

22 Oct 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. GS1 Related

SOCIAL ISSUES

- [1. U.P. tops in crimes against women, says NCRB report](#)

B. GS2 Related

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- [1. U.S. is quietly reducing its troops in Afghanistan](#)

C. GS3 Related

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

- [1. Many hydropower projects could face closure](#)

SECURITY

- [1. New rules to regulate social media by January](#)

D. GS4 Related

E. Editorials

POLITY

- [1. A road map for Criminal Justice Reforms](#)

ECONOMY

- [1. GDP is a means, not an end](#)
- [2. A fix for growth gain from fiscal pain](#)
- [3. Asia's remarkable economic transformation](#)

HEALTH

- [1. Safe, but not entirely](#)

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- [1. China's growing clout at the UN](#)

F. Tidbits

- [1. DAC clears indigenous projects worth Rs. 3,300 cr](#)

G. Prelims Fact

- [1. Australian newspapers redact front pages to protest curbs](#)
- [2. National Bal Shree Scheme](#)

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

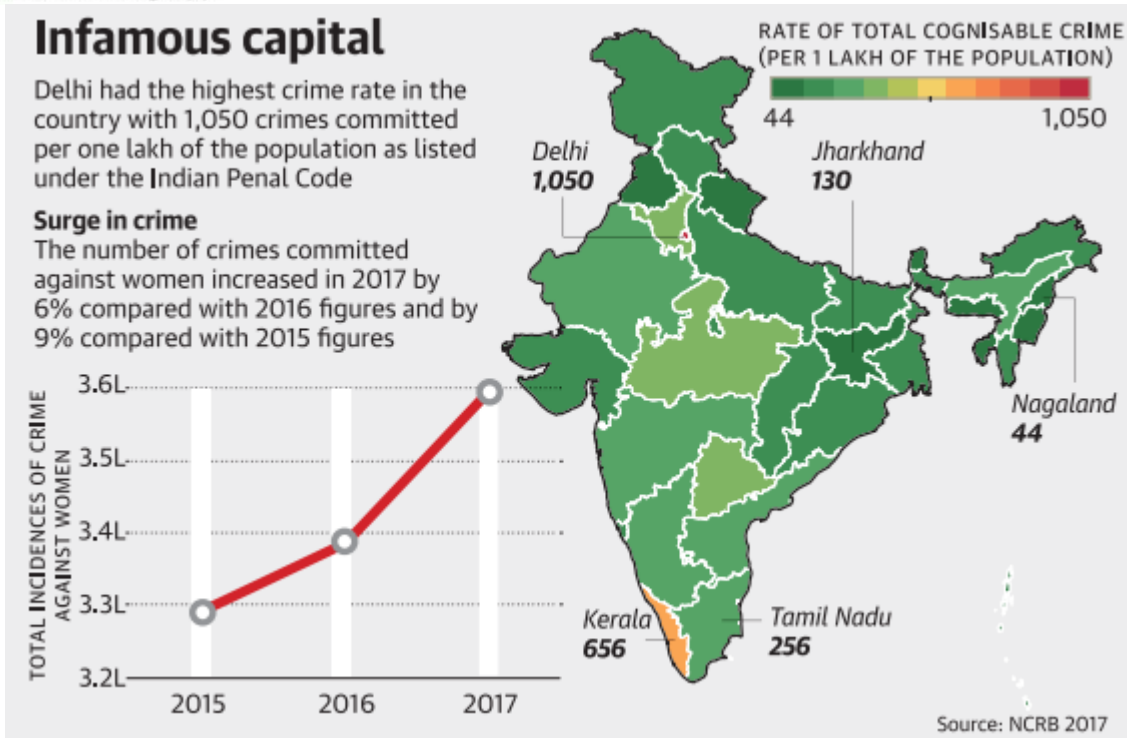
A. GS1 Related

Category: SOCIAL ISSUES

1. U.P. tops in crimes against women, says NCRB report

Context:

The annual crime against women in India Report 2017 has been published by the NCRB, after a delay of 2 years. The bureau said that the addition of the new categories had led to a delay in the report's release.



Key findings of the report:

- As per the report, close to 3.6 Lakhs cases of crime against women were reported in the country.
- Uttar Pradesh topped the list, followed by Maharashtra and West Bengal.
- Majority of cases under crimes against women were registered under ‘Cruelty by Husband or his Relatives’ (27.9%) followed by ‘Assault on Women with Intent to Outrage her Modesty’ (21.7%), ‘Kidnapping & Abduction of Women’ (20.5%) and ‘Rape’ (7.0%).
- As per the report, 58,880 incidents of rioting were reported, of which the maximum incidents were reported from Bihar, followed by Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra.
- The incidents registered under the Scheduled Caste Prevention of Atrocities Act saw an increase from 5,082 in 2016 to 5,775 in 2017.
- Incidents of crime related to Scheduled Tribes dipped from 844 in 2016 to 720 in 2017.
 - Kidnapping and abduction cases showed an increase of 9.0% over 2016 figures.
- The report highlighted that several new crime categories, including criminal intimidation, and credit or debit card fraud, were included in the data.
- The NCRB for the first time collected data on circulation of “false/fake news and rumours.” Under the category, maximum incidents were reported from Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Kerala.
- Information on mob lynchings, killing by khap panchayats, murder for religious reasons, and murder committed by influential people have not been included in the list.

National Crime Records Bureau:

- The National Crime Records Bureau, abbreviated to NCRB, is an Indian government agency responsible for collecting and analysing crime data as defined by the Indian Penal Code and Special and Local Laws.
- NCRB was set-up in 1986 to function as a repository of information on crime and criminals so as to assist the investigators in linking crime to the perpetrators.
- NCRB is headquartered in New Delhi and is part of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

B. GS2 Related

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. U.S. is quietly reducing its troops in Afghanistan

Context:

Despite the lack of a peace deal with the Taliban, the U.S. is already reducing the size of its troop force in Afghanistan. The clarity comes at a time when President Donald Trump has expressed reluctance to remain engaged in costly wars abroad.

Details:

- In a news conference, the top American commander in Afghanistan confirmed that the size of the American force in the country had already quietly dropped by 2,000 over the last year, down to roughly 12,000.
- Rather than a formal withdrawal order, they are reducing the force through a gradual process of not replacing troops as they cycle out.
- The decision to reduce American troops even before a deal with the Taliban means the U.S. is weakening its hand in future negotiations with the insurgents.
- Reducing the number of troops ahead of a complete departure from the country was always the most important American bargaining chip in any negotiations with the Taliban to end the long war.

American military officials had signed off on the first stage of a troop drawdown in a draft peace agreement. It would have seen 5,400 American troops leave the country over about five months. The measure was put forward to show the Taliban that the Americans would abide by the proposed deal in return for the insurgent group reducing violence in Afghanistan. But the peace talks collapsed when Mr. Trump called off negotiations with the Taliban.

The issue has been covered in 9th September 2019 Comprehensive News Analysis. [Click Here](#) to read.

C. GS3 Related

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Many hydropower projects could face closure

Context:

Hydropower projects that do not comply with the Centre's ecological flow notification could face closure.

Key concepts:

- The **Natural Flow Regime** is the characteristic pattern of a river's flow quantity, timing, and variability.
- **Environmental flows/ ecological flows** are the acceptable flow regimes that are required to maintain a river in the desired environmental state or predetermined state.

What is ecological flow notification?

- Power producers generally hoard water to create reserves to increase power production.
- The Centre's ecological flow notification, 2018 mandates that project developers ensure a minimum supply of water all through the year.

- The notification came into effect in October 2018 and gave companies three years to modify their design plans, if required, to ensure that a minimum amount of water flowed during all seasons.
 - The e-flow notification specifies that the upper stretches of the Ganga — from its origins in the glaciers and until Haridwar — would have to maintain: 20% of the monthly average flow of the preceding 10-days between November and March, which is the dry season; 25% of the average during the ‘lean season’ of October, April and May; and 30% of monthly average during the monsoon months of June-September.
 - It will apply to the upper Ganga River Basin starting from originating glaciers and through respective confluences of its head tributaries finally meeting at Devaprayag up to Haridwar and the main stem of River Ganga up to Unnao district of Uttar Pradesh.
- In September 2019, the government advanced this deadline, from October 2021 to December 2019. This was after it tasked the Central Water Commission (CWC) to ascertain actual flows and the amount of water present in the river through 2019.

Details:

- The Central Water Commission (CWC) will be the designated authority and the custodian of the data, and will be responsible for supervision, monitoring, regulation of flows and reporting of necessary information to the appropriate authority as and when required and also take emergent decisions about the water storage norms in case of any emergency.
- Power projects will be assessed by the CWC quarterly for compliance after December 2019.
- Projects that are not compliant will have to face closure.

Category: SECURITY

1. New rules to regulate social media by January

Context:

India plans to frame rules to regulate social media citing unimaginable disruption to democracy and the growing menace of fake news.

Details:

- Currently, liabilities of the intermediaries on online content is governed by the Information Technology (Intermediaries Guidelines) Rules operational from April 2011.
- The government now says that they recognise that rules need to be revisited and has initiated a consultation process on framing the revised guidelines.
- The government aims to ramp up the regulatory regime considering the ever-growing threats to individual rights and the nation’s integrity, sovereignty, and security.
 - The government said that the new Information Technology Intermediaries Guidelines (Amendment) Rules would be notified by January 15, 2020.
 - The response from the government came on the case seeking to trace the origin of messages on WhatsApp.
 - And the government’s planned rules come amid a growing list of nations that seek to regulate social media content to fight online crimes and fake news.

Internet – the double-edged sword:

- With lower Internet tariffs, availability of smart devices and last-mile connectivity, more and more people in India are becoming part of the Internet/social media platforms. Consequently, there has been an enormous increase in the use of social media.

- If on the one hand technology has led to economic growth and societal development, on the other hand, there has been an exponential rise in hate speech, fake news, public order, anti-national activities, defamatory postings, and other unlawful activities using Internet/social media platforms.
- The Tamil Nadu government (with one of the cases pending in the Madras High Court) has argued that social media should be more transparent and cooperative with the police for purposes of crime detection, national security, etc.

What are the concerns raised by Social Media intermediaries?

Social media intermediaries like Facebook and WhatsApp have argued that “seeking to trace the origin of messages” would lead to loss of individual privacy.

Way forward:

- Cooperation of social media intermediaries is necessary for cracking cybercrimes, keeping a check on fake news, defamatory postings, etc.
- The government must work with internet service providers, search engines and social media platforms to frame the guidelines.
- While the government must ensure that privacy is not compromised, Social Media companies must not take umbrage under the right to privacy.

D. GS4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: POLITY

1. A road map for Criminal Justice Reforms

Context

- The Union Home Ministry has recently requested the Bureau of Police Research and Development to overhaul the British-era Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)

Why is change a necessity?

- In colonial times, the primary function of police was to **maintain the stability of the British Empire**
 - In the British era, the police were raised to protect their interests, but now their duty is to protect the people
 - The purpose of the IPC and CrPC has shifted from preservation of the British Empire to the welfare of people, and this has to be reflected in the provisions and application of the code.
- The idea behind the overhaul is to change the “master-servant concept” envisaged in the IPC

Examples

- IPC has provided “**uneven punishment for crimes of grievous nature**”
 - For crimes such as snatching of chains or bags **could be life-threatening in some cases**, but the IPC does not provide punishment that is commensurate with the gravity of the crime

- Currently awarding of these punishments depends on the whims of the police, it is booked under robbery or theft. So a need for standardization is a must.
- The amendments introduced in the IPC have been **ad hoc and reactive, in response to immediate circumstances**
 - Like the 2013 amendment after the Delhi gangrape case.
 - After a long agitation **Section 377** was decriminalised.
 - In another big verdict, the Supreme Court decriminalised **adultery**
- The IPC has provisions dealing with sexuality, procreation and marriage and the implications of the operation of this part of **IPC raises complex issues of privacy and discriminatory application of law to men and women.**
- The distinction between “**culpable homicide**” and “**murder**” was criticized even by Stephen as the “weakest part of the code”, as the definitions are obscure.
 - Example: Tabrez Ansari Case- In Jharkhand Mob Killing
- Having the **death penalty on the statute book is also contrary to the ideas of humanizing criminal justice** response and punishment for the offender.
 - Keeping of death penalty in the IPC had a different objective in the beginning as the state wanted to profess a retributive stance and deterrent move for potential offenders and **against the people joining mutiny.**
 - All such reasons have now vanished and the presence of death penalty in master criminal law of India defies modern principles of penology and rehabilitation.

Even though the IPC has been haphazardly amended more than 75 times, no comprehensive revision has been undertaken in spite of the **42nd report of the law commission in 1971 recommending it.** Hence, to bring this into action the home ministry has constituted two committees comprising legal luminaries for the purpose.

Changes to be introduced should be clear

- The reason for this decision, the direction the exercise should take, and the changes envisaged in the laws are not clear. Therefore, before introducing changes, the **Home Ministry must first identify the provisions to be revised and provide a justification** for doing so.
- The clarity required for the creation of new offences, reclassification or removal of existing offences, and changes to the quantum of punishment is missing from the discourse.

Keeping principles in mind

Criminal law is considered to be the most apparent expression of the relationship between a state and its citizens. Any revision of the IPC, therefore, needs to be done while keeping several principles in mind.

1. First, **victimological underpinnings ought to be given a major thrust in reforming laws** to identify the rights of crime victims.
 - The launch of victim and witness protection schemes, use of victim impact statements, advent of victim advocacy, increased victim participation in criminal trials, enhanced access of victims to compensation and restitution all point towards the increased role of victims in the criminal justice system.
 - “**Victims**” means persons who, individually or collectively, have suffered harm, including physical or mental injury,
 - **Victimology**: The study of the victims of crime and the psychological effects on them of their experience.
2. Second, **construction of new offences and reworking of the existing classification of offences** must be informed by the principles of criminal jurisprudence which have substantially altered in the

past four decades.

- For instance, liability questions in offences need a fresh look. **Criminal liability could be graded better to assign the degree of punishments.**
 - New types of **punishments like community service orders, restitution orders, and other aspects of restorative and reformative justice** could also be brought in this fold.
3. Third, the **scheme of chapters and classification of offences** can be drastically reworked.
- Offences like criminal conspiracy, sedition, offences against coin and stamps etc. **must be abolished or replaced.**
 - Chapters of the IPC are overloaded at several places. It is unnecessary to have hundreds of sections in the category of **property offences.**
 - Even the chapters on offences against public servants, contempt of authority, public tranquility, and trespass can be **redefined and narrowed.**
 - New offences under a fresh classification scheme, like those **suggested by the Malimath Committee on criminal justice reforms, can be introduced.**
 - Classification of offences must be done in a **manner conducive to management of crimes in the future.**

Way Forward

Criminal justice is directionless and **in a state of policy ambiguity**. India needs to draft a clear policy that should inform the changes to be envisaged in the IPC or CrPC.

- **Unprincipled criminalisation** must be avoided to save the state from dealing with too many entrants into the criminal justice system.
 - It often leads to not only the creation of new offences on unscientific grounds, but also arbitrariness in the criminal justice system.
- Guiding principles need to be developed after **sufficient debate before criminalising an act** as a crime.
- There is a need to have **empirical legal research showing areas required to be contemplated** as new offences in the code.
 - This project must be substantiated by empirical researchers and to be handled by professionals by undertaking extensive pre-legislative surveys.
- To be comprehensive enough, the **IPC must also include chapters on cyber laws, economic offences, and terrorist offences in the code.** This would be helpful in avoiding duplicity and confusion.
- Finally, these reforms will be of no consequence unless **simultaneous improvements are made in the police, prosecution, judiciary and in prisons.**

Category: ECONOMY

1. GDP is a means, not an end

Context

- MIT economists Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, who, along with Michael Kremer, won the 2019 Nobel Prize for Economics for their “experimental approach to alleviating global poverty”, have published a new book, Good Economics for Hard Times.
- In this article, we will be looking at important pointers for revival of economy.

A comparison of India and China

According to Nobel Laureates Growth in India, like that in China, will slow.

- When **China** was at the same level of per capita GDP as **India** is today, it was growing at 12% per year, whereas India thinks of 8% as something to aspire to.
- If we were to infer from that, **India is placed at a much lower level of per capita GDP than China.**

Middle Income Trap

World Bank Classification

- The World Bank classifies the world's economies into four income groups — high, upper-middle, lower-middle, and low.
- It bases this assignment on **Gross National Income (GNI)** per capita (current US\$) calculated using the Atlas method.

Updated Thresholds

- **New thresholds are determined at the start of the World Bank's fiscal year in July** and remain fixed for 12 months regardless of subsequent revisions to estimates.

Threshold	July 2019/\$ (new)	July 2018/\$ (old)
Low income	< 1,025	< 995
Lower-middle income	1,026 - 3,995	996 - 3,895
Upper-middle income	3,996 - 12,375	3,896 - 12,055
High income	> 12,375	> 12,055

Trap

- This is a risk that emerging economies are said to be vulnerable to.
- As a **country runs out of new sources of growth after an initial burst of rapid expansion**, it finds itself unable to break into a higher-income league.
- Middle-Income Trap crystalizes the notion that **growing rapidly can become more difficult after a country moves up from low income to middle income.**
- The transition from middle income to high income is inherently more challenging than the transition from low income to middle income.

According to the World Bank, of 101 middle-income economies in 1960, only 13 had become high income by 2008. Malaysia, Thailand, Egypt, Mexico and Peru all seem to have trouble moving up.

- But India need not worry, but **take this as a warning** and bring about changes in the overall structure of its economy.
- India has some of the sectors which are yet to be explored and the **entrepreneurial genius** needs to be

recognised and revived to discover the unexploited opportunities

- India should understand from history about pro-rich, anti-poor policies not helping the revival of economy.
 - In the U.S. and U.K. in the **Reagan-Thatcher era** to preserve growth they introduced “business-friendly” policies and environment.
 - This enriched the top earners at the cost of everyone else, and did nothing for growth.
 - If the U.S. and U.K. experience is any guide, **asking the poor to tighten their belts**, in the hope that giveaways to the rich will eventually trickle down, it does nothing for growth and even less for the poor.
 - Interestingly, **even the IMF, so long the bastion of growth-first orthodoxy, now recognises that sacrificing the poor to promote growth was bad policy.**

The ultimate goal

- The key, ultimately, is to not lose sight of the fact that GDP is a means and not an end. A useful means, no doubt, especially when it creates jobs or raises wages or plumps the **government budget so it can redistribute more.**
- But the ultimate goal remains **one of raising the quality of life of the average person and especially the worst-off person.**
- And quality of life means more than just consumption. While better lives are indeed partly about being able to consume more, even very poor people also care about the health of their parents, about educating their children, about having their voices heard, and about being able to pursue their dreams.

Conclusion

- The best bet, therefore, for a country like **India is to attempt to do things that can make the quality of life better for its citizens with the resources it already has:** improving education, health and the functioning of the courts and the banks, and building better infrastructure (better roads and more liveable cities, for example).
 - The solutions must be formed with **bottom-up perspectives of citizens on the ground, rather than top-down perceptions of investors and policymakers**
- For the world of policymakers, this perspective suggests that a **clear focus on the well-being of the poorest offers the possibility of transforming millions of lives** much more profoundly than we could by finding the recipe to increase growth from 2% to 2.3% in the rich countries.

2. A fix for growth gain from fiscal pain

Context

- The Finance Ministry has announced new corporate tax rates
- It has slashed corporate tax rate for domestic companies to 22% from 30% **that don't avail any exemption/incentive** (stopped availing themselves of any other tax sops)

Details

- The effective tax rate for these companies shall be 25.17% inclusive of surcharge and cess. Also, such companies **shall not be required to pay Minimum Alternate Tax or MAT**
- To attract investment in **manufacturing, local companies incorporated after October** will pay tax at the rate of 15 percent (compared to 25% currently).
 - The effective tax for these new companies will be 17.01 percent, including cess and surcharge
 - **For new manufacturing firms** set up after October 1, 2019, and commencing operations by

March 31, 2023, the effective tax rate will fall from 29.1% to 17%.

- A company that does not opt for the concessional tax regime and avails the tax exemption/incentive can continue to pay tax at the pre-amended rate. After the expiry of their tax holiday/exemption period, **these companies can opt for the new concessional tax regime.**
- To provide relief to companies that continue to avail exemptions/incentives, the government has **reduced the rate of Minimum Alternate Tax or MAT to 15%, from 18.5%.**

Significance

The continuing deceleration of the Indian economy was being blamed both on depressed consumption by private individuals and decline in investment by private businesses

- A lower rate --comparable with Asian peers will make large Indian companies far **more competitive, leave them with more cash for investment and expansion** and persuade them to stay India
- It restrains India Inc from demanding more sops, putting pressure on them to invest.
- The revised tax rate of Minimum Alternative Tax (MAT) will pave the way for **new investments from startups and MSMEs, creating a robust ancillary ecosystem**
- The unstated intention could also be to attract **foreign investors looking for alternative sites for their global value chains** disrupted now by the tariff war between China and the U.S.
- The **stock exchanges zoomed within minutes of the news** because for most established companies the tax cut would immediately lead to a pro-rata increase in profits.

Concerns

- The revenue foregone for this move will be Rs 1.45 lakh crore annually. The tax revenue may also **decline and put pressure on fiscal deficit.**
 - Tax collections have not grown at expected rates. This tax cut will lead to lower tax collection in the short to medium-term.
 - To meet the fiscal deficit target, the government has pushed a lot of borrowing off-budget, making government agencies borrow more. If the government then borrows to bridge the gap (on-budget or off-budget), it would limit the benefits for firms.
- These stimulus and structural measures and monetary policy may help reviving the economy to some extent in the near future. But, **these measures alone may not help in getting higher growth.**
- Higher levels of surplus income with corporates will not necessarily translate into a higher level of investment and a consequent spurt in economic growth.
 - Agriculture and allied sectors and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) — not corporates — are still the strongest drivers of our economy.
 - Agriculture and allied sectors which not only contribute to our food security but to approximately over 50% employment have been on the decline in spite of several ad hoc policy pronouncements to revive them.
- The **Chief Economic Advisor** also mentions that we need long-term structural reforms for investment-led growth. we need to focus on three structural issues:
 - Physical infrastructure development,
 - raising human capital
 - revival of rural economy
- In a **recent book, Dani Rodrik** an economist discusses two challenges faced by countries like India.
 - The “fundamentals challenge” relates to development of broad capabilities such as
 - **Infrastructure**
 - **Human Capital.**
 - We can't have higher growth without tackling this fundamental challenge.
 - So the medicine to the plaguing disease is Infrastructure, Infrastructure, and Infrastructure!!!
- A lot of progress has been made in all **Infrastructure Sectors.** However, almost all **indicators score**

poorly if one looks at India's urban and rural infrastructure particularly compared with South East Asian countries and China.

- The second structural issue is raising **Human Capital** for higher growth. **Health and education achievements are essential for human capital.** Yet the country's progress on both these aspects leaves much to be desired.
 - There are islands of excellence that can compete internationally in education while vast majority of them churn masses of children with poor learning achievement and unemployable graduates.
 - The Niti Aayog says that only 2.3 per cent of Indian workers have formal skill training compared to 70 to 80 per cent in other countries.

Steps that can be taken

- The report of the expert committee on MSMEs that was set up by the Reserve Bank of India has made significant recommendations.
 - These include constituting a **government-sponsored "fund of funds" to support venture capital funds and a credit guarantee fund** which would go a long way in enabling their growth.
- **Disinvestment**, reducing non-merit subsidies, increasing tax base and shifting from revenue to capital expenditures are some of the measures for raising government investment.
- The **construction sector** was an important source of job creation during 2004-05 to 2011-12. This sector has to be revived in order to create growth and employment. The need of the hour is structural reforms in land acquisition
- Both immediate and long-term structural reforms are needed to achieve higher economic growth. Physical infrastructure development, tackling fundamental challenge of raising human capital and stimulus and reforms in rural economy are needed to achieve a sustainable 7 per cent to 8 per cent growth.
 - Higher levels of public spending for creating much-needed infrastructure in several sectors would not only generate employment but also create productive assets.
 - For instance, spending on buildings, roads, bridges, schools, hospitals and waterbodies would have multiple benefits to the economy.

Conclusion

- If speedily and efficiently implemented, these mundane measures could pull the sagging economy out of the quagmire, especially in the near term, and hopefully incentivise and facilitate the much-anticipated spurt in corporate investment which apparently the government was aiming at while announcing the tax bonanza.

3. Asia's remarkable economic transformation

Context

- This article draws a comparison of economic position of Asian countries before and after the colonial rule.
- It gives an idea of the economic model's adapted, transformation of the countries in terms of economic progress and living conditions of people in Asia.

A look at key stats

- In **1820**, Asia accounted for **two-thirds of the world's population and more than half of world income.**
 - It also contributed more than half of manufacturing production in the world economy.

- The subsequent decline of Asia was attributable to its **integration with the world economy shaped by colonialism and driven by imperialism**.
- By **1962**, its share in world income had plummeted to 15%, while its share in world manufacturing had dropped to 6%.
- Even in **1970**, Asia was the poorest continent. Its demographic and social indicators of development, among the worst anywhere, signifying its underdevelopment.

How Asia was able to transform itself?

In the half-century since 1970, Asia has witnessed a profound makeover in terms of economic improvement and the standard of living of its people.

- By **2016**, it accounted for 30% of world income, 40% of world manufacturing, and over a third of world trade.
- Its income per capita also converged towards the world average, **although the convergence was at best modest compared with industrialized countries** because the initial income gap was enormous.
- This transformation was unequal across countries and between people. But, Asia's economic transformation in this short time span is unprecedented in history.

What led to this transformation of Asian Countries was the Self-regulating economic models that they were able to adapt after the colonial hangover.

- They had a well-established structure as it was not entirely destroyed by colonialism unlike the Latin American and African countries.
 - Governments that were able to evolve some institutional arrangements, carry forward carrot and stick policy suitably with institutionalized checks-and-balances, had evolved relationship between states and markets, development-orientation and people-friendly measures were able to bring massive changes in the economy.
 - Success at industrialization in Asia was driven by sensible industrial policy that was implemented by effective governments.
- The countries in Asia that modified, adapted and contextualized their reform agenda, while calibrating the sequence of, and the speed at which, economic reforms were introduced, did well.
- This ultimately led to
 - Economic **growth** leading to further development, GDP per capita in Asia were stunning and far higher than elsewhere in the world.
 - Rising investment and savings rates combined with the spread of **education** were the underlying factors.
 - Growth was driven by rapid industrialisation, **often export-led**.
 - This was associated with **structural changes in the composition of output and employment**.
 - The process was also supported by a coordination of economic policies across sectors and over time.

Varying Political Ideologies and economic Models of Asian countries

The Asian countries has had its share of diversity

- There were marked differences between countries in geographical size, embedded histories, colonial legacies, nationalist movements, initial conditions, natural resource endowments, population size, income levels and political systems.
- The reliance on **markets and degree of openness** in economies varied greatly across countries and over time. The politics too ranged widely from **authoritarian regimes or oligarchies to political**

democracies.

- So did ideologies, from **communism to state capitalism to capitalism.**
 - There were no universal solutions to economic problems, countries chose different paths to development and this differed across space and time.

Regional variations and Unequal Income

However, development outcomes were unequal across sub-regions and countries.

- **East Asia** was the leader and **South Asia** was the laggard, with **Southeast Asia** in the middle, while progress in **West Asia** did not match its high-income levels.
 - In just 50 years, South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore joined the league of **industrialised nations.**
 - **China** was a star performer throughout, making impressive strides in development after 1990.
 - The economic dynamism of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand waned after the Asian financial crisis.
- The growth performance of **India, Bangladesh and Vietnam** was most impressive during the past quarter century, although India and Bangladesh did not match the rest of Asia in social progress.
- In comparison, the performance of **Sri Lanka** was respectable, while that of **Turkey** was average; but that of **Pakistan** and the **Philippines** was relatively poor.

Reduction in Poverty

- **Rising per capita incomes transformed social indicators of development,** as literacy rates and life expectancy rose everywhere.
- Rapid economic growth led to a **massive reduction in absolute poverty.** But the scale of absolute poverty that persists, despite unprecedented growth, is just as striking as the sharp reduction therein.
- The poverty reduction **could have been much greater but for the rising inequality.**
- Inequality between people within countries rose almost everywhere, while the **gap between the richest and poorest countries in Asia remains awesome.**

Challenges ahead

- The rise of Asia represents the beginnings of a shift in the balance of economic power in the world and some **erosion in the political hegemony of the West.**
- The future will be **shaped partly by how Asia exploits the opportunities and meets the challenges** and partly by how the present difficult economic and political conjuncture in the world unfolds.
- In terms of per capita income, however, it will be nowhere near as rich as the United States or Europe. Thus, Asian countries would emerge as world powers, without the income levels of rich countries.

Conclusion

- Openness facilitated industrialization in the past but in the future, technological learning and technological capabilities are also essential to provide the foundations for sustaining industrialization.
- By the end of 2050, a century after the end of colonial rule, Asia will account for more than half of world income and will be home to more than half the people on earth. It will thus have an economic and political significance in the world.

Category: HEALTH

1. Safe, but not entirely

This article is covered on October 19th under the Topic '37.7% of processed milk samples unsafe'.

[CNA Dated Oct 19th, 2019](#)

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. China's growing clout at the UN

Introduction

- India had fielded Ramesh Chand for the top post of Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)
 - But it withdrew its candidate sensing the defeat by China's Qu Dongyu.
- Eventually, China's Qu Dongyu was elected as the Director-General of FAO.
 - His election shows China's growing influence that gains it leadership positions in world organisations.
 - China with its renminbi diplomacy of investing in development projects around the world, especially in developing countries, was able to outmaneuver France and also the US, which backed Georgia's candidate.
- In the first week of October 2019, when President Xi Jinping led China's biggest-ever military parade to mark the 70th anniversary of Communist rule, for the **first time a contingent from the country's 8,000-strong UN peacekeeping standby force participated.**

Filling the vacuum

- Whether through specialised UN agencies or peacekeeping, **China is racing to fill the vacuum in international leadership left by the withdrawal of the U.S.** from multilateral fora under President Donald Trump, and taking advantage of the lack of convergence among the permanent members of the Security Council on many global issues.
- Unlike **India whose UN outreach is largely limited to a customary reiteration of its decades-old advocacy for the expansion of the Security Council**, China is aggressively seeking more positions in the UN Secretariat hierarchy.
 - It also aims to play a bigger role in peacekeeping operations.
- For much of the **Cold War era and beyond**, China's role at the UN was largely that of a disruptor aimed at thwarting attempts by Western democracies to impose a liberal vision on the world.
 - But today Beijing is trying to reverse that role and is actively **seeking to use the UN platform to legitimise — and spread — its ideology.**
- China has increased its monetary contributions to the UN fivefold in the past decade. President Xi is keen to **project his country as a "champion of multilateralism,"** even as Mr. Trump is busy disbanding multilateral agreements and engaging in trade wars
- With increased financial contributions and concomitant clout, China has been able to get Communist Party officials to **head more than a quarter of UN's specialised agencies** including the FAO, the Industrial Development Organization, the International Civil Aviation Administration and the International Telecommunication Union.

View on human rights

With its increasing influence at the UN, **China is eager to push its ideological stance through the global**

body.

- It argues that each country may **choose its own human rights protection in the context of “national circumstances”**.
- Ironically, through the body tasked with bringing human rights violators to account — the **Human Rights Council, which the U.S. abandoned** — China is diluting the concept of universal values and promoting its world view on the subject.
- “In 2017, Human Rights Watch exposed Beijing’s efforts to silence UN human rights experts and staff, to prevent critical voices from China from participating in UN processes, and to manipulate rules and procedures to ensure more favourable reviews,” the human rights group said in a report.
- For some time now, there is speculation of a coordinated **Sino-Russian front at the UN**.
 - The two countries seem to frequently align their positions, **especially when human rights issues come up**.

Conclusion

- With **no one to stand up to China in the absence of U.S. leadership at the UN**, Beijing is actively promoting its foreign policy initiatives, especially the Belt and Road Initiative, through the global body.
- The **prevailing lack of strategic unity among the Western members of the Security Council** is ripe for the duo to advance their interests, and China seems keen to take advantage of the opportunities this disarray presents to enhance its hold on the UN.

F. Tidbits

1. DAC clears indigenous projects worth Rs. 3,300 cr

- The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) chaired by Defence Minister has approved three projects worth Rs.3,300 crore of **indigenously designed and developed equipment**.
- These include **third-generation Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (ATGM) and Auxiliary Power Units (APUs) for the T-72 and T-90 Tanks** to be executed by the Indian industry.
- The third indigenous project pertains to **discrete electronic warfare systems for the mountain and high altitude terrain**, which would be designed and developed by the DRDO and manufactured by design cum production partner from the Indian industry.
- Both these projects will be progressed under the ‘Make-II’ Category and will provide a boost to indigenous research and development in the private sector.
- With this, **for the first time, the Ministry of Defence has offered complex military equipment to be designed, developed and manufactured by the Indian private industry**.

G. Prelims Facts

1. Australian newspapers redact front pages to protest curbs

- Australia’s biggest newspapers ran front pages made up to appear heavily redacted, in a protest against legislation that restricts press freedoms.
- Australia has no constitutional safeguards for free speech, although the government added a provision to protect whistle-blowers when it strengthened counter-espionage laws in 2018. Media groups say press freedoms remain restricted.
- The protest aimed to put pressure on the government to:
 - Exempt journalists from laws limiting access to sensitive information
 - Enact a properly functioning freedom of information system

- Raise the benchmark for defamation lawsuits

World Press Freedom Index:

- World Press Freedom Index is published every year since 2002 by Reporters Without Borders (RSF).
- The Index ranks 180 countries and regions according to the level of freedom available to journalists.

Read more about World Press Freedom Index 2019. [Click Here](#)

2. National Bal Shree Scheme

- National Bal Shree Scheme was initiated in 1995.
- It is an initiative of National Bal Bhavan to identify the creative potential of children in four main streams (Creative Performance, Creative Art, Creative Writing and Creative Scientific Innovation, and motivate them to pursue and enhance their creative potential.
- The evaluation and selection is a complex process and procedure which needs constant refinement and inputs from creative artists and experts in various fields.
- National Bal Bhavan is an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) and is fully funded by it.

H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. One-horned Rhino – Assam
2. Wild Water Buffalo – Bihar
3. Asiatic Lion – Gujarat
4. Sangai – Manipur

Which of the pairs is/are correctly matched?

- a. 1 and 3 only
- b. 1, 3 and 4 only
- c. 1, 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 3 and 4

Answer: b

Explanation:

Only 2 is incorrect. Wild Water Buffalo is the state animal of Chhattisgarh and the state animal of Bihar is Indian bison/ Gaur.

Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to "Project Tiger":

1. It is a Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Environment and Forests.
2. The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) was constituted under Project Tiger in 1973 for reorganised management of Project Tiger.

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: d

Explanation:

Project Tiger was launched in 1973, in 9 Tiger Reserves for conservation of Tigers. It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of the Ministry of Environment and Forests. The NTCA was launched in 2005, following the recommendations of the Tiger Task Force. It was given statutory status by 2006 amendment of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Q3. The first Pre Independence Law Commission of India was chaired by:

- a. Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay
- b. Sir John Romilly
- c. Dr. Whitley Stokes
- d. Sir Charles Turner

Answer: a

Explanation:

The first law commission of India was established in 1834 under the Charter Act of 1833 under the Chairmanship of Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay. The Indian Penal Code (IPC) was drafted in 1860 on the recommendations of the first law commission of India.

Q4. Consider the following statements with respect to Bhashan Char Island:

1. Bhashan Char that lies in the Bay of Bengal was formed about two decades ago on the mouth of river Meghna.
2. It is located to the east of Hatiya island.

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:

Bhashan Char Island was formed about two decades ago on the mouth of River Meghna. The uninhabited island is located around 30 kilometres east of Hatiya island in South-East Bangladesh. About 4,50,000 people live on the Hatiya Island. The key livelihood of the people of Island is agriculture and fishing. The fishermen are the only ones who set foot on Bhashan Char sometimes. Bangladesh wants to move 100,000 Rohingya refugees to the Bhashan Char in the Bay of Bengal to take the pressure off the overcrowded border camps. The Bhashan Char falls in an ecologically fragile area prone to floods, erosion and cyclone.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. With global economy growth prospects looking gloomy and with India's growth slowing down, there have been calls for appropriate policies to address this challenge. In this context, discuss alternatives being suggested in place of the traditional approach of "growth first model". (15 Marks, 250 Words)
2. According to the recently released National milk sample safety quality survey, contamination in milk is a more serious problem than adulteration. Discuss. (15 Marks, 250 Words).

