

GEOGRAPHY**Arabian Sea Cyclones**

Just over a month after the powerful cyclone Fani devastated large areas of Odisha, another cyclone is headed towards India, this time towards the Gujarat coast.

Arabian Sea cyclones

- Though cyclones are common in the June, very few of them originate in the Arabian Sea. Most of them are found in the Bay of Bengal.
- In the last 120 years for which records are available, just about 14% of all cyclonic storms, and 23% of severe cyclones, around India have occurred in the Arabian Sea.
- Arabian Sea cyclones are also relatively weak compared to those emerging in the Bay of Bengal.
- This, along with the fact that the Gujarat coastline, which is where most of the cyclones emerging in the Arabian Sea are headed, is not very densely populated.
- This ensures that the damage potential of the cyclones on the western coast is comparatively low.

About Cyclone Vayu

- Cyclone Vayu is a deep depression positioned around 250 km northwest of Aminidivi island in Lakshadweep and about 750 km southwest of Mumbai.
- It is likely to generate winds of speed 110-120 km per hour. In contrast, winds associated with Fani had speeds of about 220 km per hour.
- Vayu at its most powerful stage would only be categorised as a “severe cyclonic storm”, while Fani was an “extremely severe cyclonic storm”
- It has almost satisfied the conditions for classification as a “super cyclone”.

Major Impact: It halts Monsoon

- Cyclones are sustained by very strong low-pressure areas at their core. Winds in surrounding areas are forced to rush towards these low-pressure areas.
- Vayu is likely to halt the northward progression of the monsoon for a few days.
- The cyclone is expected to interfere with normal progression, by sucking all the moisture from the monsoon winds towards itself.
- Similar low-pressure areas, when they develop near or over land, are instrumental in pulling the monsoon winds over the country as well.
- But right now, the low-pressure area at the centre of the cyclone is far more powerful than any local system that can pull the monsoon winds moving northeast.
- Implications: What this means is that the places where the monsoon has already reached would continue to get rain, mainly along the western coastline, but other areas would have to wait a little longer.

CONSTITUTION AND POLITY**Recognizing a National Party**

Recently a political party viz. National People’s Party (NPP) in Meghalaya got recognition as a “national party”. The NPP is the eighth party to get that recognition — after INC, BJP, BSP, NCP, CPI, CPI(M) and TMC — and the first from the Northeast.

Recognizing a National Party

- The Election Commission lists political parties as “national party”, “state party” or “registered (unrecognised) party”.
- The conditions for being listed as a national or a state party are specified under the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968.
- A party has to satisfy any one of a number of these conditions.
- For recognition as a NATIONAL PARTY, the conditions specified are:
 - a 6% vote share in the last Assembly polls in each of any four states, as well as four seats in the last Lok Sabha polls; or
 - 2% of all Lok Sabha seats in the last such election, with MPs elected from at least three states; or
 - recognition as a state party in at least four states.
- For recognition as a STATE PARTY, any one of five conditions needs to be satisfied:
 - two seats plus a 6% vote share in the last Assembly election in that state; or
 - one seat plus a 6% vote share in the last Lok Sabha election from that state; or
 - 3% of the total Assembly seats or 3 seats, whichever is more; or
 - one of every 25 Lok Sabha seats (or an equivalent fraction) from a state; or
 - an 8% state-wide vote share in either the last Lok Sabha or the last Assembly polls.

Benefits of such recognition

- The biggest advantage of being recognized is getting the reserved symbol. A party recognized as a state party gets a reserved symbol within the state.
- For National Parties, the reserved symbol can be used across the country by its contesting candidates. This is one the biggest advantages since symbol plays a very important role in elections.
- There are also other advantages to the recognized parties like subsidized land for party offices, free air time on Doordarshan & All India Radio, supply of electoral roll copies free of cost during elections etc.

Losing the recognition

- Once recognised as a national or a state party, a political party retains that status irrespective of its performance in the next elections.
- It loses the given status only if it fails to fulfil any of the conditions for two successive Assembly and two successive Lok Sabha elections.

GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.Cabinet Secretary

The government amended a six-decade-old rule to grant a three-month extension to a serving Cabinet Secretary. According to All India Services (Death-Cum-Retirement-Benefits) Rules, 1958, the government can give extension in service to a cabinet secretary provided the total tenure does not exceed four years. This move has made him the longest-serving bureaucrat in the country's history following the change in the rule.

Who is Cabinet Secretary?

- The Cabinet Secretary is the top-most executive official and senior-most civil servant of the Government of India.
- She/he is the ex-officio head of the Civil Services Board, the Cabinet Secretariat, the IAS, and all civil services under the rules of business of the government.
- She/he is the senior-most cadre post of the Indian Administrative Service,[6] ranking eleventh on the Indian order of precedence.
- She/he is under the direct charge of the PM and is appointed for a fixed tenure of two years.
- The Cabinet Secretariat is responsible for the administration of the Transaction of Business and the Allocation of Business Rules 1961.

Functions

- She/he facilitates smooth transaction of business in Ministries/ Departments of the Government.
- This Secretariat provides:
 - Secretarial assistance to the Cabinet and its Committees
 - Assists in decision-making in Government by ensuring Inter-Ministerial coordination ,
 - Ironing out differences amongst Ministries/ Departments
 - Evolving consensus through the instrumentality of the standing/ adhoc Committees of Secretaries.

Origin of the post

- Before the adoption of the portfolio system in India, all Governmental business was disposed of by the Governor-General in Council, the Council functioning as a Joint Consultative Board.
- This procedure was legalized by the Indian Councils Act, 1861 during the time of Lord Canning, leading to the introduction of the portfolio system and the inception of the Executive Council of the Governor-General.
- The Secretariat of the Executive Council was headed by the Private Secretary to the Viceroy, but he did not attend the Council meetings.
- Lord Willingdon first started the practice of having his Private Secretary by his side at these meetings.
- Later, this practice continued and in November, 1935, the Viceroy's Private Secretary was given the additional designation of Secretary to the Executive Council.
- The constitution of the Interim Government in 1946 brought a change in the name, though little in functions, of this Office. The Executive Council's Secretariat was then designated as Cabinet Secretariat.
- It no longer remained concerned with only the work of circulating papers to Ministers and Ministries, but developed into an organisation for effecting coordination between the Ministries.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONSForeign policy challenges five years later

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi begins his second term, the world looks more disorderly in 2019 than was the case five years ago.

Disruptive global Conditions

- U.S. President Donald Trump's election and the new dose of unpredictability in U.S. policy pronouncements;

- The trade war between the U.S. and China which is becoming a technology war;
- Brexit and the European Union's internal preoccupations;
- Erosion of U.S.-Russia arms control agreements and the likelihood of a new arms race covering nuclear, space and cyber domains;
- The U.S.'s withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal and growing tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran are some of the developments that add to the complexity of India's principal foreign policy challenge of dealing with the rise of China.

Redefining neighbourhood

- New neighbourhood emphasis – Since an invitation to Pakistan was out of the question, leaders from the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand) with Kyrgyzstan, added as current Shanghai Cooperation Organisation chair, highlighted a new neighbourhood emphasis.

Ways to develop prosperous neighbourhood

- Multi-pronged diplomatic efforts and being generous as the larger economy.
- It also needs a more confident and coordinated approach in handling neighbourhood organisations — SAARC, BIMSTEC, the Bangladesh, the Bhutan, India, Nepal Initiative, the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Forum for Regional Cooperation, the Indian Ocean Rim Association.
- This should be preferably in tandem with bilateralism because our bilateral relations provide us with significant advantages.
- With all our neighbours, ties of kinship, culture and language among the people straddle boundaries, making the role of governments in States bordering neighbours vital in fostering closer linkages.
- This means investing attention in State governments, both at the political and bureaucratic levels.

Managing China and the U.S.

India and China

- The informal summit in Wuhan restored a semblance of calm but does not address the long-term implications of the growing gap between the two countries.
- Meanwhile, there is the growing strategic rivalry between the U.S. and China unfolding on our doorstep. We no longer have the luxury of distance to be non-aligned.

India and USA

- Crude oil – As part of its policy on tightening sanctions pressure on Iran, the U.S. has terminated the sanctions waiver that had enabled India to import limited quantities of Iranian crude till last month.
- GSP – The Generalised System of Preferences scheme has been withdrawn, adversely impacting about 12% of India's exports to the U.S., as a sign of growing impatience with India's inability to address the U.S.'s concerns regarding market access, tariff lines and recent changes in the e-commerce policy.
- Sanctions under CAATSA – A third looming issue, perhaps the most critical, is the threat of sanctions under the Countering American Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), were India to proceed with the purchase of the S-400 air and missile defence system from Russia.
- Huawei – Other potential tricky issues could relate to whether Huawei, which is currently the prime target in the U.S.-China technology war, is allowed to participate in the 5G trials (telecom) in India.
- Afghanistan – The reconciliation talks between the U.S. and the Taliban as the U.S. negotiates its exit from Afghanistan raise New Delhi's apprehensions about the Taliban's return, constituting another potential irritant.

Way Ahead

- Resource limitations – In a post-ideology age of promiscuity with rivalries unfolding around us, the harsh reality is that India lacks the ability to shape events around it on account of resource limitations.
- Seasoned professional – These require domestic decisions in terms of expanding the foreign policy establishment though having a seasoned professional at the top does help.
- Coordination among the different ministries and agencies – We need to ensure far more coordination among the different ministries and agencies than has been the case so far. Our record in implementation projects is patchy at best and needs urgent attention.
- Focus on the neighbourhood – The focus on the neighbourhood is certainly desirable, for only if we can shape events here can we look beyond. However, the fact that China too is part of the neighbourhood compounds Mr. Modi's foreign policy challenges in his second term.
- External balancing – Employing external balancing to create a conducive regional environment is a new game that will also require building a new consensus at home.

INDIAN ECONOMY

National Data Warehouse

The statistical reforms are necessary for ensuring responsiveness to the changing needs of society.

The statistics ministry said that it proposes to set up a NDW with a view to leveraging big data analytical tools to further improve the quality of macro-economic aggregates. Here technology will be leveraged for using big data analytical tools for further improving the quality of macro-economic aggregates. Efforts are also on to evolve a legislative framework under which the National Statistical Commission (NSC) may function with independence and give holistic guidance for improving the national statistical system.

Why such move?

- Over a period of time, there have been increasing demands on the statistical system for the production of relevant and quality statistics.
- MoSPI has been criticised in some sections for the quality of macro-economic data.
- The Ministry said revision in GDP estimates occur when data coverage from administrative sources improves over time and these improvements get well documented.
- Consequently, the initial estimates of GDP tend to be conservative.
- To improve this, it would require concomitant changes in the sectoral data flows and associated regulatory framework in the data source agencies to facilitate the use of more macro modelling techniques.

Recent initiatives

- The Ministry has been accommodating these demands by optimizing the available resources and use of technology.
- The recent step for the merger of CSO and NSSO was aimed at leveraging the strengths of the two organisations so that it can meet the increasing demands, MoSPI said.

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

ICAT Releases India's 1st BS – VI Certificate in 2W Segment

International Centre for Automotive Technology (ICAT) released India's first Type Approval Certificate (TAC) for Bharat Stage – VI norms for the two wheeler segment.

This is India's first certification in the two wheeler segment for the BS – VI norms that are the latest emission norms as notified by the GoI.

Quick Recap: BS Norms

- Bharat Stage norms are the automotive emission norms which the automotive manufacturers have to comply to sell their vehicles in India.
- These norms are applicable to all two wheelers, three wheelers, four wheelers and construction equipment vehicles.
- To curb growing menace of air pollution through the vehicles emission, the Govt. has decided to leapfrog from the existing BS – IV norms to the BS- VI with effect from 1st April 2020.

How is BS VI Different from BS IV?

- The major difference between the existing BS-IV and forthcoming BS-VI norms is the presence of sulphur in the fuel.
- While the BS-IV fuels contain 50 parts per million (ppm) sulphur, the BS-VI grade fuel only has 10 ppm sulphur content.
- Also, the harmful NO_x from diesel cars can be brought down by nearly 70%. In the petrol cars, they can be reduced by 25%.
- However, when we talk air pollution, particulate matter like PM 2.5 and PM 10 are the most harmful components and the BS VI will bring the cancer causing particulate matter in diesel cars by a phenomenal 80%.
- Only those vehicles will be sold and registered in India from 1st April 2020 onwards, which comply to these norms.

About ICAT

- ICAT is the premier testing and certification agency authorized by Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
- Aim: Providing testing and certification services to the vehicle and component manufacturers in India and abroad.
- It has the latest equipment, facilities and capabilities to develop, validate, test and certify the engines and vehicles for the latest norms in the field of emission.
- It tests for many other facilities like crash lab, NVH lab, EMC lab and test tracks.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The problem is not the problem but the problem is your attitude about the problem.

Captain Jack Sparrow

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns: Discuss the contemporary disruptive global scenario affecting the interests of India. How should India react to enhance its credibility in the world today?

Ans: For the Modi 2.0 govt. the world looks more disorderly in 2019 than was the case five years ago.

Disruptive global Conditions

- U.S. President Donald Trump's election and the new dose of unpredictability in U.S. policy pronouncements;
- The trade war between the U.S. and China which is becoming a technology war;
- Brexit and the European Union's internal preoccupations;
- Erosion of U.S.-Russia arms control agreements and the likelihood of a new arms race covering nuclear, space and cyber domains;
- The U.S.'s withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal and growing tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran are some of the developments that add to the complexity of India's principal foreign policy challenge of dealing with the rise of China.
- The never-ending conflict with the western neighborhood has been another challenge to establish peace and stability.

Way Ahead

- Resource limitations – In a post-ideology age of promiscuity with rivalries unfolding around us, the harsh reality is that India lacks the ability to shape events around it on account of resource limitations.
- Seasoned professional – These require domestic decisions in terms of expanding the foreign policy establishment though having a seasoned professional at the top does help.
- Coordination among the different ministries and agencies – We need to ensure far more coordination among the different ministries and agencies than has been the case so far. Our record in implementation projects is patchy at best and needs urgent attention.
- Focus on the neighbourhood – The focus on the neighbourhood is certainly desirable, for only if we can shape events here can we look beyond. However, the fact that China too is part of the neighbourhood compounds Mr. Modi's foreign policy challenges in his second term.
- External balancing – Employing external balancing to create a conducive regional environment is a new game that will also require building a new consensus at home.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS BASED MCQS

1. Which of the following is the cause for 'storm surge' which accompanies cyclone making landfall?
 - (a) El Nino
 - (b) La Nino
 - (c) Intense rainfall
 - (d) **Winds pushing waves onshore**
2. Which of the following causes a tropical cyclone to rotate?
 - (a) Geostrophic wind
 - (b) Frictional force
 - (c) **Coriolis effect**
 - (d) Westerlies
3. Consider the following statement w.r.t the cyclones of the Arabian Sea.
 1. Arabian Sea cyclones are relatively strong compared to those emerging in the Bay of Bengal.
 2. Bay of Bengal experiences more no. of cyclones than the Arabian Sea.
 Which of the above is/are incorrect?
 - (a) **1 only**
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
4. Which of the following statements is/are incorrect w.r.t recognition of political party as a National Party.
 1. A 6% vote share in the last Assembly polls in each of any four states, as well as four seats in the last Lok Sabha polls; or
 2. 2% of all Lok Sabha seats in the last such election, with MPs elected from at least three states; or
3. Recognition as a state party in at least six states.

Select the correct answer from the codes given below

 - (a) 1 and 3
 - (b) **3 only**
 - (c) 2 and 3
 - (d) None of the above
5. Consider the following Statements w.r.t the Cabinet Secretariat
 1. The Cabinet Secretariat functions under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.
 2. The administrative head of the Secretariat is the Cabinet Secretary who is also the ex-officio Chairman of the Civil Services Board.
 Which of the statements is/are correct?
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) **2 only**
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. Which of the following statements is/are correct w.r.t Bharat norms?
 1. Currently, BS-IV petrol and diesel are being supplied in whole of Southern India.
 2. Whole India will shift to the BS-IV by 1st April, 2020.
 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**