

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS****Vietnam, a valuable partner in the Indo-Pacific region**

**CONTEXT:** India and Vietnam are celebrating the 50th anniversary of their diplomatic relations.

**Strategic Significance of Vietnam**

- **Beginning**
  - The strategic dimensions of Indo-Vietnamese relations, initiated during the 1980s, began unfolding in the form of structured and institutional arrangements during the 1990s.
- **Maritime domain**
  - India is essentially a maritime nation and the oceans hold the key to India's future.
    - India's external trade (over 90% by volume and 70% by value) is by sea.
  - Very dependent on the seas for its trade and commerce, India has intensified its efforts to engage with maritime neighbours, including Vietnam.
    - Vietnam is of great strategic importance because its position enables it to control 'the South China Sea' (almost 55% of India's trade with the Indo-Pacific region passes through it)
  - Since the formal declaration of a strategic partnership in 2007 and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2016, the scope and scale of the India-Vietnam strategic and defence cooperation, particularly in the maritime domain, is deepening with a clear vision, institutional mechanisms and the necessary political support from both governments.
- **Act East Policy'**
  - As India pursues its 'Act East Policy', Vietnam has become a valuable partner in India's political and security engagements in the Indo-Pacific region.

**The driving forces**

- There are four key motivations behind India's growing maritime engagement with Vietnam.
  - India's aspiration to counter an assertive China by strengthening Vietnam's military power.
  - With India's increasing trade with East and Southeast Asia, India has begun to recognise the importance of its sea lines of communication beyond its geographical proximity;
  - India desires to intensify its presence to track potential developments in the maritime domain that could affect its national interests.
  - The Indian Navy underlines the importance of a forward maritime presence and naval partnership that would be critical to deter potential adversaries.

**Developments**

- **Economic**
  - In 1992, India and Vietnam established extensive economic ties, including oil exploration, agriculture and manufacturing.
- **Defence**
  - India and Vietnam signed a Joint Vision Statement on "India-Vietnam Defence Partnership towards 2030".
    - The signing of 'Joint Vision for Defence Cooperation' and a memorandum of understanding on mutual logistics support in June 2022 has further strengthened mutual defence cooperation.
  - While a U.S.\$100 million Defence Line of Credit has been implemented, India has also announced early finalisation of another U.S.\$500 million Defence Line of Credit to enhance Vietnam's defence capability.
  - India has also agreed to expand military training and assist the Vietnam Navy's strike capabilities.
- **Multilateral frameworks**
  - They have found mutual convergences on cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region and are synergising their efforts to work in bilateral as well as other sub-regional and multilateral frameworks, such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation, ADMM-Plus or the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting-Plus.
  - The Special Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-India Foreign Ministers' Meeting in June 2022 has proposed an ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise and informal meeting between India and ASEAN Defence Ministers in November 2022.
  - Both countries are also looking at collaboration around the seven pillars of the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).

**Strategic Concerns**

- The two countries are working to address shared strategic concerns (such as energy security and open and secure sea lines of communication), and make policy choices without undue external interference.

- India sees an open and stable maritime commons being essential to international trade and prosperity; therefore, it has an interest in protecting the sea lanes.

### **China Factor**

- India and Vietnam face territorial disputes with and shared apprehensions about their common neighbour, China.
  - China aggressively continues to encroach in the territories of the two countries.
  - Hence, it is natural for both the countries to come closer with a view to restrain China from its aggressive actions.
- India is willing to take a principled stand on territorial disputes in the hope that it contributes to the stabilisation of the Indo-Pacific.

### **Future Prospects**

- Bolstering friendship between the two countries is a natural outcome of a growing convergence of their strategic and economic interests, and also their common vision for peace, prosperity and their people.
- A strong commitment of political leadership along with the necessary institutional frameworks and cooperation between the two countries is likely to be more robust in the future.
- More importantly, embedding a flexible framework of engagement can contribute positively to regional stability and prosperity.
- There are some other potential areas for New Delhi and Hanoi to further deepen collaboration, such as meaningful academic and cultural collaborations, shipbuilding, maritime connectivity, maritime education and research, coastal engineering, the blue economy, marine habitat conservation, and advance collaboration between maritime security agencies.
- The road map agreed upon by the leaders will be helpful in addressing common challenges and decisively navigating towards making an India-Vietnam partnership that helps in stability in the Indo-Pacific.

## **PRELIMS**

### **1. Doubling Farmers' Income(DFI)**

**CONTEXT:** Recently, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation [National Statistical Office (NSO)] conducted a Situation Assessment Survey (SAS) of Agricultural Households survey and said that the average monthly incomes of agricultural households have risen.

#### **Background**

- Inter-Ministerial Committee: Government had constituted an Inter-Ministerial Committee in 2016 to examine issues relating to Doubling of Farmers Income (DFI) and recommend strategies to achieve the same.
- The DFI strategy recommends recognition of agriculture as a value-led enterprise, identifying 7 major sources of income growth.
  - Improvement in crop productivity
  - Improvement in livestock productivity
  - Resource use efficiency or savings in the cost of production
  - Increase in the cropping intensity
  - Diversification towards high value crops
  - Improvement in real prices received by farmers
  - Shift of surplus manpower from farm to non-farm occupations.

### **Need to Double Farmers' Income**

- Past strategy for the development of the agriculture sector in India has focused primarily on raising agricultural output and improving food security.
- The net result has been that farmers' income remained low, which is evident from the incidence of poverty among farm households.
- Low level of absolute income, as well as the large disparity between the income of a farmer and non-agricultural worker, constitutes an important reason for the emergence of agrarian distress in the country during the 1990s.
  - This distress is spreading and getting severe over time impacting almost half of the population of the country that is dependent on farming for livelihood.
- The country also witnessed a sharp increase in the number of farmer suicides from 1995 to 2004, due to losses from farming.
- The low and highly fluctuating farm income is causing a detrimental effect on the interest in farming and farm investments and is also forcing more and more cultivators, particularly younger age groups, to leave farming.
- It is apparent that income earned by a farmer from agriculture is crucial to address agrarian distress and promote farmers welfare.

- Therefore, the goal set to double farmers' income by 2022-23 is central to promote farmers welfare, reduce agrarian distress and bring parity between the income of farmers and those working in non-agricultural professions.

## 2. Renunciation of Indian Citizenship

**CONTEXT:** Recently, Government Data claimed that over 3.9 lakh Indians gave up citizenship in the past 3 yrs to settle abroad.

### Key Findings

- **America** emerged as the top choice among 103 countries where the emigrants settled.
- **2021:** More than 1.63 lakh Indians relinquished their citizenship in 2021 alone. Of them, more than 78,000 took US citizenship.
- **2019 and 2020:** While 1.44 lakh Indians gave up their citizenship in 2019, the numbers fell in 2020 to 85,256 in 2020, before rising again last year.
- **Reason:** The most common reason given was “Personal”.
- **Other Countries:** Apart from choosing countries such as Singapore (7,046) and Sweden (3,754), many have also renounced their citizenship for Bahrain (170), Angola (2), Iran (21), and Iraq (1) — one person took the citizenship of Burkina Faso in 2021.
  - More than 1,400 persons took Chinese citizenship, while 48 persons renounced their citizenship for Pakistan’s.
- **Most citizenships acquired:** The largest numbers of Indians who relinquished Indian citizenship in 2021 went to:
  - The United States (78,284),
  - Australia (23,533),
  - Canada (21,597), and
  - The United Kingdom (14,637).

## 3. Religious and Linguistic Minorities in India

**CONTEXT:** Recently, the Supreme Court held that the minority status of religious and linguistic communities is “State-dependent”.

### More about the news

- **The petition:**
  - The court was hearing a petition complaining that followers of Judaism, Bahaim and Hinduism, who are the real minorities in Ladakh, Mizoram, Lakshadweep, Kashmir, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Punjab and Manipur cannot establish and administer educational institutions of their choice because of non-identification of ‘minority’ at State level, thus jeopardising their basic rights guaranteed under Articles 29 and 30.
- **The opinion of the bench:**
  - The court held that every person in India can be a minority in one State or the other.
  - So, a religious or linguistic community that is a minority in a particular State can inherently claim protection and the right to administer and run its own educational institutions under Articles 29 and 30 of the Constitution.
- **Requirement of notification as ‘minority’:**
  - The court also asked whether a specific notification, declaring such non-dominant communities as a ‘minority’ in the particular State, was required to be issued at all.
  - Hindus residing in certain States were unable to exercise their rights under Articles 29 and 30 in the absence of a specific notification declaring them a minority.

### Issues

- The primary concern is the “general perception” that since Hindus were a majority, they cannot claim minority status in States where they were “definitely a minority”.
  - Hindus are a mere 1% in Ladakh, 2.75% in Mizoram, 2.77% in Lakshadweep, 4% in Kashmir, 8.74% in Nagaland, 11.52% in Meghalaya, 29% in Arunachal Pradesh, 38.49% in Punjab and 41.29% in Manipur.
- The recognition of Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis nationally by the Centre as ‘minorities’ ignored the fact that religious communities like Hindus were “socially, economically, politically non-dominant and numerically inferior” in several States.
- In the case of linguistic minorities:
  - In Punjab, Hindi-speaking people are in a minority.
  - Likewise, people who speak all other languages except Hindi are a minority in Delhi.
  - But there is no notification issued per se that these people are a minority in Delhi.

- Kannada or Tamil speakers are a minority in Maharashtra. But there is no such notification in these states.
- Section 2(c) of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) Act 1992, gave “unbridled power” to the Centre to notify minorities
  - **TMA Pai Case**
    - The apex Court stated that for the purposes of Article 30, the rights of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions, religious and linguistic minorities have to be considered state-wise.

#### 4. Genetically Modified Cowpea in Ghana

**CONTEXT:** Recently, Genetically Modified (GM) Cowpea has cleared the first of the three regulatory hurdles in the way of commercialisation in Ghana.

##### More about the news

- **Significance of Cowpea in Ghana:**
  - Cowpea – black-eyed pea in some parts of the world – is a major source of protein in Ghana and the rest of the sub-continent. It is integral to Ghana’s food security.
  - It is a staple, especially in the northern part of Ghana, where it is second only to groundnut in terms of area cultivated.
  - Ghana is the fifth largest producer of cowpea in Africa.
- **Rationale behind Genetic Modification of Cowpea:**
  - The GM cowpea has been genetically engineered to resist the Maruca pod borer.
    - In confined field trials, GM cowpea suffered less damage from the Maruca pod-borer than non-GM cowpea.
  - The hope is that this resistance will help decrease the number of insecticides farmers have been using to control pests and increase yields.
    - Insecticides are known to be deleterious to human health, but their use is on the rise throughout Africa.
  - If Ghana commercialises GM cowpea, it will join Nigeria as the second country in the world to grow it.

##### GM crops in India

- **Bt cotton:**
  - It is the only GM crop that is allowed in India since 2002, has two alien genes from the soil bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) that allows the crop to develop a protein toxic to the common pest pink bollworm
  - The other is Ht Bt cotton which is derived with the insertion of an additional gene, from another soil bacterium, which allows the plant to resist the common herbicide glyphosate.
- **Bt brinjal:**
  - A gene permits the plant to resist attacks of fruit and shoot borers.
- **Bt Mustard:**
  - The government has put on hold the commercial release of genetically modified (GM) mustard due to stiff opposition from anti-GM activists and NGOs.

#### 5. India Innovation Index

**CONTEXT:** Recently, NITI Aayog said that it will release the third edition of its India Innovation Index.

##### About India Innovation Index

- **Body:** The India Innovation Index is released by NITI Aayog and the Institute for Competitiveness every year.
- **Previous editions:** The first and second editions were launched in 2019 and 2021 respectively.
- **Aim:** To rank states and UTs based on their scores, recognize opportunities and challenges, and assist in tailoring government policies to foster innovation.
  - It examines states' innovation capacities and ecosystems at the sub-national level, highlights the recent factors and catalysts for promoting such crisis-driven innovation.
- **Indicators:** The new framework presents a more nuanced and comprehensive outlook for measuring innovation performance in India.
  - With the introduction of 66 unique indicators, as compared to the 36 indicators used in the preceding edition.
- **Coverage:** The index evaluates the innovation performance of all the states and union territories in India.

- The states and the union territories have been divided into 17 major states, 10 northeast and hill states and 9 Union Territories and city-states for effectively comparing their performance.

**Significance of India Innovation Index**

- Resilience and crisis-driven innovation have helped India bounce back in tough times.
- **Global Innovation Index:** The latest report strengthens the scope of innovation analysis in the country by drawing on the framework of the Global Innovation Index (GII).
- Innovation is at the forefront of India’s ‘Make in India’ and ‘Aatmanirbhar Bharat’ initiatives.
- **Scale-up its manufacturing:** With the thrust from innovation, India can scale-up its manufacturing and develop its export competitiveness.
- **Identifying Strength and weakness:** It portrays the innovative capabilities of the States, highlighting their strengths, which can be replicated in others, and weaknesses, which can be rectified.
- **Entrepreneurship and attracting start-ups:** It will also help states to assess their own capacities in identifying areas that have the potential to boost the development of innovation-led entrepreneurship and attract start-ups and hi-tech companies.
- **Cooperative and competitive federalism:** This index in the spirit of cooperative and competitive federalism will allow the sharing of good practices between States/UTs to widen and replicate the innovation landscape across the country especially in the parts that have the potential to become hubs of innovation.

**ANSWER WRITTING**

**Q. Discuss the essentials of the 69th Constitutional Amendment Act and anomalies, if any, that have led to recent reported conflicts between the elected representatives and institution of Lieutenant Governor in the administration of Delhi. Do you think that this will give rise to a new trend in the functioning of the Indian Federal Politics? (150 words)**

**Introduction**

Delhi has a peculiar federal architecture. Before the 69th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1991, Delhi was a Union Territory. The amendment re-designated it as National Capital Territory of Delhi and designated the administrator of Delhi as the Lieutenant Governor (LG).

Further, it created a Legislative Assembly and a Council of Ministers for Delhi. The assembly can make laws on all matters of the State List except public order, land and police. The Council of Ministers (CoM) headed by the Chief Minister aid and advice the LG in exercise of his functions except in so far as he is required to act in his discretion.

**Body**

The recent cases of conflicts between the LG and the government have largely happened due to assertion of this discretion by the LG with regards to matters such as appointments, like that of Parliamentary Secretaries. The ambiguities with respect to the discretion of LG have resulted in a tussle between his office and the government. The government has accused the LG of acting on behalf of the centre to prevent proper functioning of the government. It claims that the LG should act on the aid and advice of CoM on matters except those stated in the amendment. Since Delhi is the seat of both the national capital territory as well as that of the central government, the centre is bound to have a say in the matters of the city. At the same time, the LG should not interfere in the day to day running of the government. The LG has a dual role to play as an administrative and constitutional head. A balance of jurisdictions needs to be determined so that the citizens don’t suffer as a result of the policy paralysis happening due to this turf war. The ultimate loser is governance and people of Delhi.

**Conclusion**

This impasse is not new altogether. Since 1967, when the parties ruling at centre and state started varying, there has been trust deficit between the state/UT govts and the governors or administrators acting on behalf of centre. In Delhi also, successive governments have asked for more power and full statehood. It has just been magnified in current times due to presence of strong leadership at both central and state level. There is a need for harmonious functioning based on the spirit of co-operative federalism between the two.

**MCQs**

- 1) Consider the following statements about Indian Citizenship:
  1. Under the Indian Citizenship Act, 1955, Persons of Indian Origin are not allowed citizenship of two countries
  2. Government Data claimed that over 3.9 lakh Indians gave up citizenship in the past 3 yrs to settle abroad.
  3. An Indian citizen's citizenship can be revoked if he or she knowingly or voluntarily adopts the citizenship of another country. Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?
    - a. 1 and 2 only
    - b. 2 and 3 only
    - c. 1 and 3 only
    - d. 1, 2 and 3
- 2) Consider the following statements regarding Minorities in India:
  1. Union Government has notified five communities — Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis as minorities at the national level.

2. Article 25 of the Indian Constitution deals with the “protection of interest of minorities”. Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?  
**a. 1 only**                      b. 2 only                      c. Both 1 and 2                      d. Neither 1 nor 2
- 3) Consider the following statements regarding National Commission for Minorities(NCM):  
 1. Minorities Commission (MC) was initially envisaged in the Ministry of Home Affairs Resolution.  
 2. The first National Commission for Minorities with a statutory status was formed in 1993.  
 3. Every member of the Commission holds office for a period of five years.  
 Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?  
**a. 1 and 2 only**                      b. 2 and 3 only                      c. 1 and 3 only                      d. 1, 2 and 3
- 4) Consider the following statements about Genetically Modified(GM) crops:  
 1. They are that type of plants whose DNA has been modified through genetic engineering for embedding a new trait to the plant.  
 2. It improves production and raises the farmer’s income.  
 3. Use of the unapproved GM variant can attract a jail term of 5 years and a fine of Rs 1 lakh under the Environmental Protection Act,1989.  
 Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?  
**a. 1 and 2 only**                      b. 1 and 3 only                      c. 3 only                      **d. All are correct.**
- 5) Consider the following statements about Mission Buniyad:  
 1. It is lunched by Odisha government to improve the learning skills of children studying in state and municipal-run schools.  
 2. It was started over the summer holidays to help bridge learning gaps caused by COVID-induced lockdowns.  
 3. Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?  
**a. 1 only**                      **b. 2 only**                      c. Both 1 and 2                      d. Neither 1 nor 2
- 6) The e-Utthaan project, recently seen in news, tells about:  
**a. Capturing online data based on funds allocated under Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP)**  
 b. Spending of funds related to Tribal sub plan  
 c. Database about the usage of Nirbhaya Fund  
 d. Centralized database about usage of funds in Compensatory Afforestation programme
- 7) With reference to the Landlord port, consider the following statements:  
 1. Deendayal Port has become first 100% Landlord Major Port of India having all berths being operated on Public Private Partnership model.  
 2. The Landlord port will be handling premier container traffic and also the RO-RO vessels to reduce logistics cost.  
 Which of the statements given above is/are **incorrect**?  
**a. 1 only**                      b. 2 only                      c. Both 1 and 2                      d. Neither 1 nor 2
- 8) What are the major possible conditions that make Kuno-Palpur National park, a suitable site for reintroduction of Cheetahs?  
**a.** The action plan for cheetah translocations in KNP has been developed in compliance with International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) guidelines.  
**b.** Kuno-Palpur National park has an adequate prey base along with suitable carrying capacity.  
**c.** It is devoid of human settlements, forms a part of the Sheopur-Shivpuri deciduous open forest landscape and is estimated to have a capacity to sustain 21 cheetahs.  
**d. All of the above.**
- 9) Consider the following statements:  
 1. The extracts from opium poppy such as morphine are potent painkillers and are prescribed to cancer patients.  
 2. It is cultivated in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan.  
 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
- 10) With reference to National Action Plan for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem, consider the following statements:  
 1. It is a joint venture of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.  
 2. It aims to achieve zero fatalities in sanitation work in India, all Sewer and Septic tank sanitation workers have access to alternative livelihoods.  
 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