

# 13 July 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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## B. GS2 Related

### Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

#### 1. Trust Vote

- The Chief Minister stays in power as long as it retains the confidence of the state Assembly. The Trust Vote or Confidence Vote is proposed by the party in power in order to demonstrate that it still enjoys the support of the majority of MLAs.
- A trust vote is a motion through which the **government of the day seeks to know whether it still enjoys the confidence of parliament or Assembly.**
- A trust vote is sought either during the first session if it is not clear whether a party or a grouping of parties command a majority in the house, or **at any time during the five-year tenure of the house if it becomes apparent that the government of the day has lost its majority.**
- This initiative is often looked upon as a strategy of the state government to pre-empt a no-confidence motion by the opposition parties.

### *What Happens When The Government Loses Trust Vote?*

- If the results of the trust vote don't appear to be in favour of the ruling party, the Governor of the state orders resignation of the Chief Minister and new Assembly elections are sought i.e. government would be expected to resign if it loses a trust vote.

#### *Context*

- Karnataka Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy said that he is ready to seek the trust vote to prove his majority on the floor of the assembly asked the Speaker to "fix a time".

### **Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

#### **1. India abstains from voting for LGBTQ rights**

##### *Context*

- India maintained its past position on LGBTQ rights by abstaining from voting at the UN Human Rights Council on a resolution moved by Latin American states seeking to renew the mandate of independent expert on **protection against violence and discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI)**.

##### *What was the resolution about?*

- The Resolution numbered L10 Rev 1 granted an **extension of three years to the Independent Expert** to carry on **reporting on incidents of violence against the LGBTQ** community all over the world.
- The Resolution will help **integrating the work of the crucial official into the larger body of global work** by the United Nations.
- The text of the resolution specifically asked the U.N. for providing financial support to the official in implementing the mandate.

##### *Abstention*

- The resolution received support from most of the member countries at the Human Rights Council but India, Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo, Hungary, Togo and Senegal **abstained** during the final voting.
- Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, China, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Qatar, Somalia **opposed** the resolution.
- India had also abstained during the 2016 vote on appointment of the Independent Expert.

##### *Criticism*

- The abstention of 2016 was before the landmark Supreme Court pronouncement on Section 377 and therefore India's latest abstention which comes after the Supreme Court's decision against 377 is disappointing.

#### **2. Russian S-400 defense systems arrive in Turkey**

##### *Context*

- Turkey's Defense Ministry says the first shipment of a Russian missile defense system has arrived in

### *Why Turkey requires them?*

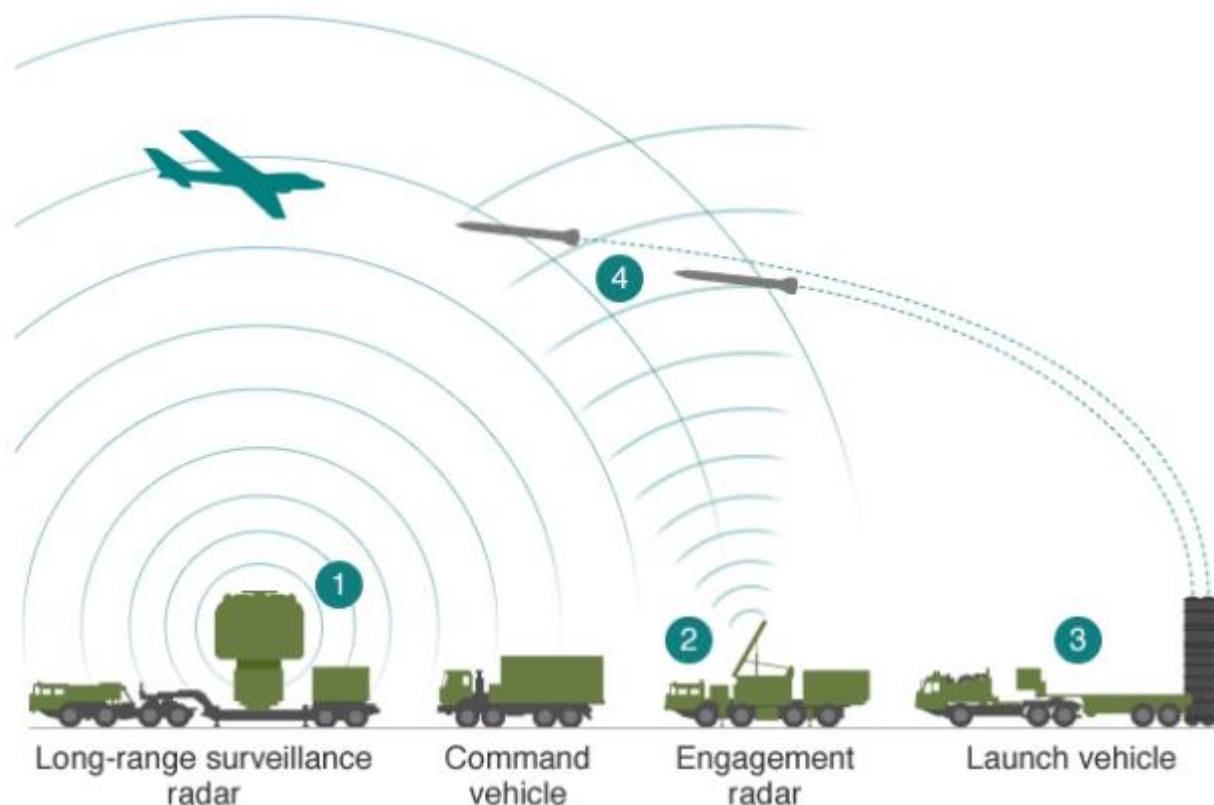
- Turkey says the system is a strategic defence requirement, particularly to secure its southern borders with Syria and Iraq.
- It says that when it made the deal with Russia for the S-400s, the U.S. and Europe had not presented a viable alternative.

### *Sanctions*

- It is a move expected to trigger U.S. sanctions against a NATO ally and drive a wedge into the heart of the Western military alliance.
- Under legislation known as **Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)**, which targets purchases of military equipment from Russia, Mr. Trump can impose sanctions
- These range from banning visas and denying access to the U.S.-based Export-Import Bank, to the harsher options of blocking transactions with the U.S. financial system and denying export licences.
- The United States has warned Turkey it will face **economic sanctions** if it goes ahead with the purchase of a Russian missile defense system.
- It has also said Turkey **won't be allowed to participate in the program to produce the high-tech F-35 fighter jets.**

### *How does the S-400 work?*

- Long-range surveillance radar tracks objects and relays information to command vehicle, which assesses potential targets
- Target is identified and command vehicle orders missile launch
- Launch data are sent to the best placed launch vehicle and it releases surface-to-air missiles
- Engagement radar helps guide missiles towards target



### *How important is Turkey?*

- Turkey has the second-largest army in Nato, a 29-member military alliance.
- It is one of the US's key allies, and is located in a strategic position, sharing borders with Syria, Iraq and Iran.
- It has also played an important role in the Syria conflict, providing arms and military support to some rebel groups.
- However, it has seen relations deteriorate with some Nato members and the EU, who have accused Mr Erdogan of adopting an increasingly authoritarian style following a failed coup in 2016.

## C. GS3 Related

### Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

#### 1. Chandrayaan 2 Mission

- It is India's uncrewed Indian lunar mission which aims to get a **better understanding of the Moon's origin** and its evolution by conducting topographical studies and mineralogical analyses alongside a few other experiments on the Moon's Surface. According to ISRO, the mission Chandrayaan 2 will also **foster the findings of Chandrayaan 1**.
  - While a few mature models do exist, the Moon's origin still needs further explanations. Extensive mapping of the lunar surface will aid us in studying variations in its composition — an essential piece of information in tracing the Moon's origin and evolution.
- The Chandrayaan 2 mission will **target a completely unexplored section of the Moon that is, its "South Polar region"**.
  - The mission is being considered as a challenge as **no space agency has ever thought of exploring the South Polar Region of the Moon**



- The name Chandrayaan means Moon vehicle.

### *Why go to the Moon?*


- The Moon is the **closest cosmic body** at which space discovery can be attempted and documented.
- It is also a promising test bed to demonstrate the technologies required for deep-space missions.

### *Launcher*

- Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark-III (GSLV Mk-III)


## Mission moon 2.0

A look at the four key components of Chandrayaan 2 – launcher, orbiter, lander and rover



**LAUNCHER — GSLV Mk-III**


It will carry Chandrayaan 2 to its designated orbit. This three-stage vehicle is India's most powerful launcher to date, and is capable of launching 4-tonne class of satellites to the Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit



**ORBITER**

**Weight:** 2,379 kg  
**Power generation capability:** 1,000 W


Capable of communicating with the Indian Deep Space Network at Bialalu and the Vikram lander. It will be placed in a 100X100 km lunar polar orbit



**LANDER — VIKRAM**

**Weight:** 1,471 kg  
**Power generation capability:** 650 W

Named after Vikram Sarabhai, the Father of the Indian space programme, it is designed to function for one lunar day, equivalent to about 14 earth days



**ROVER — PRAGYAN**

**Weight:** 27 kg  
**Power generation capability:** 50 W

This 6-wheeled robotic vehicle can travel up to 500 m and uses solar energy for its functioning. It can communicate only with the lander

Its components are:

- S200 solid rocket boosters
- L110 liquid stage
- C25 upper stage

### *Chandrayaan-2 is composed of three modules*

The **orbiter**, the Vikram **lander** (named after Vikram Sarabhai, the late father of India's space program) and the **Pragyan rover** (named after the Sanskrit word for wisdom).

- From orbit, instruments will create detailed **three-dimensional maps of the surface**, both to

- ascertain the safety of potential landing sites and
- To track the distributions of water molecules, hydrated minerals and other materials of interest on and around the moon.
- If touchdown is successful, the **Vikram lander** will serve as a **listening station for seismic waves from moonquakes**, which could reveal more details about the structure of the lunar core, mantle and crust.
- Further studies are set to take place via the **Pragyan rover**, which is meant to **drill into the surface to gather samples for additional mineralogical and chemical analysis**.

The orbiter, lander and rover will collectively **carry 14 scientific payloads**, including a **Laser Retroreflector Array from NASA** to provide precision measurements of the distance between Earth and the moon

### *Soft-Landing*

- A soft-landing occurs when the rocket is designed to touch down as gently as possible.
- India would join the U.S., China and the former Soviet Union on the list of countries that have completed a "soft" moon landing, or a touchdown that doesn't result in a crash landing.

*Here are the reasons why Chandrayaan 2 is on a mission to explore the Moon's South Polar Region and why it's a huge challenge:*

#### 1. **The Dark Side of the moon – the importance of exploring Moon's South pole**

- Due to the moon's axis, few regions on **the South Pole** remains forever dark especially the **craters** and have higher chances of containing water.
- The bottom of the **polar craters** of remain under shadows permanently because of the **low angular tilt of the axis (1.54-degree tilt in comparison to earth's 23.5 degrees)**.
- Hence the temperature at the **poles remains frigid, hitting as low as -248 degree Celcius**. That makes it among the lowest temperatures in the Solar System.
- The **sunlight strikes at very low angles in the Polar Regions and thus the craters might have never received sunlight**, thereby increasing the chances of presence of ice on such surfaces.
- The moon's South Pole is especially interesting because the **lunar surface area at the south pole of the Moon that remains in shadow is much larger than that of its north pole**. This increases the possibility of the presence of water in permanently shadowed areas around it.

#### 2. **Totally Uncharted Territory**

- No one has ever explored the South Polar Region of the Moon. In all the **space missions, be it manned or unmanned, no country has ever attempted to land a spacecraft in the polar regions of the moon**.
- The South Polar Region is far from the equator and it is totally uncharted till now. This could **give India a lead in space exploration on an international level**.
- The South Pole region has craters that are cold traps and contain a **fossil record of the early Solar System**.

### *Significance*

- The success of the mission is going to **boost national morale and contribute to [India's] scientific endeavors** in ways ranging from academic research to national security.
- The mission is **completely indigenous**, with heavy participation from the private sector and academia, involving young scientists from across the country—a **reflection of India's rising**

## *Chandrayaan-1 Vs Chandrayaan-2*

- **Chandrayaan-1** was launched by India's **Polar Satellite launch Vehicle -- PSLV-C11** in 2008 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.
  - On the other hand, **Chandrayaan-2** will be launched by the **GSLV Mk-III**
- The **Chandrayaan-1 spacecraft** made more than 3,400 orbits around the Moon. Chandrayaan-1 was operational for 312 days till August 29, 2009.
  - **Chandrayaan-2's** orbiter will continue its mission for around a year.
- There were **11 scientific instruments** onboard the **Chandrayaan-1 spacecraft**. Five of them were Indian while the others were from European Space Agency (ESA), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa) and Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.
  - **Chandrayaan-2's orbiter** carries **eight** scientific payloads for mapping the lunar surface and to study the exosphere (outer atmosphere) of the Moon. The **lander** carries **three** scientific payloads to conduct surface and subsurface science experiments. The **rover** carries **two** payloads to enhance our understanding of the lunar surface. A **passive experiment** from Nasa will also be carried onboard Chandrayaan-2.
- **Chandrayaan-1** conclusively discovered traces of water on the Moon. This was a path-breaking discovery. Chandrayaan-1 also discovered water ice in the north polar region of the Moon. It also detected magnesium, aluminium and silicon on the lunar surface. Global imaging of the Moon is another achievement of Chandrayaan-1 mission.
  - **Chandrayaan-2** aims to widen the scientific objectives of Chandrayaan-1 by way of soft landing on the Moon and deploying a rover to study the lunar surface.

## *A Legacy of Chandrayaan-1*

- August 15, 2003: Chandrayaan programme is announced by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
- October 22, 2008: Chandrayaan-1 takes off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota.
- November 8, 2008: Chandrayaan-1 enters a Lunar Transfer Trajectory.
- November 14, 2008: The Moon Impact Probe ejects from Chandrayaan-1 and crashes near the lunar South Pole - confirms presence of water molecules on Moon's surface.
- August 28, 2009: End of Chandrayaan-1 programme.

## *Timeline of Chandrayaan-2 Mission*

- September 18, 2008: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh approved the Chandrayaan-2 lunar mission.
- July 9, 2019: Launch window opens
- September 6, 2019: Chandrayaan-2 is expected to land on the Moon.

## **Category: ECONOMY**

### **1. Merchant Discount Rate**

- Merchant Discount Rate (alternatively referred to as the Transaction Discount Rate or TDR) is the sum total of all the charges and taxes that a digital payment entails.
- For instance, the **MDR includes** bank charges, which a bank charges customers and merchants for allowing payments to be made digitally.
- Similarly, **MDR also includes** the processing charges that a payments aggregator has to pay to online or mobile wallets or indeed to banks for their service.



### *What was the Budget announcement?*

In her speech, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a slew of **steps aimed at promoting digital payments and a less-cash economy.**

- In particular, she said, "...there are low-cost digital modes of payment such as BHIM UPI, UPI-QR Code, Aadhaar Pay, certain Debit cards, NEFT, RTGS etc. which can be used to promote less cash economy. I, therefore, propose that the **business establishments with annual turnover more than 50 crore shall offer such low cost digital modes of payment to their customers and no charges or Merchant Discount Rate shall be imposed on customers as well as merchants.**"
- In other words, the government has mandated that **neither the customers nor the merchants will have to pay the so-called Merchant Discount Rate (or MDR)** while transacting digital payments.
- Of course, it is good news for both customers and merchants **because their costs of digital payments come down.**

### *Who will bear the MDR costs?*

- If customers don't pay and merchants don't pay, some entity has to pay for the MDR costs.
- In her speech, the FM has said: **"RBI and Banks will absorb these costs from the savings that will accrue to them on account of handling less cash as people move to these digital modes of payment...Necessary amendments are being made in the Income Tax Act and the Payments and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 to give effect to these provisions."**

### *Concerns*

- MDR is a charge a merchant pays to a bank for accepting customer payments through debit or credit cards, BHIM/UPI/Aadhaar-Pay payment ecosystem, when any payment is made at a merchant Point of Sale (POS) machine or QR "scan & pay" systems or an online mode of payment.
- A percentage of the transaction amount is then split between the stakeholders.
- The **primary fear among industry players is that banks that have been asked to bear the cost might try to recover from non-bank payment providers and fintech companies.**
- The card issuing banks, payment service providers, and the whole ecosystem should be able to find value in acquisition and payments. However, zero MDR will make the acquiring industry collapse, fears Payments Council of India (PCI).
- Non-Bank payment service providers (PSPs) like aggregators/ processors are a significant part of the ecosystem. If there is no commercial model, **they will be forced to shut down.** Banks may have multiple ways to recover money from the merchants, but non-bank players do not have any other avenue than the MDR. These **PSPs are employing at least over a several lakh jobs,** and in the absence of revenue, there will be survival issues and the **industry will eventually collapse.**

## **2. Privatisation of Indian Railways**

### *Context*

- Railway Minister Piyush Goyal rejected opposition's allegation that the government is working to privatise the national transporter, but said the ministry will invite investments for new technology, lines and projects in national interest.

### *Tejas Express*

- The Delhi-Lucknow Tejas Express is set to be the first train to be operated by private players
- It will be handed over to private players after an open bidding process for operationalisation.



- The key lesson from the UK is to **retain the rail-track and infrastructure** as a publicly-owned monopoly, while **opening up rolling stock operations** for passengers and freight to the private sector
- Thus, he recommends following the key features of various international models with focus on the British experiment to achieve two main aims: changing the institutional structure between the government and the Indian Railways and increasing competition.
- Ultimately, it suggests unbundling Indian Railways into two independent organisations: one responsible for the track and infrastructure and another that will operate trains.

### *Advantages*

- **Improved Infrastructure** - A strong argument in favour of privatization is that it will lead to better infrastructure which in turn would lead to improved amenities for travelers. As opposed to mismanagement in form of putrid washrooms, lack of water supply and dirty platforms, it is expected that a private company will ensure better amenities.
- **Lesser Accidents** – Any train-related mishap is like a nightmare come true for travelers and authorities alike courtesy of the physical, mental and financial trauma that ensues.
  - Because **private ownership is synonymous with better maintenance**, supporters of privatisation feel that it will reduce the number of accidents, thus resulting in safe travel and higher monetary savings in the long run.
- It leads to **simplification of cost recovery for the money spent by the government** in setting up the infrastructure. It would be profitable as the government would charge the operator

### *Problems associated with Privatization*

- **Coverage Limited to Lucrative Sectors** – An advantage of Indian Railways being government-owned is that it provides nation-wide connectivity irrespective of profit.
  - This would not be possible with privatisation since routes which are less popular will be eliminated, thus having a negative impact on connectivity.
  - It will also render some parts of the country virtually inaccessible and omit them from the process of development.
- **Fares** – Given that a private enterprise runs on profit, it is but natural to assume that the easiest way of accruing profits in Indian Railways would be to hike fares, thus rendering the service out of reach for lower income groups.
  - This will defeat the entire purpose of the system which is meant to serve the entire population of the country irrespective of the level of income

### *Conclusion*

- High costs and lower returns, policy uncertainty, absence of a regulator to create a level playing field, the lack of incentives for investors and procedural or operational issues have significantly restricted private sector participation.

## **D. GS4 Related**

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## **E. Editorials**

## Category: GOVERNANCE

### 1. A case of confused thinking

#### Background:

- The Committee for Draft National Education Policy (Chair: Dr. K. Kasturirangan) submitted its report in May, 2019.
- The Committee was constituted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development in June 2017.
- The report proposes an education policy, which seeks to address the challenges of: (i) access, (ii) equity, (iii) quality, (iv) affordability, and (v) accountability faced by the current education system.
- The draft Policy provides for reforms at all levels of education from school to higher education. It seeks to increase the focus on early childhood care, reform the current exam system, strengthen teacher training, and restructure the education regulatory framework.
- It also seeks to set up a **National Education Commission**, increase public investment in education, strengthen the use of technology and increase focus on vocational and adult education, among others.

Key observations and recommendations of the draft Policy include:

#### (1) School Education:

- **Early Childhood Care and Education:** In addition to problems of access, the Committee observed several quality related deficiencies in the existing early childhood learning programmes.
- These include: (i) curriculum that doesn't meet the developmental needs of children, (ii) lack of qualified and trained teachers, and (iii) substandard pedagogy.
- Currently, most early childhood education is delivered through anganwadis and private-preschools. However, there has been less focus on the educational aspects of early childhood.
- Hence, the draft Policy recommends developing a two-part curriculum for early childhood care and education. This will consist of:

(i) guidelines for up to three-year-old children (for parents and teachers), and (ii) educational framework for three to eight-year-old children. This would be implemented by improving and expanding the anganwadi system and co-locating anganwadis with primary schools.

- **The Right to Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act):** Currently, the RTE Act provides for free and compulsory education to all children from the age of six to 14 years.
- The draft Policy recommends extending the ambit of the RTE Act to include early childhood education and secondary school education.
- This would extend the coverage of the Act to all children between the ages of three to 18 years.
- In addition, the draft Policy recommends that the recent amendments to the RTE Act on continuous and comprehensive evaluation and the no detention policy must be reviewed. It states that there should be no detention of children till class eight. Instead, schools must ensure that children are achieving age-appropriate learning levels.
- **Curriculum framework:** The current structure of school education must be restructured on the basis of the development needs of students. This would consist of a 5-3-3-4 design comprising: (i) five years of foundational stage (three years of pre-primary school and classes one and two), (ii) three years of preparatory stage (classes three to five), (iii) three years of middle stage (classes six to eight), and (iv) four years of secondary stage (classes nine to 12).
- **The Committee noted that the current education system solely focuses on rote learning of facts and procedures.** Hence, it recommends that the curriculum load in each subject should be reduced to its essential core content. This would make space for holistic, discussion and analysis-based learning.

- **School exam reforms:** The Committee noted that the current board examinations: (i) force students to concentrate only on a few subjects, (ii) do not test learning in a formative manner, and (iii) cause stress among students.
- To track students' progress throughout their school experience, the draft Policy proposes **State Census Examinations** in classes three, five and eight.
- Further, it recommends restructuring the board examinations to test only core concepts, skills and higher order capacities. These board examinations will be on a range of subjects. The students can choose their subjects, and the semester when they want to take these board exams.
- The in-school final examinations may be replaced by these board examinations.
- **School infrastructure:** The Committee noted that establishing primary schools in every habitation across the country has helped increase access to education. However, it has led to the development of very small schools (having low number of students). **The small size of schools makes it operationally complex to deploy teachers and critical physical resources.**
- Therefore, the draft Policy recommends that multiple public schools should be brought together to form a school complex. A complex will consist of one secondary school (classes nine to twelve) and all the public schools in its neighbourhood that offer education from pre-primary till class eight.
- The school complexes will also include anganwadis, vocational education facilities, and an adult education centre. Each school complex will be a semi-autonomous unit providing integrated education across all stages from early childhood to secondary education. This will ensure that resources such as infrastructure and trained teachers can be efficiently shared across a school complex.
- **Teacher management:** The Committee noted that there has been a steep rise in teacher shortage, lack of professionally qualified teachers, and deployment of teachers for non-educational purposes. The draft Policy recommends that teachers should be deployed with a particular school complex for at least five to seven years.
- Further, teachers will not be allowed to participate in any non-teaching activities (such as cooking mid-day meals or participating in vaccination campaigns) during school hours that could affect their teaching capacities.
- For teacher training, **the existing B.Ed. programme will be replaced by a four-year integrated B.Ed. programme** that combines high-quality content, pedagogy, and practical training. An integrated continuous professional development will also be developed for all subjects.
- Teachers will be required to complete a minimum of 50 hours of continuous professional development training every year.
- Regulation of schools: The draft Policy recommends separating the regulation of schools from aspects such as policymaking, school operations, and academic development.
- It suggests creating an independent **State School Regulatory Authority** for each state that will prescribe basic uniform standards for public and private schools.
- The Department of Education of the State will formulate policy and conduct monitoring and supervision.

## (2) Higher Education:

- According to the All India Survey on Higher Education, the **Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education in India has increased from 20.8% in 2011-12 to 25.8% in 2017-18.**
- The Committee identified **lack of access as a major reason behind low intake of higher education in the country.** It aims to increase GER to 50% by 2035 from the current level of about 25.8%.

### Key recommendations in this regard include:

- **Regulatory structure and accreditation:**
- The Committee noted that the current higher education system has multiple regulators with overlapping mandates.
- This reduces the autonomy of higher educational institutions and creates an environment of

dependency and centralised decision making.

- Therefore, it proposes setting up the **National Higher Education Regulatory Authority (NHERA)**.
- This independent authority would replace the existing individual regulators in higher education, including professional and vocational education.
- This implies that the **role of all professional councils such as AICTE and the Bar Council of India would be limited to setting standards for professional practice.**
- **The role of the University Grants Commission (UGC) will be limited to providing grants to higher educational institutions.**
- Currently, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is an accreditation body under the UGC. The draft Policy recommends separating NAAC from the UGC into an independent and autonomous body.
- In its new role, **NAAC will function as the top level accreditor**, and will issue licenses to different accreditation institutions, who will assess higher educational institutions once every five to seven years. **All existing higher education institutions should be accredited by 2030.**
- **Establishment of new higher educational institutions:**
- Currently, higher educational institutions can only be set up by Parliament or state legislatures.
- The draft Policy proposes that these institutions could be allowed to be set up through a **Higher Education Institution Charter from NHERA.**
- This Charter will be awarded on the basis of transparent assessment of certain specified criteria.
- All such newly constituted higher educational institutions must receive accreditation as mandated by NHERA within five years of being established.
- **Restructuring of higher education institutions:** Higher education institutions will be restructured into three types: (i) research universities focusing equally on research and teaching; (ii) teaching universities focusing primarily on teaching; and (iii) colleges focusing only on teaching at undergraduate levels. All such institutions will gradually move towards full autonomy - academic, administrative, and financial.
- **Establishing a National Research Foundation:** The Committee observed that the total investment on research and innovation in India has declined from 0.84% of GDP in 2008 to 0.69% in 2014.

India also lags behind many nations in number of researchers (per lakh population), patents and publications.

- The draft Policy recommends establishing a **National Research Foundation**, an autonomous body, for funding, mentoring and building the capacity for quality research in India. The Foundation will consist of four major divisions: sciences, technology, social sciences, and arts and humanities, with the provision to add additional divisions. The Foundation will be provided with an annual grant of Rs 20,000 crore (0.1% of GDP).
- **Moving towards a liberal approach:**

The draft Policy recommends making undergraduate programmes interdisciplinary by redesigning their curriculum to include: (a) a common core curriculum and (b) one/two area(s) of specialisation. Students will be required to choose an area of specialisation as 'major', and an optional area as 'minor'. Four-year undergraduate programmes in Liberal Arts will be introduced and multiple exit options with appropriate certification will be made available to students. Further, within the next five years, five Indian Institute of Liberal Arts must be setup as model multidisciplinary liberal arts institutions.

- **Professional development of faculty:** The Committee observed that poor service conditions and heavy teaching loads at higher education institutions have resulted in low faculty motivation. Further, lack of autonomy and no clear career progression system are also major impediments to faculty motivation. The draft Policy recommends development of a **Continuous Professional Development programme** and introduction of a permanent employment (tenure) track system for faculty in all higher education institutions by 2030. Further, a desirable student-teacher ratio of not more than 30:1 must be ensured.



- **Optimal learning environment:** The Committee observed that the curricula remain rigid, narrow, and archaic. Moreover, the faculty often lacks the autonomy to design curricula, which negatively impacts pedagogy. It recommends that all higher education institutions must have complete autonomy on curricular, pedagogical and resource-related matters.

### (3) Education Governance

- The Committee observed that there is a need to revisit the existing system of governance in education, and bring in synergy and coordination among the different ministries, departments and agencies. In this context, it recommends:
  1. Creation of a **National Education Commission or Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog**, as an apex body for education, to be headed by the Prime Minister. This body will be responsible for developing, implementing, evaluating, and revising the vision of education in the country on a continuous and sustained basis. **It will oversee the implementation and functioning of several bodies including the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), the proposed National Higher Education Regulatory Authority, and National Research Foundation.**
  2. The Ministry of Human Resources and Development must be renamed as the Ministry of Education in order to bring focus back on education.

### (4) Financing Education

- **The Draft Policy reaffirmed the commitment of spending 6% of GDP as public investment in education.**
- Note that the first National Education Policy (NEP) 1968 had recommended public expenditure in education must be 6% of GDP, which was reiterated by the second NEP in 1986.
- In 2017-18, public expenditure on education in India was 2.7% of GDP.
- **The draft Policy seeks to double the public investment in education from the current 10% of total public expenditure to 20% in the next 10 years.**
- Of the additional 10% expenditure, 5% will be utilised for universities and colleges (higher education), 2% will be utilised for additional teacher costs or resources in school education and 1.4% will be utilised for early childhood care and education.
- The Committee also observed operational problems and leakages in disbursement of funds.
- For instance, it observed that **District Institutes of Education and Training have about 45% vacancies** which have led to their allocations not being used or being used ineffectively.
- It recommends optimal and timely utilisation of funds through the institutional development plans.

### (5) Technology in Education

- The Committee observed that technology plays an important role in: (a) improving the classroom process of teaching, learning and evaluation, (b) aiding in preparation of teachers and continuous professional development of teachers, (c) improving access to education in remote areas and for disadvantaged groups, and (d) improving the overall planning, administration and management of the entire education system. It recommends focused electrification of all educational institutions as electricity is a pre-requisite for all technology-based interventions.

Further, it recommends:

- **National Mission on Education through information and communication technology:** The Mission will encompass virtual laboratories that provide remote access to laboratories in various disciplines. A **National Education Technology Forum** will also be setup under the Mission, as an autonomous body, to facilitate decision making on the induction, deployment and use of technology. This Forum will provide evidence-based advice to central and state-governments on

technology-based interventions.

- **National Repository on Educational Data:** A National Repository will be setup to maintain all records related to institutions, teachers, and students in digital form. Further, a single online digital repository will be created where copyright-free educational resources will be made available in multiple languages.

#### (6) Vocational Education:

- The Committee observed that less than 5% of the workforce in the age-group of 19-24 receives vocational education in India.
- This is in contrast to 52% in the USA, 75% in Germany and 96% in South Korea.
- It recommends integrating vocational educational programmes in all educational institutions (schools, colleges and universities) in a phased manner over a period of 10 years. Note that this is an upward revision from the National Policy on Skills Development and Entrepreneurship (2015) which aimed at offering vocational education in 25% of educational institutions.

Key recommendations in this regard include:

- **Vocational courses:** All school students must receive vocational education in at least one vocation in grades nine to 12. The proposed school complexes must build expertise in curriculum delivery that is aligned to the competency levels under the existing National Skills Qualifications Framework.
- The proposed Higher Education Institutions must also offer vocational courses that are integrated into the undergraduate education programmes. The draft Policy targets to offer vocational education to up to 50% of the total enrolment in higher education institutions by 2025, up from the present level of enrolment of well below 10% in these institutions.
- **National Committee for the Integration of Vocational Education:** The Committee will be set up to work out the steps that need to be taken towards achieving the above goals. A separate fund will be setup for the integration of vocational education into educational institutions. The Committee will work out the modalities for the disbursement of these funds.

#### (7) Adult Education:

- As per Census 2011, India still had over 3.26 crore youth non-literates (15-24 years of age) and a total of 26.5 crore adult non-literates (15 years and above). In this regard, the draft Policy recommends:
- Establishing **an autonomous Central Institute of Adult Education**, as a constituent unit of NCERT, which will develop a National Curriculum Framework for adult education. The Framework will cover five broad areas: foundational literacy and numeracy, critical life skills vocational skills development, basic education, and continuing education.
- **Adult Education Centres** will be included within the proposed school complexes. Relevant courses for youth and adults will be made available at the **National Institute of Open Schooling**. A cadre of adult education instructors and managers, as well as a team of one-on-one tutors will be created through a newly-established **National Adult Tutors Programme**.

#### (8) Education and Indian Languages:

- The Committee observed that a large number of students are falling behind since classes in schools are being conducted in a language that they do not understand.
- Therefore, it recommended that the medium of instruction must either be the home language/mother tongue/local language till grade five, and preferable till grade eight, wherever possible.
- Introduced by the first National Education Policy, **the three-language formula** stated that state governments should adopt and implement study of a modern Indian language, preferably one of the southern languages, apart from Hindi and English in the Hindi-speaking states, and of Hindi along

with the regional language and English in the non-Hindi speaking states. The draft Policy recommended that this three language formula be continued and flexibility in the implementation of the formula should be provided.

- The Committee remarked that the implementation of the formula needs to be strengthened, particularly in Hindi-speaking states. Further, schools in Hindi speaking areas should also teach Indian languages from other parts of India for the purpose of national integration. To provide flexibility in the choice of language, students who wish to change one or more of their three languages may do so in grade six or grade seven, subjected to the condition that they are still able to demonstrate proficiency in three languages in their modular board examinations.
- To promote Indian languages, a National Institute for Pali, Persian and Prakrit will be set up. All higher education institutes must recruit high quality faculty for at least three Indian languages, in addition to the local Indian language. Further, the mandate of the Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology will be expanded to include all fields and disciplines to strengthen vocabulary in Indian languages.

### Editorial Analysis:

- It is important to note that the draft **National Education Policy (NEP) 2019** recommends a restructuring of school years and the curriculum, in a wide-ranging manner.
- As a matter of fact, if properly implemented, many of the suggested changes may help education. These include flexibility and wider scope at the secondary level, space for moral reasoning, re-emphasis on the true spirit of the three language formula, a focus on the core concepts and key ideas in subjects, vocational courses, and also a focus of assessment on understanding.
- However, the draft NEP also recommends much that may have just the opposite effect.

### What do the critics say?

- Critics opine that the curriculum the draft NEP suggests at the upper primary level has started looking like a laundry list. Critics allege that this is perhaps due to the lack of a coherent vision and the curricular thinking it adopts.
- These are, for example, 15 subjects/courses at the upper primary level, three languages in early childhood education, and confusing statements on a number of curricular issues.

#### (a) An India-centric aim?

- The policy envisions an India centred education system that contributes directly to transforming our nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society.
- However, critics point out that the proclaimed “India centred-ness” of education is limited to recommendations on Indian languages and a mention of Indian knowledge systems.
- Further, they point out that the operational vision is that of a “knowledge society”, almost entirely contained in the UNESCO-preached ‘21st century skills’.
- Critics further allege that the democratic ideal is neither mentioned nor used in articulating the aims of education or curricular recommendation, though democratic values are mentioned in the list of key skills that are to be integrated in subjects.

#### (b) Shaping an individual

Under the heading “Curricular integration of essential subjects and skills”, it says: “certain subjects and skills should be learned by all students in order to become good, successful, innovative, adaptable, and productive human beings in today’s rapidly-changing world. In addition to proficiency in languages, these skills include: scientific temper; sense of aesthetics and art; languages; communication; ethical reasoning; digital literacy; knowledge of India; and knowledge of critical issues facing local communities, States, the

country, and the world”.

Critics point out that **these broad goals are to send out good, successful, innovative, adaptable, and productive human beings; not a critical, democratic citizen who may want to change the situation rather than adapting to it.**

Critics also point out that the phrase “Evidence-based and scientific thinking” is used together everywhere implying that there can be “scientific thinking” which is not evidence based.

It is important to note that a policy document is read and interpreted at many levels and influences educational discourse. Critics point out that a document which places much emphasis on clarity of understanding and critical thinking cannot itself afford to fail in meeting the same standards.

### (c) Language teaching:

- The draft NEP rightly criticises private pre-schools for being a downward extension of primary school and of there being formal teaching in them.
- However, it goes on to recommend preparing children for primary by prescribing learning the alphabets of and reading in three languages (for 3-6-year olds).
- **Critics allege that all this in the name of “enhanced language learning abilities” of young children.** Further the draft policy mistakes “language acquisition when children are immersed in more than one languages” with a “language teaching” situation where immersion is impossible in three languages. It then extends it unjustifiably to a learning of three scripts.
- The policy prescribes teaching script and reading in three languages to three-year-old children, but writing is supposed to be taught to six-year-old children. It also wants to introduce “some textbooks” only at age eight. **Critics question why there is a three year gap between teaching reading and writing.** They assert that **if script and reading are already taught, then why withhold textbooks till age eight?**
- The draft policy stipulates that the “mandated contents in the curriculum will be reduced... to its core, focussing on key concepts and essential ideas”. This is to “yield more space for discussion and nuanced understanding, analysis, and application of key concepts”.
- However, critics point out that **it goes on to block more than the space vacated by prescribing six new laundry-list subjects/courses in addition to the existing eight.**
- Some of these new courses such as “critical issues” and “moral reasoning” can be taught in a much better way in a revised curriculum of social studies as the context for both is society.
- Social studies needs more space in the upper primary curriculum. The subject has to be taught in such a manner that it connects with society and can be a very good way of introducing critical issues and moral thinking.
- Abstract moral reasoning is likely to have the same fate as so-called “moral science” that is taught in many schools. Similarly, “Indian classical language” and “Indian languages” can constitute a single rich subject rather than being split into two courses.

### Concluding Remarks:

- Identifying key concepts and essential ideas are a matter of rational curricular decision making; not listing ideas as they come to one’s mind.
- The absence of discussion on socio-political life seems to be another casualty in the emphasis on a knowledge society and 21st century skills.
- Social studies seems to be missing entirely as it has been mentioned once and then left out of the entire discussion on curriculum.
- Critics allege that the vision of the draft NEP rests on UNESCO declarations and reports rather than the Indian Constitution and development of democracy in this country; this in spite of wanting to make education India-centred. Thus, in the suggested curriculum changes, socio-political life is



almost invisible.

- Critics point out that the draft NEP 2019 itself lacks the very abilities it emphasises, namely critical thinking and deeper understanding.

## Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### 1. Game of chicken that can end in disaster

#### Editorial Analysis:

- **Recently, Iran announced that it would begin enriching uranium above a concentration of 3.67% permitted under the nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), reached by Iran and the P5+1 (China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) on July 14, 2015.**
- This followed its July, 2019 announcement that it had breached the limit of the 300 kg of enriched uranium stockpile that was allowed by the JCPOA. Experts opine that these developments suggest that Iran's patience is wearing out.
- These steps come in the wake of increasing tensions between the U.S. and Iran following the shooting down of an unmanned U.S. drone over the Strait of Hormuz in June, 2019.
- The circumstances surrounding this event and the locale of the downing are contested.
- However, it led to the U.S. President, Donald Trump, first ordering a retaliatory strike on Iran and then rescinding it at the last minute.

#### Events that may have ensued had the strike taken place:

- **It is possible that had this strike taken place, it would have become the first act in a major military confrontation between the U.S. and Iran.**
- The mayhem could have spread to the entire West Asian region with Iran attacking strategic American, Saudi and Emirati targets around the Gulf and attempting to block the Strait of Hormuz in an effort to choke off the supply of Gulf oil to the international market.
- Further, Iranian allies in Lebanon, Iraq and Syria might have launched attacks against American troop concentrations as well as against U.S. ally Israel, thus inviting further American and Israeli counter-retaliation and dragging the U.S. into its third major war in the region.

#### The Spark that initiated the downward spiral:

- It is important to note that **the downward spiral in U.S.-Iran relations started with Mr. Trump's decision (announced in May 2018) to withdraw from the JCPOA against the advice of the U.S.'s European allies France, Germany, and the U.K. that are parties to the deal.**
- The Trump administration followed it up with the re-imposition of stringent economic sanctions against Iran that were being gradually dismantled following the 2015 nuclear deal.
- These included sanctions against foreign companies doing business with Iran and against countries buying Iranian oil.

#### List of demands:

- Finally, the U.S. announced in April 2019 that it would not extend waivers granted earlier to eight countries (China, India, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, Italy and Greece) which had been the largest importers of Iranian oil.
- This decision was aimed at totally choking off the export of Iranian oil — the primary foreign exchange earner for Tehran — in order to bring Iran to its knees and force it to accept American demands spelt out by U.S. Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo.

- These included further curbs on Iran's nuclear programme including total stoppage of uranium enrichment even at low levels permitted by the JCPOA and monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency.
- Further, Mr. Pompeo demanded that Iran stop all support to Hezbollah and Hamas which the U.S. considers to be "terrorist" groups, permit the disarming of Shia militias in Iraq, and stop aiding Houthis in Yemen fighting Saudi and Emirati forces in that country. Above all, Mr. Pompeo demanded that Iran end building of ballistic missiles and halt further launching or development of nuclear-capable missile systems.
- It is important to note that **all these demands went far beyond the limits placed on Iran by the JCPOA and most were unrelated to Iran's nuclear programme.**
- Iran's government rejected these demands while still keeping the door open for negotiations, hoping against hope to draw the U.S. back into the nuclear deal.
- However, persisting and escalating moves by the U.S. during the past year now seem to have made it impossible for Tehran to simultaneously maintain the contradictory position of resisting American demands while continuing to comply with restrictions imposed on its nuclear programme by the JCPOA.

### Concluding Remarks:

- Experts opine that **the stance of Iran's Hassan Rouhani government became increasingly untenable in the light of recent American actions.**
- The latter provided the hardline opposition in Iran, composed of right-wing factions and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the opportunity to attack the government for conforming to an agreement that had been rejected by the U.S. and that had provided no economic relief to the Iranian people, the primary selling point in favour of the JCPOA.
- Moreover, **the Iranian Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, whose support for the JCPOA was crucial, has for all practical purposes withdrawn his endorsement of the agreement in turn leaving the duo of President Rouhani and Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif without any protective political cover.**
- Therefore, the Iranian government, in order to maintain its standing with the populace, has been left with no option but to undertake tit-for-tat measures, further heightening the political temperature in the Persian Gulf.
- **This has turned the U.S.-Iran standoff into a game of chicken in which either one of the parties to the game blinks and concedes victory to the other or a "crash" becomes inevitable.**
- The American-Iranian confrontation seems to be inexorably heading towards the latter outcome. If taken to its logical conclusion this scenario can turn out to be catastrophic for the entire West Asian region as well as for the international economy.
- Lastly, **oil supplies from the Persian Gulf are likely to be greatly reduced if not totally eliminated sending oil prices sky-rocketing, especially threatening the vulnerable economies of the global South.**

## F. Tidbits

### 1. CEA for balanced tapping into domestic, foreign savings

#### Context

- Chief Economic Adviser Krishnamurthy Subramanian sought to **caution against a more-than-necessary reliance on foreign savings as a trigger for accelerating economic growth** through more investments.

### Comments

- “If we have to invest for triggering a virtuous cycle, we need to tap into savings... domestic or foreign [and] there are trade-offs with any of those,” he said, adding that tapping into more of the former would mean leaving less with the households for consumption.
- Such a situation of falling demand could be offset **through measures to increase exports**.
- **Dependence on foreign savings can create macro vulnerability** adding that letting all or a large part of investment coming from foreign savings would mean exposing to vulnerability as it happened in the case of East Asian economies.

## G. Prelims Facts

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1. Nangarhar province, recently seen in news, is in which country?

- a) Iran
- b) Afghanistan
- c) Iraq
- d) Yemen

**Ans: b**

**Explanation:**

- It is one of the 34 provinces of Afghanistan, located in the eastern part of the country.

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding Special 301 report:

1. It is a United States federal law that imposes sanctions on Iran, North Korea, and Russia.
2. Sanctions were imposed on Turkey recently under this report.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Ans: c**

**Explanation:**

**Special 301 Report**

- It is prepared annually by the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) that identifies trade barriers to United States companies and products due to the intellectual property laws, such as copyright, patents and trademarks, in other countries.
- The Special 301 Report is published pursuant to **Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974**
- By statute, the annual Special 301 Report includes a list of "**Priority Foreign Countries**", that are

- judged to have inadequate intellectual property laws; these countries may be subject to sanctions.
- In addition, the report contains a "**Priority Watch List**" and a "**Watch List**", containing countries whose intellectual property regimes are deemed of concern.

**Q3. With reference to World Bank, which of the following statements is/are correct?**

1. World Bank generally refers to International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and International Development Agency.
2. International Finance Corporation is known as the private arm of the WB.

Options:

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Ans: c**

**Explanation:**

Context:

- The World Bank Group announced that Anshula Kant, an Indian national, had been appointed its next MD and CFO.

**Q4. The Quadrilateral Coordination Group does not include which of the following countries?**

- a) USA
- b) China
- c) Pakistan
- d) India

**Ans: d**

**Explanation:**

- It includes the US, Afghanistan, China and Pakistan.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. 'One Nation, One Ration Card' will bring perceptible changes in the lives of vulnerable migrant workers in India but challenges lie ahead in designing and implementing it. Comment.
2. Discuss the contentious issues that have prevented the Government from embarking on the path of Railway Privatization.
3. The rules-based global economic governance is becoming more fragmented under pressure from growing American unilateralism and Chinese state capitalism. Explain.



