

GOVERNANCE**Seven New Defence Public Sector Units (DPSUs)**

The Prime Minister dedicated the seven defence Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), created through the restructuring of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB), to the nation. India's goal under 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India) is to make the country, on its own, into a big military power.

Key Points**About:**

- **Dissolution and Amalgamation:**

1. The Union government ordered the dissolution of the four-decade-old Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) and amalgamated 41 factories under seven new state-owned companies to manufacture defence hardware ranging from munitions to heavy weapons and vehicles. These new companies are headquartered in five cities.
2. OFB was an umbrella body for the ordnance factories and related institutions, and was a subordinate office of the Ministry of Defence (MoD). It was a conglomerate of 41 factories, 9 training Institutes, 3 regional marketing centres and 5 regional controllers of safety. It was headquartered at Kolkata.
3. All employees of the erstwhile OFB (Group A, B and C) belonging to production units will be transferred to the corporate entities on deemed deputation for a period of two years without any change in their service conditions as central government staff.

- **Seven New Companies:** Munitions India Limited, Armoured Vehicles Nigam Limited, Advanced Weapons and Equipment India Limited, Troop Comforts Limited, Yantra India Limited, India Optel Limited, and Gliders India Limited.

- **Significance:**

1. The concerns have been raised regarding high costs, inconsistent quality and delay in supply of OFB products by the armed forces.
2. The new structure will help overcome these various shortcomings in the existing system of OFB and encourage these companies to become competitive and explore new opportunities in the market including exports.

Self-Reliance in Defence Sector:

- Corporatisation of OFB.
- Revised FDI Limit: The Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit in defence manufacturing under automatic route is raised from 49% to 74%.
- Defence Industrial Corridor: The government has proposed to establish two Defence Industrial Corridors in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu each.
- Project Management Unit (PMU): The government is expected to begin time-bound defence procurement and faster decision making by setting up a Project Management Unit (for contract management purposes). The Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020 has been unveiled.
- Reduction in Defence Import Bill: The government will notify a list of weapons/platforms banned for imports and thus such items can only be purchased from the domestic market. Separate budget provision for domestic capital procurement.

2. One Health Consortium

Recently, the Department of Biotechnology has launched the country's first One Health consortium. The Department of Biotechnology is an Indian government department, under the Ministry of Science and Technology

Key Points**About:**

- This Consortium consisting of 27 organisations is one of the biggest one health programs launched by India in post-Covid times.
- It envisages carrying out surveillance of important bacterial, viral and parasitic infections of zoonotic and transboundary pathogens in India.
- It also looks into the use of existing diagnostic tests and the development of additional methodologies for the surveillance and understanding the spread of emerging diseases.

Significance: It will provide a holistic approach to understand the health of human, animals and wildlife to minimise the damage caused by future pandemics.

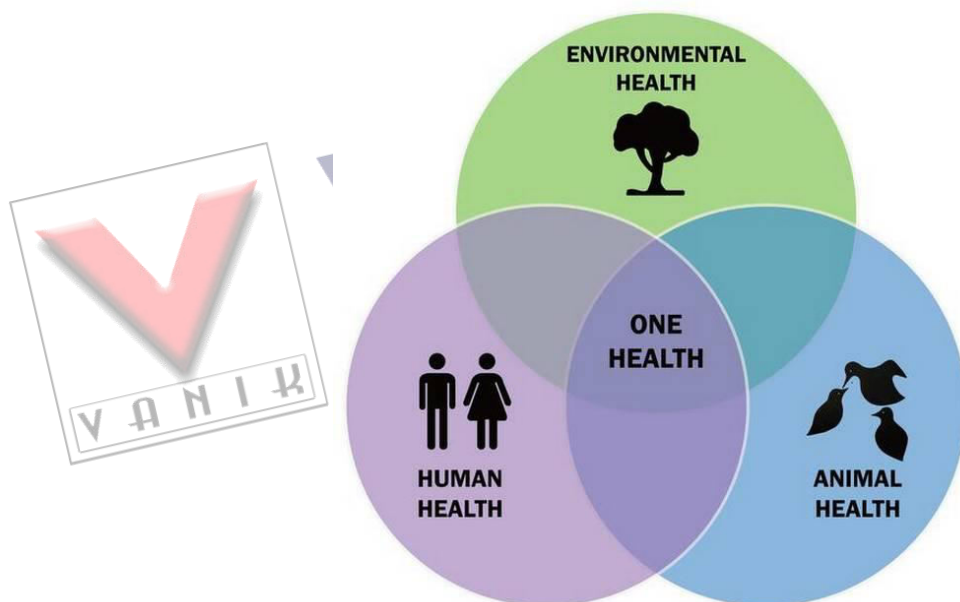
Related Government Steps:

- **National Expert Group on 'One Health':** A National Expert Group on 'One Health' as a multi-sectoral, transdisciplinary, collaborative group was set up by India in May 2019. Recently in April 2021, the Group submitted its report with inclusion of Subject Specific Health Action Plans on identified Climate Sensitive Diseases and 'One Health'.
- **Malé Declaration in 2017:** In the context of Green and Climate Resilient Healthcare Facilities, India became signatory to the Malé Declaration in 2017 and agreed to promote climate-resilient healthcare facilities to be able to withstand any climatic event.
- **Universal Health Coverage:** Its goal as stated in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs no. 3) is one of the most significant commitments to equitable quality healthcare for all. India moved a step closer towards its commitment to the SDGs, when in 2018 the country launched a national health protection scheme, Ayushman Bharat, to achieve UHC.

One Health Concept

About:

- One Health is an approach that recognizes that the health of people is closely connected to the health of animals and our shared environment.
- One Health' vision derives its blueprint from the agreement between the tripartite-plus alliance comprising the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).
- It's purpose is to encourage collaborations in research and sharing of knowledge at multiple levels across various disciplines like human health, animal health, plants, soil, environmental and ecosystem health in ways that improve, protect and defend the health of all species.



Increasing Significance: It has become more important in recent years because many factors have changed interactions between people, animals, plants, and our environment.

- **Human Expansion:** Human populations are growing and expanding into new geographic areas due to which close contact with animals and their environments provides more opportunities for diseases to pass between animals and people. Of the contagious diseases affecting humans, more than 65% are of zoonotic or animal to man origin.
- **Environmental Disruptions:** Disruptions in environmental conditions and habitats can provide new opportunities for diseases to pass to animals.
- **International Travel & Trade:** The movement of people, animals, and animal products has increased from international travel and trade due to which diseases can spread quickly across borders and around the globe.
- **Viruses in Wildlife:** Scientists have observed that there are more than 1.7 million viruses circulating in wildlife, and many of them are likely to be zoonotic. This implies that unless there is timely detection, India risks facing many more pandemics in times to come.

Way Forward

- The Covid-19 pandemic showed the relevance of 'One Health' principles in the governance of infectious diseases, especially efforts to prevent and contain zoonotic diseases throughout the world.
- India needs to scale up such a model across the country and to establish meaningful research collaborations across the world.
- There is a need to develop best-practice guidelines for informal market and slaughterhouse operation (e.g., inspections, disease prevalence assessments), and creating mechanisms to operationalise 'One Health' at every stage down to the village level.
- Awareness generation, and increased investments toward meeting 'One Health' targets is the need of the hour.

INTERNATIONAL RELATION

Normalizing Saudi-Iran Relations

Recently, four meetings took place between representatives of Iran and Saudi Arabia in Baghdad, and one in New York. These meetings indicate continuity in the warming of bilateral relations that had been frozen since 2016. The renewed bilateral ties and normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran will pave the way for regional stability and diplomatic ease for India as well.



Key Points

Background (Saudi Arabia-Iran Conflict):

- **Religious Factionalism:** The decades-old feud between them is exacerbated by religious differences.
 1. They each follow one of the two main branches of Islam. Iran is largely Shia Muslim, while Saudi Arabia sees itself as the leading Sunni Muslim power.
 2. Historically, Saudi Arabia, a monarchy and home to the birthplace of Islam, saw itself as the leader of the Muslim world.
 3. However this was challenged in 1979 by the Islamic revolution in Iran which created a new type of state in the region - a kind of revolutionary theocracy - that had an explicit goal of exporting this model beyond its own borders.
- **Regional Cold War:** Saudi Arabia and Iran - two powerful neighbours - are locked in a fierce struggle for regional dominance.
 1. Uprisings across the Arab world (after the Arab Spring in 2011) caused political instability throughout the region.
 2. Iran and Saudi Arabia exploited these upheavals to expand their influence, notably in Syria, Bahrain and Yemen, further heightening mutual suspicions.
 3. Moreover, external powers like the US and Israel have a major role in exacerbating conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

- **Proxy Wars:** Iran and Saudi Arabia are not directly fighting but they are engaged in a variety of proxy wars (conflicts where they support rival sides and militias) around the region. For Example, Houthi rebels in Yemen. These groups can acquire greater capabilities which can cause further instability in the region. Saudi Arabia accuses Iran of supporting them.
- **2016 Flash Point:** Many Iranian protesters attacked Saudi diplomatic missions in the Iran following Saudi Arabia's execution of the Shiite Muslim cleric Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr.

Reasons for Normalization of Relations:

- **Saudi Arabia Vision 2030 Strategy:** This refers to targeted reforms within the country's economy, defense, tourism and renewable energy. In the context of Covid-19, Saudi Arabia has realised that to attract serious investment, it can only achieve that through a de-escalation with Iran.
- **Compromise on Regional Front:** Saudi Arabia is also involved in the process of establishing Syria's power holder Bashar Assad in the Arab League (a regional organization)- a move that has been welcomed by Iran.
- **Withdrawal of US from the Region:** The arrival of the new US president (Joe Biden) administration and withdrawal of US from Afghanistan and now focusing more on the Indo-pacific region, could be another reason for softening of Saudi-Arabia's stance on Iran.

Possible Impact of Normalization of Relations:

- **Resolution of Israel-Palestine Conflict:** Warming of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia may have a positive impact in dealing with Israel and the Palestinian issue.
- **Stabilization of Oil Market:** Iran and Saudi Arabia share a common interest for stable oil prices given the importance of the market to their economies. Normalization of relations would ensure steady oil revenues for all producing countries and more predictability to economic planners in both Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Way Forward

- **Role of India:** Historically, India has good diplomatic relations with both the countries. Stabilization of relations between the two countries may impact India in a mixed way.
 1. On the negative side, higher oil prices will affect the balance of trade in India.
 2. On the positive side, this could provide easing of investments, connectivity projects across the region.
- **Reciprocity by Iran:** Iran still needs to make a mark in its diplomatic efforts by publicly supporting a cease-fire in Yemen.
- **Easing of US Sanctions:** Clarity on US sanctions over Iran is of prime importance, if Iran-Saudi Arabia relations are to get normalised.

ECONOMICS

World Energy Outlook Report 2021: IEA

Recently, the International Energy Agency (IEA) released the World Energy Outlook (WEO) Report 2021. Published every year, the WEO provides critical analysis and insights on trends in energy demand and supply.

The 2021 report signaled pressure on governments to push for greater climate action at the Conference of Parties (COP26) summit (in Glasgow, UK). Earlier, IEA also released its Net Zero Emissions (NZE) Roadmap - named 'Net Zero by 2050'.

Key Points

Increase Share of Renewables:

- Renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind, hydropower and bioenergy, need to form a far bigger share in the rebound in energy investment after the coronavirus pandemic. World is not investing enough to meet future energy needs, and the uncertainties are setting the stage for a volatile period ahead.
- Demand for renewables continues to grow. However, this clean energy progress is still far too slow to put global emissions into sustained decline towards net zero by 2050, which the IEA believes will help limit the increase in global temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- Initially IEA supported continued investment in fossil fuels. However it has gradually moved toward a "more distinct tone urging decision makers to mitigate climate change".

Emission Reduction Measures:

- The extra investment might not be as difficult as it sounds. More than 40% of the required emissions reductions would come from measures that pay for themselves, such as: Improving

efficiency, limiting gas leakage, or installing wind or solar in places where they are now the most competitive electricity generation technologies.

Different Scenarios: The IEA analyzed two possible scenarios:

- **Stated Policies Scenario (STEPS):**

1. This looks at the measures and policies that governments have already put in place. Despite the measures, annual worldwide emissions would still be the same as developing countries build up their infrastructure.
2. Under this scenario, temperatures in the year 2100 would be 2.6 C higher than pre industrial levels.

Pledge for Net Zero:

1. This looks at governments' pledges to achieve net-zero emissions, potentially doubling clean energy investment over the next decade.
2. If countries manage to implement these pledges in time, the global average temperature increase would be around 2.1 C by the year 2100 — an improvement, but still well above the 1.5 Celsius agreed under the Paris accord.

Major Suggestions:

- **Clean Electrification:** This requires a doubling of solar PV and wind deployment relative to the [announced pledges scenarios].
- **Low-Emission Generation:** A major expansion of other low-emissions generation, including the use of nuclear power where acceptable; a huge build-out of electricity infrastructure and all forms of system flexibility, including from hydropower; a rapid phase-out of coal; and a drive to expand electricity use for transport and heating.
- **Energy Efficiency:** A relentless focus on energy efficiency, together with measures to temper energy service demand through materials efficiency and behavioral change.
- **Reduction in Methane Emissions:** A drive to cut methane emissions from fossil fuel operations and a big boost to clean energy innovation.
- **Decade of Clean Energy:** Making the 2020s the decade of massive clean energy deployment will require unambiguous direction from COP26.

India Specific Findings

- **Population and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) 2020-2050:**

1. India will become the most populous nation surpassing China's population this decade, and by 2050 India crosses 1.6 billion in population whereas China's population is projected to decrease.
2. India's GDP will be growing faster than China on average over the next three decades [5.3% vs China's 3.6%].

- **Coal Production:**

1. In India, over 50 GW of Financially Stressed Coal Assets (NPAs) has created strains in the banking system.
2. Coal demand in India is expected to grow by around 30% by 2030.
3. As per their announced pledges, after China, India is projected to be the next largest user of unabated coal, responsible for about 15% of global use for electricity generation in 2030.

- **Air Pollution:**

1. A failure to accelerate clean energy transitions would continue to leave people exposed to air pollution globally.
2. Recently 1.67 million premature deaths in India were linked to air pollution, that's more than three deaths every minute.

- **Appreciated India's Efforts:**

1. Notable examples of developing economies mobilising capital for clean energy projects, such as India's success in financing a rapid expansion of solar photovoltaics (pv) in pursuit of its 450 GW target for renewables by 2030.
2. Recent survey data from the World Health Organization for India revised the historic clean cooking access rates. This is due to faster progress than previously assumed, in large part due to the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana LPG distribution scheme.

- **Recommendation:**

1. Calls for India to mandate a default set point temperature of 24 degrees Celsius for all room air conditioners and tighter minimum performance standards with the aim to improve efficiencies as the demand for cooling and power increases.

Way Forward

- The world is facing a formidable task of transforming the energy sector within 30 years in a cost-effective manner, even as the world economy more than doubles in size and the global population increases by 2 billion people.
- The need for the world to reach Net Zero Emissions by 2050 lies in the major interim steps that need to be taken through 2030 — to engineer cheap and green energy from hydrogen and renewable energy while making them accessible to all.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM

Exercise Yudh Abhyas

Recently, the 17th Indo-US Joint Military Exercise "Ex Yudh Abhyas 2021" was held at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Alaska (US).

In February 2021, the previous version of the exercise was held in Bikaner's Mahajan Field Firing Ranges (Rajasthan).

Key Points

About:

- It is the largest running joint military training and defence cooperation endeavor between India and the US.
- The exercise was started in 2004 under the US Army Pacific Partnership Program. The exercise is hosted alternately between both countries.
- The exercise aims at enhancing understanding, cooperation and interoperability between two Armies. This will help them in undertaking joint operations at battalion level in mountainous terrain with cold climatic conditions under the ambit of the United Nations.

Other Exercises between India and the US:

- Exercise Tiger Triumph (Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief exercise)
- Exercise Vajra Prahar (Special Forces' Exercise)
- Cope India (Air Force).
- Malabar Exercise (Quadrilateral naval exercise of India, USA, Japan and Australia).
- Red Flag (US' multilateral air exercise).

2.Exercise MITRA SHAKTI

The 8th Edition of joint military exercise between the Indian Army and the Sri Lankan Army, Exercise MITRA SHAKTI was conducted in Sri Lanka. The 7th edition of the Mitra Shakti exercise was held in Pune, Maharashtra in 2019.

Key Points

About:

- It is based on counter insurgency and counter terrorism operations in semi urban terrain.
- It is the largest bilateral exercise being undertaken by the Sri Lankan Army and it forms a major part of India and Sri Lanka's growing defence partnership.
- The joint exercise is designed for incorporating the current dynamics of United Nations' peacekeeping operations through tactical exercises and practical discussions.

Other Exercises with Sri Lanka:

- Naval exercise (SLINEX).

3.Exercise Cambrian Patrol

Recently, the Gorkha Rifles (Frontier Force) of the Indian Army has been awarded a Gold medal in the Cambrian Patrol Exercise, which was held in Wales (the UK).

Key Points

About:

- It is an annual international military patrolling exercise and is referred to as the 'Olympics of Military Patrolling' among militaries in the world.
- It was first set up more than 40 years ago, by a group of Welsh Territorial Army soldiers who designed the training event to feature long-distance marching over the Cambrian Mountains culminating in firing. The teams have to cover a 50-mile course in less than 48 hrs while performing numerous types of military exercises placed throughout the rugged Cambrian Mountains and swamplands of mid-Wales, UK.
- The aim of the exercise is to test their leadership, self-discipline, courage, physical endurance, and determination.

Joint Exercises between India and UK:

1. Navy: Konkan
2. Air Force: Indradhanush
3. Military: Ajeya Warrior

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. Critically analyse the performance of National Green Tribunal (NGT) in upholding its mandate. Do you think the endowment of Suo-motu powers to NGT is a step in right direction? (250 words)

Ans:

Introduction

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) was established in 2010 under the National Green Tribunal Act. It is a specialized environmental court that deals with cases relating to environmental protection and the conservation of forests. It has judicial powers that allow it to exclusively decide civil environmental matters. The tribunal is guided by principles of natural justice and is not bound by the mainstream code of civil procedure. The Supreme Court has declared the National Green Tribunal's (NGT) position as a "unique" forum endowed with suo motu powers to take up environmental issues across the country.

Body**Performance of NGT**

- The NGT has been recognized as one of the most progressive Tribunals in the world.
- This jurisprudential leap has allowed our country to enter a rather exclusive group of nations which have set up such institutions with broad powers.
- In the Almitra H Patel Vs Union of India case, it directed states to implement Solid Waste Management Rules and prohibited open burning of waste on lands.
- Many Projects which were approved in violation of the law such as an Aranmula Airport, Kerala; Lower Demwe Hydro Power Project and Nyamnjangu in Arunachal Pradesh; mining projects in in Goa; and coal mining projects in Chhattisgarh were either cancelled or fresh assessments were directed.

Limitations of NGT

- The jurisdiction of NGT is curtailed as Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 is not under its ambit.
- This restricts the jurisdiction area of NGT and at times hampers its functioning as the crucial forest rights issue is linked directly to the environment.
- The sanctioned strength of 10 each under judicial and expert members are not filled. The lack of human and financial resources has led to high pendency of cases – which undermines NGT's very objective of disposal of appeals within 6 months.
- The option of appeals has nullified the purpose of reducing burden on the higher courts.
- The justice delivery mechanism is also hindered by a limited number of regional benches.

Is endowment of Suo-motu powers to NGT a step in the right direction?

- The Supreme Court recently declared that the National Green Tribunal is vested with suo motu powers to take cognizance on the basis of letters, representations and media reports
- This could allow the NGT to play a more effective role in environmental protection.
- However, the need for suo moto powers itself reiterates the idea that a judicial body must 'swoop in' to protect constitutional values, if the legislature or the executive is ill equipped to perform their functions.
- The Tribunal would have a direct effect on the functioning of executive bodies, such as the Municipal Corporation in the present case.
- Unlike orders based on petitions, cases taken up suo moto would allow the tribunal itself to decide what issues it should consider and to what extent it can infringe on the executive's domain.

Way forward

- There is an immediate need to set up new regional benches. Further, these should be based in a place that has the highest forest cover or large mineral deposit.
- Appeal may be provided against the order of the NGT before a larger Bench of the Tribunal before the matter reaches to the Supreme Court or High Court.
- Vacancies in NGT, needs to be filled as soon as possible.

- There is a need for the central and state governments to work in collaboration with the NGT for balancing between environment & economy.
- NGT should also identify institutions and experts who can help it to scientifically estimate environmental damages/compensation/fines on a case-to-case basis.

DAILY QUIZ

Q1. Which of the following Constitutional Amendment Act was enacted to impose, by law, reasonable restrictions in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India?

- Constitution (Tenth Amendment) Act, 1961
- Constitution (Thirteenth Amendment) Act, 1962
- Constitution (Sixteenth Amendment) Act, 1963**
- Constitution (Twenty-third Amendment) Act, 1970

Q2. Tiananmen Square massacre was in news recently, is associated with which of the following?

- Israel
- Russia
- Japan
- China**

Q3. Consider the following statements about the Border Security Force (BSF):

- It is one of the five Central Armed Police Forces of India.
- It comes under the Ministry of Defence.
- It currently stands as the world's largest border guarding force.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 and 2 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 3 only**
- 1, 2 and 3

Q4. The Service Area Approach was implemented under the purview of

- Integrated Rural Programme
- Lead Bank Scheme**
- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
- National Skill Development Mission

Q5. Which of the following is not included in the assets of a commercial bank in India?

- Advances
- Deposits**
- Investments
- Money at call and short notice