

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

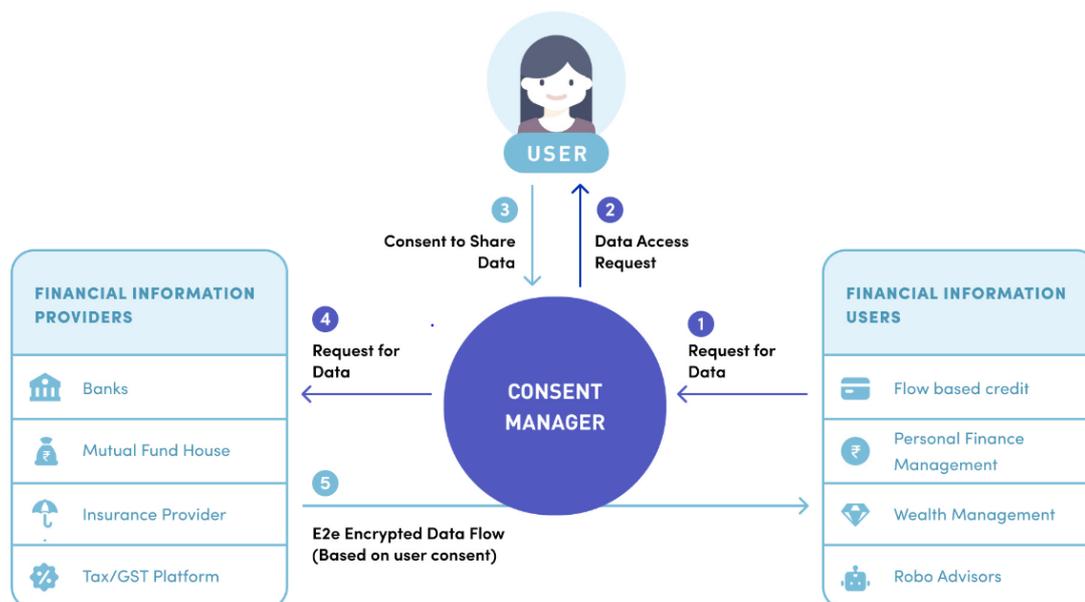
Draft Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture : NITI Aayog

Recently, the NITI Aayog has released draft Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture (DEPA) which aims to promote greater user control on data sharing.

Key Points

- Features: DEPA will be empowering individuals with control over their personal data, by operationalising a regulatory, institutional, and technology design for secure data sharing.
 - DEPA is designed as an evolvable and agile framework for good data governance.
 - DEPA empowers people to seamlessly and securely access their data and share it with third party institutions.
 - The consent given under DEPA will be free, informed, specific, clear, and revocable.
- Consent Managers: DEPA’s Institutional Architecture will involve the creation of new market players known as User Consent Managers. These will ensure that individuals can provide consent as per an innovative digital standard for every data shared. These Consent Managers will also work to protect data rights.
 - Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued a Master Directive creating Consent Managers in the financial sector to be known as Account Aggregators (AAs). A non-profit collective or alliance of these players is created called the DigiSahamati Foundation.
- Open APIs: Open Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) enable seamless and encrypted flow of data between data providers and data users through a consent manager.
- Implementation: RBI, SEBI, IRDAI, PFRDA and the Ministry of Finance will implement this model. This regulatory foundation is also expected to evolve with time (eg. with the forthcoming Data Protection Authority envisaged under Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019).

DEPA Institutional Architecture



- Background: Regulatory direction on data privacy, protection, consent, and the new financial institutions required for DEPA’s application in the financial sector was provided through
 - Supreme Court Judgement on the fundamental Right to Privacy in 2017.
 - Personal Data Protection Bill (PDP), 2019.
 - Justice Srikishna Committee Report, 2018.
 - RBI Master Direction on NBFC-Account Aggregators, 2016 (for the financial sector).
- Recently, a government committee headed by Infosys co-founder Kris Gopalakrishnan has suggested that non-personal data generated in India be allowed to be harnessed by various domestic companies and entities.

Application

- Financial sector:
 - Using DEPA, individuals and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) can use their digital footprints to access not just affordable loans, but also insurance, savings, and better financial management products.
 - The framework is expected to become functional for the financial sector starting fall 2020.
 - It will help in greater financial inclusion and economic growth.
 - Flow based lending: If portability and control of data could allow an MSME owner to digitally share proof of the business' regular tax (GST) payments or receivables invoices easily, a bank could design and offer working capital loans based on demonstrated ability to repay (known as flow based lending) rather than only offering bank loans backed by assets or collateral.
- Telecom Sector: DEPA is also being launched in the telecom sector following a Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) consultation report on privacy released in July 2018.
- Government Departments: The first major government department to become a Government Information Provider will be Goods and Services Tax (GST).
 - In future, departments with data on individuals and MSMEs could adopt the specifications to improve the ease of doing business or create greater data portability of individual education, jobs, or transaction data.
- Healthcare: National Health Authority which has been tasked with implementing the National Digital Health Mission, is piloting the DEPA architecture for healthcare data.
- Skilling: The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship is encouraging adoption of a digital skill credential that could be used to address low data portability in employment by sharing verified information on work experience or educational training.

Advantages

- Opening up an API-based data sharing framework would bring significant innovation by new fintech entities.
- This architecture replaces costly and cumbersome data access and sharing practices that disempower individuals, such as physical submission, username/password sharing, and terms and conditions forms providing blanket consent etc.
- Individuals and small firms do not benefit from individual's data right now. DEPA will provide individuals and small businesses with the practical means to access, control, and selectively share personal data that they have stored across multiple institutional datasets – to maximise the benefits of data sharing for individual empowerment whilst minimising privacy risks and data misuse.
- DEPA will also enable better personal financial management services, wealth management, robo advisory, or different types of lending, insurance, and investment use cases and products that one may not be able to foresee today.

Proposed Amendment to Railways Act 1989

Recently, the Ministry of Railways has proposed to decriminalise begging on trains or railway premises and compound the offence of smoking by levying spot fine and dropping all charges/action against the person involved.

- These changes are part of an exercise to decriminalise/rationalise penalties under the provisions of the Railway Act, 1989.

Key Points

- **On Begging:**
 - Current Provision: Section 144 (2) of the Act holds that if any person begs in any railway carriage or upon a railway station, s/he shall be liable for punishment of either imprisonment for a term that may extend to one year, or with a fine that may extend to Rs. 2,000, or with both.
 - Proposed Amendment: Now the proposal is to amend the Section by stating that “No person shall be permitted to beg in any railway carriage or upon any part of the Railway”.
 - In 2018, Delhi High Court quashed a similar law that made begging in the national capital a punishable offence and held that law does not make any distinction between types of begging: voluntary or involuntary.

- The law violated Article 14 (Equality before Law) and Article 21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty) of the Constitution.
 - The Court held that the State cannot fail to do its duty to provide a decent life to its citizens and add insult to injury by arresting, detaining and, if necessary, imprisoning persons who beg in search for essentials of bare survival.
 - It noted that the city governments can bring in alternative legislation to curb any racket of forced begging after undertaking an empirical examination on the sociological and economic aspects of the matter.
- **On Smoking:**
 - Current Provision: Section 167 of the Act holds that no person in any compartment of a train shall, if objected to by any other passenger, smoke therein. Irrespective of any objections raised, the railway administration may prohibit smoking in any train or part of a train. Whosoever contravenes these provisions shall be punishable with a fine that may extend to Rs.100.
 - Proposed Amendment: If the person liable to pay the fine is willing to pay it immediately, the officer authorised may compound the offence by charging the maximum fine which will be paid to the railway administration. Provided that, the offender shall be discharged and no further proceeding shall be taken against him/her in respect of such offence.

Additional Information

Definition of Beggary:

- The Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959 defines beggary as an activity of having no visible means of subsistence, and wandering about or remaining in any public place in such condition or manner, as makes it likely that the person doing so exists by soliciting or receiving alms.
- However, the provisions of legislation aim to effectively "cleanse" these spaces of individuals who appear poor or destitute.
- In India, begging was first criminalised in the 1920s, as part of a colonial logic that sought to subjugate certain communities by imputing criminality to them.
- Beggary Laws In India:
- There is no central Act on beggary, however, many States and Union Territories have used certain sections of the Bombay Prevention of Beggary Act, 1959, as the basis for their own laws.
- The act of begging in Delhi was made a criminal offence after the 1959 Act was extended to Delhi by a Central government amendment in 1960.
- Through these legislations, the governments try to maintain public order, address forced begging or "begging rackets", and prevent annoyance to tourists.

Major Provision Related to Smoking

- The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003 (COTPA) is the principal comprehensive law governing tobacco control in India.
- In 2004, India ratified the World Health Organisation Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO-FCTC) which came into force in 2005.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Hematite at the lunar poles

The recent images sent by Chandrayaan-1 suggest that the moon may be rusting along the poles.

- Chandrayaan-1, India's first mission to the moon, was launched by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in 2008.

Key Points

- **Finding:**
 - Data from the Mineralogy Mapper (M3), one of the instruments on Chandrayaan-1, indicates the presence of hematite at the lunar poles.
 - Hematite (Fe₂O₃) is a mineral which is a form of iron oxide, or rust, produced when iron is exposed to oxygen and water.
 - The sign of this finding is that even though the surface of the moon is known to have iron-rich rocks, it is not known for the presence of water and oxygen, which are the two elements needed to interact with iron to create rust.

- Recently, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has found evidence of greater quantities of metals such as iron and titanium on the moon's subsurface.
- **Possible Reasons Behind Rusting along the Lunar Poles:**
 - As per scientists at NASA, earth's oxygen could be driving the formation of hematite. Earth's magnetotail (elongated region of the magnetosphere of the earth) ferries oxygen to the moon and also blocks 99% of solar wind during certain periods of the moon's orbit.
 - The solar wind, a stream of charged particles that flows out from the sun, bombards earth and the moon with hydrogen.
 - Hydrogen makes it harder for hematite to form. It is a reducer, meaning it adds electrons to the materials it interacts with. That's the opposite of what is needed to make hematite or iron to rust, which requires an oxidizer, which removes electrons.
 - Chandrayaan-1 Moon data indicates that the moon's poles are home to water that scientists are trying to decipher.
- **Chandrayaan-3: It is likely to be launched in early 2021.**
 - It will be a mission repeat of Chandrayaan-2 and will include a Lander and Rover similar to that of Chandrayaan-2, but will not have an orbiter.
 - Planned to land on the South Pole of the Moon, Chandrayaan-2 was launched on 22nd July in 2019. However, the lander Vikram hard-landed on 7th September 2019, crashing India's dream to become the first nation to successfully touch down on the lunar surface in its maiden attempt.
 - With the Artemis program, NASA will land the first woman and next man on the moon by 2024.
 - India's first ever human space mission Gaganyaan aims to send a three-member crew to space for a period of five to seven days by 2022 when India completes 75 years of Independence.

Way Forward

The findings will reshape scientists' knowledge about the moon's polar regions. It also suggests that the Earth may have played an important role in the evolution of moon's surface. However, more data is needed to determine exactly how the water is interacting with rock.

INTERNATIONAL RELATION

Indo-China Defence Ministerial Meet

The Indo-China Defence Minister level meet happened on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' meeting in Moscow (Russia) on 4th September 2020.

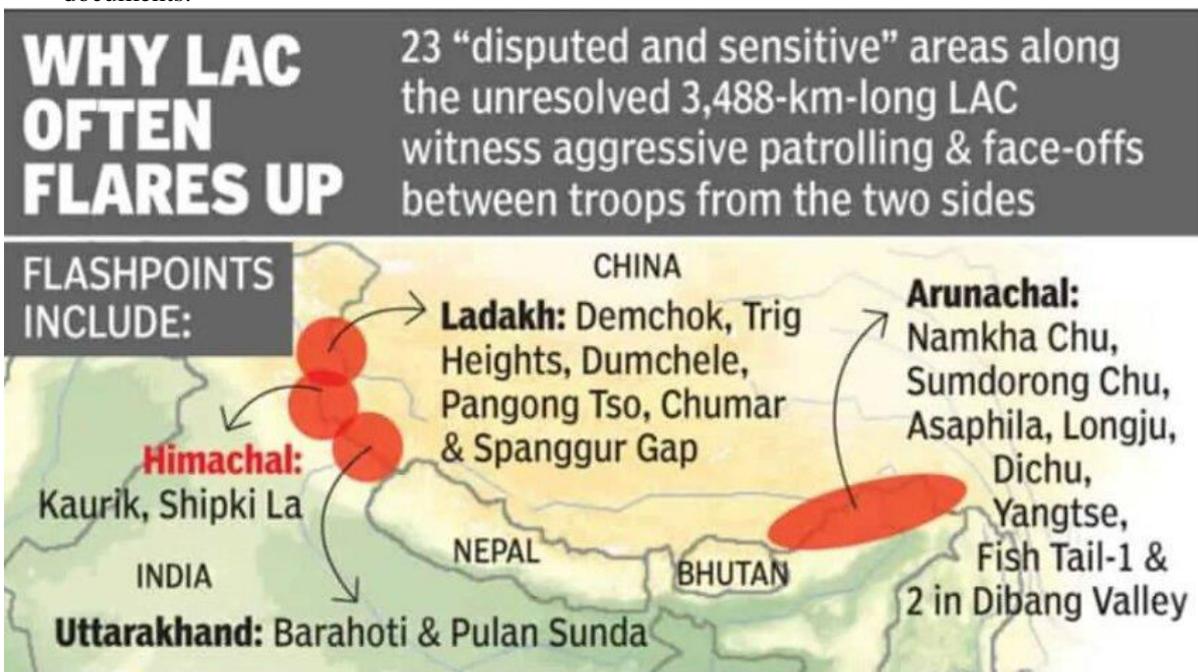
Key Points

- **Significance of the Meet:** The first high-level political face-to-face meeting between India and China since the border row erupted along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.
 - India pushed for the restoration of status quo ante at all friction points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh and called for disengagement of troops in an expeditious way.
- **Background:**
 - The Indian and Chinese armies are engaged in the standoff at Pangong Tso, Galwan Valley, Demchok and Daulat Beg Oldie in eastern Ladakh.
 - The actions on the northern bank of Pangong Tso are not just for territorial gains on land, but enhanced domination of the resource-rich lake.
 - Pangong Tso is overlooked by the Finger Area - a set of eight cliffs extending out of the Sirijap range (on the northern bank of Lake).
 - The stand-off at Ladakh's Galwan Valley has escalated in recent weeks due to the infrastructure projects that India has undertaken in the recent years. India is building a strategic road, Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldie (DSDBO) road, through the Galwan Valley - close to China - connecting the region to an airstrip.
 - China is opposed to any Indian construction in the area. A stand-off in the Galwan area was one of the biggest flashpoints of the 1962 war.

Line of Actual Control

- The LAC is the demarcation that separates Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory. India considers the LAC to be 3,488 km long, while the Chinese consider it to be only around 2,000 km.

- It is divided into three sectors:
 - The eastern sector which spans Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim.
 - The middle sector in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.
 - The western sector in Ladakh.
- The India-China LAC in Ladakh is an outcome of the territory illegally retained by China after the 1962 conflict. The Chinese occupation of parts of Aksai Chin is not supported by historical or legal documents.



India’s Statement at SCO

- Peace and Prosperity: India stressed upon a peaceful, stable and secure region of SCO member states.
 - Prosperity and stability in the region demand a climate of trust and cooperation, non-aggression, respect for international rules, sensitivity to each other’s interest and peaceful resolution of differences.
 - India is committed to the evolution of a global security architecture which will be open, transparent, inclusive, rules-based and anchored in international laws.
- On the Regional Situation: India expressed concern at
 - The security situation in Afghanistan.
 - The SCO contact group on Afghanistan is useful for arriving at a formal agreement among SCO member States.
 - It was conceived In 2005 and was brought into action in 2017 at the level of deputy foreign ministers.
 - The Group envisages joint actions to enhance cooperation in security, trade, the economy as well as cultural and humanitarian ties.
 - Gulf Region: India called upon the Gulf countries to resolve differences between them by “dialogue based on mutual respect, sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs of each other”.
- Terrorism: India unequivocally condemns terrorism in all forms and manifestations, and condemns its proponents and asserted the need to build institutional capacity to deal with both traditional and non-traditional threats — above all, terrorism, drug-trafficking and transnational crime.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization

- It was formed in the year 2001 and headquartered at Beijing, China.
- Geographic Extent: SCO is a significant organization that has a vast geographic expanse and is important for Central Asia, South-Asia and Asia-Pacific region.
- It is a major Eurasian organization that represents half of the world’s population.
- It is a permanent intergovernmental international organisation.

- Member-states: The SCO has eight members namely India, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and four observer states - Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran and Mongolia.
- India joined SCO in 2017 at the insistence of Russia, and China balanced India's entry with the entry of Pakistan.
- Permanent Bodies: The organisation has two permanent bodies — the SCO Secretariat based in Beijing (China) and the Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) based in Tashkent (Uzbekistan).
- Significance: It has the capacity to counterbalance the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.
- Mandate: SCO has an evolving mandate which started off by being an economic, political, cultural and regional security organization.

Way Forward

- In April 2020, India and China completed their 70 years of diplomatic relations. Both sides should acknowledge that the situation is precarious, and that the recent days in particular have undone decades of painstakingly negotiated confidence-building mechanisms.
- For India, the first priority has to be to restore the status quo ante at the border as it existed in April 2020. This will require both a display of military strength at the border by standing up to Chinese aggression, and diplomatic work by making it clear to China that its intervention will lead to heavy costs across all spheres of the relationship.
- Through the platform of SCO, India has a clear opportunity to highlight the real values of Indian Foreign Policy.

5th BRICS Culture Ministers' Meeting

The 5th BRICS Culture Ministers' Meeting was held through a video conference under the Chairpersonship of Russian Federation.

- The delegates from Culture Ministries of the BRICS nations - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa - participated in the meeting.

Key Points

- **Discussions Held:**
 - Impact of the Covid-19 situation on the cultural sphere in the BRICS countries.
 - Review of the possible implementation of joint cultural online-projects within BRICS.
- **Suggestions Given by India:**
 - Digitisation:
 - Exploring possibilities of hosting a Digital Online Exhibition on a shared theme towards the end of 2021 under the auspices of BRICS Alliance of Museums.
 - Extending full cooperation and content sharing for the website envisaged under the BRICS Alliance.
 - BRICS Corner: Opening the BRICS Corner under the auspices of BRICS Alliance of Libraries proposed to be inaugurated during India's BRICS Presidency in 2021. The Corner will disseminate information related to the history and culture of BRICS countries.
- **Joint Exhibition to be Organised by India:**
 - The National Gallery of Modern Arts, New Delhi will host the BRICS Joint Exhibition titled 'Bonding Regions & Imagining Cultural Synergies' under the auspices of the BRICS Alliance of Art Museums and Galleries in 2021.
- **Cultural Cooperation among BRICS Nations:**
 - In 2018, the BRICS nations endorsed institution-to-institution collaborations in the form of BRICS Alliance of Museums, BRICS Alliance of Art Museums and Galleries.
 - In 2017, the agreement on cooperation in the field of culture (2017-21) between the governments of BRICS nations was signed.

BRICS:

- BRICS is an acronym for the grouping of the world's leading emerging economies, namely Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.
- In 2001, the British Economist Jim O'Neill coined the term BRIC to describe the four emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China.
- The grouping was formalised during the first meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers' in 2006.
- South Africa was invited to join BRIC in December 2010, after which the group adopted the acronym BRICS.

- The chairmanship of the forum is rotated annually among the members, in accordance with the acronym B-R-I-C-S.
- During the Sixth BRICS Summit in Fortaleza (Brazil) in 2014, the leaders signed the Agreement establishing the New Development Bank (NDB - Shanghai, China). They also signed the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement to provide short-term liquidity support to the members.

INDIAN ECONOMY

Revised Priority Sector Lending Guidelines

Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released revised Priority Sector Lending (PSL) guidelines, which align with emerging national priorities and also bring sharper focus on inclusive development.

- The PSL guidelines were last reviewed for commercial banks in April 2015 and for Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs) in May 2018.

Key Points

▪ **Revised Guidelines:**

- Fresh Categories: Bank finance to start-ups up to Rs. 50 crore, loans to farmers for installation of solar power plants for solarisation of grid connected agriculture pumps and loans for setting up Compressed BioGas plants have been included as fresh categories eligible for finance under priority sector.
- Farmers' Related: Higher credit limit has been specified for Farmers Producers Organisations (FPOs) undertaking farming with assured marketing of their produce at a predetermined price.
 - Loans for these activities will be subject to an aggregate limit of Rs. 2 crore per borrowing entity.
 - The targets prescribed for small and marginal farmers and weaker sections will be increased in a phased manner.
 - It has defined farmers with land holding of up to one hectare as marginal farmers, and farmers with a landholding of more than one hectare and up to 2 hectares as small farmers.
- Boosting Credit: The credit limits for renewable energy, health infrastructure, including the projects under 'Ayushman Bharat', have been doubled.
 - Bank loans up to a limit of Rs. 30 crore to borrowers for purposes like solar-based and biomass-based power generators, windmills, non-conventional energy-based public utilities, etc. For individual households, the loan limit will be Rs. 10 lakh per borrower.
 - Bank loans up to a limit of Rs.10 crore per borrower for building healthcare facilities including under 'Ayushman Bharat' in Tier II to Tier VI centres, have been allowed.
- Addresses Disparity: It seeks to address the issues concerning regional disparities in the flow of priority sector credit at district level which includes:
 - Ranking districts on the basis of per capita credit flow to the priority sector.
 - Building an incentive framework for districts with comparatively low flow of credit and a dis-incentive framework for districts with comparatively high flow of priority sector credit.
 - Higher weightage has been assigned to priority sector credit in 'identified districts' where priority sector credit flow is comparatively low.

▪ **Benefits:**

- Revised PSL guidelines will enable better credit penetration to credit deficient areas; increase the lending to small and marginal farmers and weaker sections; boost credit to renewable energy, and health infrastructure.

Priority Sector Lending

- The RBI mandates banks to lend a certain portion of their funds to specified sectors, like agriculture, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), export credit, education, housing, social infrastructure, renewable energy among others.
 - All scheduled commercial banks and foreign banks (with a sizable presence in India) are mandated to set aside 40% of their Adjusted Net Bank Credit (ANBC) for lending to these sectors.

- Regional rural banks, co-operative banks and small finance banks have to allocate 75% of ANDC to PSL.
- The idea behind this is to ensure that adequate institutional credit reaches some of the vulnerable sectors of the economy, which otherwise may not be attractive for banks from the profitability point of view.

BIODIVERSITY & ENVIRONMENT

Project Dolphin

The Prime Minister announced the **government’s plan to launch a Project Dolphin** in his recent Independence Day Speech (15th August 2020).

- The proposed project is aimed at **saving both river and marine dolphins**.

Key Points

PROJECT DOLPHIN
PRESERVING OUR UNDERWATER FRIENDS

- 10-YEAR PROJECT TO FOCUS ON BOTH RIVER AND SEA DOLPHINS
- AIM TO STRENGTHEN BIODIVERSITY, CREATE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND ATTRACT TOURISM
- KILLING, HABITAT FRAGMENTATION BY DAMS AND BARRAGES AND INDISCRIMINATE FISHING HAS REDUCED THE GANGES RIVER DOLPHIN POPULATION FROM TENS OF THOUSANDS TO AROUND 3,700 OVER THE LAST CENTURY
- GANGES RIVER DOLPHIN, A SPECIES OF FRESHWATER DOLPHINS, IS PRIMARILY FOUND IN GANGA AND BRAHMAPUTRA RIVERS, AND THEIR TRIBUTARIES IN INDIA, BANGLADESH AND NEPAL
- IN INDIA, THESE DOLPHINS ARE SIGHTED IN DEEP RIVERS IN ASSAM, BIHAR, JHARKHAND, MADHYA PRADESH, RAJASTHAN, UTTAR PRADESH AND WEST BENGAL
- GANGES RIVER DOLPHIN, OFFICIALLY DISCOVERED IN 1801, CAN LIVE ONLY IN FRESHWATER

- Project Dolphin will be on the lines of Project Tiger, which has helped increase the tiger population.
- Project got in-principle approval in December 2019, at the first meeting of the National Ganga Council (NGC), headed by the Prime Minister.
- It is expected to be implemented by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
 - Special Conservation program needs to be taken up for Gangetic Dolphin which is a national aquatic animal and also indicator species for the river Ganga spread over several states. As the Gangetic dolphin is at the top of the food chain, protecting the species and its habitat will ensure conservation of aquatic lives of the river.
 - So far, the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), which implements the government’s flagship scheme Namami Gange, has been taking some initiatives for saving dolphins.
- Global Experience: The Rhine Action Plan (1987) of the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine (ICPR) — representing Switzerland, France, Germany, Luxemburg and the Netherlands — helped in conservation of the salmon fish (also an indicator species).

Gangetic Dolphin

- **Scientific Name:** Platanista gangetica
- **Features:**
 - These are generally blind and catch their prey in a unique manner. They emit an ultrasonic sound which reaches the prey.
 - These are also called susu.
- **Location:**
 - It is found mainly in the Indian subcontinent, particularly in Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Karnaphuli-Sangu river systems.
 - It is also found in the Ganga's tributaries.
- **Threats:**
 - Dams disturb the migration, breeding cycles and habitat of fish and other prey.
 - Pollution.
 - Excessive silting and sand mining especially in Assam and lower course of the Ganga.
- **Population:**
 - The Gangetic dolphin census suggests that the Gangetic dolphin population in India could be about 2,500-3,000.
 - As per Ministry of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change there are about 1,272 dolphins in Uttar Pradesh and 962 in Assam.
- **Status of Conservation:**
 - In the First Schedule of the Indian Wildlife (Protection), Act 1972.
 - Endangered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
 - Appendix I (most endangered) of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).
 - Appendix II (migratory species that need conservation and management or would significantly benefit from international co-operation) of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS).
- **Conservation Efforts:**
 - Wildlife Protection Act: In 1986 after the launch of Ganga Action Plan in 1985, the government included Gangetic dolphins in the First Schedule of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972.
 - It means they have the highest degree of protection against hunting.
 - This was aimed at checking hunting and providing conservation facilities such as wildlife sanctuaries.
 - For instance, Vikramshila Ganges Dolphin Sanctuary was established in Bihar under this Act.
 - Conservation Plan: The Conservation Action Plan for the Ganges River Dolphin 2010-2020, which "identified threats to Gangetic Dolphins and impact of river traffic, irrigation canals and depletion of prey-base on Dolphins populations".
 - The National Ganga River Basin Authority (replaced by National Ganga Council) in 2009 and constituted a Working Group under the Patna University to prepare a Conservation Action Plan for the Gangetic Dolphin in 2009.
 - National Aquatic Animal: In 2009, during the 1st meeting of the National Ganga River Basin Authority, the Gangetic river dolphin was declared as the national aquatic animal.
 - The National Mission for Clean Ganga celebrates 5th October as National Ganga River Dolphin Day.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. Discuss the role of Jawaharlal Neheru in post independence consolidation and nation building. (150 words)

Ans.

Jawahar Lal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of Independent India is widely acclaimed as one of the architects of modern India.

His remarkable personality was an unusual combination of an intellectual and a practical political leader.

The role that he played in the long struggle for national freedom, and later as one of the greatest political leaders of free India, has had a profound impact on the modern politics of the country.

Challenges Faced by the Newly Independent India

- India was born in very difficult circumstances. Freedom came with partition of the country. The year 1947 was a year of unprecedented violence and trauma of displacement.
- It was in this situation that independent India started on its journey to achieve several objectives.
- Yet the turmoil that accompanied independence did not make our leaders lose sight of the multiple challenges that faced the new nation.

Broadly, independent India faced the following challenges:

- The first and the immediate challenge was to shape a nation that was united yet accommodative of the diversity.
- India was a land of continental size and diversity. Its people spoke different languages and followed different cultures and religions.
- At that time it was widely believed that a country full of such kinds of diversity could not remain together for long.
- The partition of the country appeared to prove everyone's worst fears. Hence, consolidation of the country was one of the biggest challenges.
- The second challenge was to establish democracy.
- Everybody agreed on running the country through democratic government.
- However, a democratic constitution is necessary but not sufficient for establishing democracy. The challenge was to develop democratic practices in accordance with the constitution.
- The third challenge was to ensure the development and well being of the entire society and not only of some sections.
- The constitution laid down the principle of equality and special protection to socially disadvantaged groups and religious and cultural communities.
- But, the real challenge was to evolve effective policies for economic development and eradication of poverty.
- The fourth challenge was to have a new foreign policy.
- India had just gained independence from Britishers. The leaders feared that joining any of the two blocs (USA and USSR) might be a risk to the country's autonomy and compromising independence.

Nehru's role in overcoming these challenges

Consolidation of the nation: Nehru took a firm stance against the possible division of India into smaller principalities. He established the State Reorganization Committee to fulfil regional aspirations of the people which would lower the chances of them wanting to cede from the nation. This way he strengthened the unity.

Rehabilitation of refugees: Refugees from Pakistan were given shelter and attempts were made to reduce communalism.

Secularism: It was mainly due to Jawahar Lal Nehru's efforts that India emerged as a secular state in the mid-twentieth century. Much before independence, he played a heroic role in the development of a secular basis for Indian polity. This helped in building the narrative of 'Unity in Diversity'.

Welfare state: Nehru was a practical idealist and believed that socialism and democracy were not contradictory but complementary to each other. He wanted to build a welfare state for the equitable distribution of wealth.

Planning Commission: Nehru, a pragmatic socialist understood the importance of the welfare state in a country which does not have sufficient infrastructure, established a planning commission for long term planning of social schemes.

Non-Alignment Policy (NAM): Nehru, being the Foreign Minister, did not want to join either of the power blocs. Also he did not want India to remain aloof from world politics. Therefore, Nehru's visionary approach to establish NAM with other third world countries proved to be an ideal foreign policy approach.

Conclusion

Nehru's contribution to India can never be truly evaluated. Despite facing daunting tasks he was successful in maintaining and strengthening the nation. Carrying the traditions of the national movement, he nurtured the newly born nation, India.

DAILY QUIZ

1. With reference to Priority Sector Lending (PSL), consider the following statements:
 1. Regional rural banks (RRBs) and small finance banks have to allocate 40% of adjusted Net Bank Credit (ANDC) to PSL.
 2. Loans for setting up compressed biogas plants is a category eligible for finance under PSL.Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - a. only 1
 - b. **only 2**
 - c. both 1& 2
 - d. none
2. With reference to the draft of Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture (DEPA), which of the following is/are correct?
 1. It is a draft released by the RBI which aims at empowering individuals with control over their banking data.
 2. It will involve the creation of new market players known as User Consent Managers.Choose the correct answer using the codes given below.
 - a. 1 only
 - b. **2 only**
 - c. both 1&2
 - d. Neither 1 nor 2
3. With reference to the conservation status of Gangetic Dolphin, consider the following statements:
 1. It is listed under the first schedule of Indian Wildlife (Protection), Act 1972.
 2. It is listed as critically endangered under the IUCN Red List.Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - a. **1 only**
 - b. 2 only
 - c. Both 1& 2
 - d. None
4. With reference to the BRICS, consider the following statements:
 1. The term was coined by the British Economist Agnus Deaton.
 2. New Development Bank And Contingent Reserve Arrangement were announced by Goa Declaration of BRICS.Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - a. 1 only
 - b. 2 only
 - c. 1&2 only
 - d. **Neither 1 nor 2**
5. With reference to Parliamentary Committees, consider the following statements:
 1. The Constitution of India mentions the composition and tenure of parliamentary committees.
 2. The house-keeping committee is a standing committee.Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - a. 1 only
 - b. **2 only**
 - c. 1&2 only
 - d. Neither 1 nor 2