

**NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION,  
EMPOWERMENT ETC****NITI Aayog “Healthy States, Progressive India” Report and Health Index 2019**

Kerala was ranked the best in the country in terms of health performance, according to health index scores in a report by NITI Aayog. Kerala had an overall score of 74.01, with Andhra Pradesh coming second at 65.13.

**NITI Aayog’s Health Index**

- The report is an annual systematic performance tool to measure the performance of the States and UTs.
- It ranks states and union territories on their year on year incremental change in health outcomes, as well as, their overall performance with respect to each other.
- The index analyses overall performance and incremental improvement in the States and the UTs for the period with 2015-16 as the base year and 2017-18 as the reference year.
- HIV and tuberculosis detection and treatment, institutional deliveries, maternal and neonatal mortality rates, and immunisation coverage are among the indices measured and compared.
- The states are broadly grouped into three: larger and smaller states and union territories so as to maintain a constant when comparing their health indices.
- States had to fill in the responses in a specially created dashboard while a number of responses were pre-filled while sourced from National Family Health Survey-4 and Health Management Information System.

**INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE, HISTORY****Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs)**

To protect, promote & preserve various forms of folk art and culture throughout the country including Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand & Odisha, the Government of India has set up seven Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs).

**Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs)**

- The establishment of Zonal Cultural Centre was announced by the PM for the northern region during his visit to Hussainiwala, Punjab on 23rd March 1985.
- The concept was enlarged with the setting up of seven Zonal Cultural Centers in the 7th Five Year Plan.

**Objectives of ZCCs**

- The ZCCs have been set up with the prime objective of creative development of Indian culture in the different regions and for building up a sense of cultural cohesiveness in the country.
- The ZCCs work for national unity through cultural integration.
- They seek to inspire, foster and promote fine arts, dance, drama, music, theatre, crafts and related forms of creative expression.

**Various activities under ZCCs**

- The ZCCs have been carrying out various activities and programmes at the national, zonal and local levels in accordance with their aims and objectives implemented through various schemes.
- They have been implementing the following schemes to preserve and promote traditional art and culture:
- These are: National Cultural Exchange Programme; Guru Shishya Parampara Scheme; Young Talented Artistes Scheme; Documentation of Vanishing Art Forms; Theatre Rejuvenation Scheme; Shilpagram Activities and Loktarang – National Folk Dance Festival and Octave.
- These ZCCs organize various cultural activities & programmes on regular basis all over the country.

**Seven ZCCs**

- Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre, Kolkata
- North Central Zone Cultural Centre, Allahabad

- North east Zone Cultural centre, Dimapur
- North Zone Cultural centre, Patiala
- South Central Zone Cultural Centre, Nagpur
- South Zone Cultural Centre, Thanjavur
- West Zone Cultural Centre, Udaipur

## **CONSTITUTION AND POLITY**

### **Constructive Vote of No-confidence**

In the debate over simultaneous elections, one question being raised is what happens to the common cycle if any one of these simultaneously elected legislatures is brought down by a no-confidence motion. The ruling govt. in Odisha where Assembly and general elections already coincide has proposed a solution, a provision what is followed in Germany.

### **Constructive Vote of No-confidence**

- Article 67 [Vote of no confidence] of Basic Law in Germany (Constitution of Germany) sets conditions for moving a no-confidence motion against the Chancellor.
- The Bundestag (German parliament) may express its lack of confidence in the Federal Chancellor only by electing a successor by the vote of a majority of its members and requesting the Federal President to dismiss the Chancellor.
- The President must comply with the request and appoint the person elected.
- Article 68 [Vote of confidence] states that if a motion of the Chancellor for a vote of confidence is not supported by a majority of members, the President, upon the proposal of the Chancellor, may dissolve the Bundestag within 21 days.
- The right of dissolution shall lapse as soon as the Bundestag elects another Chancellor by a majority vote.

### **Its meaning**

- The provision allows Parliament to withdraw confidence from a head of government only if there is a majority in favour for a prospective successor.
- This narrows down the scope of the Opposition to overthrow the government at will and necessitate elections before the government ends its term.
- The underlying premise is that there is a fixed five-year-tenure (for the House) and that there will be a government no matter what.
- The government will be presumed to have a majority unless another grouping is in a position to demonstrate that they have greater numbers.
- This is based on a concept called “constructive vote of no-confidence”, also recommended by the Law Commission of India in a 2018 draft report.

## **GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.**

### **‘Jal Hi Jiwan’ Scheme in Haryana**

Farmers in paddy-growing districts of Haryana have agreed to opt for maize and other alternatives after the state government offered major incentives for crop diversification. This was done in an attempt to address the rapidly falling groundwater levels in the state.

### **‘Jal Hi Jiwan’ Scheme**

- The ‘Jal Hi Jiwan’ scheme envisages diversification of 50,000 hectare area of non-basmati rice mainly into maize, pulses or oilseeds to achieve the target.
- Apart from seeds and financial assistance of Rs 5,000 per hectare, the farmer’s share of crop insurance will also be borne by the government.
- After it emerged that the groundwater level has depleted in 76% area of the state, Haryana launched the pilot scheme.
- The objective of the scheme is to replace paddy with maize in seven major paddy-growing districts: Ambala, Yamuna Nagar, Kurukshetra, Kaithal, Jind, Karnal and Sonapat.
- According to the state Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department, the farmers have formally registered for alternative plantations over 40,000 hectares of land.

### **Why substitute Paddy Cultivation?**

- Paddy is not suitable for Haryana because it puts tremendous stress on the groundwater due to its water-intensive nature.
- According to agriculture department officials, 1 kg of rice requires 2,000-5,000 litres of water, depending upon its variety, soil type and time of sowing.
- With paddy production jumping, the number of tubewells in the state also shot up from a few thousand to 8 lakh, resulting in overdraw of groundwater.
- Experts also say that it has exhausted the soil health while the crops like arhar, pulses and oilseeds require minimum fertilizers.
- If farmers opt for maize in place of rice, the water saved per hectare will be about 14 lakh litres per crop season.

#### Rise in dark zones

- These are zones where the water table has fallen to a critical level, and the rate at which water is being drawn is much more than the pace at which it is being recharged.
- In the last two decades, the farmers have pumped out much as 74% of the groundwater reservoirs.
- If over-exploitation of the water continues, parts of Haryana will turn into a desert in the coming years.
- First such scheme ever: Haryana is the first state to implement water-saving scheme involving sowing maize as an alternative crop.

### **INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS**

#### India's non-permanent membership of UNSC

India's candidature for a non-permanent seat in the Security Council has been endorsed unanimously by the Asia Pacific group, which comprises 55 countries, including Pakistan.

#### How is a non-permanent member nominated?

- Each year, the General Assembly elects five non-permanent members out of a total of 10, for a two-year term.
- These 10 seats are distributed among the regions thus: five for African and Asian countries; one for Eastern European countries; two for Latin American and Caribbean countries; two for Western European and other countries.
- Of the five seats for Africa and Asia, three are for Africa and two for Asia; there is an informal understanding between the two groups to reserve one for an Arab country.
- The Africa and Asia Pacific group takes turns every two years to put up an Arab candidate.
- The 55-member Asia-Pacific Group gets to nominate one of its members for the June 2020 elections to a non-permanent seat on the UNSC.

#### Why it's special?

- The endorsement means that India has a "clean slate" candidature – that is there is no other contestant from the group – for the elections that will be held for five non-permanent members next year, for the 2021-22 terms.
- The development is particularly significant given that Pakistan and China, both countries with which India has had diplomatic challenges at the UN, supported the move.
- Afghanistan, a potential contender, withdrew its nomination to accommodate India's candidacy based on the "long-standing, close and friendly relations" between the two countries.
- India and UNSC
- India has already held a non-permanent seat on the UNSC for seven terms: 1950-1951, 1967-1968, 1972-1973, 1977-1978, 1984-1985, 1991-1992 and 2011-2012.
- It has been keen to hold the seat in 2021-22 to coincide with the 75th anniversary of Independence in 2022.

### **INDIAN ECONOMY**

#### Surjit Bhalla Committee on Trade and Policy

High Level Advisory Group (HLAG) headed by Dr. Surjit S. Bhalla has been constituted by the Department of Commerce.

### Surjit Bhalla Committee Recommendations

- The HLAG has made several recommendations for boosting India's share and importance in global merchandise and services trade.
- Among other things, the Report identifies tax reforms also to boost export and investment channels for exports.
- The Committee has recommended "Elephant Bonds" as a specialised security product providing funds towards Long Term Infrastructure.
- HLAG has also made recommendations for reforms in Financial Services Framework for making India a Preferred Destination for financial services.

### About Elephant Bonds

- Elephant Bonds are the 25-year sovereign bonds in which people declaring undisclosed income will be bound to invest 50 per cent.
- The fund, made from these bonds, will be utilized only for infrastructure projects.
- It is like an Amnesty scheme to help State treasury raising tax revenues, adding beneficiaries in tax base who have not declared their assets previously.

## **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE ETC**

### Thorium-Based Nuclear Reactors

Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) has planned the use of large deposits of Thorium available in the country as a long-term option.

### Thorium-Based Nuclear Reactors

- A three-stage nuclear power programme has been chalked out to use Thorium as a viable and sustainable option, right at the inception of India's nuclear power programme.
- The three stage nuclear power programme aims to multiply the domestically available fissile resource through the use of natural Uranium in Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors.
- It is followed by the use of Plutonium obtained from the spent fuel of Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors in Fast Breeder Reactors.

### Why Thorium?

- The utilization of Thorium, as a practically inexhaustible energy source, has been contemplated during the third stage of the Indian Nuclear Programme.
- As is the case with generation of electricity from Uranium, there will be no emission of green house gases from Thorium also and therefore, it will be a clean source of energy.
- It is not possible to build a nuclear reactor using Thorium (Thorium-232) alone due to its physics characteristics.
- Thorium has to be converted to Uranium-233 in a reactor before it can be used as fuel.

### Fall Army Worm

The Union Government is considering several steps to control the spread of Fall Army Worm in many states.

### Background

- Fall armyworm, first detected in maize fields in India last year, can wreak havoc across crops without timely government action.
- Its moths were totally different from oriental armyworm.
- This pest was known to strike once every 10-12 years.

### Fall Armyworm

- Native to the Americas, FAW has, since 2016, been aggressively moving eastwards, infesting Africa and making landfall in India last summer.
- It propagates similar to an army that "marches" slowly forward and consumes any foliage on the way.
- Unlike oriental armyworm, FAW isn't a cyclical pest that comes intermittently.
- Instead, it is a continuous pest that is nearly always present and can build permanent populations.

- Not only is it a far more serious threat, but the measures to control the pest are also ad hoc.
- Within India, FAW attacks have already been reported from even Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal, while causing damage to the maize, jowar (sorghum) and, to a limited extent, sugarcane crops in these states.

#### Why FAW are more dangerous?

- Both oriental armyworm and FAW are polyphagous; their larvae feed on a range of host crop plants.
- The former, though, does not spread very fast, which is why the damage from it in 2017 and even 2018 was largely confined to Karnataka.
- The adult FAW moth, in contrast, can fly up to 100 km distance every night, allowing it to invade new geographies very quickly.
- Besides, an adult female can lay 1,500-2,000 eggs during her entire life cycle of 45 days, as against 100-200 eggs by the oriental armyworm.

#### How to identify them?

- Pheromones are natural compounds emitted by female FAW moths to attract males for mating.
- Pheromone traps basically use synthetic versions of these compounds to attract and catch male moths, which can, then, be counted to detect any significant FAW presence.

### **DEFENCE**

#### Exercise Garuda-VI

- The Indian Air Force is participating in a bilateral exercise between Indian and French Air Force named Exercise 'Garuda-VI' France in July '19.
- This is the sixth edition of Exercise Garuda and is being planned in France.
- The first edition of the Garuda exercise was held in February 2003 in Gwalior.
- The last exercise, 'Garuda V' was held at Air Force Station Jodhpur in Jun 2014.
- A fleet of Sukhoi 30 fighter jets of the Indian Air Force will engage in dogfights with France's Rafale multirole aircraft in simulated scenarios as part of the exercise.

#### Benefits of the exercise

- This will enhance understanding of interoperability during mutual operations between the two Air Forces and provide an opportunity to learn from each other's best practices.
- Participation of IAF in the exercise will also promote professional interaction, exchange experiences and operational knowledge besides strengthening bilateral relations with the French Air Force.
- It will also provide a good opportunity to the air warriors to operate in an international environment.

### **QUOTE OF THE DAY**

**Failing to prepare is preparing to fail.**

## **Daily Answer Writing Practice**

### **Question: Why UNSC Reforms are required and is significant for India?**

Ans: UN Security Council (UNSC), must reflect contemporary global realities. UNSC has been reduced to a tool to serve the caprice of its five permanent members. Due to its structural defects, the UNSC has never been capable of preventing the most destructive and deadly wars, many of which are catered by the countries entrusted with the veto. Russia's armed intervention in Ukraine, USA's Iraq invasion are testimonies to this fact. As long as responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security is left to the whims of only the most powerful in the international order, the world cannot expect quality peacekeeping efforts. For this purpose the reform of the UN including the expansion of the UNSC in both permanent and non-permanent categories is crucial. To this end, the Government of India has been actively working along with other like-minded countries for building support among the UN membership for a meaningful restructuring and expansion of the UNSC.

### **Why UNSC reform is necessary**

- UNSC still reflects the geopolitical architecture of the Second World War. The Council's five permanent members – United States, Britain, France, Russia, and China – enjoy their position, as well as the privilege of a veto over any Council resolution or decision, by virtue of having won a war 70 years ago.
- Expanded only once in 1963 to add 4 non permanent members. Since then the membership of the United Nations has increased from 113 to 193 without any change in the composition of the UNSC.
- The current composition of the Council also gives undue weight to the balance of power of at least a half century ago. Europe, for instance, which accounts for barely 5 percent of the world's population, still controls 33 percent of the SC seats in any given year (and that does not count Russia, regarded by much of the world as another European power).
- No permanent member from Africa, despite 75% of work of the UNSC focused on Africa.
- Unable to respond effectively to situations of international conflict.
- The current Council membership denies opportunities to other states that have contributed through participation in peacekeeping operations. India and Brazil are notable examples of this.
- Any amendment requires a two-thirds majority of the overall UN membership. An amendment would further have to be ratified by two-thirds of the member states.

### **India's case**

- India, with a population of 1.2 billion, a \$ trillion economy, the third largest country in terms of purchasing power parity, a nuclear weapons power with the third largest standing army in the world, and a major contributor to the UN's peacekeeping missions, should be a permanent member of the UNSC. By any objective criteria such as population, territorial size, GDP, economic potential, civilizational legacy, cultural diversity, political system and past and on-going contributions to the activities of the UN – especially to UN peacekeeping operations – India is eminently suited for permanent membership of an expanded UNSC.
- India's performance as a non-permanent member of the Security Council during 2011- 2012 has also significantly strengthened India's claim to permanent membership. India has served as a non-permanent member of the UNSC for 7 terms,

viz. in 1950 – 1951, 1967 – 1968, 1972 – 1973, 1977 – 1978, 1984 – 1985, 1991 – 1992, and 2011 – 2012. India has again put forth its candidature for the 2021-22 term.

- India along with Brazil, Japan and Germany (together known as the G-4) has proposed expansion of the membership of the UNSC in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. Pakistan has called the grouping a “minority” that wants to reconfigure the Security Council to secure “their national interests”.
- Separately, India is spearheading a group of around 42 developing countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America –called the L.69 Group – which has demanded urgent action on the UNSC reform front. With a view to harness the support of the 54-member strong African Group, the L.69 has engaged in discussions with the Committee of C-10 of the African Union to evolve a joint position on UNSC reform.
- India is also pursuing the matter through bilateral channels with interlocutors. A large number of countries have supported India’s initiatives for reform of the UNSC as well as endorsed its candidature for permanent membership.

### Challenges

- Opposition from Italy, Mexico and Pakistan—called the “Coffee Club” by UN diplomats as well as the reluctance of existing members that has stalled the reform.
- China is reluctant to see its stature diminished. The thought of sharing permanent status with India and Japan is not one that evokes much joy in Beijing. Though it has supported India’s bid as a permanent member, with a rider that India does not associate its bid with Japan.
- USA is conscious that a larger body would be more unwieldy and a bigger collection of permanent members more difficult to manage. USA of course likes a council which it can dominate.
- Failure to name the possible African representatives because of intense rivalry amongst them and severe criticism of their candidature within Africa. African opponents of Council reform have adroitly maneuvered the African Union into an impossible position under the label “the Ezulwini Consensus” (named after the Swaziland town in which the formula was agreed). The Ezulwini Consensus demands two veto-wielding permanent seats and five non permanent seats for Africa in a reformed Council, a demand couched in terms of African self-respect but pushed precisely by those countries that know it is unlikely ever to be granted.

### Way forward

- Kishore Mahbubani , a noted academic and diplomat, advocates a 7-7-7 formula for UNSC reform — seven permanent members, seven semi-permanent members and seven non-permanent members.
- There is also broad support for the idea that there should be concrete outcome on the issue of UNSC reform in 2015, which will mark the 70th anniversary of the UN and the 10th anniversary of the 2005 World Summit which had called for ‘early’ reform of the UNSC. At a time when faster growing economies, more youthful populations, and the concentration of natural resources are mainly in the developing world, a reform of global political management systems to respond to crises and violence is even more imperative. If the UNSC includes India and Brazil, and also represents Africa and West Asia, it will infuse the council with a deeper understanding and enable a wiser response to the world’s cascading political crises, and not hasty and excessive militarism.

**Daily Current Affair Based MCQs**

1. Consider the following statements w.r.t the Health Index -2019 published by NITI Aayog?
  1. The 2019 edition of the report accounts for the period 2015-16 as base year and 2017-18 as reference year.
  2. Uttarakhand has been ranked the best in terms of health performance.Which of the statements is/are incorrect?
  - (a) 1 only
  - (b) 2 only**
  - (c) Both 1 and 2
  - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
2. Consider the following statements w.r.t the North-East Zone Cultural Centre.
  1. It is headquartered in Dispur, Assam.
  2. Sikkim is not a component state of this the North-East Zone Cultural Centre.Which of the statements is/are incorrect?
  - (a) 1 only**
  - (b) 2 only
  - (c) Both 1 and 2
  - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
3. Which one of the following statements is not correct ?
  - (a) In Lok Sabha, a no-confidence motion has to set out the grounds on which it is based**
  - (b) In the case of a no-confidence motion in Lok Sabha, no conditions of admissibility have been laid down in the Rules
  - (c) A motion of no-confidence, once admitted, has to be taken up within ten days of the leave being granted
  - (d) Rajya Sabha is not empowered to entertain a motion of no-confidence.
4. Consider the following statements w.r.t the Jal hi Jiwan Scheme.
  1. It has been introduced by the Govt of Haryana.
  2. Its main objective is to replace paddy with maize in several regions.Which of the statements is/are incorrect?
  - (a) 1 only
  - (b) 2 only**
  - (c) Both 1 and 2
  - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
5. Which of the following statements is/ are correct w.r.t Thorium?
  1. India has about 25 % of the worlds reserve of Thorium
  2. Thorium is found in the form of mineral Monazite in the beaches of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.Select the correct answer from the codes given below.
  - (a) 1 only
  - (b) 2 only
  - (c) Both 1 and 2**
  - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. Consider the following statements w.r.t the Nuclear Reactors in India.
  1. The largest power station in India is in Tarapur Maharashtra
  2. The largest reactor is Dhruva at the Babha Atomic Resarch Center.
  3. Currently India is using two types of Power reactors, Pressurized Heavy Water Reactor and the Boiling Water Reactor.Which of the statements is/are correct?
  - (a) 1 and 2
  - (b) 2 and 3
  - (c) 1 and 3
  - (d) 1, 2 and 3**