

CONSTITUTION AND POLITY**Parichay**

Law schools across India launched a collaborative legal aid clinic on for people excluded from the updated National Register Citizens (NRC) in Assam.

About:

- The clinic, named Parichay (Identity) and with headquarters in Guwahati, is envisaged to function as a “clearing house of litigation and research assistance for lawyers filing appeals against exclusion from the NRC”.
- Parichay will assist lawyers in drafting appeals, conduct research on pertinent questions of the law, assist in training lawyers and paralegals, and generate documentation on the functioning of Foreigners’ Tribunals
- The institutes include Assam’s National Law University and Judicial Academy (NLUJA), the Kolkata-based West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences, Hyderabad’s National Academy of Legal Studies and Research (NALSAR), Delhi’s National Law University and National Law University of Odisha.
- Other law schools are in the process of formalising their collaboration with Parichay.

GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.**Prakash Portal**

The Union Minister for Power and the Union Minister for Coal & Mines jointly launched PRAKASH portal for transparency and better coordination in coal supplies to power plants.

About:

- PRAKASH stands for ‘Power Rail Koyla Availability through Supply Harmony’.
- The Portal aims at bringing better coordination for coal supplies among all stakeholders viz - Ministry of Power, Ministry of Coal, Coal India, Railways and power utilities. This is an important step in ensuring adequate availability and optimum utilization of coal at thermal power plants.
- PRAKASH Portal is developed by NTPC and sources data from different stakeholders such as Central Electricity Authority (CEA), Centre for Railway Information System (CRIS) and coal companies.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS**Indo Mauritius Relations**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of Mauritius, Pravind Jugnauth jointly inaugurated the Metro Express and new ENT Hospital in Mauritius through a video link.

About:

- The Metro Express (Light Rail Transit) Project, will transform the mobility landscape in Mauritius as an efficient, faster and cleaner mode of public transport.
- The ENT Hospital will significantly expand access to quality health-care and benefit the people in addition to being the first paperless E-Hospital in Mauritius.
- PM Modi also conveyed Government of India’s decision to support Mauritius in construction of a Renal unit as well as Medi-Clinics and Area Health Centres through grant assistance.

Mauritius

- Mauritius is an island nation in the Indian Ocean about 2,000 kilometres off the southeast coast of the African continent. The country includes the islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues and the outer islands of Agaléga and St. Brandon.
- The islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues form part of the Mascarene Islands, along with nearby Réunion, a French overseas department.
- The sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago is disputed between Mauritius and the United Kingdom.
- The capital and largest city is Port Louis.

Exercise Ekuverin

Tenth edition of the Joint Military Exercise Ekuverin between the Indian Army and the Maldives National Defence Force will be organised from 07 to 20 October 2019 at Aundh Military Station in Pune, Maharashtra.

About:

- The Indian Army and the Maldives National Defence Forces have been conducting Exercise Ekuverin meaning 'Friends' in the Dhivehi language since 2009.
- The 14 days Joint Exercise held alternatively in India and Maldives was held in 2018 at Northern Area Headquarters, Lh. Maafilaafushi of Maldives.
- The Exercise focuses on enhancing interoperability between the two forces for carrying out counter insurgency and counter-terrorism operations in a semi-urban environment under the United Nations mandate.

Exercise Nomadic Elephant

14th edition of Indo – Mongolian joint military training, Exercise Nomadic Elephant-XIV, being conducted over a period of 14 days, will commence from 05 Oct 2019.

About:

- The exercise will be conducted from 05 Oct 19 to 18 Oct 19 at Bakloh.
- The Mongolian Army is being represented by officers and troops of the elite 084 Air Borne Special Task Battalion while Indian Army is being represented by a contingent of a battalion of RAJPUTANA RIFLES.
- Nomadic Elephant-XIV is aimed at training troops in counter insurgency & counter terrorism operations under United Nations mandate.

INDIAN ECONOMY**Microfinance**

In a move that will enable more borrowers to avail loans from microfinance institutions (MFI), the Reserve Bank of India has decided to raise the lending limit per borrower from Rs.1 lakh to Rs.1.25 lakh.

Background:

- In the wake of the Andhra Pradesh micro finance crisis in 2010, a Sub-Committee of the Central Board of the Reserve Bank (Chairman: Y. H. Malegam) was constituted to study issues in the MFI sector.
- Based on the recommendations of the Committee, it was decided to create a separate category of NBFC, viz., Non-Banking Financial Company-Micro Finance Institution (NBFC-MFI) and a detailed regulatory framework for NBFC-MFIs was put in place in December 2011.
- The income and loan limits to classify an exposure as eligible asset were last revised in 2015.

Recent development:

- Taking into consideration the important role played by MFIs in delivering credit to poor, it is proposed to revise these criteria as under:
- Increase the household income limit for borrowers of NBFC-MFIs from the current level of Rs.1.00 lakh for rural areas and Rs.1.60 lakh for urban/semi urban areas to Rs.1.25 lakh and Rs.2.00 lakh, respectively.
- Raise the lending limit from ₹ 1.00 lakh to ₹ 1.25 lakh per eligible borrower.

Fourth Bi-Monthly Monetary Policy Statement, 2019-20

The Monetary Policy Committee of the RBI has cut the key policy rate by 25 basis point to 5.15 %.

Key highlights of Monetary Policy Statement:

- On the basis of an assessment of the current and evolving macroeconomic situation, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has decided to reduce the policy repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) by 25 basis points to 5.15 % from 5.40 % with immediate effect.
- Consequently, the reverse repo rate under the LAF stands reduced to 4.90 %, and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate to 5.40 %.
- The MPC also decided to continue with an accommodative stance as long as it is necessary to revive growth, while ensuring that inflation remains within the target.
- It also revised its growth forecast for the current financial sharply, from 6.9% projected in the August policy, to 6.1%. Growth forecast for the first quarter of the next financial year was also trimmed to 7.2% from 7.4%.

- These decisions are in consonance with the objective of achieving the medium-term target for consumer price index (CPI) inflation of 4 % within a band of +/- 2 %, while supporting growth.
- The rate cut comes after GDP growth for the first quarter of the current financial year plunged to a 25-quarter low of 5%.
- Between February and now, the central bank has reduced the policy rate by 135 bps.

Youth Co:Lab

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) India launched Youth Co:Lab to accelerate youth-led social entrepreneurship and innovation in India.

About:

- Co-created in 2017 by UNDP and the Citi Foundation, and operational in 25 countries across the Asia Pacific region, the Youth Co:Lab initiative aims to create an enabling ecosystem to promote youth leadership, innovation, and social entrepreneurship.
- Through Youth Co:Lab, young entrepreneurs and innovators will get a chance to connect with governments, mentors, incubators and investors, who will help equip them with entrepreneurial skills.
- The first phase of Youth Co:Lab will focus on six SDGs: SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production) and SDG 13 (Climate Action).
- The initiative will also convene a series of youth dialogues across several cities such as New Delhi, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Mumbai to promote entrepreneurship across India.

ISSUES RELATED TO INTERNAL SECURITY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Halt The Hate

Amnesty India's 'Halt the Hate', a hate crime tracker has recorded 181 incidents of alleged hate crimes in the first half of 2019, the steepest rise in such incidents since 2015.

Key findings:

- The 181 recorded incidents of alleged hate crimes in the first half of 2019 is almost double that of the same period last year, when 100 such cases were recorded.
- Over two-thirds of the victims were targeted because they were Dalits, while 40 of them suffered because of their Muslim identity.
- In 37 reported incidents, the victims were killed. In 30 cases, victims were raped or sexually assaulted.
- Between January and June 2019, 72 mob attacks were reported. Of the 37 such attacks against Muslims, the victims were lynched in 5 cases. Dalit victims were lynched in 8 of the 28 mob attacks.
- There were 7 honour killings and 12 cases of violence against Adivasis.

Halt the Hate

- Amnesty's Halt the Hate website was launched in September 2015 in the wake of the murder of Mohammed Akhlaq – a Muslim resident of Dadri, Uttar Pradesh – by a mob claiming that he had eaten beef.
- 'Halt the Hate' is an interactive website that documents reports of alleged hate crimes in India against Dalits, Muslims, Adivasis, Transgender people, Christians, and 'Other' vulnerable groups.
- The term 'hate crime' is generally applied to criminal acts against people based on their real or perceived membership of a particular group, such as caste, religion or ethnicity, among others.

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES

E-Waste Clinic

India's first e-waste clinic will come up in Madhya Pradesh capital.

About:

- The Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC) and the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) have joined hands to set up the country's first e-waste clinic in Bhopal. CPCB will offer technical support.

- The clinic is being conceived in compliance with the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016.
- This would enable segregation, processing and disposal of waste from both household and commercial units.
- Electronic waste will be collected door-to-door or could be deposited directly at the clinic in exchange for a fee. Door-to-door collection will happen in two ways. Either separate carts for the collection of e-waste will be designed, or separate bins will be attached to existing ones meant for solid and wet waste.
- A three-month pilot project, the clinic, if successful, would be replicated elsewhere in the country.

Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Guidelines

In a major decision to give a boost to Electric Vehicles in country, Union Minister for Power has approved amendments in Electric Vehicle Charging Guidelines and Specifications.

Key highlights of the Revised Guidelines:

- At least one Charging Station to be available in a grid of 3 Km x 3 Km in the cities and one Charging Station at every 25 Km on both sides of highways/roads.
- All Mega Cities & expressways connected to these Mega Cities to be taken up for coverage in first phase, other big cities to be taken up in second phase.
- For inter-city travel, Fast Charging Station to be installed at every 100 Kms.
- Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), a statutory body under Ministry of Power has been nominated as the Central Nodal Agency to facilitate installation of Charging Infrastructure.
- These Revised Guidelines and Specifications for charging infrastructure shall supersede the earlier guidelines and standards issued by the Ministry of Power on 14.12.2018.

PRELIMS SPECIFIC FACTS- INDICES, DAYS, AWARDS ETC.

World Cotton Day

The Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, is participating in the World Cotton Day being observed from 7th October to 11th October 2019 in Geneva.

About:

- The World Trade Organisation (WTO) is organizing World Cotton Day event in collaboration with the Secretariats of the FAO, UNCTAD, the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC).
- WTO is hosting the event at the request of the Cotton – 4 countries, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali to celebrate their official application for the recognition of 7th October as World Cotton Day by the United Nations.
- The objective of World Cotton Day is to give exposure and recognition to cotton and all its stakeholders in production, transformation and trade and promote research and development on cotton.
- Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) will be displaying various grades of raw cotton including SUVIN, the finest quality of Extra Long Staple Cotton produced in Tamil Nadu having the highest fibre length.
- Fabrics which have been given Geographical Indication like Venkatagiri, Chanderi, Maheshwari and Ikkat sarees will be displayed along with many other traditional Indian textiles.

Advantages of Cotton:

- Cotton is a global commodity that is produced all over the world and a single tonne of cotton provides year-round employment for five people on average.
- Cotton is a drought – resistant crop ideal for arid climates, it occupies just 2.1 % of the world's arable land, yet it meets 27% of the world's textiles need.
- In addition to its fibre used in textiles and apparel, food products are also derived from cotton like edible oil and animal feed from the seed.

Sarbat Da Bhala Express

Minister of Railways flagged off the extension of train no. 12037/12038 New Delhi - Ludhiana Intercity Express upto Lohian Khas (via Jalandhar) with new number and name (22479/22480 "Sarbat Da Bhala" Express) at New Delhi station.

About:

- The train no. 22479/22480 “Sarbat-Da-Bhala” Express will start from New Delhi and have stoppages at Shakurbasti, Bahadurgarh, Rohtak Jn, Jind, Narwana, Tohana, Jakhal, Sangrur, Dhuri, Jalandhar City, Kapurthala, Sultanpur Lodhi and will reach Lohian Khas. The new train will serve the Sikh pilgrims visiting Sultanpur Lodhi on 550th Birthday of Guru Nanak ji (Prakash Parv).
- Sarbat Da Bhala Express, the name of the train reflects the teaching of Guru Nanak ji which symbolises goodness of the humanity.

Sultanpur Lodhi

- Sultanpur Lodhi is a city in the Kapurthala district of Punjab. it is located on the south bank of a seasonal rivulet called Kali Bein.
- After Nanakana Sahib {now in Pakistan}, Sultanpur Lodhi is perhaps the most related to life of the first Sikh Guru. This is the place where Guru Nanak Dev spent 14 years of his life and received enlightenment.
- The town is named after its founder, Sultan Khan Lodhi, who was a general of Mahmud of Ghazni in 1103 AD, and has also been mentioned in the Ain-e-Akbari. Sultanpur Lodhi has got the credit of White City in year 2019 as of 550th gurpurab celebrations.

Vande Bharat Express

Union Minister for Home Affairs, Amit Shah flagged off the New Delhi-Katra 'Vande Bharat' Express in New Delhi. It will be a big boost to the religious tourism as may Hindus have a desire to visit Vaishno devi Temple at least once in the lifetime.

About:

- The present Vande Bharat to Mata Vaishno Devi Katra shall be running at a maximum speed of 130 km on this route and shall cover the distance between New Delhi-Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra in 08 hours. A reduction of 4 hours from the current fastest train, will thus be achieved.
- This is the second ‘Vande Bharat’ express after the New Delhi - Varanasi semi-high speed train flagged off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in February this year.
- The coaches of this train are indigenously manufactured at the Chennai Rail coach factory.
- Vande Bharat Express has been tested at 180 kmph and can run upto maximum speed of 160 kmph on passenger service. All Coaches are equipped with automatic doors; GPS based audio-visual passenger information system, onboard hotspot, wi-fi for entertainment purposes, and very comfortable seating.

ODISHA DEVELOPMENTMo Sarkar

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched his government’s new governance initiative ‘Mo Sarkar’ on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti.

About:

- The objective of the ‘Mo Sarkar’ programme is to provide service with dignity to people who are coming to government offices for different purposes.
- The phone numbers of people who are coming to government offices will be collected randomly with the purpose to improve the governance system by collecting feedback on behaviour and professionalism of government officers.
- The Chief Minister, Departmental Minister, Director General of Police (in case of police stations) and Departmental Minister, Secretary and Director (in case of hospitals) will call on random numbers to collect feedback.
- The employees will be ranked as good or bad on the basis of the feedback and those with good rank will get out-of-turn promotion and action will be taken against employees with bad rank.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The biggest risk in life is not taking any risk.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. Briefly discuss various instruments of monetary policy of the RBI. Why monetary policy has to be in better coordination with the Fiscal Policy measures?

Ans

Monetary policy refers to the use of monetary instruments under the control of the central bank to regulate magnitudes such as interest rates, money supply and availability of credit with a view to achieving the ultimate objective of economic policy. There are several direct and indirect instruments that are used for implementing monetary policy.

- **Repo Rate:** The (fixed) interest rate at which the Reserve Bank provides overnight liquidity to banks against the collateral of government and other approved securities under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF).
- **Reverse Repo Rate:** The (fixed) interest rate at which the Reserve Bank absorbs liquidity, on an overnight basis, from banks against the collateral of eligible government securities under the LAF.
- **Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF):** The LAF consists of overnight as well as term repo auctions. Progressively, the Reserve Bank has increased the proportion of liquidity injected under fine-tuning variable rate repo auctions of a range of tenors. The aim of term repo is to help develop the inter-bank term money market, which in turn can set market-based benchmarks for pricing of loans and deposits, and hence improve the transmission of monetary policy. The Reserve Bank also conducts variable interest rate reverse repo auctions, as necessitated under the market conditions.
- **Marginal Standing Facility (MSF):** A facility under which scheduled commercial banks can borrow an additional amount of overnight money from the Reserve Bank by dipping into their Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) portfolio up to a limit at a penal rate of interest. This provides a safety valve against unanticipated liquidity shocks to the banking system.
- **Bank Rate:** It is the rate at which the Reserve Bank is ready to buy or rediscount bills of exchange or other commercial papers. The Bank Rate is published under Section 49 of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934. This rate has been aligned to the MSF rate and, therefore, changes automatically as and when the MSF rate changes alongside policy repo rate changes.
- **Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR):** The average daily balance that a bank is required to maintain with the Reserve Bank as a share of such percent of its Net demand and time liabilities (NDTL) that the Reserve Bank may notify from time to time in the Gazette of India.
- **Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR):** The share of NDTL that a bank is required to maintain in safe and liquid assets, such as unencumbered government securities, cash and gold. Changes in SLR often influence the availability of resources in the banking system for lending to the private sector.
- **Open Market Operations (OMOs):** These include both, outright purchase and sale of government securities, for injection and absorption of durable liquidity, respectively.
- **Market Stabilisation Scheme (MSS):** This instrument for monetary management was introduced in 2004. Surplus liquidity of a more enduring nature arising from large capital inflows is absorbed through the sale of short-dated government securities and treasury bills. The cash so mobilised is held in a separate government account with the Reserve Bank.

After the 2008 economic crisis, monetary policies and fiscal policies were tested to their brink. They failed to spur growth and now, the world is facing another economic slowdown. These policies need to work together to keep economic growth sustainable. If the two policies diverge:

- Excessive fiscal deficits will fail to attract investments despite attractive interest rates
- Monetary policy has to accommodate the needs of economy and be an enabler of growth through competitive interest rates
- As growth continues to slow and inflation stays below the target, interest rates may keep falling, but likely not fast enough to revive growth quickly
- excessive borrowing by public sector enterprises will crowd out investments how much ever RBI manages interest rates

Despite coordination between the two policies, lack of administrative and comprehensive economic reforms will affect growth in the economy in the long term.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQ

1. What is 'Parichay', recently seen in news?
 - (a) **A collaborative legal aid clinic launched by Law schools across India for people excluded from the updated National Register Citizens (NRC) in Assam.**
 - (b) A platform for girls and women in rural areas to raise voice against sexual harassments.
 - (c) A new platform for online processing of applications for pension revision in respect of pre-2016 pensioners.
 - (d) None of the above
2. Joint Military Exercise Ekuverin, recently seen in news, is between India and which one of the following countries?
 - (a) **Maldives**
 - (b) Thailand
 - (c) Bhutan
 - (d) Nepal
3. With reference to Mauritius, consider the following statements:
 1. It is an island nation in the Atlantic Ocean.
 2. The islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues form part of the Mascarene Islands, along with nearby Réunion, a French overseas department.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) **2 only**
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
4. With reference to the 'PRAKASH portal', consider the following statements:
 1. It aims for transparency and better coordination in coal supplies to power plants.
 2. It is developed by DRDO.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

 - (a) **1 only**
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
5. With reference to Vande Bharat express, consider the following statements:
 1. The coaches of this train are indigenously manufactured at the Chennai Rail coach factory.
 2. It has been tested at 180 kmph and can run upto maximum speed of 160 kmph on passenger service.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) **Both 1 and 2**
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. With reference to the Youth Co:Lab, consider the following statements:
 1. It was launched by UNESCO.
 2. It aims to accelerate youth-led social entrepreneurship and innovation in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) **2 only**
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
7. With reference to the World Cotton Day, consider the following statements:
 1. WTO is hosting the event at the request of the Cotton – 4 countries, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali.
 2. The objective of World Cotton Day is to give exposure and recognition to cotton and all its stakeholders in production, transformation and trade and promote research and development on cotton.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) **Both 1 and 2**
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
8. Sarbat Da Bhala Express, the name of the train reflects the teaching of who among the following, that was in news recently?
 - (a) **Guru Nanak**
 - (b) Guru Arjun Dev
 - (c) Adi Shankaracharya
 - (d) Ramanuja

9. With reference to the Electric Vehicle Charging Guidelines, consider the following statements:

1. All Mega Cities & expressways connected to these Mega Cities to be taken up for coverage in first phase.
2. Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA) has been nominated as the Central Nodal Agency to facilitate installation of Charging Infrastructure.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) **1 only**
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

10. With reference to the recent Monetary Policy Statement announced by Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), consider the following statements:

1. It reduced the policy repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) by 25 basis points to 5.15 % from 5.40 % with immediate effect.
2. The reverse repo rate under the LAF stands reduced to 4.90 %, and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate to 5.40 %.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) **Both 1 and 2**
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

11. With reference to the new strategic disinvestment policy, consider the following statements:

1. Under the new policy, the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) under the Ministry of Finance has been made the nodal department for the strategic stake sale.
2. Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises will identify PSUs for strategic disinvestment.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) **1 only**
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

12. Recently seen in news, India's first e-waste clinic will come up in which of the following places?

- (a) Surat
(b) Kochi
(c) Nagpur
(d) **Bhopal**

13. With reference to revised regulatory framework for microfinance by Non-Banking Financial Company-Micro Finance Institution (NBFC-MFI), consider the following statements:

1. Recently, Reserve Bank of India has decided to raise the lending limit per borrower from Rs.1 lakh to Rs.1.25 lakh.
2. RBI increased the household income limit for borrowers of NBFC-MFIs from the current level of Rs.1.00 lakh for rural areas and Rs.1.60 lakh for urban/semi urban areas to Rs.1.25 lakh and Rs.2.00 lakh, respectively.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) **Both 1 and 2**
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

14. Halt the Hate', a hate crime tracker is an initiative of which of the following agencies?

- (a) **Amnesty India**
(b) Greenpeace India
(c) Oxfam
(d) None of the above