

14 Aug 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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B. GS2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. [EC kicks off delimitation process](#)

Context:

The Election Commission (EC) held its first meeting for the delimitation exercise, necessitated under the new Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act.

What is delimitation?

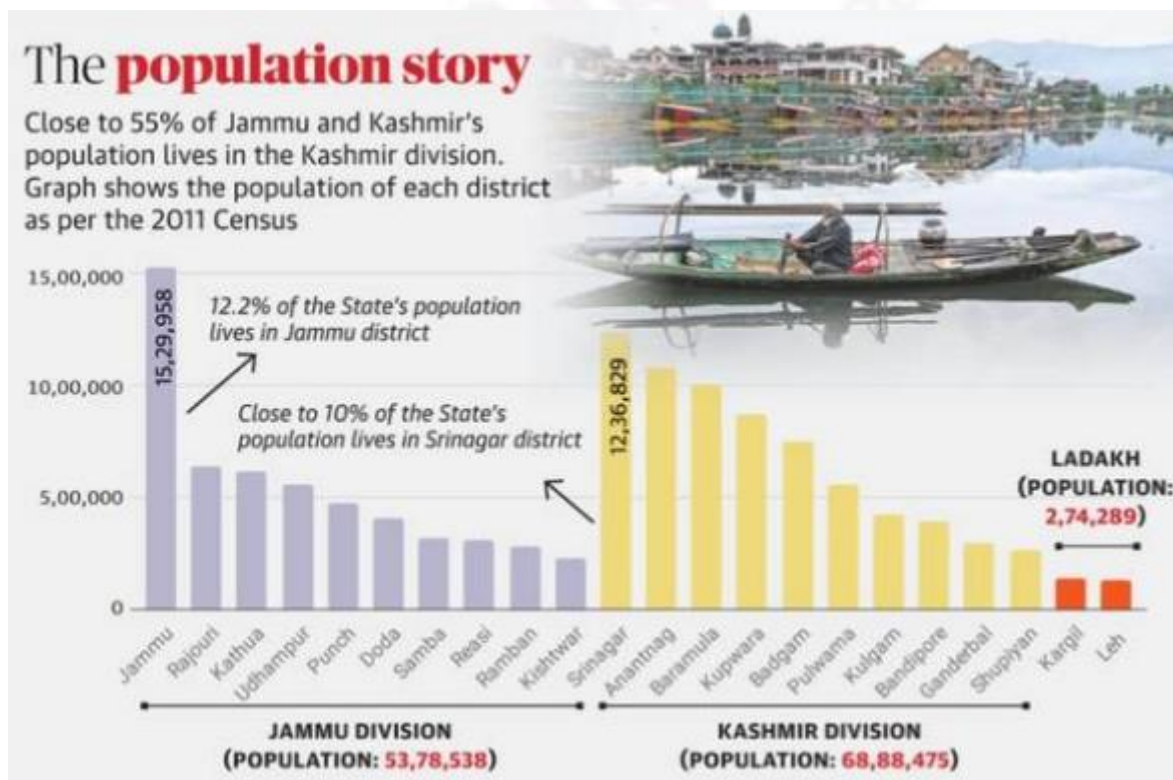
- The Delimitation commission or Boundary commission of India is a commission established by

the Government of India under the provisions of the Delimitation Commission Act.

- The main task of the commission is redrawing the boundaries of the various assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies based on a recent census.
- The representation from each State is not changed during this exercise.
- However, the number of SC and ST seats in a state is changed in accordance with the census.
- The present delimitation of constituencies, across the country has been done on the basis of 2001 census under the provisions of Delimitation Act, 2002.

History of delimitation in Jammu and Kashmir:

- The Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir, enacted in 1957, was based on the Maharaja's Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir of 1939.
- After accession to India, the State Constituent Assembly was constituted under the 1939 Constitution, but Sheikh Abdullah's administration arbitrarily carved out 30 seats for Jammu region and 43 seats for Kashmir region and two seats for Ladakh region. This regional disparity became entrenched thereafter: Kashmir (46), Jammu (37) and Ladakh (four).
- The last time a delimitation exercise took place in the state was also under President's Rule, as far back as 1995 in extremely difficult circumstances by the Justice (retd) KK Gupta Commission.
- Incidentally, the Constitution provides for delimitation every 10 years, the next delimitation of assembly constituencies should have logically taken place in 2005.
- However, in 2002, the Farooq Abdullah government chose to freeze delimitation until 2026 by amending the Jammu & Kashmir Representation of the People Act 1957 and Section 47(3) of the Constitution of Jammu & Kashmir.
- At the moment there are seven seats reserved for SC in the assembly, all in the Jammu division which haven't been rotated since 1996 -- Chamb, Domana, Ranbir Singh Pura, Samba, Hiranagar, Chenani and Ramban (separate) in Jammu, Kathua and Udhampur district, respectively.



Details:

- Though the home ministry is yet to provide any formal instruction or information on the

reorganization and delimitation of Jammu and Kashmir, the EC discussed how it will deal with the issue after receiving the notification.

- The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, provides for increasing the number of assembly seats in the newly formed Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir from 107 to 114.
- Ladakh will be a Union territory without a legislative assembly.
 - Of the 114 seats, 24 have been kept aside for areas under Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK), which means elections will be conducted for 90 seats.
 - The old Assembly had strength of 111 seats (again 24 kept aside for PoK) with four seats for Ladakh region.
 - That means 7 extra seats will be added to the effective strength of the House.

2. Chief Justice advocates more autonomy to CBI

Context:

Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi has recommended a comprehensive legislation to make the Central Bureau of Investigation functional as an efficient and impartial investigative agency.

Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI):

- The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is the premier investigating agency of India.
- It operates under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.
- The agency has been known to investigate several economic crimes, special crimes, cases of corruption and other high-profile cases.
- Its job is to ensure a fair and an impartial probe.

Issues:

- Chief Justice Gogoi lists legal ambiguity, weak human resource, lack of adequate investment, accountability, and political and administrative interference as key concerns.
- In the context of political and administrative interference, he said that in the Vineet Narain v. Union of India case, the Supreme Court had expressed concern over the state of affairs and laid down explicit guidelines for protecting the integrity of the force.
- Under the DSPE Act, the CBI requires consent of the State concerned for investigation. Given vested interests or bureaucratic lethargy, such consent is often either denied or delayed, severely compromising the investigation. Additionally, a patch work of legislations governing the functioning of the CBI adversely affects inter-institutional coordination, both horizontally and vertically.

Details:

- The Chief Justice said that time and again, the Supreme Court had utilised its constitutional authority to ensure that the CBI functioned without any fear or favour, and in the best public interest. As a multi-faceted, multi-disciplinary investigative agency, it had for the most part of its existence enjoyed tremendous public trust.
- He opined that the CBI should be given statutory status through legislation equivalent to that provided to the Comptroller & Auditor General.
- And that the legal mandate of the CBI must be strengthened by having a comprehensive legislation addressing deficiencies relating to organisational structure, charter of functions, limits of power, superintendence and oversight.
- Advocating administrative and financial autonomy for the CBI, he said, “To address an increasing incidence of inter-State crimes, an argument could be made for including ‘public order’ in concurrent list, for the limited purposes of investigating such crimes.”
- However, given that the superintendence and control of the agency continues to, in large measure, lie

with the executive by virtue of Section 4 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946, the possibility of it being used as a political instrument remains ever present, he said.

Category: HEALTH

1. 57.3% allopathic practitioners are not qualified: Health Ministry

Context:

The Union Health Ministry's data states that, 57.3% of personnel currently practising allopathic medicine do not have a medical qualification.

Concerns:

- The data throws light upon the risks rural patients would be exposed to; those who suffer because of an urban to rural doctor density ratio of 3.8:1, and India's poor doctor-population ratio of 1:1456 as compared with the World Health Organisation standards of 1:1000.
- There is a huge skew in the distribution of doctors working in the urban and rural areas.
- Consequently, most of our rural and poor population is denied good quality care, leaving them in the clutches of quacks.
- Besides, there are also 7.63 lakh Ayurveda, Unani and Homeopathy (AUH) doctors in the country.
- Assuming 80% availability, it is estimated that around 6.1 lakh AUH doctors may be actually available for service, and considered together with allopathic doctors, there is a doctor-population ratio of 1:884, which is still low.

Details:

- Section 15 of the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956 prohibits a person other than a medical practitioner enrolled on a State Medical Register to practice medicine in the State.
- Any person acting in contravention is punishable with imprisonment and fine.
- Since health is a State subject, the primary responsibility to deal with such cases lies with the respective State governments.

Way forward:

- The Health Ministry is looking into bringing in mid-level healthcare providers to relieve overburdened specialists.
- The Chief Ministers of all the States have been urged to take appropriate action under the law against quacks.
- States have been asked to evolve suitable policies to ensure the availability of a quality health workforce in rural areas.
- Wide gaps in comprehensive primary healthcare services for many rural areas need to be filled through competent mid-level healthcare providers who are adequately trained, technologically enabled and legally empowered.
- Investment is needed in producing more family physicians for primary care. However, the potential of well-trained non-physician care providers in community settings must not be ignored.
- Since there is a shortage of doctors and specialists, cue must be taken from countries such as Thailand, United Kingdom, China and even [a city like] New York have permitted community health workers/ nurse practitioners into mainstream health services, with improved health outcomes.
- Chhattisgarh and Assam have experimented with community health workers, and that according to independent evaluations carried out by the Harvard School of Public Health, they have performed very well. However, the quality of personnel must be regulated tightly.

- The Ministry opines that it would take 7-8 years to ramp up the supply of doctors, therefore, in the interim there is no option but to rely upon a cadre of specially trained mid-level providers who can lead the health and wellness centres.

C. GS3 Related

Category: ECONOMY

1. CSR expenditure may be made tax deductible, says committee

Context:

The High Level Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has recommended making CSR expenditure tax deductible and that compliance violations be treated as a civil offence that attracts penalties.

Details:

- The main recommendations of the committee include:
 - Making CSR expenditure tax deductible.
 - Allowing the carry-forward of unspent balance for a period of 3-5 years.
 - Aligning Schedule 7 of the Companies Act (which outlines the kinds of activities that qualify as CSR) with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
- The Committee has also recommended that companies having CSR-prescribed amount below Rs.50 lakh may be exempted from constituting a CSR Committee.
- The Committee has also recommended that violation of CSR compliance may be made a civil offence and shifted to the penalty regime.
- The report recommends balancing local area preferences with national priorities when it comes to CSR.
- It recommends introducing impact assessment studies for CSR obligations of Rs.5 crore or more.
- It also recommends the registration of implementation agencies on the Ministry of Corporate Affairs portal.

Significance:

- If the suggestion of carrying forward the unspent balance is implemented, it would come as a major relief to companies who are hassled about meeting stringent CSR norms or facing penalties.
- Sustainable development goals which would additionally include sports promotion, senior citizens' welfare, welfare of differently-abled persons, disaster management and heritage protection would be covered under Schedule 7 of the Companies Act.
- Several other recommendations such as developing a CSR exchange portal to connect contributors, beneficiaries and agencies, promoting social impact companies, and third-party assessment of major CSR projects, would be a welcome move.
- The committee has also strongly opposed treating CSR as a means of resource gap funding for government schemes. Also, the committee has discouraged passive contribution of CSR into different funds.

2. RBI issues final norms for regulatory sandbox

Context:

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued the final framework for regulatory sandbox in order to enable

innovations in the financial technology space.

What is regulatory sandbox?

A regulatory sandbox (RS) usually refers to live testing of new products or services in a controlled/test regulatory environment for which regulators may permit certain regulatory relaxations for the limited purpose of the testing.

Details:

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will issue guidelines for fintech companies to test their new products on a small group of users before scaling up.
- RBI said the objective of the sandbox was to foster responsible innovation in financial services, promote efficiency and bring benefit to consumers.
- The proposed FinTech solution highlights an existing gap in the financial ecosystem and the proposal would demonstrate how it would address the problem.

Criteria:

- RBI will launch the sandbox for entities that meet the criteria of minimum net worth of Rs.25 lakh as per their latest audited balance sheet.
- The entity should either be a company incorporated and registered in the country or banks licensed to operate in India.
- While money transfer services, digital know-your customer, financial inclusion and cyber security products are included, crypto currency, credit registry and credit information have been left out.

Advantages of RS:

- RS fosters 'learning by doing' on all sides and help regulators obtain first-hand empirical evidence on the benefits and risks of emerging technologies and their implications.
- This will enable authorities to take a considered view on the regulatory changes or new regulations that may be needed to support useful innovation, while containing the attendant risks.
- It brings benefits to consumers or the industry and/or perform the same work more efficiently.
- Users of an RS can test the product's viability without the need for a larger and more expensive roll-out, if the product appears to have the potential to be successful, is another major benefit of such exercise.

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Highlands in Kerala on shaky grounds

Context:

Highland regions bordering Kozhikode and Wayanad could witness more landslides if heavy rain continues, geology experts have warned.

Details:

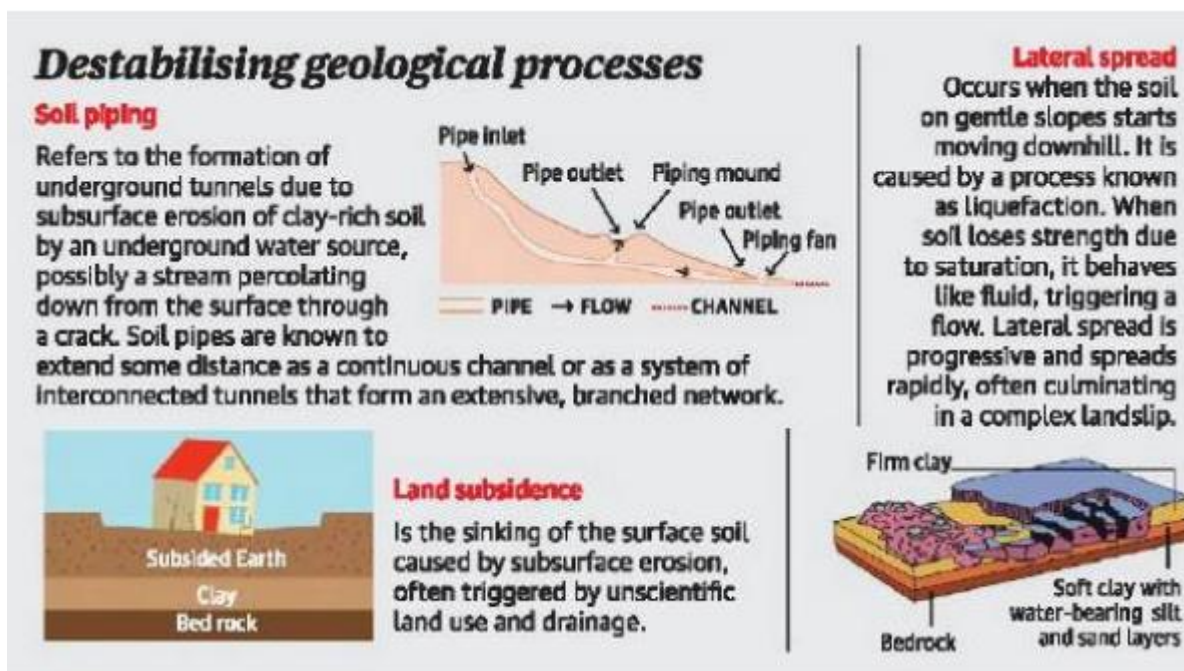
- A team of scientists from the National Centre for Earth Science Studies (NCESS) that carried out an investigation in Kerala in the wake of the heavy rain and devastating floods in August 2018 found that land subsidence, lateral spread, and soil piping immediate threat to life and property.
- According to scientists, destabilising geological processes, coupled with extreme rainfall events and

unscientific farming and construction activities, posed a serious threat to human habitation in the highlands of Kerala.

- During the investigation, which primarily focussed on landslip-prone areas in Thrissur and Kannur districts, the researchers found huge cracks across farmlands and dwellings.

Concerns:

- Heavy intense rainfall triggers slope failure in locations where lateral spread and soil piping have occurred.
- Most of the slopes surveyed are used for raising crops and farmers have blocked the natural drainage systems. Any developmental activity like construction of roads and buildings in such vulnerable areas requires remedial measures for slope stabilisation.
- The situation in the highlands alarming.



Way forward:

- Lateral spreading, subsidence, and crack development are quite unusual phenomena and the sites need immediate rehabilitation.
- The team alerted the District Collectors in Thrissur, Kannur, and Kasaragod, outlining the remedial steps to be adopted.
- The scientists also recommended the formation of a trained task force for the highlands to monitor ground signatures like hollows, cracks, and water spouts that often precede land subsidence, lateral spread, and landslips.
- Based on the recommendations of the NCESS, the Union Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) has initiated steps to establish a network of landslip monitoring stations in the highlands.
- The units based on acoustic emission technology will also have an early warning mechanism to alert the local community.
- Moves are afoot to set up 10 monitoring stations.

D. GS4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: GEOGRAPHY

1. Perseid Meteor Shower

Meteoroid

- The small pieces of rocks which move around the sun are called meteoroids. A meteoroid is **a small rock or particle of debris in our solar system.**

Meteor

- A meteor is the **streak of light that you see in the sky when a small piece of cometary or asteroidal material enters the atmosphere** at high speed and burns up because of the frictional heating from the piece's collision with the atoms and molecules in the atmosphere.
- A **meteoroid that burns up as it passes through the Earth's atmosphere** is known as a meteor.
- A meteor is popularly termed a 'shooting star' or 'falling star'.

Meteorite

- The part of a meteoroid or asteroid that **survives the passage through our atmosphere and reaches the Earth's surface.**
- **Largest Meteor Crater:** A meteor crater in Arizona (USA) is 4,200 ft (1,300 m) deep is the largest meteor crater in the world. It was formed over 10,000 years ago.

Meteor Shower

- Well, **comets, like Earth and the other planets, also orbit the sun.**
- Unlike the nearly circular orbits of the planets, the **orbits of comets are usually quite lop-sided.**
- As a comet gets closer to the sun, some of its icy surface boils off, releasing lots of particles of dust and rock.
- A meteor shower happens when Earth passes through the path of a comet.
- When this happens, the bits of comet debris, most no larger than a grain of sand, create streaks of light in the night sky as they burn up in Earth's atmosphere.
- On any night, there are several small meteors which shoot across the sky. However, **during a meteor shower, tens to hundreds of meteors can be seen each hour**

Perseid Meteor Shower

- Meteor showers are generally **named after the constellation in which they appear to originate;** thus the Perseids appear to originate in the constellation Perseus and the Leonids in the constellation Leo.
- The Perseids occur as the Earth runs into pieces of **cosmic debris left behind by the comet Swift-Tuttle.**
- Meteors are best seen on a cloudless night, when the entire sky is visible, and when the Moon is not extremely bright. Chances of a successful viewing are higher from locations far away from the lights of cities. **Pollution and monsoon clouds make the Perseids difficult to view from India.**

Context

- Several meteor showers can be seen around the year. Among the brightest and best known of them is

the **Perseid Meteor Shower, which has been active from July 17 onward, and can be seen until August 26.**

- According to the International Meteor Organisation, the Perseid Showers will be followed in 2019 by
 - the Orionids (between October 2 and November 7, peaking around October 21-22),
 - the Leonids (from November 6-30, peaking around November 16-17),
 - the Geminids (from December 4-17, peaking around December 13-14), and
 - the Ursids (from December 17-26, peaking around December 21-22).

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Yemen Crisis

Yemeni Revolution

- The Yemeni Uprising (intifada), and also known as the Yemeni Revolution of Dignity followed the initial stages of the Tunisian Revolution and occurred simultaneously with the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 and other Arab Spring protests
- In its early phase, protests in Yemen were initially against unemployment, economic conditions and corruption, as well as against the government's proposals to modify Yemen's constitution.
- The protesters' demands then escalated to calls for **the resignation of Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh.**
- Saleh signed a power-transfer agreement brokered by the Gulf Cooperation Council in Riyadh where Vice President **Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi** took over as president after Presidential elections in 2012.
 - President Hadi struggled to deal with a variety of problems, the continuing loyalty of many military officers to Mr Saleh, as well as corruption, unemployment and food insecurity.
- There was continuous threats both from **Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and Houthi militants.**

Houthis

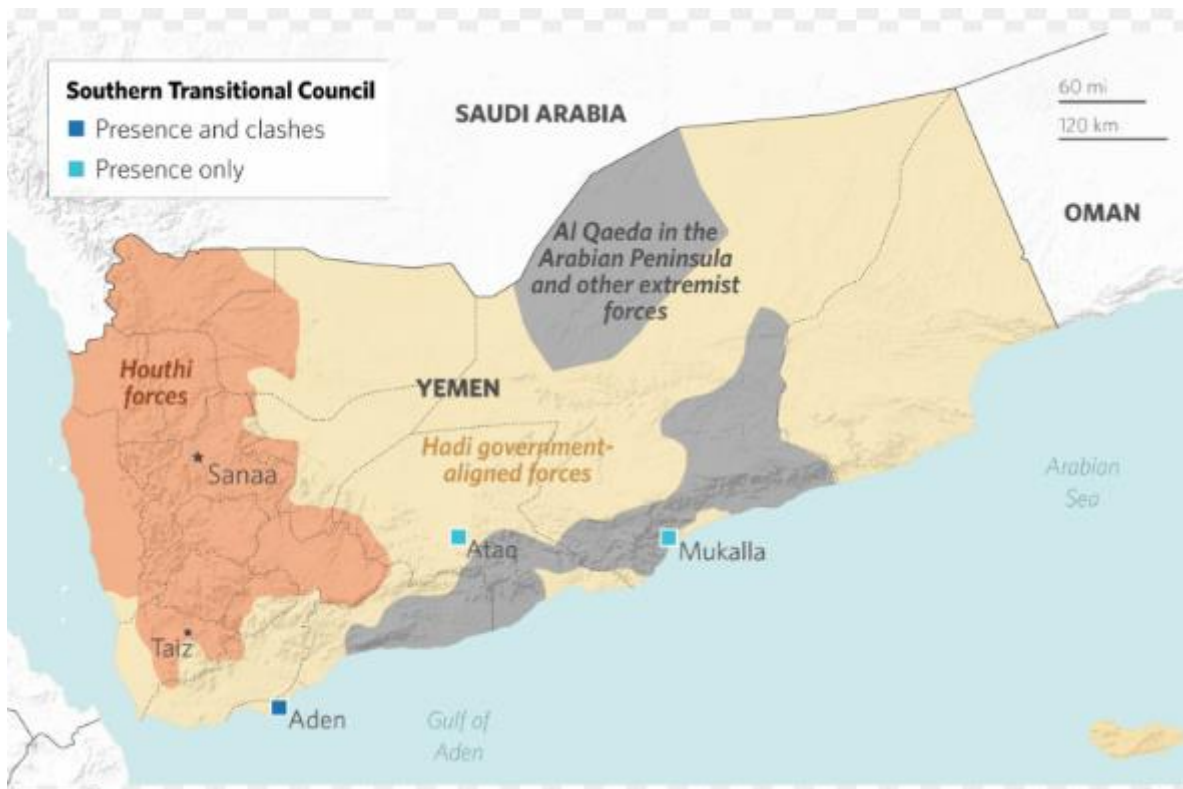
- The Houthis are members of a rebel group, also known as **Ansar Allah (Partisans of God)**, who **adhere to a branch of Shia Islam known as Zaidism.**
- Zaidis make up one-third of the population and ruled North Yemen under a system known as the **imamate** for almost 1,000 years until 1962.
- The Houthis take their name from **Hussein Badr al-Din al-Houthi.**
 - He led the group's first uprising in 2004 in an effort to win greater autonomy for their heartland of Saada province, and also to protect Zaidi religious and cultural traditions from perceived encroachment by Sunni Islamists.
- In **2011**, the Houthis joined the protests against then **President Saleh** and took advantage of the power vacuum to expand their territorial **control in Saada and neighboring Amran province.**
- In **2014**, Houthi fighters swept into the capital of Sana'a
- **The 2015** Houthis declared themselves in control of the government, dissolving Parliament and installing an interim Revolutionary Committee led by Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, a cousin of Houthi leader Abdul-Malik al-Houthi.

Saudi Arabian war in Yemen

- Saudi Arabia started the attack in March 2015 after Shia Houthi rebels captured parts of Yemen, including the capital city Sana'a.
- Riyadh saw the Houthis as **Iranian proxies** and was worried they would establish stable rule in **its backyard.**
- For the sake of legitimacy, **the Saudis claimed they were fighting on behalf of the globally recognised government of Yemen, led by President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi** who is reported

to be residing in Riyadh.

- But the war has reached a bloody stalemate as the Houthis still remain powerful in northern Yemen and the government controls the southern parts, including Aden.



Grave violations of Human Rights

The Saudi-led coalition's intervention in Yemen is proof of how things can go wrong with an ill-conceived, **poorly strategized and geopolitics-driven military interference** that cares little about human lives.

- After four years of war, the Saudis have not met their declared goal — pushing back the Shia Houthi rebels from the capital Sana'a and restoring the ousted government
- On the contrary, the war has pushed **Yemen into what the UN calls the worst humanitarian crisis.**
- Thousands have been killed, tens of thousands displaced and about **two thirds of the country's 28 million people do not have enough to eat.** And now, there is a rebellion within the coalition.

Southern Transitional Council (STC)

- It is a secessionist organization in Yemen.
- It was formed by a faction of the **Southern Movement**
 - The **Southern Movement** also known as the Southern Separatist Movement, or South Yemen Movement, and colloquially known as al-Hirak
- The Southern Movement was established in 2007, during the term of former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, and it has **called for and worked toward the separation of southern Yemen from the rest of the nation** (as it previously was until 1990).

A triangular War unfolding in Yemen

- The **Southern Transitional Council (STC)**, a militia group that was fighting the Houthis as part of the Saudi-led coalition, **turned against their masters** and captured the presidential palace in Aden as well as the city's main port.

- In return, **Saudi jets targeted STC fighters** before a tenuous ceasefire set in.
- It now looks like a three-way conflict.
 - The **Shia Houthis**, who the Saudis claim are backed by Iran, are controlling much of the country's north including Sana'a.
 - **Yemen's internationally-backed government of Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi**, the Saudi ally, is controlling the south, though Mr. Hadi is running the purported administration from Saudi Arabia.
 - The **STC** wants the **south to be an independent entity, like** it was till the Yemeni unification in 1990.
 - The STC's rebellion also signals the **growing friction in the multi-national coalition Saudi Arabia has stitched together to fight the Houthis.**
 - The **STC is backed by the UAE**, a crucial partner of Saudi Arabia in its foreign policy adventures.

Differences of opinion in the mode of Operation between Saudi and UAE

- In the past the Saudi and UAE stayed together in **propping up the military dictatorship of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in Egypt**, in countering the spread and influence of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Arab world, in opposing the Iran nuclear deal and on blockading Qatar.
- But when it comes to Yemen, the **Saudis** see the **Hadi government and Sunni Islamic parties**, including the **Islah**, as allies who could stabilise and rebuild the whole country after the Houthis are defeated, while
- **UAE**, already frustrated by the coalition's failure to defeat the rebels, **counts on the STC** and is staunchly **opposed to the Islah party**, which has ties to the Brotherhood.
 - The UAE has already pulled out of the Yemen war leaving it to Saudi Arabia to defeat the Houthis.
 - And with their continued backing to the STC, the Emiratis appear less concerned about defeating the Houthis than **maintaining their influence in southern Yemen.**

Way forward

- This should be a moment of reckoning for Mohammed bin Salman, the Saudi Arabian Crown Prince and the main architect of the Yemen intervention. He has lost the war and his coalition is crumbling, while Yemen is left with unimaginable human suffering.
- If Saudi Arabia has geopolitical concerns about Iran's growing influence, it **should address them directly with Tehran, not by punishing the people of Yemen.**
- It is time for a nationwide ceasefire and talks with all stakeholders under the mediation of a willing UN to find a political settlement to the crisis.

Category: HEALTH

1. National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill

Context

- The National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill, seeks to replace the 63-year-old Medical Council of India (MCI) to reform the medical sector in India

Features of the bill

- The bill provides for the setting up of a medical commission in place of the Medical Council of India (MCI) and **repeal of the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956.**

- The NMC will have authority over medical education — **approvals for colleges, admissions, tests and fee-fixation.**
- The medical colleges will have to conform to standards the NMC will lay down. Once they conform and are permitted to operate, there would be no need for annual renewals.
- The bill provides that the National Medical Commission will have **four autonomous boards**,
 - Under-Graduate Medical Education Board,
 - Post-Graduate Medical Education Board,
 - Medical Assessment and Rating Board
 - It will conduct an assessment of the medical colleges and develop a system of ranking the institutes. MARB will grant permission for new medical colleges, starting PG course and increase of seats based on the standards set by the UG and PG board
 - Ethics and medical registration board.
- The Bill has also **removed the exemption hitherto given to Central institutions, the AIIMS and JIPMER, from NEET** for admission to MBBS and allied courses.
 - In doing so, the government has moved in the right direction, as there was resentment and a charge of elitism at the exclusion of some institutions from an exam that aimed at standardising testing for entry into MBBS.

Constitution of the National Medical Commission:

- The Bill sets up the National Medical Commission (NMC). Within three years of the passage of the Bill, **state governments will establish State Medical Councils at the state level.**
- The NMC will consist of **25 members, appointed by the central government.**
 - The members will include a **chairperson**, who must be a senior medical practitioner and academic with at least 20 years of experience
 - **10 ex officio members**
 - The ex officio members will include the presidents of the undergraduate and postgraduate medical education boards, the director general of Indian Council of Medical Research, and a director of one of the AIIMS, among others.
 - **14 part-time members.**
 - Part-time members, on the other hand, will include experts from the field of management, law, medical ethics, etc. and nominees of states and union territories.
 - A Search Committee will recommend names to the central government for the post of Chairperson, and the part time members.
 - The Search Committee will consist of **seven members including the Cabinet Secretary** and five experts nominated by the central government (of which three will have experience in the medical field).

NMC Bill may help curb corruption in MCI

- Unlike MCI, the members of **NMC will have to declare their assets at the time of assuming office and when they leave.** They will also have to submit a conflict of interest declaration.
- The members will have to serve a **two-year cooling-off period after their tenure**, which, however, could be waived by the government if required.

National Exit Test (NEXT)

- **Section 15 (1) of the bill** proposes a common final-year MBBS exam NEXT
 - It will work as a licentiate examination, a screening test for foreign medical graduates, and an entrance test for admission in postgraduate programmes.
 - The new Bill has the provision for making **national standards in medical education uniform**
- Per se, it offers a definite benefit for students who invest much time and energy in five years of

training in classrooms, labs and the bedside, by reducing the number of tests they would have to take in case they aim to study further.

Why single Exam?

- For the past few years, a separate NEET is being **conducted for undergraduate and postgraduate courses**. In addition there are different examinations for institutes such as the All India Institute of Medical Sciences and the Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research.
- This Act **consolidates multiple exams at the undergraduate level with a single NEET and in turn avoids multiple counselling processes**.
- NEXT will act as the **final year MBBS examination across India, an entrance test to the postgraduate level, and as a licentiate exam** before doctors can practise. It aims to reduce disparities in the skill sets of doctors graduating from different institutions.
- It would also be a single licentiate exam for graduates across the world. Thus, the government has in effect implemented a **'One-Nation-One-Exam' in medical education**.

Concerns

- But according to doctors from All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Merit should be the determining factor in securing a PG seat and the current NEET-PG should not be scrapped
- NEXT will undermine the federal system

Community Health Provider

- The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has raised concerned over **Section 32 of the NMC Bill** that provides for **licensing of 3.5 lakhs non-medical persons or Community Health Providers** to practise modern medicine.
- According to the Bill, the **Commission may grant limited licence to practice medicine at mid-level** as Community Health Provider to such person connected with modern scientific medical profession who qualifies such criteria as may be specified by the regulations.
- According to the Bill, the **Community Health Provider may prescribe specified medicine independently, only in primary and preventive healthcare**,
 - But in cases other than primary and preventive healthcare, he may prescribe medicine only under the supervision of medical practitioners registered under sub-section (1) of section 32.

Empowering of community health providers for limited practice

- The **WHO prescribes the doctor-to-patient ratio as 1:1,000**.
 - In India, this ratio is as 1:1,596.
- The country is short of five lakh doctors.
 - This gap is felt more in rural areas where the shortage is acute.
 - Most of the qualified doctors are concentrated in tertiary care hospitals in cities.
- Even with about 70% of India's population residing in the rural areas, the present ratio of doctors in urban and rural areas is 3.8:1
 - 27,000 doctors serve about 650,000 villages of the country.
- A recent study by the **World Health Organisation** shows that nearly 80% of allopathic doctors in the rural areas are without a medical qualification.
- The NMC Act attempts to address this gap by effectively utilising modern medicine professionals, other than doctors in enabling primary and preventive health care.
- **Evidence from China, Thailand and the United Kingdom** shows such integration results in better health outcomes.
 - **Chhattisgarh and Assam** have also experimented with community health workers.

Concerns

- Doctors claim, under Section 32 of the NMC bill, nearly 3.5 lakh community health providers – **mostly quacks-- would be legalised to prescribe drugs.**
- The term Community Health Provider has been vaguely defined to allow anyone connected with modern medicine to get registered in NMC and be licensed to practise modern medicine. This means persons without medical background are becoming eligible to practise modern medicine and prescribe independently.

The Bill puts a cap on fees on 50 per cent of seats in MBBS and PG colleges.

- The Indian Medical Council Act, 1956 has no provision for fee regulation.
- Until now, 'not-for-profit' organisations were permitted to set up medical colleges, a process involving enormous investments and a negotiation of cumbersome procedures.
- The NMC Act removes the discretionary quota by using a transparent fee structure. It empowers the NMC to frame guidelines for determination **of not only fees but all other charges in 50% of seats in private colleges to support poor and meritorious students.**
- While a cap on fees is necessary, there is also a **need for incentives to attract private investors.**
 - In any case, the transparency that NEXE provides would lead to **fee regulation through market forces.**
 - The Act also provides for rating of colleges.
 - Thus, reducing entry barriers for setting up medical colleges, along with their rating, is expected to benefit students. They would be able to make an informed decision before seeking admission.

Concerns

- This increases the **number of seats for which private institutes will have the discretion to determine fees.**
- At present, in such institutes, state governments decide fees for 85 per cent of the seats.
- There have also been suggestions to put a cap on the fees charged by unaided medical institutes.

Conclusion

- The efforts of successive governments have now culminated with the NMC Act replacing the IMC Act. There is no denying that medical education needs continuous reforms in order to usher in improvements in health care.
- There cannot be just one solution. The NMC Act is a serious attempt to meet the primary need of more medical professionals in the country; it is a beginning.

Category: POLITY

1. Deliberate, don't disrupt: On Budget session

Context

- Vice President has urged all political parties to include code of conduct for MPs and MLAs in their election manifestoes

Details

- The Vice President of India and the Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has called

upon all political parties to incorporate a **code of conduct for people's representatives**, including MPs and MLAs, in their election manifestos.

- The code of conduct **should include stipulations that the members would not enter the well of the house, nor resort to sloganeering and disruptions** or any other unruly behavior such as tearing papers and throwing them in the House.

Background

- In the past lawmakers have taken the route of organised disruption of legislative business.
- It has become common among the political parties and legislators to demonstratively advertise their points of view without recourse to debate.
- A number of crucial bills **have taken an inordinate time to be enacted due to disruption**, while others were not enacted despite a broad consensus — such as the Women's Reservation Bill — due to the behaviour of a few naysayers.
- Many sessions of Parliament in the recent past saw **little business being done due to repeated disruption**.

In this context, Vice President Venkaiah Naidu's exhortation to political parties to incorporate a model code of conduct for their legislators in State Assemblies and in Parliament is welcome.

Inference

- If indeed parties adopt a code, it will go a long way in making parliamentary work meaningful.
- Otherwise, the **general public will lose interest in the procedural aspects of parliamentary democracy** and limit their participation to just voting in the elections.

Need for deliberation not disruption

- The current Budget session **sailed through with minimal disruption**. Yet the high productivity during the session came **without sufficient deliberation over crucial bills**, several of which were rushed through without vetting by parliamentary standing and select committees.
- These committees have in the past been useful in **expanding discussion over laws with civil society and experts from various streams of the larger society**.
 - They have also facilitated an enhanced cross-party coordination over issues.
- By not sending a single Bill among the 28 that were introduced and passed to a standing or select committee for scrutiny, the **current session accentuated the trend that has minimised the importance of such committees over the last few years**.

Key Stats

- Unlike the 15th Lok Sabha (2009-2014), when 71% of the bills were referred to such committees, in the 16th Lok Sabha, they constituted only a fourth of the overall number of bills.
- Time spent on debates in the current session in both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha was barely a third of the overall business. This does not augur well for lawmaking.

Conclusion

- As Mr. Naidu has also pointed out correctly, **deliberation is an important component of parliamentary democracy apart from legislation and accountability of lawmakers**. All three aspects must cohere for a thoroughgoing procedural democracy.

F. Tidbits

Nothing here for today!!!

G. Prelims Facts

Nothing here for today!!!

H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Van Dhan Vikas Karyakram is an initiative targeting livelihood generation for tribal population by harnessing the wealth of forest.
2. Van Dhan Kendras are the implementing agencies of Van Dhan Vikas Karyakram.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

Van Dhan Vikas Karyakram is an initiative targeting livelihood generation for tribal population by harnessing the wealth of forest i.e. Van Dhan. The programme aims to tap into the traditional knowledge and skill sets of tribal people by adding technology and Information Technology for upgradation of output at each stage and to convert the tribal wisdom into a remunerative economic activity. Implementation of Van Dhan Vikas Karyakram is through Van Dhan Kendras.

Q2. Green Mahanadi Mission has been launched in

- a. Odisha
- b. Chattisgarh
- c. West Bengal
- d. Andhra Pradesh

Answer: a

Explanation:

Odisha Government has launched 'Green Mahanadi Mission', a plantation drive under which 2 crore saplings will be planted along Mahanadi river and its tributaries.

Q3. "Rama Chiluka" is the state bird of

- a. Tamil Nadu

- b. Andhra Pradesh
- c. Karnataka
- d. Kerala

Answer: b

Explanation:

Rama Chiluka or rose-ringed parakeet is the newly announced state bird of Andhra Pradesh.

Q4. Consider the following statements:

1. Ganga Vriksharopan Abhiyan was initiated as part of the Forest Interventions in Ganga (FIG) component of Namami Gange Programme.
2. Under the program, plantation activities are being carried out, all along the banks of the River Ganga with participation of local people.
3. It is being organised in Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 1 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: d

Explanation:

Ganga Vriksharopan Abhiyan was initiated as part of the Forest Interventions in Ganga (FIG) component of Namami Gange Programme. Under the program, plantation activities are being carried out, all along the banks of the River Ganga with participation of local people. It is being organised in five main stem Ganga basin states – Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2019 dilutes National Human Rights Commission's Autonomy. Critically examine. (15 Marks, 250 Words)
2. Comment on the significance of Rural Tourism in Indian Economy and discuss the government initiatives in the rural tourism sector. (15 Marks, 250 Words)

