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Category: ECONOMICS

1. RBI to inject liquidity via forex swaps

Context

• The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to inject rupee liquidity into the system through long-term foreign exchange buy/sell swap — a first-of-its-kind instrument used for liquidity management.



• The RBI would conduct dollar-rupee buy/sell swap auction of \$5 billion for a three-year tenor on March 26.

How it will work?

- The swap is in the nature of a simple Buy/Sell foreign exchange swap with the RBI.
- A bank shall sell U.S. dollars to the RBI and simultaneously agree to buy the same amount of U.S. dollars at the end of the swap period.
- Banks would likely bid to swap dollars at a forward rate, which is lower than the market. A cut-off would be determined based on the bids received.
- The dollars raised through the auction will reflect in the RBI's foreign exchange reserves.

Details of the initiative

- In order to meet the durable liquidity needs of the system, the Reserve Bank has decided to augment its liquidity management toolkit and inject rupee liquidity for longer duration through long-term foreign exchange buy/sell swap
- The U.S. dollar amount mobilised through this auction would also reflect in RBI's foreign exchange reserves for the tenor of the swap while also reflecting in RBI's forward liabilities
- According to bankers, the move is seen to lower the dependence on open market operations which have been a significant amount of the overall borrowing. "Higher OMOs can distort the rates curve," said a banker. The move would boost RBI's foreign exchange reserves which were at \$401.7 billion for the week ended March 1.

Category: ENVIRONMENT

1. Environment damage behind a quarter of premature deaths, diseases: UN report

Context

• A quarter of all premature deaths and diseases worldwide are due to manmade pollution and environmental damage, the United Nations said in a landmark report on the planet's parlous state.

Details of the Report

- The Global Environment Outlook (GEO) a report six years in the making compiled by 250 scientists from 70 nations — depicts a growing chasm between rich and poor countries as rampant overconsumption, pollution and food waste in the developed world leads to hunger, poverty and disease elsewhere.
- Deadly emissions, chemicals polluting drinking water, and the accelerating destruction of ecosystems crucial to the livelihoods of billions of people are driving a worldwide epidemic that hampers the global economy.
- As greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise amid a preponderance of droughts, floods and superstorms made worse by climbing sea levels, there is a growing political consensus that climate change poses a future risk to billions.
- But the health impacts of pollution, deforestation and the mechanised food-chain are less well understood.
- Nor is there any international agreement for the environment close to covering what the 2015 Paris accord does for climate.
- The poor environmental conditions "cause approximately 25% of global disease and mortality" around 9 million deaths in 2015 alone. The air pollution causes 6-7 million early deaths annually.
- Lacking access to clean drinking supplies, 1.4 million people die each year from preventable diseases such as diarrhoea and parasites linked to pathogen-riddled water and poor sanitation.
- The report called for a root-and-branch detoxification of human behaviour while insisting that the situation is not unassailable.
- Food waste for instance, which accounts for 9% of global greenhouse gas emissions, could be slashed. The world currently throws away a third of all food produced. In richer nations, 56% goes to waste.
- It also called for a rapid drawdown in greenhouse gas emissions and pesticide use to improve air and



water quality.

Global Environmental Outlook and India

- India could save at least \$3 trillion (□210 trillion approx.) in healthcare costs if it implemented policy initiatives consistent with ensuring that the globe didn't heat up beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius by the turn of the century, says the sixth edition of the Global Environmental Outlook (GEO), prepared by the United Nations Environment Programme.
- India's stated commitment is to lower emissions intensity of its GDP by 33-35% compared to 2005 levels by 2030; increase total cumulative electricity generation from fossil free energy sources to 40% by 2030, and create additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tons through additional forest and tree cover.
- India is on track to achieve two of these goals of emissions intensity and electricity generation
 However these actions are only enough and provided other countries too live up to their commitments
 — to limit temperature rise to 2 degrees.
- For India to leapfrog onto a 1.5-degree pathway it would have to "abandon plans to build new coal-fired power plants

Global Environment Outlook

- The Global Environment Outlook (GEO) is often referred to as UN Environment's flagship environmental assessment. The first publication was in 1997 and was originally requested by Member States.
- It is a flagship report because it fulfills the core functions of the organization, which date back to the UN General Assembly resolution that established the UN Environment Programme in 1972.
- The Global Environment Outlook (GEO) is a consultative and participatory process to prepare an independent assessment of the state of the environment, the effectiveness of the policy response to address these environmental challenges and the possible pathways to be achieve various internationally agreed environmental goals.
- The process also builds capacity for conducting integrated environmental assessments and reporting on the state, trends and outlooks of the environment.
- The Global Environment Outlook (GEO) is also a series of products that informs environmental decision-making for not only governments but also various stakeholders such as the youth, businesses and local governments and aims to facilitate the interaction between science and policy.

D. GS4 Related

Nothing here today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Heavy-handed order

Context

- The Meghalaya High Court has imposed a fine of □2 lakh each on The Shillong Times Editor Patricia Mukhim and publisher Shobha Chaudhuri and ordered them to sit in the corner of the courtroom till the rising of the court in a contempt case.
- The case relates to an order by Justice Sudip Ranjan Sen on the perks and facilities for retired judges and their families.
- The report on December 10, 2018, headlined "When judges judge for themselves" linked the order of Meghalaya High Court's former Chief Justice Uma Nath Singh and former Justice T.K.N. Singh on January 7, 2016, for providing them Z-category and Y-category security respectively.

Contempt of court

- It is the offense of being disobedient to or being disrespectful towards a court of law
- Any action which defies a court's authority or impedes ability of the court to perform its functions or wilfully fails to obey a court order



- A judge may impose sanctions such as a fine or jail for someone found guilty of contempt of court
- The contempt proceeding can be initiated till 1 year from the commission of an offence.
- Apology also forms a defence under the Contempt of Court Act; however, it should be unconditional and should be in good faith with the promise to abide by the order of the Court.

Objective behind contempt law

- The purpose of contempt jurisdiction is to uphold the majesty and dignity of justice delivery system.
- Contempt powers help judges to do their duties of deciding cases without fear, favour, affection or ill will.
- Law of contempt is the protector of the seat of justice more than the person occupying that seat per se.
- Open criticism and malign of judiciary decreases the respect for judiciary and the confidence reposed in the courts.
- When questions are raised and motives attributed to court's decisions have extraneous basis, not only the legal and moral authority of courts is questioned but it is an affront to the Constitution itself.

Analysis of the issue

- The Meghalaya High Court's order finding the Editor and Publisher of Shillong Times guilty of contempt, and asking them to "sit in a corner" till the rising of the court and imposing a fine of □2 lakh each, is a heavy-handed response to comments in the newspaper on the court's earlier orders.
- What makes the order even more unfortunate is the explicit threat to ban the newspaper and jail them if they fail to pay the fine.
- While courts are indeed empowered to decide whether a publication scandalised or tended to scandalise
 the judiciary or interfered with the administration of justice, there is no legal provision for an outright ban
 on it.
- The origin of these contempt proceedings appears to be the State government's unilateral decision to withdraw certain facilities to retired judges without consulting the court administration.
- After the matter was not resolved on the administrative side for two months, the court initiated suo motu
 proceedings and issued some directions. It was because of a news item, accompanied by a commentary
 on the court's directions, that the contemnors had incurred the court's displeasure.
- The offending comments appeared to imply that the directions regarding extending facilities, including protocol services and domestic help, and reimbursing communication bills up to □10,000 a month and a mobile phone worth □80,000, to retired judges amounted to "judges judging for themselves".
- It is a moot question whether the court ought to have taken umbrage at this remark or ignored it. It would serve the cause of preserving the dignity of the higher judiciary if overzealous comments made by activists or journalists were ignored.
- In 1999, the Supreme Court had brushed aside some adverse remarks by activists by saying, "the court's shoulders are broad enough to shrug off their comments."
- However, in the case of Patricia Mukhim, the Editor of Shillong Times, the court has made sweeping remarks that the newspaper had always attacked individuals and institutions, had published propaganda calling for bandhs and "was always working against judges and the judicial system".
- The defence argued the court should frame specific charges before convicting them for contempt. However, the matter was tried summarily.
- While it is open to the court to try a case of contempt in a summary manner, the use of personalised views of the publication's past record to hand down the verdict puts a question mark over the decisionmaking process.

Conclusion

- Orders like this are a threat to freedom of speech not just because they could potentially lead to the closure of a newspaper without any basis in law, but also because of the chilling effect they can produce.
- This order will lead to self-censorship by other media covering the Meghalaya High Court and indeed journalists covering other courts across the country, because of the precedent this order sets.
- While there may be a need to curb tendentious criticism of the judiciary and self-serving comments on ongoing proceedings in mainstream and social media, there is a compelling case to use the contempt law sparingly, and avoid the impression that it is being used to stifle free speech or dissent. Lenience,



not anger, ought to be the primary response of a detached judiciary.

2. A model policy for women in the police

Context

• Women constitute about 7% of the police strength in India. This number is expected to rise, with many States and Union Territories providing for 30% (and more) reservation for women in the police in specific ranks. However, this is not enough. The discourse on mainstreaming women in the police by making policing inclusive, non-discriminatory and efficient in India is missing in policy circles.

Background

- Women in Independent India have evolved with the flow of history, but it has only been over the last 35 years that they have experienced the post-industrial revolution and subsequent positives of globalisation.
- These developments have radically transformed their gender relations at home, the workplace, with peers, and possibly in society at large, quite similar to the kind of social transformations women in the US experienced in the 1960s.
- This revolution was specifically linked to the proliferation of higher education and income levels of nuclear families going up throughout the country. The Indian woman ever since has come a long way in being part of the active workforce and has possibly broken all barriers in most professional fields, including that of donning the uniform of the police and the para-military.
- Following the 1970s, a combination of societal changes and progressive legislations paved the way for women to enter law enforcement.
- The chronicle of women in Indian police started in the early 70s when its first woman joined the uniformed force. She entered the profession at the top of the tier of an extremely hierarchical formation and put in a good three decades of exemplary work.
- During those decades, thousands of women joined the force from the ranks of constable all the way across the spectrum.
- In 2010, the Bureau of Police Research & Development (BPR&D) estimated that there are around 30,000 women in various Indian police forces. However, despite these "achievements," even a decadeold figure by the 7th UN Survey on the percentage of women police in 13 Asian countries reflects a very low percentage of women in India's police force.
- The Police in India recruited a decent number of women over the last twenty years, but acceptability and assimilation as "equal partners" to men within the professional core has left much to be desired.

Need for policy

- One way to mainstream women in the police is to develop a model policy that will challenge the deeprooted patriarchy in the institution.
- Unfortunately, till now, not a single State police department has attempted to even draft such a policy.
 Thus, neither the Central nor State governments can get very far by merely adopting reservation to increase gender diversity without considering the need for policymaking.

Salient features of the Model Policy

 A model policy, while laying the foundation for equal opportunities for women in every aspect of policing, should also strive to create a safe and enabling work environment. Without this, all other efforts will remain piecemeal.

Increase the Numbers

- One of the first steps to ensure a level playing field for women in the police is to increase their numbers.
- Merely providing reservation is not enough; police departments should develop an action plan to achieve the target of 30% or more in a time-bound manner. This also applies to States that have not provided a quota as yet.
- Departments should also undertake special recruitment drives in every district to ensure geographical diversity.
- To achieve the target, the police should reach out to the media and educational institutions to spread



awareness about opportunities for women in the police.

 Current data reveal that most women in the police are concentrated in the lower ranks. Efforts should be made to change this. The impulse to create women-only battalions for the sake of augmenting numbers should be eliminated.

Gender Stereotypes

- The model policy should strive to ensure that decisions on deployment of women are free of gender stereotyping to facilitate bringing women into leading operational positions.
- At present, there appears to be a tendency to sideline women, or give them policing tasks that are
 physically less demanding, or relegate them to desk duty, or make them work on crimes against women
 alone.
- Women police officers should be encouraged to take on public order and investigative crimes of all types, and should be given duties beyond the minimum mandated by special laws. Desk work too must be allocated evenly among men and women.

Women specific needs

- A major burden of family and childcare responsibilities falls on women. Yet, police departments still lack proper internal childcare support systems.
- Departments need to be mindful of this social reality and exercise sensitivity in making decisions on transfers and posting of women personnel. As far as possible, women should be posted in their home districts in consultation with supervising officers.
- Most State police departments have received funds under the Modernisation of State Police Forces
 Scheme for providing separate toilets and changing rooms for women, and for constructing separate
 accommodation for women with attached toilets in all police stations and units. Police departments must
 ensure the best use of this fund.

Preventing sexual harassment

- Police departments must also ensure safe working spaces for women and adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards discrimination and harassment, in order to make policing a viable career option for women.
- Departments are legally bound to set up Internal Complaints Committees to prevent sexual harassment at the workplace. Departments must operationalise the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act of 2013.

Conclusion

- Some of these suggestions have already been made by the National Conference of Women in Police. However, Central and State governments have not yet developed or adopted a comprehensive framework towards achieving substantive gender equality.
- By and large, lack of requisite social attitudes and work culture in the Indian society at large, and, in particular, government and its workplace, are squarely responsible for the gender bias in the profession.
- Broad social changes in developing countries such as India have resulted in the increased representation of women officers. The philosophy governing their integration into the police is that they should be treated equally to men and they should be provided with the same opportunities to undertake the same tasks.

F. Tidbits

1. Private bodies to help promote family welfare programmes

- The Congress government in Rajasthan has decided to involve voluntary groups, industrial houses and private bodies in the implementation of family welfare programmes through the corporate social responsibility activities. The participation of private bodies is expected to give a boost to outreach of these programmes in the rural areas.
- Industries Commissioner Krishna Kant Pathak said at a workshop here earlier this week that the State expected to strengthen reproductive health rights and reduce high fertility rate as well as maternal and infant mortality ratios, which were above the national average, through the CSR intervention.



- Pathak, who is also the State CSR Secretary, said the business houses could render a significant help in improving the health care infrastructure in the villages. He said the maternal mortality ratio in the State stood at 30% and infant mortality ratio at 10% largely because of poor infrastructure.
- Medical & Health Department's Nodal Officer Dharmesh Arya said the State's fertility rate at 2.4 was higher than the national average.
- The family welfare programmes could be taken to the targeted groups with the help of private bodies, he said.
- Representatives of Chambal Fertilisers, NTPC Limited, Cairn India, Pathfinder and Mylan Pharma suggested the CSR activities which could make an effective intervention in the reproductive health sector.

2. Karnataka has most number of stolen artefacts; none recovered

- At least 12 idols have been stolen from protected monuments in Karnataka in the past six years, and none of them has been recovered by the police.
- Karnataka tops the list in the country that has seen 30 idols or artefacts being stolen from Archaeology Survey of India (ASI) sites, reveals the Ministry of Culture in a written answer to a Lok Sabha question last week.
- "The demand for these Hoysala and Chalukya idols exist and the three southern States are susceptible as there are hundreds of unprotected or State-protected sites," said T. Arun Raj, Superintending Archaeologist (Museum), ASI, New Delhi, and who was in-charge of Karnataka till recently.
- Lack of sufficient staff to guard the monuments is said to be one of the reasons for the thefts. H.N.
 Nagaraj, district general secretary of Temporary Workers Union of ASI, said the sculptures were stolen
 from a place that had no night watchmen.
- "If the department does not take measures to strengthen security, it is difficult to protect monuments," he said.
- An official at the local ASI office says the local police are often clueless on how to go about the investigation into this.
- "We do contact Customs officials so that it can't be smuggled out through major ports. But it continues to happen. And the local police can't do much if the perpetrator is not from the surroundings," said an official.
- The demand was for an idol wing, much like what exists in Tamil Nadu where idol thefts is a continuing concern.
- "An idol wing is an immediate priority to follow up and track these investigations. At a local level, heritage committees headed by the Deputy Commissioner should keep track of unprotected sites and see if any temples are vulnerable to theft," said Mr. Raj.

3. Swachh Survekshan rankings criteria myopic, says CSE study

- Are Swachh Survekshan rankings myopic? A study by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), a
 non-profit public interest research and advocacy group based in New Delhi, did a reality check of cities
 that secured the top 50 ranks in 2019. It found that the ranking system was skewed towards cities that
 had only recently adopted various cleanliness measures.
- "Swachh Survekshan 2019 has rewarded cities that implemented a cleanliness drive during the two to three months of the survey. Many cities that work all year towards household-level segregation, decentralised recycling and reuse of waste were given poor rankings," read the report.
- The authors of the report say that sweeping waste out of sight is not the answer to the growing problem. "This cannot be the way to incentivise and recognise cities for waste management," said the CSE.
- Swati Singh Sambyal, Programme Manager Environmental Governance (Waste Management), CSE, said, "Swachh Survekshan rankings have become like an annual affair when cities work to get good ranking for three-four months, and are lax for the rest of the year. Visual cleanliness has become key."
- The study found that only the three top cities Indore, Ambikapur and Mysuru had source segregation levels beyond 80%. Nearly half of the 50 cities have segregation levels below 40%.
- Some such as Rajkot, Ranchi, Satara, Ghaziabad and Chandigarh launched their segregation campaign
 just a few months before the survey, and have segregation levels below 20%. Jaipur and Sagar have no
 source segregation practice at all.



• The CSE recommended that the Survekshan introduce a cut-off criteria where any city that has not started segregation not be rated.

4. Centre, Assam lax on illegal migration: SC

- The Supreme Court blamed the Centre and the Assam government for being lax (not sufficiently strict, severe, or careful) about tackling the illegal inflow of foreigners into the northeastern State and their deportation.
- "It has become a joke. You have not done anything," Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi addressed the Assam government.
- The court pointed out that though the State's foreigners tribunals had identified over 58,000 illegal immigrants, the detention centres house only 900.
- The court is hearing a petition filed by activist Harsh Mander about the dismal living conditions in the detention centres in the State.
- The court noticed that many detainees continue to be lodged inside these centres even after the expiry of their term of imprisonment for illegally entering the country.
- The Bench expressed annoyance at the State's inability to give a clear account of the number of illegal immigrants identified, the exact number of cases referred to the foreigners tribunals, the details of persons manning these tribunals, etc.
- "We have given far too many opportunities... the State (Assam) is facing external aggression... We like to know what the State is trying to do to tackle the problem?" Chief Justice Gogoi said.
- At one point, referring to the main issue raised in the petition about the lack of basic facilities for the 900 detainees lodged in the centres, Chief Justice Gogoi asked, "You [Assam] are unable to deal with the base problem of 900 illegal immigrants. How will you deal with over 58,000 of them?"
- The court initially wanted to summon the Chief Secretary but desisted after Mr. Mehta's intervention. The State has to further update the court on the adequacy of foreigners tribunals.

5. First person on Mars may be a woman, says NASA

- The first person to set foot on Mars is likely to be a woman, NASA administrator Jim Bridenstine has said.
- While Mr. Bridenstine did not identify a specific person, he said that women are at the forefront of NASA's upcoming plans.
- Asked if a woman will go to the moon for the first time, Mr. Bridenstine said, "The answer is absolutely. In fact, it is likely to be a woman, the first next person on the Moon."
- "It is also true that the first person on Mars is likely to be a woman," he added.
- NASA had announced that it will have its first all-female spacewalk this month-end, when astronauts Anne McClain and Christina Koch will float around in space.

G. Prelims Facts

1. NGT directs Rajasthan govt. to conduct medical test of villagers in Nagaur

Context

- The National Green Tribunal directed the Rajasthan government to conduct complete medical tests of villagers in Nagaur district who have been affected due to air pollution caused by stone crushers.
- It had also directed a joint team to inspect the stone crushers and submit a report on whether they have taken all anti-pollution measures and installed relevant devices.
- The NGT had earlier rapped the Rajasthan government for its failure to curb pollution caused by stone crushers in Nagaur district and sought a report on their functioning.
- The Tribunal was hearing a plea by local resident Bhanwara Ram, seeking implementation of September 2, 2015, order of the NGT, which had directed the closure of illegal stone crushers in Nagaur district.

National Green Tribunal

The National Green Tribunal has been established in 2010 under the National Green Tribunal Act 2010.



- It draws inspiration from India's constitutional provision of Article 21, which assures the citizens of India the right to a healthy environment.
- It aims for effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources including enforcement of any legal right relating to the environment and giving relief and compensation for damages to persons and property and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- It has Original Jurisdiction on matters of "substantial question relating to environment" and & "damage to the environment due to specific activity" (such as pollution).

2. Tactical voting

- Also known as strategic voting, this refers to the act of voting for a particular candidate or political party
 not because the voter necessarily supports them but because she wants to prevent some other party or
 candidate from winning.
- For example, a voter who prefers a leftist candidate would vote for a centrist candidate in order to prevent a right-wing candidate from winning because the leftist candidate is weak in that constituency.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Question 1.Which of the following is the correct objective of the 'COMMIT Program' launched by the Union Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pension?

- (a) To set a minimum pension to all Government officers working in State Government.
- (b) To improve public service delivery through capacity building of officials who interact with citizens on day to day basis.
- (c) To make Government offices more accessible for People with Disabilities.
- (d) All of the above

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

The objective of COMMIT programme is to improve the public service delivery mechanism and provide citizen centric administration through capacity building of officials who interact with the citizens on day-to-day basis.

Question 2. Which one of the following is an objective of Bhavantar Bhugtan Yojana?

- (a) To provide the compensation to farmers for agriculture products whenever its price fall below the announced Minimum support price
- (b) To insure the crop insurance from natural calamities in Madhya Pradesh
- (c) To facilitate production of organic farming
- (d) To provide cheap credit facilities to farmers in the form of subsidised loans

Answer: (a)

Explanation:

Bhavantar Bhugtan Yojana (price difference payment scheme) is a scheme of the Government of Madhya Pradesh whereby the government pays farmers the difference between official Minimum Support Price (MSP) and the rate at which they sell their crops or Model Price whichever is higher. The objective of the scheme is to provide the compensation to farmers for agriculture products whenever its price fall below the announced Minimum support price (MSP) and thereby protecting them from losses suffered on account of distress sale.

Question 3. Which among the following programmes have been exclusively



launched for women scientists?

- 1. KIRAN
- 2. VAJRA
- 3. ROSHNI

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 1 and 2
- (c) Only 2 and 3
- (d) All of the above

Answer: (a)

Explanation:

Department of Science & Technology has launched several initiatives for women in science under its flagship scheme namely KIRAN (Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement through Nurturing). Through this unique initiative, DST provides opportunity to women scientists who had break in their career, primarily due to family reasons, to pursue research in Physical & Mathematical Sciences, Chemical Sciences, Life Sciences, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences and Engineering Technology.

The Government of India had launched VAJRA (Visiting Advanced Joint Research) Faculty scheme by the Department of Science and Technology which enables NRIs and overseas scientific community to participate and contribute to research and development in India. It is not exclusively for women.

ROSHNI is a special initiative under, Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (Formerly Ajeevika Skills), launched in June 2013 for training and placement of rural poor youth from 27 Left wing extremism affected districts in 09 States.

Question 4. Consider the following statements regarding fortification of food 'Jan Shikshan Sansthans (JSSs)'

- 1. Fortification of milk has been prohibited by the Ministry of Health and family Welfare due to its reactive nature
- 2. Fortification does not alter the characteristics of the food—the taste, the feel, the look Which of the above statement(s) is/ are correct?
- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) None of the above

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Fortification is the addition of key vitamins and minerals such as iron, iodine, zinc, Vitamin A & D to staple foods such as rice, milk and salt to improve their nutritional content. These nutrients may or may not have been originally present in the food before processing. There is no such prohibition on milk.

I. UPSC Mains practice Questions

- 1. Discuss the issues being faced by the women due to traditional gendered roles and societal stereotypes. (10 Marks; 150 words)
- 2. Write a note on the importance of the Model Code of Conduct in conducting free and fair elections. (10 Marks; 150 words)

See previous CNA



