament should replace the Speaker with a "permanent tribunal" or external mechanism to render quick and impartial decisions on questions of defection.
▪ Few would disagree with the Court's view that initial fears and doubts about whether Speakers would be impartial had come true.
▪ The second is its extraordinary ruling that the reference by another Bench, in 2016, of a key question to a Constitution Bench was itself unnecessary.

- The question awaiting determination by a larger Bench is whether courts have the power to direct Speakers to decide petitions seeking disqualification within a fixed time frame.
- The question had arisen because several presiding officers have allowed defectors to bolster the strength of ruling parties and even be sworn in Ministers by merely refraining from adjudicating on complaints against them.
- Some States have seen enmasse defections soon after elections.
- Secure in the belief that no court would question the delay in disposal of disqualification matters as long as the matter was pending before a Constitution Bench, Speakers have been wilfully failing to act as per law, thereby helping the ruling party, which invariably is the one that helped them get to the Chair.
- It is time that Parliament have a rethink on whether disqualification petitions ought to be entrusted to a Speaker as a quasi-judicial authority when such Speaker continues to belong to a particular political party either de jure or de facto.

Landmark judgment in Kihoto Hollohan (1992) which upheld the validity of the Constitution's Tenth Schedule:

- This verdict had also made the Speaker's order subject to judicial review on limited grounds.
- It made it clear that the court's jurisdiction would not come into play unless the Speaker passes an order, leaving no room for intervention prior to adjudication.
- Finding several pending complaints before Speakers, the Bench, in 2016, decided that it was time for an authoritative verdict on whether Speakers can be directed to dispose of defection questions within a time frame.

Supreme Court directed till Independent Tribunal is brought, decide in 3 months:

- However, for the present, the court said the Speakers should decide Tenth Schedule disqualifications within a "reasonable period". What was 'reasonable' would depend on the facts of each case.
- Unless there were "exceptional circumstances", disqualification petitions under the Tenth Schedule should be decided by Speakers within three months.
- The court noted that this period was 'reasonable', as the ordinary life of the Lok Sabha or the Legislative Assemblies was merely five years.
- Given the widespread abuse of provisions of the Anti-Defection Act in the country, it is time Parliament reflected on the matter and came up with an out-of-the-box solution.

Way forward:

- The decision to disqualify a legislator is contingent on the institution of the Speaker.
- The partisan role of the Speaker in many States has ensured the continuation of turncoat legislators as legitimate members of the House.
- This is a good time to heed the advice of eminent constitutional experts to amend the anti-defection law and rest the authority to disqualify turncoats in the hands of an autonomous body.
- As "failure to exercise jurisdiction" is a recognised stage at which the court can now intervene, the court has thus opened a window for judicial intervention in cases in which Speakers refuse to act.
- This augurs well for the enforcement of the law against defection in letter and spirit.
- While recommending that keeping in view the partisan conduct of Speakers, Parliament should amend the Constitution to set up a permanent tribunal to decide cases under the 10th Schedule.

Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

Are Indian the metros deprived of empowered Mayors who lead country on Urban Issues? Discuss the challenges faced by the position of a Mayor, Suggest what needs to be done to empower the post. (250 words)

The Hindu

Why this question:
The article highlights the fact that Many Global cities like New York, Paris, London have empowered mayors who lead their country on Urban Issues, but in India the metros have been deprived of empowered Mayors who can raise efficiency, productivity and livability. Thus the question.

Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the status of the post of mayor in the country and the real-time challenges facing it. Discuss the need to empower Mayors to ensure growth and sustainable development of our urban areas.

Directive:
Discuss *– This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.*

Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Start with constitutional status of the position of a Mayor.

Body:
Discuss briefly the powers and responsibilities of Mayor in India.
Explain what the Advantages of having empowered mayors are.
Discuss the challenges in the Indian scenario; key challenge is the status quo itself and the vested interests it has entrenched. State governments do not wish to delegate more authority to city-level institutions etc.
Suggest what needs to be done to empower the post.

Conclusion:
Conclude that India's cities need a new deal that is focused on development. Only elected, empowered and accountable Mayors can deliver on that.

Introduction:

While there are multiple reasons for India's urban woes, one of the underlying problems is the absence of powerful and politically accountable leadership in the city. Our cities have a weak and fragmented institutional architecture in which multiple agencies with different bosses pull the strings of city administration.

Body:

Need for directly elected mayors:

- Currently, the head of the municipal corporation, the mayor, is merely a ceremonial authority and executive decisions are carried out by the municipal commissioner appointed by the state government.
- An elected mayor with substantial powers of his own not only provides a single point for negotiations with outside agencies and investors but also ensures greater coordination among the different city departments and promotes decisive decision making.

- A popularly elected mayor with a fixed tenure also offers more stability in governance as the person is not dependent on the elected members of the council or on the local or state level political leadership for his survival in office.
- A stable leadership can also afford to roll out long term plans that will ensure major changes in the cities political and economic landscape.

Challenges faced for post of directly elected mayors:

- State governments do not wish to delegate more authority to city-level institutions. Often, urban resources are transferred to rural areas in the name of development.
- Even if the mayor is directly elected, the state governments can refuse to devolve power and resources, effectively reducing him to a figurehead.
- Chief Ministers see a potential threat from a charismatic and empowered Mayor with progressive policies.
- Mayors could steal the limelight through spectacular successes, leaving Chief Ministers and legislators with little direct connect with urban voters.
- Some of them have used the excuse of poor performance of urban local bodies as a justification to replace direct election of Mayors with an indirect system.
- Municipal commissioner also, sometimes, becomes hurdle.
- Even if some powers are delegated to the municipality, the state governments have in place municipal commissioners to perform the executive functions, again cutting the mayor to size, the nature of mayoral election notwithstanding.
- If a directly elected mayor belongs to a party in minority in the municipality, it becomes difficult to get other municipality members on board in taking decisions. This was witnessed in Himachal Pradesh, which ultimately led to the scrapping of this system.
- Also, a mayor executing projects will tend to gain popularity at the expense of the local legislator whose job is to legislate and scrutinise the performance of the executive.
- A legislator will always see the directly elected and empowered mayor as a potential future rival and will do everything in his command to undercut his authority.
- It is also widely felt that elected mayors may blur the lines between the three tiers of government: the Union, the states and the local self governments.

Measures needed:

- In the light of development, state governments should take up this issue seriously and confer necessary powers upon mayor to effectively discharge his duties.
- To avoid conflict between elected mayor and municipal commissioner, mayor may be made the executive head of the municipality. Additionally, mayor may also be given the power to "authorize the payment and repayment of money relating to the Municipality".
- To check the spread of vested interests, mayor may also be vested with the power to veto a resolution passed by the municipality.
- Voter awareness is also necessary as it is the only thing that will drive them to vote for a legislator based on his performance in the state assembly or Parliament and vote for the mayor and councillors based on their executive performance. This ensures that there exists separation between the two.
- Besides direct elections, a fixed tenure should be ensured for Mayors. One or two years, as provided presently, is not sufficient to ensure the holistic development of urban areas.
- Also, frequent changing of mayors results in discontinuation of policies and wastage of scarce resources.

- Preferably, the Mayor's term should be coterminous with that of the municipality, and the Mayor should be made the executive head of the municipality.

Conclusion:

A direct election of mayors in the urban centers as currently planned will ensure a sea change in the political equations at the local level and help launch a new generation of more charismatic leaders who can mobilise voters and usher in real changes in urban governance. In fact in some countries like the UK legislative changes were rolled out at the beginning of the decade to ensure direct elections of mayors in all major cities.

Discuss the significance of electoral literacy for a stronger democracy. (250 words)

Reference: News On Air
Why this question:
Recently 10th National Voters Day was celebrated to mark the Foundation Day of Election Commission of India.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the importance of electoral literacy for a stronger democracy.
Directive:
***Discuss** – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.*
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Start with the fact that the theme for NVD 2020 was 'Electoral Literacy for Stronger Democracy' reiterating the commitment of the Election Commission
Of India towards electoral literacy for all to ensure maximum participation and informed and ethical voting.
Body:
Narrate first upon the significant role played by Election commission in ensuring strong electoral system.
Explain why electoral literacy is the key to the system?
Discuss the efforts made the election commission so far.
Take hints from the article and highlight the importance of electoral literacy.
Conclusion:
Conclude with way forward.
Introduction:

The 10th National Voters' Day has been celebrated on 25th Jan. It was celebrated at over ten lakh locations across the country including Polling Stations, District and State headquarters. The theme this year is 'Electoral Literacy for Stronger Democracy'.

It sets the tone for year-long activities focusing on voter education and renewal of citizens' faith in the electoral process. The Day is celebrated since 2011 to mark the Foundation day of Election Commission of India, which was established on 25th January 1950.

Body:

Voter literacy:

Voter literacy means providing citizens of a democracy with basic information about participating in elections. Voter education is often provided by the state itself, often through a national

electoral commission, so it is therefore important that it is politically non-partisan. Government departments that focus on voter education are often highly scrutinized by a third party. In addition, there are various private institutions whose mission it is to strengthen democratic values by increasing voter education.

Three dimensions of electoral literacy
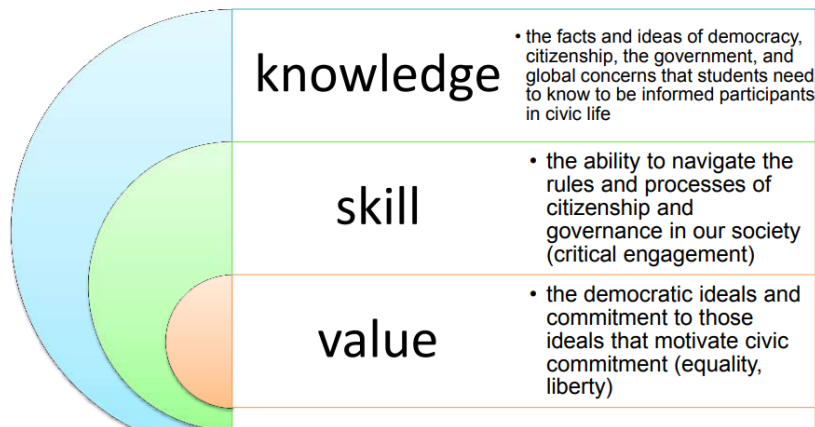
Electoral literacy for a stronger democracy:

- In view of the upcoming elections voter literacy clubs are to be set up in various schools, colleges, Government departments, voluntary organisations and corporate institutions.

- The clubs are to be set up under Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation program (SVEEP) with an aim to sensitize voters through various activities and ensuring their participation in the elections. It will also work towards informing the future voters about the procedures related to the voting process.

- The purpose of the literacy clubs is to give information about the voting process to the target population.

- The members of this club will be future voters aged between 14 to 17 years, first time voters- 18 to 19 years and senior citizens. The election schools will be organised at regular intervals.

- The Election Commission of India has directed the formation of a voter literacy club in all schools and colleges. Through these clubs students will be educated about their franchise, voter registration, election process and related subjects through various activities.

- It will also facilitate their participation in the election process. Classroom based activities will be organised for the members.

- Schools and colleges can contact the Deputy Commissioner cum District Election Officer for setting up these clubs. As per the guidelines set by the Election Commission of India facilities will be provided to the organisations.

- Forums are also to be set up in various Government departments, corporate institutions and voluntary organizations where senior officials will be appointed as nodal officers.

- The forum will be responsible for conducting a wide range of activities for ensuring participation in the election.

Role of EC:

- Guardian of Free & Fair Elections.

- Issues a Model code of Conduct for political parties and candidates to conduct elections in free & fair manner.

- Registration of Political Parties and Allotment of Symbols

- The Election Commission has fixed the legal limits on the amount of money which a candidate can spend during election campaigns.

- Use of Scientific and Technological Advancement like introduction of EVM and computerizations of the electoral rolls,

- Election Commission – A Tribunal for Adjudication

- Checking Criminalization of Politics.

- Cancellation of Polls due to rigging at any polling booth

- The Election Commission has the power to disqualify a candidate if he or she does not file election returns within a prescribed period.

Role of EC to increase voter's participation:

- The steady increasing electoral participation points out to the positive interventions made by Election Commission of India to secure the same.

- Free and fair elections attract more voters. The measures taken by ECI to attract voters include:

- Employing "Awareness Observer" across the country in order to compile a report on voting numbers and reasons behind low or high participation in each constituency so that ECI can work upon the hurdles

- Introducing Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) to make voting process interactive by showing the details of their votes

- Introducing Short Message Service and Toll Free Numbers so that people can ask details regarding enrolment process and address of polling station

- Live Monitoring of Sensitive Areas to ensure that no mischievous activities are carried at the polling station

- Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) to increase awareness and education about the electoral process

- Replacing ballot papers through electronic voting machine to make the voting process easier

- Organizing National Voters' Day, Voter Fest and employing school children and renowned personalities as ambassadors to persuade people to cast their votes.

Conclusion:

Election management body and other related agencies of a country is responsible for nurturing a democratic nation with a political literate and empowered citizenry that cherishes democratic values and promotes good governance. A country's administration should be governed not by the bullet but by the ballot

Development processes and the development industry —the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders

Where college is the first step towards a bigger political role, Should politics be allowed in university campuses? Discuss in the context wherein campus politics are hailed to serve and uphold a tradition of dissent which is in line with protecting the rights of free speech and promoting the values of democracy. (250 words)

Indian Express

Why this question:
Students of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) on Sunday late night took out a peaceful candlelight march inside the varsity premises in solidarity with students of JNU who were attacked by a mob of masked men.

Key demand of the question:
The question aims to discuss the aspects of politics in the university and seeks to answer how far it is just to allow the same.

Directive:
Discuss *– This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.*

Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Discuss the incidence of violence recently witnessed in JNU campus.

Body:
Explain that politics is necessary within the campus as it gives a space to voice political opinions; at the same time explain the need to have a barricade at the quantum of politics as against the educational centre.
One can substantiate by stating that Jawaharlal Nehru University campus reaffirms the crucial contribution of the institution's diverse and democratic base to Indian politics.
Discuss pros and cons with suitable justifications.

Conclusion:
Conclude that a diverse yet inclusive campus, gives space to radical voices not only from the organizational left movement but across the political spectrum, and finally upholds a tradition of dissent which is in line with protecting the rights of free speech and promoting the values of democracy.

Introduction:

Students of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) on Sunday late night took out a peaceful candlelight march inside the varsity premises in solidarity with students of JNU who were attacked by a mob of masked men. The intrusion by political parties has negated the essential concept of universities as

autonomous spaces, where freedom of expression, exploration of ideas and advancement of knowledge are an integral part of the learning process.

Body:

Necessity to have political activities inside universities:

- It is a serious mistake to think of universities as campuses or classrooms that teach young people to pass examinations, and become employable, where research is subsidiary or does not matter.
- Universities are about far more.
- For students, there is so much learning outside the classroom that makes them good citizens of society.
- For faculty, apart from commitment to their teaching and their research, there is a role in society as intellectuals who can provide an independent, credible, voice in evaluating governments, parliament, legislatures, or the judiciary, as guardians of society.
- These roles are particularly important in a political democracy.

Campus politics and Right to free speech:

- Article 19 of Indian constitution gives all Indian citizens the right to freedom of speech and expression, the right to assemble peacefully and right to form association.
- politics is necessary within the campus as it gives students a space to voice our political opinions.
- The lack of politics in college campuses tends to make them authoritarian and undemocratic, which is not healthy.
- Student activism/politics has kept the spirit of questioning alive and also fights for inclusion.
- Student politics is making campus inclusive, where students belonging to diverse backgrounds bring their unique perspectives, which give rise to original thinking.

Way forward:

- Differences in views are natural, but these must be addressed through discussion, with open minds.
- There must be respect, not contempt for the other.
- Political organisations inside the universities have a right to disagree.
- It should pose questions, engage in debate, or organize events to articulate its views, but it cannot and must not seek to silence others.
- The best model to be followed in a university would be a board of governors, to which governments could nominate at the most one-third the total number.
- The other members, two-thirds or more should be independent, of whom one-half should be distinguished academics while one-half should be drawn from industry, civil society or professions.
- The chairman should be an eminent academic with administrative experience.
- Members of the board should have a term of six years, with one-third retiring every two years.
- The VC, to be appointed by the board with six-year tenure, would be an ex-officio member.
- Except for nominees of governments, the board should decide on replacements for its retiring members.
- Such institutional mechanisms are necessary but not sufficient.
- Governments and political parties must stop playing politics in universities and stop turning them into arenas for political battles.

Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

The appointment of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) is a crucial step towards achieving seamless coordination in higher defence management. Deliberate. (250 words)

Indian Express

Why this question:
The outgoing Army chief, Gen. Bipin Rawat, was recently appointed as the country's first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), a day before he was to step down on superannuation.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the significance of CDS and in what way it can prove to be a great leap forward step.
Directive:
Deliberate – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Define first who is a CDS.
Body:
The question is straight forward and there isn't much to deliberate upon.
Explain the merits of the decision and creation of the post.
The decision to appoint a CDS is a huge step towards achieving seamless coordination and greater effectiveness in higher defence management structures by creating an enabling architecture that permits fuller expression on the part of our professional armed forces.
Conclusion:
Conclude with significance of the post.

Introduction:

The appointment of General Bipin Rawat as India's first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) comes quick on the heels of the historic decision taken by India's Cabinet Committee on Security on December 24, 2019 on the appointment of a CDS, bringing to fruition a matter that has been hanging fire for close to two decades.

Body:

About the office of The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS):

- The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) is a **high military office that oversees and coordinates the working of the three Services**, and **offers seamless tri-service views and single-point advice to the Executive** (in India's case, to the Prime Minister) on **long-term defence planning and management**, including **manpower, equipment and strategy, and above all, "jointsmanship" in operations**.

- It shall **provide "effective leadership at the top level" to the three wings of the armed forces**, and to help **improve coordination among them.**

- CDS will be a four-star officer and act as principal military adviser to defence minister on all tri services matters.

Functions of the CDS:

- CDS will administer tri-services organisations. Tri-service agencies/organisations/commands related to Cyber and Space will be under the command of the CDS.

- CDS will be member of Defence Acquisition Council chaired by Raksha Mantri and Defence Planning Committee chaired by NSA.
- Function as the Military Adviser to the Nuclear Command Authority.
- Bring about jointness in operation, logistics, transport, training, support services, communications, repairs and maintenance, etc. of the three Services, within three years of the first CDS assuming office.
- Ensure optimal utilisation of infrastructure and rationalise it through jointness among the services.
- Implement Five-Year Defence Capital Acquisition Plan (DCAP), and Two-Year roll-on Annual Acquisition Plans (AAP), as a follow up of Integrated Capability Development Plan (ICDP).
- Assign inter-Services prioritisation to capital acquisition proposals based on the anticipated budget.
- Bring about reforms in the functioning of three Services aimed at augmenting combat capabilities of the Armed Forces by reducing wasteful expenditure.
- It is expected that this reform in the Higher Defence Management would enable the Armed Forces to implement coordinated defence doctrines and procedures and go a long way in fostering jointmanship among the three Services. The country would be benefitted by coordinated action on greater jointmanship in training, logistics and operations as well as for prioritisation of procurements.
- In addition to heading the department of military Affairs, the CDS will also be the permanent chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee.
- However, CDS will not exercise any military command including over three service chiefs.

Challenges:

- The **Kargil Review Committee Report** pointed out that India is the only major democracy where the Armed Forces Headquarters is outside the apex governmental structure.

- It observed that Service Chiefs devote most of their time to their operational roles, "often resulting in negative results".

- Long-term defence planning suffers as day-to-day priorities dominate.

- Also, the Prime Minister and Defence Minister do not have the benefit of the views and expertise of military commanders, in order to ensure that higher level defence management decisions are more consensual and broadbased.

- The CDS is also seen as being vital to the creation of "theatre commands", integrating tri-service assets and personnel like in the US military.

Way Forward:

- This is a major first step in the direction of changes but not the final step.

- The single services must be evolved in a way so that it can raise, train and sustain.

- Restructuring of defence must be done in a transparent manner such that there is cross-posting of the senior military officers in the decision making in the Department of Defence as well.

- The creation of the CDS will need to be followed up with further reforms to reconfigure the armed forces to meet India's aspirations to be a global power.

- It is also necessary that the first incumbent is given a term of three years so as to be able to carry the ambitious vision laid out in the cabinet note through to its conclusion.

- The job is strategic, requires personal supervision, and cannot be left unfinished for the successor to finish. Given the challenges and the limited time-frame within which to accomplish it, allowances will have to be made for attendant hiccups.

- Some teething problems can be expected in the beginning but things are bound to fall in place as norms, processes and rules are worked out between the three services, the CDS and the defence ministry.

- It will require the navigation of entrenched institutional interests, hierarchical powers and military traditions, to lay the foundations for a strong and functional CDS.

Conclusion:

The creation of the CDS is part of the fulfilment of commitments by the incumbent government on defence matters, starting with the implementation of One Rank One Pension after 40 years, the establishment of the Defence Space and Cyber Agencies as also the Special Operations Division, Make in India initiatives aimed at ensuring an "India First" policy. It is in keeping with India's aspirations to fulfil its destiny as a major power in the 21st century.

In the context of protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, and the detention of minors in some instances, what does the law say about such detentions by the police? What role do commissions play? Explain. (250 words)

The Hindu
Why this question:
As protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 rocked the country over the last two weeks there have been several instances of police clashing with and detaining protesters. In several cases, those detained were minors under 18 years.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss the context in detail and the role played by different responsible commissions to ensure the rights of the citizens are protected and are unharmed.
Directive:
Explain – Clarify the topic by giving a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Explain first the context of protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 across the country.
Body:
Discuss the role of commissions that are indirectly responsible to ensure safety of the involved protestors; in this case the minors, the juveniles.
Explain the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 has specific procedures and rules in relation to children found to be in conflict with the law.
Discuss the statutory bodies responsible for protecting the rights of children in India.
Elucidate upon the powers of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR).
Conclusion:
Conclude with way forward.
Introduction:

As protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 rocked the country over the last two weeks there have been several instances of police clashing with and detaining protesters. In several cases, those detained were minors under 18 years. Two notable instances have been reported.

Body:

Laws regarding the detention of minors:

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015

- It has specific procedures and rules in relation to children found to be in conflict with the law.
- Under Section 10, it says that as soon as a child alleged to be in conflict with law is apprehended by the police, the child shall be placed under the charge of the special juvenile police unit or the designated child welfare police officer.
- That officer in turn, should produce the child before the Juvenile Justice Board within a period of 24 hours excluding the time necessary for the journey from the place where the child was picked up.

Statutory bodies responsible for protecting the rights of children in India:

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)

- **It** is a statutory body set up in 2007 under the Commission for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005.
- The objective of the commission is to protect, promote and defend child rights in India including the rights adopted in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 — with an accession by India in 1992.
- The same convention defines a child as being a human being under 18.
- It examines and reviews the safeguards provided under any law for the protection of child rights and recommends measures to the government.
- The commission can also inquire into the violation of child rights and recommend initiation of proceedings in such cases.
- While inquiring into such matters, the NCPCR has the powers of a civil court.
- In addition, it has a host of other powers in terms of commissioning research and framing policy for child protection and safety.

Way forward:

- In order to ensure that Children have a productive upbringing free of any mental torture imposed due to structural reasons (poverty, insensitivity of bureaucracy)- government should bring in long term reforms.
- This includes enhanced spending on education and health, proper implementation of JJ Act and POSCO Act, societal awareness programmes about significance of Child's mental health and sensitization of personnel involved in Child Welfare programmes.

A consummation of flawed policy proposals, the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019 will refine store and trade personal information. Do you agree? Analyse.(250 words)
The Hindu
Why this question:
Article highlights the fact that in the continuing social churn and widespread citizen protests, it would seem out of place to direct thought towards issues such as data protection.

Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the pros and cons of the newly introduced Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019.
Explain in what way it is going to be a game changer.
Directive:
Analyze – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary.
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
The Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019, which was introduced in the Lok Sabha this month, is a revolutionary piece of legislation that promises to return power and control to people in our digital society.
Body:
Briefly explain the current case of Data protection scenario being witnessed in the country.
Discuss first the positives of the Bill; highlight how it is central to several policy and political pronouncements by the present government.
Then explain the issues and challenges involved; The government is seeking to not only access data but also collect it and then exploit it — making it an active data trader for the generation of revenue to meet its fiscal goals.
Principles in conflict-
First, the scale of data collection is ambitious and broadly contained in the 'Digital India' programme.
In the view of some technologists, this also fulfills geostrategic goals when personal data is viewed as strategic state resource. However, this poses grave risks to the right to privacy.
Conclusion:
Conclude that Data Protection Bill is not a leaky oil barrel with large exceptions, but it is a perfect one.
It will refine, store and then trade the personal information of Indians without their control; open for sale or open for appropriation to the interests of securitization or revenue maximization, with minimal levels of protection.
For this to change, we have to not only focus upon red-lining the finer text of this draft but also reframing large parts of its intents and objectives.

Introduction:

The Union cabinet recently gave its approval to the Personal Data Protection Bill 2019 that seeks to lay down a legal framework to preserve the sanctity of "consent" in data sharing and penalize those breaching privacy norms. The Bill will update the currently non-existent standards for privacy and consent. The Bill is based on the previous draft version prepared by a committee headed by retired **Justice B N SriKrishna.**

The bill which is currently under parliamentary process for approval is criticised to be of heavily tilted towards security and revenue generation of the state rather than Right to Privacy which is the basic reason for a Data Protection Regime.

Body:

Provisions of the bill which is Under Criticism:

- **Access to Non-Personal Data:**
    - Government is empowered to gain access to any non-personal data — anonymised data like traffic patterns or demographic information — mainly for framing policy for better delivery of services and evidence-based policy.

- **Process Data Without Consent:**
  - The Bill includes exemptions for processing data without an individual's consent for "reasonable purposes", including security of the state, detection of any unlawful activity or fraud, whistle blowing, medical emergencies, credit scoring, operation of search engines and processing of publicly available data.
  - Accordingly, personal data processed in the interest of prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of any offence is exempt.

Challenges posed:

- A common argument from government officials has been that data localization will help law-enforcement access data for investigations and enforcement.
- Critical data will be defined by the government from time to time and has to be stored and processed in India
- National security or reasonable purposes are an open-ended terms, this may lead to intrusion of state into the private lives of citizens.
- Technology giants like Facebook and Google have criticised protectionist policy on data protection.
- They fear that the domino effect of protectionist policy will lead to other countries following suit.
- Protectionist regime suppress the values of a globalized, competitive internet marketplace, where costs and speeds determine information flows rather than nationalistic borders.
- Also, it may backfire on India's own young startups that are attempting global growth, or on larger firms that process foreign data in India.
- Civil society groups have criticized the open-ended exceptions given to the government in the Bill, allowing for surveillance.
- Moreover, some lawyers contend that security and government access are not achieved by localization.
- There have only been limited studies on privacy in the Indian context but the most existing literature points to the collectivist nature of society to explain the low levels of privacy consciousness.
- While awareness is growing, if people display a high level of apathy towards ensuring the protection of their personal data it may push data fiduciaries down the path of non-compliance.

Way forward:

- The government should table the Bill at the earliest to allow sufficient time for discussing the finer aspects of the Bill on the floor of the house.
- The number of questions posed to MEITY on the topic of privacy and data protection indicates a high degree of interest in Parliament on the subject.
- The government should also endeavour to remain as transparent as possible when framing the remaining provisions.
- Simultaneously, society should not slide into complacency after the passage of the Bill.
- Instead, it must continue to stay engaged to ensure that we have a strong data protection regime that succeeds in safeguarding Indians' fundamental right to privacy.

The CAA narrative is a watershed moment for the judiciary not to falter and for judges to undo the wrongs of the past. Explain in detail what is expected out of judiciary at this moment.(250 words)

Reference:

Why this question:
The question aims to discuss the role of Judiciary in interpreting the pros and cons of the CAA.

Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the effect of the recently passed CAA and in what way Judiciary's role becomes important in interpreting the right and the wrong.

Directive:

***Explain** – Clarify the topic by giving a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.*

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:
The recent enactments of the amendments to the Citizenship Act have left many very disturbed. The legislation itself is undoubtedly problematic and is compounded by the linkages with the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Body:
Explain in detail the fact that the protests that have followed the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019, were not surprising, but the manner in which the protesters were treated certainly is.
The reaction of the law and order machinery to what were essentially student-led peaceful protests has led to incidents of violence and loss of property across the country, which is terribly unfortunate. Discuss What the Judiciary should possibly do to evaluate and infer upon the situation.

Conclusion:
Conclude that this is a watershed moment for this generation of judges to undo the wrongs done by their predecessors 40 years ago to the people of India.

Introduction:

The Supreme Court of India is the highest judicial court under the Constitution of India, the highest constitutional court, with the power of judicial review. It safeguards the fundamental rights of citizens and settles disputes between various government authorities as well as the central government vs state governments or state governments versus another state government in the country. This is a watershed moment for the judiciary not to falter and for judges to undo the wrongs of the past.

Body:

Challenges posed by CAA:

- **Against Equality:**

    - The first is that the Citizenship (Amendment) Act is against the letter and spirit of our Constitution. Articles 5 to 11 of the Constitution deal with citizenship, and the Citizenship Act, 1955, lays down criteria for citizenship based on birth, descent, registration, naturalization, and citizenship by incorporation of territory.

    - By setting new criteria, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act goes against the premise of common citizenship regardless of differences of caste, creed, gender, ethnicity and culture.

- Further, Article 14 of the Constitution lays down that the "State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India".

- **Violative of human rights:**

  - The Citizenship (Amendment) Act is divisive, deeply discriminatory and violative of human rights.

  - Our national unity was won through struggle; the Citizenship (Amendment) Act is one of the many threats to its survival.

  - Our hard-won Constitution recognizes individual and social differences, and that we must weave the cord of unity by creating a sense of belonging and inclusiveness for all.

- **Communal and authoritarian:**

  - The Citizenship (Amendment) Act attempts to create and deepen communal division and social polarization in the country.

- **Subdued judiciary:**

  - The voice of the judiciary in this narrative is either almost entirely absent or has been overwhelmed by a strong executive.

- **Protest that turns violent:**

  - The protests that have followed the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019, were not surprising, but the manner in which the protesters were treated certainly is. The reaction of the law and order machinery to what were essentially student-led peaceful protests has led to incidents of violence and loss of property across the country, which is terribly unfortunate.

- **Discriminatory:**

  - In granting citizenship on the basis of religion, it discriminates against Muslims and rejects the basic concept of secularism.

  - That the Citizenship (Amendment) Act is discriminatory and violative of human rights has been recognized by those who have come out on the streets in many States, in opposition to the Act.

- **Against diversity:**

  - The Act gives eligibility for citizenship to Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan who entered India on or before December 31, 2014, and specifically excludes Muslims from that list.

  - In the days since the passage of the CAA, multiple protests across north and Northeast India last week. Ironically, these protests are themselves expressions of India's overlapping multi-religious, multi-ethnic character that the CAA seeks to undermine.

- **Disastrous and problematic:**

- The mobilizations in the Northeast are about anxieties of ethnicity, culture and language as much as religion while the protests in Delhi, Aligarh and Lucknow are chiefly about religious identity and discriminatory exclusion of Muslims from the CAA.

This is a watershed moment for this generation of judges to undo the wrongs done by their predecessors 40 years ago to the people of India. If it is, the judiciary must call it out for what it is a patently unconstitutional piece of legislation.

Conclusion:

The obvious question is whether in a country such as India, with a secular Constitution, certain religious groups can be preferred in the acquisition of citizenship. Especially when secularism has been declared to be a basic feature of the Constitution in a multitude of judgments. Historically, Indian courts have had a chequered history in tackling circumstances where they are the final arbiter. Especially when faced with a powerful executive, courts have tended to falter, the Emergency being a case in point.

Do you think 'Anti-defection law' succeeded in meeting its intended objectives? Explain. Suggest suitable measures, if any, to be taken in this regard.(250 words)
PRS India
Why this question:
Last week the Chairman of Rajya Sabha disqualified two Members of Parliament (MPs) from the House under the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution (better known as the anti-defection law) for having defected from their party. Thus the question.
Key demand of the question:
The question is aimed at a critical examination of Anti-defection law.
Directive:
Explain – Clarify the topic by giving a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Give a brief introduction about the provisions of Anti defection law.
Body:
Explain about the loopholes that political parties are using for the defection of parties.
Write about the landmark cases that are related to the case and the Supreme court's pronouncements.
Suggest suitable steps to be taken in this regard.
Conclusion:
Conclude with way forward.
Introduction:

Defection is "desertion by one member of the party of his loyalty towards his political party" or basically it means "When an elected representative joins another party without resigning his present party for benefits".

The Anti-Defection Law was passed in 1985 through the 52nd Amendment to the Constitution, which added the Tenth Schedule to the Indian Constitution. The main intent of the law was to combat "the evil of political defections" which may be due to reward of office or other similar considerations. The law applies to both Parliament and state assemblies. However, there are several issues in relation to the working of this law.

Body:

Grounds for disqualification:

- If a member of a house belonging to a political party:

  - Voluntarily gives up the membership of his political party, or

  - Votes, or does not vote in the legislature, contrary to the directions of his political party.

  - However, if the member has taken prior permission, or is condoned by the party within 15 days from such voting or abstention, the member shall not be disqualified.

- If an independent candidate joins a political party after the election.

- If a nominated member joins a party six months after he becomes a member of the legislature.

Exception:

- **Merger:** A person shall not be disqualified if his original political party merges with another, and:

  - He and other members of the old political party become members of the new political party, or

  - He and other members do not accept the merger and opt to function as a separate group.

- This exception shall operate only if not less than two-thirds of the members of party in the House have agreed to the merger.

Power to disqualify:

- The Chairman or the Speaker of the House takes the decision to disqualify a member.
- If a complaint is received with respect to the defection of the Chairman or Speaker, a member of the House elected by that House shall take the decision.

Advantages of anti-defection law:

- Provides stability to the government by preventing shifts of party allegiance.
- Ensures that candidates remain loyal to the party as well the citizens voting for him.
- Promotes party discipline.
- Facilitates merger of political parties without attracting the provisions of Anti-defection
- Expected to reduce corruption at the political level.
- More concentration on governance is possible.
- Provides for punitive measures against a member who defects from one party to another.

Challenges posed/Shortcomings of anti-defection law:

- The anti-defection law raises a number of questions, several of which have been addressed by the courts and the presiding officers.

- **The law impinges on the right of free speech of the legislators:**

  - This issue was addressed by the **five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court in 1992 (Kihoto Hollohan vs Zachilhu and others).** The court said that "the anti-defection law

seeks to recognise the practical need to place the proprieties of political and personal conduct…above certain theoretical assumptions." It held that the law does not violate any rights or freedoms, or the basic structure of parliamentary democracy.

- **Doubts regarding "voluntarily" resigning from a party:**

  - According to a Supreme Court judgment, "voluntarily giving up the membership of the party" is not synonymous with "resignation".

  - It has interpreted that in the absence of a formal resignation by the member, the giving up of membership can be inferred by his conduct.

  - In other judgments, members who have publicly expressed opposition to their party or support for another party were deemed to have resigned

- **Regarding Whips:**

  - Political parties issue a direction to MPs on how to vote on most issues, irrespective of the nature of the issue.

  - It restricts a legislator from voting in line with his conscience, judgement and interests of his electorate.

  - Such a situation impedes the oversight function of the legislature over the government, by ensuring that members vote based on the decisions taken by the party leadership, and not what their constituents would like them to vote for.

- **Challenging the decision of the presiding officer in the courts:**

  - The law states that the decision is final and not subject to judicial review. There are several instances that presiding officers take politically partisan view.

  - The Supreme Court struck down part of this condition. It held that there may not be any judicial intervention until the presiding officer gives his order. However, the final decision is subject to appeal in the High Courts and Supreme Court.

Various Recommendations to overcome the above challenges:

- **Dinesh Goswami Committee on electoral reforms:** Disqualification should be limited to following cases:

  - A member voluntarily gives up the membership of his political party

  - A member abstains from voting, or votes contrary to the party whip in a motion of vote of confidence or motion of no-confidence. Political parties could issue whips only when the government was in danger.

- **Law Commission (170th Report)**

  - Provisions which exempt splits and mergers from disqualification to be deleted.

  - Pre-poll electoral fronts should be treated as political parties under anti-defection

  - Political parties should limit issuance of whips to instances only when the government is in danger.

- **Election Commission**
  - Decisions under the Tenth Schedule should be made by the President/ Governor on the binding advice of the Election Commission.

Conclusion:

The anti-defection law seeks to provide a stable government by ensuring the legislators do not switch sides. The true objective to enhance the credibility of the country's polity by addressing rampant party-hopping by elected representatives should be pursued rather than using it as a political tool to pursue narrow interests of party.

Regardless of present challenges, the latent resources of the north eastern region can add to the development goals of the country. Elaborate.(250 words)

Financial Express

Why this question:

Article highlights the true potential of the North East region and in what way it can add to the development goals of the country.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must capture the significance of NER and the richness of resources it is endowed with and in what way this fact can truly contribute to the country's development goals.

Directive:

Elaborate – *Give a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.*

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Discuss the importance of NER in general.

Body:

Firstly, trace the developments from 'Look East Policy' of 1991 to to 'Act East Policy' of 2014. Explain that the entire region with rich soil types, sufficient rainfall and diverse agro-climatic conditions is home to unique organic agri-produce with untapped export potential. This produce, its grading, packing, processing and marketing will be the dynamic key differentiators for NER someday. Discuss various aspects of the NER and its actual potential.

Explain the challenges involved; discuss policies and schemes that have been chalked out to address these issues.

Conclusion:

Conclude that NER and its potential have a greater role to play in achieving the dream of $5 trillion economy by 2024.

Introduction:

The **North-Eastern Indian region (NER)** is abundant with rich soil types, sufficient rainfall and diverse agro-climatic conditions. Consequently, the region is home to unique organic agri-produce with untapped export potential. A smooth economic take-off by NER is central to India's moving closer to the $5-trillion-dream. A **World Bank report** has projected strong long-term potential for India's Northeast, with a little handholding from the central government and viability-gap funding.

Body:

Potential of the NER:

- Hydropower potential of nearly 50,000 MW, natural gas reserves of 190 billion cubic metres, coal reserves of over 900 million tonnes and oil reserves of over 500 million tonnes.
- Surrounded by five countries, NER shares a phenomenal international border of 5,182 kilometres, a rare proximity with a sky full of heady economic rewards.
- The North Eastern Region (NER) is surrounded by international borders, serving as India's gateway to the east.
- NER's geographical position, vast land border, rich nature and agro-climatic conditions, access to growing ASEAN market and presence of mineral and agro-horticulture resources largely explain why NER continues to play an important role in the India's Act East Policy.

However, the NER has a more than **fair share of handicaps** to overcome

- The **RBI's "Report on State Finances: A Study of Budgets 2017-18 And 2018-19"** shows that visible fiscal pressures are emerging for NER states on the expenditure side, particularly on account of pay revisions and interest payments.
- Limited borrowing capacities and a limited supply of central funds raises bigger challenges.
- On the credit front, the 40% CD ratio has confounded NER for decades and the real reasons are not simply limited to an indifferent banking sector.
- Thousands of farmers still can't access small ticket loans for poultry, dairy and piggery projects.
- With a less than 1% share of the total credit flow in India, sustained gaps in credit to lakhs of small and marginal farmers has haunted the entire region for decades.
- Of about 5,23,000 SHGs here just about 27,000 (5%) have been credit linked.
- **The NABARD All India Rural Financial Inclusion Survey 2016-17 (NAFIS)** revealed that all NER states except Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur have lower indebtedness against a national average indebtedness of 47% reflecting high financial exclusion.
- Revenue mobilisation remains the key to attaining the budgeted targets; but limited credit off-take and business opportunities mean that this is going to continue to haunt NER states for some time.
- The north eastern region continues to be a **net importer of food grains** even for its own consumption.
- Even with 33% of country's water resources, the region reels from acute water distress. Infrastructure indices are at abysmal levels.
- The complicated system of land ownership and its transfer impedes growth of enterprise.
- They lie elsewhere: in hamlets with sparse populations located in deep valleys and mountains, patchy road network, poor governance, faulty network connectivity and power deficit.
- The private sector driven growth model does not fit into the NER canvas because the Sixth Schedule makes it well-nigh impossible for 'outsiders' to come in and take a long-term position.
- Over a million people in NER stand facing floods or landslides every year. The region is also very vulnerable to natural disasters such as earthquakes.
- Northeast has been **the land of thousand Insurgencies.** The roots of insurgency in the North-Eastern region are embedded in its geography, history and a host of socio-economic factors. These insurgencies are due to various reasons social, cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity, terrain, socio-economic development, politico-economic conditions, historical evolution and changes in the environment of the area

Measures needed:

- **Innovative PPP models** may be the solution with the state governments facilitating access to land on a long-term basis to the private sector, and village councils becoming a part of the partnerships from the very inception.
- Big industry is not the solution, but **small localised solutions** leveraging the core unique strengths of NER can be viable options.
- The **rich and diverse organic agri produce**, its grading, packing, processing and marketing will be the dynamic key differentiators for NER someday.
- The **immense potential of tourism** can be boosted up by aggressive marketing campaigns, social media-based advertising campaigns and strategic tie-ups under CSR.
- On the credit front, **banks need to partner with other service providers** to expand their reach through **innovative tie-ups** in this difficult region.
- **Small finance banks** with their entire business model centred around financial technology can prove to be the connecting links.
- It is imperative for state governments to use funds judiciously and **build adequate road infrastructure** to further the agenda of both bank credit, as well as, **network connectivity**.

The **way forward** for the development of the NER is through getting India, CLMV countries and ASEAN act together and supporting and complimenting each other for connectivity and human resource development, sustainability and inclusiveness.

Conclusion:

Mainstreaming NER into the $5 trillion economy and doing it all in an equitable manner will need not just political will but serious coordinated action by multiple stakeholders. The centre can only cover this much ground with policy framework and funds allocation. The state machinery, banks, corporates, civil society organisations, agriculture universities and extension agencies will all need to step in to drive the NER growth engine.

Financial inclusion is increasingly being recognized as a key driver of economic growth and poverty alleviation the world over. Discuss the efforts being made by India in this direction.(250 words)

RBI
Why this question:
The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released the National Strategy for Financial Inclusion (NSFI) for the period 2019-2024.Thus the question aims to discuss the efforts in this direction.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the importance of Financial inclusion and in what way it can drive economic growth and help alleviate poverty. Explain what has been done in this direction by the government of India in this direction and what more is required.
Directive:
Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Define what you understand by financial inclusion.
Body:
Discuss the aspects of the recent RBI policy in detail –

It aims to strengthen the ecosystem for various modes of digital financial services in all Tier ll to Tier VI centres to create the necessary infrastructure to move towards a less cash society by March 2022. One of the objectives of the strategy includes increasing outreach of banking outlets of to provide banking access to every village Within a 5km radius or a hamlet of 500 households in hilly areas by March 2020.

The aim also to see that every adult had access to a financial service provider through a mobile device by March 2024.

With the aim of providing basic of financial services, a target has been set that every Milling and eligible adult, has been enrolled under the Prime Minister Jan Dhan Yojana, be enrolled under an insurance scheme and a pension scheme.

The plan is also to make the Public Credit Registry (PCR) fully operational by March 2022 so that authorized financial entities could leverage the same for assessing credit proposals from all citizens. Discuss other aspects too and conclude with significance.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

Financial inclusion refers to efforts to make financial products and services accessible and affordable to all individuals and businesses, regardless of their personal net worth or company size. Financial inclusion strives to remove the barriers that exclude people from participating in the financial sector and using these services to improve their lives. It is also called inclusive finance.

Body:

Importance of Financial inclusion:

- Access to formal finance can boost job creation, reduce vulnerability to economic shocks and increase investments in human capital.
- Seven of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of 2030 view financial inclusion as a key enabler for achieving sustainable development worldwide.
- To achieve the above objectives in a coordinated and time-bound manner, preparation of a National Strategy for Financial Inclusion (NSFI) is essential.
- Lack of financial inclusion is costly to society and the individual. As far as the individual is concerned, lack of financial inclusion forces the unbanked into informal banking sectors where interest rates are higher and the amount of available funds much smaller.
- As far as the social benefits are concerned, financial inclusion increases the amount of available savings, increases efficiency of financial intermediation, and allows for tapping new business opportunities.
- The census report, 2011 shows that 41.3 percent of the Indian population in urban and rural areas do not have access to banking facilities.

Efforts by India for wider financial inclusion include:

- Keeping in view the global trend, Reserve Bank of India under the aegis of **Financial Inclusion Advisory Committee (FIAC)** initiated the process of formulation of **National Strategy for Financial Inclusion (NSFI) for the period 2019-2024**.
- Wide ranging discussions were held with all stakeholders. Based on the inputs/feedback received, NSFI has been finalised and approved by the **Financial Stability Development Council (FSDC).**

- The NSFI sets forth the vision and key objectives of the Financial Inclusion policies in India to expand the reach and sustain the efforts through a broad convergence of action involving all the stakeholders in the financial sector.
- The RBI has set up **a high-level committee to review the existing status of digitisation** and devise a medium-term strategy for increasing digital payments.
- In August 2019, the RBI released the **Enabling Framework for Regulatory Sandbox (RS),** which creates the basis for a regulatory sandbox that will allow fintech start-ups to live-test innovative products and services.
- **Jan Dhan Yojana:**
    - With a view to increase the penetration of banking services and to ensure that all households have at least one bank account, a National Mission on Financial Inclusion named as Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana was formally launched 2014.
    - Within a fortnight of its launch, the scheme entered into the Guinness Book of records for opening a record number of bank accounts.
    - Large scale achievement was made by opening 29.48 crores accounts by Mid-August, 2017 out of which 17.61 crores accounts were in rural/semi-urban areas and the rest 11.87 crores in urban areas.
    - More than 44 lakh accounts have been sanctioned overdraft facility of which more than 23 lakh account holders have availed the facility involving an amount around 300 crores.
- **Insurance & Pension schemes:**
    - Pro-poor initiatives include Atal Pension Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana and Jan Suraksha Yojana benefiting 16 crore people.
    - Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana provides formal access of financial facilities to Non Corporate Small Business Sector. The basic objective of the scheme is to promote & ensure bank finance to unfunded segment of the Indian economy.
- **CRISIL Inclusix**
    - India's first financial inclusion index measures progress on financial inclusion down to the level of each of the 666 districts in the country. The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, and the RBI's steadfast focus on unbanked regions, have really made a difference
    - Financial inclusion has improved significantly in India. As many as 600 million deposit accounts were opened between fiscals 2013 and 2016, or twice the number between 2010 and 2013. Nearly a third of this was on account of Jan Dhan
    - On the credit side, there was a sharp 31.7 million increase in new credit or loan (banks and microfinance) accounts in the two years up to fiscal 2016, which is the most since fiscal 2013
- The **Digital India initiative**, **payments banks and small finance banks** have all helped improve the reach of formal financial services to economically disadvantaged sections
- Digital platforms are likely to deliver financial services to both the unbanked and the underbanked population, especially in rural/remote regions, at a low cost, and subsequently increase digital financial access to the vast swathes of the country's population. The use of digital channels can bring down the transaction costs in a great way
- RBI has created a **Financial Inclusion Fund (FIF)** with a corpus of Rs 2,000 crore to support developmental and promotional activities for expanding the reach of banking services towards securing greater financial inclusion. Special financial literacy campaigns have been designed for the 'new' adults (those who have recently turned 18); financial literacy training is being imparted through mass media and by financial education programmes in school curriculum.

- **National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC), National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC), National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSCFDC), National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC), National Minorities Finance and Development Corporation (NMDFC), National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHFDC), Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK), Stand-Up India Scheme, venture capital fund scheme, Credit enhancement guarantee scheme** are other initiatives
- These schemes highlight the government's commitment for inclusive empowerment of weaker section of the society.

Way forward:

- There is a need to increase financial and digital knowledge among the people.
- To ensure that the benefits of inclusion reaches the intended target group of the society, seminal changes need to be introduced in the spread of financial and digital literacy
- Adequately equipping and empowering institutions engaged in disseminating comprehensive literacy programmes will be essential.
- Business correspondents in villages can be an integral part of change agents to create social awareness and to highlight the benefits of the formal financial system.
- Over period of time, such institutions should be able to phase out informal money lenders who charge usurious interest rates.
- It is the right time to accelerate literacy campaigns, particularly when digital culture is spreading fast with introduction of GST, FASTags and other online utilities of daily use.
- Right synchronisation of comprehensive financial literacy efforts should be able to take India close to the objectives of FI by 2030.

Conclusion:

The government is committed to its target of increasing the inclusion of every household in the financial system thus strengthening the social contract so that the masses can get all the legitimate benefits arising out of the growth of the country and also provide an extra thrust to lead the path of growth.

Is India witnessing erosion of civil liberties in the country? Critically analyse the secret transition from the tag of world's largest democracy to a flawed democracy' in the backdrop of recently released Democracy Index.(250 words)

Reference: The Hindu
Why this question:
Economist Intelligence Unit released Democracy Index, India's rankings slipped by 10 ranks to 51st place in the latest Democracy Index 2019. Thus the question.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the causes of such slippage in the ranking and explain why India is witnessing erosion of civil liberties.
Directive:
Critically analyze – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgment.
Structure of the answer:

Introduction:
Highlight the findings brought out by the report that ranked India at 51st place.
Body:
Give a brief introduction about the recent India's ranking in the Democracy Index.
Write about the probable reasons for the dire situation; talks about the repeal of both Article 370
and Article 35A, NRC exercise in Assam, the CAA bill etc.
Mention the needed measures to be followed in this regard.
Conclusion:
Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

Democracy is a form of government in which power ultimately comes from the people who are governed, either through direct voting or through elected representatives. India is today the largest functioning democracy in the world. The "**State of Democracy in the World in 2018**" index report titled "Me Too? Political participation, protest and democracy" was published recently by the **Economist Intelligence Unit** (EIU). India was ranked **41**, a **mid-range country among flawed democracies**.

Body:

Liberty in jeopardy

Of all the five categories that make up the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index, India's civil liberties index fell the most

Index	Value in 2019	Change from 2018
Democracy	**6.90**	**-0.33**
Electoral pluralism	8.67	-0.5
Government	6.79	O
Political participation	6.67	-0.55
Political culture	5.63	O
Civil liberties	6.76	-0.59

Reasons for India being classified as a flawed democracy:

- **Illiteracy, Poverty, Gender Discrimination, Casteism, Communalism, Religious Fundamentalism, Regionalism, Corruption, and Criminalization of Politics** are still plaguing Indian Democracy.
- According to the last two reports, there is a rise of "conservative religious ideologies" in the country.
- Vigilantism, violence, narrowing scope for dissent, threat to minorities and marginalised groups has affected India's ranking.
- The new citizenship law has enraged the large Muslim population, stoked communal tensions and generated large protests in major cities.

- the repeal of both Article 370 and Article 35A and how ahead of the move, "the government deployed a large number of troops in J&K, imposed various other security measures and placed local leaders under house arrest, including those with pro-India credentials."
- The government also restricted Internet access in J&K.
- The NRC exercise in Assam excluded 1.9 million people from the final list, and that "the vast majority of people excluded from the NRC are Muslims."
- Important issues like **horse-trading in politics**, **the anti-defection law**, **pros and cons of post-poll alliances** and **discretionary powers of the governor** has brought to light the various challenges facing Indian democracy.
- **Journalists are increasingly under attack**, with murders taking place in several areas.
- As a result of limited scope for fair reportage, the Indian media is classified as only "partially free". This is a fact which is also supported by the "Freedom in the World Report, 2018".
- Unlike pre-poll alliances, where the voters are aware of whom they are voting for, **post-poll alliances present a new set of challenges**.
- **Anti-Defection law** does not seem to be doing much to stop MLAs from defecting.
- **Dynastic politics, lack of strong opposition at the centre and Religion based politics.** Ex: Government's decision to classify Lingayats as a religious minority in Karnataka.
- The delay in disposal of cases by the courts is a concern to people.
- Misuse of data on social media sites, privacy of users and the power of social media to influence important political outcomes.

Conclusion:

Democracy is important because it gives representation to a larger section of society in the Government. But the world still witnesses full democracies, flawed democracies, hybrid regimes and even authoritarian regimes. Efforts from institutions like United Nations and nations world over are needed so that representation by citizens of various nations of the world may be met and their voices be heard. At the same time, democracy also needs to have various internal checks like independence of judiciary so that its real goals are achieved.

Way Forward

- **Universal literacy**:. education for all, poverty alleviation, elimination of gender discrimination, removal of regional imbalances, administrative and judicial reforms and sustained economic, social and environmental development.
- A set of rules which would **curb** the **menace of defection** as well as the **misuse of powers of the governor's office** is required.
- A **defecting MLA must be disqualified** from contesting or becoming a minister for at least six years.
- A distinction needs to be drawn whether a member is leaving a party for ideological differences or for money and power.
- In case of hung assembly, whether the governor must call the single largest party first, or a post-poll alliance, the process must be uniform across the country.
- The governors' discretionary powers must be abolished and replaced with clear guidelines based on the **Sarkaria Commission**.
- Stricter data protection laws are required to ensure that political parties do not indulge in practices that involve undue influencing of voting behaviour.
- **Voter education, electoral reforms and periodical highlighting of the performance** (or non-performance) of elected representatives should be high priority.

- People must exercise their **right to vote**, participate in democracy and contribute towards the development of the country.
- The **youth must be aware** of the problems that the country is facing and choose the candidate who is most likely to bring about a change
- Democracy cannot survive without both **citizens' participation and politicians' accountability**.
- The promises of democracy can only be realised through collective action in civil society.
- The state must respect the articulation of the politics of voice and not just the politics of the vote

Biotechnology in cotton, post its introduction, has led to transformational changes in India's cotton cultivation. Do you agree? Comment. (250 words)

Reference: The Hindu
Why this question:
The article presents with arguments for and against the use of Biotechnology, especially with respect to Bt. Cotton, in India. Thus the context of the question.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail transformational changes in India's cotton cultivation owing to the introduction of BT Cotton.
Directive:
Comment– here we have to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and form an overall opinion thereupon.
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Describe what BT Cotton is.
Body:
Start with key facts that highlight the change such as – India's cotton production in 2019 is projected as the highest ever. India's cotton production has doubled over the past decade. India is expected to be the world's largest cotton producer, surpassing China in output in 2020.
Present arguments for and against BT. Cotton, take cues from the article.
Explain that the outcome of using a technology such as Biotechnology is determined by the context in which it is deployed, and not just by the technology itself.
It is important to recognize that apart from the technology itself, its relevance to the particular context is also important. If the context is suboptimal and does not prioritize the needs of the farmers, it can have significant negative fallouts, especially in India with a high proportion of farmers being marginal and subsistence farmers.
Conclusion:
Conclude that In a fast-evolving global market, India's farmers need the best technologies to remain competitive and Biotechnology can be a harbinger in this direction.

Introduction:

BT Cotton is a genetically modified organism or genetically modified pest-resistant variety of cotton. Genetically Modified (GM) pest resistant BT cotton hybrids have captured the Indian market since their introduction in 2002.

Body:

Advantages by BT cotton:

- **Several key studies by third-party economists and sociologists have established that**

- 85% of hybrid Bt cotton seed farmers and farm laborers invested in better education for children; 77% reported better intake of nutritious food; 75% reported better health of their family members; 64% invested on the health of livestock;
- Female workers on Bt cotton fields earned an average 55% higher income; and 42.4 crore additional days of rural employment have been generated, thereby doubling cotton production.
- **India's farmers are the ones who have reposed trust in biotechnology**, making India the world's second largest cotton producer and exporter by doubling cotton production over the past decade
- Cotton Corporation of India data show that the **highest production of 398 lakh bales of cotton in India was achieved in 2013-14, valued at around ₹72,000 crore.**
- Additional incomes were generated from cotton seeds oil (1.3 million tons) and cotton seed oil meal (11 million tons) worth ₹13,000 crore and ₹22,000 crore, respectively.
- Biotechnology in cotton, post its introduction in 2002, has led to transformational changes in India's cotton cultivation. These have helped increase cotton yields by over 1.8 times — from 241 kg/hectare in 2002-2003 to 541 kg/hectare in 2018-2019.
- The significant increase in farmer incomes from higher yields and reduced pesticide use has generated additional farm income of over ₹42,300 crore.
- India is moving to first place as the largest producer of cotton in the world.
- Due to the adoption of Bt cotton ensured that India transitioned into a cotton-exporting country from being a net importer.
- Hybrid cotton has delivered not only higher yields but also provided resistance to some pests and diseases.
- **Less use of insecticides:-**
- To produce the GM Cotton, the gene coding for Bt toxin (Cry-1-ac) has been inserted into cotton, causing cotton to produce this natural insecticide in its tissues. By this, the larvae are killed by the Bt protein in the GM cotton they eat. This eliminates the need to use large amounts of broad-spectrum insecticides to kill various pesticides.
- There is no doubt that the Bt technology has brought down the use of pesticides by about 50%.

Disadvantages of BT Cotton:

- **Loss caused by the pink bollworm infestation have raised questions about the sustainability** of GM cotton, which accounts for over 90% of all cotton grown in the country.
- GM crops face **strident opposition due to their perceived adverse ecological, bio-safety measures and health implications.**
- Cotton is also plagued by use of **illegal herbicide-tolerant Bt cotton seeds**.
- There was no substantial difference found between Bt and non-Bt cotton for germination and vigour, indicating that there is no substantial difference between transgenic Bt and control non-Bt cotton with regard to their weediness potential.
- Bt cotton hybrids do not have any toxic effects on the non-target species such as sucking pests. The beneficial insects remained active in both Bt and non Bt varieties.
- The growing number of farmers committing suicides in some cotton growing states has re-ignited the protests against the Bt Cotton.
- Normal cotton seed is largely unavailable to Indian farmers because of Monsanto's control of the seed market.

Takeaways from the experience of BT cotton:

- **First, we must be clear that the outcome of using a technology such as Bt is determined by the context in which it is deployed, and not just by the technology itself.**
- If the context is suboptimal and does not prioritise the needs of the principal stakeholders (farmers), it can have significant negative fallouts, especially in India with a high proportion being marginal and subsistence farmers.
- **Second, there is a need for better consultation in policy, be it agriculture as a whole or crop-wise.**
- Notably, India is a signatory to international treaties on GMO regulation (the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety), which specifically provide for inclusion of socioeconomic considerations in GMO risk assessment.
- However, socioeconomic and need-based considerations have not been a part of GMO regulatory process in India.
- **It is important to recognize that adoption of any new technology such as Bt is a choice and not an imperative**.
- For example, some of the major cotton-producing countries such as Brazil (until 2012) and Turkey (up to the present) have achieved high productivity without the use of GM cotton by using alternative pest-management approaches.

Conclusion:

The purpose of risk assessment in GMO regulation is to enable exercising of this choice by careful and comprehensive evaluation of costs and benefits. In the case of Bt cotton hybrids, the benefits were limited and costs may well have been too high, particularly for resource-poor farmers.

Rural India has been witnessing slowdown, and one of the key factors contributing to it has been the fund crunch in the schemes addressing jobs in rural India. In such a scenario, discuss what way MGNREGA can prove to be an effective solution? (250 words)

Reference: Live Mint
Why this question:
The article highlights the fact that with rural distress deepening across India and private consumption growing anemically, calls for ramping up the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), are growing louder ahead of the upcoming budget.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the importance of ramping up the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) as a cure to the rising rural distress in the country.
Directive:
Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Describe the current state of rural distress in the country.
Body:
Present first some data on key metrics such as wages, inflation, and consumption that indicate the present rural distress.
Explain the crunch in funds related to other schemes that aim at improvising the rural economy.
Explain the possible role that MGNREGA can play in fixing the issue.
Take hints from the article and discuss what can be the way ahead.

Conclusion:
Conclude with a balanced and fair opinion.
Introduction:

With rural distress deepening across India and private consumption growing anaemically, calls for ramping up the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), are growing louder ahead of the upcoming budget. Proponents of MGNREGS believe that it may be the only ammunition in the government's arsenal to fight rural poverty. Critics, though, have labelled the scheme as leaky, wasteful and simply ineffective.

Body:

Data on key metrics such as wages, inflation, and consumption suggests that the truth lies somewhere in the middle. While MGNREGS can provide income security to its beneficiaries, its overall impact on the rural economy will be limited unless it is implemented with greater resources and greater care.

Rural India has been witnessing slowdown:

- Rising prices of agricultural inputs, landholding size decreasing, non-availability of water, soil suitability and pest management.
- Small and marginal farmers face a greater burden of debt
- Large fall in food prices
- The income of landless rural population is hardly enough to cover its consumption requirements.
- Clime change impacting the monsoon.
- Decline in land available for agriculture and its diversion for non-agricultural use.
- More than 50% of people in rural India do not own land and have to depend on manual labour.
- Sub-optimal utilisation of MSP.
- Green Revolution caused regional and other disparities.
- All these factors create a narrow window of economic benefit for the marginal farmer.
- Data shows that over the years, MGNREGA wages have increased only in nominal terms with no increase in real wages.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA):

The MGNREGA was launched in 2006 in order to provide at least 100 days of guaranteed employment to rural households. It is the largest scheme run by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD).

Crunch in funds related to other schemes that aim at improvising the rural economy

- Though a national program, the responsibility of implementation of MGNREGS lies with states. And even in states where MGNREGS has been implemented more intensely, there has been no major gains in real rural wage growth.
- Here the rough proxy for implementation intensity is the number of person-days per job-card holder, which reflects the total employment provided under the scheme.
- States such as Tamil Nadu, Chattisgarh, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh have outperformed others on this measure but have had not experienced any major increase in real rural wage growth.
- States such as Assam, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Bihar have underperformed in implementation and have seen similar wage growth as better performers.

- The programme is being throttled by a reduction in the budget and in real wages, according to Reetika Khera of the Indian Institute of Management (Ahmedabad).
- Currently, MGNREGS spending is approximately 0.3% of GDP and has steadily declined over the years.
- In the second term of the United Progressive Alliance, budget allocations towards MGNREGS began accounted for 2.5% of overall government spending on average.

Impact of MGNREGA:

- It has helped in increasing rural household income.
- It has not only helped in increasing groundwater table in the last one decade, but also agriculture productivity, mainly cereals and vegetables and fodders.
- The water conservation measures, including farm ponds and dug wells, have made a difference to the lives of the poor.
- While the scheme was earlier focused on creation of community assets, in the last three years, individual assets have also been emphasised.
- It has provided goat, poultry and cattle shed as per the need of poor households.
- One national study found that MGNREGS has created valuable public goods which have augmented rural incomes.
- Another national study found that, even after deficiencies in implementation, MGNREGS may have improved nutrition outcomes.
- Even consumption has been shown to improve if MGNREGS is implemented well. A 2018 study of a better-implemented version of MGNREGS in Andhra Pradesh, where there was significantly less leakage or payment delays, estimated that MGNREGS increased income households' earnings by 13% and decreased poverty by 17%
- MGNREGS can smoothen food consumption of rural poor by providing them with an alternate source of income during the agricultural lean season.

Challenges:

- In the last five years, the average person days of work generated per household under MGNREGA remained less than 50 across years
- The scheme is running out of funds due to increased demand for work.
- Droughts and floods in several States have led to an increased demand for work.
- Data show disparity in MGNREGA wages across States.
- Agricultural minimum wages exceed MGNREGA wages in almost all states.
- The total MGNREGA expenditure reported by States has risen, but the year-on-year growth has fallen below 5%.
- The act continues to fight widespread corruption and administrative negligence.
- In some areas of certain states, MGNREGA work opens only during specific seasons and time.
- Since April 2014, the work completion rate has been declining.
- Jharkhand being one of the poorest states and having huge dependence on MGNREGA, has the lowest wage rates.

Way Forward:

- MGNREGA can be revived through
- Adequate allocation of Budget funds
- Timely payments to workers
- Completely decentralising implementation

- Improving entitlements (ie, wages, compensations and worksite facilities)
- There is a need to upgrade skills of MGNREGA workers.
- The centre needs to ensure uninterrupted operations by primarily ensuring allocation of adequate funds for the programme.
- Workers across the nation have been demanding higher wages in accordance with the recommendations of the Seventh Pay Commission.
- Different committees constituted by the Centre vouched for higher MGNREGA wages.
- The recent central committee for fixation of national minimum wage recommended that the national minimum wage should be fixed at Rs 375 per day.
- Many civil society organisations has been demanding that the person work days under MGNREGA be increased to 200 days per rural household.

Conclusion:

MGNREGS may never address structural weaknesses in the economy but with greater funding and better implementation, it could provide some much-needed respite to rural India.

Do you agree that the recent move to amend the MTP Act, 1971 is a progressive step towards empowerment of women as it looks beyond mere termination of pregnancy and aims to assure greater reproductive rights to women? Evaluate. (250 words)

Reference: [Indian Express](#)
Why this question:
Moving to ease abortion laws in the country, the Union Cabinet is set to consider a host of changes to the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971. Thus the question.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the impact of such a move taken by the government and explain in what way it shall ensure reproductive rights to women of the country.
Directive:
Evaluate – When you are asked to evaluate, you have to pass a sound judgement about the truth of the given statement in the question or the topic based on evidences. You have to appraise the worth of the statement in question. There is scope for forming a personal opinion here.
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Start with a brief background – In recent years, there have been strong demands to raise the foetal gestation period for abortion beyond 20 weeks.
Body:
Discuss first the existing scenario.
Comment on the changes suggested by the Union govt.
Explain the pros and cons of such a move.
Discuss that the changes in law were proposed after an extensive consultation process with experts representing a range of stakeholders from central and state governments, NGOs, academic institutions, professional bodies and associations like Indian Medical Association, Indian Nursing Council and legal professionals.
Conclusion:
Conclude that the move to amend the MTP Act, 1971 is a progressive step towards empowerment of women. It will provide greater reproductive Rights to women as abortion is considered an important aspect of the reproductive health of women. Deaths and injuries from unsafe abortions are largely preventable provided services are performed legally by trained practitioners.
Introduction:

Moving to ease abortion laws in the country, the Union Cabinet is set to consider a host of changes to the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971.

The present abortion law, which is about five decades old, permits abortion up to a maximum foetal gestation period of 20 weeks. In recent years, there have been strong demands to raise the foetal gestation period for abortion beyond 20 weeks.

According to the Lancet Global Health report, 15.6 million abortions occurred in 2015 in India, of which 78% were not conducted inside health facilities.

Body:

Abortion in India:

Abortion in India is legal only up to 20 weeks of pregnancy, under specific conditions and situations, which are defined as:

- If the continuance of pregnancy risks the life of the woman or may result in grave physical or mental injury.
- If there is a substantial possibility of the child being born with physical or mental abnormalities, as to be seriously handicapped.

Laws governing abortion in India:

- According to the IPC abortion falls under 'Offences Affecting the Human Body', and provides that causing a miscarriage with or without consent for a purpose other than saving the life of the woman is punishable.
- However, the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act (MTP Act) makes for a quantum difference in approach, as if by a legislative sleight through a non-obstante clause, by decriminalizing abortion without bringing an amendment to the IPC or abrogating the penal provisions.

Changes suggested by the Union Govt to Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971:

- Among others, amendments seek to increase the upper limit for termination of a pregnancy from 20 weeks to 24 weeks.
- It also seeks to extend the contraceptive-failure clause for termination to include "any woman or her partner" from the present provision for **"only married woman or her husband".**
- The draft Bill proposes requirement of opinion of one registered medical practitioner (RMP) for termination of pregnancy up to 20 weeks of gestation.
- It also provides for the requirement of opinion of two RMPs for termination of pregnancy of 20 to 24 weeks.
- The Bill also seeks to increase the upper gestation limit from 20 to 24 weeks for survivors of rape, victims of incest and other vulnerable women.
- For unmarried women, the Bill seeks to relax the contraceptive-failure condition for "any woman or her partner" from the present provision for "only married woman or her husband", allowing them to medically terminate the pregnancy.

Significance of the changes:

- The move to amend the MTP Act, 1971 is a progressive step towards empowerment of women.
- It will provide greater reproductive rights to women as abortion is considered an important aspect of the reproductive health of women.

- Deaths and injuries from unsafe abortions are largely preventable provided services are performed legally by trained practitioners.
- It is a step towards the safety and well-being of the women and many women will be benefitted from this.
- Recently several petitions were received by the Courts seeking permission for aborting pregnancies at a gestational age beyond the present permissible limit on grounds of foetal abnormalities or pregnancies due to sexual violence faced by women.
- The proposed increase in gestational age will ensure dignity, autonomy, confidentiality and justice for women who need to terminate the pregnancy.

Conclusion:

Nevertheless, the amendment, if passed, will be a victory, albeit a small one, for women's reproductive rights.

The Supreme Court's decision to allow the introduction of African cheetahs into the Indian forests is a significant step forward in the conservation of the breed. Comment. (250 words)

Reference: The Hindu
Why this question:
The Supreme Court on Tuesday lifted its seven-year stay on a proposal to introduce African cheetahs from Namibia into the Indian habitat on an experimental basis. The plan was to revive the Indian cheetah population. Thus the question.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail about the move by the court and arrangements made by it and in what way it is a significant step in conserving the species.
Directive:
Comment– here we have to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and form an overall opinion thereupon.
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Describe briefly the background of the question.
Body:
There have been previous proposals to introduce African cheetahs in India, as part of a plan to revive the Indian cheetah population. The proposal was to introduce African cheetahs into the Palpur Kuno Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh on an experimental basis.
However, the Supreme Court had stalled the plan in 2012.
Explain that Following a favorable view from the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), the Supreme Court has lifted its seven-year stay on a proposal to introduce African cheetahs from Namibia into the Indian habitat on an experimental basis.
Discuss the significance of such a step.
Explain concerns if any.
Conclusion:
Conclude with way ahead.
Introduction:

The Supreme Court recently allowed the Centre to introduce the African cheetah to a suitable habitat in India. With India's own cheetahs vanishing, a plea for this had been filed by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), seeking permission to introduce the African cheetah from Namibia.

Background

- The Ministry of forests and environment of India is now hammering out the details of the cheetah conservation plan. As a first step, a two-day seminar of technical experts on cheetahs was held in Gajner from 9 September 2009.
- **The initial plans were to bring the cheetahs to Gajner Wildlife Sanctuary**. Thereafter, they will be transported to various states,"
- India is also in talks with the Islamic Republic of Iran over the possibility of sending a pair of Asiatic cheetahs to India.
- In May 2012, the top court had stalled the plan to initiate the foreign cheetahs into the Palpur Kuno sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh fearing they may come into conflict with a parallel and a much-delayed project to reintroduce lions into the same sanctuary.
- The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) had previously told the Supreme Court that African cheetahs would be translocated in India from Namibia and would be kept at Nauradehi wildlife sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh.
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has given a 'no objection' for the translocation.

Reasons for extinction of cheetah:

- Cheetah was declared extinct from India in 1952 and is considered the only large mammal that has gone extinct since the country's independence.
- According to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List, **cheetah's population is 'vulnerable'** witnessing a decreasing **trend with only less than 7,000 of them left in the wild globally.**
- The reasons for extinction can all be traced to **man's interference.** Problems like human-**wildlife conflict, loss of habitat and loss of prey, and illegal trafficking, have decimated their numbers.**
- The advent of climate change and growing human populations have only made these problems worse.
- With less available land for wildlife, species that require vast home range like the cheetah are placed in competition with other animals and humans, all fighting over less space.

Significance of such a step:

- A section of conservationists has long advocated the reintroduction of the species in the country.
- Reintroductions of large carnivores have increasingly been recognised as a strategy to conserve threatened species and restore ecosystem functions.
- The cheetah is the only large carnivore that has been extirpated, mainly by over-hunting in India in historical times.
- India now has the economic ability to consider restoring its lost natural heritage for ethical as well as ecological reasons.

Conclusion:

NCTA will be guided by the committee of experts who will carry out a survey for the best location. It was submitted before the apex court that the African cheetah will be introduced on an experimental basis in the best suitable habitat to see whether it can adapt to Indian conditions.

Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Discuss the objectives of National Tribal Youth Exchange Programme. Why should the tribal pockets be mainstreamed? Explain.(250 words)

News on Air

Why this question:

The 12th National Tribal Youth Exchange Programme was inaugurated in Puducherry, under which tribal youths will be visiting many places to know about the language, customs, culture, arts, dressing patterns, food pattern and other aspects of Puducherry. Thus the question.

Key demand of the question:

Discuss in detail the objectives of National Tribal Youth Exchange Programme. And explain why the tribal pockets should be mainstreamed.

Directive:

Explain – *Clarify the topic by giving a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.*

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Start by stating the facts like – Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) organizes Tribal Youth Exchange Programme with the support of Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India.

Body:

Discuss the objective of the programme; To provide an opportunity to the tribal youth to understand the cultural ethos, language, lifestyles of the people depicting Socio –economic and Cultural Development and Development process unity in diversity aspect of our national life.

Quote reasons as to why tribals should be mainstreamed? – To deal with discrimination against tribal communities and in providing them with the rights they truly deserve.

Discuss what steps the government is taking in this direction.

Conclusion:

Conclude that as India is aspiring to become a developed country, it needs to rethink and redefine its definition of development to incorporate the discourse of inclusive development.

Introduction:

Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan organizes Tribal Youth Exchange Programme for the development of tribal youth with the support of Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India. The 12th National Tribal Youth Exchange Programme was held in Puducherry recently. Tribal youths will be visiting many places to know about the language, customs, culture, arts, dressing patterns, food pattern and other aspects of Puducherry.

Body:

Aims and Objectives of National Tribal Youth Exchange Programme:

▪ To provide an opportunity to the tribal youth of 30 selected districts of 07 states for exposure visit to 10 different places of the country to understand the cultural ethos, language, lifestyles of the people depicting Socio –economic & Cultural Development & Development process unity in diversity aspect of our national life.

- To expose tribal youth to the technological and industrial advancement that have taken place in different states of the country with focus on various developmental activities, skill development, educational & employment opportunities available there.
- To sensitize the tribal youth about their rich traditional & cultural heritage and enable them to preserve it for the future generation.
- To help the tribal youth to develop emotional linkages with their peer groups in other part of the country and enhance their self-esteem.
- To provide opportunities to the participants for interactions with Hon'ble President of India, PM & CM, Governor & other VIPs, the local communities, Panchayati Raj Institutions and the youths affiliated with the NYKS Youth Clubs so as understand development issues, seek guidance for their involvement in the process of development.
- To develop personality of the tribal youth by enhancing their understanding of Ten Core Life Skills, identify their skill development oriented training needs and fulfilment of their legitimate career aspirations through Employable Skills, Scheme of Government of India and State Govt and provide them necessary guidance and career counselling.
- To provide exposure to industry and Skill Development programme which can facilitate the provision of employment to the tribal youth.
- To provide literature on developmental schemes of the Centre & State pertaining to tribals.

Need for tribal youth to be mainstreamed:

- The tribes who are residing in the remote corners of the nation are not having first-hand information about what is happening elsewhere in the country.
- If the student and youth communities are getting sufficient information and opportunities to interact with their peer groups in other parts of the nation, the extremist activities among them can be curtailed.
- In this context it is proposed that, the tribal youth should be positively engaged and educated and for that; tribal youth exchange programmes will be of great help.

Conclusion:

The programme helps students in understanding various cultures prevalent in the country and promotes national integration. It would not only help them know about the local culture and customs but help local pupils understand the tribal culture.

Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

The NITI Aayog's proposed 15-year plan for Indian healthcare entitled "Health Systems for a New India: Building Blocks — Potential Pathways to Reform" is a welcome move to improve the state of the healthcare system in India. Comment. (250 words)

The Hindu

Why this question:
The question is based on the set of NITI Aayog's proposed 15-year plan for the Indian healthcare system that was recently released.

Key demand of the question:
Discuss in what way the 15 year plan is a welcome move. Highlight the significance of such a roadmap and importance of achieving the final goals of it.

Directive:

Comment *– here we have to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and form an overall opinion thereupon.*

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:
Bring out the highlights of the report.

Body:
Discuss the key findings and suggestions of the report such as – With regard to the risk pooling mechanism, even though the report has not out rightly suggested that Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY), the government's cashless health insurance scheme covering 10 crore poor families for Rs five lakh annually, should be extended to the whole of India, it discretely mentioned that PM-JAY should be considered with an eye on its potential to influence the overall healthcare transformation in India, beyond its current explicit mandate.
The report is critical of the fragmented nature of the Indian Healthcare system. It emphasizes the fact that overcoming the challenges of fragmentation across healthcare financing and service delivery will help India optimize both quality and access in the domain of healthcare services. It proposes the consolidation of small practices into larger business-like organizations.
Discuss any concerns associated with the plan.
Provide for counter arguments if any.

Conclusion:
Conclude There is a need for installing an inbuilt family physician in the health services system who acts as the first port of call for every registered patient.

Introduction:

The **NITI Aayog's proposed 15-year plan for Indian healthcare** entitled **"Health Systems for a New India: Building Blocks — Potential Pathways to Reform"** outlines prospects of such an infelicitous turn in Indian healthcare. The report makes otherwise commendable proposals for health system strengthening including **elimination of informality, merging of fragmented risk pools, and reduction of out-of-pocket health spending. However, the proposal to consolidate small practices into larger business-like organisations appears problematic on multiple fronts**.

Body:

Highlights of the report:

- To deliver on unfinished public health agenda and move towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC).
- Changing the health financing away from out of pocket expenditure into large insurers.

- Empowering citizens to become better buyers of health by educating them of the options available.
- Harnessing the power of digital health.
- Integrating service delivery vertically and horizontally.

Challenges with the proposal:

- Nearly 98% of healthcare providers have less than 10 employees. It is identified as a negative trait.

- Apart from cost and competition-related concerns, it could portend a commodification of healthcare from the bottom-up.

- The report's bent towards the U.S. HMO model adds to such a foreboding.

- Loyalty and longitudinality form vital pillars of the patient-physician relationship.

- The edifice of these is built upon mutual trust, warmth, and understanding that accrues over time between a patient and their personal physician.

- Momentary and haphazardly physician-patient interactions in a system that limits access to one's 'physician of choice' are incapable of fostering such enduring relationships.

- **Importance of family physician:**

  o Apart from providing comprehensive care and coordinating referrals, a family physician's longitudinal relationship with their patient helps in a better understanding of the patient's needs and expectations.

- **Increased Commercialization of care**

  o Widespread commercialisation over the past few decades has entailed that the family physician is a dying breed in India today.

  o This has a sizeable role in impairing the doctor-patient relationship, manifested through violence against healthcare providers.

  o In a setting of overcrowded public hospitals, and profiteering healthcare enterprises, mistrust in the healthcare provider and its gruesome implications are not difficult to anticipate.

- Lack of funds for the healthcare sector and the economics of scale offered by larger organizations.

- India faces an acute shortage in terms of manpower in the medical sector. An integrated framework would allow for a smaller number of medical personnel to take care of the needs of the large patient population in India.

Measures needed:

- Studies have demonstrated that healthcare received in small clinics indeed scores higher in terms of patient satisfaction than that received in larger institutions.
- This increased satisfaction manifests as better compliance with the treatment regimen and regular follow-ups, culminating in improved clinical outcomes.

- The NITI Aayog's long-term plan provides a good opportunity to envisage such long-called-for reforms, but that would require not the U.S. model but the U.K. model to be kept at the forefront for emulation.
- There is a need for installing an inbuilt family physician in the health services system who acts as the first port of call for every registered patient.
- Introducing **Attitude, Ethics, and Communication (AETCOM)** in the revised undergraduate medical curriculum is a welcome step and this needs to be progressively emphasized on in healthcare service delivery.

Conclusion:

The plan needs to be revisited to ensure that healthcare clinics delivering patient care don't transform into veritable supermarket stores marketing medical services any further.

"A multi-sectorial and community-led approach driving a national movement is the need of the hour to end TB by 2025 in the country", Comment on the above statement in the backdrop of India still acclaimed to host highest TB burden in the world. (250 words)

Indian Express
Why this question:
The article discusses the need for a multilingual, multi-stakeholder awareness effort to ensure that every single Indian knows about the challenges of TB and where to seek treatment.
Key demand of the question:
Explain the scenario of TB hazard in the country and highlight the urgency and need to create a mass movement to end the menace of TB facing India.
Directive:
Comment– here we have to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and form an overall opinion thereupon.
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Quote some key facts to highlight the impact of TB in the country.
Body:
India still has the highest TB burden in the world and despite the disease being fully curable, people still die from it.
Discuss what steps are required to be taken, how should the approach change from past to present scenario.
Explain the significance of creation of awareness and empowering of communities.
Conclusion:
Conclude that As long as our people continue to die every year from this preventable and treatable disease, we are failing in our duties as citizens, doctors, administrators and public health professionals. We must join hands to ensure a TB-free India. Each one of us can make a difference.

Introduction:

Tuberculosis (TB) remains the biggest killer disease in India, outnumbering all other infectious diseases put together — this despite our battle against it from 1962, when the National TB Programme (NTP) was launched. The **Global Tuberculosis (TB) report by WHO** provides a comprehensive and up-to-date assessment of the TB epidemic and progress in the response at global, regional and country levels for India.

Body:

TB Situation in India:

- Tuberculosis incidence rate in India has decreased by almost 50,000 patients over the past one year (26.9 lakh TB patients in India in 2018).

- Incidence per 1,00,000 population has decreased from 204 in 2017 to 199 in 2018.

- Number of patients being tested for rifampicin resistance has increased from 32% in 2017 to 46% in 2018.

- Treatment success rate has increased to 81% for new and relapse cases (drug sensitive) in 2017, which was 69% in 2016.

- **India's efforts to eliminate TB:**

- In 2018, Indian government launched **Joint Effort for Elimination of Tuberculosis (JEET)**, to increase the reporting of TB cases by the private sector.

- **National Strategic Plan (NSP) for TB Elimination (2017-2025)** was launched in 2017. The government also called for the elimination of TB by 2025, five years prior to the international target (2030).

  - The NSP plans to provide incentives to private providers for following the standard protocols for diagnosis and treatment as well as for notifying the government of cases.

  - Further, patients referred to the government will receive a cash transfer to compensate them for the direct and indirect costs of undergoing treatment and as an incentive to complete treatment.

- "**Nikshay**," (2012) an online tuberculosis reporting system for medical practitioners and clinical establishments was set up. The aim is to increase the reporting of tuberculosis, especially from the private sector.

- In 1992, the WHO devised the **Directly Observed Treatment-Short Course (DOTS) strategy** and advised all countries to adopt the strategy to combat the menace of tuberculosis. The DOTS strategy is based on 5 pillars:

  - political commitment and continued funding for TB control programs

  - diagnosis by sputum smear examinations

  - uninterrupted supply of high-quality anti-TB drugs

  - drug intake under direct observation

  - accurate reporting and recording of all registered cases

- The Indian government has been implementing Programmatic Management of Drug Resistant TB (PMDT) services, for the management of multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) and TB-HIV collaborative activities for TB-HIV

Challenges to achieve TB free India by 2025:

- **Poor socio-economic conditions:**

- Poverty remains a stark reality in India with associated problems of hunger, undernourishment and poor and unhygienic living conditions.
- According to GTB Report, 2018, a majority of TB patients (6lakhs) in India are attributable to undernourishment.
- **Underreporting and misdiagnosis:**
  - According to GTB Report 2018, India is one of the major contributors to under-reporting and under-diagnosis of TB cases in the world, accounting for 26% of the 3.6 million global gap in the reporting of tuberculosis cases.
  - Biomarkers and other diagnostics that identify individuals at highest risk of progression to disease are inadequate.
- **Treatment:**
  - Inequitable access to quality diagnosis and treatment remains a major issue in combating tuberculosis. Further, the private sector which contributes a major part of TB care is fragmented, made up of diverse types of healthcare providers, and largely unregulated.
  - Standard TB treatment is not followed uniformly across the private sector, resulting in the rise of drug resistance.
- **Follow-up treatment:**
  - Though the reporting of TB cases has increased lately, the reporting of treatment outcomes has not been robust.
  - The absence of consistent follow-up of treatment regimens and outcomes may result in relapse of cases and MDR-TB and XDR-TB. India has already been facing the problem of increasing MDR-TB cases
- **Drugs:**
  - The drugs used to treat TB, especially multidrug-resistant-TB, are decades old. It is only recently that Bedaquiline and Delamanid (drugs to treat MDR-TB) has been made available. However, access to such drugs remains low.
- **Funds:**
  - The RNCTP remains inadequately funded. There has been a growing gap between the allocation of funds and the minimum investment required to reach the goals of the national strategic plan to address tuberculosis.
- **Issues with RNCTP:**
  - Weak implementation of RNCTP at state level is another major concern. The Joint Monitoring Mission report of 2015 pointed out that the RNCTP failed to achieve both the main goals of NSP 2012-2017- Providing universal access to early diagnosis and treatment and improving case detection.
  - Major issues with RNCTP include: human resource crunch, payment delays, procurement delays and drug stock-outs
- **R&D:**
  - R&D for new methods and technologies to detect the different modes of TB, new vaccines, and new drugs and shorter drug regimens have been slow, as compared to other such diseases like HIV/AIDS.
- **Social Stigma:**
  - According to a study which assessed social stigma associated with TB in Bangladesh, Colombia, India, India had the highest social stigma index.
  - Patients often hesitate to seek treatment or deny their condition altogether for fear of social discrimination and stigmatization.

Way forward:

▪ The first step towards ending TB is ensuring that people are empowered with the necessary information to identify and recognise TB symptoms, and seek diagnosis and treatment.

▪ The second step is ensuring that we provide every Indian with access to correct diagnosis and treatment for TB, regardless of their ability to pay for it.

▪ It is important to **address the social conditions and factors** which contribute to and increase vulnerability to tuberculosis. Concerted efforts should be made to address the issues of undernourishment, diabetes, alcohol and tobacco use.

▪ **Increased political will, financial resources and increasing research** to develop new ways to diagnose, treat and prevent TB will help achieve the goal.

▪ **Private sector engagement** in combating TB needs to be strengthened. The private sector should also be incentivised to report TB cases. Example: **The Kochi Model**– Increasing TB cases reporting from private sector

▪ There is an urgent need for **cost-effective point-of-care devices** that can be deployed for TB diagnosis in different settings across India.

▪ **Universal access to drug, susceptibility testing at diagnosis** to ensure that all patients are given appropriate treatment, including access to second-line treatment for drug-resistant TB.

▪ To ensure public participation — a missing element in the RNTCP —in public-private participation mode.

▪ **Mass awareness campaigns** like 'TB Harega Desh Jeetega' can play an important role in breaking social taboos regarding TB.

Conclusion:

India has the highest TB burden in the world. Given our inter-connected world and the airborne spread of TB, we need collective global action. Ending TB in India will have massive global impact in addition to saving the lives of tens of millions of India's people over the next 25 years. Even if ending TB by 2025 is not complete, pulling the TB curve down by 2025 and sustaining the decline ever after is a possibility.

India, facing the double burden of malnutrition, has taken several steps to address it and in spite of the progress made, there are still challenges facing India in the fight. Explain why and also suggest suitable steps that need to be assimilated in India's efforts.(250 words)

The Hindu
Why this question:
India facing the double burden of both under nutrition and over nutrition has taken several steps to address the same. The article discusses the need for more evidence-based policymaking.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss the double burden in detail and explain the challenges in detail as to why the progress on this front is slow. Also suggest solutions to the problem.
Directive:
Explain – Clarify the topic by giving a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts**.**
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:

Define Malnutrition in general. Malnutrition, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), refers to deficiencies, excesses, or imbalances in a person's intake of energy and/or nutrients.

Body:

The term malnutrition covers 2 broad groups of conditions. One is 'under nutrition'—which includes stunting (low height for age), wasting (low weight for height), underweight (low weight for age) and micronutrient deficiencies or insufficiencies (a lack of important vitamins and minerals). The other is overweight, obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases (such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer).

Discuss the issue of malnutrition in India.

Explain programmes and policies in this direction.

Conclusion:

Conclude by suggesting way forward.

Introduction:

Malnutrition refers to deficiencies, excesses or imbalances in a person's intake of energy and/or nutrients. India's National Family Health Surveys (NFHS) show that there has been a decline in child malnutrition numbers in the country. However, various studies show that the rate of decline is very slow, and India is still fighting a tough battle.

Body:

Initiatives taken by government:

▪ **ICDS:**

- High priority was accorded to reducing undernutrition in preschool children. The Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) was aimed at providing food supplements to children from poor and marginalised sections to bridge the gap between requirement and actual dietary intake.

- Another component of ICDS programme was weighing children for early detection of growth faltering and undernutrition.

▪ **Universal Salt Iodisation:**

- National Iodine Deficiency Control Programme (NIDDCP) was initiated in 1992 with the goal that all salt for human consumption will be iodised to ensure universal household access to iodised salt.

▪ There are a number of existing programmes targeting nutrition outcomes, directly or indirectly. These include the National Health Mission – **Janani Suraksha Yojana, the National Rural Drinking Water Programme, Matritva Sahyog Yojana, SABLA for adolescent girls, Mid-day Meal Scheme, Targeted Public Distribution System, National Food Security Mission, MGNREGA and the National Rural Livelihoods Mission** among others.

▪ **National Nutrition Mission:**

- NNM has introduced a central nodal agency with extensive financial resources to coordinate various central and state government schemes and imbue them with additional financial resources.

- The programme will cover all states and districts in a phased manner.

- The core strategy of the mission is to create decentralised governance systems with flexibility given to states, districts and local level with robust monitoring, accountability and incentive frameworks that will encourage local solutions.

- More than 10 crore people are likely to be benefitted by this programme.

- **POSHAN Abhiyaan -PM's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment** from Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan.

  - The programme through the use of technology, a targeted approach and convergence strives to reduce the level of stunting, undernutrition, anemia and low birthweight in children, as also, focus on adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers, thus holistically addressing malnutrition.

  - The programme aims to ensure service delivery and interventions by use of technology, behavioural change through convergence and lays-down specific targets to be achieved across different monitoring parameters over the next few years.

- **POSHAN Atlas:**

  - To map the crops and food grains grown in different regions of the country so that nutritious protein rich food in local areas can be promoted.

  - Indian Government has taken important steps, such as the release of fortification standards for five staples by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to fight micronutrient malnutrition, release of food composition tables by the National Institute of Nutrition to increase focus on dietary diversity, and now, the release of nutrition data to address the issue of malnutrition more holistically.

- **The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)-2 goal,** which aims to "end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture", is a priority area for India, which can offer key solutions for hunger and poverty eradication and also tackle the issue of malnutrition and undernourishment in the country.

Challenges still faced in fighting malnutrition:

- **Mother's health:**

  - Scientists say the initial 1,000 days of an individual's lifespan, from the day of conception till he or she turns two, is crucial for physical and cognitive development.

  - But more than half the women of childbearing age are anaemic and 33 per cent are undernourished, according to NFHS 2006. A malnourished mother is more likely to give birth to malnourished children.

- **Social inequality:**

  - For example, girl children are more likely to be malnourished than boys, and low-caste children than upper-caste children.

- **Sanitation:**

- Most children in rural areas and urban slums still lack sanitation. This makes them vulnerable to the kinds of chronic intestinal diseases that prevent bodies from making good use of nutrients in food, and they become malnourished.

- Lack of sanitation and clean drinking water are the reasons high levels of malnutrition persists in India despite improvement in food availability.

- **Lack of diversified food:**

  - With the increase in diversity in food intake malnutrition (stunted/underweight) status declines. Only 12% of children are likely to be stunted and underweight in areas where diversity in food intake is high, while around 50% children are stunted if they consume less than three food items.

- **Lack of food security:**

  - The dismal health of Indian women and children is primarily due to lack of food security.

  - Nearly one-third of adults in the country have a body mass index (BMI) below normal just because they do not have enough food to eat.

- **Failure of government approaches:**

  - India already has two robust national programmes addressing malnutrition the Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) and the National Health Mission but these do not yet reach enough people.

  - The delivery system is also inadequate and plagued by inefficiency and corruption. Some analysts estimate that 40 per cent of the subsidized food never reaches the intended recipients

- **Disease spread:**

  - Most child deaths in India occur from treatable diseases like pneumonia, diarrhoea, malaria and complications at birth.

  - The child may eventually die of a disease, but that disease becomes lethal because the child is malnourished and unable to put up resistance to it.

- **Poverty:**

  - The staff of ICDS places part of the blame of malnutrition on parents being inattentive to the needs of their children, but crushing poverty forces most women to leave their young children at home and work in the fields during the agricultural seasons.

  - Regional disparities in the availability of food and varying food habits lead to the differential status of under-nutrition which is substantially higher in rural than in urban areas.

  - This demands a region-specific action plan with significant investments in human resources with critical health investments at the local levels.

- **Lack of nutrition:**

  - Significant cause of malnutrition is also the deliberate failure of malnourished people to choose nutritious food.

- An international study found that the poor in developing countries had enough money to increase their food spending by as much as 30 per cent but that this money was spent on alcohol, tobacco and festivals instead.

Measures needed:

- Anganwadis system is the backbone of India's nutrition target effort and we really have to improve it.
- Primary health infrastructure is not strong so proper steps needs to be taken in this regard.
- Farmers should be encouraged and incentivized for agricultural diversification.
- Innovative and low-cost farming technologies, increase in the irrigation coverage and enhancing knowledge of farmers in areas such as appropriate use of land and water should be encouraged to improve the sustainability of food productivity.
- Public Health Management Cadre.
- The government should improve policy support for improving agricultural produce of traditional crops in the country.
- Improve ICDS
- The targeting efficiency of all food safety nets should be improved, especially that of the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), to ensure that the poorest are included.
- In addition, fortification of government-approved commodities within the social safety net programmes can improve nutritional outcomes.
- Child feeding practices should be improved in the country, especially at the critical ages when solid foods are introduced to the diet.
- Fortification, diversification and supplementation may be used as simultaneous strategies to address micro and macronutrient deficiencies.
- Storage capacity should be improved to prevent post-harvest losses.
- There is a need for more robust measures that can take cognizance of all aspects of SDG 2.
- All the major welfare programmes need to be gender sensitive.
- The inherited dehumanizing poverty explains the persistence of malnutrition on a large scale.
- Children born in impecunious circumstances suffer the most from malnutrition. It is all the more reason for governments to intervene to provide adequate nutrition to all.
- Taking medical services to the door step of villages
- Funds for food to all yield great returns and help in unlocking the full potential of citizens besides strengthening the workforce.
- Focus to improve the hygiene and cleanliness of our surrounding.
- Real time delivery of such schemes to the targeted beneficiaries.
- Schools kids and their parents should be made aware about the various government programmes.

As outrage continues over the deaths of Newborns in parts of states like Rajasthan and Gujarat, the fact remains that India has the most child deaths in the world. Explain what happened in these regions and why does India have such a high child death rate. (250 words)

Indian Express
Why this question:
Every day, India witnesses the death of an estimated 2,350 babies aged less than one year. Among them, an average 172 are from Rajasthan and 98 from Gujarat. As outrage continues over the deaths

of babies in J K Lon Hospital in Kota, Rajasthan, and in the civil hospital in Rajkot, Gujarat, the fact remains that India has the most child deaths in the world. Thus the question.

Key demand of the question:

Discuss in detail the causative factors responsible for such a scenario. Explain what needs to be done to arrest the problem while suggesting way forward.

Directive:

Explain – Clarify the topic by giving a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Quote facts that suggest the context of the question; India has an annual birth cohort of approximately 26 million. The infant mortality rate (IMR) in the country currently stands at 33 per 1,000 live births

Body:

First briefly provide a detailed spatial aspect of the IMR in the country across the states.

Then discuss the reasons responsible; Among the factors that have been proved detrimental to child survival are lack of education in the mother, malnutrition (more than half of Indian women are anemic), age of the mother at the time of birth, spacing, and whether the child is born at home or in a facility.

The rates are lowest among children born to mothers between the ages of 20-24, remain low up to 25-34, and increase again after that age.

According to the Health Ministry, the vaccination cover in India after several rounds of Intensified Mission Indradhanush (MI) and the original MI, now stands at 87%. This means over 33 lakh children continue to miss out on some or all vaccinations every year.

Discuss measures that are in place for sick newborns, explain the efforts of the government in this direction.

Conclusion:

Conclude by suggesting way forward.

Introduction:

India is one of the fastest economies in the world, its achievements in space technology surprised the world but when it is still one of the countries where new borns die everyday. In 2017, UNICEF estimated 8,02,000 babies had died in India.

Body:

Mortality rates in India:

- India has an annual birth cohort of approximately 26 million.
- The infant mortality rate (IMR) in the country currently stands at 33 per 1,000 live births.
- This means babies numbering in the region of 8,50,000 die every year in India, or an average daily toll to 2,350.
- Gujarat has an annual birth cohort of 1.2 million. In 2017, the infant mortality rate in the state was 30 per 1,000 live births. This means the state sees about 36,000 deaths a year, or an average 98 a day.
- In Rajasthan, an estimated 1.65 million births take place every year. The infant mortality rate is 38 per 1000 live births which implies an estimated 62,843 deaths annually, or an average 172 every day.

Factors for the high level of IMR:

- Among the factors that have been proved detrimental to child survival are lack of education in the mother.
- Malnutrition (more than half of Indian women are anaemic).
- Age of the mother at the time of birth, spacing
- **Shortage of properly trained health workers and midwives:**
- Also the large reproductive population of 2.6 crore remains bereft of care during the critical phases of pregnancy. Whether the child is born at home or in a facility.
- According to a UNICEF factsheet on child mortality in India, "… Children born to mothers with at least 8 years of schooling have 32% lesser chances of dying in neonatal period and 52% lesser chances in the post-neonatal period, as compared to the illiterate mothers."
- It also notes that infant and under-five mortality rates are highest among **mothers under age 20.** The rates are lowest among children born to mothers between the ages of 20-24, remain low up to 25-34, and increase again after that age.
- According to the National Family Health Survey-4, **only 78.9% births in India happen in a facility**.
- This means 21.1% or about 54 lakh births in a year still happen outside of a facility where **hygiene levels can be low**, sometimes without the help of a trained health worker.
- Apart from the **obvious infection risks** in a non-institutional birth, vaccine compliance too is usually worse in these cases.
- According to the Health Ministry, **the vaccination cover in India** after several rounds of Intensified Mission Indradhanush (MI) and the original MI, now stands at 87%. This means over 33 lakh children continue to miss out on some or all vaccinations every year.
- Babies born to the poorest families are 40 per cent more likely to die than those who are born to the least poor
- The absence of steps to propagate basic healthy practices relating to breast feeding and immunisation.
- Part of the reason is that in the last two decades, efforts to tackle the problem were not as well funded as HIV and AIDS prevention.

Measures:

- Paying attention to the **mother's health during pregnancy** and ensuring she delivers in a hospital attended by trained doctors or midwives. India has programmes such as the Janani Suraksha Yojana for this, but must expand its reach in laggard States like Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

- Each State will have to identify a specific goal to meet the target. These could be enhanced coverage of health and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene which can prevent pneumonia and diarrhoea.

- Inexpensive lifesaving treatments remain inaccessible to a vast majority of Indian children, and especially those in the poorest groups within the country. All these challenges can only be met by State intervention.

- It is also equally important to **forge interlinkages and package different interventions at various levels like linking child survival to reproductive health, family planning, and maternal health**

- In addition to focusing attention to addressing disparities within States and among regions, there is an urgent need to bring health and child services under universal health coverage with a focus on special requirements of vulnerable and marginalised groups.

- Universalisation of maternal health and child services, which includes special newborn care, skilled delivery, immunisation and management of diarrhoea, need to be effectively implemented if India is to achieve the high goals of reducing child deaths .

- To lower neonatal deaths, **India needs to strengthen mother and newborn health services,** including home-based care by health workers, promoting breastfeeding, treating underweight babies, keeping the mother healthy, preventing early marriage and reducing malnutrition in adolescent girls.

- More than 80 per cent of newborn deaths can be saved with:

    o   Provide clean water, disinfectants

    o   Breastfeeding within the first hour

    o   Good nutrition

- **Special newborn care units (SNCUs)** have been established at district hospitals and sub-district hospitals with an annual delivery load more than 3,000 to provide care for sick newborns: that is, all type of neonatal care except assisted ventilation and major surgeries.

- According to officials in the Health Ministry, approximately 1 million children are admitted to the 996 SNCUs in the country every year with an average death rate of 10%.

- In AIIMS, New Delhi, usually only those newborns are admitted who are born there and these usually come from high-risk pregnancies.

In the backdrop of the recently released Pratham's Annual Status of Education Report, Deliberate if India's learning crisis is linked to the weakness of the country's pre-primary education system? Present your opinion and explain the deficiencies in India's Education system and how children have fallen short on basic learning skills. (250 words)

The Hindu
Why this question:
NGO Pratham's Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) in the past has spoken about deficiencies in India's Education system and how children fall short on basic learning skills. In the latest edition of ASER, it directs attention to children between four and eight years of age, and suggests that India's learning crisis could be linked to the weakness of the country's pre-primary system. Thus the question.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail in what way if India's learning crisis is linked to the weakness of the country's pre-primary education system. Explain the deficiencies in India's Education system and how children have fallen short on basic learning skills.
Directive:
***Explain –** Clarify the topic by giving a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.*
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
In brief highlight the conditions of Indian education system in general.
Body:

Discuss the key statistics of the report – ASER.
According to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2019, 21% children in grade one of government schools could read words compared to 46.7% in private schools — an advantage of 122%.
Provide for reasons for such conditions, take hints from the article.
Discuss the crucial role played by Early childhood education, its lacunae in Indian education system. Suggest what needs to be done.
Conclusion:
Conclude with way forward.
Introduction:

NGO Pratham, a well-known Non-Profit Organization has released the Annual Status of Education Report 2019. The report shared several key insights and interesting observations about the state of education, especially school-level education in the country.

Body:

Findings of ASER Report 2019:

- According to a brief analysis, Pratham's ASER Report 2019 showcases parents' choice of school when it comes to education of their students.
- This is an annual survey that aims to provide reliable annual estimates of children's schooling status and basic learning levels for each state and rural district in India.
- ASER has been conducted every year since 2005 in almost all rural districts of India.
- ASER is the largest citizen-led survey in India. It is also the only annual source of information on children's learning outcomes available in India today.
- In 2019, ASER aims to shine the spotlight on the early years, reporting on the schooling status as well as on a range of important developmental indicators for young children in the age group 4 to 8 across 26 districts in the country.

The reasons for poor learning outcomes in the country are

- **Infrastructure deficit:**

  - Dilapidated structures, single-room schools, lack of drinking water facilities, separate toilets and other educational infrastructure is a grave problem.

- **Corruption and leakages**:

  - The transfer of funds from the central to state to local governments to school leads to involvement of many intermediaries.

  - The fund transfer is drastically reduced by the time it reaches the true beneficiaries.

  - High rates of corruption and leakages plague the system, undermine its legitimacy and harm the many thousands of honest headmasters and teachers.

- **Quality of Teachers:**

  - Lack of well trained, skilled and knowledgeable teachers which provide the foundation for a high quality education system.

  - Teacher shortages and poorly qualified teachers are both a cause and effect of poorly paid and managed teaching cadres.

- **Non-Academic burden:**

  - The teachers are overburdened with senseless reports and administrative workload. This eats into the time which is necessary for teaching.

  - A study by **the National Institute of Education Planning and Administration (NIEPA)** revealed that **teachers spend only around 19 percent of their time teaching** while the rest is spent mostly on non-teaching administrative work.

- **Poor salary:**

  - Teachers are paid miserly salaries which affect their interest and dedication to work. They will look for other avenues like tuitions or coaching centers and coax the students to attend it.

  - This has dual effect, **firstly the quality of teaching in schools drop and secondly, the poor students are forced to spend money despite constitutional provision of free education.**

- **Teacher Absenteeism**:

  - Absence of teachers during school hours is rampant. The lack of accountability and poor governance structures add to the woes.

- **Lack of Accountability:**

  - **School Management Committees** are largely dysfunctional. Many exist solely on paper.

  - Parents are often not aware of their rights and if they are it is difficult for them to make their voice heard.

- **High drop-out rates:**

  - The drop-out rates in schools, especially girls, is very high.

  - Many factors like poverty, patriarchal mindset, lack of toilets in schools, distance to schools and cultural elements lead to children dropping out from education.

- **School closure:**

  - Many schools are closed to low student strength, lack of teachers and infrastructure. The competition posed by private schools is also a major challenge to government schools.

The situation of learning outcomes can be improved as follows

- **Teachers must only teach:**

- Employ young people, equip them with a tablet computer and let them be cluster administrators. One cluster of schools consists of around ten schools.

- The **cluster administrators** will overtake the administrative tasks and ensure that teachers and headmasters can focus on academic work.

- Better policies like transparent transfer mechanisms, which urgently need upscaling and strengthening. After adequate teacher positioning, school autonomy and teacher collaborations have demonstrated in many pilots to be the catalyst that transforms the education system.

- **Teacher's own collectives or networks built collaborations and institutional capacities** of teachers.

- **Digitization:**

- **Create a single-window system for infrastructure and mainstream fund-flows:** In Bihar, only around 10 percent of the schools fulfils infrastructure norms. A study revealed that files for renovating schools often go on a two-year journey through various departments.

- The same can be applied for teacher salaries and school funds. These can be transferred directly from the State to the teachers and schools. There is no need to involve the District or Block in this process.

- Leveraging the **audio-visual edutainment** to make education more interesting and easier to understand for the children. This will **improve the quality as well as reduce the drop-out rates.**

- Implementing **bio-metric attendance for teachers and students for every class** can help reduce absenteeism.

- **Empower School Management Committees by using mobile phones:**

  o To develop a system that **facilitates School Management Committee** members by fostering democratic accountability.

  o Social audits should also be carried out for effective functioning.

- The Government must insist on **fixing teachers' accountability** in public schools and learning outcome-based recognition for all schools, be it public or private schools.

- **Better pre-service teacher training coupled with transparent and merit-based recruitments** is a lasting solution for teacher quality.

- Improve the **quality of teacher education** by **making teacher training mandatory**.
  Example: **National Council for Teacher Education Act amendment bill, Diksha portal** to train teachers.

- **Increase the public spending on education to 6% of GDP** as recommended by many committees like the recent **TSR Subramaniam committee.**

- Teachers are rarely reprimanded for non-performance, while there are recommendations for removal of non-detention policy. The blame is squarely on the children, such an attitude must be wiped out.

- Teachers' efficiency will improve with **administrative incentives, better pay and a systematic change in the professional development** of this cohort.

- Education policy in India is focused on inputs rather than learning outcomes; It has a strong elitist bias in favour of higher education as opposed to primary or secondary education. This needs a change by coming out with a new policy.

Conclusion:

The latest ASER 2019 holds a mirror to a country that is aspiring to be a knowledge power. There is an urgent need to tackle some of the teething problems affecting the education in India. **Innovative digital interventions to improving the teacher and education quality along with proper governance structure** can help achieve the true objectives of the Right to Education as a fundamental right of every child.

Along with immunization, a comprehensive approach has to be designed for dengue cases for efficient and effective vector control management. Comment.(250 words)

The Hindu
Why this question:
The article discusses in detail the need for having a holistic approach to control and manage the vector borne diseases such as Dengue.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the urgency to adapt to a holistic approach to control and manage the vector borne diseases.
Directive:
***Comment**– here we have to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and form an overall opinion thereupon.*
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Discuss first what vector borne diseases are and why are they so prevalent in the country.
Body:
Discuss with some key facts to highlight the urgency to change the current policy of handling the diseases.
First discuss why immunization alone can't suffice the requirement to eradicate the disease burden and onset.
Explain what should be a comprehensive strategy? Discuss from the article steps that need to be taken to prevent and better manage the cases of vector borne diseases such as Dengue.
Briefly present the case of Dengue in the country and justify.
Conclusion:
Conclude with way forward.
Introduction

Vector-borne diseases are human illnesses caused by parasites, viruses and bacteria that are transmitted by vectors. Dengue is a vector-borne disease because the transmission of dengue requires mosquitoes (Aedes Egypti) as vectors(carriers). Currently there is no concrete and effective vaccine (except Dengvaxia in US) against dengue and no specific treatment for the disease, controlling and preventing dengue fever outbreaks are essential steps for keeping the majority populace healthy.

Body

Urgency to fight against vectore-borne diseases

- According to WHO vector-borne diseases account for more than 17% of all infectious diseases, causing more than 700 000 deaths annually. They can be caused by either parasites, bacteria or viruses.

- The burden of these diseases is highest in tropical and subtropical areas, and they disproportionately affect the poorest populations.

- Since 2014, major outbreaks of dengue, malaria, chikungunya, yellow fever and Zika have afflicted populations, claimed lives, and overwhelmed health systems in many countries.

- Other diseases such as Chikungunya, leishmaniasis and lymphatic filariasis cause chronic suffering, life-long morbidity, disability and occasional stigmatisation.

Immunization alone is not sufficient

The primary preventative measure to reduce dengue infections or any other vector-borne disease is the control of mosquito (or other vector) populations. WHO promotes the strategic approach known as **Integrated Vector Management (IVM)** to control mosquito vectors, including those of dengue.

India has reported 6,210 cases and six deaths from **dengue** until June 9, 2019.

Effective Vector Management

Aedes aegypti uses a wide range of confined larval habitats, both man-made and natural. Some man-made container habitats produce large numbers of adult mosquitoes. Consequently, control efforts should target the habitats that are most productive and hence epidemiologically more important rather than all types of container, especially when there are major resource constraints.

Environmental Management

- **Solid waste management:** In the context of dengue vector control, "solid waste" refers mainly to non-biodegradable items of household, community and industrial waste.

- **Street cleansing:** A reliable and regular street cleansing system that removes discarded water-bearing containers and cleans drains to ensure they do not become stagnant and breed mosquitoes will both help to reduce larval habitats of *Ae. aegypti* and remove the origin of other urban pests.

- **Building structures:** During the planning and construction of buildings and other infrastructure, and through legislation and regulation, opportunities arise to modify or reduce potential larval habitats of urban disease vectors, including *Ae. aegypti*, *Culex quinquefasciatus* and *An. stephensi*.

Chemical Management

- **Larvicide**: Larviciding should be considered as complementary to environmental management and – except in emergencies – should be restricted to containers that cannot otherwise be eliminated or managed.

- **Adulticide**: Methods of chemical control that target adult vectors are intended to impact on mosquito densities, longevity and other transmission parameters. Adulticides are applied either as residual surface treatments or as space treatments.

- **Space spraying** is recommended for control only in emergency situations to suppress an ongoing epidemic or to prevent an incipient one. The objective of space spraying is the massive, rapid destruction of the adult vector population.

- **Indoor residual spraying** (**IRS**) is the application of long-acting chemical insecticides on the walls and roofs of all houses and domestic animal shelters in a given area, in order to kill the adult vector mosquitoes that land and rest on these surfaces

Bio-control

Against Aedes, a selection of larvivore fish species and predatory copepods (small freshwater crustaceans) are effective against the immature larval stages of vector mosquitoes.

Wolbachia: Wolbachia are extremely common bacteria that occur naturally in 60 per cent of insect species. This method stops the virus from replicating inside the mosquitoes. This is called as **population replacement strategy.**

Conclusion

The "Global Vector Control Response (GVCR) 2017–2030" was approved by the World Health Assembly in 2017 for urgent strengthening of vector control as a fundamental approach to preventing disease and responding to outbreaks. To achieve this a re-alignment of vector control programmes is required, supported by increased technical capacity, improved infrastructure, strengthened monitoring and surveillance systems, and greater community mobilization. Ultimately, this will support implementation of a comprehensive approach to vector control that will enable the achievement of disease-specific national and global goals and contribute to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and Universal Health Coverage.

The Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) of India has witnessed major breakthrough in the recent times, Elaborate on the progress made so far and discuss the way ahead.(250 words)

Indian Express
Why this question:
The government's comprehensive Multi-Year Plan for 2018-22 details a comprehensive financial plan to fully immunize 26 million children and 30 million pregnant women with life-saving vaccines. Thus the question.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the progress made on the immunization front by the country and in what way it has taken a major leap forward.
Directive:
Elaborate – Give a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.
Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Start with what UIP is.
Body:
Comment on the aspects that prove – Universal Immunization Program has contributed a lot in preventing so many diseases and deaths related to them India.
Explain that it is one of the largest in the world in terms of the number of beneficiaries, quantities of vaccine used, the geographical spread, the number of Immunization session organized, and diversity of areas covered.
Discuss what the vaccines under it are.
Explain the impact of it – how it can collectively prevent at least one lakh deaths of adults in the working age group, one lakh infant deaths, and up to 10 lakh cases of hospitalization each year.

Till now, Immunization has immensely helped bring down the annual mortality of children under five, from 3.3 million a generation ago, to 1.3 million deaths in present which is 17,000 deaths each day. Suggest way forward.

Conclusion:

Conclude that the improvements in immunization coverage and the introduction of a rotavirus vaccine will significantly alleviate disease and financial burden in Indian households. Population and regions with low existing immunization coverage benefit the most from the universal immunization program.

Introduction:

Mission Indradhanush was launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India on December 25, 2014. Between 2009-2013 immunization coverage has increased from 61% to 65%, indicating only 1% increase in coverage every year. To accelerate the process of immunization by covering 5% and more children every year, Indradhanush mission has been adopted to achieve target of full coverage by 2020. The government's comprehensive Multi-Year Plan for 2018-22 details a comprehensive financial plan to fully immunise 26 million children and 30 million pregnant women with life-saving vaccines.

Body:

Progress of the scheme so far:

- India's Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) is working both to increase immunization coverage and to introduce new vaccines.
- In the early 90s, India saw over two lakh cases of polio annually, but, after the polio eradication programme was launched in 1994, India attained polio-free status over the course of the next two decade due to concentrated efforts and collaboration of the Government, international partners, civil society, health workers and millions of volunteers.
- The best practices and the systems established by the Pulse Polio programme have benefitted other health programs, viz. the community mobilization, logistics management, reaching the last mile or setting up a surveillance system.
- Since 2014, five new vaccines, including against two of the leading causes of deaths in children under five in India — pneumonia and diarrhoea – were introduced under the UIP, one of the largest such programmes in the world.
- Rotavirus vaccine (RVV), which protects against a severe form of diarrhoea, was scaled up in all states last year.
- According to internal data collected by the Health Ministry, as of September 2019, almost 1.3 million children has received all three doses of PCV across 159 districts in the six states, with approximately 8.1 million children targeted for 2019-20.

Challenges:

- In 2010, 0.56 million severe pneumococcal pneumonia episodes and 105 thousand pneumococcal pneumonia deaths had occurred in children younger than 5 years of age in India.
- The annual incidence of severe pneumococcal pneumonia in India was estimated to be 4.8 episodes per 1,000 children younger than 5 years.
- Pneomococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV), the costliest vaccine in the UIP basket, currently covers only about 50 per cent of the 26 million birth cohort in Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan.

- At present, the vaccine being used in the UIP costs approximately $2.95/dose, which makes PCV costlier than other UIP vaccines such as rotavirus vaccine ($1/dose), pentavalent vaccine ($0.69/dose), and measles vaccine ($0.308-$0.318/dose).

Conclusion:

Improving immunization coverage and the introduction of a newer vaccines significantly alleviates disease and financial burden in Indian households. Population subgroups or regions with low existing immunization coverage benefit the most from the intervention. Increasing coverage by targeting those subgroups alleviates the burden more than simply increasing coverage in the population at large.

For a sustainable Universal healthcare model, maintaining a balanced trade-off between cost, quality and access to healthcare services is critical, Discuss in the context of India's Ayushman Bharat and suggest the key takeaways that India can borrow from the famous Brazilian model of UHC. (250 words)

The Hindu
Why this question:
The article discusses the lessons to be learnt for India from Brazils' universal healthcare plan.
Key demand of the question:
The question seeks to ascertain the need for a balanced model for the concept of Universal health Care and what India can borrow from the famous Brazilian model.
Directive:
Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Briefly discuss the need for UHC and its significance to the overall development of the country, and then explain the relevance of Brazilian model.
Body:
Explain that India's Ayushman Bharat can benefit by borrowing best practices from Brazil Universal Health coverage plan. Such as- public expenditure, community healthcare plan.
Discuss India's Ayushman Bharat; highlight what India can borrow from the Brazil model.
Explain the importance of maintaining a balanced trade-off between cost, quality and access to healthcare services.
Conclusion:
Conclude that a collaborative approach aligning patients, payers and providers, along with innovative partnerships, will hasten efforts to mitigate risks, drive impact, forge stronger social returns and achieve sustainable UHC targets.

Introduction:

India moved a step closer towards its commitment to the SDGs, when in 2018 the country launched a national health protection scheme, Ayushman Bharat, to achieve UHC. However, achieving UHC is a very complex task, especially for developing countries. India, for instance, faces many challenges in this pursuit.

Body:

Challenges in the Healthcare Value Chain of India:

- Poor healthcare infrastructure: A crucial component of Ayushman Bharat is the strategic purchasing of secondary and tertiary healthcare services from the private sector.
- While private healthcare caters to around 70% of India's population there are 0.65 doctors, 1.3 nurses and 1.3 hospital beds per 1,000 people in the country.
- Low Healthcare spending: Public health expenditure is still very low in India, at around 1.3% of GDP in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.
- Acute shortage of skilled personnel: Global estimates reveal that only half of all countries have the requisite health workforce required to deliver quality healthcare services.
- Furthermore, the twin burdens of communicable and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are projected to generate additional demand for 40 million health workers globally by 2030.
- Worse still, even if we meet the WHO's benchmark of one doctor for every 1,000 people in the next six years, there is a large imbalance among individual states.
- Another major challenge is that a one-size-fits-all approach is not feasible for heterogeneous regional realities in India.

Unified Health System (SUS) of Brazil:

- The Brazilian society decided to achieve universal coverage by establishing a government-funded system.
- The Unified Health System (SUS), which guaranteed free health coverage that included pharmaceutical services, was written into the new Constitution in 1988.
- In the last 30 years, Brazilians have experienced a drastic increase in health coverage as well as outcomes: life expectancy has increased from 64 years to almost 76 years, while Infant Mortality Rate has declined from 53 to 14 per 1,000 live births.
- In terms of service provision, polio vaccination has reached 98% of the population.
- National Health Identification Card: It allows a patient's health record to be accessed via a central database from any public or private hospital within the Unified Health System network.
- Family Health Programme: Community-based healthcare network who perform monthly visits to every family enrolled in the programme. They conduct health promotion and prevention activities and effectively manage the relationship between citizens and the healthcare system
- A 2015 report said that 95% of those that seek care in the SUS are able to receive treatment.
- Every year, the SUS covers more than two million births, 10 million hospital admissions, and nearly one billion ambulatory procedures.
- This has been made possible even amidst a scenario of tightening budget allocation.

Lessons for Ayushman Bharat from UHS of Brazil:

In the last 30 years, Brazilians have experienced a drastic increase in health coverage as well as outcomes:

- It guarantees free health coverage that includes pharmaceutical services
- Life expectancy has increased from 64 years to almost 76 years.
- Infant Mortality Rate has declined from 53 to 14 per 1,000 live births.
- A 2015 report said that 95% of those that seek care in the SUS are able to receive treatment.
- Every year, the SUS covers more than two million births, 10 million hospital admissions, and nearly one billion ambulatory procedures.
- UHS strategy is based on an extensive work of community health agents who perform monthly visits to every family enrolled in the programme.

- UHS strategy is based on an extensive work of community health agents who perform monthly visits to every family enrolled in the programme.
- These agents carry out a variety of tasks. For example, they conduct health promotion and prevention activities, oversee whether family members are complying with any treatment they might be receiving, and effectively manage the relationship between citizens and the healthcare system.
- UHS has expanded from 4% of coverage in 2000 to up to 64% of the overall population in 2015; **it was able to reach even the rural areas and the poorest states of the country.**

Way forward:

- For UHC to become a reality, it is important to expedite steps beyond infrastructural interventions to include water, sanitation, nutrition and a healthy lifestyle. The challenge is to incentivize wellness-seeking behaviour.
- An encouraging aspect of India's commitment to UHC has been the active and participatory role of the government.
- From Poshan Abhiyaan, which aims to eliminate the malaise of malnutrition, to the Prime Minister's call for a Fit India Movement, new emphasis has been given to multi-stakeholder engagements.
- India has to align the vision of medical education with the vision of "one nation, one healthcare sector".
- The National Medical Commission (NMC) 2019 Bill recognizes the much-needed reforms in medical education.
- The challenge of building capacity of people in a short time needs to be addressed through more transformational public-private partnerships (PPPs), presenting another opportunity to develop and adopt e-learning models.
- Digital health has emerged as a game-changer in achieving UHC goals. India has taken rapid strides here and digital health is bringing healthcare within reach of 70% of our population residing in rural and remote areas.
- With the use of digital technology, India is positioned to not only bridge gaps in our healthcare delivery but also to have the capability to contribute to global UHC goals through its telemedicine and digital health tools.
- India's healthcare providers are already working on new frontiers of digital technologies.
- Machine learning, blockchain and AI will continue to strengthen India's ability to engage effectively with other geographies towards achieving global UHC targets.
- Regional disparities in terms of resources and institutional capabilities must be addressed. This diversity, nevertheless, can be a powerful source of policy innovation and creativity.
- A collaborative approach aligning patients, payers and providers, along with innovative partnerships, will hasten efforts to mitigate risks, drive impact, forge stronger social returns and achieve sustainable UHC targets.

Discuss the interrelationship between an outbreak of a disease and economy of a country while analyzing the case of recent outbreak of Corona virus. (250 words)

Reference: Indian Express
Why this question:
The outbreak of a new virus in China has sent shivers through world financial markets, with investors drawing comparisons to the 2003 SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) outbreak in order to assess its potential economic impact. Thus the question.

Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the impact of an outbreak of a disease upon the economy of the sufferer country in general and more specifically explain how it can lead to a sudden slump in the economy.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Start by mentioning the recent outbreak of Corona virus in China.

Body:

Start with fact – A 2017 paper by economists Victoria Fan, Dean Jamison and Lawrence Summers estimated that the expected annual losses from pandemic risk to be about $500 billion — or 0.6% of global income — per year, accounting for both lost income and the intrinsic cost of elevated mortality.

A paper by Jong-Wha Lee and Warwick McKibbin estimates the global economic loss due at SARS at $40 billion in 2003.

However, price action in markets indicates that the impacts of such outbreaks are limited.

After Chinese authorities reported the outbreak of SARS to the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2003, the MSCI China index of shares decoupled from its global peers – but made up the lost ground in only six months.

Explain that there are both winners and losers.

Despite the disruption to the wider economy, virus outbreaks have tended to benefit pharmaceutical stocks, while tourism and travel-related stocks — hotels, airlines and luxury and consumer goods — tend to get punished.

Discuss the case of China and corona Virus outbreak.

Conclusion:

Conclude with what should be the way forward.

Introduction:

The outbreak of a new virus in China has sent shivers through world financial markets, with investors drawing comparisons to the 2003 SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) outbreak in order to assess its potential economic impact. An IMF paper by David Bloom, Daniel Cadarette, and JP Sevilla notes that even when the health impact of an outbreak is relatively limited, economic consequences can be quickly magnified.

Body:

Interrelationship between an outbreak of a disease and economy of a country

- A 2017 paper by economists Victoria Fan, Dean Jamison and Lawrence Summers estimated that the expected annual losses from pandemic risk to be about $500 billion — or 0.6% of global income — per year, accounting for both lost income and the intrinsic cost of elevated mortality.
- Another 2016 study by the Commission on a Global Health Risk Framework for the Future estimated that pandemic disease events would cost the global economy over $6 trillion in the 21st century — over $60 billion per year.
- A paper by Jong-Wha Lee and Warwick McKibbin estimates the global economic loss due at SARS at $40 billion in 2003.
- A May 2006 economic briefing by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) estimated that world gross domestic product suffered a 0.1% hit due to the outbreak.

Positive impacts:

- Despite the disruption to the wider economy, virus outbreaks have tended to benefit pharmaceutical stocks.
- Chinese drugmakers Jiangsu Bioperfectus Technologies Co Ltd, Shandong Lukang Pharmaceutical Co Ltd, and Jiangsu Hengrui Medicine Co Ltd were among those outperforming the wider market.
- Facemask manufacturers Tianjin Teda Co Ltd and Shanghai Dragon Corp also outperformed.

Negative impacts:

- Sectors like tourism and travel-related stocks — hotels, airlines and luxury and consumer goods — tend to get punished.
- During the SARS outbreak, retail sales figures in China showed a marked drop-off as consumer spending took a hit.
- Shares of long-haul flight operators Air France, Lufthansa and British Airways-owner IAG retreated, as news of the contagion raised concerns over disruptions to travel during a coming Chinese holiday.
- China-exposed luxury goods makers including LVMH, Kering, Hermes and Burberry also fell.
- People didn't take public transport, stayed away from work, stayed away from shops, restaurants, cinemas, conferences etc.
- The impact from the disease was massive on the economy, but almost all of it indirect, due to the precautionary behaviour of the population.

Impact on Indian Economy:

- The viral outbreak comes at a difficult time for the Indian economy and could make the slowdown worse. Coronavirus could further slow down the already struggling economy.
- While S&P has estimated the crisis would slow China's GDP growth this year to 5%, no formal estimates of the impact on India are available.
- A supply shortage of components that go into the manufacturing of a wide range of goods will likely be the first manifestation of the disruption.
- This could translate into shortages of finished products, higher prices, assembly lines shutting down, end of online discounts and job losses.

Way forward:

- India and the other countries should be prepared to face the effects both in terms of the spread of the virus and in dealing with the economic slowdown which can occur.
- The public should not panic and the spread of misinformation should be regulated.
- The affected countries could try to look for alternate options while taking this opportunity to strengthen their domestic markets.
- Try to help the people in China by not making the situation harder for them than it already is.

Conclusion:

Further, in the long-term perspective, a well-researched pandemic/epidemic management strategy delineating the roles of different authorities and action points at various stages need to be formulated.

What do multiple outbreaks of Polio in the vicinity mean for India? Should India worry? Discuss the achievements made by Polio immunization programme so far and what should be the way forward.(250 words)

Reference: Indian Express
Why this question:
The article highlights the Polio comeback in a number of countries and the repercussions it can possibly have on India.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the achievements made by Polio immunization programme so far, explain how onset of Polio in neighborhood can be worrisome to India and what should India do to overcome it.
Directive:
Discuss *– This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.*
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Describe the current situation of onset of Polio in several countries.

Body:
Explain that in the last one year or so, polio has made a comeback in countries such as the Philippines, Malaysia, Ghana, Myanmar, China, Cameroon, Indonesia and Iran, mostly as vaccine-derived polio infection and that all these countries had wiped the virus out at various times during the last couple of decades; some, such as Iran and Malaysia, had done so even earlier.
Explain – should India worry?
Discuss the achievements made by the Polio immunization programme of the country.
Explain where does India stand?
What precautions should India take and the lessons it should learn to overcome the possible threat of onset.
Conclusion:
Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

In the last one year or so, polio has made a comeback in countries such as the Philippines, Malaysia, Ghana, Myanmar, China, Cameroon, Indonesia and Iran, mostly as vaccine-derived polio infection. All these countries had wiped the virus out at various times during the last couple of decades; some, such as Iran and Malaysia, had done so even earlier.

Body:

Polio (also called poliomyelitis) is a contagious, historically devastating disease that was virtually eliminated from the Western hemisphere in the second half of the 20th century. Although polio has been around since ancient times, its most extensive outbreak occurred in the first half of the 1900s until the polio vaccine was introduced in 1955.

It is a highly infectious viral disease, which mainly affects young children. The virus is transmitted by person-to-person spread mainly through the faecal-oral route or, less frequently, by a common vehicle (e.g. contaminated water or food) and multiplies in the intestine, from where it can invade the nervous system and can cause paralysis.

Current situation of onset of Polio in several countries:

- On December 8, 2019, the Ministry of Health in Malaysia announced the country's first case of polio since 1992.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) announced that tests have confirmed that the virus is genetically linked to poliovirus circulating in the Philippines
- On September 19 last year, the Philippines had declared an outbreak of polio. Two cases have been reported to date, both caused by vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2.
- The first case was confirmed on September 14 following testing by the National Polio Laboratory at the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine, the Japan National Institute of Infectious Diseases (NIID) and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- Last month, the CDC published a list of Asian countries where polio outbreaks have been reported. These are Afghanistan, Burma (Myanmar), China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines. Except for Afghanistan and Pakistan, all these countries are new entrants into the list.
- The CDC recommends that "all travelers to these countries be vaccinated fully against polio. Before traveling to these countries, adults who completed their routine polio vaccine series as children should receive a single, lifetime adult booster dose of polio vaccine".

What do multiple outbreaks in the vicinity mean for India?

- It calls for heightened vigilance, in short. Officials in the Ministry of Health are clear that there is no reason for undue panic because, thanks to shared borders with a polio-endemic country (Pakistan), India's preparedness for preventing a polio influx is already very high.

- There is no reason for any knee-jerk response because our polio surveillance mechanism is always on high alert and at airports we already look out for polio entry from seven-eight countries at all times.

- Some years ago, India introduced the injectable polio vaccine in the Universal Immunization Programme. This was to reduce chances of vaccine-derived polio infection, which continues to happen in the country.

- If both wild and vaccine-derived polio infection are reduced to zero, it would mean there is no trace left of the virus anywhere in the world, except in controlled situations in laboratories for future contingencies.

Steps taken by the Government to maintain polio free status in India:

- Maintaining community immunity through high *quality National and Sub National polio rounds each year.*

- An extremely high level of vigilance through surveillance across the country for any importation or circulation of poliovirus and VDPV is being maintained. Environmental surveillance (sewage sampling) have been established to detect poliovirus transmission and as a surrogate indicator of the progress as well for any programmatic interventions strategically in Mumbai, Delhi, Patna, Kolkata Punjab and Gujarat.

- All States and Union Territories in the country have developed a *Rapid Response Team (RRT)* to respond to any polio outbreak in the country. An *Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP)* has also been developed by all States indicating steps to be undertaken in case of detection of a polio case.

- To reduce risk of importation from neighbouring countries, international border vaccination is being provided through **continuous vaccination teams (CVT)** to all eligible children round the clock. These are provided through special booths set up at the international borders that India shares with Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan Nepal and Myanmar.

- Government of India has issued guidelines for mandatory requirement of polio vaccination to all international travelers before their departure from India to polio affected countries namely: Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Syria and Cameroon. The mandatory requirement is effective for travelers from 1st March 2014.

- A rolling emergency stock of OPV is being maintained **to respond to detection/importation of wild poliovirus (WPV**) or emergence of circulating vaccine derived poliovirus (cVDPV).

- **National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI)** has recommended Injectable Polio Vaccine (IPV) introduction as an additional dose along with 3rd dose of DPT in the entire country in the last quarter of 2015 as a part of polio endgame strategy.

Conclusion:

India must continue its efforts to guard against polio. One potential way for polio to return is through migrant populations. For the past few years, the polio vaccination campaign has targeted train stations where people travel from polio-infected areas. Today, India also enforced travel restrictions to polio-affected countries and requires travelers to carry proof of polio vaccination. Continued surveillance of polio outbreaks is also a critical to maintain polio-free status.

Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures.

Good Governance Index (GGI) is a welcome exercise to incentivize States to competitively deliver on public services to the citizens. Elucidate.(250 words)

The Hindu

Why this question:
The article discusses in what way marking States on different parameters can incentivize performance.

Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the importance of Good Governance Index (GGI) and in what way it aids the different states to competitively deliver on public services.

Directive:
Elucidate – Give a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.

Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Discuss first the importance of Governance in general.

Body:
First explain what is Good Governance Index (GGI)? – It is a tool to assess the status of governance and the impact of various interventions taken up by the State Government and UTs.
Discuss the objectives of GGI.
Highlight the key findings of the GGI report.
Explain how it can help building a competitive spirit amongst different states of the country and aid in overall growth and development.

Conclusion:
Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

The Good Governance index is a uniform tool to assess the status of governance and the impact of various interventions by state governments and Union Territories. 'Good Governance Index' (GGI) has been launched by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, on the occasion of Good Governance Day.

Body:

The objectives of GGI are:

- To provide quantifiable data to compare the state of governance in all states and UTs.
- To enable states and UTs to formulate and implement suitable strategies for improving governance.
- To shift to result-oriented approaches and administration.
- Various principles have been kept in mind while selecting the indicators, i.e. it should be easy to understand & calculate, citizen-centric & result-driven, leading to improved results and applicable to all states and UTs.

Key findings of the GGI:

- Tamil Nadu has always had the reputation of being a better-run State, it is only now that it is ranked first in any study of this kind.
- Its strength has been the ability to ensure stable and smooth delivery of services without much ado.
- But it is not the only southern State to have put up an impressive performance.
- Three of its neighbours are among the top 10 of the big 18 States, one of the three groups formed for the study with the north-east and hill States and Union Territories being the other two.
- Of course, traditionally, the south has been ahead of others in several parameters of development.
- What is more significant about the GGI is that the dubiously-labelled "BIMARU" States are seeking to catch up with others in development.
- Of the nine sectors, Rajasthan, a "BIMARU" State, has finished within the top 10 in five sectors, Madhya Pradesh in four and Uttar Pradesh in three.
- In agriculture and allied sectors, almost all the "BIMARU" States are within the top 10 category and in human resources development, U.P. and Bihar figure. In the composite ranking, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh are ranked fourth and ninth, respectively.
- The key message is that these northern States can catch up with others in due course of time, if the political leadership shows the will to overcome historical obstacles and stays focused on development.

Importance of GGI:

- The nation-wide comparative study of States on governance carried out by the Government of India helps build a competitive spirit amongst different states of the country and aid in overall growth and development.
- GGI can be an effective and efficient process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented) keeping the amelioration of citizens as the topmost priority.
- Resource allocation, creation of formal establishments, setting up rules and regulations etc., are part of achieving this goal.
- Good Governance Day is celebrated to enhance the welfare and betterment of the people.
- It is celebrated to standardize the government's functioning and to make it highly effective and accountable governance for the citizens of the country.
- It makes people aware of the government's commitment to providing a transparent and accountable administration in the country.
- GGI helps to implement policies effectively to achieve good governance in India.
- GGI enhances the growth and development in the country through good governance.
- GGI brings citizens closer to the government to make them active participants in the good governance process.

Conclusion:

Good Governance Index (GGI), is a welcome exercise to incentivize States to competitively deliver on public services to the citizens. There will always be an unending debate over which indicators, process-based or outcome-based should get more importance in the design of such a study. However, it is noteworthy that the Centre has made an attempt to address the problem of the

absence of a credible and uniform index for an objective evaluation of the States and Union Territories.

In the recent hearing of Tripura high court that ruled – posting on social media was tantamount to a "fundamental right" applicable to all citizens, including government employees provides a moment of opportunities and obstacles to the government servants, Do you agree? Critically examine the statement.(250 words)

The Hindu
Why this question:
In a landmark order, the High Court of Tripura ordered the police to refrain from prosecuting a man who was earlier arrested over a social media post. The Chief Justice in his order broadly remarked that posting on social media was tantamount to a "fundamental right" applicable to all citizens, including government employees.
Key demand of the question:
One must provide for a detailed analysis of the judgment that was passed recently in this regard.
Directive:
Critically examine *– When asked to 'Examine', we have to look into the topic (content words) in detail, inspect it, investigate it and establish the key facts and issues related to the topic in question. While doing so we should explain why these facts and issues are important and their implications. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgment.*
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Briefly highlight the observations made in the order.
Body:
Discuss the aspects such followed:
Explain first the importance of fundamental rights to citizens, public servants etc.
Elaborate as to why it is important to civil servants?
Discuss the significance of fundamental rights with respect to the case of social media.
Conclusion:
Conclude with way forward.

Introduction

The Chief Justice of Tripura, in his recent order broadly remarked that posting on social media was tantamount to a "fundamental right" applicable to all citizens, including government employees.

The advent of social media is transforming the way in which people connect with each other and the manner in which information is shared and distributed. Thus it is imperative to ensure freedom of speech and expression is upheld even on these platforms. At the same time, when it comes to civil servants, the conduct rules need a relook aligning to current age of digital world.

Body

Social Media and Rights of Citizens

Recently even **Supreme Court** made a few critical observations regarding use of the internet and free of speech which essentially occurs over social media.

- Freedom of speech and expression through the medium of internet is a fundamental right under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. The restrictions on internet have to follow the principles of proportionality under Article 19(2).

- Doctrine of proportionality is a principle that is prominently used as a ground for judicial review in cases of administrative action.

- The doctrine essentially signifies that the punishment should not be disproportionate to the offence committed or the nature and extent of the State's interference with the exercise of a right must be proportionate to the goal it seeks to achieve.

  - **In the Tripura case**, police erased Sections 120(B) and 153(A) (Hate speech)of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) from the relevant First Information Report (FIR) to quash the case after the High Court Order.

Civil Servants' rights and social media

Arguments in favour

- Social media has the potential to aid public servants in their work – not only for promotional activities, but also as a "grievance redressal" mechanism.

  - Eg: For instance, Former Minister of External Affairs Sushma Swaraj was well known for aiding Indians abroad and home through twitter. The same can be emulated by civil servants.

- **Outreach**: Given its characteristics to potentially give "voice to all", immediate outreach and 24*7 engagement, Social Media offers a unique opportunity to governments (civil servants) to engage with their stakeholders especially citizens in real time to make policy making citizen centric.

  - Eg: **Mumbai Traffic Police** using memes to generate awareness regarding rules for road safety.

- **Real Time engagement**: Social Media releases the shackles of time and place for engagement. They can connect policy makers to stakeholders in real time. In recent Libyan crisis, Ministry of External Affairs used social media platforms such as Twitter to assist in locating and evacuating Indian Citizens from Libya.

- **Managing Perceptions**: One of the big challenges for government is to avoid propagation of unverified facts and frivolous misleading rumours with respect to government policies. Leveraging these platforms can help to counter such perceptions and present the facts to enable informed opinion making. Eg: **Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan, Voter awareness etc**

Checks and Balances are needed

- Official and Classified information that has not been made public cannot be disclosed through social media, except with prior authorization.

- Civil servants must be mindful of liking or expressing support to other posts. It might be interpreted as endorsing of the facts and opinions such posts represent. Political neutrality must be upheld at all times even on social media.

- The public conduct of any civil servant must uphold the values of the Indian republic and promote the spirit and letter of the Constitution.

- The distinction between official and personal accounts should be addressed, but the basic **Conduct Rules should also be applicable** to the latter.

- A bureaucrat does not cease to represent the government even when he is using his personal account, and should therefore **exercise restraint** even in that.

- Under **Article 33** Parliament can restrict fundamental rights of members of **armed forces, para-military forces, police and intelligence agencies**. This is to ensure proper discharge of their duties and maintenance of **discipline** among them.

Conclusion

The Government must come up with a clear policy on social media for civil servants and employees. At the same time, what constitutes hate speech or criminal offence should be made clear. This requires a reform of the Indian Penal Code. Excessive curtailment of freedom of speech on social media will not bode well for the world's largest democracy and law makers must ensure that minimum restrictions are placed for necessary reasons only.

With Data being the new oil, National Data and Analytics Platform will work to democratize access to publicly available government data. Elucidate. (250 words)

Reference: [Economic Times](#)
Why this question:
NITI Aayog released its vision for the National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP) recently, thus the question.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the significance of such a platform in aiding to democratize access to publicly available government data.
Directive:
***Elucidate** – Give a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.*
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Start with the concerns that were raising about access of available government data.
Body:
Comment on the features of the National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP).
It aims to democratize access to publicly available government data.
It will host the latest datasets from various government websites, present them
Coherently and provide tools for analytics and visualization.
It will follow a user-centric approach and will enable data access in a simple and intuitive portal tailored to the needs of a variety of stakeholders.
It will spearhead the standardization of formats in which data is presented across sectors
It would cater to a wide audience of policy makers, researchers, innovators, data scientists, journalists and citizens.
Discuss the advantages of the move, explain any concerns associated.
Conclusion:
Conclude that the platform will bring in more transparency and accountability and will helps in achieving the Vision of Digital India under one of its pillars – Information For All.

Introduction:

Recently Government think-tank Niti Aayog will develop a national data and analytics platform to make all government data accessible to stakeholders in a user-friendly manner. The NDAP will strive to ensure that the data is assured, consistent, coherent and credible.

Body:

Concerns that were raising about access of available government data:

- **India has rich publicly available data**. Government departments have digitized various processes and reporting requirements, which in turn are feeding into management information systems and interactive dashboards
- **Data is not published in a user-centric manner**. The current data formats are often not conducive for research and innovation. Many departments maintain public dashboards with visualizations, and options to download data in analyzable formats.
- **Data ecosystem is incoherent due to different standards**. Ministries and Departments do not use a shared standard for common indicators. Attributes like region and time period defined differently. This makes it difficult for datasets to speak to each other and present a coherent picture.

Features of the National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP):

The advantages of National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP):

- NDAP will take a user-centric approach to providing access to data. The platform will be powered by a user friendly search engine, backed by seamless navigation, with a world-class user interface.
- NDAP will provide access to data from multiple sectors in one place. Data will be sourced from different Central and State Ministries and Departments. This will be presented using a common schema, with clear definitions and narratives to help the user navigate the differences between similar data from different sources.
- NDAP will be a reliable platform for up-to-date data. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) will be developed to keep data updated. There will be regular tracking of compliance to these SOPs. Further, APIs, web-crawling and other methods will be used to keep the data fully up-to-date.
- Success of NDAP relies on effective collaboration. NDAP goes beyond just developing a platform and will require extensive consultation. Inputs will be needed from data producers in the government to identify data sources and develop data processing techniques for the datasets to be coherent.
- NDAP has the potential to transform data-driven discourse, research, innovation, and decision-making in India. There are a large number of benefits for up-to-date and reliable data. NDAP's vision is to democratize access to public government data and provide a world-class user experience.

Conclusion:

NDAP is a pan-India initiative by NITI Aayog. Its success requires extensive support and cooperation of various stakeholders such as Central Ministries, State Governments and guidance from experts to realize the vision and meet the timelines.

India and its neighborhood- relations.

India's unsettled boundaries pose major problems in its policy towards its neighbors, especially China and Pakistan. Critically analyse.(250 words)

Economic Times

Why this question:
In a stern warning to Pakistan, new Army Chief Gen Manoj Mukund Naravane on Tuesday said India reserves the right to "preemptively strike" at sources of terror, asserting that a "new normal" in the country's response mechanism to acts of cross-border terrorism has already been "emphatically" displayed.
Thus the question.

Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the disputed territories of India with its neighborhood. And need to have a policy to resolve the issues.

Directive:
Critically analyze *– When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgment.*

Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Discuss first the context of the question by highlighting recent turfs with neighbors.

Body:
First explain briefly the geographical extent, borders and borders in conflict with India.
Discuss then the border disputes on case by case basis; China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar etc.
It has not been possible for India to agree on the border with China since China is laying unreasonable claims on territories that have historically been India. There must be more constructive diplomatic engagement between both countries to resolve their decades-long border issues. Regarding Pakistan, both the countries should come on the table sooner or later to discuss their contentious issues. Meanwhile, Pakistan must end any kind of support to Terrorism and its "Proxy War" on India to bring India on table to talk border issues.
Discuss the policy measures from past to present taken to resolve the problems posed in this sector.

Conclusion:
Conclude that India should engage constructively and generously with its smaller neighbors like Nepal to deal the border issues.

Introduction:

India has one of the longest and most varied of international borders. Historical and political reasons have left India with an artificial unnatural border. The challenge of coping with long-standing territorial and boundary disputes with China and Pakistan, combined with porous borders along some of the most difficult terrain in the world, has made effective and efficient border management a national priority.

Body:

Unsettled boundaries issues with China and Pakistan:

- India's borders with China and Pakistan are one of the most dangerous borders because local war with China could be one standoff away and potential of limited war with Pakistan is one terror strike away.

- The threat India faces ranges from regular to irregular, state to non-state actors and conventional to nuclear war.
- The nature of borders with Pakistan and China are such that some part are designated as international borders and some parts continue to remain unresolved designated as Line of Control (LoC) and Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL referring to Siachen) with Pakistan and Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China.
- LoC is active and cross border firing and infiltration of terrorists from Pakistan has become a routine in spite of the cease fire agreement.
- Whereas no bullet has been fired across LAC since 1967 but transgression by People's Liberation Army (PLA) into Indian Territory has become a routine that is leading to frequent standoffs between PLA Border Defence Regiments and the Indian Army.
- Under such circumstances border defence is a military operation and cannot be confused by defining it as policing or management of borders where loss of territory could take place if not resolutely defended.

Unsettled boundaries and major problems posed:

- increased cross-border terrorism
- infiltration and ex-filtration of armed militants
- emergence of non-state actors
- nexus between narcotics traffickers and arms smugglers
- left-wing extremism
- separatist movements aided and abetted by external powers
- The establishment of madrasas, some of which are potential security hazards

Structural measures needed:

- Infrastructure along with border has to be improved – rail connectivity along with road connectivity has to be provided for quick mobilization.
- Building of additional checkpoints and Border posts along major and minor trade routes connected with borders
- Building of floating bridges, walls & electrical fences where there is high probability of infiltration.
- Taking up of joint Border management with Countries like Myanmar, Bhutan and Nepal.
- Improving healthcare, physical infrastructure and digital connectivity in villages around borders thus making them stakeholder in Border Management.
- **Madhav Godbole task force** recommendations on border management need to be implemented.
- It had recommended that the CRPF should be designated as the primary national level counter-insurgency force. This would enable the other central paramilitary forces like the BSF and Indo-Tibetan Border Police to return to their primary role of better border management.
- It had also recommended that all paramilitary forces managing unsettled borders should operate directly under the control of the army and that there should be lateral induction from the army to the paramilitary forces so as to enhance their operational effectiveness.
- The principle of 'single point control' must be followed if the borders are to be effectively managed.
- The advances in surveillance technology, particularly satellite and aerial imagery, can help to maintain a constant vigil along the LAC and make it possible to reduce physical deployment.

Policy measures:

- Need for a renewed effort to resolve the boundary dispute to maintain peace and tranquillity in border areas.
- India and China should "reinforce communication and coordination in international affairs and make the international order more just and equitable".
- Maintain regular contact and advance the development of bilateral relations in all areas.
- Seeking mutually acceptable resolutions on the differences with due respect for each other's sensitivities, concerns and aspirations
- Need to respect each other's Sovereignty and sincere adherence to Panchsheel (Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence).

Conclusion:

Keeping a strong vigil on its border is very important for any nation to check any kind of illegal activities or intrusion through them. For India, the task becomes difficult where terrain and climate is very complex across some of its border areas. Focussing on improved technology will help in making the task easier for the security forces and make its borders more secure.

Do you think India needs to re-orient its foreign policy to face the challenge of increasing Chinese influence in South Asian region? Analyse.(250 words)

Reference: [The Hindu](#)
Why this question:
The editorial highlights the Myanmar's growing dependence on China.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail why and how India needs to re-orient its foreign policy to face the challenge of increasing Chinese influence in South Asian region.
Directive:
Analyze – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary.
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Start with the fact that Myanmar in recent times seems to have abandoned its earlier stance of non-alignment in favor of closer relations with China.
Body:
One has to explain in detail the implications of China-Myanmar bonhomie; like the Increase in China's influence in domestic politics etc.
Discuss the impact of it on India; Increasing Chinese influence in India's immediate and extended neighborhood could affect India's interests in future.
Explain the changes that India should fold in to address the upcoming threat.
Conclusion:
Conclude with what India should do to tackle the situation.
Introduction:

South Asia has been one of the world's most volatile regions and hitherto dominated by the United States. The region is now at a transformative stage with far-reaching implications for the states in the region, including India. China has also broadened its diplomatic activities ever since, playing a key role in international institutions and wielding greater geopolitical influence in Asia and around the world. In the process it has become the second most influential country in the world after the US.

Body:

The importance of India-China relations in India's overall foreign policy cannot be overstated. Not only is China's rise changing Asia's geopolitical landscape and the global balance of power, its involvement in South Asia in recent years has augmented its position from being India's largest neighbour to an engaged great power across the subcontinent.

Increasing Chinese influence in South Asian region:

- **Defence outreach:** Back in 1980s and 1990s there was a Sino-Pak military axis; today even the defence forces of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives have Chinese equipment.
- **Friendlier approach:** China is off late changing its hostile relationships with some neighbours to becoming friendlier. For example, with Philippines, Myanmar, Singapore, Japan and South Korea.
- **Soft loans:** China has been extending soft-loans to neighbouring nations to help them develop state of infrastructure. The downside of this has been countries being caught in a debt-trap, like in Sri Lanka and Maldives.
- **Concerns about China involvement:** China has only two real friends in the world: Pakistan and North Korea. Big and small nations are increasingly wary about Chinese intensions.
- Even in The Arctic Circle council, Greenland (Denmark) expressed deep distrust towards China's investment in its aviation sector.
- **Reorienting diplomacy:** China's 'major power diplomacy' consists of four aspects: economic expansion, political penetration, "friendship" creation, and core interest protection.

Challenges posed:

- China seeks to connect South Asia with China; while India seeks to bring South Asia closer from within as well as more connected with Eurasia and South East Asia.
- There is a large measure of uncertainty about the geopolitical implications of the BRI in South Asia.
- China's deep pockets make it difficult for India to control the expansion of China's influence in India's neighbourhood.
- India's main concern is that deeper connectivity between India's neighbours and China will reorient the foreign policies of South Asian states in ways that could eventually undermine Indian interests and challenge its claims to regional authority.
- More broadly, China's engagement in South Asia might also adversely influence domestic politics in the subcontinent and strengthen anti-India political forces; the latter could spill over onto the domestic politics in India's states, thereby impacting periphery security and social stability.
- A major faultline would be the militarizing of China's regional connectivity projects.
- Such a hypothetical scenario would pose military security challenges to India as well as place China in a position to act as a direct security provider in the subcontinent, an outcome that would have profound consequences for the geopolitics in the region.

India must re-orient its foreign policy:

- India must regain its role as a prime mover of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the organisation it abandoned.
- Indian government must promote the alternate regional groupings such as South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC), BIMSTEC, the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) Initiative and Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR).

- India must recognise that doing better with its neighbours is not about investing more or undue favours. It is about following a policy of mutual interests and of respect.
- India is more culturally attuned to than China is. Each of India's neighbours shares more than a geographical context with India. They share history, language, tradition and even cuisine.
- With the exception of Pakistan, none of them sees itself as a rival to India, or India as inimical to its sovereignty.
- When dealing with Beijing bilaterally, New Delhi must match China's aggression, and counter its moves with its own.
- When dealing with China in South Asia, however, India must do exactly the opposite, and not allow itself to be outpaced.
- Maintaining regional peace is the responsibility of all the countries. India needs to rekindle the SAARC process in order to secure historical affinity with its neighbours.
- Indian policymakers must take the long view and pursue an approach of peaceful competition in the neighbourhood.

Conclusion:

India and China need to engage in a strategic conversation on the subcontinent and its various parts towards coordinating some of their regional connectivity visions and policies. The failure to pursue such a dialogue, and to arrive an understanding on an agreed framework for Indian and Chinese policies, would constitute a recipe for regional instability and a costly zero-sum rivalry that neither country can afford in a rapidly changing international environment.

Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

The relative decline in America's power coupled with the rise of new and old powers point to a structural churning in the post-Cold War order. Comment.(250 words)

The Hindu

Why this question:
Developments in 2019 suggest that the U.S.'s ability to shape global politics is clearly receding. Thus the question.

Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the changing Geopolitics around the world and establish in what way in the world system, the core has never been static. Hegemony of a single power is temporary.

Directive:
Comment– here we have to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and form an overall opinion thereupon.

Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
In brief discuss the recent happenings that justify the context of the question.

Body:
Highlight the relative decline in America's power that was manifested through a number of crises during the year.
Discuss the trends from past to present; The U.S. is the world's mightiest military power and arguably the centre of the post-Soviet world order. In the 1990s, the U.S.'s dominance was at its peak with international and multilateral organizations getting overshadowed by its pre-eminence. In 2001, after the September 11 terrorist attacks, it got international support for its war in Afghanistan. In

2003, the U.S. went ahead with the plan to bomb Iraq despite the UN opposition, reminding the world of imperial invasions. But the global situation is different and more complex today.
Conclusion:
Conclude that the relative decline in America's power coupled with the rise of new and old powers point to a structural churning in the post-Cold War order. In the world system, the core has never been static. Hegemony of a single power is temporary.
Introduction:

The U.S.A is the world's mightiest military power and arguably the centre of the post-Soviet world order. In the 1990s, the U.S.'s dominance was at its peak with international and multilateral organisations getting overshadowed by its pre-eminence. In 2001, after the September 11 terrorist attacks, it got international support for its war in Afghanistan. In 2003, the U.S. went ahead with the plan to bomb Iraq despite the UN opposition, reminding the world of imperial invasions.

Body:

Relative decline in America's power:

- **The Afghan experience**

    - The U.S. went to Afghanistan in October 2001, with a vow to destroy Al-Qaeda and topple the Taliban regime. After years the US is now desperate to get out of a stalemated conflict and has started direct negotiations with the Taliban.

    - The whole Afghan experience shows how the U.S. botched up the war.

    - The U.S. has a superior hand in conventional warfare.

    - But winning a war abroad is not just about toppling a hostile regime, but also about stabilizing the country after the regime is toppled.

    - The U.S., history shows, is good at the former but fares poorly in the latter. It is now left with no other option but to reach an agreement with the Taliban for a face-saving exit.

    - That would leave Kabul's fragile, faction-ridden government exposed to the Taliban insurgency, just like how the Mohammed Najibullah government was left to the Afghan Mujahideen in 1989 after the Soviet withdrawal.

- **The Iran stand-off**

    - The U.S.-Iran tensions were triggered by President Trump's unilateral decision to pull the U.S. out of the Iran nuclear deal.

    - Trump's plan was to put "maximum pressure" on Iran through sanctions and force Tehran to renegotiate the nuclear deal. But Iran countered it through "maximum resistance", instead of giving in.

    - The year 2019 saw Iran repeatedly provoking the U.S. and its allies.

    - It shot down an American drone over the Gulf, captured a British tanker and is believed to have either carried out or orchestrated multiple attacks on oil tankers that pass through the Strait of Hormuz.

    - Two Saudi oil facilities came under attack, which temporarily cut the kingdom's oil output by half. Iran was blamed for the attacks.

- The only counter-measure the U.S. took in response to Iran's growing provocations was imposing more sanctions.

- The U.S.'s inability to shape outcomes of the wars it launches is acting as a deterrent against its own war machines.

- **Cracks in the NATO**

  - The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Cold War alliance that was formed as a counterweight to the Soviet Union, continued to act as a vehicle of Western military dominance under the leadership of the U.S. in the post-Soviet order.

  - The alliance has come under pressure in recent years with the rise of nationalist-populist leaders, like Mr. Trump, who have a favourable view of Russian President Vladimir Putin and are critical of NATO.

  - These contradictions sharpened in 2019, suggesting that there are growing cracks in the alliance.

  - Turkey invaded north-eastern Syria's Kurdish held-territories, which had housed U.S. troops during the war against the Islamic State.

  - Ankara practically forced the Trump administration to pull back troops from the areas before it started airstrikes.

  - The U.S. was relegated to the role of a spectator when a determined Turkey first captured some towns on the border and then struck a deal with Russia to create a buffer between Turkey and the Kurdish-held territories of Syria, which will be manned by Russian and Turkish troops.

Implications:

- New economic powers (China) are on the rise and an old military power (Russia) is making a comeback.
- Rise in the multi-polar world order.
- China's growing assertiveness both in Trade and Foreign Policy.
- Rise of Turkey as a new power role in West Asia.
- Various crisis and recent impeachment procedure started by Congress on President Donald Trump.

Conclusion:

These incidents do not mean that the U.S.'s dominance over global politics is over. But they do show that America's long wars and its inability to shape post-war outcomes are impacting its stature in an international system that centres around it.

The raging bushfires of Australia give India and Australia a chance to deepen their dialogue, including on energy. How far can the two countries seek amidst a tragedy, an opportunity? Discuss. (250 words)

The Hindu
Why this question:

Today, with wildfires burning more than 12 million hectares of land, destroying native flora, killing thousands of wild animals, including endangered species, and displacing residents and tourists, Australia is confronted with a dystopian vision, where "apocalypse becomes the new normal".

Key demand of the question:

Discuss in what way the Bush fires present New Delhi and Canberra a rare opportunity to translate their rapidly converging interests and coalescing of values into a formidable partnership for the 21st century.

Directive:

Discuss *– This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.*

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Briefly state the situation of Bush fires in Australia, explain the severity.

Body:

Briefly discuss what bush fires are and what leads to them.

Discuss that with this incident debate on global warming, climate change and fossil fuels are going to intensify.

Explain the significance of the disaster to Australia-India relationship.

Discuss the scope for partnership.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way forward and assert the significance of partnership between the two countries on this front.

Introduction:

Australia is fighting one of its worst bushfire seasons, fuelled by record-breaking temperatures and months of severe drought. Australia has declared a state of emergency for the state of New South Wales (NSW) along with a catastrophic fire warning.

Body:

Current scenario of Bushfire in Australia:

- Wildfires have affected more than **12 million hectares of land in Australia** and the tragedy of the bushfires is still unfolding.
- The wildfires have caused **large scale loss to life and property** leading to the displacement of many residents.
- The wildfires have **destroyed the native flora and fauna, killing thousands of wild animals**. Australia is home to many endangered and rare species.

- New South Wales has been the most severely hit, with more than 1.65m hectares razed, an area significantly larger than suburban Sydney.
- Tourism which constitutes a major source of revenue for Australia has been affected by the raging bushfires.

Climate change and Australian bushfires:

- This year a **natural weather phenomenon known as the Indian Ocean Dipole** has meant a hot, dry spell across the country.
- But the overwhelming scientific consensus is that rising levels of CO2 are warming the planet. And Australia has been getting hotter over recent decades and is expected to continue doing so.
- This year, Australia twice set a new temperature record: an average maximum of 41.9C was recorded on 18 December. That comes on top of a long period of drought.
- Scientists have long warned that this hotter, drier climate will contribute to fires becoming more frequent and more intense.
- The more extreme weather patterns and higher temperatures increase the risk of bushfires and allow them to spread faster and wider.

India and Australia have **many converging interests**. There is an opportunity to translate these converging interests and coalescing of values into a formidable partnership. There is the scope for partnership in diverse areas, including the most relevant challenge of climate change facing the planet. Post the tragedy of the bushfires, the debate on global warming, climate change and fossil fuels and the need for climate action is only going to intensify.

Areas of cooperation:

Energy sector:

Given the complementarity of India and Australia's needs, it is critical for India and Australia to ensure that their dialogue on energy acquires momentum. The envisaged cooperation could take place in the following realms:

- Joint scientific task force to investigate the latest evidence linking climate change and extreme climatic events. The role of fossil fuels in fuelling climate change needs further understanding.
- To study the promise and potential of "clean" coal technology.
- Both countries must simultaneously strengthen the International Solar Alliance.
- R&D on alternative green fuels.

The **other potential areas** include:

- **Water management technologies**, given the problem of water stress being faced by both countries
- **Skills and higher education**
- **Maritime technology and maritime security**
- **Cybersecurity**
- **Counterterrorism**

Economic cooperation:

- Indians are today the largest source of skilled migrants to Australia and the economic relationship between the two is already robust.

- There is still scope for enhanced economic cooperation between the two countries and efforts in this direction are afoot.
- The Government of India will be officially releasing the **Australia Economic Strategy (AES).** This will complement **Australia's India Economic Strategy 2035**.
- Post India's decision to exit from the RCEP trade deal, India aims to strengthen economic ties with Australia.

Shared Values:

- India and Australia have large English-speaking populations. Language is not a major barrier for the two nations.
- India and Australia are both multicultural, federal democracies that believe in and respect the rule of law.

Way forward:

- There is the need to elevate the 'two plus two' format talks between India and Australia, from the secretary level to the level of foreign and defence ministers.
- That would signal that New Delhi recognises Canberra as important a partner as Washington and Tokyo.
- This will help take the bilateral relations to the next stage.

The rising tensions between US and China affords an opportunity for India to secure some of its crucial interests. Do you agree? Analyse and comment. (250 words)

The Hindu
Why this question:
The article discusses in what way the rising tensions between US and China affords an opportunity for India to secure some of its crucial interests.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the present scenario; explain in detail the rising tensions between US and China. Highlight the possible challenges and opportunities that the context throws at India.
Directive:
Analyze *– When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary.*
Comment*– here we have to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and form an overall opinion thereupon.*
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Recently USA and China agreed on a temporary trade deal ('Phase One') to ongoing trade war between them. However this will not significantly improve the relations between the two countries. Since many other challenges between these two countries
have risen up in recent times like- technology war, passing of Hong Kong Human rights act, US's decision on Iran etc.
Body:
Explain first what has been the impact of this tension on India so far?
Quote the "Ecowrap report" and the key highlights of it.
Explain the opportunities it poses to India.
Discuss in what way India can respond to this challenge.
Conclusion:

Conclude that US-China rising tensions could help India achieve its economic and strategic interests that are crucial to the growth of the country.

Introduction:

Trade war is a situation where countries restrict each other's trade by imposing tariff or quota on imports. According to the World Bank's Global Economic Prospect, the global economy has slowed to its lowest pace in three years because international trade and investment have been weaker than expected. International trade has been severely affected by the trade war between the US and China. The "Phase One" trade deal between the United States and China gives both sides a reprieve, especially since the U.S. stayed its hand in not imposing additional tariffs worth $160-billion in mid-December.

Body:

Trade war:

- In the backdrop of a growing trade deficit with China, the U.S. in 2018 began setting tariffs and other trade barriers on China with the goal of forcing it to make changes to what the U.S. considers China's "unfair trade practices".
- The U.S. claims that the trade practices of China have led to the theft of intellectual property, and the forced transfer of American technology to China.

The U.S.-China rivalry is not limited to the economic sphere and the **differences between the two countries have been witnessed in many other domains as well.**

- **Next-generation Technologies:**
  - A technology war has erupted in the areas of artificial intelligence, digital space and 5G. Washington has blacklisted the Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei and urged governments not to work with it in developing 5G networks.
  - It accuses China of using Huawei to gather intelligence from other countries. The U.S. has cautioned its allies that using Huawei equipment will lead to less intelligence sharing from it.

- **Human Rights:**
  - Tensions between the two countries have risen following the U.S.'s passing of the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019 and the proposed Uighur Act. The U.S. accuses China of cracking down on domestic dissent and human rights violations.
  - China claims that the U.S. is behind the disturbances in Hong Kong. There is no sign of the protests abating.

- **Power Play in the Pacific region:**
  - China has asserted its military control over the South China Sea by deploying more military assets to the region and occupying several man-made islands.
  - This is viewed as an arm twisting tactic of the Chinese to resolve the dispute over territorial issues in the South China Sea.
  - The U.S. and its allies have called for freedom of navigation in the South China Sea.

- The U.S. has worked towards a military build-up in Asia by its move to arm its allies like South Korea and Japan with American missile defence systems. The Chinese view this as a provocation to China.

- **Defence field:**

  - Despite the military advances made by China, U.S. defence spending is much larger than that of China's budget. With the creation of a U.S. Space Force as a separate arm under the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. is seeking to increase its superiority in network-centric warfare.

  - The Chinese have been increasing their defence budget year on year citing the increased military build-up in the pacific region.

Opportunities for India:

- According to the State Bank of India report-Ecowrap, India has scarcely benefited from the trade war.
- China is facing pork shortage but India exports pork indirectly through Vietnam, increasing its cost and reducing market share.
- China's thrust on the AI, robotics, autonomous vehicles, and space technology has raised the U.S. suspicion, raising the prospects of high-tech war.
- The big three Chines high-tech companies, Baidu, Alibaba, and Tencent together invested $5bn in India.
- India could use this opportunity to insist China open its market for the IT sector and other tech exports.
- India has allowed all the players including Huawei to participate in the 5G trials but the outcomes are far from over.
- With all that said, the U.S.-China tensions drive supply chains out of China, with the right policies as Vietnam has done, India could emerge as an alternative destination.
- With the protests in Hong Kong showing no signs of abating, India may have to cater to refugees of Indian origin if things turn uglier.

However, **concerns exist:**

- India is not a member of the Indo-Pacific Business Forum created by the U.S., Japan, and Australia.
- India is also not a member of Blue Dot network created by the U.S., Japan, and Australia.
- In future India might have to reconcile its regional connectivity issues with BRI projects that have mushroomed in the region.
- On the ideological fronts, China is so emboldened by its economic success that it seeks to challenge the liberal democratic model and offers an alternative based on its own system.
- India might have to contend with the greater Chinese presence in the Asia-Pacific theatre.

Way forward:

- India should come out with the right policies and incentives to attract industries to invest in India.
- India's participation in the "Quad" dialogue on broader issues in the Indo-Pacific should be used as a leverage to protect India's interest in the region.

- India should try to reconcile its own regional connectivity initiatives with the BRI projects that have mushroomed in the neighbourhood.

Conclusion:

U.S.-China rivalry coincides with an upward trajectory in India-U.S. relations. This is important for equilibrium and multi-polarity in Asia, even as India and China try and build much-needed trust and cooperation. India should not officially push forward any such policy that intends to take advantage of the crisis. We should stick to our fundamental foreign policy of non-alignment and wait and watch without getting involved in the core trade war.

The Indian government should keep a cautious appreciation on developments in the Gulf, looking west Asian crisis and prepare its own groundwork. Elucidate. (250 words)

The Hindu

Why this question:
Once again, the West Asia – or the Middle East – is on the boil as Washington and Tehran ratchet up the aggression, thus the question.

Key demand of the question:
Discuss the recently being witnessed Gulf crisis and the effects that it will possibly have on India and what should India do in such a situation.

Directive:
Elucidate – Give a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.

Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Discuss the ongoing turmoil in the Gulf.

Body:
Explain the ongoing conflict between US and Iran.
Discuss the west Asian crisis and India's stand.
Explain the dependence of India on West Asia for Oil.
Explain how the economy gets nudged due to the crisis.
What are the strategic interests of various countries in the region?
Suggest what should India do in such a situation?

Conclusion:
Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

Iranian forces fired missiles at military bases housing U.S. troops in Iraq on Wednesday in retaliation for the U.S. killing of an Iranian General. Tehran's Foreign Minister said Iran took "proportionate measures" in self-defence and did not seek to escalate the confrontation. U.S. President Donald Trump said on Wednesday that no Americans were harmed in the Iranian missile attacks on military bases housing U.S. troops in Iraq, and urged world powers to forge a new nuclear deal with Tehran.

Body:

Relations between USA and Iran:

- The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, commonly known as the Iran deal, was signed on July 14, 2015 between Iran, the U.S., China, France, Russia, the U.K., Germany and the European Union.

- It was considered a landmark deal which would eventually bring peace and harmony to the turmoil-stricken Middle East.
- However, President Donald Trump recently decided to unilaterally pull the U.S. out of the Iran nuclear deal and to re-imposing nuclear sanctions against that country.
- The recent conflagrations have further worsened the crisis in West Asia.

Implications for India:

- **Oil and Gas:**

  - The impact on world oil prices will be the immediately visible impact of the U.S. decision.

  - Iran is presently India's third biggest supplier (after Iraq and Saudi Arabia), and any increase in prices will hit both inflation levels as well as the Indian rupee.

  - The negotiations on the **Farzad-B gas field** remain stuck, with both sides blaming the other for shifting the goalposts. It was remained on paper because of Iranian unhappiness over India's stand in the IAEA.

- **Chahbahar port:**

  - India's moves over the last few years to develop berths at the Shahid Beheshti port in Chahbahar was a key part of its plans to circumvent Pakistan's blocks on trade with Afghanistan.

  - India has already committed about $85 million to Chabahar development with plans for a total of $500 million on the port, while a railway line to Afghanistan could cost as much as $1.6 billion.

- **INSTC:**

  - Beyond Chahbahar, India has been a founder of the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) since it was ratified in 2002.

  - It starts from Iran and aims to cut right across Central Asia to Russia over a 7,200-km multi-mode network, cutting down transportation and time taken by trade by about 30%.

  - New U.S. sanctions will affect these plans immediately, especially if any of the countries along the route or banking and insurance companies dealing with the INSTC plan also decide to adhere to U.S. restrictions on trade with Iran.

- **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation:**

  - India joined the SCO along with Pakistan last year, and both were formally admitted in June 2018, when Prime Minister travelled to the Chinese city of Qingdao for the SCO summit.

  - Chinese officials say they will consider inducting Iran into the 8-member Eurasian security organisation.

  - If the proposal is accepted by the SCO, which is led by China and Russia, India will become a member of a bloc that will be seen as anti-American, and will run counter to some of the government's other initiatives like the Indo-Pacific quadrilateral with the U.S., Australia and Japan.

- The move may also rile other adversaries of Iran, like Saudi Arabia, UAE and Israel, with whom the government has strengthened ties in an effort to balance its West Asia policy.

- **Rules-based order:**

  - India has long been a proponent of a "rules-based order" that depends on multilateral consensus and an adherence to commitments made by countries on the international stage.

  - By walking out of the JCPOA, the U.S. government has overturned the precept that such international agreements are made by "States" not just with prevailing governments or regimes.

Way forward for India:

- Allowing Indian investment in rupees and initiating new banking channels to go ahead with oil trade.
- The near-term developments in its neighbourhood are a priority for Tehran even as India tries to find a balance with his stated preference to develop closer ties with both the U.S. and Israel.
- India and Iran are looking to swiftly conclude a preferential trade agreement and a bilateral investment treaty.
- Newly relaxed visa norms announced by Iran in addition to India's proposal for Indian businesses to invest in rupees in Iran are all moves in the right direction.
- Nonetheless, they may be insufficient to cement commercial ties if USA sanctions do return.
- India should give its full support for the effective implementation of the JCPOA. Only successful implementation of the JCPOA over a period of time can create the political space for additional negotiations.
- Both the nations can take leverage of their historical and civilizational relations to steer ties so much. The visit proved to be a much-needed reality check to the India-Iran partnership.

Mauritius was and is the "Star and Key of the Indian Ocean". Examine the statement in the light of changing geopolitics of the Indian ocean.(250 words)

Indian Express

Why this question:
The article explains that As India prepares to host the prime minister of Mauritius, PravindJugnauth, who returned to power in the recent general elections, Delhi needs to change the lens through which it sees the small island republic in the western Indian Ocean.

Key demand of the question:
Discuss the importance of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean geopolitics.

Directive:
Examine – When asked to 'Examine', we must look into the topic (content words) in detail, inspect it, investigate it and establish the key facts and issues related to the topic in question. While doing so we should explain why these facts and issues are important and their implications.

Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Discuss briefly the key aspects of Mauritius as a country of the Indian ocean.

Body:
Explain the history of Mauritius and the present day value.
Discuss why Mauritius should and can be made the pivot of Delhi's island policy.
Explain the possible aspects that make the country unique and important.
Take hints from the article and explain the significance of building ties with Mauritius.

Conclusion:
Conclude what should be the approach of India in dealing with Mauritus.
Introduction:

Mauritius is a sovereign entity with a unique national culture and an international identity of its own. Indo-Mauritian relations refers to the historical, political, economic, military, social and cultural connections between the Republic of India and the Republic of Mauritius.

Body:

Evolution of Indo—Mauritian relations:

- Connections between India and Mauritius date back to 1730, diplomatic relations were established in 1948, before Mauritius became independent state.
- For far too long, Delhi has viewed Mauritius through the prism of diaspora. This was, perhaps, natural since communities of Indian origin constitute a significant majority in the island
- More recently, Delhi has certainly begun to see the strategic significance of Mauritius thanks to the renewed great power contestation in the Indian Ocean.
- In 2014, Prime Minister Modi saw Mauritius as part of India's neighbourhood and invited its leadership to join his inauguration along with other South Asian leaders.
- In 2015 that Modi unveiled an ambitious policy called the SAGAR (security and growth for all). It was India's first significant policy statement on the Indian Ocean in many decades.

Significance of Mauritius to India:

- **Geo-strategic significance:**

    - In 2015, Indian Prime Minister signed an agreement to set up eight Indian-controlled coastal surveillance radar stations

    - Mauritius is part of India's security grid including Coastal Surveillance Radar (CSR) station of Indian Navy's National Command Control Communication Intelligence network

    - if Delhi takes an integrated view of its security cooperation in the south western Indian Ocean, Mauritius is the natural node for it.

- **Geo-economic significance:**

    - India is Mauritius's largest trading partner and has been the largest exporter of goods and services to the Indian Ocean island nation since 2007.

    - The French description of the island as a "central geographic point" holds equally true for commerce and connectivity in the Indian Ocean.

    - As a member of the African Union, Indian Ocean Rim Association and the Indian Ocean Commission, Mauritius is a stepping stone to multiple geographies.

    - If Delhi appreciates the value of Mauritius as a regional hub, a number of possibilities present themselves. One, as new investments pour into Africa, Mauritius is where a lot of it gets serviced. Mauritius can be the fulcrum for India's own African economic outreach.

- **Mauritius as pivot of Delhi's island policy:**

- until now India has tended to deal with the so-called Vanilla islands of the south western Indian Ocean — Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mayotte, Reunion and Seychelles — on a bilateral basis.

- If the Indian establishment thinks of them as a collective, it could make Mauritius the pivot of Delhi's island policy.

- **Economic opportunities:**

  - the Mauritius pivot can facilitate a number of Indian commercial activities in the south western Indian ocean — as a banking gateway, the hub for flights to and from Indian cities and tourism.

  - India could also contribute to the evolution of Mauritius as a regional centre for technological innovation.

- **Common challenges:**

  - climate change, sustainable development and the blue economy are existential challenges for Mauritius and the neighbouring island states.

  - Mauritius will be the right partner in promoting Indian initiatives in these areas.

  - It could also become a valuable place for regional and international maritime scientific research.

Way forward:

- The urgent need for New Delhi is to discard the deep-rooted perception that Mauritius is simply an extension of India.
- Delhi must take a fresh and more strategic look at Mauritius.
- One way of getting there is to have an early Indian summit with the leaders of the Vanilla islands.
- India, with its strong intelligence network, will also be helpful in maritime law enforcement by Mauritius and Seychelles.
- While declaring support for India's maritime security plans, there is need to pointed out that small nations are equally important in the contemporary world order and need to be taken seriously for the sake of preserving the security and order.
- Companies registered in Mauritius are the largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) into India, making it crucial for India to upgrade its bilateral tax treaty, adopting the latest international practices that prevent multinational companies from artificially shifting profits to low tax countries.

Considering the jeopardies posed by worsening of ties between Iran and the U.S. to the region and the world at large, propose essential steps to de-escalate the hostilities and suggest what role should India play in this regard.(250 words)

The Hindu Business Line

Why this question:
One needs to explain What's currently happening between the U.S. and Iran and what is at stake? What should be the role of India in such a scenario?
Key demand of the question:

Discuss in detail the ongoing turf between the two countries. Suggest what needs to be done and highlight role that India should be playing.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Tensions between the U.S. and Iran have rocketed and they are on the threshold of what could prove to be an escalation in hostilities.

Body:

Explain the following aspects in the answer body –

What the issue is?

Larger background of the issue and associated Geopolitics.

Discuss what's currently happening between the U.S. and Iran and what is at stake?

Who is to blame for the situation?

What should be India's stand .

Conclusion:

Conclude that peace and harmony should be the solution and not Wars.

Introduction:

The U.S. recently killed Iranian Major General Qassem Soleimani, head of the elite Quds Force, in an air strike near Baghdad airport. The killing of Gen. Soleimani, considered the architect of Tehran's spreading military influence in West Asia, marks a dramatic escalation in the regional **"shadow war"** between Iran and the U.S. and its allies, principally Israel and Saudi Arabia, which could quickly ratchet up tit-for-tat attacks.

Body:

Potential fallout on India:

- India has already had considerable difficulties in meandering through the obstacle course created by the U.S.-Iran cold war.
- While we need to be on the right side of the U.S., our ties with Iran, apart from being "civilisational", have their own geostrategic logic.
- Now that the conflict has turned hot, its adverse impact on India could magnify.
- Apart from a rise in our oil import bill and difficulties in supplies, the safety of an estimated eight million expatriates in the Gulf may be affected.
- Iran has the capacity to influence the U.S.-Taliban peace process in Afghanistan, a neighbouring country.
- Last but not the least, after Iran, India has perhaps the largest number of the world's Shia population and the possibility of some of them being radicalised by this event cannot be ruled out.

Steps to de-escalating the hostilities:

- Unlike Trump's warmongering, Russia has reportedly come up with constructive suggestions to promote peace and security in the region.
- The Russian initiative would involve major external powers, including China and India, without eroding American security imperatives.

Role of India:

- Allowing Indian investment in rupees and initiating new banking channels to go ahead with oil trade.

- The near-term developments in its neighbourhood are a priority for Tehran even as India tries to find a balance with his stated preference to develop closer ties with both the U.S. and Israel.
- India and Iran are looking to swiftly conclude a preferential trade agreement and a bilateral investment treaty.
- Newly relaxed visa norms announced by Iran in addition to India's proposal for Indian businesses to invest in rupees in Iran are all moves in the right direction.
- Nonetheless, they may be insufficient to cement commercial ties if USA sanctions do return.
- India should give its full support for the effective implementation of the JCPOA. Only successful implementation of the JCPOA over a period of time can create the political space for additional negotiations.
- Both the nations can take leverage of their historical and civilizational relations to steer ties so much. The visit proved to be a much-needed reality check to the India-Iran partnership.

Measures needed:

- For India, the bigger strategic choice will have to be made if the region does descend into an overt conflict situation between the Arab states and its old strategic partner, Iran and even Israel.
- Unlike in the past, Indian interests in the region are broader and deeper than ever before. There will be hell to pay in the aftermath of Soleimani's assassination.
- The world doesn't yet know exactly how the chips will fall. But it will not be good.
- India will ready its contingency evacuation plans, just in case things get ugly for the diaspora in the Gulf region, but that is now a relatively easier exercise, having done it several times.
- India will have to keep a keen eye out on Afghanistan, which could return into a geopolitical conflict theatre.
- Pakistan will attempt to fish in troubled waters, but frankly, India is now better able to take care of that. Also, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation has more important things to worry about now rather than a discussion on Kashmir.

Conclusion:

While India has counselled restraint on all concerned, New Delhi has a delicate balance to maintain. New Delhi should work closely with Russia and other global and regional powers to back the initiative for peace and stability in our strategic and oil-rich Indian Ocean neighbourhood.

While presenting various editions of the Raisina dialogue , discuss what India hopes to achieve through it and its significance of it to the world today.(250 words)

News On Air
Why this question:
The fifth edition of the prestigious event is being jointly organized by the Ministry of External Affairs and the Observer Research Foundation.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the significance of Raisina Dialogue to Asia and world and the role that India plays.
Directive:
Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Describe what Raisina Dialogue is.

Body:
First present facts associated – The three-day conference will see the participation of 12 Foreign Ministers, including from Russia, Iran, Australia, Maldives, South Africa, Denmark, Uzbekistan and the EU. The theme this year is 'Navigating the alpha century'.
The Raisina Dialogue is a multilateral conference committed to addressing the most challenging issues facing the global community.
It is a multilateral conference held annually in India.
Every year, global leaders in policy, business, media and civil society are hosted in New Delhi to discuss cooperation on a wide range of pertinent international policy matters.
The conference is hosted by the Observer Research Foundation, an independent think tank, in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs of India.
It is designed to explore prospects and opportunities for Asian integration as well as Asia's integration with the larger world.
Conclusion:
Conclude with importance of such multilateral forums.
Introduction:

The fifth edition of the prestigious event – **Raisina dialogue** was jointly organized by the Ministry of External Affairs and the Observer Research Foundation. Indian Prime Minister has said that Raisina Dialogue has emerged as a vibrant forum for discussing important global and strategic issues over the years.

Body:

Significance of Raisina Dialogue:

- The 5th edition of the Raisina Dialogue addressed some of the most challenging issues facing the global community.
- The three-day event this year is addressed the theme **'21@20: Navigating the Alpha Century'**.
- The Raisina Dialogue 2020 brings together 700 international participants from over 100 countries, Foreign Ministers from 12 countries are taking part in the Dialogue.
- It is designed to explore prospects and opportunities for Asian integration as well as Asia's integration with the larger world.
- It is predicated on India's vital role in the Indian Ocean Region and how India along with its partners can build a stable regional and world order.
- The Raisina Dialogue is a multilateral conference committed to addressing the most challenging issues facing the global community.
- Every year, global leaders in policy, business, media and civil society are hosted in New Delhi to discuss cooperation on a wide range of pertinent international policy matters.
- The Raisina Dialogue was born in 2016, in the belief that the Asian century that the world was talking about was not about any exclusive geographical region.
- It was rather about the engagement of global actors with Asia and of Asia with the world.
- So this dialogue took birth as a platform, where the old and the new could work together, to discover their connections, their inter-dependence.

India hopes to achieve:

- Raisina has been successful in drawing participants from countries that are at odds with each other — US, China, Russia, Iran and the Gulf Arabs.

- Beyond political leaders and government officials, it also drew technology leaders, media personalities and policy wonks from around the world, providing Delhi an opportunity to lay out its position on controversial moves in Kashmir and on citizenship.
- More broadly, Raisina is facilitating the development of sustainable intellectual networks between the Indian strategic community and its counterparts in the world.
- Raisina emerged out of a recognition five years ago that Delhi did not have effective international platforms of its own despite the globalisation of India's economy — trade now contributes nearly 40 per cent of India's GDP.
- India is at once more influential in world affairs as well as more susceptible to external developments. But its policy discourse appeared stuck in the past.
- Raisina was part of the strategy to recalibrate that discourse and discard the traditional bureaucratic pretence that the government knows best.

Conclusion:

Indian foreign policy seeks to achieve a **focus on key challenges**, **a broad engagement with many parties** and **managing, if not leveraging, global contradictions**. Advancing the interests in a multi-polar world and contributing to global good is what it is all about. Raisina dialogue is a good forum to advance the goals of India's foreign policy.

while drawing participants from countries that are at odds with each other, Raisina has emerged as an important global forum on geopolitics. Discuss. (250 words)

Indian Express
Why this question:
The article highlights the significance of Raisina dialogue as a global platform for geopolitics.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the significance of Raisina dialogue to India and the associated geopolitics.
Directive:
Discuss *– This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.*
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Briefly narrate about the Raisina platform.
Body:
Discuss in what way the Raisina dialogue has emerged as an important global forum on geopolitics. Explain that Raisina has been successful in drawing participants from countries that are at odds with each other — US, China, Russia, Iran and the Gulf Arabs.
Bring out the growing international interest in India amidst its rapid economic growth in the new millennium and the recognition of its salience in shaping the future of international order.
Discuss the advantages of having such a forum from Indian perspective.
Conclusion:
Conclude with way forward.
Introduction:

Raisina dialogue is an annual geo-political event, organised by the Ministry of External Affairs and Observer Research Foundation (ORF). It is designed to explore prospects and opportunities for Asian integration as well as Asia's integration with the larger world. The Fifth edition of the Raisina Dialogue was held in New Delhi. The title of the Raisina Dialogue this year (2020) is "Navigating the Alpha Century".

Body:

Importance of Raisina Dialogue:

- The Raisina Dialogue was born in 2016, in the belief that the Asian century that the world was talking about was not about any exclusive geographical region.
- It was rather about the engagement of global actors with Asia and of Asia with the world.
- So this dialogue took birth as a platform, where the old and the new could work together, to discover their connections, their inter-dependence.
- It is predicated on India's vital role in the Indian Ocean Region and how India along with its partners can build a stable regional and world order.

Raisina's growing importance on geopolitics:

- Part of the reason for Raisina's success is the growing international interest in India amidst its rapid economic growth in the new millennium and the recognition of its salience in shaping the future of international order.
- It is also due to the fact that it is based on collaboration between the government and a private think tank.
- This collaboration has helped shed the dull rigidity that has marked the government's past engagement with the global strategic community.
- Raisina emerged out of a recognition five years ago that Delhi did not have effective international platforms of its own despite the globalisation of India's economy — trade now contributes nearly 40 per cent of India's GDP.
- India is at once more influential in world affairs as well as more susceptible to external developments. But its policy discourse appeared stuck in the past.
- Raisina was part of the strategy to recalibrate that discourse and discard the traditional bureaucratic pretence that the government knows best.
- Along with the Raisina Dialogue, the MEA had helped launch two other international forums — one on technology policy in Bengaluru and another on business in Mumbai.

Way forward:

- Delhi needs a separate forum focused on India's immediate neighbourhood.
- Delhi needs to devote a lot more attention to engaging the strategic and economic elites in the Subcontinent to make a success of its declared policy that puts the "neighbourhood first".
- While government-supported forums like Raisina are welcome, Delhi needs to make it easier for the civil society groups to develop trans-border and international conversations.
- Successive governments in recent decades have tightened the visa restrictions for conferences and made it harder to obtain official clearances to host such events.
- Only a genuine liberalisation of these rules will help India realise the full potential of its global engagement.

With much in common, the rising ties between India and Brazil will send out strong signals of South-South cooperation. Explain.(250 words)

Reference: [Financial Express](#)
Why this question:
The article discusses the growing ties between India and Brazil and in what way it is sending out signals of strong South-South cooperation.
Key demand of the question:

Discuss in detail the ties between India and Brazil and its significance.
Directive:
***Explain** – Clarify the topic by giving a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.*
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
State key facts highlighting the Indo-Brazilian relations.
Body:
Explain that with much in common, the door is wide open to forge a social, cultural, people to people and economic relationship to boost trade from an insignificant $7 billion at present.
Both countries are multi-cultural, with a commitment to democracy; where the leadership has a strong mandate and a compatible profile.
Explain why and how it depicts strong south-south cooperation.
Conclusion:
Conclude with way forward.
Introduction:

India and Brazil share a very close and multifaceted relationship at bilateral level as well as in plurilateral fora such as BRICS, BASIC, G-20, G-4, IBSA, International Solar Alliance, Bio future Platform and in the larger multilateral bodies such as the UN, WTO, UNESCO and WIPO. The bilateral strategic partnership, which has opened a new phase for India-Brazil relations in 2006, is based on a common global vision, shared democratic values, and a commitment to foster economic growth with social inclusion for the welfare of the people of both countries.

Body:

The India-Brazil bilateral summit will be an important occasion to consolidate relationship between the two countries. While there is considerable distance between India and Brazil, the former is 15,000 miles away, yet striking similarities can make the heart grow fonder. Both countries are multi-cultural, with a commitment to democracy; where the leadership has a strong mandate and a compatible profile.

Highlights of Indo-Brazilian relations:

Political Cooperation:

- The strategic partnership established in 2006 between Brazil and India has deepened, with both countries cooperating closely within BRICS, IBSA, G4, G20, and the wider multilateral context of the United Nations.
- Brazil and India (along with Germany and Japan) jointly pursued aspirations of permanent seats in the UN Security Council and worked towards a multipolar world where large developing countries can frame global rules and democratise international institutions.
- Both countries played a pivotal role as leaders of the Global South or South-South cooperation.
- The Brazilian foreign policy of reciprocal multilateralism is in concurrence with India's policy of strategic autonomy.

Cultural Cooperation:

- In Brazil, there is enormous interest in India's culture, religion, performing arts and philosophy.

- Brazil has a strong community of Yoga and Ayurveda practitioners. The Brazilian Association of Ayurveda (ABRA) is a non-profit association with offices in 9 states of Brazil and has members all over Brazil.
- Mahatma Gandhi is highly regarded in Brazil and the government and NGOs are trying to inculcate the philosophy of non-violence among students, youth and police.

Trade Relations:

- The trade between both the countries is around $12 billion which is moderate. Brazil wants to increase the trade with India three times the present trade volume. The major focus is on commodities and so it is difficult to raise the trade volume. India grows coffee which is Brazil's major export; animal feed is the major export of Brazil for which there is no market in India.
- Brazil is rich in minerals and agricultural resources. If we look at the future trade there are possibilities like India might need to import pulses. India exports generic drugs and other pharmaceutical products. The services industry, IT and biotechnology is well established.
- Brazil has an organisation which is the counter part of Indian Council for Agricultural Research called Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa). The cattle stock of Brazil is very important for them. Nellorebeef cattle originated from Ongole Cattle originally brought to Brazil from India. They are named after the district of Nellore in Andhra Pradesh state in India. So there are some Indian connections to its origin.

Defence Relations:

- The defence relationship is possible; both are large countries with large defence needs whether it is helicopters or aircrafts. India has bought Embraer aircraft from Brazil where only few countries in the developing world make aircraft. There are possibility of cooperation in science and technology and developing designs.
- Both countries have normal exchanges for instance Brazilian officers coming to National Defence College, providing training exercises and visits of chiefs. Both countries are aware that the requirements are large. The real potential is in designing and developing the defence industry.
- Brazil and India signed a bilateral 'Defence Cooperation Agreement' in 2003 that calls for cooperation in defence-related matters, especially in the field of Research and Development, acquisition and logistic support between the two countries.

Strategic Relationship:

- Both are mature democracies, developing countries, have different perspectives on many issues which is different from other countries, want a greater voice for ourselves, both are the partners for the expansion of security council and for becoming permanent members, both believe in institutional reforms in IMF, World Bank and UNSC. We are Natural Partners with the same kind of outlook on global issues.
- Despite the huge distance, lot of cultural differences and different kind of history, there are remarkable affinities and common values. India was colonized by British and Brazil was colonized by Portuguese. Just as India sees coalition governments, differences between centre and state, Independence of judiciary, a very vibrant press, critical kind of NGOs, Brazil also has a same kind of political climate like many parties, many regions, and differences between central and state governments.
- Both are developing countries with same size in economies. Brazil has lot of people trapped in poverty like India. Therefore in Democracy, Development, and Diversity, Brazil is also a country

with many religion, languages, and cultures. Brazil is also familiar with the same kind of Diversity which India is familiar.

▪ Brazil has a space programme which was stared at a time when India started it. But India has gone far ahead. From time to time ISRO has offered technical knowhow to Brazil.

The rising ties between India and Brazil will send out strong signals of South-South cooperation:

With much in common, the door is wide open to forge a social, cultural, people-to-people and economic relationship to boost trade from an insignificant $7 billion at present. This will send out a strong signal of South-South co-operation.

▪ Brazil's number one export to India is crude oil, but, mind you, it is experiencing an oil production boom and will be amongst the top-5 oil producing countries in the world over the next decade.

▪ As a large producer of sugarcane, Brazil started a bioethanol programme which is highly effective and is a means of bio-energy which can fire up thermal cogeneration plants. One resultant by-product are bio-pellets (a substitute for coal) and a means of clean energy, the urgent need of the hour in India.

▪ In wind energy, Brazil is the cheaperst source; a Brazilian company manufacturing wind turbine generators WEG is already in India. This resource can be fully tapped.

▪ An ideal energy partner is around the corner, almost a God sent, and India should clinch a deal, especially in the wake of recent global events which could result in an oil crisis.

▪ Brazil is not only self-sufficient in food production, but exports commodities including pulses to the Indian market. India consumes a variety of different foods, its growing and expanding population requires a perennial source, especially for proteins.

▪ The ingredients for an all-encompassing relationship are, therefore, in place. Now, the two countries must repose trust in each other—make it solid like BRICS (Bricks) to bind aspirations, goals, and objectives of two nations.

▪ India can start with a clean slate, having opted out of trade agreements, to put in place a bilateral framework/ agreement. This will be a "First" as we look beyond our neighbourhood principle.

▪ It will also facilitate the flow of investments, and strengthen and fortify India's strategic interests. Moving in this direction will be a practical litmus test for the ease of doing business. It will send out positive signals to foreign investors. A bilateral agreement between the two countries will secure this, which, in turn, will globally push India up in the 'World Bank Ease of doing' index.

▪ We can go from a stage where the countries not only have a BRICS 'bank' in common, but can bank upon each other for ushering in the winds of change.

Conclusion:

The time is right for deepening this relationship. In fact, the Brazilian ministry of mines and energy has said that "India and Brazil are key players in the international energy landscape, both as consumers and producers. We are joining hands to create an international biofuel market and supply our planet with renewable and clean energy." This partnership will make the presidential visit a landmark win-win, setting the right 'pulse'.

Geopolitics has played a crucial role in recent success of Pakistan in Asia-Pacific meet of FATF, Do you agree? Analyse.(250 words)

Reference: [The Hindu](#)

Why this question:
The article discusses in detail the Recent deliberations of the Asia-Pacific
group of Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Thus the question.

Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the deliberations with respect to FATF and in what way the changing geopolitics
have redefined the success of Pakistan in the Asia-Pacific meet.

Directive:

Analyze *– When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the*
topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:
Discuss briefly the highlights of the deliberations that took place recently.

Body:
Asia-pacific group has observed that Pakistan has made progress in curtailing
Terror financing in its country. Ex: stopping fund flow to LeT, JeM, legal action initiated against some
etc.
Pakistan was put on a grey list under FATF norms for its failure to stop terror financing in the country
in 2018.
Discuss India's response to it.

Conclusion:
Conclude with the role that Geopolitics plays in such deliberations at a global level.

Introduction:

The deliberations, in Beijing, of the Asia-Pacific joint group of the global watchdog on terror financing and money laundering, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), gave Pakistan some encouraging news: that it had progressed in its efforts to avoid a blacklisting.

A final decision will be taken at a plenary meeting of the body, expected in Paris next month: in keeping Pakistan on the current **"grey list",** downgrading it to a **"black list",** or letting it off altogether for the moment.

Body:

Financial Action Task Force (FATF):

- FATF is an intergovernmental organization founded in 1989 on the initiative of the G7 to develop policies to combat money laundering.

- In 2001 its mandate expanded to include terrorism financing.

- The objectives of the FATF are to set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.

- The FATF is therefore a "policy-making body" which works to generate the necessary political will to bring about national legislative and regulatory reforms in these areas.

Pakistan has placed in grey list:

Geopolitics has played a crucial role in recent success of Pakistan in Asia-Pacific meet of FATF

- The 39-member body had determined that Pakistan was to be placed on the grey list in 2018, and presented it a 27-point list of actions.

- These included freezing the funds of UN Security Council entities such as 26/11 mastermind Hafiz Saeed and the LeT, the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and other Taliban-affiliated groups.

- The actions entailed a sustained effort to bring legal action against these groups, and also called for changes to Pakistani law in line with global standards for measures against money laundering and financing terrorism.

- Unlike in October 2019, when Pakistan had completed five points, the Beijing meeting has cleared it on 14 points.

- In the Beijing meeting, Pakistan provided a list of its action taken to comply with the FATF diktat.

- Pakistan was placed on the 'Grey List' by the FATF in June 2018 and was given a plan of action to complete it by October 2019 or face the risk of being placed on the blacklist along with Iran and North Korea.

- The FATF currently has 35 members and two regional organisations — the European Commission and Gulf Cooperation Council.

India want more scrutiny on removing Pakistan's Grey list:

While Pakistan's progress will come as a disappointment to India, it wants more scrutiny of Pakistan's support to terror groups lest Islamabad feels it has been let off the hook there are a few points to consider.

- First, the grey listing is not new. Pakistan was placed on it in 2012, and was removed in 2015 after it passed a National Action Plan to deal with terrorism following the 2014 Peshawar School massacre. It was also placed under severe restrictions in the years 2008-2012, after the Mumbai attack.

- Second, this last grey list period has already seen some Indian demands met, including the chargesheeting of Hafiz Saeed for terror financing, and the addition of JeM chief Masood Azhar to the UNSC 1267 list.

- Finally, although the FATF is a technical organisation, there is no doubting that geopolitics and bilateral deals play a part in deciding outcomes.

However, FATF needs to scrutinise in an unbiased manner:

- The FATF monitors the progress of its members in implementing necessary measures, reviews money laundering and terrorist financing techniques and counter-measures, and promotes the adoption and implementation of appropriate measures globally.

- In collaboration with other international stakeholders, the FATF works to identify national-level vulnerabilities with the aim of protecting the international financial system from misuse.

- The FATF has developed a series of Recommendations that are recognised as the international standard for combating of money laundering and the financing of terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

- They form the basis for a co-ordinated response to these threats to the integrity of the financial system and help ensure a level playing field.

Conclusion:

India must study the politics behind Pakistan's FATF "progress". Officials have suggested that Pakistan's role in ensuring Taliban talks are brought to a successful conclusion soon may have weighed with the U.S. and its allies in the grouping.

India's recent troubles on the international stage, including the UNSC where China has been allowed to raise the Kashmir issue twice in five months, after nearly five decades, may also be a reason its objections at the Beijing discussions were not considered as carefully as in the past.

Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian Diaspora.

What do you understand by Asian Century?Explain and discuss what are the opportunities for India amidst the growing significance of Asia.(250 words)
The Hindu
Why this question:
The article highlights the fact that In the coming years, Asian economies will become larger than the rest of the world combined in PPP terms, for the first time since the 19th century. Thus the question on the importance of Asian century.
Key demand of the question:
Explain first the coming of the concept of Asian century and discuss the context of India and the prospects India has in such a century.
Directive:
Explain – Clarify the topic by giving a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Define what Asian century is;The Asian Century is the projected 21st-century dominance of Asian politics and culture, assuming certain demographic and economic trends persist.
Body:
Highlight the fact that after a gap of 200 years, Asian economies are again larger than the rest of the world's combined. As India and China resolve their border dispute, Asia is providing the multilateral alternative to a world divided by values, and no longer by ideology.
Use illustrations from the article to bring out the context of the question.
Explain the opportunities India has.
Discuss the possible challenges from the West and the Gulf crisis.
Conclusion:
Over the coming century, cooperation between China and India can play a crucial role in reviving multilateralism and building a more united Asia.

Introduction:

The **Asian Century** refers to the dominant role that Asia is expected to play in the 21st century due to its burgeoning economy and demographic trends. The concept of the Asian Century gained credence following the rapid economic growth of China and India since the 1980s, which propelled both of them to the ranks of the world's largest economies. After a gap of 200 years, Asian economies are again larger than the rest of the world's combined.

Body:

Growing significance of Asia:

- China, in 2013, after attaining 15% of global wealth, announced the multilateral Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and in 2014, launched the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, challenging the global governance paradigm.
- In 2015, emerging India established the International Solar Alliance, laying out a distinct global sustainable development framework, and seeking a triumvirate.
- The United States has recognised the 'Asian Century' bypassing multilateralism; its direct dealings with China and India and the Indo-Pacific construct are examples

Opportunities for India:

- **Services:** It accounts for 53% of India's GDP
- **Young labour force:** younger than China's median age by around ten years
- New markets for the rest of the region
- **Growth:** despite the downturn, GDP in India is expected to grow at well above 5% for the coming period.
- There is room for India to become a larger sourcing base for global supply chains.
- India can benefit from the flows of capital and investment powering development.
- East Asia has emerged as a leading hub that rivals the leading innovation hubs globally.
- Nearly 65% of global patents stemmed from Asia between 2015 and 2017, derived from the 50 fastest-rising innovation cities in Asia.
- This gives an opportunity for Indian firms to be a part of this Asia-wide innovation arc.
- **Rapidly growing Asia** is catapulting its major cities into leading consumption centers.
- This offers a market opportunity for Indian businesses ranging from IT services, tourism services, generic pharmaceuticals, automotive components, agrochemicals, and so forth.

Measures needed:

- **Improving infrastructure:** Investments are needed to improve the logistical backbone supporting manufacturing.
- **R&D:** Incentives are needed to encourage future investments in R&D.
- **Innovation:** Large-scale innovation hubs need to be developed to move to manufacture to the next phase and help to capture the demand opportunity.
- **Attract investments:** while India is beginning to attract investment from firms across Asia, more needs to be done to realize the potential opportunity of investment flows from other countries.

Conclusion:

The Asian century is truly underway. As globalization gives way to regionalism, Asia takes a leading position. India could look to many of the opportunities arising out of the region's rapid integration and shifting networks and flows to help drive its next chapter of growth.

What do you understand by war crimes? What steps can a country take in case its cultural property is threatened? Discuss in detail the safeguards available to a country under various conventions.(250 words)

Indian Express

Why this question:

Following the assassination of Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, President Donald Trump tweeted on Saturday that if "Iran strikes any Americans, or American assets" in retaliation, the US would target 52 sites in Iran, "some at a very high level & important to Iran & the Iranian culture". Thus the question.

Key demand of the question:

Discuss in detail the theory of war crimes; explain the importance of Cultural heritage and its preservation highlight the various conventions that are in force to ensure cultural heritage of each and every country is preserved.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Define what war crimes are.

Body:

Discuss the aspects such as Iran is home to one of the world's oldest civilizations dating back to 10,000 BC. Its rich heritage and culture is an amalgam of Arab, Persian, Turkish and South Asian cultures.

Twenty-four Iranian sites are on UNESCO's World Heritage List, two of which are natural sites and the rest cultural sites.

Discuss then What the problem with targeting cultural heritage is.

Take hints from the article and highlight in what way they can be preserved.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

According to the **United Nations**, a **war crime** is a serious breach of international law committed against civilians or "enemy combatants" during an international or domestic armed conflict. A war crime occurs when superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering is inflicted upon an enemy. In contrast with genocide and crimes against humanity, war crimes have to occur in the context of armed conflict.

The US President tweeted on that if "Iran strikes any Americans, or American assets" in retaliation, the US would target 52 sites in Iran, "some at a very high level & important to Iran & the Iranian culture".

Body:

Previous incidents of threats to cultural heritage:

- During the Siege of Dubrovnik in 1991-92 by the Yugoslav People's Army, the old town of Dubrovnik in Croatia was targeted in an attempt to wipe out Croatian history and cultural heritage. Subsequently, during the Croat-Bosniak war, Croat paramilitary forces destroyed the 16th century Stari Most bridge in Mostar in today's Bosnia-Herzegovina, in 1993.
- In 2001, the Taliban destroyed statutes of the Buddha that had been carved into sandstone cliffs in Bamiyan, Afghanistan, between the 3rd and 6th centuries AD.
- In 2006, the UN and the Cambodian government established the Khmer Rouge Tribunal to prosecute the destruction of Cambodia's cultural assets that included mosques, churches and temples along with other sites of cultural significance.
- Between 2014 and 2017, the Islamic State destroyed several places of religious and cultural significance. In 2015, the IS captured and destroyed the ancient Syrian city of Palmyra, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Steps can a country take in case its cultural property is threatened:

- Following the unparalleled destruction of cultural heritage in World War II, the nations of the world adopted **at The Hague in 1954**, **The Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict**, the first international treaty focussed exclusively on the protection of cultural heritage during war and armed conflict.
- There are currently 133 signatories to Convention, including countries that have acceded to and ratified the treaty.
- Both the United States and Iran (as well as India) signed the Convention on May 14, 1954, and it entered into force on August 7, 1956.

Safeguards available:

- The **Geneva Convention Protocol I**, signed in 1949 and amended in 1977, renders unlawful "any acts of hostility directed against the historic monuments, works of art or places of worship which constitute the cultural or spiritual heritage of peoples."
- **The Rome Statute of 1998**, the founding treaty of the International Criminal Court, describes as a "war crime" any intentional attack against a historical monument, or a building dedicated to religion, education, art, or science.
- Article 8 of the Rome Statute deals with war crimes.
- Article 8(2)(b)(ii) says war crimes include "intentionally directing attacks against civilian objects, that is, objects which are not military objectives", and 8(2)(b)(ix) mentions "intentionally directing attacks against buildings dedicated to religion, education, art, science or charitable purposes, historic monuments, hospitals and places where the sick and wounded are collected, provided they are not military objectives".
- 122 countries are States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The United States is a signatory that has not ratified the Statute. India has neither signed nor ratified the Statute.

Conclusion:

Trump's threatened actions would be morally reprehensible even outside the law, because they would destroy centuries-old places of profound importance not just to Iranians, but to all of human civilization.

A nation that willfully destroys another country's heritage would be no better than the criminals who have destroyed irreplaceable sites in Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere in recent years.

Protecting civilian lives is paramount, but saving cultural sites is consistent with that mission, too. Destroying mosques, museums and libraries will certainly result in civilian casualties.

What is happening in Libya? Does a ceasefire still looks far-fetched? Discuss in the light of recently concluded Berlin Summit.(250 words)

The Hindu

Why this question:
World leaders made a fresh push for peace in Libya at a summit in Berlin on Sunday, in a desperate bid to stop the conflict-wracked nation from turning into a "second Syria". Thus the question.

Key demand of the question:
Discuss in detail the ongoing Syrian crisis and the possibility of ceasefire in near future.

Directive:

Discuss *– This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.*

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:
Describe what is happening in Libya currently.

Body:
Explain what is happening in Libya; Libya has been wracked by conflict since the 2011 uprising which ousted long-time strongman Muammar Gaddafi.
Discuss the efforts by foreign powers to resolve the crisis.
Explain the possibility of ceasefire, role of UN etc.
Take hints from the article and comment upon the Berlin action.

Conclusion:
Conclude with what needs to be done.

Introduction:

World leaders made a fresh push for peace in Libya at a summit in Berlin on Sunday, in a desperate bid to stop the conflict-wracked nation from turning into a "second Syria". The participation of so many major powers embroiled in the conflict signalled a renewed sense of urgency to stop spiralling violence, but the future of what was agreed upon depends in large part on the good faith of the signatories and their ability to load pressure on their Libyan allies, both of which remain seriously in doubt.

Body:
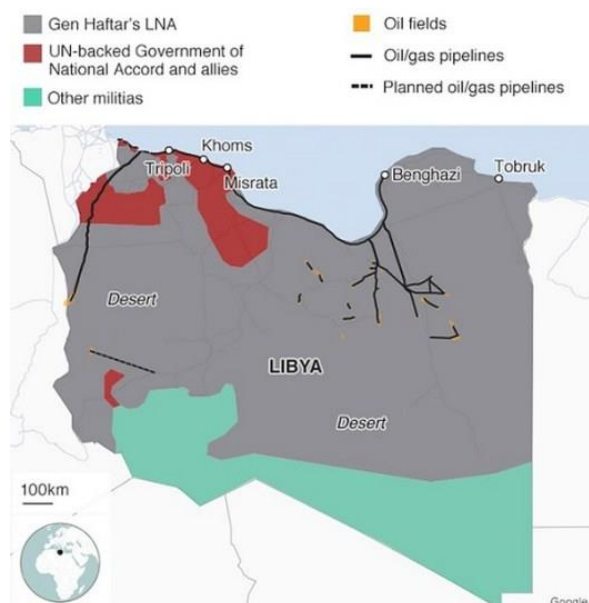
Incidents in Libya:

- Libya has been wracked by conflict since the 2011 uprising which ousted long-time strongman Muammar Gaddafi.
- Gen Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA) controls much of eastern Libya, and last April he launched an offensive against the country's rival Government of National Accord (GNA) in the capital, Tripoli.
- His forces have so far been unable to take the city, but earlier this month the LNA captured the country's third-biggest city, Sirte.
- According to the UN, the fighting has killed hundreds of people and displaced thousands more from their homes.
- A truce was announced earlier this month between Gen Haftar and the GNA, led by Prime Minister Fayez al-Serraj.
- But both sides blame each other for reported breaches of the agreement, and attempts to broker a lasting ceasefire broke down last week at a summit in Moscow.

Role of foreign states:

- The role of foreign states in the conflict has come into focus in recent months, with Turkey passing a controversial law to deploy troops to help GNA forces in Tripoli.
- Gen Haftar's LNA has the backing of Russia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Jordan.

Berlin Summit:

- The Presidents of Russia, Turkey and France joined other global chiefs at the talks hosted by Chancellor Angela Merkel and held under the auspices of the United Nations.
- The summit's main goal is to get foreign powers wielding influence in the region to stop interfering in the war — be it through weapons, troops or financing.
- The UN hopes all sides will sign up to a plan to refrain from interference, and commit to a truce that leads to a lasting end to hostilities, according to a draft of a final communique seen by AFP.
- That document also urges all parties to re-commit to a much-violated UN arms embargo and raises the prospect of intra-Libyan political talks in Geneva at the end of the month.

The ceasefire still looks far-fetched:

- Analysts doubt good faith is enough to end bloodshed as world powers pledge to end foreign interference and back truce.
- Turkey has repeatedly urged Europe to stand united behind Sarraj's government, warning that Tripoli's fall could allow jihadist groups like the Islamic State or Al-Qaeda to regroup.
- Turkey has also cautioned that further unrest could prompt a new wave of migrants to head for Europe.
- For Turkey, a fall of Sarraj's GNA could jeopardise a maritime boundary agreement the parties signed. It gives Ankara extensive rights over the eastern Mediterranean where the recent discovery of undersea gas reserves has triggered a scramble by littoral states.
- With so many regional rivals and competing interests facing off, Wolfram Lacher, Libya expert at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, was sceptical about the chances of a Berlin breakthrough.

Conclusion:

A political solution agreed upon by all involved in the conflict is the best possible way out. The UNSC [United Nations Security Council] should impose appropriate sanctions on those who are found to be in violation of the ceasefire arrangements and on Member States to enforce these. If there is eventually a long-enough ceasefire in place, it would allow the UN to go back to the political drawing board, and design a fresh political process for the country.

Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate
Why has the U.S. crippled the functioning of the WTO? Discuss in detail the reasons for US actions and efforts to revive the appellate body.(250 words)
The Hindu
Why this question:
The U.S. decisions making the World Trade Organization's Appellate Body dysfunctional. Thus the question.
Key demand of the question:
Discuss in why the US has been crippling the functions of WTO, what are the consequences of it and what can be done to overcome it.
Directive:
Discuss *– This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.*
Structure of the answer:
Introduction:
Discuss the context of the question.
Body:
Explain the background of the question.
In December 2019, the U.S. cut short its share of the funding to the WTO. This move has resulted in a shortage of funds for the Appellate Body of WTO to function.
The U.S. has also stalled the selection process for filling six vacancies at the Appellate Body by virtue of the veto power it enjoys in the appointment process. Consequently, the Appellate Body is left with only one member, who will not be able to deliver any rulings on pending trade disputes since a quorum of three members is required to adjudicate any dispute.
Discuss the dispute settlement at WTO.

Explain the issue in detail and suggest what needs to be done.
Conclusion:
Conclude that the strangulation of the Appellate Body is a reflection of unilateralism and protectionism that are on a sharp rise. The absence of the Appellate Body paves the way for the return of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, 1947 rules which many countries consider as a step back in global trade.

Introduction:

Resolving trade disputes has been one of the core functions of the WTO. When countries cannot resolve matters with their trading partners, they show up at the door of the WTO. The **Appellate Body(AB)**, one of the highest adjudicating bodies of the international trade world, hears disputes brought by WTO members. After more than two decades, this mechanism is now under duress.

Body:

Importance of WTO Appellate body:

- The panels and the Appellate Body have issued rulings in almost 200 disputes involving bananas, cotton, aircraft, beef, tuna, trade, 'shrimp-turtles', hot-rolled coils, subsidies for renewable energy, and gambling.
- Cases involving trade remedies such as countervailing and anti-dumping measures, and the use of a controversial practice called the zeroing methodology that inflated the anti-dumping duties, dominated the disputes among the WTO members.
- The establishment of the Appellate Body has given teeth and credibility to the rules-based multilateral trading system.
- Moreover, it provided security and predictability in the multilateral trading system.

USA has crippled functioning the WTO:

- The smooth and effective functioning of the Appellate Body, which is regarded as the jewel in the crown, has posed hurdles to the U.S. for adopting unilateral measures.
- Several U.S. provisions for imposing countervailing and anti-dumping measures were found to be inconsistent with core provisions of the WTO agreements.
- Finally, the U.S. chose to spike the Appellate Body by resorting to starving funds for its functioning as well as blocking the selection process for filling six vacancies.
- Consequently, the Appellate Body is left with only one member, who will not be able to deliver any rulings on the pending trade disputes.
- A minimum of three members are required to adjudicate any dispute.

Reasons for USA's actions:

- The independent and impartial functioning of the Appellate Body in complex trade disputes has become a problem for Washington over the past many years.
- While the U.S. has accepted favourable rulings that served its interests in global trade, it raised intransigent concerns about adverse decisions that struck down the U.S.'s trade measures.
- Washington has repeatedly accused the Appellate Body of allegedly straying away from the dispute settlement understanding (DSU) in several disputes involving the U.S.' measures that were challenged by other members.
- USA has maintained that the Appellate Body failed to issue rulings within the 90-day deadline.

- The U.S. says the Appellate Body's rulings failed to adhere to the provisions in the dispute settlement understanding in cases involving countervailing (anti-subsidy) and anti-dumping measures based on the zeroing methodology.
- It argues that the Appellate Body's decisions "assert a precedential value for its reports…".
- It has suggested that "some Appellate Body members view themselves as 'appellate judges'… serving on a 'World Trade Court' that is the 'centrepiece' of the WTO dispute settlement system … rather than one component of it."

Way Forward:

- WTO needs to strengthen the dispute settlement mechanism as there are issues in appointment of judges in new appellate body.
- WTO needs to enhance discussion mechanism by introducing wider consultations. It has been a long-standing complaint by the smaller participants that the consultations or decision making is limited to the green room of DG of WTO.
- There is a need of free trade is required more by developing countries like India than developed countries.
- There is need for the structural reform in the WTO functioning as multilateral trading system. Despite WTO being a democratic organization, there is a need to make it more effective in protecting the interests of small nations against stronger countries. The process of retaliation is ineffective and too impractical for smaller players.
- So, developing countries must work collaboratively to strengthen WTO to collaborate effectively and learn from the past experiences when India and China led the developing countries in environmental forums, garnering funds in the form of GCF.

Conclusion:

The strangulation of the Appellate Body is a reflection of unilateralism and protectionism that are on a sharp rise. The world has changed and multilateral institutions now have to embed these changes. This WTO crisis might well be the final battle to retain control over a Western-centric organisation. The time has come for the emerging economies and the developing world to have a greater say in how to shape multilateralism and its institutions.