

GOVERNANCE**Reservation in Super-speciality Medical Courses: SC**

Recently, the Supreme Court (SC) has reserved its order on the state governments providing a 50% in-service reservation for admissions to super-speciality medical courses (Doctorate of Medicine/DM and Master of Chirurgiae/M. Ch.) in government colleges for the academic year 2020-21.

Key Points

- In August 2020, the SC allowed states to grant the benefit of reservation of seats to in-service doctors in the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) postgraduate (PG) degree courses.
- The judgment held that the state has the legislative competence and authority to provide for a separate source of entry for in-service candidates seeking admission to PG/diploma courses in the exercise of powers under Entry 25, List III.
- Entry 25 of List-III: Education, including technical education, medical education and universities, subject to the provisions of entries 63, 64, 65 and 66 of List I; vocational and technical training of labour.
- The Constitution provides for a three-fold distribution of legislative subjects between the Union and the states, which are List-I (the Union List), List-II (the State List) and List-III (the Concurrent List), described in the seventh schedule.

In November 2020, Tamil Nadu government allowed counselling and filling of 50% of the super-speciality seats in the government medical colleges with in-service candidates in the state.

- The seats would be filled with candidates who have cleared NEET-Super Speciality Courses (SS) and the selection committee of the Directorate of Medical Education would prepare the merit list and conduct counselling.
- The state government argued that there was an acute need for super-speciality qualified doctors both in the medical academia and in practice.
- After 50% of seats in DM/M. Ch. courses in government medical colleges are allocated to in-service candidates, the rest will be surrendered to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).
- DGHS is a repository of technical knowledge concerning public health, medical education and health care. It is an attached organisation of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- Doctors, including PG holders qualified in NEET 2020, challenged the decision saying that there is no concept of any reservation for admission to super-speciality medical courses.

They referred to the verdict in *Dr Preeti Srivastava & Anr. versus State of Madhya Pradesh & Ors, 1999* which held that “merit, and merit alone, is the basis for admission at the super-speciality level”.

- Their appeal argued that the State order was contrary to the Postgraduate Medical Education (Amendment) Regulations of 2019, which mandated that the DGHS should be in charge of the admission process.
- The regulations empower DGHS to conduct the counselling for all super-speciality courses in medical educational institutions of the Central and state governments, deemed universities, medical educational institutions established by municipal bodies, trusts, etc.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**IRNSS: Part of World Wide Radio Navigation System**

The Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) has recognised the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) as a component of the World Wide Radio Navigation System (WWRNS) during its 102nd session held virtually.

- The IMO is the United Nations specialised agency responsible for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine and atmospheric pollution by ships.

Key Points

- India has become the fourth country in the world to have its independent regional navigation satellite system recognised by the IMO as a part of the World Wide Radio Navigation System (WWRNS).
- The other three countries that have its navigation systems recognised by the IMO are the USA, Russia and China.

Significance:

- The IMO has accepted IRNSS as an alternative navigation module in Indian waters. It was in use only on a pilot basis earlier but now all merchant vessels are authorised to use it, even small fishing vessels.

- The navigation system can now replace GPS in the Indian Ocean waters upto 1500 km from the Indian boundary.
- IRNSS is a regional and not a global navigation system.
- With the recognition as a component of the WWRNS, the Indian navigation system is similarly placed as Global Positioning System (GPS - USA), most commonly used by marine shipping vessels across the world or the Russian Global Navigation Satellite System (GLONASS).
- It is being considered as a significant achievement towards the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative.
- Apart from navigational benefits it has strategic importance as it reduces overdependence on the global navigation system.

Important Navigation Systems:

- USA navigation system: The Global Positioning System (GPS) is a satellite-based navigation system that consists of 24 orbiting satellites.
- Glonass is Russian Satellite Navigation System considered as a counterpart to GPS of the USA.
- BeiDou Navigation Satellite System of China: A hybrid constellation consisting of around 30 satellites in three kinds of orbits.
- Galileo is Europe's Global Navigation Satellite System.

Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System

- IRNSS is an independent regional navigation satellite system developed by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO).
- The main objective is to provide reliable position, navigation and timing services over India and its neighbourhood.
- The IRNSS constellation was named as "NavIC" (Navigation with Indian Constellation) by the Prime Minister.

NavIC provides two types of services:

- Standard Positioning Service (SPS) is meant for the general public.
- Restricted Service (RS) is an encrypted service meant for authorised users and agencies.
- Unlike the widely used GPS which includes 24 satellites, NavIC has 8 satellites and their range is within India and its adjoining regions extending up to 1,500 km from the country's border.
- Technically satellite systems with more satellites provide more accurate positioning information. However, compared to GPS which has a position accuracy of 20-30 metres, the NavIC is able to pinpoint location to an estimated accuracy of under 20 metres.

INDIAN GEOGRAPHY

Cyclone Nivar

Recently, the tropical cyclone Nivar has made landfall along the Tamil Nadu-Puducherry coast. Landfall refers to the phenomenon of a cyclone's outer wall moving over the coastline and beyond.

Key Points

Tropical Cyclone:

- A tropical cyclone is an intense circular storm that originates over warm tropical oceans and is characterized by low atmospheric pressure, high winds, and heavy rain.
- A characteristic feature of tropical cyclones is the eye, a central region of clear skies, warm temperatures, and low atmospheric pressure.
- Storms of this type are called hurricanes in the North Atlantic and eastern Pacific and typhoons in SouthEast Asia and China. They are called tropical cyclones in the southwest Pacific and Indian Ocean region and Willy-willies in north-western Australia.
- Storms rotate anticlockwise in the northern hemisphere and clockwise in the southern hemisphere.

Cyclone Nivar:

- It is the fourth cyclone that has taken shape in the North Indian Ocean region this year. The first three cyclones were Cyclone Gati (made landfall in Somalia in November), Cyclone Amphan (eastern India witnessed it in May), and Cyclone Nisarga (in Maharashtra).
- Nivar will be the second cyclone to hit Tamil Nadu in two years after Cyclone Gaja in 2018.
- The storm has been named Cyclone Nivar, based on the guidelines of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO). Nivara has been selected from the list of names given by Iran.
- According to WMO guidelines, countries in every region are supposed to give names for cyclones.

- The North Indian Ocean Region covers tropical cyclones formed over Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea.
- The 13 members, which come under the region, are Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Yemen.
- A total of 169 cyclones were named by these countries for this year, with 13 names from each country.
- It has weakened from a very severe cyclonic storm to a severe cyclonic storm with a wind speed of 100-110 km per hour.



Cyclone Category	Wind Speed in Km/h	Damage Capacity	Type of Disturbances	Wind Speed in Km/h
01	120-150	Minimal	Low Pressure	Less than 31
02	150-180	Moderate	Depression	31-49
03	180-210	Extensive	Deep Depression	49-61
04	210-250	Extreme	Cyclonic Storm	61-88
05	250 +	Catastrophic	Severe Cyclonic Storm	88-117
			Very Severe Cyclone	118-221
			Super Cyclone	More than 221

Government Steps:

- The Tamil Nadu government has announced a public holiday under the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881, in 16 districts, including Chennai, considering the impact of Cyclone Nivar.
- Fishing activities have been restricted and residents evacuated in coastal areas hit by the cyclone. The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has deployed its teams in the affected regions.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

India's Assistance to Afghanistan

Recently, at the Afghanistan 2020 Conference, India has announced about 150 projects worth USD 80 million.

- Afghanistan's President, officials from the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU) officials, besides representatives of other countries, attended the conference.
- Also, the USA has decided to reduce its troop presence in Afghanistan to about 2,500 by January 2021.

Key Points

India's Current Assistance:

- India will launch phase-IV of high-impact community development projects, which include around 150 projects worth USD 80 million.
- It has signed an agreement for building the Shahtoot dam, which would provide safe drinking water to 2 million residents of Kabul city.
- It builds on the 202 km Pul-e-Khumri transmission line of 2009, through which India provides power to the city.

Earlier Assistance:

- India's development programmes in Afghanistan are focused around five pillars:
- Large infrastructure projects.
- Human resource development and capacity building.
- Humanitarian assistance.
- High-impact community development projects.
- Enhancing trade and investment through air and land connectivity.
- Since 2001, India has committed USD 3 billion towards rebuilding and reconstruction of Afghanistan.



- During the Taliban years from 1996 to 2001, India did not invest in Afghanistan.
- Chabahar Port in Iran, which provides alternate connectivity to Afghanistan.
- Afghanistan's growth has been constrained by its landlocked geography and Pakistan blocking transit access made the situation even worse.
- Pandemic Support: India sent more than 20 tonnes of medicines, other equipment and transported 75,000 tonnes of wheat to Afghanistan to address the Covid-19 challenge.

Shift in Indian Perspective:

- The Indian government's decision to invest in Afghanistan's future, where the Taliban is set to play a dominant role, is being seen as a major departure from the past.
- India also participated in the commencement ceremony of the intra-Afghan talks in Doha in September 2020, where a 21-member Taliban team was also present. It reflects India's realisation of ground realities and shifting sands in Kabul's power structure.

Reduction of Troops by USA:

- In February 2020, the USA and the Taliban signed an agreement in Doha, (Qatar's capital).
- According to it, the USA would withdraw all of its troops from Afghanistan in 14 months and would also release Taliban prisoners, held captive by the Afghan government.
- In return, the Taliban assured that they would not allow transnational jihadist organisations such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State to use Afghanistan as their base and also committed to start direct talks with the Afghan government, which began in September 2020.
- With the USA leaving at such a crucial point, it not only deprives Afghan forces of the support they need, particularly the airpower, but also affects their morale.
- The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has committed to funding Afghan troops for four more years.
- However, this decision will leave Afghanistan with an uncertain future as the Taliban is expected to take over after the troops' withdrawal.
- The Taliban, who were ousted from power in 2001 after the USA invasion, have since been fighting both foreign troops and the Afghan government.
- It now controls more than half of the country and contests the whole of it.
- Since the agreement was signed, the Taliban have conducted more than 13,000 attacks nationwide.
- According to a UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UMAMA) report in October 2020, nearly 6,000 Afghan civilians were killed in the first nine months of the year and 45% of the deaths were by the Taliban.

Way Forward

- The increasing level of violence in Afghanistan is a pressing concern. However, in spite of the challenges, both sides (the government representatives and the Taliban) remain at the negotiating table, and appear to have reached an early breakthrough.
- India calls for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire and also believes that the peace process must be Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled.
- India looks forward to walking hand in hand with the people of Afghanistan and the world community to work towards a peaceful, prosperous, sovereign, democratic and united Afghanistan.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM

Chang'e-5 Mission: China

China has launched an unmanned spacecraft to bring back lunar rocks, the first attempt by any nation to retrieve samples from the Moon in four decades.

The Chang'e-5 mission, named after the ancient Chinese goddess of the moon, will seek to collect lunar material to help scientists understand more about the moon's origins and formation.

Key Points

- Launch: The Long March-5 Y5 rocket, carrying the Chang'e-5 spacecraft, was launched from Wenchang Space Launch Center (China).
- Key Task of the Mission: To drill 2 meters beneath the moon's surface and scoop up about 2 kilograms of rocks and other debris to be brought back to Earth.

It will help scientists learn about:

- Moon's origins,
- Volcanic activity on its surface and its interior, and
- When its magnetic field, key to protecting any form of life from the sun's radiation dissipated.

Functioning:

- Upon entering the moon's orbit, the spacecraft is intended to deploy a pair of vehicles to the lunar surface, a lander and an ascender.
- A lander will drill into the ground, then transfer its soil and rock samples to an ascender that will lift off and dock with an orbiting module.
- There will be an attempt to collect 2 kg of samples in a previously unvisited area in a massive lava plain known as Oceanus Procellarum, or "Ocean of Storms".
- Area of the moon where the spacecraft is due to land is 1-2 billion years old.
- If this is successful, the samples will be transferred to a return capsule that will return them to Earth, with a landing in China's Inner Mongolia region.
- The entire mission is scheduled to take around 23 days.
- Significance: If the mission is completed as planned, it would make China only the third country to have retrieved lunar samples, joining the United States and the Soviet Union.
- The Apollo programme (which first put men on the moon), the United States landed 12 astronauts over six flights from 1969 to 1972, bringing back 382 kg of rocks and soil.
- The Soviet Union Lead Luna: Deployed three successful robotic sample return missions in the 1970s. The last, the Luna 24, retrieved samples in 1976 from Mare Crisium, or "Sea of Crises" - a lunar basin.
- The Apollo-Luna sample zone of the moon, while critical to our understanding, was undertaken in an area that comprises far less than half the lunar surface.
- Subsequent data from orbital remote sensing missions have shown a wider diversity of rock types, mineralogies and ages than represented in the Apollo-Luna sample collections.

China's Moon Missions:

- China made its first lunar landing in 2013.
- In January 2019, the Chang'e-4 probe touched down on the far side of the moon, the first by any nation's space probe.
- Chang'e is a series of lunar probes launched by China National Space administration.

China's Other Space Plans:

- It aims to have a permanent manned space station in service by around 2022.
- Within the next decade, China plans to establish a robotic base station to conduct unmanned exploration in the south polar region of the moon.
- It is to be developed through the Chang'e-6, 7 and 8 missions through the 2020s.

Other Important Mission to Moon:

- Chandrayaan 3 by ISRO
- Artemis Mission by National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns Discuss the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the Tourism and Hospitality industry. (250 words)

Ans:

In the recent past, tourism and hospitality industry has become a crucial sector for the global economy, as it amounts to around 10% of the global GDP. However, extensive travel restrictions and movement regulations due to covid-19 pandemic have crippled the entire tourism and hospitality sector.

Impact of Covid-19 on Tourism and Hospitality Sector

- Due to higher forward and backward linkages, the sector has a multiplier effect on the local economy.
- This sector can be seen as a medium for the creation of jobs, a tool for boosting soft power, and a foreign exchange earner and plays a critical role in ensuring decentralized development.
- Therefore, the collapse of the Tourism and Hospitality sector will certainly hit these areas.
- Further, given its substantial share in global GDP, slump in the sector will have a considerable macroeconomic impact in the form of reduced growth.
- The biggest negative fallout would be on the employment scenario. This, in turn, will further worsen global slowdown.
- Drastic changes in people's social behaviour are evident in the post-pandemic scenario. This will impact the current business model of the tourism and hospitality industry.
- India has been no exception, due to almost zero revenue, the sector is facing major concerns like liquidity crunch, delay in payment of salaries and job losses.

Conclusion

Global Tourism and Hospitality Sectors have been facing one of its worst crisis. Given the significance of this sector, there is need for a multi-stakeholder approach, where private players need to reevaluate and re-engineer their business models and government needs to promote and ensure the sustainability of this sector, once the crisis gets over.

DAILY QUIZ

1. With reference to PRAGATI meeting, consider the following statements:

1. It has been designed by the NITI Ayog for timely implementation of central government schemes.
2. It is a three-tier system in which Chief ministers of the concerned states participate.

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**

2. Consider the following statements regarding the North Indian Ocean Region:

1. The Cyclones Gati, Nisarga, Amphan and Nivar all have occurred in the North Indian Ocean Region.
2. India, Bangladesh, China, UAE and Yemen come under the North Indian Ocean Region.

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

3. Consider the following statements:

1. Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY) is a centrally sponsored scheme.
2. PMKSY aims to supplement agriculture by providing capital subsidy in the form of grants-in-aid.
3. The PMKSY scheme is launched by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
b) 2 and 3 only
c) 2 only
d) 1, 2 and 3

4. With reference to La Niña, consider the following statements:

1. It refers to large-scale cooling of the ocean surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean.
2. It reduces the rainfall associated with Southwest monsoon but has a positive impact on the Northeast monsoon.

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. 'Bru tribe' has been in the news recently, is related to which of the following geographical areas?

- a) North-East India**
b) Nilgiris
c) Andaman & Nicobar Islands
d) Chhattisgarh Plains



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A	100%
B	75%
C	50%
D	25%
E	10%

Scholarship will vary from 10% to 100% in tuition fee, based on merit list.

VST : TEST CENTRES

BHUBANESWAR, CUTTACK, BERHAMPUR, SAMBALPUR, KOLKATA

Syllabus	No. of Questions
History of Modern India	5
Geography of India	5
General Science	8
Environment & Ecology	7
Indian Constitution	8
Indian Economy	7
Current Affairs	10

TEST PATTERN: OBJECTIVE TYPE OFFLINE TEST

Total Marks	:	100
Total Questions	:	50 Q
Time Duration	:	1 Hour
Per Question	:	2 Marks
Negative Marking	:	0.66 Marks

- Ex. Vanik Students refers to those students who were previously enrolled in classroom courses like Banking, SSC, Banking+SSC+Railway, OSSC, ASO, CT/B.Ed batches.
- Scholarship is applicable for IAS, OAS, WBCS long term classroom courses.
- Both Ex. VANIK & Non-VANIK students can appear for VST.

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