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Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Do numbers matter in Rajya Sabha?

Context:

The Rajya Sabha (RS), the Upper House of the Parliament of India, had its first sitting on **May 13, 1952**. This article is authored by the Rajya Sabha Chairman.

Details:

- The Indian **Constitution** provides for parity of powers between the **Lok Sabha** (LS) and the **Rajya Sabha in law**, making an **exception in some cases**.
- The **Money Bill** or **Finance Bills** can be introduced only in the **Lok Sabha**, which only can approve the Demands for Grants.

- On the other hand, the **Rajya Sabha** has some **special powers**:
 - **To adopt a resolution allowing Parliament to legislate on subjects in the State List.**
 - **Creating All India Services.**
 - **Approving proclamations of Emergency and President's Rule** when the Lok Sabha is dissolved.

Elections to RS and LS:

- Elections to the Lok Sabha are held **every five years** and **before that on dissolution of the House.**
- For the Rajya Sabha, **one-third of the members are chosen every second year** reflecting its **permanent nature.**
- While the Lok Sabha elections hold a mirror to the recent will of the people, the Rajya Sabha is envisaged to convey the same in different phases of development marking some continuity.
- The Executive lasts only as long as it has a majority in the Lok Sabha, but **in law-making, both the Houses are at par.** Given the possible variations in the composition of both the Houses on account of different modes of election to them, did it impact the nature and speed of legislation?

Has the Rajya Sabha been obstructionist?

- An analysis undertaken by the Rajya Sabha Secretariat recently revealed that during the past 68 years since the first general elections in 1952, the government of the day had a majority in the Rajya Sabha only for 29 years and was in a minority for 39 years, including an unbroken stretch for the past 31 years.
- This **pronounced divergence in numbers in the two Houses of Parliament does not indicate any adverse impact on the broader course of legislation except in a few cases.**
- There are, however, a few discordant notes during this long journey of legislation. But there is no case for terming Rajya Sabha as obstructionist.
- So far, **Parliament held only three Joint Sittings to resolve differences between both the Houses.**
 - The first instance was in 1961 when the then Nehru government enjoyed a majority in the Rajya Sabha but the Dowry Prohibition Bill, 1959 suffered a defeat.
 - In 1978, the Banking Services Commission (Repeal) Bill, 1977 was rejected by the Rajya Sabha.
 - In 2002, the Prevention of Terrorism Bill, 2002 could not pass the Rajya Sabha scrutiny.
- There were occasions when **the Rajya Sabha sat over Bills passed by the Lok Sabha for a long time including the Prevention of Corruption Bill, 1987 and the Dock Worker (Safety, Health and Welfare) Bill, 1986.**
- If this was checking hasty legislation, the **Rajya Sabha had passed five Constituent Amendment Bills in one day on August 25, 1994 when the government of the day did not have the numbers.** The Rajya Sabha has also made amendments to several Bills passed by the Lok Sabha and these were accepted in several cases by the other House.
- Though the present government too, does not have the required numbers in the Rajya Sabha, members of different parties rose to the occasion in passing **landmark legislation relating to the GST, Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code, Triple Talaq, Unlawful Activities, Reorganisation of Jammu & Kashmir, Citizenship Amendment and so on.**
- This goes to prove that **numbers in the Rajya Sabha is not an issue as far as law-making is concerned.** It is a different concern which applies broadly to the legislatures of the country.

Spirit of cordiality between RS and LS:

- Renowned British philosopher and political economist John Stuart Mill, as early as in 1861, said in his great treatise 'Considerations on Representative Government' that **management of free**

institutions requires conciliation; a readiness to compromise; a willingness to concede something to opponents and mutual give and take.

- The required spirit of cordiality between the two Houses suffered a dent on some occasions.
 - First, when Rajya Sabha members were not included in the Public Accounts Committee in 1952.
 - When the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill, 1953, was introduced in the Rajya Sabha, some members questioned its certification as a Money Bill by the Lok Sabha Speaker. When the controversy was thickening, Prime Minister Nehru intervened, asserting that "For those who are interested in the success of the great experiment in nation building that we have embarked upon, it is a paramount duty to bring about this close cooperation and respect for each other (House)."
 - Rajya Sabha members objected when the Lok Sabha Speaker referred the Major Port Trust Bill, 1963 to its Select Committee without involving Rajya Sabha members and this Bill was later referred to its own Select Committee again.

Need for a second chamber:

- Continuing with some reservations voiced in the Constituent Assembly about having a second chamber, **some members of the Lok Sabha moved resolutions as early as in 1954 and again later in 1971, 1972 and 1975 for the dissolution of the Rajya Sabha.** But such efforts were thwarted.
- As per the constitutional provisions, the Rajya Sabha at best could hold a Money Bill for 14 days during when, it has to return such Bills without or with amendments for the consideration of the Lok Sabha.

This topic has been covered in 12th May 2020 CNA. [Click here](#) to read.

Increasing disruptions:

- An analysis by the Secretariat revealed that **the productivity of the Rajya Sabha till 1997 has been 100% and above and the past 23 years have thrown up a disturbing trend of rising disruptions.** Productivity fell to 87% during 1998-2004, 76% during 2005-14 and 61% during 2015-19.
- While the time spent by the Rajya Sabha on legislation since 1978 remained the same, a concern emerges in respect of the 'Oversight' function of the House.
- **Legislatures ensure accountability of the executive through Questions, Calling Attention Notices, etc.** Time share of this important Oversight function of the Council of States in the total functional time of the House during 1978-2004 was 39.50%. This fell to 21.99% during 2005-14 and to 12.34% since 2015.
- **This decline is primarily on account of disruptions forcing cancellation of Question Hour frequently.** Disruptions also **dent the quality of law-making** as seen in **passing of Bills without discussion** sometimes.
- However, the **Rajya Sabha** is proving to be more and more a '**deliberative**' body with **increasingly more time being spent on this function.** The time share on deliberations under instruments like Short Duration Discussions, **Zero Hour**, Special Mentions, Discussion on Budgets and working of ministries, Motion of Thanks to President, etc. was 33.54% during 1978-2004. It rose to 41.42 % during 2005-2014 and to a high of 46.59% during 2015-19.

Conclusion:

- After the initial frictions, Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha have proved to be constructive partners in steering the socio-economic transformation of the country since 1952, co-scripting pioneering laws.
- This partnership has been guided by the required spirit of cooperation and camaraderie despite

- divergence in the composition of both the Houses for most part of this journey.
- What needs to be addressed by all the stakeholders is that while enabling Rajya Sabha to retain its independence, it should not be seen as disruptive as evidenced over the past two decades.

2. Aarogya Setu app mandatory for returning NRIs, migrants

Context:

Expanding the ambit of the Aarogya Setu app, the Union Health Ministry has directed that downloading it be made compulsory for all returnees (migrant labourers and those coming from abroad) for better contact surveillance and suitable medical intervention.

Details:

- The Health Ministry has directed the States to focus on more effective surveillance, contact tracing, adequate testing and timely treatment of all the returnees, including testing at the point of disembarking, quarantining and offering further treatment.
- It has also asked the States to ramp up surveillance for Severe Acute Respiratory Infections (SARI) or Influenza-like illnesses (ILI) to detect any possible hidden infection at an early stage to ensure timely containment.

For more details on the Aarogya Setu app and the concerns associated with it, read [26th April 2020 CNA](#).

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. India caught in U.S.-China spat over Taiwan's status at WHO

Context:

The External Affairs Minister attended a seven-nation virtual meeting of Foreign Ministers, convened by the U.S. Secretary of State.

Details:

- The meeting was held on the same day the U.S. Senate passed an Act to direct the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to regain observer status for Taiwan in the [World Health Organization](#), beginning with its decision-making body, the World Health Agency (WHA).
- The meeting appeared to be part of the U.S.'s efforts to gain support for its move to effect changes at the WHO. The meeting also discussed "strengthening and reforming" the WHO.
- Meanwhile, China has also stepped up warnings on any attempt to include or support Taiwan's role at the WHA, referring to the "One-China" principle as a widely accepted universal consensus of the international community including the Indian government.
- The meeting was attended by the foreign ministers of Australia, Brazil, India, Israel, Japan, and the Republic of Korea.
 - Significantly, all invitees other than India are major non-NATO allies of the United States, who would be expected to support Washington's call.
- The U.S. has, in the recent past, accused WHO of acting as a PR agency for China during the pandemic.

Concerns:

- India is set to take over as the next Chairperson of the World Health Organization's decision-making executive body in May 2020.

- India is likely to hold the post for the next three years.
- The timing of the appointment is crucial, given the worldwide debate on the role of the WHO during the pandemic, and criticism of the WHO Director.
- As tensions between the U.S. and China rise over the novel coronavirus pandemic, India is faced with a major choice on whether to support a U.S. move to reinstate Taiwan's observer status at the World Health Assembly (WHA) or to China's opposition to it.

2. No air space violation at Pangong Tso

Context:

The government sources have clarified that there was no airspace violation by China in Ladakh.

Background:

- It was reported that Chinese helicopters were spotted flying close to the un-demarcated border between India and China in Eastern Ladakh after which Su-30 fighters of the Indian Air Force too carried out sorties in the area.
- Around 250 soldiers of both sides were engaged in a fierce face-off near Pangong Lake.
- Stating that incidents of face-off and aggressive behaviour occur on the Line of Actual Control (LAC), it is said that the patrols disengaged after local-level interaction and dialogue.

Details:

- There were two incidents of face-off between Indian and Chinese troops recently which resulted in injuries to several soldiers on both sides.
- The first incident occurred near Pangong Tso in eastern Ladakh while the second face-off occurred at Naku La in Sikkim.
- Pangong Tso has seen such several incidents in the past including in 2017 and in 2019.
- In September 2019, a scuffle broke out between Indian and Chinese soldiers on the bank of the Pangong Tso in eastern Ladakh but the matter was resolved through talks between the two militaries.
- In one of the longest confrontations between the two sides, troops of India and China were locked in a 73-day face-off in Doklam from June 16, 2017, after the Indian side stopped the building of a road in the disputed area by the Chinese Army.
- As per existing agreements between India and China, operation of fighter aircraft and armed helicopters is restricted to a distance from the LAC.
- According to the 'Agreement on Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity along the LAC in India-China Border Area' of 1996, "combat aircraft (to include fighter, bomber, reconnaissance, military trainer, armed helicopter and other armed aircraft) shall not fly within 10 km of the LAC."

The Doklam issue has been covered in 17th June 2019 Comprehensive News Analysis. [Click here](#) to read.

Category: HEALTH

1. India may miss nutrition targets

Context:

Global Nutrition Report 2020 has been released.

Global Nutrition Report:

- In 2012, the World Health Assembly identified six nutrition targets for maternal, infant and young child nutrition to be met by 2025. These require governments to:
 1. Reduce stunting by 40% in children under five
 2. Reduce prevalence of anaemia by 50% among women in the age group of 19-49
 3. Ensure 30% reduction in low-birth weight
 4. Ensure no increase in childhood overweight
 5. Increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months up to at least 50%
 6. Reduce and maintain childhood wasting to less than 5%.
- The Global Nutrition Report was conceived following the first Nutrition for Growth Initiative Summit (N4G) in 2013. The first report was published in 2014.
- This report is produced by the Independent Expert Group of the Global Nutrition Report, supported by the Global Nutrition Report Stakeholder Group.
- The Report acts as a report card on the world's nutrition—globally, regionally, and country by country—and on efforts to improve it.
- It assesses progress in meeting Global Nutrition Targets established by the World Health Assembly.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) is a Global Nutrition Report Partner.

Issue:

- According to the Global Nutrition Report 2020, India is among 88 countries that are likely to miss global nutrition targets by 2025.
- It states that India will miss targets for all four nutritional indicators for which there are data available — stunting among under-five children, anaemia among women of reproductive age, childhood overweight and exclusive breastfeeding.

Details:

- Between 2000 and 2016, underweight rates have decreased from 66.0% to 58.1% for boys and 54.2% to 50.1% in girls. However, this is still high compared with the average of 35.6% for boys and 31.8% for girls in Asia.
- 37.9% of children under five are stunted and 20.8% are wasted, compared with the Asia average of 22.7% and 9.4% respectively.
- India is identified as among the three worst countries, along with Nigeria and Indonesia, for steep within-country disparities on stunting, where the levels varied four-fold across communities.
- Stunting level in Uttar Pradesh is over 40% and the rate among individuals in the lowest income group is more than double those in the highest income group at 22.0% and 50.7%, respectively.
- In addition, stunting prevalence is 10.1% higher in rural areas compared with urban areas.
- One in two women of reproductive age is anaemic, while at the same time, the rate of overweight and obesity continues to rise, affecting almost a fifth of the adults, at 21.6% of women and 17.8% of men.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ECONOMY

1. PM announces ₹20 lakh crore economic stimulus package

Context:

The PM announced an **economic stimulus package for ₹20 lakh crore** (estimated at 10% of the GDP), with a clearly defined leap towards economic reforms with an aim to transform the country to Atmanirbhar Bharat,

or a self-reliant, resilient India.

Details:

- Clarifying that by self-reliance he did not mean insularity and suspicion of the world as in the past, but embracing the world in the spirit of Vasudheva Kutumbakam (the world is one family).
- It was said that the edifice of this self-reliant India would be based on the five pillars of economy, infrastructure, demography, technologically driven systems and to strengthen demand and supply chains, with the supply chains being based on local sourcing.

Economic Stimulus Package:

- This amount in the economic stimulus package includes packages already announced at the beginning of the lockdown, incorporating a slew of measures from the RBI and the payouts under the **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana**.
- The Prime Minister said the economic package would not be based on incremental changes, but a quantum leap in bold reforms with regard to land, labour, law and liquidity.

Concerns:

- PM has included the actions of **RBI**, India's central bank, as part of the government's fiscal package, even though only the government controls the fiscal policy and not the RBI (which controls the 'monetary' policy).

Why shouldn't RBI's package be included in the overall package?

- Direct expenditure by a government — either by way of wage subsidy or direct benefit transfer or payment of salaries or payment for construction of a new hospital, etc. — immediately and necessarily stimulates the economy. In other words, that money necessarily reaches the people, either as someone's salary or someone's purchase.
- But credit easing by the RBI, that is, making more money available to the banks so that they can lend to the broader economy is not like government expenditure. That's because, especially in times of crisis, banks may take that money from RBI and elsewhere and, instead of lending it, park it back with the RBI.
 - At the last count, Indian banks had parked Rs 8.5 lakh crore with the central bank. So in terms of calculations, RBI has given a stimulus of Rs 6 lakh crore. But the reality is that it has received an even bigger amount back from the banks.

Note:

- The Union Finance Minister is expected to give details of the package.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Riding roughshod over State governments

Context:

- The central government issuing guidelines to the state governments over the **management of the COVID-19 pandemic**.

Background:

Federalism:

- Federalism signifies the independence of the Union and State governments of a country, in their own spheres.

7th schedule:

- Under the Indian scheme of federalism, there is division of powers between the central and state governments. The **7th Schedule of the Indian Constitution** contains three lists – **Union list, State list and Concurrent list**.
- Parliament can legislate on matters under the Union List, State legislatures can legislate on matters under the State List and both Parliament and State legislatures can legislate on matters under the Concurrent List.
- The **residuary power** to legislate on matters that are not mentioned in either of the lists **rests with Parliament**.
- As per Articles 73 and 162, the **executive power of the Centre and the States is co-extensive with their respective legislative powers**, which means that the Central and State governments can only take executive actions in matters where Parliament and State legislatures, respectively, have powers to legislate.

Principle of Harmonious Construction:

- The principle of harmonious construction was laid down by the Supreme Court in a number of judgments, including in **Godfrey Phillips v. State of U.P. & Ors (2005)**.
- The judgment notes that the **entries in the legislative lists must be interpreted harmoniously**, and in the event of any overlap between two or more entries, the specific subject matter contained in a particular entry must be deemed to have been excluded from another entry which may deal with a more general subject matter.

Details:

- The Central government has been issuing guidelines to the state governments. The guidelines contain varying **restrictions on public activity and commerce** which the States are expected to enforce.
- The Centre has been issuing guidelines **under the Disaster Management Act of 2005**.
 - The Disaster Management Act allows the Centre to issue guidelines, directions or orders to the States for mitigating the effects of any disaster.
- The Centre has directed the State governments to strictly enforce the set of guidelines, with the **States only being allowed to increase and not dilute the restrictions**.

Concerns:

- The current approach seems to be counterproductive, putting the federal structure of India under strain, and seems to be an overreach of powers by the Central government.

Top down approach:

- The Central government has so far followed a **mostly top-down approach in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic**. There seems to be **very limited consultation with the states** with respect to policy formulation.

Counterproductive:

- Though a national level coordination and collaborative effort is necessary, the **one size fits all approach seems to be having counterproductive results**.
 - The Central government, in its latest guidelines, has classified all districts in the country as red, orange or green zones in a bid to lift lockdown restrictions in an area-specific manner. Some States/Union Territories objected to this classification. The states have argued that such a classification would lead to restrictions of economic activity in the entire district area even when cases had been reported only from a small portion of that district. They have called for **micro zonation of hotspots beyond the district levels**.
 - Kerala has performed relatively well in containing the pandemic and is in a position to relax the existing guidelines. However, the Central government has asked Kerala to refrain from relaxing restrictions in the State. This move seems to be questioning the wisdom and judgment of the **State government which has a better understanding of the ground conditions**.

Division of powers:

- The Supreme Court has held time and again that **federalism is a basic feature of the Constitution** and stated that although the Union enjoys many more powers than States, the **States are still sovereign**.
- **Reasonable and effective division of powers is the bedrock of a federal structure**. This aspect seems to be under threat due to the government's recent moves.

Disaster Management Act:

- Disaster management does not find mention in either State list or Concurrent list, nor does any particular entry in Union list specifically deal with this. Thus, the **Disaster Management Act** could only have been enacted by Parliament in exercise of its **residuary powers of legislation**.
- **'Public health and sanitation' is a specific field of legislation under the State list**. This would imply that States have the exclusive right to legislate and act on matters concerning public health.
- The author argues that the Disaster Management Act cannot be applied to pandemics in view of the fact that the power to legislate on public health is vested specifically and exclusively with the States.
- The author argues that the Centre's guidelines and directions to the States for dealing with the pandemic entrench upon the state's power to legislate and take executive action in the field of public health and hence **terms it unconstitutional**.

Prevention of inter-State spread of contagious and infectious diseases:

- The author argues that **Disaster Management Act is concerned with disasters in general and not pandemics in particular**.
- **'Prevention of inter-State spread of contagious and infectious diseases' falls under the Concurrent list**, wherein both Parliament and State legislatures are competent to legislate on related matters.
- 'Prevention of inter-State spread of contagious and infectious diseases' being a specific legislative head provided in the Concurrent list, the same must be deemed to have been excluded from

- Parliament's residuary legislative powers.
- Therefore, the Disaster Management Act, which has been enacted under Parliament's residuary legislative powers, cannot be applied to the prevention of inter-State spread of contagious and infectious diseases based on the principle of harmonious construction.

Neglecting existing laws:

- The **Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897**, has the specific objective of preventing the spread of dangerous epidemic diseases.
 - Under this Act, the **State governments have the prerogative** to take appropriate measures for arresting the outbreak or spread of a contagious or infectious disease in their respective States. **The Central government's powers are limited to taking measures for inspecting and detaining persons travelling out of or into the country.**
 - Under this Act, the Central Government is not empowered to issue directions to the States to contain the pandemic within the State, but it can only deal with inter-State spread of the disease.
- The Central Government's resorting to the Disaster Management Act instead of the Epidemic Diseases Act has enabled the central government to ride roughshod over State governments.

2. Reaffirm cooperative federalism

Context:

- The article examines the **strain on the principle of federalism** due to the current circumstances in India.

Background:

Cooperative federalism:

- In a traditional sense, **federalism signifies the independence of the Union and State governments of a country, in their own spheres.**
- However, while framing the Indian Constitution, the Constituent Assembly carefully studied the constitutions of other federations like the U.S., Canada, Australia and Switzerland and adopted a 'pick and choose' policy to formulate a **system suited uniquely to India's need.**
- As a result, India's Constituent Assembly became the first-ever constituent body in the world to embrace what has been referred to as '**cooperative federalism**'.
 - Cooperative federalism essentially is defined as the **administrative cooperation between the Centre and the States, and a partial dependence of the States upon payments from the Centre.**
 - Despite a strong Centre, cooperative federalism doesn't necessarily result in weaker States.

Concerns:

- The current circumstances under the pandemic crisis have severely strained the principle of federalism in India.

Fissures in cooperation:

- The central government's zone classifications into 'red' and 'orange' zones have evoked sharp criticisms from several States. The **States have demanded more autonomy** in making such classifications.

Lack of consultation:

- Despite **State consultation being a legislative mandate cast upon the Centre under the Disaster Management Act of 2005**, there has been minimal consultation with the states and the guidelines issued so far have been mostly based on a top down approach.
 - The Disaster Management Act of 2005 envisages the creation of a 'National Plan' as well as issuance of binding guidelines by the Centre to States in furtherance of the 'National Plan'. The Act mandates State consultations before formulating a 'National Plan', so that the binding guidelines issued under it, also represent the views of the States.
- The Centre has not formulated a 'National Plan', and has chosen instead to respond to COVID-19 through **ad hoc binding guidelines issued to States**, thereby **circumventing the legislative mandate** of State consultations.

Centralized decision making:

- The Centre has directed the State governments to strictly enforce the set of guidelines, prohibiting the States from lowering the Centre's classifications. The selective application of the Act serves to **concentrate all decision-making powers with the Centre**.

Lack of funds:

- The states are facing a huge financial burden:
 - **Corporations donating to PM-CARES can avail CSR exemptions**, whereas such provisions are not available for the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. This disincentivizes donations to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund and diverts crores in potential State revenues to PM-CARES and thus, makes the **States largely dependent upon the Centre**.
 - The **revenue streams of several States have dried up** because of the liquor sale ban, negligible sale of petrol/diesel, temporary halt of land dealings and registration of agreements.
 - States' GST collections have been severely affected with their dues still not disbursed by the Centre.
- This is a major concern given the fact that **States act as the first responders to the pandemic**, and supplying them with adequate funds is essential for effectively tackling the crisis.

Conclusion:

- The progress of the Indian Republic rests upon active **cooperation** between the states and the centre. Similarly, India's success in defeating COVID-19 actively rests upon **Centre-State collaboration**.
- The Centre needs to **view the States as equals, and strengthen their capabilities**, instead of increasing their dependence upon itself.

Category: ECONOMY

1. Perilous state

Context:

- State government's **precarious financial condition**.

Causes:

- The COVID-19-induced lockdown has severely affected State finances in the following ways.
 - The **state's revenue sources** from liquor sales, stamp duty from property transactions and sales tax on petroleum products, which account for almost half the total revenues, **have collapsed**.
 - The **state's expenditure on interest payments, social sector schemes and staff salaries** remain unchanged.
 - The states are having to spend more on **strengthening their health infrastructure** and on COVID-19 measures, including testing, treatment and quarantining.

Worrying developments:

- Given the state of finances, some States have gone ahead and **cut salaries of their employees and pension benefits** to rein in expenses.
- Even the traditionally well performing states such as Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, are now **requesting for funding support from the Centre** and relaxation in borrowing rules by the RBI.
- Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra, looking for revenue sources **commenced liquor sales with outlets flouting all physical distancing norms**. The fear is that this could seed fresh infections.

Way forward:

Centre's role:

- The **burden is on the Centre to find the resources** to immediately release the dues of the States and also reimburse them for their COVID-19-related expenses.
- Though the Centre itself is not in a comfortable financial condition, the centre at least has the means to replenish its **finances through conventional and unconventional means**.
 - The centre has been able to appropriate the benefits of **falling oil prices** through increase in duties.
 - The centre has also recently announced an **increase in its borrowing** by half for the current fiscal.

More leeway for states:

- There is a need to **relax the fiscal deficit levels of the States** from the current 3% level to at least 4.5%. The States should be allowed to borrow more.
- The Centre should give States the **freedom to restart economic activity** based on their own assessment. Greater leeway in restarting economic activity will relieve some of the financial stress, not just on the States but also on the Centre.

F. Prelims Facts

Nothing here for today!!!

G. Tidbits

1. China waives tariffs on more U.S. imports

What's in News?

China has suspended punitive tariffs on more U.S. goods, including radar equipment for aviation, amid pressure from President Donald Trump to buy more imports as part of a truce in their trade war.

- Washington agreed in January 2020 to cancel additional tariff hikes and Beijing committed to buy more American farm exports.
- Trump threatened to terminate the agreement if China fails to buy more American goods.
 - The two sides have raised duties on tens of billions of dollars of each other's imports in a dispute over China's technology ambitions and trade surplus.
- Fears have been rekindled in the financial markets, of more U.S.-Chinese conflict and potential disruption of global trade even as countries are reeling under the pandemic.
- Slumping economic activity due to the virus has prompted suggestions that China might be unable to carry out commitments to boost imports.
- The recent announcement is the third Chinese tariff cut since the January 2020 deal.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Arrange the following from North to South:

1. Tso Kar
2. Tso Moriri
3. Kiagar Tso
4. Pangong Tso

Choose the correct option:

1. 4, 1, 3, 2
2. 4, 3, 1, 2
3. 1, 2, 3, 4
4. 2, 3, 1, 4

Answer

Answer: a

Explanation:



Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to Global Nutrition Survey:

1. Global Nutrition Survey is published by the World Health Organisation.
2. It assesses progress in meeting Global Nutrition Targets established by the World Health Assembly.
3. The first Global Nutrition Survey was published in 1949.

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

1. 1 and 3 only
2. 2 and 3 only
3. 2 only
4. 1 and 2 only

Answer

Answer: a

Explanation:

- The Global Nutrition Report is **produced by the Independent Expert Group, supported by the Global Nutrition Report Stakeholder Group**. It is an independently produced annual stock-take of the state of the world's nutrition.
 - The World Health Organization (WHO) is a Global Nutrition Report Partner.
- It was conceived following the first Nutrition for Growth Initiative Summit (N4G) in 2013. **The first report was published in 2014.**
- **It assesses progress in meeting Global Nutrition Targets established by the World Health Assembly.**

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. The joint sitting of the Parliament is called and presided over by the Rajya Sabha Chairman.
2. The Parliament of India has never held Joint Sitzings.
3. Constitution Amendment Bill and Money Bill cannot be referred to a joint sitting of the Parliament.

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

1. 1 and 2 only
2. 1 only
3. 3 only
4. 1, 2 and 3

Answer

Answer: c

Explanation:

- The joint sitting of the Parliament is called by the President (Article 108) and is presided over by the Speaker or, in his absence, by the Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha or in his absence, the Deputy-Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. **A joint sitting is not presided over by the Rajya Sabha Chairman.**
- So far, **Parliament has held only three Joint Sitzings** to resolve differences between both the Houses.
- **Constitution Amendment Bill and Money Bill cannot be referred to a joint sitting of the Parliament.**

Q4. Consider the following statements:

1. India shares the longest border with China, followed by Bangladesh.
2. Line of Actual Control (LAC) runs from the eastern limit of Bhutan to a point near the Talu Pass.
3. Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh touch the Indian boundary with China.

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

1. 1 and 3 only
2. 1 and 2 only
3. 1, 2 and 3
4. 3 only

Answer

Answer: d

Explanation:

- India shares the longest border with Bangladesh, followed by China.
- Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh touch the Indian boundary with China.
- India shares a 1,140 km long boundary with China in the Eastern sector. It runs from the **eastern limit of Bhutan to a point near the Talu Pass at the trijunction of Tibet, India and Myanmar. This boundary line is called McMahon Line.**

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. In the light of the Central Government issuing guidelines to the state governments over the management of the COVID-19 pandemic under the Disaster management Act, there have been concerns raised over the undermining of the federalism principle. Examine. (10 marks, 150 words)
2. Evaluate and compare the centralized approach and state-led efforts in the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic in India. Suggest a suitable way forward for a more effective response. (15 marks, 250 words)
3. Discuss the reasons for the current precarious condition of the state finances and the concerns associated with it. Suggest suitable measures to reduce the fiscal pressures on the states. (10 marks, 150 words)

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