

13 Nov 2019: Comprehensive News Analysis

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B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Maharashtra placed under President's Rule

Context:

The President has approved a proclamation imposing President's Rule in Maharashtra, following a recommendation from Governor.

Details:

- In Maharashtra, a situation has arisen when the formation of a stable government is not possible even 15 days after the election results have been declared.
- In Maharashtra's 59-year-long history, President's rule has only been imposed twice — for 112 days between February and June 1980, and for 33 days between September and October 2014.
- The Assembly will be kept under suspended animation.

Role of Governor:

- Usually the moment an election is won or lost, the Chief Minister resigns and is then asked by the Governor to continue as 'caretaker' until a new government is in place.
- The Sarkaria Commission formed in 1983 came out with a detailed report which discusses the Role of Governor, in such circumstances.
- As per the Sarkaria Commission report, if there is a single party having an absolute majority in the Assembly, the leader of the party should automatically be asked to become the Chief Minister.
- However, if there is no such party, Governor would be expected to go as per an order of preference set out in the Sarkaria Commission recommendations.
- By the order of preference, the Governor can invite 1) a pre-poll alliance of parties; 2) invite the single largest party which stakes a claim to form government; 3) invite a post-poll alliance of parties, with all the partners in the coalition joining the government or 4) invite a post-poll alliances of parties, with some becoming part of the government and some supporting from outside.

How is the President's Rule imposed?

- President's Rule implies the suspension of a state government and the imposition of direct rule of the Centre. This is achieved through the invocation of Article 356 of the Constitution by the President on the advice of the Union Council of Ministers.
- Under Article 356, this move can be taken, if the President, on receipt of the report from the Governor of the State or otherwise, is satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

How long can the President's Rule last?

- A proclamation of President's Rule can be revoked through a subsequent proclamation in case the leader of a party produces letters of support from a majority of members of the Assembly, and stakes his claim to form a government. The revocation does not need the approval of Parliament.
- Any proclamation under Article 356 — which stands for six months — has to be approved by both Houses in the Parliament session following it. This six-month time-frame can be extended in phases, up to three years.

Note:**President's Rule must have legitimate basis**

- Any recommendation by a Governor for President's rule in a State under Article 356(1) of the Constitution should be based on "objective material" and not on a political whim or fancy, the Supreme Court had ruled in the 1994 S.R. Bommai case.
 - "It is not the personal whim, wish, view or opinion or the ipse dixit of the President de hors the material, but a legitimate inference drawn from the material placed before him which is relevant for the purpose," the nine-judge Bench had said.

- Such objective material may be available in the report sent to the President by the Governor or otherwise or both from the report and other sources. Once such material is shown to exist, the satisfaction of the President based on the material is not open to question.
- Article 356(1) has been deliberately drafted in a narrow language by the Founding Fathers so that political parties in the Centre do not misuse it to subvert federalism, it had noted.
- The proclamation of President's Rule in a State is open to challenge if there is no supporting objective material.
- The court had stated that although the sufficiency or otherwise of the material cannot be questioned, the legitimacy of inference drawn from such material is "certainly open to judicial review".
- The proclamation by the President under Article 356 is on the advice of the Council of Ministers tendered under Article 74(1).
- The judgment had explained that in a multi-party political system, chances are high that the political parties in the Centre and the State concerned may not be the same. Article 356 cannot be used for the purpose of political one-upmanship by the Centre.

Category: HEALTH

1. India's cancer care facilities 'highly inadequate'

Context:

- A report by a Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science, Technology and Environment has said that India's cancer care infrastructure is highly inadequate and forces a majority of patients to travel thousands of kilometres for treatment.
- And that the systematic failure to address the needs of patients contributes to a 20% higher mortality among Indian cancer patients than in countries with a high Human Development Index.
- The committee was constituted to examine an expanded role for the Department of Atomic Energy, through the Tata Memorial Centre (TMC), to address India's rising cancer burden.

Concerns:

- The International Agency for Research on Cancer expects India's cancer burden to increase from an estimated 13 lakh cases in 2018 to about 17 lakh in 2035, and cancer deaths are expected to rise from 8.8 lakh in 2018 to 13 lakh in 2035.
- According to the report, incidence of cancer is very high in all North Eastern States, as it is higher than the national average for several types of cancer, showing a consistently rising trend over the past few decades.
- Because of grossly inadequate infrastructure and lack of awareness, many patients are diagnosed at a later stage in India. It not only increases their expenses for treatment but also leads to higher mortality.
- The committee laid emphasis on the fact that mortality to incidence ratio of 0.68 in India is higher than that in the very high human development index (HDI) countries (0.38) and the high HDI countries (0.57).

Details:

- The incidence or the number of newly diagnosed cases of cancer annually, is about 16 lakh. The disease kills 8 lakh people annually.
- Among these are 1,40,000 fresh cases of breast cancer, 1,00,000 cervical cancer cases, and 45,000 cases of oral cancer among women.

- Among men, the top three cancers with the highest incidence are those in the oral cavity (1,38,000 cases), cancer of the pharynx (90,000) and those of the gastrointestinal tract (2,00,000).

Cancer treatment:

- Two-thirds of India's cancer patients were treated in the private sector and this forced 6 crore Indians below the poverty line because of “catastrophic healthcare related expenditure on cancer”.
- While the TMC is a major referral centre for cancer treatment, India’s National Cancer Grid is the bulwark of cancer treatment in the country.
- The Committee has recommended a ‘Hub and Spoke Model’ proposed by the TMC to better reach out to cancer patients nationally.
 - The hub-and-spoke organization design is a model which arranges service delivery assets into a network consisting of an anchor establishment (hub) which offers a full array of services, complemented by secondary establishments (spokes) which offer more limited service arrays, routing patients needing more intensive services to the hub for treatment.
 - This, it said, would reduce costs and the trouble of transporting and treating patients from parts of the country where cancer-care facilities are inadequate.

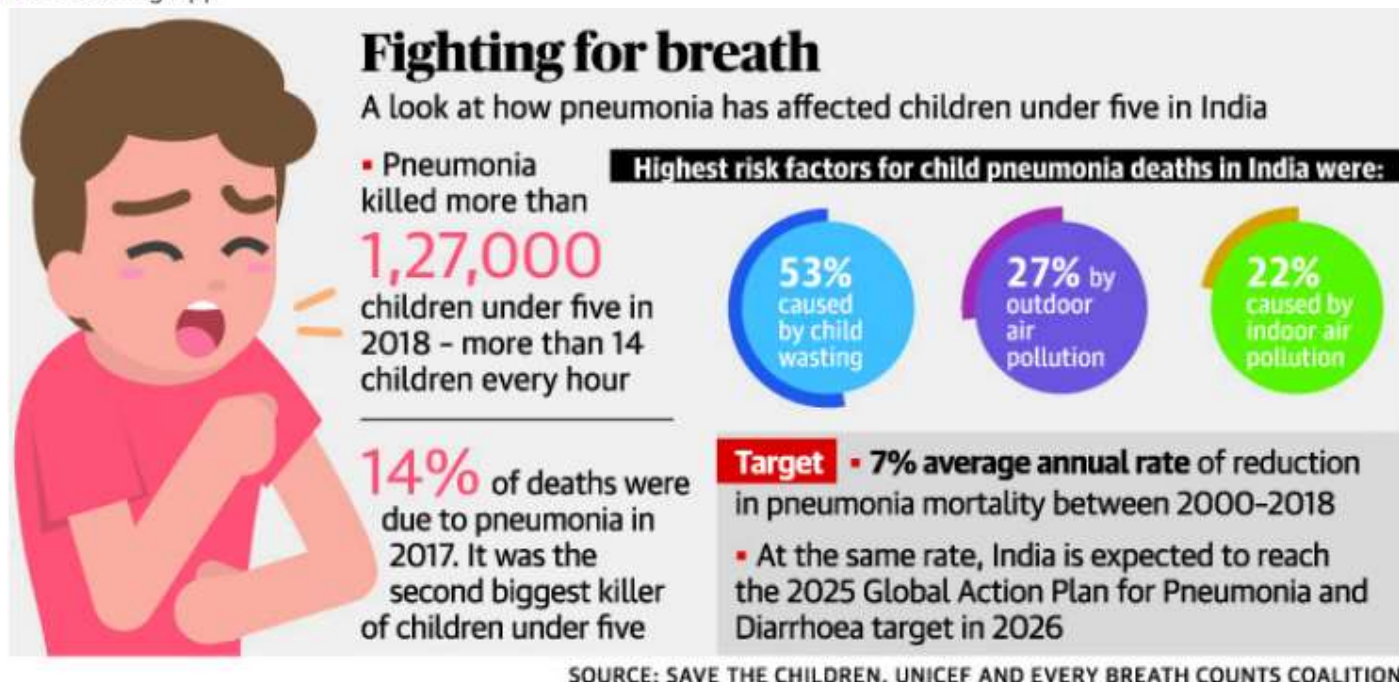
2. Pneumonia, diarrhoea still a big threat

Context:

- The 10th pneumonia and diarrhoea progress report card has found that health systems are falling short of ensuring the world’s most vulnerable children access to prevention and treatment services in the 23 countries that together account for 75% of global pneumonia and diarrhoea deaths in children under five.
- The report analyses how effectively countries are delivering 10 key interventions, including breastfeeding, vaccination, access to care, use of antibiotics, ORS, and zinc supplementation.

Issue:

- Globally, pneumonia and diarrhoea led to nearly one of every four deaths in children under five years of age in 2017.
- India, which is home to a large population of under-five children, accounts for a major portion of deaths due to pneumonia and diarrhoea.



Situation in India:

- Rollout of rotavirus vaccines, beginning in 2016, and the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, beginning in 2017, helped India's scores improve.
- India's exclusive breastfeeding rate, at 55%, is among the highest of the 23 countries.
- However, the proportion of children receiving important treatments, as with many other countries, remains below targets.
- Half of the children with diarrhoea receive ORS (oral rehydration solution) and 20% receive zinc supplementation — to help protect against, prevent and treat pneumonia and diarrhoea.

Conclusion:

- Pneumonia and diarrhoea are preventable diseases through basic interventions.
- The report card concludes that the global community must increase investment and support countries in developing smart, sustainable strategies that close gaps and accelerate progress.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ECONOMY

1. Centre wants States to ditch APMC for e-NAM

Context:

- According to the Finance Minister, States were being persuaded to reject the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) system in favour of a pan-India electronic trading portal that creates a unified national market for agricultural commodities.

- The finance minister said that the Centre was talking to States to dismantle the APMC system and move towards the electronic National Agriculture Market (e-NAM).

Details:

- Out of almost 2,500 APMCs, 585 in 18 States have been connected to the e-NAM portal so far.
- Interstate trade, which has the potential to give farmers wider market access and better prices, has 21 APMC mandi participants in 8 States so far.

Issues:

- APMCs need reforms to ensure that a transparent price discovery mechanism exists, particularly for spot prices.
- So far, the Centre had been focussed on reforming APMCs, allocating funds to upgrade them, and persuading States to adopt a model APMC Act. NABARD is now ready to operationalise a 2,000 crore agri-market infrastructure fund aimed at upgrading 585 APMCs and 10,000 gramini agricultural markets.
- While the Centre has been promoting e-NAM since its introduction in 2016, it is not clear if the online portal is ready to bear the entire burden of agricultural trade.
- Only 1.6 crore farmers have registered on the portal so far, from among the almost 12 crore cultivators in the country.

Read more about e-NAM. [Click here](#)

Category: SECURITY**1. Nuclear plant is safe, India tells Russia****Context:**

After reports of a cyber-attack on the Kudankulam nuclear power plant in Tamil Nadu, Indian authorities have apprised Russia that necessary steps have been taken to prevent similar incidents in future on the Indo-Russian joint venture.

This issue has been covered in detail in 30th October 2019 Comprehensive News Analysis. [Click here](#) to read.

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY**1. Trump slams India and China, says Paris pact is unfair to the U.S.****Context:**

The United States has notified the United Nations of its formal withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. In a speech, the U.S. President Donald Trump said that the Paris Agreement would require the U.S. to 'pay countries' such as India [for technology and support to fight climate change], justifying his withdrawal from the climate treaty.

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E. Editorials

Category: ECONOMY

1. The problem with re-basing GDP estimates

Context:

Central Statistics Office (CSO) proposal to replace the gross domestic product (GDP) series of 2011-12 base year with a new set of National Accounts using 2017-18 as the base year.

Details:

- Periodic rebasing of GDP series every seven to 10 years is carried out to account for the changing economic structure and relative prices.
- Post the release of the new consumer expenditure survey and the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) the CSO proposes to come out with a new set of national accounts using 2017-18 as the base year.
- Though rebasing is a routine administrative decision of any national statistics office, there are a few concerns with this move, given the dispute surrounding the previous rebasing. In early 2015 the CSO released a new series of GDP with 2011-12 as base-year, replacing the earlier series with the base-year 2004-05.

Background of the dispute:

Post the previous rebasing, there has been a raging controversy over the current GDP figures on account of questionable methodologies and databases used.

Difference between government estimates and other estimates:

- According to official data, the annual economic growth rate has sharply decelerated to about 5% in the latest quarter, from over 8% a few years ago.
- Independent studies using multiple statistical methods to validate the official GDP estimates by eminent economists have suggested that the annual GDP growth rates during the last few years may have been overestimated by 0.36 to 2.5 percentage points.
- This has led to much distrust in the official GDP figures leading to loss of its credibility.

Accuracy of the estimates:

- Re-basing usually leads to a marginal rise in the absolute GDP size on account of better capturing of domestic production using improved methods and new databases. However, the underlying growth rates seldom change, meaning that the rebasing does not alter the underlying pace of economic expansion. However, the 2011-12 base year revision did not follow this trend.
- The absolute GDP size in the new base year 2011-12 contracted by 2.3% (compared to the old series), and the annual GDP growth rate went up sharply from 4.8% in the old series to 6.2% in 2013-14.
- The manufacturing sector growth rate for 2013-14, swung from (-) 0.7% in the old series to (+) 5.3% in the 2011-12 series. Such large variations in growth rates for the same year may be justified if the material conditions of production warranted. But the higher growth estimates recorded by the new series were not in line with related economic indicators such as bank credit growth, industrial capacity utilization or fixed investment growth.

Failure to capture the effect of demonetization on the economy:

- The suspicion of official output estimates became particularly intense after the demonetization of high valued currency notes in November 2016.
- By most analyses, the economic shock severely hurt output and employment. The Ministry of Finance's own Report on Income Tax Reforms for Building New India provided data on fixed investment in the private corporate sector based on actual corporate tax returns. It shows that the fixed investment to GDP ratio in the private corporate sector fell sharply from 7.5% in 2015-16 to 2.8% in 2016-17 which is suspected to be on account of demonetization. However, surprisingly, the ratio in the national accounts went up from 11.7% in 2015-16 to 12% in 2016-17.
- Similarly, several research papers and studies have shown an adverse effect of demonetization on growth rate. Yet, the official GDP for the year 2016-17 grew at 8.2%, the highest in a decade post demonetization.

The root of the problem:

- The source of the problem, according to many economists, is the underlying methodologies for calculating GDP (in the 2011-12 series) which they claim are deeply flawed, as well as the new dataset used in estimating the private corporate sector's contribution.
- The private corporate sector accounts for about a third of GDP and spans all production sectors, and roughly about half of the private corporate sector output originates in manufacturing. Even small mistakes in estimating the numbers in this sector will have a profound effect on the national accounts.

Problem with the dataset:

- The CSO estimated value addition in the private corporate sector using the statutory filing of financial results with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
- The database of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs has been criticized by many as unreliable.
- For example, the Ministry's database on "active" companies — that is companies claiming to have submitted audited financial results regularly for three years — seems to contain many companies that are actually inactive (not producing output on a regular basis). This fact has been observed by the National Sample Survey Office (the government's premier, independent, data-gathering agency) also.
- The problem also lies in the fact that the working companies, their number, and their activities keep changing with time. The failure to capture this changing factor will impede the accuracy of the data.
- Hence it is possible that the private corporate sector output has been overestimated.

Questionable methodologies:

- The sample data used will have a pronounced effect on the actual estimates.
- While estimating the GDP of the private corporate sector, the methods used like using unverified sample estimates to extrapolate for the larger economy is not an ideal approach.

- Though the new approach claims to use much larger datasets, these larger data sets are not necessarily better if they are unverified.

Effect of new method on State Domestic Product (SDP) Estimation:

- State Domestic Product (SDP) estimation uses many of the same databases and methodologies used in all-India GDP estimation. The methodological changes made in the 2011-12 base-year revision have adversely impacted the quality of SDP estimates on two counts.
- First, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs data does not have factory identifiers like the location of production units, but only has the location of the company head office. It is possible that a company might be operating in many states but all the company's output will be considered for the state where it is headquartered. This has distorted the distribution of the SDP estimates across States.
- Second, for estimating value-added in the informal or unorganized sector, state-specific labour productivity estimates are unavailable in the 2011-12 series. Hence the method used distorts output estimation.

Official Rebuttal:

- The CSO has denied the claim that the underlying methodology is flawed and that there are serious problems with the new database being used.
- The official response throughout the debate has been that the 2011-12 GDP series follows global best practices and is in line with the latest United Nations System of National Accounts guidelines.

Way forward:

- The proposed change over to a new base-year of 2017-18, is, in principle, a welcome decision.
- The new rebasing exercise must address the methodological disputes and data related questions relating to the current national accounts series.
- As long as the underlying methodological apparatus remains the same, feeding it with up-to-date data is unlikely to improve the quality of the estimates which will lead to the loss of credibility.
- Setting up of an independent commission of national and international experts to review the GDP methodology might be a welcome move as this will bring in transparency in the process and much-needed expertise.
- The ideal time to do this would be now so that solutions could be found and incorporated into the new GDP series.

Additional information:

- A base year is the first of a series of years in an economic or financial index. It is typically set to an arbitrary level of 100.
- Any year can serve as a base year, but analysts typically choose recent years.
- While choosing a base year, certain parameters need to be kept in mind like, the base year considered must be a normal year with respect to parameters like inflation and economic activity, meaning that the markets are stable. The base year also doesn't record any particular natural calamity, famines or draughts. In India's case generally, base years have lesser monsoon deficit given the relation between monsoons and Indian economy.

For more information on the new system of National accounts: [Click Here](#)

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. A partnership for stability, security, and growth

Context:

11th BRICS summit, currently underway in Brazil.

Details:

- In November 2019, Brasilia will host the 11th BRICS Summit, an international relations conference to be attended by the heads of state or heads of government of the five-member states Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.
- The chosen theme for the 11th summit is “BRICS: Economic Growth for an Innovative Future”.
- The topics of discussion for the agenda include: strengthening of the cooperation in science, technology and innovation, enhancement of the cooperation on digital economy, invigoration of the cooperation on the fight against transnational crime, especially against organized crime, money laundry and drug traffic, and encouragement to the rapprochement between the New Development Bank (NDB) and the BRICS Business Council.

Prevailing global situation:

- Various regions of the planet still retain significant conflict potential. West Asia region is in turmoil. Prolonged and repeated protests have marred South America of late. The arms control architecture has been severely impaired by the U.S.’s unilateral withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Global politics continues to reel.
- Structural imbalances in the world economy have continued with increasing inequality. A serious threat to global economic growth is posed by unfair competition practices as unilateral economic sanctions, trade wars and flagrant abuse of economic strength by the developed countries.
- There is an increasing trend of isolationism from the developed countries and withdrawal from multilateral institutions based on “rules-based order”, where even the rules are being framed without wide-based consultations and are being imposed on the whole world.
- The international community is yet to find effective responses to a whole number of critical challenges facing the world like terrorism and climate change.

Significance of BRICS:

BRICS is one of the pillars of the emerging fairer polycentric world order, playing an important stabilizing role in global affairs, for which it has all the necessary capacity.

Aligning to global changes:

- Given the ongoing global changes and the significant effect they are bound to result in, the alignment of efforts of BRICS members to counter them is particularly important.
- The importance of strengthening the dialogue within BRICS, which will enable the BRICS countries to make the best use of ongoing global changes.
- BRICS has always called for a peaceful and politico-diplomatic settlement of crises and conflicts in various regions of the world.
- BRICS agenda involves comprehensive dialogue in such fields as counter-terrorism, international information security and the fight against organized crime and corruption.

The impetus to Multipolarity:

- Unlike the increasing trend of isolationism and unilateralism, the world order needs more multipolarity.
- There is a need to follow the path of a mutually respectful dialogue aimed to reach the consensus that takes into account the interests of all actors in inter-state relations.
- Any agreement on the most important issues on the global agenda should be reached with the widest and equal participation of all stakeholders and be based on universally recognized legal norms.
- In contrast to the criticism that multipolarity is a recipe for competition and chaos in international relations, multipolarity is the only order attuned to present-day realities, to promote the comprehensive development of all states, both big and small, and enhance mutually beneficial cooperation among the member countries on the basis of shared interests.

Common goals of BRICS members:

- The BRICS countries are firmly committed to the democratisation of international life and its development under the principles enshrined in the UN Charter, the principles of respect for cultural and civilizational diversity of the world, and the right of peoples to forge their destiny themselves.
- It is of fundamental importance that BRICS members' approaches to key global and regional issues are the same or rather similar.

Economic:

- The grouping brings together five major emerging economies comprising 42 percent of the world's population, having 23 percent of the global Gross Domestic Product. BRICS accounts for almost a third of global GDP at purchasing power parity. In 2018, BRICS even outperformed the G7 on this indicator.
- BRICS is attracting the attention of many emerging economies as the group protects values of multilateralism, supports transparent, non-discriminatory, open, free and inclusive international trade, and rejects the recent trend of unilateral economic restrictions and protectionist measures.
- The BRICS leaders' explicit indication of their willingness to protect the pillars of the equitable multilateral trading system and the role of the World Trade Organization as its centre, and to advocate International Monetary Fund reform is a welcome relief for the ailing global economy.
- The New Development Bank (NDB), one of the multilateral development institutions created by the BRICS countries has been working successfully. Since the start of its operation in 2015, 42 investment projects worth over \$11 billion have been approved and are under implementation bringing in the much-needed investment in the developing countries.
- The BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) with a total capital of \$100 billion would act as a guarantor of the BRICS members' financial stability in case of crisis.

Humanitarian measures:

- The group has systematically increased the density of humanitarian exchanges. Cooperation in the areas of culture, education, and sport and youth policy is gaining momentum and the much needed people-to-people contacts are developing which can go a long way in strengthening the ties between the member countries.
- Initiatives have also involved subjects like innovations and health which contribute significantly to improving the ease of living in the member countries.

Way forward:

- The Brasilia Summit is aimed to be an important milestone in this Penta-lateral cooperation framework.
- In the ever-changing context of world politics, the BRICS should steer a steady course and further contribute significantly to maintaining international stability and ensuring global economic growth.

- BRICS grouping needs to continue with the policy of progressive and comprehensive enhancement of the strategic partnership of the BRICS countries.
- A major pillar of this partnership should consider increasing financial and economic cooperation among the participating countries, effective industrial interaction and practical cooperation in developing and implementing new joint energy, telecommunications, and high-tech projects.
- Future priorities should include enhanced foreign policy coordination within leading multilateral fora, primarily in the UN. Given the collective bargaining power of the group and common goals, this will ensure the much-needed multilateralism.
- BRICS should continue efforts to realize the vision of the BRICS strategic partnership to improve the practical impact of the multifaceted interaction on the prosperity of the member states and its people.

Additional information:

- The BRICS summit is being hosted in Brasília for the second time – the first occasion was in 2010, at the second summit of the grouping. The capital of Brazil will be the first city to receive BRICS's main meeting twice.
- Russia will be hosting the next BRICS summit in 2020.

For more information on BRICS: [Click Here](#)

Category: SECULARISM**1. What we owe to the Mahatma****Context:**

Gandhian views on secularism and its relevance in the present context.

Difference between the European and Indian conception of secularism:Secularism in Europe

- The background of the emergence of political secularism in Europe is profound religious homogenization wherein dissenters, and adherents of non-dominant religions were expelled or exterminated during and after the wars of religion.
- Rulers publicly confessed allegiance to one of the many churches in these predominantly single-religion societies, thereby consolidating a strong alliance between state and the dominant church.
- The problem with the system began, when the church became increasingly politically meddlesome and socially oppressive. The key issue then was how to tame the power of the church. The state's disentanglement from the dominant church was necessary to realize a number of goals, including the enhancement of individual liberty and equality.
- Tackling religious diversity was not an issue in the European countries where there was religious homogeneity.
- Hence the European conception of secularism involves the strict separation of the state from the church or religion.

Secularism in India

- In India, deep religious diversity has been a part of its social, cultural and historical landscape.
- India is one of the very few nations in the ancient world which had recognized and accepted cultural democracy.
- Hence in the Indian context what was needed is that Secularism accords due recognition to the different religious communities and ensures comfort and trust among members.

The idea of secularism in India:

- Two related but equally distinctive conceptions of secularism have developed in India.
- First is the constitutional approach to secularism which talks about the principled distance model. This involves the state maintaining equal distance from all religions without any bias towards any one religion.
- The second approach involves the communal harmony model, attributed to Mahatma Gandhi.
- This Gandhian conception is distinctive from the constitutional approach and there is an urgent need for its revival in the present context of fears of majoritarianism.

Gandhian Take on Secularism:

- Gandhi had always dismissed the idea that there could ever be one religion in the world, a uniform religious code, as it were, for all humankind. Gandhi held that the roads to one and the same God are many, but the goal was one because God was one and the same.
- Gandhi believed that all humans had a fundamental desire for what might be called deep sociability. They value human relations as an end in itself. They desire a constructive relationship with others. Humans simply can't do without one another, and no matter how much they like to be with people of their own ilk, they invariably also need to live with those with who they differ, to reach out to people with whom they disagree.
- The world's religious diversity and the impossibility of there ever being one religion for humankind, makes mutual respect, equal regard and communal harmony a necessity to ensure peace and tranquility. Gandhi believed that this can become a reality by virtue of the human quality of deep sociability.
- Gandhi felt that a large part of the responsibility for maintaining communal harmony lies with the communities themselves. But there are times when this communally sustained harmony is disturbed or breaks down. In such a situation the state has to step in. Such a scenario needs the state to be secular and must be distant from all. The Gandhian conception is indispensable in times of religious disharmony.
- Secularism thus marks an important quality of the state whereby it distances itself from all religious-philosophical perspectives in order to promote a certain quality of sociability and fraternity between communities.

The distinctiveness of the Gandhian model of secularism:

- Unlike modern Western secularisms that separate church and state for the sake of individual freedom and equality and have a place for neither community nor fraternity, the Gandhian conception demands that the state be secular for the sake of better relations between members of all religious communities, especially if they are mutually estranged. This makes Gandhian secularism distinctive.
- This Gandhian view did not stem from strategic considerations but was grounded in deep conviction and reasoning. His approach involved accepting the differences between the different cultures but at the same time linking all this together. Gandhi held that the roads to one and the same God are many, but the goal was one because God was one and the same.
- Gandhian views meant that every attack on someone else's god was a denial of one's own god; every claim that one's own god is better than the other's was tantamount to the humiliation of one's own god. This would avoid unnecessary one-upmanship among religions.

F. Tidbits

1. Western Ghats still home to a rich stock of butterflies

- A survey in the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary (WWS) has found that the Western Ghats is still home to a rich stock of butterflies.
- It was found that the diversity of butterflies was very low in the forest areas where the alien invasive plant like **Senna spectabilis** invaded other endemic plants, whereas the diversity was very rich in areas where plants like **Mikania micrantha** and **Lantana camera** remained dominant.
- The sighting of 191 species of butterflies throws light upon the healthy butterfly habitat in the region.
- 12 of the 191 species are endemic to the biodiversity-rich region.



Brown onyx, Common three ring, Peacock royal, and Tamil lacewing sighted at the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary during a butterfly survey that concluded on Monday.

2. Debt trouble brewing for coffee planters

- The coffee plantation sector, which is facing severe financial, productivity and falling price issues consecutively for the last three years, has sought the intervention of the State governments concerned and the Centre.
- The Karnataka Planters' Association, an apex body that represents coffee farmers across key coffee growing regions — **Chikmagalur, Kodagu and Hassan, which account for 80% of the country's total coffee production**, has urged the Union government to waive the interest on all outstanding coffee crop loans. The remaining amount may be restructured in nine annual instalments with repayment of principal with interest at 6% per annum.
- The association also urged the government to increase the limit on crop loans and development loans from commercial and co-operative banks, with subsidised rate of interest.
- KPA has also requested for the **deletion of Rule 7B of Income Tax**, as under this rule, **income derived from curing of coffee by the grower is deemed as business income** and 25% of such income is taxable under the existing regime.

What is the issue?

- Over 90% of coffee farmers are small holders, they are in deep debt.
- Cost of farm labour, material and fertilizer is on a constant rise while coffee prices are only falling season after season.

- Drastic changes in weather patterns have adversely impacted the yield.
- Farmers are forced to sell below cost of production.

G. Prelims Facts

Nothing here for today!!!

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Which of the following countries do not border Bolivia?

1. Chile
2. Ecuador
3. Uruguay
4. Peru

Choose the correct option:

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

Answer: c

Explanation:



Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. The pardoning power of the President is wider than the pardoning power of the Governor.
2. The President can grant pardon in all cases where the sentence given is sentence of death.
3. The power of the President to grant pardon extends to cases where the punishment or sentence is by a Court Martial.

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

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

The pardoning power of the President under Article 72 is wider than the pardoning power of the Governor. The power of the President to grant pardon extends in cases where the punishment or sentence is by a Court Martial but Article 161 does not provide any such power to the Governor. The President can grant pardon in all cases where the sentence given is sentence of death.

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. Model Code of Conduct is a legally enforceable document that lays down guidelines for conduct of political parties and candidates during elections.
2. It is a part of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.
3. MCC is operational from the date that the election schedule is announced till the date that results are announced.

Choose the correct option:

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

Model Code of Conduct is a set of guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India for conduct of political parties and candidates during elections mainly with respect to speeches, polling day, polling booths, portfolios, election manifestos, processions and general conduct. It is not a legally enforceable document. MCC is operational from the date that the election schedule is announced till the date that results are announced. It is not a part of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and is not legally enforceable.

Q4. Which of the following statements are correct with regard to coffee cultivation in India:

1. A major portion of the coffee grown in India is under shade.
2. The two major types of coffee grown in India are the Arabica and the Robusta.
3. Regions with high elevations are ideally suited for growing Arabicas while those with warm humid conditions are best suited for Robustas.
4. Almost 80% of Indian coffee is used within the country leaving very little for exports.

Choose the correct option:

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

India cultivates most of its coffee under a well-defined two-tier mixed shade canopy, comprising evergreen leguminous trees. Shade trees prevent soil erosion on a sloping terrain; they enrich the soil by recycling nutrients from deeper layers, protect the coffee plant from seasonal fluctuations in temperature, and play host

to diverse flora and fauna. Almost 80% of Indian coffee is exported, with Italy accounting for 29% of the exports. The two major types of coffee grown in India are the Arabica and the Robusta. Regions with high elevations are ideally suited for growing Arabicas while those with warm humid conditions are best suited for Robustas.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. In the backdrop of the ongoing BRICS summit, discuss the significance of the grouping for its member countries and the world, at large. State the challenges for further strengthening the cooperation in the grouping. (15 marks, 250 words).
2. The background for the advent of the concept of secularism was completely different in the Indian context as compared to that in European countries. This has resulted in the difference between the Western Model of Secularism and the Indian Model of secularism. Comment. (150 words, 10 marks)