

29 Nov 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. GS1 Related

B. GS2 Related

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

- [1. Lok Sabha passes Bill to regularise Delhi colonies](#)
- [2. Protest against Industrial Relations Code Bill in LS](#)
- [3. RS passes chit fund Bill](#)
- [4. Citizenship Bill yet to be listed](#)

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- [1. China threatens to retaliate after U.S. passes Hong Kong law](#)

C. GS3 Related

D. GS4 Related

E. Editorials

POLITY

- [1. Should life convicts be denied remission?](#)

ENVIRONMENT

- [1. UN's Emissions Gap Report](#)
- [2. India's food basket must be enlarged](#)

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- [1. Not as you say, but as you do](#)

F. Tidbits

- [1. Google warned 500 Indians on phishing](#)
- [2. Pakistan SC extends Army chief's tenure](#)
- [3. Army test-fires Israeli anti-tank missile](#)
- [4. U.S. to cut spending on NATO budget, Germany to pay more](#)

G. Prelims Fact

H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

I. Practice Questions for UPSC Mains Exam

A. GS1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Lok Sabha passes Bill to regularise Delhi colonies

Context:

The Lok Sabha has passed a bill to regularise property of residents living in unauthorised colonies in Delhi by securing their rights of ownership.

Details:

- The National Capital Territory of Delhi (Recognition of Property Rights of Residents in

Unauthorised Colonies) Bill, 2019 will regularise the unauthorised colonies by securing the ownership rights or transfer or mortgage in favour of the residents.

- The bill seeks to regularize more than 1,700 unauthorized colonies across the national capital.
- It will benefit approximately four million residents, who largely belong to low-income groups and will also set the ball rolling for the registration of properties for the residents of these colonies.
- The bill, approved by the Union Cabinet, recognizes power of attorney, will, agreement to sell, purchase and possession documents as a one-time relaxation.

Salient features of the bill:

- **Recognition of property rights:** The Bill provides that the Central Government may recognize the property rights of persons living in unauthorized colonies in Delhi; by granting rights of ownership or transfer or mortgage on the basis of Power of Attorney, Agreement to Sale, Will, possession letter or any other document evidencing payment of consideration. The corresponding provision operates notwithstanding anything contained in the Indian Stamp Act, 1899, the Registration Act, 1908, the Income Tax Act, 1961 and the judgment of the Supreme Court in the Suraj Lamp case.
- **Resident:** The Bill defines a resident as a person with physical possession of the property on the basis of a registered sale deed or other documents as mentioned above. It also recognizes the rights of legal heirs of residents but does not include any tenant, licensee, etc.
- **Unauthorized colony:** The Bill will be applicable to only those unauthorized colonies that have been notified for regularization by DDA.
- **Payment of charges:** The residents will be required to pay (nominal) charges notified by the central government, along with Stamp duty and registration charges on the last transaction, to obtain ownership.

2. Protest against Industrial Relations Code Bill in LS

Context:

Union Labour Minister introduced the Industrial Relations Code Bill 2019 in the Lok Sabha amid protests from the Opposition members. Terming the Bill “anti-labourers,” the Opposition demanded that it be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour.

The issue has been covered in the 21st November Comprehensive News Analysis. [Click Here](#) to read.

3. RS passes chit fund Bill

Context:

Parliament has passed the Chit Funds (Amendment) Bill, 2019.

Details:

- The Chit Funds Act of 1982 was amended to incorporate stringent measures to stop alleged fraud.
- The bill increases the limit of chit funds to 3 lakh for those run by up to four individuals and Rs. 18 lakh for those operated by more than four partners.
- The Bill has increased the amount and commissions for foremen to account for inflation.
- The maximum commission for foreman, who is responsible for managing the chit, is proposed to be raised from 5 per cent to 7 per cent. The bill also allows the foreman a right to lien against the credit balance from subscribers.
- The bill also introduces words such as fraternity fund, rotating savings and credit institution to make chit funds more respectable.
- Among other amendments, chits are supposed to be drawn in the presence of at least two subscribers,

and also allow subscribers to join through video conferencing.

- The Rajya Sabha passed it by voice vote. The Lok Sabha also cleared it. It will now require the President's assent to become a law.

Chit Funds:

- Chit funds are legal and registered and are different from ponzi schemes as well as unregulated deposits.
- In a chit fund, people periodically pay a fixed amount. Thereafter, one of the subscribers get the prize money, which is determined by an auction or lottery.
- Such funds are mostly, alternative source of finance and saving for the poor.
- Chit funds play a crucial role in India's rural economy, providing people with access to funds and investment opportunities, especially in regions where banks and financial institutions do not have a presence.

4. Citizenship Bill yet to be listed

Context:

The government has so far not listed the controversial Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB).

Details:

- In the 16th Lok Sabha, the CAB 2018 was cleared in the Lower House. It was sent to the select committee, where nine of the 30 members submitted a dissent note.
- The government, however, failed to move it in the Upper House fearing its defeat, since the numbers were stacked against it.
- The Home Ministry has to move a new Bill now, which has to be cleared by the Cabinet before being tabled in Parliament.
- According to rules and procedures of business, MPs must be given two days to read and analyse legislation. However, the Chairman, using his discretion, can allow less time.

The Citizenship Amendment Bill has been covered in the 28th September 2019 Comprehensive News Analysis. [Click Here](#) to read.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. China threatens to retaliate after U.S. passes Hong Kong law

Context:

- U.S. President Donald Trump recently signed into law, congressional legislation which supported the Hong Kong protesters, despite angry objections from Beijing, with which he is seeking a deal to end a damaging trade war.
- China warned the U.S. it would take firm countermeasures in response to U.S. legislation backing anti-government protesters in Hong Kong, and said attempts to interfere in the Chinese-ruled city were doomed to fail.
- The Chinese Foreign Ministry said the U.S. would shoulder the consequences of China's countermeasures if it continued to "act arbitrarily" in regards to Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong Rights Bill has been covered in the 21st November 2019 Comprehensive News

C. GS3 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

D. GS4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: POLITY

1. Should life convicts be denied remission?

Context

- The Tamilnadu Govt. has released 13 convicts serving life terms for the murder of six Dalits including the president and vice-president of Melavalavu village panchayat near Melur in Madurai district in Tamil Nadu.
- The Tamil Nadu Prison Department released them from the Madurai Central Prison on the occasion of the MGR birth centenary celebration, for “good conduct”.

Background

- Melur panchayat, which was a general constituency, was declared a reserved constituency in 1996.
- This had caused resentment between the Scheduled Caste people and Kallar (Ambalakarar) community.
- In the 1996 panchayat elections, Murugesan was elected president. In June 1996, a group of persons attacked Murugesan, vice-president Mookan and others with deadly weapons, resulting in the death of six persons and injuries to many others.

Laws that allow State Govt. to grant remission

- The State government has powers of remission under Sections 432 and 433 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC). These sections give absolute powers to the state government or a Union territory to grant remission to any prisoner convicted by a court of law.
 - But in cases investigated and prosecuted by the CBI or the Enforcement Directorate or any other central agency, the power to grant remission is vested in the Union government.
- Power to suspend or remit sentences.
 - (1) When any person has been sentenced to punishment for an offence, the appropriate Government may, at any time, without conditions or upon any conditions which the person sentenced accepts, suspend the execution of his sentence or remit the whole or any part of the punishment to which he has been sentenced.
- Power to commute a sentence.
- Each State has its own prison rules because **‘Prisons’ is a State subject**. Each State has a different way of calculating remission.
 - One way an individual gets remission is for various kinds of conduct or work that one does in prison.
 - The Governor, if the State is under President’s rule, and the President too can exercise this

power.

- To prevent any hasty decision making and to ensure that the changed individual gets the remission there is constitution of the **Sentence Review Board**.

How does it work?

- Some prisoners are entitled to consideration for early release after completion of 14 years; certain categories of prisoners are entitled after 20 years.
- So, six months before they are nearing 14 or 20 years, the prison authorities assess
 - whether the person's potential for crime has ended,
 - whether his family is in socio-economic need,
 - whether he will be useful to society.
- The DCP and then the probation officer make an assessment. The CrPC provides for this. That is **Reformed Jurisprudence**.

What has the SC said with respect to remission?

- The Indian Supreme Court has established in several judgments that a sentence of **life imprisonment means imprisonment till the end of life subject to statutory powers of remission** under Section 432 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, and constitutional powers under Articles 72 and 161.
 - Gopal Vinayak Godse v. State of Maharashtra
 - Maru Ram v. Union of India
- In 2008, in **Swamy Shraddhananda v. State of Karnataka**, it upheld the validity of sentences where the prisoners are **debarred from earning remission and from being eligible to be considered for premature release** for either the rest of their lives, or for a specified period of 20, 30 or more years, depending on the discretion of the court.
- In **Union of India v. V. Sriharan (2015)**, who is the person convicted in the Rajiv Gandhi case, the court considered the question of whether the 'court' can exclude the remission powers of the government under Section 432 of the CrPC.
 - In Sriharan case, the Supreme Court said, the appellate court, **that is a High Court or the Supreme Court**, can explicitly exclude the remission powers of the State government or the Central Government under Section 432 of the CrPC.
 - That's basically saying that courts can now ensure that accused persons can remain for the rest of their natural life in prison. That is a serious infringement of the separation of powers doctrine.
 - What the Supreme Court did, therefore, was effectively create a new punishment, and in the process infringe upon what is the dominion of the legislature.

Reactions to the political decision

- The move invited a swift rebuke from the Madras High Court for what it saw as the government's haste in releasing them on grounds of 'good conduct'.
- Tamil Nadu Untouchability Eradication Front (TNUEF) organised a protest against the remission of sentence and premature release of convicts in the Melavalavu murder case.
- It caused considerable disquiet among activists and Scheduled Castes.
- Casteist forces will now be emboldened with the premature release of these persons, which would send a wrong signal to other dangerous anti-social elements.

Questions unanswered?

- How the government is choosing a bunch of people to be released; are there any political connections?
- When a court says that a person is sentenced to life, that does mean till the end of natural life. That

means the person is no longer going to get any other remedy from the court. And the court's position is that there is no automatic right to release. Why are Governments on the basis of good conduct releasing these individuals? Is it for political mileage?

- Then there's confusion arising from various prison manuals and how different States calculate remission. What is this calculation?

Why remission is required periodically?

- It is important to understand the processes of remission and periodic review for premature release not as privileges extended to the prisoner by a benevolent state, but as functions that are essential to the carceral process. Doing away with such functions **amounts to abdicating reformation** as a legitimate object of a prison sentence altogether.
- A reasonable expectation to have one's sentence reviewed based upon a variety of factors, including prison behavior, is not an incidental and dispensable aspect of the sentence, **but a part of the very right to life of the prisoner**.
- The **Supreme Court** has stated that the process of reforming a convict under humane conditions in prison is motivated by "human dignity jurisprudence", and is part of the [right to life](#) under Article 21.
 - *Shabnam v. Union of India*
 - *K Gopal v. State of Karnataka*
- The **European Court of Human Rights**, in **Vinter v. United Kingdom** came to the finding that a law providing for a whole life sentence without the prospect of release or review of sentence would amount to inhuman and degrading punishment, falling foul of Article 3 of the ECHR.
- The person who has committed an offence should be considered for remission because remission is about the offender, it is not about the offence.
 - That person may be other things. He may be a father, a husband, a Good Samaritan in another respect, but probably because of an ideological indoctrination or financial need or mental distress, the person commits a crime.

Can this power of the executive be challenged?

- Once the executive authority takes a decision, it is always open for the affected parties to approach the constitutional courts for judicial review (**Epuru Sudhakar, Bangal v. B.K Srivastava**).
- And if the executive makes a mistake, this can be challenged in a writ petition about the timing of the release and the considerations which went into the release.
- Under the Right to Information Act one can ask for an evaluation from the prison authorities — how has this person shown regret or reform? What is the evidence that he will not commit such a crime again? And this can all be challenged in a writ petition.

Conclusion

- The State government should frame a proper policy or law on remission of sentences.
- In sensitive cases, it is the duty of the state to also release the assessment of this person, the remorse that they have, and the acknowledgement that what they did was wrong. This needs to be done so that it is made clear that the state is not endorsing the convict's conduct.
- So, if the government is actually doing this in a reformatory spirit, it should make that known, but if the government is insidiously doing it for political reasons, then this should be questioned

Category: ENVIRONMENT

1. UN's Emissions Gap Report

Context

- The tenth edition of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Emissions Gap Report was recently released.

What is “Emissions Gap”?

- The Emissions Gap could also be called the “Commitment Gap”.
- It measures the gap between what we need to do and what we are actually doing to tackle climate change.
- The gap is the difference between the low level of emissions that the world needs to drop to, compared with the projected level of emissions based on countries’ current commitments to decarbonization.
- It provides the latest assessment of scientific studies on current and estimated future [Green House Gas \(GHG\)](#) emissions and compares these with the emission levels permissible for the world to progress on a least-cost pathway to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Why does the Emissions Gap Matter?

- The gap is important because if we can’t close it and meet the emissions reduction target, we will face increasingly severe climate impacts worldwide.
- It is important that policymakers, and their citizens, know what the gap is so that the commitments countries are making are sufficient to close the gap.

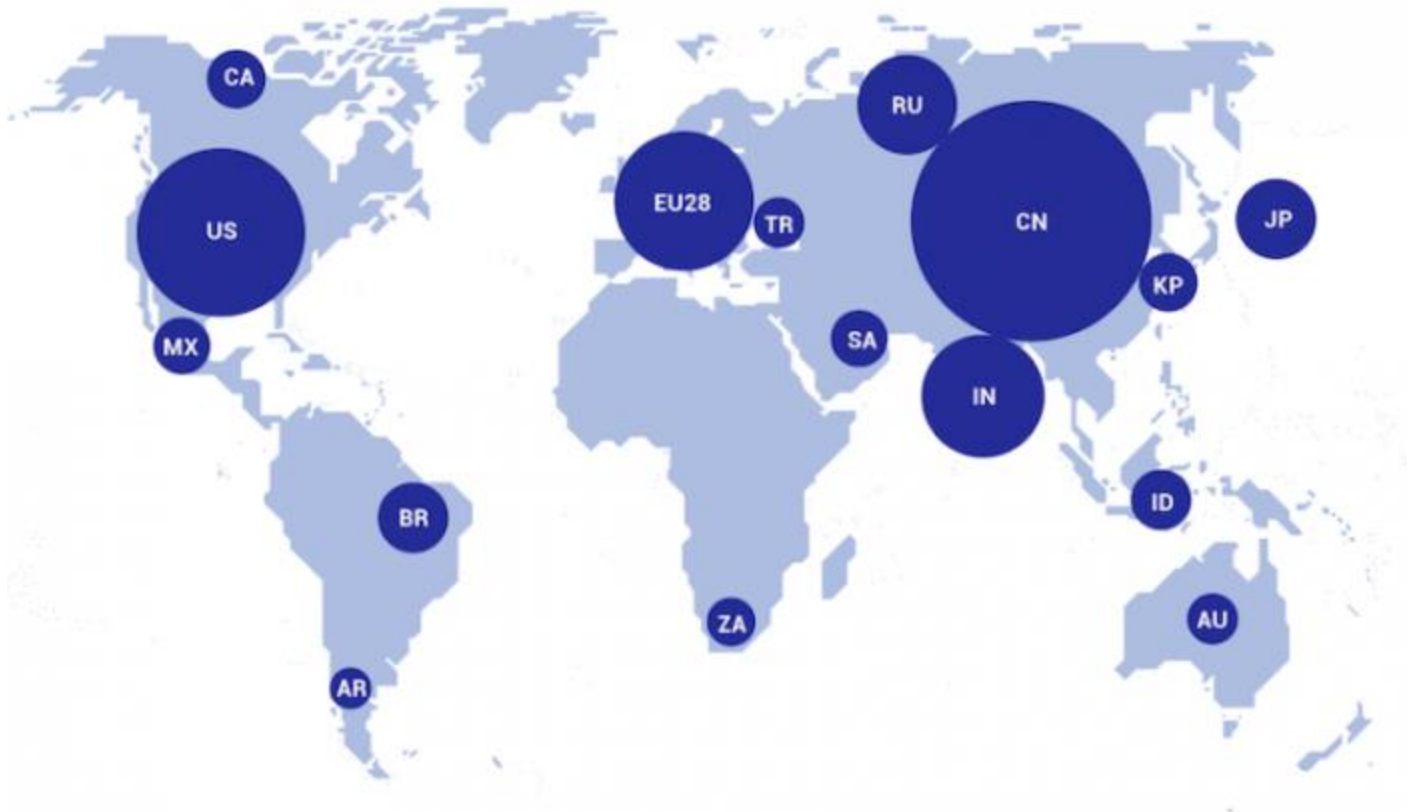
What does the Emissions Gap Report measure?

The Emissions Gap Report measures and projects three key trend lines:

- The amount of greenhouse gas emissions every year up to 2030.
- The commitments countries are making to reduce their emissions and the impact these commitments are likely to have on the overall emission reduction.
- The pace at which emissions must be reduced to reach an emission level that would limit the temperature increase to 1.5oC, affordably.

The report also identifies key opportunities for each country to increase the pace of emission reduction necessary to close the gap.

Where do the emissions come from?



- **G20 nations** collectively account for 78 per cent of all emissions, but **only five G20 members** (the EU and four individual members) have committed to long-term zero emission targets.
 - The EU, where public pressure to act on climate change is high, is working on legislation to bring about net zero emissions.
 - The U.K., responsible for a large share of historical emissions, has turned its net zero 2050 goal into a legal requirement.
- The **top four emitters** (China, USA, EU28 and India) contribute to over 55 per cent of the total emissions over the last decade, excluding emissions from land-use change such as deforestation.
- If land-use change emissions were included, the rankings would change, with **Brazil** likely to be the largest emitter.
- The **largest share** of emissions come from the energy sector and its fossil fuel emissions.
- **Industry produces the next largest footprint**, followed by forestry, transport, agriculture and buildings.

What does the report say?

- Despite scientific warnings and political commitments, **GHG emissions continue to rise, including by China and the United States**, the two biggest polluters.
 - GHG emissions have risen at a rate of 1.5 per cent per year in the last decade, stabilizing only briefly between 2014 and 2016.
 - Total GHG emissions, including from land-use change, reached a record high of 55.3 GtCO_{2e} [gigatonnes (thousand million tonnes) of carbon dioxide equivalent] in 2018.
- Although the number of countries announcing net zero GHG emission targets for 2050 is increasing, only a few countries have so far formally submitted long-term strategies to the UNFCCC.

Can we still close the gap? Yes, we can!

- Climate change can still be limited to 1.5°C degrees. We must **halve our emissions** by 2030—this

will take a 7.6 per cent cut in emissions every year from 2020.

- The good news is that **we have the technology and science** to decarbonize our energy sources, transport systems and cities.
- We have the knowledge to halt deforestation and scale reforestation.

What are possible solutions to close the gap?

- A full **decarbonization of the energy sector** is necessary and possible. Renewables and energy efficiency are critical to the energy transition.
- **Electrification of transport** could reduce the sector's CO₂ emissions by a huge 72 per cent by 2050.
- Each sector and each country has unique opportunities to harness renewable energy, protect natural resources, lives and livelihoods, and transition to a decarbonization pathway.
- Countries must increase their ambition immediately to close the emissions gap.
 - They can strengthen or add emissions-reduction targets, as well as sectoral targets such as those related to renewable energy.
 - They can commit to implementing their NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions) in line with achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.
 - The report also notes the potential to make existing policies more stringent (for example, those related to renewable energy and industrial energy efficiency), and to explore promising policies that haven't yet been widely adopted (for example, carbon pricing and reducing fossil fuel subsidies).

Steps to be taken by India

- UN report points out that India needs to provide more consistent support for renewable energy, have a long-term plan to retire coal power plants, enhance ambition on air quality, adopt an economy-wide green industrialisation strategy, and expand mass transport.
- In the key area of buildings, the energy conservation code of 2018 needs to be implemented under close scrutiny.
- With a clear vision, India could use green technologies to galvanize its faltering economy, create new jobs and become a climate leader.

2. India's food basket must be enlarged

Introduction

- India is ranked 102 in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) out of 117 qualified countries.
- Hunger is defined by caloric deprivation; protein hunger; hidden hunger by deficiency of micronutrients.

A look at stats

- Nearly 47 million or four out of 10 children in India do not meet their potential because of chronic undernutrition or stunting.
 - This leads to diminished learning capacity, increased chronic diseases, low birth-weight infants from malnourished parents.
- The global nutrition report pegs 614 million women and more than half the women in India aged 15-49 as being anaemic.

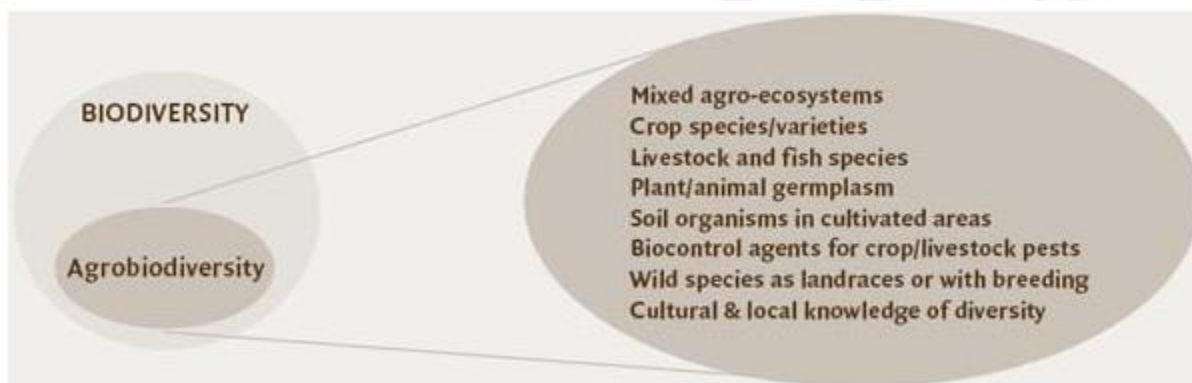
School Nutrition (Kitchen) Gardens

- It is an initiative of the Ministry of Human Resources Development.

- Objectives of school nutrition garden:
 - To help in addressing malnutrition & micronutrient deficiencies by consumption of freshly grown vegetables.
 - To give children first-hand experience with nature and gardening.
 - To enhance the knowledge of children regarding the nutritional aspects of vegetables and the harmful effects of junk food.
- Significance:
 - These gardens can give students lifelong social, numerical and presentation skills, care for living organisms and teamwork, besides being used in the noon-meal scheme.
 - Students also learn to cultivate fruits and vegetables in their homes and this could address micronutrient deficiencies.

Agro biodiversity

- Agricultural biodiversity is a broad term that includes all components of biological diversity **of relevance to food and agriculture**, and all components of biological diversity that constitute the agricultural ecosystems.
- It is crucial in food security, nutrition, health and essential in agricultural landscapes.
- Out of 2,50,000 globally identified plant species, about 7,000 have historically been used in human diets.
- Today, only 30 crops form the basis of the world's agriculture and just three species of maize, rice and wheat supply more than half the world's daily calories.



Why it matters?

- India is a centre of origin of rice, brinjal, citrus, banana, cucumber species.
- Across the world, 37 sites are designated as Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS), of which three are Indian — Kashmir (saffron), Koraput (traditional agriculture) and Kuttanad (below sea-level farming).
- In India, over 811 cultivated plants and 902 of their wild relatives have been documented. Our promising genetic resources include rice from Tamil Nadu (Konamani), Assam (Agni bora) and Kerala (Pokkali), Bhalia Wheat and mushroom (Guchhi) from Himachal Pradesh and rich farm animal native breeds — cattle (42), buffaloes (15), goat (34), sheep (43) and chicken (19).
- Agrobiodiversity helps **nutrition-sensitive farming and bio-fortified foods**.
 - For instance, moringa (drumstick) has **micronutrients** and sweet potato is rich in **Vitamin A**.
 - There are varieties of pearl millet and sorghum rich in **iron and zinc**.

Development goals

- The UN Sustainable Development Goal 2 advocates for Zero Hunger.
- The Aichi Biodiversity Target focuses on countries conserving genetic diversity of plants, farm

livestock and wild relatives.

- It emphasises that countries develop strategies and action plans to halt biodiversity loss and reduce direct pressure on biodiversity.
- The **Centre for Biodiversity Policy and Law (CEBPOL)**, a policy advocacy unit of the National Biodiversity Authority, came out with recommendations to increase India's agro biodiversity in 2019.
 - These include a comprehensive policy on 'ecological agriculture' to enhance native pest and pollinator population providing ecosystem services for the agricultural landscape.
 - The recommendations also include encouraging **Community Seed Banks** in each agro-climatic zone so that regional biotic properties are saved and used by new generation farmers; preparing an agrobiodiversity index, documenting traditional practices through People's Biodiversity Registers, identifying Biodiversity Heritage Sites under provisions of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002; and strengthening Biodiversity Management Committees to conserve agrobiodiversity and traditional knowledge.
 - Developing a **National Level Invasive Alien Species Policy** is required to identify pathways, mapping, monitoring, managing, controlling and eradicating the invasive species and prioritising problematic species based on risk assessment studies.

Way forward

- Loss of crop genetic resources is mainly a result of adopting new crop varieties **without conserving traditional varieties**. Similarly, there are concerns about high output breeds for production of meat, milk and egg.
- The consumption pattern and culinary diversity **must be enlarged to increase India's food basket**.
- To conserve indigenous crop, livestock and poultry breeds, it is recommended to **mainstream biodiversity** into agricultural policies, schemes, programmes and projects to achieve India's food and nutrition security and minimise genetic erosion.

[su_box title="**Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)**" box_color="#7960a0" title_color="#ffffff"]

- It is an initiative by FAO which was started in 2002.
- It will help in safeguarding and supporting the world's agricultural heritage systems.
- The objective is to support the international community to put forward food production practices that make skillful use of natural resources and protect soil health and biodiversity.
- These traditional agricultural systems represent models of sustainable agricultural production.
- Located in specific sites around the world, they sustainably provide multiple goods and services, food and livelihood security for millions of small-scale farmers.

So, why are heritage agricultural systems important in today's world?

- The traditional agricultural systems are threatened by many factors including climate change and increased competition for natural resources.
- In these systems, water use, soil nutrition and other ecosystem factors are intricately linked, thus making them resilient to climate change.
- They are also dealing with migration due to low economic viability, which has resulted in traditional farming practices being abandoned and endemic species and breeds being lost.
 - These ancestral agricultural systems constitute the foundation for contemporary and future agricultural innovations and technologies. Their cultural, ecological and agricultural diversity is still evident in many parts of the world, maintained as unique systems of agriculture.[/su_box]

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Not as you say, but as you do

Context

- Gotabaya Rajapaksa emerged as winner securing 52.25% of the mandate in Sri Lanka's presidential elections.

Profile

- He was a former Army officer who served as Sri Lanka's defence secretary when his brother Mahinda Rajapaksa was President.
- Gotabaya led the military campaign against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam between 2007 and 2009 which ended with the final defeat of the Tigers, and the killing of its leader Velupillai Prabhakaran.
- The war led to thousands of civilian deaths in the country and created a narrative of muscular Sinhala Buddhist supremacy that continues to dominate the Sri Lankan national discourse.

Issues of human rights violations in the past

- Gotabaya has been accused of human rights violations in Sri Lanka, Europe and the United States.
- The time of the Rajapaksas' rule in the country saw many instances of forced disappearances of dissenters, and attacks on independent journalists.

What led to the victory of Gotabaya?

- Apart from the Sinhala majority voting for him, anxieties were arising from the state of the economy, dislike towards unabated corruption and fears set off by the Easter Sunday bombings.
- President Maithripala Sirisena had dismissed Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe in 2018, leading to a constitutional crisis, which made this election a referendum on the failures of the power-sharing arrangement between the two leaders.
- The coalition government was rocked by infighting and its aloof leadership with grand projects of trade liberalisation and foreign investment neglected people's everyday concerns.

Past tensions and the China card

With the return of the Rajapaksas to power, India would be closely watching the trajectory that Sri Lanka's relationship with China takes.

- China got huge concessions when Mahinda was President, and Beijing extended loans worth billions of dollars, which, while helping build ports and highways in Sri Lanka, **rapidly drowned the country deep in debt.**
 - The debt has dragged down the economy, and in 2017, the Sri Lankan government, having struggled with repayments, was forced to hand over the port of Hambantota and 15,000 acres of land around it to the Chinese for 99 years.
- During the last couple of years of Mahinda's rule, **Chinese military submarines and warships** made repeated undeclared visits to the port of Colombo, to India's great concern.
 - Early in the first term of the Narendra Modi government in India, when Gotabaya was in charge of Sri Lanka's defence ministry, New Delhi had protested against a Chinese submarine docking in Sri Lanka.
 - Colombo had at the time said this was "nothing unusual" and military vessels of many

countries have over the years come to Sri Lanka on “**goodwill visits and for refuelling and crew refreshment**”.

- Many now worry that a tilt towards China will be inevitable, given the Rajapaksa’s past preferences as well as Gotabaya’s acrimonious relationship with the United States.

Challenges ahead for India

Gotabaya, who is unpopular for his role in the war against LTTE in these areas, was defeated in all of the Northern Province's five districts and in three districts in the Eastern Province in the election.

- The most sensitive issue for New Delhi in dealing with Gotabaya will be **dealing with the Tamil-speaking areas of Sri Lanka’s North and Muslim-dominated East**, which Tamil Nadu has the closest links with.
- Despite the clear desire among both sides to move ahead, it remains to be seen whether the Modi government and the Rajapaksa regime, comprising President Gotabaya and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, will actually be able to shrug off the deeply bitter history they have shared for the last few years.

Advantage India

- As a symbolic first step, the President-elect chose **Anuradhapura**, the World Heritage City and ancient capital **known for its traditional links to India**, for his swearing-in ceremony— instead of the traditional Independence Square in Colombo.
- Within a day of his swearing-in as Sri Lanka’s new President, Gotabaya Rajapaksa received a visit from Minister of External Affairs S. Jaishankar in Colombo, and accepted an invitation to visit India, as his first trip abroad in office.
- One area that is likely to help that process and hold New Delhi-Colombo ties in good stead is the rapid improvement in intelligence sharing between the two countries especially since the Easter Sunday terror attacks.
- India has already evinced interest in building infrastructure in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, including upgrading the Jaffna-Colombo rail track and other railway lines, providing electricity transmission lines for power imports from India, and rebuilding the Kankesanthurai port. Each of these projects is an opportunity to showcase New Delhi’s delivery ability and Colombo’s desire to cooperate for the benefit of its less-developed areas.
- In the Eastern Province, little progress has been made on projects that former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe had signed through MoUs in New Delhi. Completion of these should become a priority, including India’s plan to develop Trincomalee port and oil tank farms, and LNG terminals near Colombo.
- Finally, India’s plans to counter Chinese investment will be tested by the pace of the joint India-Japan agreement to develop the East Container Terminal at Colombo harbour, and other projects like the offer to operate the Mattala Airport.

Way forward

- Given the polarized mandate in the North and East of Sri Lanka, Gotabaya should **actually want India’s friendship in resolving tensions** with the North and East region, and India should move in quickly to ensure more development projects in those areas.

F. Tidbits

1. Google warned 500 Indians on phishing

- Google sent out over 12,000 warnings to users globally, including about 500 in India, during the period from July to September 2019, alerting them to “government-backed” phishing attempts against them.
 - **Phishing** is the fraudulent practice of sending emails purporting to be from reputable companies in order to induce individuals to reveal personal information, such as passwords and credit card numbers.
- This comes close on the heels of the Facebook-owned WhatsApp disclosing that an Israeli spyware, Pegasus, was used to spy on journalists and human rights activists globally, including 121 people in India.
- In a blog post, Google said its Threat Analysis Group (TAG) works to counter targeted and government-backed hacking against Google and its users. The TAG tracks more than 270 targeted or government-backed groups from more than 50 countries.
- These groups have many goals, including intelligence collection, stealing of intellectual property, targeting dissidents and activists, destructive cyberattacks, or spreading coordinated disinformation.
- As per the data shared on the blog post, about 500 warnings were issued to users in India.
- Over 90% of these users were targeted via “credential phishing emails” where attempts are made to obtain the target’s password or other account credentials to hijack their account.

2. Pakistan SC extends Army chief’s tenure

- The Supreme Court of Pakistan has allowed a conditional extension of the Army chief’s term for six months, during which Parliament will have to legislate on the terms of service of the top general.
- The cabinet of Prime Minister Imran Khan had approved the three-year extension for the Army chief, citing a worsening national security situation in the region over its rivalry with neighbouring India.
- The Supreme Court’s decision cuts the original three-year extension down to six months.
- Lawmakers will have to pass legislation on the terms of service of the top general in six months, to clarify the scope of Article 243 of the Constitution of Pakistan (dealing with the President and the federal government’s authority over the armed forces).

3. Army test-fires Israeli anti-tank missile

- The Army successfully tested two newly-acquired Spike long-range anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM) in Madhya Pradesh.
- The Army has recently procured a small batch of 12 launchers and 250 missiles from Israel using its new financial powers to make emergency procurements.
- The missiles will ultimately be deployed mainly on the fronts facing Pakistan.
- Spike is a fourth-generation missile, which can engage a target with precision at ranges up to four km.
- In addition to fire and forget capability, the missile also has the ability to fire, observe and update, providing substantial flexibility to the firer to pinpoint the impact point, as also the ability to switch to a different target mid-flight.
- India became the 33rd country to induct the Spike ATGM.

4. U.S. to cut spending on NATO budget, Germany to pay more

- The U.S. is to cut its contribution to NATO’s operating budget, with Germany increasing payments as the alliance tries to appease President Donald Trump ahead of a summit.
- Trump has repeatedly criticised European members for freeloading on the U.S., singling out Germany — the continent’s economic powerhouse — for lagging behind on an alliance commitment to spend at least 2% of GDP on defence.
- While most of Mr. Trump’s anger has been focused on European national defence budgets, American officials have also grumbled about how much Washington contributes to NATO’s running costs.

- “Under the new formula, cost shares attributed to most European allies and Canada will go up, while the US share will come down,” a NATO official said.
- Washington currently pays 22.1% of the NATO budget — which totalled \$2.5 billion in 2019 — and Germany 14.8%, under a formula based on each country’s gross national income.
- Under the new agreement, the U.S. will cut its contribution to 16.35% of the total, Germany’s will rise to the same level and other allies will pay more.

G. Prelims Facts

Nothing here for today!!!

H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to the “Chief Minister”:

1. Chief Minister is appointed by the Governor.
2. He recommends the dissolution of the legislative assembly to the Governor.
3. With the resignation of the chief minister, the entire cabinet has to resign.

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

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

Article 164 of the Constitution envisages that the Chief Minister shall be appointed by the governor. The chief minister advises the Governor to appoint any person as a minister. It is only according to the advice of CM the Governor appoints ministers. If the Chief Minister resigns then the full cabinet has to resign. He recommends the dissolution of the legislative assembly to the Governor.

Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO):

1. NATO is an economic alliance established by the North Atlantic Treaty.
2. It is an alliance of 29 countries bordering the North Atlantic Ocean.
3. It is headquartered at Brussels, Belgium.

Choose the correct options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

NATO is a military alliance established by the North Atlantic Treaty. It is an alliance of 29 countries bordering the North Atlantic Ocean. It is headquartered at Brussels, Belgium.

Q3. Emissions Gap Report is published by:

- a. United Nations Environment Programme
- b. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
- c. United Nations Development Programme
- d. International Energy Agency

Answer: a

Explanation:

The tenth edition of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Emissions Gap Report was recently released. It provides the latest assessment of scientific studies on current and estimated future Green House Gas (GHG) emissions and compares these with the emission levels permissible for the world to progress on a least-cost pathway to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Q4. "Tulagi Island" recently seen in news is a part of:

- a. Sri Lanka
- b. Soloman Islands
- c. Thailand
- d. Maldives

Answer: b

Explanation:



I. Practice Questions for UPSC Mains Exam

1. What do you understand by Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems? Comment on the importance of heritage agricultural systems in today's world. (15 Marks, 250 Words).
2. Discuss the powers of the state government to grant remission, also comment if the Judiciary has violated the doctrine of separation of powers in this regard. Justify with relevant cases. (15 Marks, 250 Words).

