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# **CURRENT AFFAIRS AUGUST 2015**

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# 1. POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

## 1.1. GOOD GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

### 1.1.1. HUMAN DNA PROFILING BILL, 2015

#### What is DNA Profiling

- DNA Profiling is a technology that can be used to identify individuals. It is a very sensitive technique which only needs a few skin cells, a hair root or a tiny amount of blood or saliva. DNA profiling is especially useful for solving crimes but can also be used to confirm if people are related to each other, such as for paternity testing.

#### Why DNA Profiling Law is needed

- At present, DNA testing labs are unregulated and lack uniform testing protocols and procedures. In the absence of a legal framework, a database can't be prepared and maintained.
- It depends on the government as to what kind of information it wants included in the database such as information on only convicted persons, suspects or all those jailed.
- If the database is to include all those in custody, then the DNA profile of acquitted individuals will have to be deleted, as done in some countries.

#### Salient feature of the Bill

A DNA profiling law is supposed to codify everything and set procedures for collection, safety, use and access of DNA samples and data.

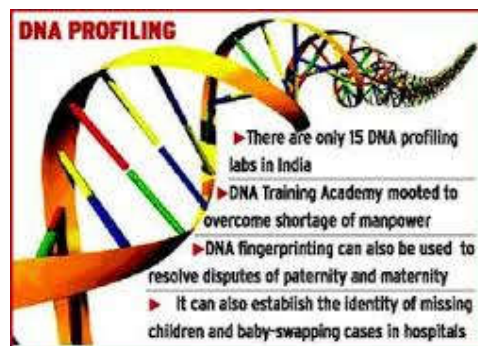
- DNA data to become admissible as evidence in judicial proceedings
- Handling of DNA testing.
- Regulation of use of this information by law enforcement agencies and others.
- Two new bodies will be created — a DNA Profiling Board that will act as the regulator, and supervise all activities relating to testing, storage and matching of DNA samples, and a DNA Data Bank, both at the national level and in the states. All existing and new DNA labs will have to seek accreditation from the Board. DNA profiles will have to be stored in the data bank.
- Bill legalizes collection and analysis of the DNA samples for Repeat offenders, suspects, missing persons, unknown deceased persons, volunteers for forensic purposes.

#### What is DNA

DNA in an individual's chromosomes controls an array of visible characteristics (including race, colouring and sex) as well as invisible characteristics (such as blood groups and susceptibility to inherited diseases). The DNA is the same in all of the cells in the body of an individual. It is almost certainly true that each person's DNA is unique (unless he or she has an identical twin).

#### Real Life Examples

Settling paternity suits, like in the case of former UP chief minister ND Tiwari. The identity of deposed Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was established through DNA testing.



The Indian Code of Criminal Procedure was amended in 2005 to enable the collection of a host of medical details from accused persons upon their arrest which included DNA profiling and such other tests which the registered medical practitioner thinks necessary in a particular case.

## What are the objections

1. **Privacy:** DNA information can reveal personal details as well as more intrusive information such as allergies, susceptibility to diseases, etc. Critics say the Bill does not have adequate safeguards against the collection and storage of such information and its misuse. The Bill does not say who can access the database, and does not provide a guarantee that it would not be used for anything other than the specified purpose.

However, the counter argument is that a very limited information is proposed to be stored, just 17 sets of numbers out of billions that can tell nothing about the individual except to act as a unique identifier. DNA will be collected from a very small proportion of people, mainly those "in conflict of law".

- **Misuse of Data:** In most countries, the DNA database is used only for criminal investigations, but India's bill allows for a lot more. For examples, it can be used to identify victims of accidents or disasters, to identify missing persons, and for civil disputes. The bill even allows the creation of population statistics, identification research, parental disputes, issues relating to reproductive technologies and migration. These provisions could one day allow the government to push civilians to provide DNA data.
- Technically it is possible for the data to be used for non-forensic purposes and to decipher information such as family history, medical history and ancestry.
- The prescribed form for collection of data from criminals has a column for "caste", which experts fear could lead to profiling of certain castes and population groups.
- The UID database already has biometric information for most Indians. If any government in future decides to link the UID database with the DNA database, it would place in the hands of the government and its agencies all personal details about millions of citizens.

### EVIDENCE VS. RIGHT TO PRIVACY

Scientists vouch for DNA Bill, but privacy activists fear it will lead to gross violation of human rights

<b>1985:</b> Indian courts accept DNA as evidence in criminal investigation	<b>Government says Bill will be useful in</b>	suspects
<b>2003:</b> Work begins to draft Bill to regulate use of DNA samples in probes	➤ Crime scene investigation	➤ Verification of missing persons
<b>2005:</b> Code of Criminal Procedure amended, includes use of DNA profiling	➤ Maintaining database of convicts and	➤ Investigation of unidentified bodies
	<b>Activists claim that the Bill could lead to</b>	➤ Research work
	➤ Racial and communal profiling	
	➤ Violation of privacy	
	➤ Longer trial period	
	➤ Errant testing and conviction	

UK setup a DNA database also allowed keeping data of more than one million innocent people on what was considered a criminal database, as the law allowed DNA data to be recorded and stored at arrest, rather than waiting for the individual to be charged with offense. With India's poor record on citizen privacy, the lax provisions in the draft bill are worrying.

2. **Reliability Issue:** There are some circumstances when even DNA data may not be reliable. For instance, if a person has had blood transfusion or a bone marrow transplant, they will have someone else's DNA in their body for some time. There are also cases of DNA chimeras, where one individual may possess multiple genomes. Other times, DNA data recovered from a crime scene may not be enough to produce a correct match for the algorithms.
3. **Consent Issue:** The bill does not clarify under what circumstances someone's DNA will be collected for the database with or without consent.
4. **On data collection and deletion:** When DNA data are collected, the person will also have to provide their name, gender, address, and their caste. Further, it does not set a limit to how long someone's DNA will kept on record.
5. The Bill has controversial clauses dealing with "issues relating to pedigree" and introducing an intrusive mode of collecting samples from living persons called "intimate forensic procedure".



## Way forward

There is need to move from **eyewitness evidence to forensic evidence**, of which DNA is an integral part. Currently, capabilities are limited and proposed law would help to create the infrastructure, including trained manpower, to facilitate DNA testing in our country.

### 1.1.2. SC / ST (AMENDMENT) BILL PASSED BY LOK SABHA

#### Provisions of Act:

- The Bill seeks to amend the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

The Act prohibits the commission of offences against members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SCs and STs) and **establishes special courts** for the trial of such offences and the **rehabilitation of victims**.

#### Actions to be treated as offences

- The Act outlines actions by other than SCs/STs against SCs or STs to be treated as offences. Certain existing categories are amended and few new categories of actions are added.
- Forcing an SC or ST individual to vote or not vote for a particular candidate in a manner that is against the law.
- Assaulting or sexual exploiting an SC or ST woman
- Preventing SCs/STs from following activities: (a) using common property resources, (b) entering any place of worship that is open to the public, (c) entering an education or health institution.
- The bill also **specifies duties for public servants** which, if neglected, shall be punishable with imprisonment. The duties include:
  - Registering a complaint or FIR,
  - Reading out information given orally, before taking the signature of the informant and giving a copy of this information to the informant etc

#### Role of courts:

- The Bill specifies that an Exclusive Special Court must be established at the district level to try offences under the Bill.
- Special Court may be established to try offences in districts with fewer cases.
- Adequate number of courts must be established so that cases are disposed of within two months.
- Appeals of these courts shall lie with the high court, and to be disposed of within three months.
- A Public Prosecutor and Exclusive Public Prosecutor shall be appointed for every Special Court and Exclusive Special Court respectively.

#### Rights of victims and witnesses

- It shall be the duty of the state to make arrangements for the protection of victims, their dependents and witnesses.

CLAMPING DOWN ON VIOLENCE		
Bill seeks to strengthen Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989		
CRITERIA FOR PUNISHMENT		
➤ <b>Illegally occupying land</b> belonging to Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes	➤ <b>Forcing members</b> of SC or ST communities to <b>vote or not vote</b> for a candidate	➤ <b>Neglect of duties</b> by a non-SC/ST public servant in cases relating to SCs or STs
IMPORTANT CLAUSES		CAUSE FOR CONCERN
➤ Special courts at the district level with <b>exclusive public prosecutors</b> for each court to ensure speedy trial		➤ Cases registered under Prevention of Atrocities Act in conjunction with the IPC <b>have increased</b>  <b>2010</b> <b>38,449</b> <b>2013</b> <b>46,114</b>
➤ <b>Mere acknowledgement</b> of SC/ST status of a victim is sufficient to establish guilt		
➤ Special courts for atrocities against women <b>presided over by a woman Judge</b>		

#### New offences added under the Bill include:

- Garlanding with footwear,
- Compelling to dispose or carry human or animal carcasses, or do manual scavenging,
- Abusing SCs or STs by caste name in public,
- Attempting to promote feelings of ill-will against SCs or STs or disrespecting any deceased person held in high esteem
- Imposing or threatening a social or economic boycott.

- the Bill may take measures such as: (a) concealing the names of witnesses, (b) taking immediate action in respect of any complaint relating to harassment of a victim, informant or witness, etc
- Any such complaint shall be tried separately and be concluded within two months.

### 1.1.3. SINGAPORE GOVERNANCE – LESSONS FOR INDIA

Recently, Singapore celebrated the Golden Jubilee of its Independence and bade farewell to **Lee Kuan Yew (LKY)**, the first and longest serving Prime Minister of Singapore. The governance architecture, designed by LKY, has been a leading cause for **Singapore to emerge from third world to the first in just 50 years**. It holds valuable lessons for India to emulate such as:

- The competitive salaries in public sector attracted the society's best people into public service
- The Singapore government invested heavily in primary education, which enabled a larger share of the population to participate in the economic growth.
- Similar to India, Singapore inherited many of the cultural barriers prevalent in Asian societies. However, the rigorous campaign encouraged women to join the workforce by making it safer for women to travel at night and publicly discussing the benefits of a dual-income family.

## 1.2. PARLIAMENT AND STATE LEGISLATURE

### 1.2.1. MONEY BILL

#### 1.2.1.1. CIRCUMVENTING UPPER HOUSE THROUGH MONEY BILL STRATEGY

Recently Opposition alleged that government was the eroding legislative powers of Rajya Sabha by deliberately introducing crucial bills as money bills. Rajya Sabha has virtually no powers regarding passage of money bills.

#### Constitutional Provisions regarding money bill

- **Article 110** defines what constitutes money bill and the Constitution has vested power to certify money bill in Lok Sabha Speaker, whose decision is final.
- The money Bill once passed by the Lok Sabha is automatically passed by Parliament if it has been in the Rajya Sabha for a fortnight (fourteen days). Thus, the Lok Sabha alone has the power to accept or reject money bills.
- However, the Constitution makes it abundantly clear that money bills should contain only matters listed under article 110 (1). If a bill is a combination of any of the above and some other provisions not incidental to those matters, it cannot be called a money bill.

#### Lack of remedy

- The Speaker, while certifying a bill as money bill, is in effect depriving the Rajya Sabha of its legislative power to disapprove a bill. There is no remedy lying with Rajya Sabha for wrong decision taken by speaker regarding certification of money bill.

#### Way Forward

- Neither the Constitution nor the House rules lay down any procedure with regard to certifying a money bill. It is therefore necessary to evolve a proper procedure for the Speaker to arrive at a decision.
- A more prudent approach would be the examination of given bill by committee of the secretaries-general of both Houses and accordingly, Speaker takes a final decision.



## 1.2.2. FUNCTIONING AND CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

### 1.2.2.1. PARLIAMENTARY PARALYSIS

Recently, the Parliament witnessed near wash-out of whole monsoon session because of persistent Government-Opposition deadlock.

#### Impacts of Parliamentary paralysis

- Hurried passage of bills without proper debate and discussions or sometimes important bills get struck causing developmental setback to nation.
- MPs cede space to non-parliamentary actors, vitiating the decision-making process and proliferating subordinate legislation activities.
- People lose faith in Parliament and Parliamentary democracy.
- Slogan shouting and disruption obstructs free and open debate in the Parliament.
- The exercise of Parliamentary accountability is compromised.
- Waste of precious time and public exchequer in arrangement of proceedings.

#### Suspension of MPs

The Speaker has the power, under Rule 374(A) of the general **Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business**, to eject and suspend members who disrupt proceedings. Her decision in this context is final. However, the Speaker takes the action of suspension **as the last resort** because it is seen as muzzling of free debate in the Parliament.

#### Way Forward:

- It is imperative to frame objective guidelines along with proper training and education to legislators for the healthy functioning of Parliamentary proceeding. The periodic publication of member's performance in the Parliament would provide effective feedback and incentive to perform efficiently.
- The political class of India needs to realise that many countries look towards India as a successful example of democracy. The stability of democratic institutions is also linked with foreign investment in country which India is in dire need.

## 1.3. CENTRE – STATE RELATIONS

### 1.3.1. FISCAL FEDERALISM

#### 1.3.1.1. SPECIAL CATEGORY DENIED TO ANDHRA PRADESH

- The centre denied granting Special Category Status to Andhra Pradesh by announcing in Parliament that there is no policy anymore for according special category status to any State. Instead, states could be provided special economic packages.

#### Special Category states in India:

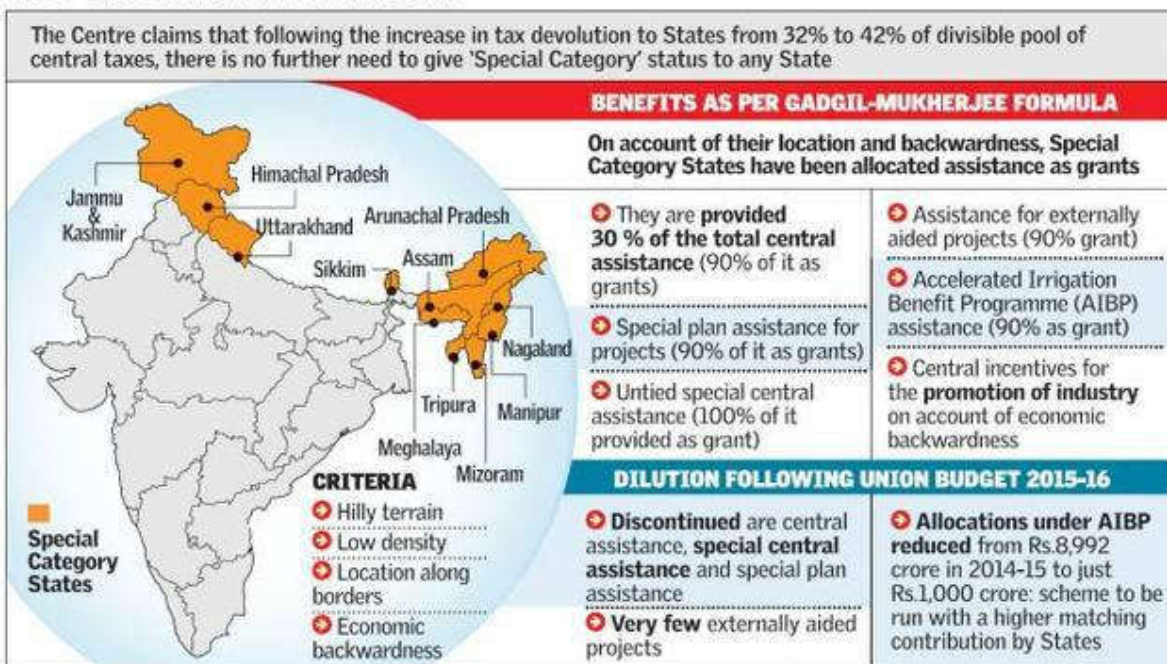
- The concept of special category state was introduced with **5th Finance Commission** recommendation to provide certain disadvantaged states with preferential treatment in the form of central assistance and tax breaks.

#### Benefits available for Special Category states vis-à-vis other states include:

- 30 per cent of the **Normal Central Assistance** (NCA) earmarked for 'Special Category States' and the remaining 70 per cent to General Category States entitled to assistance in the grant-loan ratio of 90:10 as compared with 30:70 ratios for other States.

- Special plan assistance for projects (90 per cent grant) and untied special central assistance (100 per cent grant) were being given only to 'Special Category States'.
- Assistance for externally-aided projects in the grant-loan ratio of 90:10, whereas such assistance to other States is on back-to-back basis.
- Under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP), 'Special Category States' get 90 per cent of the project cost as grant as compared with 25 per cent grant for others.

## NOT SO SPECIAL ANYMORE



### Special Category Status: recent approach of government:

Several changes over the years, more particularly those introduced in the Union Budget 2015-16, have resulted in considerable dilution of benefits to the 'Special Category States'.

- Following the increase in tax devolution to States from 32 to 42 per cent of divisible pool of central taxes, the Centre has dispensed with normal plan assistance, special central assistance and special plan assistance from 2015-16 onwards
- The share of normal central assistance in total plan assistance, which was the predominant channel of central plan assistance to States had come down to just 15 per cent with the proliferation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS).
- The only attraction that remains is the benefit of assistance for externally aided projects (90 per cent grant). There are very few externally aided projects in the 'Special Category States'.
- The Union Budget 2015-16 has drastically reduced the allocations under Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP).
- The **Finance Commission does not distinguish** between special and non-special category states in its allocation. Currently, there are **11 states with Special Category Status** – Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and all North Eastern states.

#### The parameters required for Special Category status

- Hilly and difficult terrain
- Low population density or sizeable share of tribal population
- Strategic location along borders with neighbouring countries
- Economic and infrastructural backwardness
- Non-viable nature of state finances.

## 1.4. E-GOVERNANCE – MODELS AND APPLICATIONS

### 1.4.1 INITIATIVES UNDER CCTNS PROJECTS

#### 1.4.1.1. NAMES OF CHARGESHEETED SEX OFFENDERS TO BE MADE PUBLIC UNDER CCTNS PROJECT

- Government is planning to make public online names of all such persons who are sex offenders and others charge sheeted for crime against women anywhere in the country.
- The Crime and Criminals Tracking Network and System (CCTNS) is to be extended for publication of list and will be visible to parents, employers and concerned people.
- List of wanted and most-wanted criminals, publication of a list of proclaimed offenders, information on human trafficking and missing persons, accessing legal services will also be part of the online initiative under the CCTNS.

**Q.** We are witnessing increasing instances of sexual violence against women in the country. Despite existing legal provisions against it, the number of such instances is on rise. Suggest some innovative measures to tackle this menace. **(Q 8, Paper IV, UPSC 2014)**

## 2. SOCIAL ISSUES

### 2.1. POVERTY AND EXCLUSION

#### 2.1.1. MGNREGA

##### 2.1.1.1. MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (MORD)'S NEW REPORT: MGNREGS UPDATES

The important findings of report include:

- The programme reduced poverty overall by up to 32 per cent and prevented 14 million people from falling into poverty.
- At an all-India level, the average days worked under the MGNREGS is less than four, pointing to the **relatively small impact of the scheme to the overall rural job market**.
- Although it fails to add to the number of days that individuals work, it attracted individuals who were previously employed in less productive work, thereby raising their incomes.
- While the period of 2004-05 to 2011-12 saw a sharp rise in rural wages, MGNREGS plays only a **modest role in wage increases**.
- The MGNREGS may be the first opportunity for many women to earn cash income resulting in substantial increase in **women's control over resources** — including cash in hand and the likelihood of having a bank account. Children from MGNREGS households were likely to obtain **higher levels of educational attainment** and were less likely to be working.
- On the economic front, **financial inclusion rose** in general during this period, reliance of moneylenders declined and accessing of formal credit grew.
- The report finds that **'work rationing'** - the inability of all interested households to get 100 days of work – is holding back MGNREGS.
- The findings clearly states there is huge unmet demands for MGNREGS work. The reasons cited for mismatch in demands and supplies are paucity of funds at the level of implementations and erratic fund flows. The report released by **United Nation Development Programme** recently had similar findings and stated the scheme's uptake is far greater in the lean season than in the peak agricultural season.

### 2.2. SC/ST/OBC/MINORITIES

#### 2.2.1. NAI MANZIL SCHEME LAUNCHED

- The **Ministry of Minority Affairs** launched a new Central Sector Scheme – Nai Manzil.
- The aim of the scheme would be employment generation of the youths and also extending loans for opening enterprises.
- The scheme will address educational and livelihood needs of minority communities in general and Muslims in particular as it lags behind other minority communities in terms of educational attainments.
- The target group of scheme will be **all out of school / dropped out** students and those studying in Madrasas. It is so because they will not be getting formal Class XII and Class X Certificates rendering them largely unemployed in organised sector.
- The scheme is intended to cover people in between 17 to 35 age group from all minority communities as well as Madrasa students.
- The scheme would provide **'bridge courses'** to the trainees and get them Certificates for Class XII and X through **'distance medium educational system'** and at the same time also provides them **trade basis skill training** in 4 courses – Manufacturing, Engineering, Services, Soft skills.
- This scheme will provide avenues for continuing higher education and also open up employment opportunities in the organised sector.

### 2.2.2. DRAFT IIM BILL

The Human Resource Development Ministry has come up with a draft IIM bill, which seeks to give the ministry authority over the institutes on a range of issues. Unlike the Indian Institutes of Technology, IIMs don't function under an Act of Parliament.

#### The Bill proposes

- Grant of statutory status to the 13 existing IIMs
- Declare these IIMs 'institutions of national importance'
- Will enable the IIMs to confer degrees, instead of diplomas and fellowships.

#### Several features of the Draft Bill raised debate over the autonomy

- Board of Governors of each IIM will be the “principal executive body”, grants the Centre powers to override the Board.
- Board can make rules and regulations regarding tenure, remuneration, etc for IIM employees but only after taking approval from the Centre.
- The ministry's approval will be required for matters related to admission criteria, scholarships and fellowships as well as how to conduct Board meetings.
- The decision of the Central Government, whether a question is one of policy or not, shall be final

#### Argument against the Bill

- There is concern at the overarching government control, evident in the use of the word regulation, which needs to be done away with. Particularly worrying are the clauses in the draft Bill that give powers currently held by the individual IIM Boards to the government.
- The Bill, in its present form, will end the independence of the Board of Governors of the IIMs and it will convert them to mere rubber stamps. The real decision-making power will be transferred to officials of the ministry, who have neither the required skill nor the experience to sit in judgment over academic matters.
- It empowers the central government to subsequently make rules for “all matters” such as appointment of the chairperson, terms and conditions for the director and administrative issues.

#### Argument for the Bill

- Performance norms for directors have not been set by IIM boards. Under such circumstances, it is not practical to expect that the boards can enforce accountability. It's important for the dominant stakeholder and promoter, i.e. the Government of India, to keep a watch. This will require monitoring of decisions, not just outcomes.
- A committee headed by R.C. Bhargava in 2008 made observations on IIM boards, “Board agendas are filled with routine administrative approval requests...only rarely do boards discuss strategy and prepare any long-term plans.”
- The government intervention is needed to fix serious shortcomings in governance in the IIM system e.g. IIMs have not had fixed tenures for board members, something that is considered as a basic axiom of good governance. The new Bill limits the terms of board members to a maximum of six years.

#### Way Forward

There are provisions in the IIM Bill that require discussion — for example, provision related to all regulations made by the IIM boards require the prior approval of the government. But the IIMs can hardly contest the basic aim of the Bill, i.e. to put in place transparent processes and clear norms for accountability in the system.

**Q.** Should premier institutes like IITs/IIMs be allowed to retain premier status, allowed more academic independence in designing courses and also on decide mode/criteria of selection of students. Discuss in light of the growing challenges. (Q 13, Paper II, UPSC 2014)

## 2.3. OTHER

### 2.3.1. NATIONAL HANDLOOM DAY CELEBRATED

- **1<sup>st</sup> National Handlooms Day** was celebrated on August 7.
- It stressed on creating new designs, branding and e-commerce to launch the rich, colourful heritage on a global scale.
- Handlooms constituted **15 per cent of the total cloth consumption in the country**. There is a need to make handlooms fashionable by constantly evolving and innovating, and at the same time ensuring quality.
- The fashion and design education in the country needs to reorient itself with the traditional handloom.
- **India Handloom Mark** was launched to win the trust and confidence of customers.

#### Few Facts:

- Power looms dominate India's textile production with 60% of output followed by Handlooms
- The Handloom industry is the **second-largest employment provider for the rural population in India after agriculture**.
- The US is major importer of Indian handloom products followed by the UK and Germany.
- Khadi is governed by the **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)**.



## 3. INTERNAL SECURITY / LAW & ORDER

### 3.1. SECURITY CHALLENGES AND THEIR MANAGEMENT IN BORDER AREAS

#### 3.1.1. NORTH EAST INSURGENCY

##### 3.1.1.1. NAGA PEACE ACCORD

Government of India recently signed the historic peace accord with National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isak-Muivah), a key outfit in the region demanding a unified Naga identity and a separate '**Nagalim**' State for over six decades. Under the accord, there is ceasefire agreement till April 27, 2016.

#### Historical Background

Naga problem is the legacy of British rule which, by design, kept the Nagas isolated and insulated from the rest of the nation.

Earlier, NSCN (I-M) fought for an independent Nagaland, but later on demanded a 'Greater Nagaland' by slicing off parts of Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh to unite 1.2 million Nagas. However, it was opposed by the three states concerned.

#### Timeline

- Naga Movement gained momentum in the late 1940s with the coming of Phizo as the leader
- Nagaland was given full statehood in 1963 as the 16th State of Indian Union, before which it was a district of Assam.
- The National Socialist Council of Nagaland was formed in 1980 to establish a Greater Nagaland, encompassing parts of Manipur, Nagaland, the north Cachar hills (Assam).
- The NSCN split in 1988 to form two groups namely NSCN(IM) & NSCN(K).
- Nagaland recorded more than 87% voter turnout in 2014 Indian general election which was highest voters turnout in India which Indian authorities consider as faith of Naga people in democracy of India.
- **Shillong Accord** was signed in 1975 to accept supremacy of Constitution of India, surrender arms and renounce demand for the secession. It was not accepted by some leaders of the Naga movement and led to formation of NSCN.

The present agreement was with NSCN (IM) and was the culmination of over 80 rounds of negotiations spanning 16 years, with the first breakthrough coming in 1997 when a ceasefire agreement was sealed.

#### Demand of NAGA's

A "Nagalim" comprising "all contiguous Naga-inhabited areas", along with Nagaland. But nearby 3 states namely Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Assam opposing the demand as their territory is included in Nagalim.

#### Analysis of Accord

Many smaller groups have not been part of the decisive phases of the peace process. The other factions – Khole Kitovi (KK), Reformations (R), Khaplang – are not included under the accord.

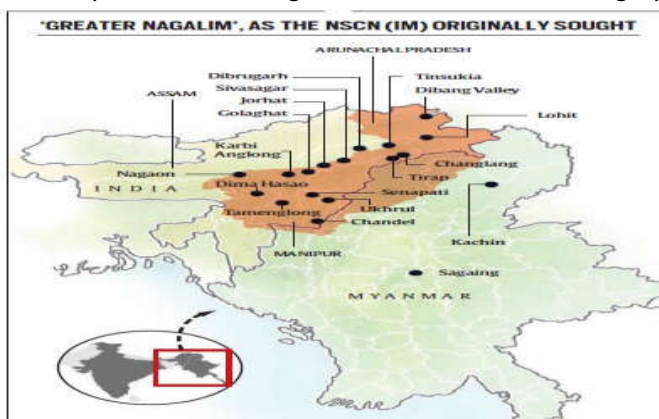
- The details of agreement has not been made public yet and there is no clarity on controversial '**sovereignty**' demand that was central to the I-M group's negotiations strategy, or on the demand for the **creation of a Nagalim or Greater Nagaland** that is tied to claims on the territories of the neighbouring States of Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.

The major challenges lying ahead for the government are:

- To recognise the Naga sense of identity without acceding to claims on the territories of other States.
- To allow the people of Nagaland greater autonomy without allowing concessions on the sovereignty of India.

Way Forward:

- The success of agreement lies with the ability of NSCN (IM) to bring on board all sections of the Naga people, especially the rival armed groups, towards an 'inclusive peace settlement'. **Historically such accords had also cause factionalism in body-politic.** For instance, the **Shillong Accord** led to creation of factions of erstwhile NSCN by Isak Chishi Swu, Th. Muivah and S.S. Khaplang.
- Under such circumstances, New Delhi will have to take joint responsibility, along with the NSCN, to take the agreement to the other armed Naga groups.



How far are India's internal security challenges linked with border management, particularly in view of the long porous borders with most countries of South Asia and Myanmar? [Mains 2013]

## 3.2. ROLE OF EXTERNAL STATE AND NON-STATE ACTORS IN CREATING CHALLENGES TO INTERNAL SECURITY

### 3.2.1. UAPA AMENDMENT TO BRING INDIVIDUALS UNDER TERROR BAN LIST

- The government is all set to amend the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) to bring in a clause that would pave the way to **"designate individuals"** along with terror organisations under the banned list of entities.
- Under Section 35 of the UAPA, there are 38 groups in the list of banned terrorist organisations.
- The amendment would cover the case of an individual not being associated with any terrorist organisation but committing an offence outside India.

### 3.2.2. NIA RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUTH SAVED FROM TERROR PATH

Background:

- Till now, 17 Indians are learnt to have joined ISIS.
- Nearly 20 have been stopped from joining the IS.
- Areeb Majeed from Maharashtra, the only IS recruit who managed to return.

Recommendations

- Invoke "lighter" sections of the law against them.
- Potential young terror recruits should be identified and "bind-down" orders issued against them.
- A local constable can be of immense help in such cases where any youth is showing signs of radicalisation.

### A CATCH-22 SITUATION

UNION HOME MINISTRY AND NIA DEBATE HOW TO PUT A LEASH ON ISLAMIC STATE RADICALISATION AMONG INDIAN YOUTH

**Bureau of Immigration (under MHA)** has been asked to record immigration patterns of Indians in a systemic manner



**THE PROBLEM:** Gulf is a job haven for Indians, so it's tough for Bureau of Immigration to randomly raise any suspicion on Indian immigrants

**WAKING UP TO THREAT:** After 20 youths were prevented from joining the IS, India has set the strategy ball rolling

**FORESIGHT OF SOFT POWER**  
NIA suggests  
• Community policing  
• Strengthening of beat constabulary  
• Garnering information about suspects via research

- Community policing.

#### Reason behind these recommendations

- Not to deter parents and other family members from coming forward to report such cases.
- Booking them under lighter sections can act as a deterrent and will create the fear of the law in their minds.

Q. The diverse nature of India as a multi-religious and multi-ethnic society is not immune to the impact of radicalism which has been in her neighborhood. Discuss along with the strategies to be adopted to counter this environment. (Mains 2014)

### 3.4. LINKAGES BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT AND SPREAD OF EXTREMISM

#### 3.4.1. CENTRE ADOPTING A FIVE-PRONGED STRATEGY TO CONTAIN LEFT WING EXTREMISM

##### Features:

- Containing the presence of Naxalists would not be by using force (armed forces) alone but by taking up **development programmes** in the naxal-affected areas and **creating awareness** among the communities there against taking to the path of violence being adopted by the LWE groups.
- The Centre is planning to develop the LWE-affected areas in the fields of education, health, communication and others.
- The Centre would utilise modern technologies such as drones and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) as part of its strategy to contain the LWE.
- As part of combating the LWE groups effectively, the Centre was procuring six modern helicopters for the use of armed forces engaged in the task.
- About 400 fortified police stations were already constructed in such areas and there were plans to set up 2,100 BSNL towers to provide mobile phone network.

## 4. SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### 4.1. INDIGENIZATION OF TECHNOLOGY AND DEVELOPING NEW TECHNOLOGY

#### 4.1.1. ISRO'S TITANIUM SPONGE PLANT IN KERALA FULLY COMMISSIONED

- The indigenous Titanium Sponge Plant at Chavara in Kerala has been fully commissioned and has started commercial production required for space applications.
- The national Space programme can now fully bank on made-in-India titanium sponge that goes into making its satellite and launch vehicle parts.
- This is the only integrated plant in the world that undertakes all activities right from mining of Ti minerals to manufacturing of aerospace grade Ti sponge under one roof.

##### Significance

- Now, India has become the seventh country in the world producing Titanium sponge commercially.
- Big saving of forex reserve as earlier India used to import titanium.
- India is endowed with the third largest reserve of Titanium bearing minerals.
- **Annual requirement:** 200-300 metric tonnes.

**Why Titanium is required in Aerospace and Defence equipments:** high strength and non-corrosive quality.

#### 4.1.2. GSLV D6 SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHED

- The GSLV D-6 is the second successful consecutive launch (earlier launch GSLV D-5 in January) of the GSLV series with indigenous cryogenic upper stage.
- ISRO is planning to test GSLV Mk III capable of carrying payload up to four tonne by the end of next year.

##### Difference between Cryogenic stage and other stages

- The cryogenic stage is technically a very complex system, as compared to solid liquid propellant stages, due to its use of propellants at extremely low temperature (cryo) and the associated thermal and structural challenges. A cryogenic rocket stage is more efficient and provides more thrust for every kilogram of propellant it burns.

##### Significance

- 2 consecutive successful launches proved the capability of ISRO and enhanced its confidence.

**ISRO SUCCESS STORY SOARS TO NEW HEIGHTS**

ISRO proved beyond doubts its cryogenic expertise after launching the GSLV-D6 (left) placing GSAT-6 (below) in orbit

**CRYOGENIC CAPABILITY**

**FACTOIDS**

- POSITION**  
83 Degree East Longitude
- LAUNCH MASS**  
2,117 kg
- SATELLITE MASS**  
985 kg
- DIMENSION**  
21x25x4.1 m
- MISSION LIFE**  
NINE years
- GENERATED POWER**  
3,100 W

**EYE IN THE SKY**

- ➔ GSAT-6 is the 25th geostationary communication satellite of India built by ISRO and 12th in the GSAT series
- ➔ Five of GSAT-6's predecessors were launched by GSLV during 2001, 2003, 2004, 2007 and 2014 respectively
- ➔ GSAT-6 provides communication through five spot beams in S-band and a national beam in C-band for strategic users

**THE TAKEOFF**

GSLV-D6 lifted off from Sriharikota at 4.52 pm. Seventeen minutes later, the rocket injected GSAT-6 into Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit

Another day & another phenomenal accomplishment by our scientists. Congratulations @isro for the successful launch of GSAT-6 - PM NARENDRA MODI ON TWITTER

Source: ISRO

GRAPHIC: KARTHICK S.T

- GSLV will cost just one third of money spent on foreign agencies, which will reduce satellite launch cost as well as will save forex.
- It will **enhance India's capability to be a competitive player** in the multimillion dollar commercial launch market. It will help in earning foreign exchange.
- The GSLV will help ISRO put heavier communication satellites of GSAT class into orbit.
- Reduction of dependence on foreign agencies gives strategic boost in this high tech sector

Q. Significance of the SPOT-6 rocket launch for ISRO. [mains 2012]

## 4.2. AWARENESS IN THE FIELDS OF IT, SPACE, COMPUTERS, ROBOTICS, NANO-TECHNOLOGY, BIO-TECHNOLOGY

### 4.2.1. GSAT-6 (GEOSYNCHRONOUS SATELLITE)

- It is aimed at primarily benefiting the country's strategic users and other specific authorised users.
- It has life of nine years and 2 tonne launch mass.
- It will provide S-band communication services in the country.
- It includes a first-of-its-kind S-Band antenna with a diameter of six meter. This is the largest antenna ISRO has ever made for a satellite.
- It will offer a Satellite Digital Multimedia Broadcasting (S-band) service, via mobile phones and mobile video/audio receivers for vehicles.
- It can also be utilized for strategic and social applications.

### 4.2.2. MULTI-APPLICATION SOLAR TELESCOPE (MAST) OPERATIONALISED AT UDAIPUR SOLAR OBSERVATORY (USO)

#### Purpose and significance

- Detailed study of the Solar activity including its magnetic field. This study of solar activities would facilitate space weather predictions in the future.
- Capable of capturing three-dimensional aspects of the solar magnetic fields further enabling the scientists to get a better understanding of the solar flares and eruptions taking place in such twisted magnetic fields.
- USO is a part of Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), which is an autonomous unit of the Department of Space.
- The observatory is situated on an island in the middle of Fatehsagar lake.

#### Why observatory is made in the middle of lake

- Large water body surrounding the telescopes decreases the amount of heating of the surface layers.
- This decreases the turbulence in the air mass and thereby improves the image quality and seeing.

#### Features of MAST

- 50 cm aperture
- Off-axis Gregorian-Coude telescope



#### Other Telescopes in India

Name/Observatory	Aperture	Year	Location
National Large Solar Telescope	200 cm	proposed	Merak Village, Ladakh,
ARIES Observatory	15 cm	1961–	Nainital,
Solar Tunnel Telescope, Kodaikanal Solar Observatory	61 cm (24 in)	1958–	Kodaikanal,

#### 4.2.3. EBOLA VACCINE DEVELOPED

- Developed by Public Health Agency of Canada
- Trial result show 100% efficacy.
- **How it works:** A dummy virus (vesicular stomatitis virus, or VSV) was designed with diluted elements of Ebola. As the risk-free virus enters a human body, it alarms the immune system, which launches a scathing attack on the intruder, killing it along with the deadly Ebola virus.

#### Ebola Disease

- The Ebola virus causes viral hemorrhagic fever.
- **Symptoms:** Early symptoms include sudden onset of fever, weakness, muscle pain, headaches and a sore throat.
- The early symptoms progress to vomiting, diarrhea, impaired kidney and liver function and sometimes internal and external bleeding.
- It kills between 25 and 90 percent of those infected, with an average of about 50 percent.

#### How does Ebola virus spread?

- Humans contract Ebola through contact with the bodily fluids of infected animals or the bodily fluids of infected humans.

**Region affected:** Sub-Saharan Africa (Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia)

#### 4.2.4. DISHA (DIGITAL SAKSHARTA ABHIYAN)

- Central Government launched a programme to invest Rs 450-500 crore on providing basic computer education to about 50 lakh people over the next three years with the help of private companies.
- The investment will be made in certain identified districts. One person would be chosen from every eligible household for training.
- The programme offers two-hour, 10-hour and 20-hour courses in local languages.
- The scheme targets to train approximately 52.5 lakh persons that include Anganwadi and ASHA workers and authorized ration dealers in all the States/UTs across the country.
- Government would deliver various services such as e-education, e-health and e-governance through a national broadband network which is expected to be in place by 2017.

#### Disha Mobile App

- The app, Disha, is expected to help people learn about computers and Internet through self-learning modules.
- In order to offer digital literacy to tribal and Dalit women in Bihar, govt. awarded tablet computers to women who received training from common service centres in the state.

#### DISHA handbook

- It is composed in such a manner that anyone with little or no digital literacy can also learn using this book by means of pictographic lessons on computers operations.



### 4.3. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- DEVELOPMENTS AND THEIR APPLICATIONS AND EFFECTS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

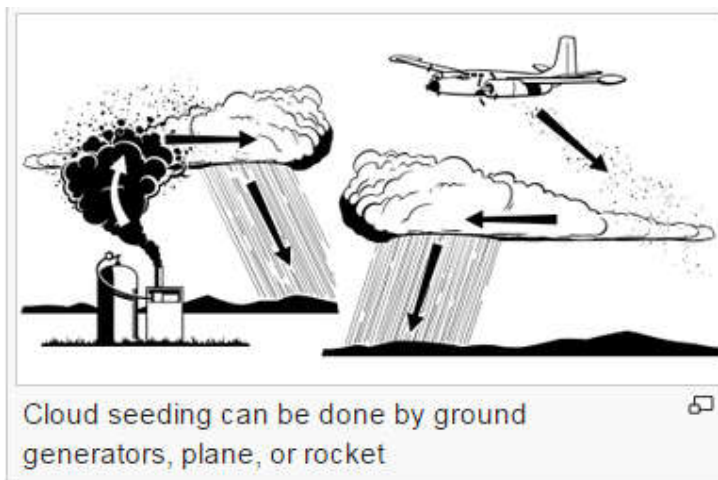
#### 4.3.1. CLOUD SEEDING

**Why in News:** The Karnataka State government has decided to take up cloud seeding to overcome the crisis in the agricultural sector owing to deficient rainfall this year.

- Cloud seeding, a form of weather modification, is an attempt to change the amount or type of precipitation that falls from clouds, by dispersing substances into the air that serve as cloud condensation or ice nuclei.
- **Chemicals used:** Silver iodide, potassium iodide and dry ice (solid carbon dioxide). Liquid propane

**Uses:**

- To increase rainfall in a particular area.
- To prevent hail and fog



**[Mains 2014]** Drought has been recognized as a disaster in view of its party expense, temporal duration, slow onset and lasting effect on various vulnerable sections. With a focus on the September 2010 guidelines from the National disaster management authority, discuss the mechanism for preparedness to deal with the El Nino and La Nina fallouts in India.

**[Mains 2012]** Examine the causes and the extent of 'desertification' in India and suggest remedial measures.

#### 4.3.2. SMART VAULT: A FULLY AUTOMATED LOCKER

ICICI Bank launched the first of its kind fully automated digital locker named Smart vault.

**Features**

- 24 x 7 access to customers with high end security.
- It is protected by multi-layer security system which includes biometric, PIN authentication and debit cards among others.
- Customers can access it without any intervention by the branch staff.
- It brings a very different, much more convenient, state of art branch experience to the customers.

#### 4.3.3. SILAGE

**What it is:** Silage, a green fodder compacted in air tight conditions to be used as substitute for green fodder during the lean period for livestock

**Uses**

- Potential fodder for livestock living in the rain shadow areas
- Can be used as alternative during dry period
- Potential to increase the milk yield

**Why in News:** Tamilnadu government has embarked upon a programme to popularise silage making. Scientists of Tamil Nadu Veterinary University Training and Research Centre at Karur demonstrated the silage making by using repol polypropylene (silage bags)

#### **Method of Silage Preparation**

- Green grass mass is stored in large sacks made from polythene
- Once the bag is filled, the material is pressed to remove the air and thereby preventing decomposition.
- After that it is fermented by adding diluted molasses and preserved for 60 days at appropriate moisture levels.

#### **4.3.4. AERIAL SEEDING**

**What it is:** Aerial seeding is a technique of sowing seeds using helicopters and aeroplanes to scatter them.

**Why in News:** Andhra Pradesh govt. launched aerial seeding of nearly 1,500 hectares of degraded forest on hill slopes in Guntur and Krishna districts that are not suitable for traditional methods of sowing.

**success of Aerial Seeding:** The Gandhi Hill in AP did not have any greenery a few decades ago, but today the entire hill is covered by trees because of aerial seeding followed up by protection.

#### **Significance**

- Large wildfires can destroy large areas of plant life resulting in erosion hazards. Aerial seeding may quickly and effectively reduce erosion hazards and suppress growth of invasive plant species.
- Can be used where terrain is extremely rocky or at high elevations or otherwise inaccessible
- Efficient coverage of a large area in the least amount of time

### **4.4. AWARENESS IN THE FIELDS OF SPACE**

#### **4.4.1. UN KALAM GLOBAL SAT**

A global satellite for earth observation and disaster risk reduction — GlobalSat for DRR — proposed under the UN framework is to be dedicated to A.P.J. Abdul Kalam by naming it as **UN Kalam Global Sat**.

#### **Why renaming**

- The renaming will inspire the next generation of scientists, engineers and space explorers to foster innovation and entrepreneurship and pooling of resources to find low-cost solutions to major problems facing mankind.
- Mr. Kalam had envisaged space faring nations joining hands to find solutions to mankind's major problems such as natural disasters, energy and water scarcity, health-care education issues and weather prediction.

#### **UN Kalam Global Sat**

- Launched on third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held at Sendai in Japan in March 2015.
- The GlobalSat was proposed in response to the need for a globally interconnected disaster and environmental management system since no single country can afford to develop a complete set of sensors and satellite systems needed for forecasting, monitoring and mitigating disasters like floods, drought, typhoons, earthquakes, wild fires, windstorms, or tidal events.
- It will provide a common platform that will allow sharing of space and data segments, with an ability to serve individual nation's disaster management and development needs.

## 4.5. INDIGENIZATION OF TECHNOLOGY AND DEVELOPING NEW TECHNOLOGY

### 4.5.1. SEMI-CRYOGENIC LAUNCH VEHICLE

- ISRO signed MoU with Russian space agency to boost its plan for Semi-cryogenic launch vehicle.
- ISRO's third rocket development programme
- Cost: Rs. 1,800-crore
- Fuel: space-grade kerosene and liquid oxygen
- Capacity: six to ten tonnes to heights of 36,000 km.
- Currently only the U.S. and Russia have this technology
- Future: According to ISRO it will be ready with the engine [SCE-200] in six to eight months.
- This would be double the lifting power of the GSLV and triple that of the PSLV.

## 5. ENVIRONMENT

### 5.1. CONSERVATION, ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION AND DEGRADATION

#### 5.1.1. INCREASING NUMBER OF MIGRATORY BIRDS IN CORINGA SANCTUARY

- Between September and March, about 89,000 birds were there in this sanctuary including the native species and winged visitors.
- Visitors (Birds) are coming from the Arctic region, Russia, China and Mongolia.

##### Reasons:

- Dwindling of mud ponds in the Pulicat
- Low levels of water at the Point Calimere

##### Coringa Sanctuary

- Second largest stretch of mangrove forests in India after Sundarbans of West Bengal.
- Home for 24 mangrove tree species
- There are 266 bird species in the Coringa mangrove, including 94 species of migratory birds.

#### 5.1.2. ATHIRAPPILLY HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT

- Athirappilly hydroelectric project, proposed across the Chalakudy river, has received the go-ahead from the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) for River Valley and Hydroelectric Projects.
- **Capacity:** 163MW
- The project was proposed by the Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) a decade ago.

##### Reasons of Delay

- Agitations by various environmental groups
- Series of litigations against the project
- Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel rejected it

##### Issues considered by EAC and its observations

- Loss of forestland
- Displacement of tribes - EAC felt that there were no tribal families in the submergence area of the Athirappilly reservoir
- Endemic species - EAC observed that no endemic species specifically of project area
- The damage due to submergence of flora and fauna of the area was mitigable.

#### 5.1.3. ESZ AROUND OKHLA BIRD SANCTUARY NOTIFIED

- The Ecologically Sensitive Zone in the Okhla Bird Sanctuary will be the area up to 100 metres from the eastern, western and southern boundary and up to 1.27 km from the northern boundary of the Okhla Bird Sanctuary.
- Notification was issued after the National Board of Wild Life (NBWL) cleared the process of demarcating the ESZ.

## Impact

A big relief to thousands of home buyers in Noida and its vicinity as their apartments will now fall out of the new notified area.

## Features of Okhla sanctuary

- Number of bird species 300 bird species, especially water birds.
- Situated at the Okhla barrage over Yamuna River.
- Area: About 4 sq km

## Species

- Two critically endangered (CR) species: white-rumped vulture and Indian vulture
- Nine vulnerable (VU) species: Baikal teal, Baer's pochard, sarus crane, sociable lapwing, Indian skimmer, Pallas's fish eagle, lesser adjutant, bristled grassbird and Finn's weaver
- Seven near threatened (NT) species: ferruginous pochard, black-bellied tern, grey-headed fish eagle, erratically east to West Bengal and south to Kerala and Sri Lanka.

## Concerns

- Once a thriving habitat for flamingos and sarus and pochards, the Okhla Bird Sanctuary today is devoid of most of its winged visitors.
- Commercial complexes, DND expressway, flyovers and even the Ambedkar Park, have destroyed the feeding grounds around the bird sanctuary.

### 5.1.4. MAJORITY OF ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE ZONES STILL NOT NOTIFIED

- Total number of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries are 526
- ESZ has been notified only around 26 of them yet.

## ESZ and its significance

- According to the national wildlife policy, each of these wildlife zones was to have a protective zone (ESZ) around it, where polluting and detrimental activities would be restricted.
- The ESZ is based on the principles of providing sanctity to protected areas and strengthening the buffer zones and corridors around such areas.
- All forms of infrastructure projects of commercial or public purpose, including mining, industries and hydro-power projects, are prohibited within such zones.

## Supreme Court order on ESZ

- All states and Union Territories were required to send proposals detailing the site-specific geographical extent of ESZs around environmentally protected areas falling within their boundaries.

### ECO-SENSITIVE ZONES

#### States with most no. of proposals

States	Number of Proposals
Madhya Pradesh	35
Himachal Pradesh	31
Maharashtra	31
Karnataka	29
Tamil Nadu	29

#### Notified proposals

Sikkim	8
Gujarat	6
Goa	6
Odisha	2
Haryana	1
Jharkhand	1
Karnataka	1
Andhra Pradesh	1

Source: Environment Ministry



- Unless site-specific ESZs are declared a 10-km area around each of these wildlife zones is treated as an ESZ.

#### Reasons

- Several states such as Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Goa have consistently raised concerns about creating ESZs.
- Many states not sending proposals on time.
- According to officials procedural complexities were primarily to be blamed for the delays.

**[Mains 2013] What are the consequences of illegal mining? Discuss the ministry of environment and forests' concept of "GO AND NO GO" zones for coal mining.**

**[Mains 2012] The issue of tourism in core areas of tiger reserve forests in the country is a subject matter of debate. Critically examine various aspects of this issue, keeping in view relevant recent judicial pronouncements.**

### 5.1.5. CLIMATE CHANGE: OBAMA UNVEILS CLEAN POWER PLAN HAILED AS US'S STRONGEST EVER CLIMATE ACTION

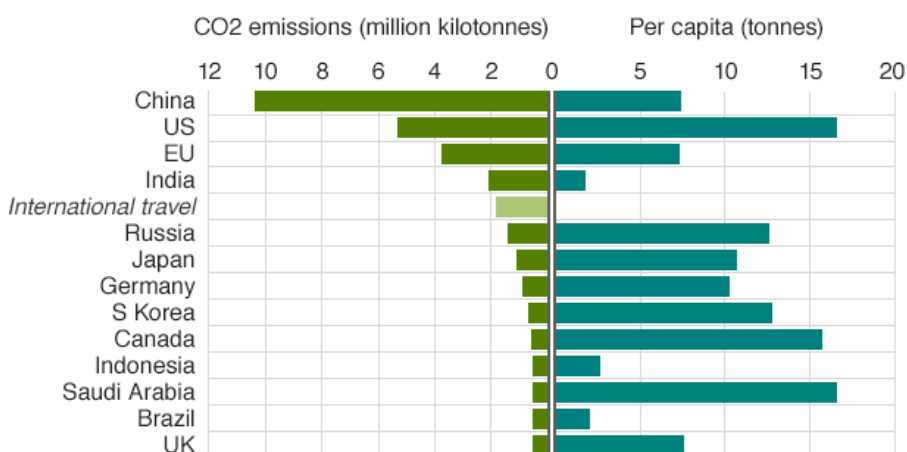
**Aim:** The Clean Power Plan sets standards to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 32% from 2005 levels by 2030.

#### How?

It sets carbon pollution reduction goals for power plants and requires states to implement plans to meet goals. States have until September 2016 to submit plans, but must comply by 2022.

The Administration believes the plan will boost a major climate summit in Paris in December and encourage other countries to submit their own plans.

#### Estimated 2013 emissions



### 5.1.6. USE OF FIREWOOD FOR COOKING IN RURAL AREAS

#### Statistics according to NSSO report

- Percentage of rural households using firewood: 67% (2/3)
- Percentage of urban households using firewood: 14%

#### Key observations in the report

- The use of firewood for cooking has declined only very slowly over the years in rural India. (from 78.2% in 1993-94 to 67.3% in 2011-12)
- LPG use in rural households has grown relatively fast (from fewer than 2% to 15% in 2011-12)
- 87% of Scheduled Tribe households and 70 per cent of Scheduled Caste households in rural India use firewood
- Tamil Nadu had the highest use of LPG among rural households, with over a third using it for cooking,



followed by Kerala and Punjab.

- 25% of rural households still rely on kerosene for lightening.
- Over the past decade, the proportion of households using kerosene to light their houses has, however, halved in rural India.

#### 5.1.7. E-PAYMENT MODULE TO DEPOSIT COMPENSATORY LEVIES INTO CAMPA FUNDS

- The Government launched an e-payment module, with an objective to make the payment of compensatory levies receivable in case of diversion of forest land.
- No payments will be accepted other than through this portal, unless specifically ordered by CAMPA (Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority).

##### Significance

- It will simplify administrative procedures, without compromising on environmental safeguards.
- It will end delays in the deposit of compensatory levies.
- It will enhance transparency in the process.

##### CAMPA

- Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) are meant to promote afforestation and regeneration activities as a way of compensating for forest land diverted to non-forest uses.
- National CAMPA Advisory Council has been established as per orders of The Hon'ble Supreme Court with the following **mandate**:
  - Lay down broad guidelines for State CAMPA.
  - Facilitate scientific, technological and other assistance that may be required by State CAMPA.
  - Make recommendations to State CAMPA based on a review of their plans and programmes.
  - Provide a mechanism to State CAMPA to resolve issues of an inter-state or Centre-State character.

##### STATE CAMPA

- The Hon'ble Supreme Court approved the guidelines prepared by the MoEF for utilizing CAMPA funds by an agency to be constituted in the states and to be known as The State CAMPA.
- It administer amount received from the CAMPA and utilize the funds collected for
  - Undertaking compensatory afforestation
  - Assisted natural regeneration
  - Conservation and protection of forests
  - Infrastructure development
  - Wildlife conservation and protection

## 5.2. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

#### 5.2.1. THANE CREEK DECLARED AS FLAMINGO SANCTUARY BY MAHARASHTRA GOVERNMENT

**Name:** Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary

- The Maharashtra government has declared the area along Thane Creek as Flamingo Sanctuary under Sec. 18 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

- It will be Maharashtra's second Marine sanctuary, after Malvan.
- By November, over 30,000 of these beautiful birds, come to this sanctuary. They stay here till May, after which most of them migrate to the Bhuj area of Gujarat for breeding.
- Almost 90% are Lesser Flamingos and the remaining are Greater Flamingos.
- Other Bird species: About 200 including Globally Threatened Species like the Greater Spotted Eagle.

#### Significance

- It is a very significant step for the conservation of this unique natural environment with its eclectic mix of mangroves, mudflats and threatened species of birds.
- Now the ecosystem will be closely monitored and shielded from serious threats like discharge of effluents, dumping of sewage and other biotic interferences.
- At the same time, the scientific community, wildlife enthusiasts and the general public could enjoy access to this natural wonder in a regulated manner.

### 5.2.2. CHENGALIKODAN BANANA

**Why in news:** Chengalikodan has been accorded the Geographical Indication (GI) status.

It is known for its unique size, shape, colour and taste.

#### Other Products which have GI status

- Palakkadan matta rice, Vazhakkulam pineapple, Pokkali rice, Wayanadan scented rice varieties Gandhakasala and Jeerakasala and Central Travancore jiggery.
- Nearly 200 unique goods have been registered as GIs in India.



#### Significance of GI registration

- GI registration confers legal protection to the products
- It Prevents unauthorised use of a GI by others
- It helps consumers get quality products of desired traits
- It promotes economic prosperity of producers of goods by enhancing demand in national and international markets
- It is essential to get protection in other countries.

### 5.2.3. ONLY FOUR SEGMENTS ELIGIBLE FOR SOLAR ROOF TOP SUBSIDY

- Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has indicated that its subsidy or central financial assistance (CFA) for solar rooftop projects will be provided only to projects under four categories.
- Domestic content requirement (for modules made in India) will be applicable to only those installations where the subsidy is provided.
- Private, commercial and industrial buildings rooftops will not be covered under the subsidy unless the solar system is owned by a government organization.
- **Other provisions for small solar power plant:** Custom duty concessions, 10 years tax holiday, provision for loans and also loans upto Rs.10 lakh for individual loans under priority sector lending.

#### Four categories

- Residential

- Institutional (schools, educational institutions, medical colleges and hospitals and R & D institutions – both public and private)
- 3. Government (both central and state government organizations as also all Panchayati Raj buildings)
- Social sectors (old age homes, orphanages, common service centres and welfare homes, etc)

**Subsidy:** 15% of the benchmark cost

**[Mains 2012] Given the accelerated pace of development and demand for energy, would you consider renewable energy as a viable option for India's future?**

#### 5.2.4. KIKIKI HUNA

**Why in news:** Recently it has been found in Tamil Nadu, India.

##### Features

- Smallest insect in the world, dimension: 0.16 mm
- A multicellular organism that is smaller than single-celled organisms.
- Like all fairyflies, Kikiki huna lays its eggs in the eggs of other insects.
- The entire life stage is passed in the single egg, from which it emerges as an adult.
- It was first discovered in Trinidad around 20 years ago and later in Hawaii.
- **Other countries** where it has been found: Australia and Argentina.

## 6. ECONOMY

### 6.1. LIBERALIZATION IMPACT ON ECONOMY

#### 6.1.1. SOLAR DISPUTE AT WTO

- Why in news: A World Trade Organization (WTO) panel has ruled against India in a dispute raised by the US over the country's solar power programme, requiring the government to offer a level playing field to both foreign and domestic manufacturers of solar panels. The panel also struck down the Indian government's incentive policies, especially subsidies provided for domestic solar companies for manufacturing solar cells and solar modules

##### Reasons

- Indian government's imposition of local content requirements for solar cells and solar modules- It has offered financial support of up to Rs.1 crore per megawatt (MW) to the implementing agency for setting up large solar capacities by placing orders with domestic manufacturers.
- WTO members are not supposed to insist on national content requirements that discriminate against foreign products. Under "national" treatment, imports must be treated on a par with domestically manufactured products.

##### Impacts

- Make in India programme, aimed at attracting foreign investment and turning India into a manufacturing hub and green energy target to install 100 gigawatts may be affected
- No major impact as Only a small portion of the orders are to be channeled through the subsidy route

### 6.2. TAX EVASION

#### 6.2.1. SEBI TO BRING MANAGERS IN TAX HAVENS UNDER ITS AMBIT

- Seeking to root out undeclared wealth, India's market regulator, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), is trying to bring some large wealth managers operating out of low-tax centres like Hong Kong and Singapore under its ambit.
- Under Indian rules, a resident Indian can remit up to \$250,000 per year outside the country. Once the money is moved abroad, authorities lose oversight of the funds.
- SEBI has asked international private banks to register their offshore units with it if they are soliciting business in India.

##### Reasons

- The Government of India is cracking down on tax evasion and black money as a means of boosting revenues. It is prosecuting several individuals on suspicion of having undeclared assets outside the country. An estimated \$344 billion has been illegally removed from the Indian economy between 2002 and 2011.
- Some boutique private banks in such centres have been trying to tap wealthy Indians and manage their foreign assets without having operations in the country and without informing local regulators.

##### Impacts

- By registering with SEBI, some private banks would have to admit that they are managing funds of wealthy Indian clients outside the country. That in turn could prompt further requests from SEBI to share information about Indian individuals.

- Apart from affecting wealthy individuals, SEBI's moves could make private bankers think twice about building their business in India, even though Indian private wealth is expected to show double-digit growth.

### 6.2.2. FATCA

- Government has notified rules to comply with the information reporting requirements of the US' Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act, or FATCA.
- India and US signed an agreement to share financial information about their residents. Financial institutions, including banks, deposit taking non-banking finance companies, mutual funds, private equity funds, custodians and life insurance companies, who will have to maintain information about their customers, including name, address, tax identification number etc. They will also have to disclose information about the bank account balance.
- Disclosure requirements are subject to certain thresholds. For instance, accounts opened before 30 June 2014 with a balance of less than \$50,000 do not have to be disclosed by individuals. This limit is \$250,000 in case of entities. Institutions such as regional rural banks and cooperative banks that deal with low-value transactions are not covered.
- This is a significant milestone achieved as under the reciprocity clause of these agreements, the government shall receive information about the Indian tax residents parking money abroad. Such information, together with provisions of the newly introduced Black Money Act, will help to curb tax evasions.

#### Challenges

- Indian financial institutions will need to train front-end staff, third-party distributors and build a balance between effective implementation and handling customer sensitivities.
- State-run banks, given their large customer base, it would be difficult to comply changes.
- Banks will also have to invest more money in upgrading their technology to maintain such data in an electronic format.

## 6.3. INDUSTRY

### 6.3.1. E-COMMERCE SECTOR

#### 6.3.1.1. INDIA TO LIFT CEILING ON E-COMMERCE EXPORTS

- Commerce ministry for the first time provided export incentives to e-commerce exports up to Rs. 25,000 through courier services for items such as handloom products, books, leather footwear, toys and customized fashion garments from six ports on a pilot basis.
- At present, the revenue department is developing the EDI (electronic data interchange) software on a public private partnership mode with the Express Industry Council of India. Once the software is ready, the e-commerce incentive scheme will be rolled out throughout the country and without any limit on the value.
- Presently, the value of such items shipped through couriers are not captured under regular export data and often categorized as samples because if they have to follow the normal export route, they have to file shipping bill and checks by custom officials, which is a cumbersome process for small exporters with small values. The software will do away with the problem.
- At present, the government allows 100% FDI in wholesale e-commerce trading but none in retail e-commerce. The government is reluctant to allow FDI in retail e-commerce, fearing it will lead to the backdoor entry of foreign offline supermarket chains.

- Once reluctant to negotiate the issue at multilateral forums since its domestic e-commerce policy is not clear on the matter, India has started sending signals that it is ready to make e-commerce part of trade agreements.
- In the inter-session meeting of trade ministers belonging to the 16-member regional comprehensive economic partnership at Kuala Lumpur, India agreed to the formation of a working group on e-commerce, after initial strong resistance to the move by Japan.
- Similarly, reversing its stand against engagement in e-commerce at the BRICS grouping (comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), India agreed to the Framework for BRICS E-commerce Cooperation at a summit in Ufa, Russia.

## 6.4. PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS REFORMS

### 6.4.1. INDRADHANUSH PLAN

#### Background

- The Public Sector Banks (PSBs) play a vital role in India's economy. In the past few years, because of a variety of legacy issues including the delay caused in various approvals as well as land acquisition etc., and also because of low global and domestic demand, many large projects have stalled.
- Public Sector Banks which have got predominant share of infrastructure financing have been sorely affected. It has resulted in lower profitability for PSBs, mainly due to provisioning for the restructured projects as well as for gross NPAs. To revive the deteriorating state of PSBs government launched Indradhanush Plan recently.

#### What is Indradhanush Plan

- It is a seven pronged plan launched by Government to revamp functioning of public sector banks.
- The seven elements include appointments, board of bureau, capitalization, de-stressing, and empowerment, framework of accountability and governance reforms (ABCDEFGF).
- Banks board of bureau will replace existing appointments board. Its members would be appointed in the next six months to be headed by the RBI governor.
- Banks board bureau would also hold bad assets of public sector banks
- The bureau will comprise a chairman and six members, of which three will be from the government. The remaining three will be professionals from banking and other sectors.
- The bureau will help in the eventual transition to a bank holding company.
- It is an attempt to separate the functioning of the banks from the government by creating another entity in the middle to act as a link between the two.
- The government has also finalized a new way of monitoring state-run banks. They will be given marks based on quantitative parameters like NPA management, return on capital,

#### CAPITALIZATION DRIVE

Capital allocation to banks this fiscal year\*

	(₹ crore)
State Bank of India	5,531
Bank of India	2,455
IDBI Bank	2,229
Indian Overseas Bank	2,009
Bank of Baroda	1,786
Punjab National Bank	1,732
Union Bank of India	1,080
Canara Bank	947
Corporation Bank	857
Dena Bank	407
Bank of Maharashtra	394
Andhra Bank	378
Allahabad Bank	283

\*This excludes the capital that will be given to banks at the end of the fiscal year based on their performance in the first three quarters.

#### Indradhanush plan for revamp of state-run banks:

- Appointments
- Bank Board Bureau
- Capitalization
- De-stressing public sector banks
- Empowerment
- Framework of accountability
- Governance reforms



growth and diversification of business and financial inclusion, and qualitative parameters like human resources initiatives and strategic steps taken to improve asset quality.

### Challenges

- *Indradhanush* framework talks about the government putting in Rs 70,000 crore into these banks over the next four years but The PJ Nayak committee report released in May 2014 estimated that between January 2014 and March 2018 "public sector banks would need Rs. 5.87 lakh crores of tier-I capital. So, the government is not investing as much as the public sector banks really need to get out of the current situation that they are in.
- Non-reference to disinvestment.
- Lack of a concrete plan to tackle NPAs.
- Many measures that the government has listed out as a part of the *Indradhanush* framework have already been around for a while now, having been put in place by the Reserve Bank of India
- Implementation method of the issue of govt: interference as mentioned in the policy,
- The Nayak Committee had proposed a BBB comprising entirely of senior bankers. Under *Indradhanush*, the government will be represented on the BBB.
- Experts believe that the real reform is for the government to vest the ownership of all the banks in a single holding company, whose board comprises professionals of integrity. It can select PSB boards and oversee their working.

## 6.5. CAPITAL MARKET

### 6.5.1. EASING NORMS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT TRUSTS

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has proposed to ease norms for infrastructure investment trusts (InvITs) as a way to encourage firms to unlock capital.
- In September 2014, SEBI had allowed firms to launch real estate investment trusts (REITs) and InvITs to help cash-strapped developers get easier access to funds while creating a new investment avenue for institutions and wealthy individuals.
- A domestic InvIT can raise long-term funds from unit holders, helping developers unlock value in their operational or completed projects or repay debt associated with those projects. Infrastructure firms can transfer a portfolio of their operational projects to such a trust and launch it in the market.
- However, infrastructure companies have been slow to respond as they sought a relaxation in rules and clarity on taxation.
- Under the new rules, the minimum commitment amount by sponsors in InvITs has been reduced from 25% to 10%. In other words, the company that promotes a trust can hold as little as 10% of the units issued by the trust.
- Additionally, Sebi proposed to allow an InvIT to invest in SPVs that act as holding companies for other SPVs.

## 7. INTERNATIONAL / INDIA AND WORLD

### 7.1. INDIA – US

India and the US have decided to sign a pact on exchange of information on terrorists on a Real Time Basis during the counter-terrorism and homeland security dialogue scheduled to be held in December this year. The Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD -6) is a model text agreement proposed by the U.S. for exchange of terrorist screening information between the Terrorist Screening Centre (TSC) of the U.S. and an Indian agency.

#### Significance:

It is to enhance homeland security cooperation and discuss building capacity in cyber security and critical infrastructure protection, countering illicit finance, global supply chain security, megacity policing, and science and technology. With this agreement in place, India could get access to a U.S. database of 11,000 terror suspects on a real time basis. India has also asked for access to Internet-related data from U.S.-based service providers like Google, Yahoo, and Bing, among others.

#### Criticism:

Some Indian security agencies have expressed concern over giving unhindered access to the U.S. on such sensitive database.

**Note:** The US has already finalised such agreements with 30 countries. Terrorist Screening Centre (TSC) is a multi-agency organisation administered by FBI which consolidates several terrorist watch list maintained by different US government agencies into single terrorist data base on terror suspects.

### 7.2. INDIA-ITALY: STATUS QUO IN MARINES CASE

The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) has put a status quo in the Italian marines case and has asked both India and Italy to suspend all court proceedings and refrain from initiating new ones. It is a kind of victory for India as the court did not allow one of the accused marines to go home from Indian custody despite Italy's plea. The other accused marine is already in Italy and is allowed to stay back home by the Supreme Court due to medical reasons.

#### Background:

- **February, 2012** - The marines, who were on board ship 'Enrica Lexie', are accused of killing two Indian fishermen off the Kerala coast under the misconception that they were pirates.
- **July 2015** - During hearing in the Supreme Court, Italy had made a plea before the court saying it has invoked international arbitration challenging India's jurisdiction. But, India has been saying that it had jurisdiction to try the Italian marines as the alleged offence had taken place in the Indian waters.

#### ITLOS:

- The ITLOS is an independent judicial body established by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to adjudicate disputes arising out of the interpretation and application of the Convention. India is also a signatory to this convention.
- The Convention also established the International Seabed Authority, with responsibility for the regulation of seabed mining beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, that is beyond the limits of the territorial sea, the contiguous zone and the continental shelf.
- The Tribunal is composed of 21 independent members and based in Hamburg, Germany.
- The Tribunal has the power to settle disputes between party states. Currently, there are 161 parties.

### 7.3. INDIA - AFGHANISTAN

Recently, India has rejected another invitation from Kabul to revive the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) signed in 2011 to hold a meeting of the **Strategic Partnership Council (SPC)**. India and Afghanistan have held only one meeting of the SPC (in 2012).

India was the **first country** Afghanistan chose to sign a strategic partnership agreement with, despite the U.S. and Pakistan keen on doing so. Since then, however, India has significantly withdrawn from its strategic promises to Afghanistan for a number of reasons.

- A barrage of attacks from the Taliban supported by Pakistan to Indian presence have forced India to reconsider its strategic and military assistance there.
- From 2014 after former president Karzai, President Ashraf Ghani made a decisive shift like visiting the Pakistan General Headquarters and inviting the Army and intelligence chiefs to Kabul, and signing an MoU between intelligence agencies NDS and ISI, even as his government joined talks with the Taliban hosted by Pakistan.

### 7.4. INDIA – UAE: PM'S VISIT TO UAE

- Prime Minister made his **first** visit to the Gulf region and West Asia with a trip to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), marking the **first visit by Indian PM to the UAE in more than three decades**. In **2014-2015**, trade between India and the UAE crossed **\$59 billion** with the **balance of trade in favour of India**, making the **UAE one of India's biggest trading partners**. India and UAE elevated the relationship between the two countries to a comprehensive strategic partnership.
- Both the countries agreed to “co-ordinate efforts to fight radicalisation and misuse of religion by groups and countries for inciting hatred, perpetrating and justifying terrorism or pursuing political aims.” It is seen as a shift in foreign policy where security and terrorism take precedence over diplomacy in driving India's interests.
- The joint statement was also significant in the way it indicted Pakistan and state sponsored terror without naming the country.
- The two countries would also work towards the adoption of India's proposed Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism in the United Nations.
- The UAE will also support India's candidature for a permanent seat in the United Nation's Security Council (UNSC).

### 7.5. INDIA - IRAN

#### MOU : Chabahar Port

India had recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Iran for the development of the Chabahar port. Iran's offer to India to help build a rail link to connect the strategically located Chabahar Port with the **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** project is facing hurdles over terms of contract, related to the ownership and maintenance of the rail network.

The proposal to India is to help to build over 500-km-rail link from the Chabahar in Southeast Iran to connect with **Zahedan, capital of Sistan-Baluchistan province**. *Zahedan is connected with the main Iranian railway network and the proposed rail link when concluded will join Chabahar with INSTC and provide access to Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and beyond.*



### Background:

**Chabahar** port is suitably located to serve India's outreach in the region to Afghanistan and beyond as well as link with INSTC to which India is one of the initial signatories. **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** is the ship, rail, and road route for moving freight between **India, Russia, Iran, Europe and Central Asia**.

Russia, Iran and India signed the agreement for the INSTC project in 2002. In 2014, Dry runs of the two routes in INSTC were conducted, the **first** was Mumbai to Baku (Azerbaijan) via Bandar Abbas (Iranian Port) and the **second** was Mumbai to Astrakhan (Russia) via Bandar Abbas, Tehran and Bandar Anzali (Iran).

**Implications:** India is keen to tap the trading potential with countries in the region and has been pushing for providing connectivity. The objective of the corridor is **to increase trade connectivity** between major cities such as Mumbai, Moscow, Tehran, Baku, Bandar Abbas, Astrakhan, Bandar Anzali and etc.

### Visa Policy

India has liberalised its visa policy for Iran and **struck it off the prior referral category (PRC) of countries**. Three categories of visas — employment, conference, students and research visa — were on the restricted list till now. The two countries have agreed to facilitate development in various fields including ports, north-south corridor, petrochemicals, steel industries, pharmaceuticals, and medical equipment

**Implications:** India sees Iran as a **key supporter** in the wake of the growing threats and influence of Islamist terror groups such as the Islamic State in Central Asia. For the ease of doing business, It will lead to large number of Iranians visiting India and help boost economy.

### Iranian Foreign Minister's Visit

The Iranian foreign minister's visit comes at a time when India is looking to recalibrate its ties with the countries in West Asia—between security partner Israel, Shia-majority Iran, which is a crucial energy partner, and the Sunni Arab Gulf nations that have an impact on Indian security and also are home to many million Indian expatriate workers and important suppliers of energy.

## 7.6. INDIA AND THE UNSC ISSUES

After the United States, Russia too has clarified that it is open to supporting India's bid for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Russia supports the candidature of India and Brazil as well as an African country in the UNSC.

But the US, Russia and China are not in favour of any large-scale reforms of the UN security council and giving veto power to new members.

### Background

India, which will be competing for a permanent seat with **Germany, Japan and Brazil**, already has the support of France and the U.K., and has long held that as one of the biggest democracies and a growing economy it is poised to take its place in the UNSC complete with the veto. However, China remains a big roadblock as it has not clarified its position on support for India.

### Implications

- It is imperative that the consolidated document uploaded by the President of the General Assembly, Sam Kutesa, at least be accepted by the countries as a basis for discussing UN reform next year.
- Indian officials feel that the fact that countries have committed to positions is a positive development for the process in this long discussion of seven years.
- If, anyone of the P-5 countries — for instance, China — decides to veto a resolution to accept the document, India's hopes for a permanent seat in the near future will be in danger.

## India and UNSC

- India was among the founding members of United Nations.
- It is the second largest and one of the largest constant contributor of troops to United Nations Peacekeeping missions.
- India, since long time, has been demanding expansion of UNSC and its inclusion as permanent member in it. It has been a member of UNSC for 7 terms and a member of G-77 and G-4, so permanent membership is a logical extension.

## UNSC - Key Facts

- The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations and is charged with the maintenance of international peace and security.
- Its powers include the establishment of peacekeeping operations, the establishment of international sanctions, and the authorization of military action through Security Council resolutions; it is the only UN body with the authority to issue binding resolutions to member states.
- The Security Council consists of fifteen members. Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, and the United States—serve as the body's five permanent members. These permanent members can veto any substantive Security Council resolution, including those on the admission of new member states or candidates for Secretary-General.
- The Security Council also has 10 non-permanent members, elected on a regional basis to serve two-year terms. The body's presidency rotates monthly among its members.

## 7.7. TRAVEL & TOURISM COMPETITIVE INDEX 2015

As per the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) 2015, of the World Economic Forum, India's rank has improved significantly to **52nd this year from 65th in 2013**. Improving the ranking had been set as a target in the Result Framework Document (RFD) of the Ministry of Tourism for the year 2014-15.

**Travel & Tourism Competitive Index** measures *"the set of factors and policies that enable the sustainable development of the Travel & Tourism (T&T) sector, which in turn, contributes to the development and competitiveness of a country."* It is published **biennially** and that is of 141 economies.

## 7.8. CHINA – PAKISTAN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR (CPEC) PROJECT

China and Pakistan recently signed 20 more agreements to implement the ambitious China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project.

### CPEC

- The agreements were signed at the CPEC Forum held at Karamay city in Xinjiang province bordering Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).
- This project will shorten the route for China's energy imports from the Middle East by about 12,000 kms.
- The project includes building of highways, railways as well as pipelines. It is among the **six economic corridors** conceived under China's Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road.



### India's Concerns

India has conveyed its objections to China as it passes through disputed territory i.e. POK. However, China defends it as commercial project aimed at improving the lives of people.

## 7.9. SENDAI FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

- India has decided to implement the Sendai framework.
- The "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030" was adopted during the **Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction** held in Sendai, Japan in March, 2015.
- It is the **first major agreement** of the post-2015 development agenda, with seven targets and four priorities for action.
- The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR – UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction) has been actively supporting India's Leadership role in implementation of Sendai Framework for disaster risk reduction in the Asian region.
- The Sendai Framework is a 15-year, **voluntary, non-binding agreement** which recognizes that the State has the primary role to reduce disaster risk but that responsibility should be shared with other stakeholders including local government, the private sector and other stakeholders.
- The Sendai Framework is the successor instrument to the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015 Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters.

## 7.10. SAARC PROMOTES NON - WOOD FOREST PRODUCE

SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Expert Group on Community-based Sustainable Management of NWFP and Income Generation for Communities With Delegates from the eight member-nations, namely **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka**.

### Key Agenda

- The meeting also mooted the establishment of **legal, fiscal and market mechanisms** to ensure sustainability of NWFP harvesting with community participation.



- They also resolved to set up a **comprehensive policy framework** to legalise the collection, processing and certification of the products and to facilitate value addition.
- The meeting also came to a general consensus on establishing a **real-time market** intelligence and monitoring system for high value forest produce.
- To curb over exploitation, the expert group mooted steps to entrust local communities with the proprietorship of these resources.

#### **Non – Wood Forest Products (NWFP)**

- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) defines NWFP as being “**goods of biological origin other than wood derived from forests, other wooded land and trees outside forests**”.

NWFP may be gathered from the wild, or produced in forest plantations, agro forestry schemes and from trees outside forests. Examples of NWFP include products used as food and food additives (edible nuts, mushrooms, fruits, herbs, spices and condiments, aromatic plants, game), fibres (used in construction, furniture, clothing or utensiles), resins, gums, and plant and animal products used for medicinal, cosmetic or cultural purposes. NWFP have also attracted considerable global interests in recent years due to the increasing recognition of their contribution to environmental objectives, including the conservation of biological diversity.

### **7.11. JAIPUR SUMMIT: FORUM FOR INDIA – PACIFIC ISLANDS COOPERATION (FIPIC)**

India hosted the second summit of the Pacific Islands countries, Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) as part of a strategy to expand its presence in the region which is important from an economic and geostrategic standpoint. The agenda included agriculture, food processing, fisheries, solar energy, e-networks for coordination in telemedicine and tele-education, space cooperation and climate change

- PM announced a major plan to open a new space research and satellite monitoring station on the Fiji Islands. A satellite monitoring station in Fiji will provide India with an independent satellite tracking capacity. At present, India relies on the United States and Australia to assist it with monitoring its satellites over the Pacific.
- The summit in Jaipur underlined the growing geostrategic importance of the 14 South Pacific islands that lie at the centre of a key maritime route rich in resources and one of the largest voting blocs in the United Nations.
- The support of these countries is key to India's attempt to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

#### **Implications**

- India's strong relations with Fiji, which has considerable influence in the region, was a “strong point” which could help counter the growing Chinese influence.
- Analysts argue that most of the economies in the region are based on agriculture, fisheries and small-scale industries and India's capacity in these sectors is even better than Europe and China; it can cultivate relations with the island nations based on its technology.
- Even small investments will make a big impact in these regions
- Many of these countries send their nationals to India for education through programmes sponsored by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations

Thus, India should make a beginning keeping in mind its strengths, possible synergy and complementarity of interests and needs.

## 7.12. ANCHOR BABY & BIRTH TOURISM: A CONTROVERSY

### Why in News

The anchor baby issue is prevalent in US due to the 2016 presidential campaign where one party promises to end it, and another to support it.

A child born of an immigrant in the United States, said to be a device by which the U.S.-born children can sponsor their parents for citizenship after they reach 21 years of age. Since those children are automatically allowed to choose American citizenship.

### Criticism

It is being criticised that the United States' "birthright citizenship" is an incentive for illegal immigration, and that immigrants come to the country to give birth specifically so that their child will be an American citizen.

Specially criticised for Asians coming to the U.S. and "taking advantage" of birth-right citizenship referring the term "birth tourism". Where "Pregnant Chinese women paying agencies to bring them to the U.S. to have their babies so that they can grow up as American citizens." It is criticised **as fraud by taking advantage of a noble concept.**

### Counter Criticism

While studies by the Pew Research Centre and the Centre for Immigration Studies estimate that nearly 300,000 children a year are born in the U.S. with at least one parent who is an undocumented immigrant, nearly 70 per cent of them come from **Mexico, El Salvador and Honduras, and not China (Asia).**

## 8. ALSO IN NEWS

### 8.1. TRIPURA PASSED RESOLUTION AGAINST CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

- Tripura Assembly has passed a resolution to request the Union Government to amend Section 302 of the IPC to abolish capital punishment. In resolution, it asked to replace death sentence with life sentence unto death.
- In **Bachan Singh vs State Of Punjab**, 1980, The Supreme Court of India ruled that the death penalty should be imposed only in "**the rarest of rare cases**". Also, In November 2012, India again upheld its stance on capital punishment by voting against the UN General Assembly draft resolution seeking to ban death penalty.

**Q.** Instances of President's delay in commuting death sentences have come under public debate as denial of justice. Should there be a time limit specified for the President to accept/reject such petitions? Analyse (**Q5, Paper II, UPSC 2014**)

### 8.2. MYSURU TOPS SWACHH BHARAT RANKING

Ministry of Urban Development released Swachh Bharat Ranking which included 476 first tier cities with population more than 1 lakh.

The survey used two parameters for cleanliness in cities:

- How "minimal" open defecation was in the city.
- How robust the municipalities were with the solid waste management system.

The city of Mysuru was found impressive on both the parameters.

The basic purpose of the survey was to find out where exactly the cities were standing at the launch of Swachh Bharat Mission and what distance they have covered ever since.

### 8.3. INDEPENDENCE DAY SPEECH OF THE PRIME MINISTER – IMPORTANT TAKE AWAYS

The Prime Minister gave broad overview of the achievements in last fifteen months along with certain announcements such as:

- While stressing the need for farmers' welfare declared that the Ministry of Agriculture would be renamed as the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
- Announced "**Start-Up India**" initiative to encourage entrepreneurship among the youth of India. Every bank branches should encourage at least one Dalit or Adivasi entrepreneur, and at least one woman entrepreneur.
- To make India a developed nation by 2022, with a house and access to basic services like electricity, to all.
- To connect with electricity, all the 18,500 villages which still remain without power, within the next 1000 days.
- To end the practice of "interviews" for recruitments even at relatively junior levels at the earliest, and to promote merit by recruiting only through transparent, online processes.

- To convert 44 labour laws into four simplified codes related to industrial relations, wages, social security and safety.
- To utilise unclaimed amount lying in EPF account for the welfare of workers.

## 8.4. PROJECT MASOOM BY YOUNG INDIA

The Young India has launched a nationwide Project Masoom against child sexual abuse.

### Need of initiative:

- Rising number of child abuse cases reported in the media is a cause for alarm.
- Large number of cases not reported due to lack of awareness or the fear of loss of reputation.

### About Project:

- The idea is to create better awareness about the issue and effectively spread the message by campaigning at public places like cinema halls.
- The campaign material lists ways to protect children from the abusers. Also it enlightens about the **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POSCO) Act 2012**.
- The project will also be introduced in schools to educate the parents, teachers and children about the issue.

### Major Challenges:

- Parents choose not to complain and also discourage their children from talking about it. This gives an undue advantage to the abusers.
- In many nuclear families parents work and entrust the job to pick up and drop their children on unknown van or auto drivers.
- Also, not many parents show inclination to understand the children's world.

### Way Forward:

It is the duty of every parent to listen to their children and observe their activities, behaviour and mood and also caution them about good and bad things.

### Few Facts:

- One in every six male and one in every four female children under 18 years fall victim to sexual abuse.
- Close relatives are the main culprits in 89 per cent of the cases.
- Parents/family members are unaware of the incident in 70 percent of the cases.

## 8.5. LINGUISTIC SURVEY OF INDIA TO BE PUBLISHED

The Gujarat based **Bhasha Research and Publication Centre (BPRC)** conducted "People's Linguistic Survey of India" in 2013. The important findings of survey are as follows:

- The survey identified **860 languages in India**.
- The state of Arunachal Pradesh has maximum number of dialects.
- About 300 languages are untraceable since Independence.
- Around 40 Crore people in India can communicate in Hindi and it has gained popularity more than English.

The survey holds great significance as it is **almost a century after George Grierson's Linguistic Survey** of India that such a survey has been carried out.

## 8.6. CABINET APPROVES PACT WITH THE SEYCHELLES TO CURB BLACK MONEY

### Provisions and Impact

- Information received under the agreement can be disclosed to any other person or entity with prior written consent of the country sending such information.
- It provides for a **Mutual Agreement Procedure** for resolving any difference or for agreeing on procedures.
- It will stimulate information exchange between two nations for tax purposes.
- Will help curb tax evasion and avoidance.

### Other steps taken to curb black money:

- India joined 59 countries in the **Multilateral Competent Authority Agreement on the Automatic Exchange of Financial Account Information** in May. This agreement obliges signatories to exchange periodically and automatically a wide range of financial information among themselves.
- India signed an inter-governmental agreement with the U.S. to implement the **Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA)**, a significant step towards curbing overseas tax evasion and black money.

## 8.7. GUJARAT VIOLENCE: 24X7 SITUATION ROOM TO TRACK SOCIAL MEDIA

### What it is:

Parallel system to keep watch on activities on the Internet

The “24x7 situation room” could be a collaborative initiative of six or seven Ministries but headed by the Home Ministry.

### Features:

- Analyze social media content and generate social media intelligence through analysis.
- Through such 24x7 situation rooms the government aims to build a “counter-narrative” in real time to ensure that **credible information is disseminated**.
- A similar set-up the New Media Wing in the Information and Broadcasting Ministry generates social media reports and sends it to top bureaucrats twice a day.

### Immediate Reason:

A huge gathering was mobilised for the Patel agitation in Gujarat by messages circulated through social networking sites and mobile applications.

Q. What are social networking site and what security implications do these sites present? [Mains 2013]

## 8.8. STEPS TAKEN BY GOVT. TO CHECK GOLD SMUGGLING

- Regular rummaging of aircrafts and scanning of passenger baggage to detect concealment.
- To stop gold smuggling at the sea route connecting Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu, agencies are regularly contacted and patrolling is being conducted along the coastal areas.
- Actionable intelligence is shared with agencies like coast guard, IB, state police to check any untoward movement of persons or goods in the sea route connecting Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu
- In 2014-15, there were 169 gold seizure cases.

### Other facilities to prevent Gold Smuggling

- Sophisticated door frame metal detectors.
- Hand held metal detectors.
- X-rays baggage machines.

## 8.9. USE OF UNUSED TV SPECTRUM TO PROVIDE BROADBAND INTERNET CONNECTIVITY

- A research group at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB) has set up India's first pilot test-bed which uses unused TV spectrum to provide broadband Internet connectivity in rural areas.
- The Department of Telecom (DoT) has also granted an experimental licence to IITB to conduct tests in TV's UHF band.

### Significance

- could be used in Digital India programme Cheaper than optic fibre network
- can provide coverage within a radius of 1 to 10 km from the access network such as WiFi zones, access points and clusters to an optic fibre point of presence.

## 8.10. SAMANVAY WEB PORTAL

### Purpose:

To monitor progress and implementation of the Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) launched by Ministry of Rural Development.

### Features

- SAMANVAY will compile all schemes of both the Centre and state governments at the gram panchayat level
- More than 1800 central and state schemes across India have been documented in SAMANVAY.

### Significance

- This move will help the MPs to utilise relevant schemes in planning and implementation of Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY).



## 8.11. GOVERNMENT TO ANNOUNCE PREMIUM PRICING FOR DIFFICULT FIELDS

- In an attempt to incentivize hydrocarbon exploration, the government will soon announce premium pricing on new discoveries in difficult areas.
- This will allow explorers such as Oil and Natural Gas Corp. Ltd (ONGC) and Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) to charge a premium over and above the price formula approved by the government in October last year.
- This comes against the backdrop of waning investor interest in the Indian hydrocarbon sector, with around 70% of Indian basins remaining largely under-explored.
- In October 2014, the government announced a new gas-pricing formula. According to the formula approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), on a net calorific value (NCV) basis, the price applicable from 1 April to 30 September is \$5.18 per million British thermal unit (mmBtu).

India approved the New Exploration Licensing Policy (Nelp) in 1997—it took effect in January 1999—to boost hydrocarbon exploration. Under Nelp, the government allocates rights to explore hydrocarbon blocks through a bidding process and has done this in nine phases so far for 360 blocks, with an investment of around \$21.3 billion. Hydrocarbon explorers in India have made a total payment of \$15.41 billion to the Union government as royalties and cess, and \$1.93 billion to state governments since 1994.

## 8.12. BANKING

### 8.12.1. APPROVAL TO PAYMENT BANKS

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has given in-principle approval to 11 entities to **open payments banks** that will widen the reach of banking services and push the government's goal of financial inclusion.
- This new category of banks **will provide basic savings, deposit, payment and remittance services** to people without access to the formal banking system.
- The payments banks will **target financially excluded customers like migrant workers, low-income households and tiny businesses**. They will not be in the business of lending, so they will be shielded from the risks that conventional banks are exposed to.
- there are sceptics who wonder whether banks that cannot lend money and which will be limited to keeping a maximum deposit of Rs.1 lakh per customer have a future at all.
- Another concern is that RBI may have problems regulating these virtual banks that will operate mainly with point-of-sales devices and through business correspondents.

In-principle approval will be valid for 18 months, after which the entities will be given formal licenses, provided they fulfil conditions stipulated by RBI  
Concerns

## 8.13. INDIA AND THE ARAB LEAGUE: NO CHANGE IN INDIA'S POSITION ON PALESTINE

- The official statement reiterated India's support to the Palestinian cause. It also underlined that there is no change in India's position and that the President of India will visit Palestine, Israel and Jordan together, and our basic support for the Palestinian cause will remain undiluted in future. This statement reiterates India's commitment to Palestinian issue which remains a sensitive one in the Arab world.

- It can be seen as a balancing act on the part of India which wants to strengthen relations with Israel as well as safeguard its traditional ties with the Arab countries.
- On July 3, India for the first time abstained from voting on an anti-Israel resolution at the UN Human Rights Council. The resolution called for accountability from the parties to last year's conflict in Gaza that killed over 2,000 people and justice for "all violations of international law in the occupied Palestinian territory." India later argued that its abstention was on account of a "direct action-oriented reference made in the resolution to the International Criminal Court," of which it is not a member.

## SIFTING OUT THE FAKES

ACCORDING TO INDIAN OFFICIALS, "STATE AGENCIES" OF OTHER COUNTRIES USE SUCH CURRENCY NOTES TO FUND TERROR ACTIVITIES IN INDIA

**When was the pact signed?**

➤ At a meeting of the Joint Task Force on Fake Currency Notes in Dhaka on August 12-13



**Sharing the information**

➤ A secure channel will be established for information exchange, for which a standard operating procedure is being developed

**Where are the notes printed?**

➤ Forensic examination indicates that the notes are being printed in Pakistan using raw materials and sophisticated machines

## 8.14. INDIA – BANGALDESH: MOU TO FIGHT FAKE CURRENCY

At a meeting of the **Joint Task Force on Fake Currency Notes** in Dhaka India and Bangladesh have signed a memorandum of understanding to curb the smuggling of counterfeit currency notes, posing a threat to national security by sharing intelligence on a real-time basis.

## 8.15. INDIA – PAKISTAN

### 8.15.1. NSA MEETING CALLED OFF

- Pakistan called off the proposed meeting between the NSA's of India and Pakistan as stipulated in the Ufa declaration of July 2015. The declaration stated that the nations will strengthen their cooperation to counter international terrorism, giving the central role in this action to the United Nations. India was firm on its stand that the talks would be about terrorism and terrorism alone. Pakistan wanted a broader agenda that included a territorial dispute over Kashmir.

**Implications:**

- The cancellation of NSA levels talks is symptomatic of relations between the two parties that have shown lack of trust in recent times.
- Prime Ministers of the two countries would have an opportunity to meet on the side-lines of the United National General Assembly session in September. The scheduled meeting between the top brass of Pakistan Rangers and BSF would also be a small step towards continuation of contacts.

### 8.15.2. INDIA DECIDES TO BOYCOTT CPU MEET

India has decided to boycott the **61st conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Union (CPU) to be held in Islamabad** unless Pakistan extends an invitation to the Speaker of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly.

- India's decision stems from Islamabad's refusal to invite the J&K Speaker on the grounds that it is in violation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1991(1951) of March 30, 1951 and resolution 122 (1957) of January 4, 1957.
- It was argued that Pakistan's decision is in violation of CPU rules and also perplexing as the J&K branch was part of the 3rd Asia and India Regional CPU Conference held in Islamabad in March 2007.
- Pakistan claims that the invitation to J&K would contradict the fundamentals of Pakistan's foreign policy.

## 8.16. INDIA – SEYCHELLES

During the visit of Seychelles President James Alix Michel to India, Several key issues were discussed and deals signed. As -

- Maritime security ties and cooperation on blue economy with the island nation.
- A Taxation Agreement with the Seychelles for allowing exchange of information to curb tax evasion and avoidance
- Agreements of Space cooperation and Agriculture

Implications:

- The location of Seychelles in Indian ocean makes it all the more important for Indian interests from the perspective of India's burgeoning diplomacy with Island nations such as the ones in the Pacific..
- As the Seychelles is considered one of the preferred offshore havens for routing of funds, signing and ratification of the taxation pact with the island nation will help in curbing and unearthing black money.
- The two countries have excellent security cooperation in the Indian Ocean region, as India has provided aircraft, naval vessels and coastal radar systems for strengthening surveillance capacities and this visit follows on the achievements of the visit of Prime Minister in March 2015.

## 8.17. INDIA – CHINA: DAULAT BEG OLDIE, THE FIFTH BORDER MEETING POINT

**Daulat Beg Oldie** in Ladakh was designated as **fifth border meeting point** between India and China as a major step to keep the frontiers calm.

- This is the second border meeting point to be set up between the two countries over the past year.
- In May, the two countries opened **another border meeting point in Kibithu in Arunachal Pradesh**
- It might have the scope of complementarity and reconciliation of China's Belt and Road initiative with India's Act East Policy.
- However, the Indian side has yet to confirm about the Chinese position on bilateral issues.

## 8.18. INDIA – MYANMAR

India has provided relief supplies to Myanmar on a request from the flood-hit country. Widespread floods and landslides have wreaked havoc in the nation on India's eastern border, affecting 2.5 lakh people and damaging over five lakh acres of farm land.

### Implications

- In April, India took the lead in rescue and relief operations in Nepal after an earthquake in the Himalayan nation. Though the Nepalese government appreciated India's role, sections of Indian media were criticised for its coverage of the tragedy.
- Cooperation in the times of need can bolster India's image and goodwill in the neighbourhood; however such occasions also call for a sensitive handling of public relations with subtlety.

## 8.19. INDIAN SAILORS GET INTERNATIONAL IDENTITY

In a move that could **improve the employability of Indian sailors in international shipping**, the Union government has ratified the **International Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention, 2003**, which will provide for a **globally recognised seafarers' identity document**. The Convention, **under the International Labour Organisation**, has been ratified by 30 other countries.

- In addition to facilitating mobility of seafarers, the smart card will improve maritime security with a verifiable identification.
- Many countries require such identification before they grant special facilities to seafarers.
- Soon, the biometric data of Indian seafarers will be collected and the identity document will be issued in the form of a globally recognised smart card within the next six months.

### Implications

- Every year, several hundred Indian sailors are incarcerated abroad for various reasons, and without proper internationally recognised identification, they do not have the full support of the law.
- In addition, this ratification by India will increase the employability of Indian sailors by allowing them to cross into foreign waters unhindered. India has over 1.8 lakh seafarers, just around 7 per cent of the global share of sailors.

## 8.20. CONCERNS WRT TO INDIANS ABDUCTED IN LIBYA

In a development that highlights threats posed to Indian interests by the rise of radical groups such as Islamic State **four Indians were abducted in Libya near the town of Sirte**. Two of them were subsequently released.

It raises several issues :

- As it was unclear which group held the men.
- And moreover India maintains only a small mission in Tripoli with Charge d' Affaires Mohammad Rashid Khan, and monitors the situation through the Embassy in Tunisia.
- The incident brings militants threatening an **"armageddon-like" war on India**, calling on 'jehadi groups' in Afghanistan and Pakistan to unite against India.
- The incident brings into question the larger problem for the government of Indian nationals who continue to live in and travel to areas of major conflict despite clear advisories issued by the government.

## 8.21. EXPANDED SUEZ CANAL

- Egypt President unveiled an expanded Suez Canal with the first ships passing through the waterway in what Egypt hopes will boost its economy and global standing.
- The government says the project will more than double the canal's annual revenue to \$13.2 billion by 2023.