

GOVERNANCE**Recent Reforms in Defence Sector**

Recently, the Defence Minister released an E-booklet titled '20 Reforms in 2020' highlighting the major reforms undertaken by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in 2020.

Key Points**Chief of Defence Staff & Department of Military Affairs:**

- The appointment of India's first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and creation of the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) were among the major decisions taken by the Government. General Bipin Rawat was appointed as the first CDS who also fulfilled the responsibilities of Secretary, DMA.
- The post of CDS was created to increase efficiency & coordination among the Armed Forces and reduce duplication, while DMA was established to ensure improved civil-military integration.

Self-Reliance in Defence:

- To promote 'Make in India' in the defence sector, a list of 101 defence items for which there would be an embargo on the import was notified in August 2020, while Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020 was unveiled in September 2020.
- There was a 10% budget increase in 2020-21 over the previous year.

Increased Defence Exports:

- The increased partnership with the private sector has led to a substantial rise in defence exports.
- The value of total defence exports rose from Rs 1,941 crore in 2014-15 to Rs 9,116 crore in 2019-20. Also, for the first time, India figured in the list of defence equipment exporting nations, as the exports expanded to more than 84 countries.

Defence Acquisitions: First five Rafale fighter aircraft arrived in India in July 2020 and several more since then, adding firepower to the arsenal of the Indian Air Force.

Reforming Defence R&D:

- To promote innovation by young minds, five Young Scientists Laboratories of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) were launched in 2020.
- DRDO has joined hands with the private sector in design & development and identified 108 Systems & Subsystems for the industry to design, develop and manufacture.

Digital Transformation:

- Directorate General Quality Assurance (DGQA) started online Pre-Delivery inspection in May 2020 to address security threats.
- The Armed Forces Tribunal began digital hearing for the first time in August 2020.

Strengthening Border Infrastructure:

- Reforms of processes and workflows within Border Roads Organisation (BRO) enabled it to achieve targets ahead of schedule, in some instances.
- World's longest Atal tunnel above 10,000 feet, at Rohtang on the Leh-Manali Highway was inaugurated.

Participation of Women in Armed Forces:

- Ten streams of Indian Army were opened for giving Permanent Commission to Short Service Commission (SSC) Women officers.
- All Sainik Schools were thrown open for girl students from academic session 2020-21.

Reforms in National Cadet Corps :

- Expanding the reach of the National Cadet Corps (NCC) to remote locations was a major announcement.
- It was decided to give preference to NCC cadets in employment in Central Armed Police Forces from May 2020.

Aid to Civil Administration during Covid-19:

- The Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces have mobilised resources to aid the civil administration in the fight against Covid-19.
- DRDO has set up several hospitals to treat Covid patients across the states, passed on technology expertise to the private sector for mass production of covid related medicines and equipment.

Help beyond Boundaries:

- The Armed Forces extended a helping hand to the countries in distress. Indian Navy mounted eight relief missions during 2020-21.
- Besides evacuating stranded Indians from Iran, Sri Lanka and Maldives under Vande Bharat Mission, Indian Naval ships provided Covid-19 medical relief to five countries.

- INS Airavat provided 270 MT food aid to Sudan, Djibouti and Eritrea struck by natural calamities.
- The Indian Coast Guard led the rescue operation to save the Sri Lanka coast from its biggest oil spill.

2. Model Panchayat Citizens Charter

Recently, the Union Minister of Panchayati Raj released a Model Panchayat Citizens Charter.

Key Points

About:

- It is prepared by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) in collaboration with National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR). NIRDPR is an autonomous organisation under the Union Ministry of Rural Development.
- It has been developed for the delivery of the services across the 29 sectors, aligning actions with localised Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- It is expected that the Panchayats utilising this framework, and with the due approval of Gram Sabha, would draw up a Citizens Charter, detailing the different categories of services rendered to the citizen by the Panchayat, the conditions for such service and also the time limit for such service.
- It will help in making the citizens aware of their rights on the one hand, and to make the Panchayats and their elected representatives directly accountable to the people, on the other hand.

Significance:

- Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) constitute the third tier of government in the rural areas and represent the first level of Government interaction for over 60% of the Indian population.
- PRIs are responsible for delivery of basic services as enshrined under Article 243G of the Constitution of India, specifically in the areas of Health & Sanitation, Education, Nutrition, Drinking Water.

Other Initiatives for PRIs:

- **eGramSwaraj:** It is a user-friendly web-based portal which unifies the planning, accounting and monitoring functions of Gram Panchayats.
- **Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA):** Launched in 2018, this centrally sponsored scheme is an effort in the direction of achieving "Sabka Sath, Sabka Gaon, Sabka Vikas".
- **People's Plan Campaign (PPC)- Sabki Yojana Sabka Vikas:** It aims to draw up Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs) in the country and place them on a website where anyone can see the status of the various government's flagship schemes.

Citizen's Charter

About:

- It is a voluntary and written document that spells out the service provider's efforts taken to focus on their commitment towards fulfilling the needs of the citizens/customers.
- 1. It preserves the trust between the service provider and the citizens/users.
- 2. It includes what the citizens can expect out of the service provider.
- 3. It also includes how citizens can redress any grievances.
- The concept was first articulated and implemented in the United Kingdom by the Conservative Government of John Major in 1991 as a national Programme.
- Citizen's charters are not legally enforceable documents. They are just guidelines to enhance service delivery to citizens.

Originally Framed Principles:

- Quality – Improving service quality.
- Choice – Wherever possible.
- Standards – Specifically mention what to expect and how to go about if standards are not met.
- Value – For taxpayers' money.
- Accountability – At the level of the individual and the organization.
- Transparency – Transparency in rules/schemes/procedures/grievances.

Indian Initiative:

- In India, the concept of citizen's charter was first adopted at a 'Conference of Chief Ministers of various States and Union Territories' held in May 1997. A major outcome of the conference was a decision to formulate Citizen's Charters by the central and state governments, beginning with sectors with a large public interface such as the railways, telecom, posts, Public Distribution System, etc. The task of coordination, formulation, and operationalization of citizen's charters was done by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG).

- The Right of Citizens for Time Bound Delivery of Goods and Services and Redressal of their Grievances Bill, 2011 (Citizens Charter) was introduced in the Lok Sabha in December 2011. It lapsed due to the dissolution of the Lok Sabha in 2014.

Need:

1. To make administration accountable and citizen friendly.
2. To ensure transparency.
3. To take measures to improve customer service.
4. To adopt a stakeholder approach.
5. To save time for both Administration and the citizens.

Challenges in India:

- In a majority of cases, not formulated through a consultative process with cutting edge staff who will finally implement it.
- Lack of meaningful and succinct Citizen's Charter, absence of critical information that end-users need to hold agencies accountable.
- Only a small percentage of end-users are aware of the commitments made in the Citizen's Charter.
- Measurable standards of delivery are rarely defined making it difficult to assess whether the desired level of service has been achieved or not.
- Little interest shown by the organizations in adhering to their Citizen's Charter since there is no citizen friendly mechanism to compensate the citizen if the organization defaults.
- Citizen's Charter has still not been adopted by all Ministries/Departments. This overlooks local issues.

Way Forward

A Citizens' Charter cannot be an end in itself, it is rather a means to an end - a tool to ensure that the citizen is always at the heart of any service delivery mechanism. Drawing from best practice models such as the Sevottam Model (a Service Delivery Excellence Model) can help Citizen's Charter in becoming more citizen centric.

3. Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen Phase-II

Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) [SBM (G)] Phase-II is making steady progress amidst Covid-19 with 1249 villages declared ODF (Open Defecation Free) Plus. SBM (G) Phase-II was approved in February 2020 by the Ministry of Jal Shakti. ODF Plus entails that ODF behaviours are sustained, and every village has access to solid and liquid waste management.

Key Points**About SBM(G) Phase-II:**

- **About:** It emphasizes the sustainability of achievements under phase I and to provide adequate facilities for Solid/Liquid & plastic Waste Management (SLWM) in rural India.
- **Implementation:** SBM (G) Phase-II will be implemented from 2020-21 to 2024-25 in a mission mode with a total outlay of Rs. 1,40,881 crores.
- **Funding Pattern and Norms:** The fund sharing pattern between Centre and States will be 90:10 for North-Eastern States and Himalayan States and UT of J&K; 60:40 for other States; and 100% for other Union Territories. Funding Norms for SLWM have been rationalized and changed to per capita basis in place of the number of households.
- **Monitoring:** The SLWM component of ODF Plus will be monitored on the basis of output-outcome indicators for 4 key areas:
 1. Plastic waste management,
 2. Biodegradable solid waste management (including animal waste management),
 3. Greywater (Household Wastewater) management
 4. Fecal sludge management.

Significance:

- It will continue to generate employment and provide impetus to the rural economy through construction of household toilets and community toilets, as well as infrastructure for SLWM such as compost pits, soak pits, waste stabilisation ponds, material recovery facilities etc.
- It will also help rural India effectively handle the challenge of solid and liquid waste management and will help in substantial improvement in the health of the villagers in the country.

Swachh Bharat Mission (G) Phase-I:

- The rural sanitation coverage in the country at the time of launch of SBM (G) on 2nd October, 2014 was reported as 38.7%.

- More than 10 crore individual toilets have been constructed since the launch of the mission; as a result, rural areas in all the States have declared themselves ODF as on 2nd October, 2019.

Other Schemes as part of SBM:

- **GOBAR-DHAN** (Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources) Scheme: It was launched by the Ministry of Jal Shakti in 2018. The scheme aims to augment income of farmers by converting biodegradable waste into compressed biogas (CBG).
- **Individual Household Latrines (IHHL)**: Under SBM, individuals get around 15 thousand for the construction of toilets.
- **Swachh Vidyalaya Abhiyan**: The Ministry of Education launched Swachh Vidyalaya Programme under Swachh Bharat Mission with an objective to provide separate toilets for boys and girls in all government schools within one year.

Way Forward

- The pandemic has largely sensitized the people of this country towards personal health and hygiene. This awareness must be built upon to further the goals under Swachh Bharat Mission.
- The landmark allocation, to the tune of 1.42 lakh Crores over 2021-25, made by the 15th Finance Commission towards Water and Sanitation sectors is termed as a game changer for Gram Panchayats.

ECONOMY
Global Minimum Corporate Tax Rate: G7

Recently, the Finance Ministers from the Group of Seven (G7) nations reached a landmark accord setting a Global Minimum Corporate Tax Rate (GMCTR). The agreement could form the basis of a worldwide deal. It will now be discussed in detail at a meeting of G20 financial ministers and central bank governors in July 2021.

Key Points
Global Minimum Corporate Tax Rate:
About:

- G7 would back a minimum global corporation tax rate of at least 15%, and put in place measures to ensure taxes were paid in the countries where businesses operate.
- Corporation tax is a direct tax imposed on the net income or profit that enterprises make from their businesses.

Applicability:

- It would apply to companies' overseas profits. Therefore, if countries agree on a global minimum, governments could still set whatever local corporate tax rate they want.
- But if companies pay lower rates in a particular country, their home governments could "top-up" their taxes to the agreed minimum rate, eliminating the advantage of shifting profits to a tax haven.
- A tax haven is generally an offshore country that offers foreign individuals and businesses little or no tax liability in a politically and economically static environment.

Need of GMCTR:
Reduce Tax Loss:

- Increasingly, income from intangible sources such as drug patents, software and royalties on intellectual property has migrated to low tax jurisdictions, allowing companies to avoid paying higher taxes in their traditional home countries (tax base erosion of the higher-tax jurisdictions).
- These companies typically rely on complex webs of subsidiaries to hoover profits out of major markets into low-tax countries such as Ireland or Caribbean nations such as the British Virgin Islands or the Bahamas, or to central American nations such as Panama.
- India's annual tax loss due to corporate tax abuse is estimated at over USD 10 billion.

To Bring Uniformity: GMCTR will end a decades-long race to the bottom in which countries have competed to attract corporate giants with ultra-low tax rates and exemptions. And it will bring uniformity in corporate taxation worldwide.

Challenges:

- **Uniting Nations:** Getting all major nations on the same page is a problem, since the GMCTR impinges on the right of the sovereign to decide a nation's tax policy.
- **Policy Issues:** A global minimum rate would essentially take away a tool that countries use to push policies that suit them. A lower tax rate is a tool they can use to alternatively push economic activity. Also, a global minimum tax rate will do little to tackle tax evasion.

Other International Effort:

- The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has been coordinating tax negotiations among 140 countries for years on rules for taxing cross-border digital services and curbing tax base erosion, including a global corporate minimum tax.

India's Stand:

- While taxation is ultimately a sovereign function, and depends upon the needs and circumstances of the nation, the government is open to participate and engage in the emerging discussions globally around the corporate tax structure.
- India is likely to benefit from the global minimum 15% corporate tax rate pact as the effective domestic tax rate is above the threshold, and the country would continue to attract investment. In September 2019, the government had reduced the corporate tax rate to 22% for companies that gave up all exemptions and incentives. Further, a 15% rate was offered to new manufacturing firms. The effective tax rate, inclusive of surcharge and cess, for Indian domestic companies is around 25.17%.

Way Forward

- A G20 meeting scheduled for Venice in July 2021 will see whether the G7 accord gets broad support from the world's biggest developed and developing countries.
- Much still needs to be ironed out - including the metrics that will determine how and to which multinational companies the tax will be applied.
- There should be appropriate coordination between the application of the new international tax rules including the Digital Services Taxes. Any final agreement could have major repercussions for low-tax countries and tax havens.

SOCIAL ISSUE

I-Familia: Global Database to Identify Missing Persons

Recently, the Interpol has launched a new global database named "I-Familia" to identify missing persons through family DNA and help the police solve cold cases in member countries.

Key Points

About I-Familia:

- The first of its kind, I-Familia is a global database for identifying missing persons based on international DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) kinship matching.
- The database seeks to identify missing persons or unidentified human remains when direct comparison is not possible, by using DNA samples from family members instead. Family members must give their consent for their data to be used for international searching.
- It builds on Interpol's long-standing success in direct DNA matching.

Working:

- I-Familia has three components:
 1. A dedicated global database to host the DNA profiles provided by relatives, held separately from any criminal data.
 2. DNA matching software called Bonaparte.
 3. Interpretation guidelines, produced by Interpol, to efficiently identify and report potential matches.
- In the event of a match, notifications are sent to the countries that supplied the DNA profile from the unidentified body and from the family respectively.

Significance:

- There is growing international concern about the number of missing persons and unidentified victims around the world due to increased international travel, the prevalence of organized crime and human trafficking, the rise in global migration, conflicts and natural disasters.
- All countries have unsolved missing persons investigations as well as human remains that cannot be identified using their national systems alone.

Direct DNA Matching vs Kinship DNA Matching:

- A direct DNA sample from the missing person, for example a prior medical sample or a personal item such as a toothbrush, can be compared to the DNA from an unidentified body or human remains to see if a match can be found. This type of identification has been carried out via the Interpol DNA Database since 2004.
- Biological relatives share a percentage of their DNA, depending on their relationship. In the event that a DNA sample from the missing person cannot be obtained for direct matching, DNA from close family members (parents, children, siblings) can also be compared. This is where I-Familia is set to make a difference.

Interpol

- The International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) is an intergovernmental organization that helps coordinate the police force of 194 member countries.
- Each of the member countries hosts an Interpol National Central Bureau (NCB). This connects their national law enforcement with other countries and with the General Secretariat. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is designated as the National Central Bureau of India.
- It is headquartered in Lyon, France.
- Interpol Notices are international requests for cooperation or alerts allowing police in member countries to share critical crime-related information.

BIODIVERSITY AND ENVIRONMENT**'Sea Snot' Outbreak in Turkey**

Recently, Turkey's Sea of Marmara, which connects the Black Sea to the Aegean Sea, has witnessed the largest outbreak of 'sea snot'. A 'sea snot' outbreak was first recorded in the country in 2007.

Key Points**Sea Snot and its Formation:**

- It is marine mucilage that is formed when algae are overloaded with nutrients as a result of water pollution combined with the effects of climate change. The nutrient overload occurs when algae feast on warm weather caused by global warming.
- It looks like a viscous, brown and foamy substance.

Concerns:

- **Threat to the Marine Ecosystem:** It has caused mass deaths among the fish population, and also killed other aquatic organisms such as corals and sponges. It is now covering the surface of the sea and has also spread to 80-100 feet below the surface which eventually can collapse to the bottom and cover the sea floor.
- **Livelihoods of Fishermen Affected:** As the sludge is getting collected in their nets, making them so heavy that they break or get lost. Moreover, the mucilage coating the strings makes the nets visible to fish and keeps them away.
- **Water-borne Diseases:** It can cause an outbreak of water-borne diseases such as cholera in cities like Istanbul.

Steps that are being Taken:

- The entire Sea of Marmara will be turned into a protected area. Moreover, steps are being taken to reduce pollution and improve treatment of waste water from coastal cities and ships.
- Turkey's biggest maritime clean-up operation is being launched and called on local residents, artists and NGOs to join hands to extend assistance.

Nutrient Pollution**About:**

- It is the process where too many nutrients, mainly nitrogen and phosphorus, are added to bodies of water and can act like fertilizer, causing excessive growth of algae.
- This process is also known as eutrophication.

Sources of Nutrients:

- They can occur naturally as a result of weathering of rocks and soil in the watershed and they can also come from the ocean due to mixing of water currents.
- There are more nutrients entering our coastal waters from wastewater treatment facilities, runoff from land in urban areas during rains, and from farming.

Impact:

- Severe algal growth blocks light that is needed for plants, such as seagrasses, to grow.
- When the algae and seagrass die, they decay and in this process the oxygen in the water is used up and this leads to low levels of dissolved oxygen in the water. This, in turn, can kill fish, crabs, oysters, and other aquatic animals.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM**World Food Safety Day**

The Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare virtually attended the World Food Safety Day (7th June) celebrations organized by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).

Key Points**About:**

- The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) jointly facilitate the observance of World Food Safety Day, in collaboration with Member States and other relevant organizations.
- It was first celebrated in 2019, to strengthen the commitment to scale up food safety made by the Addis Ababa Conference and the Geneva Forum in 2019 under the umbrella of “The Future of Food Safety”.

Aim:

- To draw attention and inspire action to help prevent, detect and manage foodborne risks, contributing to food security, human health, economic prosperity, agriculture, market access, tourism and sustainable development.

2021 Theme: Safe Food for a Healthy Tomorrow.

Importance of Food Safety:

- Access to sufficient amounts of safe food is key to sustaining life and promoting good health.
- Foodborne illnesses are usually infectious or toxic in nature and often invisible to the plain eye, caused by bacteria, viruses, parasites or chemical substances entering the body through contaminated food or water.
- An estimated 4,20,000 people around the world die every year after eating contaminated food and children under 5 years of age carry 40% of the foodborne disease burden, with 1,25, 000 deaths every year.
- Food safety has a critical role in assuring that food stays safe at every stage of the food chain - from production to harvest, processing, storage, distribution, all the way to preparation and consumption.
- Food production is responsible for up to 30% of global greenhouse-gas emissions contributing to global warming.
- Global food waste accounts for 6.7% of global greenhouse gas emissions, directly leading to climate change.

Related Global Initiative:

- The Codex Alimentarius, or "Food Code" is a collection of standards, guidelines and codes of practice adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.
- The Codex Alimentarius Commission is a joint intergovernmental body of the Food and Agriculture Organization and World Health Organization. Currently, it has 189 members and India is a member.

Indian Initiatives for Food Safety:

- **State Food Safety Index :**

1. FSSAI has developed the State Food Safety Index (SFSI) to measure the performance of States on five parameters of food safety.
2. The parameters include Human Resources and Institutional Arrangements, Compliance, Food Testing-Infrastructure and Surveillance, Training and Capacity Building and Consumer Empowerment.

- **Eat Right India Movement:**

1. It is an initiative of the Government of India and FSSAI to transform the country's food system in order to ensure safe, healthy and sustainable food for all Indians.
2. Eat Right India is aligned to the National Health Policy 2017 with its focus on preventive and promotive healthcare and flagship programmes like Ayushman Bharat, POSHAN Abhiyaan, Anemia Mukh Bharat and Swachh Bharat Mission.

- **Eat Right Awards:**

1. FSSAI has instituted the 'Eat Right Awards' to recognize the contribution of food companies and individuals to empower citizens to choose safe and healthy food options, which would help improve their health and well-being.

- **Eat Right Mela:**

1. Organised by FSSAI, it is an outreach activity for citizens to nudge them towards eating right. It is organised to make citizens aware of the health and nutrition benefits of different types of food.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. Discuss the major reservations of India with respect to the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Ans:

Introduction

Nuclear Proliferation Treaty is an international treaty, signed in 1968, which envisages three objectives of non-proliferation, disarmament, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. However, India criticized this treaty for having structural flaws and viewed it as an imbalanced instrument.

Body

India is one of the only five countries that either did not sign the NPT and due to the following issues India considers the NPT as discriminatory and had refused to sign it.

- **Failure of Disarmament Process:** The NPT proposes no tangible disarmament roadmap, no reference to testing ban or to the freezing of production of either fissile materials or nuclear weapons, and omitted provisions for reductions and elimination.
- **Nuclear ‘Haves’ and ‘Have-Nots’:** India criticizes the treaty to be discriminatory as it focuses on preventing only horizontal proliferation while there is no limit for vertical proliferation. In this context, India demands that the Nuclear Weapon State (NWS) should renounce its arsenals and further production in return for the commitment of Non- NWS not to produce them.
- **Discriminating Safeguards:** Under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) protocols of nuclear safety, the NWS allowed maintaining ‘voluntary’ safeguards while the rest were subjected to comprehensive safeguards, which seemed intrusive and discriminatory to the NNWS.
- **Emergence of Non-state Actors:** The emergence of non-state actors with declared intent to access weapons of mass destruction and the detection of a global nuclear black-market, has raised concerns on the limitations of the NPT.

Conclusion

India has opposed the international treaties aimed at non-proliferation since they were selectively applicable to the non-nuclear powers and legitimized the monopoly of the five nuclear weapons powers. Thus, all nations should engage to carve out a multilateral framework for the peaceful use of nuclear energy and global peace.

DAILY QUIZ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. There is no prescribed procedure for appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners as per the constitution.
2. At present the President appoints Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners on the advice of Prime Minister.

Which of the given above statements is/are correct?

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

Q2. The Vienna Convention was in news recently, is related to which of the following?

- a. Patent-Pooling
- b. Voluntary Licensing
- c. Diplomatic Relations**
- d. Transfers Of Military Technology

Q3. With reference to Monoclonal antibodies, consider the following statements:

1. They are laboratory-made proteins that mimic the immune system’s ability to fight off harmful pathogens such as viruses.
2. It is not possible to produce monoclonal antibodies that specifically bind to virtually any suitable substance.

Which of the given above statements is/are correct?

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

Q4. Island of Sulawesi is situated to

- a. West of Borneo
- b. North of the Maluku Islands
- c. South of Mindanao**
- d. None of the above

Q5. In the context of which one of the following are the terms ‘pyrolysis and plasma gasification’ mentioned?

- a. Extraction of rare earth elements
- b. Natural gas extraction technologies
- c. Hydrogen fuel-based automobiles
- d. Waste-to-energy technologies**