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IMPORTANT CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR PRELIMS VOL 45

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IMPORTANT CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR PRELIMS VOL - 45

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INDIAN POLITY**1) DAM SAFETY ACT 2021**

IN NEWS: - The dam safety bill 2019 has been passed in the winter session of parliament, making it the dam safety act, 2021. The constitutional validity of the Dam safety act has been challenged in the high court.

ABOUT DAM SAFETY ACT 2021

- “An Act to provide for the surveillance, inspection, operation, and maintenance of the specified dam for prevention of dam failure related disasters and to provide for an institutional mechanism to ensure their safe functioning and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.”
- Features of the act:
 - The National Committee on Dam Safety will be constituted and will be chaired by the chairperson, Central Water Commission. Functions of the committee will include formulating policies and regulations regarding dam safety standards and prevention of dam failures, analyzing the causes of major dam failures, and suggesting changes in dam safety practices.
 - The act also ideates setting up a National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) to be headed by an officer, not below the rank of an Additional Secretary, to be appointed by the central government. The main task of this authority includes implementing the policies formulated by the National Committee on Dam Safety, resolving issues between State Dam Safety Organisations (SDSOs), or between an SDSO and any dam owner in that state, specifying regulations for inspection and investigation of dams.

- The NDSA will also provide accreditation to agencies working on construction, design, and alteration of dams.
- The act also envisages constituting a State Dam Safety Organisation (SDSO) whose functions will be to keep perpetual surveillance, inspection, monitoring the operation and maintenance of dams, keeping a database of all dams, and recommending safety measures to owners of dams.
- The owners of the specified dams are required to provide a dam safety unit in each dam. This unit will inspect the dams before and after the monsoon session, and during and after any calamity or sign of distress.
- Dam owners will be required to prepare an emergency action plan, and carry out risk assessment studies for each dam at specified regular intervals.
- Dam owners will also be required to conduct a comprehensive dam safety evaluation of each dam, at regular intervals, through a panel of experts.
- The act provides for two types of offences – obstructing a person in the discharge of his functions, and refusing to comply with directions issued under the proposed law.

2) NATIONAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

IN NEWS:-The National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) under the Chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary met to review the relief and restoration efforts made by the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations in the aftermath of the Cyclonic storm ‘Tauktae’.

ABOUT NATIONAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- It is a committee set up by the Government of India in the wake of a natural calamity for effective coordination and implementation of relief measures and operations.
- It is headed by Cabinet Secretary.
- On the constitution of such a committee, the Agriculture Secretary shall provide all necessary information to and seek directions.
- It has been constituted in the Cabinet Secretariat.

3) STAND UP INDIA SCHEME

IN NEWS: - The Ministry of Finance has extended the Standup India Scheme up to the year 2025.

ABOUT STAND UP INDIA SCHEME

- It was launched in April 2016 to promote entrepreneurship at the grass-root level focusing on economic empowerment and job creation.
- The aim is to leverage the institutional credit structure to reach out to the underserved sector of people such as SCs, STs and Women Entrepreneurs.
- The objective of this scheme is to facilitate bank loans between Rs.10 lakh and Rs.1 crore to at least one SC or ST borrower and at least one woman borrower per bank branch of Scheduled Commercial Banks for setting up a Greenfield enterprise.
- This enterprise may be in manufacturing, services or the trading sector.
- Eligibility: SC/ST and/or women entrepreneurs; above 18 years of age.
- Loans under the scheme are available for only Greenfield projects.
- Borrower should not be in default to any bank or financial institution.

- In case of non-individual enterprises, at least 51% of the shareholding and controlling stake should be held by either an SC/ST or Woman entrepreneur.
- The margin money requirement for loans under the Scheme has been reduced from 'upto 25%' to 'upto 15%' and activities allied to agriculture have been included in the Scheme.
- Connect Centers: The offices of SIDBI (Small Industries Development Bank of India) and NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development) are designated Stand-Up Connect Centres (SUCC).
- Performance so far: Banks have sanctioned Rs 26,204 crore to about 1,16,266 beneficiaries under the Scheme in the last five years.
- The scheme has benefited more than 93,094 women entrepreneurs.

4) CENTRAL TIBETAN RELIEF COMMITTEE

IN NEWS: - The Union government has extended the scheme to provide ₹ 40 crore grants-in-aid to the Dalai Lama's Central Tibetan Relief Committee (CTRC) for another five years, up to fiscal year 2025-26.

ABOUT CENTRAL TIBETAN RELIEF COMMITTEE

- Launched in 2015.
- It is a scheme of providing grant-in-aid of ₹ 40 crores to CTCRC to meet the administrative and social welfare activities expenses of 36 Tibetan settlement offices in different States.

5) FOREIGN CONTRIBUTION REGULATION ACT

IN NEWS: - The Supreme Court (SC) upheld the constitutional validity of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Act (FCRA), 2020.

ABOUT FOREIGN CONTRIBUTION REGULATION ACT 2010

- Foreign funding of persons in India is regulated under FCRA act and is implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Individuals are permitted to accept foreign contributions without permission of MHA.
- However, the monetary limit for acceptance of such foreign contributions shall be less than Rs. 25,000.
- The Act ensures that the recipients of foreign contributions adhere to the stated purpose for which such contribution has been obtained.
- Under the Act, organisations are required to register themselves every five years.
- **Amendments:**
 - Prohibition to accept foreign contribution: It bars public servants from receiving foreign contributions.
 - Transfer of foreign contribution: It prohibits the transfer of foreign contribution to any other person.
 - Aadhaar for registration: Aadhaar number is mandatory for all office bearers, directors or key functionaries of a person receiving foreign contribution, as an identification document.
 - FCRA account: The foreign contribution must be received only in an account designated by the bank as FCRA account in such branches of the State Bank of India, New Delhi.
 - No funds other than the foreign contribution should be received or deposited in this account.
 - Restriction in utilisation of foreign contribution: It allowed the government to restrict usage of unutilised foreign contribution.
 - This may be done if, based on an inquiry the government believes that such person has contravened provisions of the FCRA.

- Administrative Capping: While NGOs earlier could use up to 50% funds for administrative use, the new amendment restricted this use to 20%.

6) WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION AMENDMENT BILL

IN NEWS: - The bill was recently passed in Lok Sabha.

ABOUT WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION AMENDMENT BILL

- The Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act, passed in 2005, only banned the manufacturing of weapons of mass destruction.
- The amendment bill is aimed at widening its ambit.
- Key Features of the bill
 - Prohibition on financing certain activities: The Bill bars persons from financing any prohibited activity related to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.
 - It gives more powers to the Central Government: To prevent persons from financing such activities, the central government may freeze, seize or attach their funds, financial assets, or economic resources.
 - It may also prohibit persons from making finances or related services available for the benefit of other persons in relation to any activity which is prohibited.

7) SIMPLIFICATION OF CHILD ADOPTION PROCESS IN INDIA

IN NEWS: - The Supreme Court has agreed to hear a plea that seeks to simplify the legal process involved in child adoption.

ABOUT ADOPTION IN INDIA

- In India, an Indian citizen or a non-resident Indian (NRI) can adopt a child under the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act of 1956 and the Guardian and Wards Act of 1890.
- The prospective adoptive parents shall be physically, mentally and emotionally stable, financially capable and shall not have any life threatening medical condition.
- Any prospective adoptive parents, irrespective of his marital status and whether or not he has biological son or daughter, can adopt a child subject to following, namely: -
 - the consent of both the spouses for the adoption shall be required, in case of a married couple;
 - a single female can adopt a child of any gender;
 - a single male shall not be eligible to adopt a girl child;
 - No child shall be given in adoption to a couple unless they have at least two years of stable marital relationship.
 - The minimum age difference between the child and either of the prospective adoptive parents shall not be less than twenty-five years.
 - The age criteria for prospective adoptive parents shall not be applicable in case of relative adoptions and adoption by step-parent.
 - Couples with three or more children shall not be considered for adoption except in case of special need children.

ABOUT CARA:

- Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) is a statutory body of Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India.
- It functions as the nodal body for adoption of Indian children and is mandated to monitor and regulate in-country and inter-country adoptions.

- CARA is designated as the Central Authority to deal with inter-country adoptions in accordance with the provisions of the Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoption, 1993, ratified by Government of India in 2003.
- CARA primarily deals with adoption of orphan, abandoned and surrendered children through its associated / recognised adoption agencies.
- CARA is also mandated to frame regulations on adoption-related matters from time to time as per Section 68 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.

8) ELECTION COMMISSION - PARTY SYMBOLS

IN NEWS: - Former Punjab CM Amarinder Singh's newly formed party Punjab Lok Congress has received its party symbol – Hockey stick and ball.

ABOUT ALLOCATING SYMBOLS TO POLITICAL PARTIES

As per the guidelines, to get a symbol allotted:

- A party/candidate has to provide a list of three symbols from the EC's free symbols list at the time of filing nomination papers.
- Among them, one symbol is allotted to the party/candidate on a first-come-first-serve basis.
- When a recognised political party splits, the Election Commission takes the decision on assigning the symbol.
- The Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968 empowers the EC to recognise political parties and allot symbols.
- Under Paragraph 15 of the Order, it can decide disputes among rival groups or sections of a recognised political party staking claim to its name and symbol.

- The EC is also the only authority to decide issues on a dispute or a merger. The Supreme Court upheld its validity in Sadiq Ali and another vs. ECI in 1971.
- As per the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) (Amendment) Order, 2017, party symbols are either:
 - Reserved: Eight national parties and 64 state parties across the country have “reserved” symbols.
 - Free: The Election Commission also has a pool of nearly 200 “free” symbols that are allotted to the thousands of unrecognised regional parties that pop up before elections.
- On the question of a split in a political party outside the legislature, Para 15 of the Symbols Order, 1968, states: “When the Commission is satisfied that there are rival sections or groups of a recognised political party each of whom claims to be that party the Commission may decide that one such rival section or group or none of such rival sections or groups is that recognised political party and the decision of the Commission shall be binding on all such rival sections or groups.”
- This applies to disputes in recognised national and state parties (like the LJP, in this case). For splits in registered but unrecognised parties, the EC usually advises the warring factions to resolve their differences internally or to approach the court.

9) INTER STATE RIVER WATER DISPUTES ACT 1956

IN NEWS: Karnataka CM Recently observed that the time has come to revisit the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act as it creates more disputes than resolving them.

ABOUT INTERSTATE WATER DISPUTES

- Art 262 provides for the adjudication of inter-state water disputes. It has two following provisions:
 - Parliament may by law provide for the adjudication of any dispute or complaint with respect to the use, distribution and control of waters of any inter-state river and river valley.
 - Parliament may also provide that neither the Supreme Court nor any other court is to exercise jurisdiction in respect of any such dispute or complaint.
- Under the provisions of the act, the central government has enacted, River boards act (1956) and Inter-state water disputes act (1956).
- The river board act provides for the establishment of river boards for the regulation and development of the Inter-State River and river valleys. Such a river board is established on the request of the state governments concerned.
- The inter-state water dispute act empowers the central government to set up an ad hoc tribunal for the adjudication of a dispute between the two or more states in relation to the water of an inter-state river. The decision of the tribunal would be final and binding. Furthermore, the act bars the SC and any other court to have jurisdiction in this matter.

10) 5G VERTICAL ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME

IN NEWS: - The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has invited Expression of Interest (EoI) for “5G Vertical Engagement and Partnership Program (VEPP)” initiative to build strong collaboration partnerships across 5G Use-case ecosystem stakeholders.

ABOUT 5G VEPP

- It is an Initiative, where the DoT will “facilitate necessary approvals, regulatory clearances to enable use case prototyping, pilots, demos, trials at the user or vertical industry premises”.
- The DoT will facilitate access to experimental spectrum, access to testbeds and engagement with academia, other ministries for necessary regulatory policies and pilots wherever feasible.
- The technology stakeholders, which agree to be a part of the partnership will work to develop and deploy prototypes and pilots for 5G use cases as per the needs of the respective ministries or industry verticals to help accelerate commercial usage and adoption by enterprises.
- It seeks to build strong collaboration partnerships across 5G Use-case ecosystem stakeholders with velocity and with an exclusive emphasis to address User/Vertical Industry needs.
- It will enable close collaboration between User verticals and 5G Tech stakeholders (Service providers, Solution providers & partner Original Equipment Manufacturers), which can trigger a multiplier effect to try & finetune 5G digital solutions in respective economic verticals.

11) RAISING MARRIAGE AGE OF WOMEN

IN NEWS: - Lok Sabha has sent the Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021 which seeks to raise the age of marriage for women to 21 to a standing committee.

ABOUT RAISING THE MARRIAGE AGE FOR WOMEN

- **Rationale behind the legislation:** The age of marriage should be uniformly applicable to all religions, caste, creed, overriding any custom or law that seeks to discriminate against women.
- The Bill would also amend:
 - The Indian Christian Marriage Act, 1972.
 - The Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936.
 - The Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937.
 - The Special Marriage Act, 1954.
 - The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.
 - The Foreign Marriage Act, 1956.

Important recommendations:

- The age of marriage should be increased to 21 years.
- The government should look into increasing access to schools and colleges for girls, including their transportation to these institutes from far-flung areas.
- Skill and business training has also been recommended, as has sex education in schools.
- These deliveries must come first, as, unless they are implemented and women are empowered, the law will not be as effective.

HISTORY AND CULTURE

12) BABU JAGJIVAN RAM

IN NEWS: - The Prime Minister paid tributes to freedom fighter Babu Jagjivan Ram on his 115th birth anniversary (5th April).

ABOUT BABU JAGJIVAN RAM

- Jagjivan Ram, popularly known as Babuji was a national leader, a freedom fighter, a crusader of social justice, a champion of depressed classes, an outstanding Parliamentarian, a true democrat, a distinguished Union Minister, an able administrator and an exceptionally gifted orator.
- Jagjivan Ram had organized a number of Ravidas Sammelans and had celebrated Guru Ravidas Jayanti in different areas of Calcutta (Kolkata).
- In 1934, he founded the Akhil Bhartiya Ravidas Mahasabha in Calcutta.
- He was instrumental in the foundation of the All India Depressed Classes League.
- In October 1935, Babuji appeared before the Hammond Commission at Ranchi and demanded, for the first time, voting rights for the Dalits.
- Babu Jagjivan Ram played a very active and crucial role in the freedom struggle. Inspired by Gandhiji, Babuji courted arrest on 10 December 1940. After his release, he entrenched himself deeply into the Civil Disobedience Movement and Satyagraha.
- Babuji was arrested again on 19 August 1942 for his active participation in the Quit India Movement launched by the Indian National Congress.

He has also served as the deputy prime minister of India.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

13) UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

IN NEWS: - India abstained on a vote at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. The Council moved the resolution to set up an international commission of enquiry into Russia's actions in Ukraine.

ABOUT UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

- The Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the world.
- The Council was created by the United Nations General Assembly in 2006. It replaced the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights.
- The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) serves as the Secretariat of the Human Rights Council.
- OHCHR is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- It is made up of 47 United Nations Member States which are elected by the UN General Assembly (UNGA).
- The UNGA takes into account the candidate States' contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as their voluntary pledges and commitments in this regard.
- The Council's Membership is based on equitable geographical distribution.
- Members of the Council serve for a period of three years and are not eligible for immediate re-election after serving two consecutive terms.

14) UIGHURS

IN NEWS: - Recently, Forty-three countries have called on China to “ensure full respect for the rule of law” for the Muslim Uighur community in Xinjiang.

ABOUT UIGHURS

- The Uyghurs are a predominantly Muslim minority Turkic ethnic group, whose origins can be traced to Central and East Asia.
- Their native region is considered to be the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in the People’s Republic of China.

- There are also smaller Uyghur communities living in the United States, Australia, Canada, Germany, Sweden, Afghanistan, Norway, Turkey, Belgium, Russia, the Netherlands and Saudi Arabia.
- The Uyghurs are considered to be one of the 55 officially recognized ethnic minority communities in China.
- However, China recognises the community only as a regional minority and rejects that they are an indigenous group.

15) GOLAN HEIGHTS

IN NEWS: - Israeli PM recently said the country intends to double the amount of settlers living in the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights with a multimillion-dollar plan meant to further consolidate Israel's hold on the territory it captured from Syria more than five decades ago.

ABOUT GOLAN HEIGHTS

- Golan Heights refers to the border region captured from Syria by Israel during the Six-Day Middle-East War of 1967.
- This region includes the western two-thirds of the geological Golan Heights and the Israeli-occupied part of Mount Hermon.
- It is bounded by the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee on the west, Mount Hermon on the north, the seasonal Wadi Al-Ruqq'd on the east, and the Yarmk River on the south.
- The U.S. was the first country to recognize Israel's sovereignty over the Golan, which the rest of the international community regards as Israeli-occupied.

16) GAZA STRIP

IN NEWS: - Egypt is seeking to reach an agreement on a cease-fire between Israel and the Palestinian resistance group Hamas in Gaza.

ABOUT GAZA STRIP

- The Gaza Strip is an entirely artificial creation that emerged in 1948 when roughly three-fourths of Palestine's Arab population was displaced, in some cases expelled, during the course of Israel's creation. And most of the refugees, they were sort of scattered across the region in neighboring countries like Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.
- Some went to the West Bank, which came under Jordanian rule after 1948. And a very large number went to the Gaza Strip, which is this tiny little coastal strip between Egypt and what is now Israel. Today, the population of Gaza, about 70% of Gaza's population are refugees.
- Hamas forcibly took control over the Gaza Strip in 2007. Shortly thereafter, the Israelis imposed a complete closure on Gaza's borders. They declared Gaza to be an enemy entity. Of course, Gaza is not a state.
- Hamas, of course, is viewed by Israel and by much of the international community as a terrorist organization, including the United States, for their history of attacks on civilians and so forth.

17) GLOBAL CENTRE FOR TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

IN NEWS: - The Union Cabinet has approved the establishment of the World Health Organization – Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (WHO GCTM) at Jamnagar in Gujarat. This topic is important for the current affairs section of the UPSC exam, especially with respect to the prelims exam.

ABOUT WHO GCTM

- The announcement was made subsequent to the signing of the host country agreement between the Government of India and the World Health Organization.
- The Director-General of the World Health Organization had announced the establishment of WHO GCTM on the occasion of the fifth Ayurveda Day on 13 November 2020, along with the Indian Prime Minister.
- A Joint Task Force (JTF) is being constituted for coordination, execution and monitoring of activities for the establishment of the Centre. JTF comprises representatives from the Government of India, Permanent Mission of India, Geneva and the World Health Organization.
- The WHO GCTM is to be established under the Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa and Homoeopathy).

The WHO GCTM will be the first global centre for traditional medicine.

GEOGRAPHY

18) LONG PERIOD AVERAGE

IN NEWS: - The country is likely to receive a normal monsoon for the fourth consecutive year, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said in its first Long Range Forecast (LRF) for this year released on Thursday (April 14).

ABOUT LONG PERIOD AVERAGE

- The IMD predicts a “normal”, “below normal”, or “above normal” monsoon in relation to a benchmark “long period average” (LPA). According to the IMD, the “LPA of rainfall is the rainfall recorded over a particular region for a

given interval (like month or season) average over a long period like 30 years, 50 years, etc”.

- While this quantitative benchmark refers to the average rainfall recorded from June to September for the entire country, the amount of rain that falls every year varies from region to region and from month to month.
- Therefore, along with the countrywide figure, the IMD also maintains LPAs for every meteorological region of the country — this number ranges from around 61 cm for the drier Northwest India to more than 143 cm for the wetter East and Northeast India.
- A 50-year LPA covers for large variations in either direction caused by freak years of unusually high or low rainfall (as a result of events such as El Nino or La Nina), as well as for the periodic drought years and the increasingly common extreme weather events caused by climate change.

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

19) GLOBAL WIND REPORT

- Recently, the Global Wind Report for 2022 was published by the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC).
- The Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) was established in 2005 to provide a credible and representative forum for the entire wind energy sector at an international level.

20) COAL GASIFICATION

IN NEWS: - The Delhi-based non-profit, Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), has raised concerns about the Union Government’s announcement on coal gasification projects in the Budget 2022-23.

ABOUT COAL GASIFICATION

- Coal gasification is a process in which coal is partially oxidised with air, oxygen, steam or carbon dioxide to form a fuel gas.
- This gas is then used instead of piped natural gas, methane and others for deriving energy.
- In-situ gasification of coal – or Underground Coal Gasification (UCG) – is the technique of converting coal into gas while it is still in the seam and then extracting it through wells.
- It produces Syngas which is a mixture consisting primarily of methane (CH₄), carbon monoxide (CO), hydrogen (H₂), carbon dioxide (CO₂) and water vapour (H₂O)

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

21) FORTIFICATION OF RICE

IN NEWS: - Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution informed the Rajya Sabha that the government approved the Centrally Sponsored Pilot Scheme on "Fortification of Rice & its Distribution under Public Distribution System" for a period of 3 years beginning in 2019-20 with total outlay of Rs. 174.64 Cr.

ABOUT FORTIFICATION OF RICE

- To address anemia and micro-nutrient deficiency in the country, the Government of India approved this scheme for a period of 3 years in 2019-20.
- Under the Scheme, FCI (Food Corporation of India) has been asked to come up with a comprehensive plan for procurement and distribution of fortified rice in all the Districts of the country under Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) & Mid-Day Meal (MDM) Scheme from 2021-2022.

- The mid-day meal scheme is now known as PM POSHAN.
- Special focus remains on supplying fortified rice to the 112 specially identified Aspirational Districts of the country.
- Objectives the Scheme:
 - Distribution of Fortified Rice through Public Distribution System, to cater 15 Districts in the country - preferably one district per State in the initial phase of Implementation.
 - Coverage of NFSA (National Food Security Act) beneficiaries under PDS with Fortified Rice in the selected Districts.
 - Facilitate cross learning and sharing of best practices among States/UTs and DoF&PD (Department of Food and Public Distribution).
 - To evaluate the provision, coverage and Utilization of Fortified Rice by the target population as well as the efficiency/effectiveness of the consumption of fortified rice in reducing the targeted micronutrient deficiencies in different age and gender groups.

Note - Fortification is the addition of key vitamins and minerals such as iron, iodine, zinc, Vitamin A & D to staple foods such as rice, milk and salt to improve their nutritional content.

INTERNAL SECURITY

22) NAGA PEACE TALKS

IN NEWS: - Naga groups seek early peace deal. Nagaland Government-led consultative committee meeting adopted resolution for an early political solution.

ABOUT NAGA PEACE TALKS

- The talks seek to settle disputes that date back to colonial rule.

- The Nagas are an ethnic community that comprises several tribes who live in the state of Nagaland and its neighbourhood.
- Key demands of Naga groups: Creation of Greater Nagalim, an extension of Nagaland's borders by including Naga-dominated areas in neighbouring Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh and even of Myanmar uniting 1.2 million Nagas.
- Assertion of Naga nationalism, gave rise to decades of insurgency that claimed thousands of lives.

ABOUT NAGA PEACE PROCESS

- It refers to ongoing talks between the Indian government and Naga insurgent groups, in particular the NSCN(IM), since 1997 with the aim to sign a Naga Peace Accord.
- The Naga insurgency, rooted in Naga nationalism, is one of the oldest insurgencies in the country.
- In August 2015, the group signed a framework agreement with the Indian government for the Naga Peace Accord.
- Both the government and Naga groups successfully concluded talks on the government's deadline of October 31, 2019, no accord was signed.
- In January 2020, the government had IB special director Akshay Mishra step in and continue the engagement.
- The NSCN(IM) and the Indian government differed in their understanding of the framework agreement.
- The NSCN(IM) insistent on a Naga constitution, and was pushing for a Greater Nagalim stretching beyond the boundaries of the present Nagaland state.

- Although IM had softened its stance on the demand for a separate flag and constitution, still a few bones of contention remained.
- In November 2017, Ravi signed an agreement with seven groups who had come together under the banner of the Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs), which did not include the NSCN (IM).
- The IM, accused Ravi of attempting to “segregate the Naga civil society”.
- Ravi, meanwhile, continued to engage with the other Naga groups, and declared that the Accord would be signed with or without the NSCN(IM).

INDIAN ECONOMY

23) MINIMUM SUPPORT PRICE

IN NEWS: - BJP MP Varun Gandhi has introduced a private bill for Minimum Support Price of crops in Parliament.

ABOUT MSP

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- MSP is the rate at which the government buys grains from farmers. Currently, it fixes MSPs for 23 crops grown in both Kharif and Rabi seasons.
- The MSP is the rate at which the government purchases crops from farmers, and is based on a calculation of at least one-and-a-half times the cost of production incurred by the farmers.
- The Union Budget for 2018-19 had announced that MSP would be kept at levels of 1.5 the cost of production.
- The MSP is fixed twice a year on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), which is a statutory body and submits separate reports recommending prices for kharif and rabi seasons.
- The CACP considers both ‘A2+FL’ and ‘C2’ costs while recommending MSP.

- A2 costs cover all paid-out expenses, both in cash and kind, incurred by farmers on seeds, fertilisers, chemicals, hired labour, fuel and irrigation, among others.
- A2+FL covers actual paid-out costs plus an imputed value of unpaid family labour.
- The C2 costs account for the rentals and interest forgone on owned land and fixed capital assets respectively, on top of A2+FL.

DEFENCE

24) S 400 TRAINING EQUIPMENT

IN NEWS: - S-400 training equipment and simulators have arrived in India from Russia.

ABOUT S 400 MISSILE

- The S-400 Triumf is a mobile, surface-to-air missile system (SAM) designed by Russia.
- It is the most dangerous operationally deployed modern long-range SAM (MLR SAM) in the world, considered much ahead of the US-developed Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system (THAAD).

MISCELLANEOUS

25) INDEPENDENT UMBRELLA INSTITUTION FOR REGULATION OF INVESTIGATION AGENCIES

IN NEWS: - Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana calls for immediate need for the creation of an independent umbrella institution, so as to bring various central agencies like the CBI, Enforcement Directorate and the Serious Fraud Investigation Office under one roof.

Proposed structure of the institution:

- Independent head: The proposed umbrella body should be headed by an independent and impartial authority, appointed by a committee akin to the one which appointed the CBI Director. Its head could be assisted by deputies having specialisation in different domains.
- Statutory backing: The body should be created under a statute, clearly defining its powers, functions and jurisdictions.
- Directions: Once an incident is reported, the organisation should decide as to which specialised wing should take up investigation.
- Separation of prosecution and investigation wings: was to have separate and autonomous wings for prosecution and investigation, to ensure total independence.
- Annual audit: A reasonable check and balance would be a provision in the proposed law for annual audit of the institution's performance by the appointing committee.
- Replication by states: Since, the police and public order under the State list, State agencies must be equipped to deal with increasing challenges in the field of investigation. The proposed Central law for the umbrella investigative body, can be suitably replicated by the States.

26) CAG AUDIT OF UIDAI

IN NEWS: - The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India, has pulled up the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) over a range of issues related to the issuance of Aadhaar cards.

ABOUT UIDAI

- The UIDAI is a statutory authority established on 12th July 2016 by the Government of India under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Electronics

and Information Technology, following the provisions of the Aadhaar Act 2016.

- The UIDAI was initially set up by the Government of India in January 2009, as an attached office under the aegis of the Planning Commission.
- Mandate: The UIDAI is mandated to assign a 12-digit unique identification (UID) number (Aadhaar) to all the residents of India.

27) RISING WHEAT EXPORTS

IN NEWS: - India's wheat exports in terms of volume rose by more than 527 per cent to 3.2 Million Tonne (MT) from 0.51 MT reported during April-October period of 2020-21.

- The rise in wheat exports has been achieved because of the Agricultural Products Exports Development Authority (APEDA) taking up various initiatives such as organizing B2B exhibitions in different countries, exploring new potential markets and initiating marketing campaigns with active involvement of Indian Embassies.
- It is giving thrust on building infrastructure in the value chain for giving boosts to cereal exports in collaboration with the state governments and other stakeholders such as exporters, farmer producer organizations, transporters etc.
- In March 2021, it organized its first Virtual Trade Fair – India Rice and Agro Commodity Show, where participation of wheat exporters was also organized.
- A sensitization programme for wheat startups was organized to familiarize them about export opportunities.

- In order to ensure seamless quality certification of products to be exported, APEDA has recognized 220 labs across India to provide testing services for a wide range of products and exporters.
- India is the second largest producer of wheat with a share of around 13.53 per cent of world total production.

28) COAL CRISIS IN INDIA

IN NEWS: - India's thermal power plants are facing a severe coal shortage, with coal stocks having come down to an average of four days of fuel across an increasing number of thermal stations.

REASONS FOR COAL CRISIS

- Eruption in Power Demand: Economy recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic coupled with supply issues have led to the current coal shortage.
- India is suffering from the impacts of a sharp surge in electricity demand, a squeeze on domestic mine output and surging prices of seaborne coal.
- Increased Share of Thermal Power Plants: Coal fired thermal power plants have also supplied a higher proportion of the increase in demand leading the share of thermal power in India's power mix increasing to 66.4% from 61.9% in 2019.
- Flooding and Rainfall: Lower than normal stock accumulation by thermal power plants in the April-June period and continuous rainfall in coal bearing areas in August and September which led to lower production and fewer despatches of coal from coal mines.
- Lowering Imports: A consistent move to lower imports coupled with high international prices of coal have also led to plants cutting imports.

29) PENDENCY OF CASES IN SUPREME COURT

IN NEWS: - The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted virtually every aspect of socio-economic-political setup in India and quite obviously Judiciary hasn't been immune to it. By and large, the courts have not worked with a full caseload since March 2020.

Reasons for Delay

- Persisting Vacancies
- Poor State of Subordinate Judiciary
- Government, the Biggest Litigant
- Crowding out investment
- Less budgetary allocation

30) PANCHAYATI RAJ MINISTRY SIGNS PACT WITH UNDP

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have signed a joint statement of understanding on localisation of Sustainable Development Goals.

31) TWITTER'S NEW POLICY ON CLIMATE DENIAL ADS

- Citing the latest assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), social media giant Twitter has announced that it will prohibit misleading advertisements on climate change.
- By misleading, Twitter means ads that "contradict" the scientific consensus on climate change. This decision, Twitter said, is in line with its inappropriate content policy, which deals with prohibiting ads that contain inappropriate content.

- Twitter’s announcement coinciding with Earth Day—is part of an attempt to curb climate change disinformation campaigns on its network.



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