

**EDUCATION**

- ❖ **Use of mother tongue in foundational education, now and earlier**
- ❖ **CONTEXT:** The new National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for the foundational stages of education, launched by Education Minister recently, has recommended that mother tongue should be the primary medium of instruction in schools, both public and private, for children up to eight years of age.
  - The thrust on mother tongue as the medium of instruction, especially in the primary grades, has been a feature of education policies and curriculum frameworks over the years. Recommendations on English have, however, differed.
- ❖ **What has the new NCF recommended?**
  - According to the NCF, evidence from research confirms the importance of teaching children in their mother tongue during the foundational years and beyond. Since children learn concepts most rapidly and deeply in their home language, the primary medium of instruction would optimally be the child's home language/ mother tongue/ familiar language in the Foundational Stage.
  - English, the NCF has observed, can be one of the second languages taught at that level.
- ❖ **What is the immediate, practical import of this recommendation?**
  - At the national level, in schools affiliated to the CBSE or ICSE, English is the main medium of instruction from the primary classes itself. That has been the case despite efforts to get the boards to adopt the mother tongue or dominant regional languages at least for the primary grades. Neither of these boards has so far signalled any possible revision in the current arrangement.
  - Most state boards, meanwhile, have their regional languages as the main mode of instruction. However, every state government also runs schools in which English is the medium of instruction. In fact, the Andhra Pradesh and Telangana governments have taken policy decisions to gradually get all schools to impart education only in English. This had triggered a debate, which could well revive now in the light of the new NCF.
- ❖ **What did previous education policies recommend?**
  - The first education policy, which was based on the recommendations of a commission headed by the former chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC), Dr D S Kothari, observed that regional languages were already in use as the medium of education at the primary and secondary stages, and steps should be taken to adopt the same at the university stage as well.
  - The recommendations did not contain any specific instruction on mother tongue, but underlined that "special emphasis should be laid on the study of English and other languages".
  - The second education policy, introduced in 1986, too was silent on the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction at the foundational stage. However, the 1992 Programme of Action, which was based on a review of the 1986 policy, said that at the pre-school level, the medium of communication should be mother tongue/ regional language.
  - The new National Education Policy (NEP), which was introduced in 2020, marked a departure from the past, as it made a clear case for mother tongue. "Wherever possible, the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the home language/ mother tongue/ local language/ regional language,".
- ❖ **And what about the previous NCFs?**
  - The NCFs are detailed guidelines based on which school syllabi undergo revisions. In the NCFs, the role of the mother tongue has been specified more clearly from the beginning.
  - The first NCF, which was published in 1975, said clearly that "so far as possible, primary education should be in the mother tongue", which was the child's "most natural medium of communication".
  - In the case of learners whose mother tongue was also the language of the region, the medium of instruction at the elementary and secondary stages should be the regional language, it said — and in cases where they were different, the mother tongue should be the medium in the first two years of primary education, and the regional language should then take over.
  - The NCF 2000 pronounced emphatically: "The medium of instruction, ideally, ought to be the mother tongue at all the stages of school education."
  - NCF 2005 said the language of interaction and communication in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) would "normally be the child's 'first' language, or home language". It added, however, that in the light of socio-political realities, English has to be introduced early as a second language, either in Class I or at the preschool level.
- ❖ **What is the Constitutional position on this issue?**
  - Under Article 350A of the Constitution, the government must try to ensure that children from linguistic minority groups are educated in their mother tongue.

- The provision (“Facilities for instruction in mother-tongue at primary stage”): “It shall be the endeavour of every State and of every local authority within the State to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother-tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups; and the President may issue such directions to any State as he considers necessary or proper for securing the provision of such facilities.”
- Article 351 says “It shall be the duty of the Union to promote the spread of the Hindi language, to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India and to secure its enrichment by assimilating without interfering with its genius, the forms, style and expressions used in Hindustani and in the other languages specified in the Eighth Schedule”

**PRELIMS**

**1. EXERCISE GARUDA - VII**

**Context: Indian Air Force (IAF) and French Air and Space Force (FASF) are participating in a bilateral exercise, named 'Garuda VII'.**

- It is a bilateral Indo-French large force employment warfare exercise.
- French Participation: Rafale fighter aircraft, A-330 Multi Role Tanker Transport (MRTT) aircraft
- Indian Participation: Su-30 MKI, Rafale, LCA Tejas and Jaguar fighter aircraft, Light Combat Helicopter (LCH), Mi-17 helicopters
- This is the seventh edition of the bilateral exercise.
- The first, third and fifth editions were conducted in India in 2003, 2006 and 2014.
- The second, fourth and sixth editions were conducted in France in 2005, 2010 and 2019.

**2. After GM mustard, GEAC set to recommend 'environmental release' of Bayer's herbicide-tolerant cotton**

❖ **CONTEXT: After Delhi University's transgenic hybrid mustard, India's biotechnology regulator is set to recommend the "environmental release" of a genetically modified (GM) cotton of German multinational company Bayer AG that allows farmers to spray the herbicide glyphosate.**

- The regulatory body, Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) recently, had constituted an expert sub-committee under Department of Biotechnology (DBT) scientist Sanjay Kumar Mishra to conduct a detailed review of the application by Mahyo Pvt. Ltd, the licensee for the BG-II RRF technology in India.
- BG-II RRF cotton had already undergone biosafety research and field trials by 2012-13. The dossier containing the results of these trials were submitted by its original developer, Monsanto, to the GEAC in March 2013. Amid the regulatory uncertainty and no decision being taken, the American company withdrew its application seeking environmental release of the herbicide-tolerant GM cotton product.
- In 2018, Monsanto was acquired by Bayer, following which the latter, through Mahyco, resubmitted its application early this year.

❖ **BG-II RRF**

- The transgenic cotton — Bollgard II Roundup Ready Flex (BG-II RRF) — contains three alien genes, the first two ('cry1Ac' and 'cry2Ab') being isolated from a soil bacterium, Bacillus thuringiensis or Bt, and coding for proteins toxic to the American bollworm, spotted bollworm and tobacco caterpillar insect pests.
- The third gene, 'cp4-epsps', is sourced from another soil bacterium, Agrobacterium tumefaciens. Its incorporation into cotton makes the crop “tolerant” to glyphosate. This herbicide cannot be applied on normal cotton, as the chemical does not distinguish between the crops and weeds.

**3. Exercise 'Simbex' – 2022**

❖ **CONTEXT: The Indian Navy is hosting the 29th edition of the Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX) from 26 to 30 October, 2022 at Visakhapatnam.**

- SIMBEX-2022 is being conducted in two phases – Harbour Phase at Visakhapatnam from 26 to 27 October 2022 followed by the Sea Phase in Bay of Bengal from 28 to 30 October 2022.
- Two ships from Republic of Singapore Navy, RSS Stalwart (a Formidable Class Frigate) and RSS Vigilance (a Victory Class Corvette) arrived Visakhapatnam on 25 October 2022 for participation in the exercise.
- The Harbour Phase witnessed extensive professional and sporting interactions between the two navies including cross deck visits, Subject Matter Expert Exchanges (SMEE) and planning meetings.
- SIMBEX series of exercises began in 1994 and were initially known as Exercise Lion King.
- The scope and complexity of the exercise has risen substantially over the past two decades to include advanced naval drills covering a wide spectrum of maritime operations.
- The exercise exemplifies the high level of cooperation between India and Singapore in the maritime domain.
- It also highlights the commitment and contribution of the two nations towards enhancing maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region.

**4. WHO Global TB Report 2022**

❖ **CONTEXT:** The WHO released the Global TB Report 2022 on October 27, 2022. The Report notes the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the diagnosis, treatment and burden of disease for TB all over the world.

- India's TB incidence for the year 2021 is 210 per 100,000 population – compared to the baseline year of 2015 (incidence was 256 per lakh of population in India); there has been an 18% decline which is 7 percentage points better than the global average of 11%. These figures also place India at the 36<sup>th</sup> position in terms of incidence rates (from largest to smallest incidence numbers).
- While the COVID-19 pandemic impacted TB Programmes across the world, India was able to successfully offset the disruptions caused, through the introduction of critical interventions in 2020 and 2021 – this led to the National TB Elimination Programme notifying over 21.4 lakh TB cases – 18% higher than 2020.

➤ **Globally**

- It was found that 6 million people fell ill due to TB in 2021 with an increase of 4.5 percent from 2020, and 1.6 million people died from TB.
- The burden of drug-resistant TB (DR-TB) also increased by 3 percent between 2020 and 2021, with 450 000 new cases of rifampicin-resistant TB (RR-TB) in 2021.
- This is the first time in many years an increase has been reported in the number of people falling ill with TB and drug-resistant TB.
- The number of people provided with treatment for RR-TB and multidrug-resistant TB and multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) has also declined between 2019 and 2020.

➤ **India's success** can be attributed to an array of forward-looking measures implemented by the Programme through the years, such as:

- The mandatory notification policy to ensure all cases are reported to the government
- Intensified door-to-door Active Case Finding drives to screen patients
- In 2021, over 22 crore people were screened for TB. The aim has been to find and detect more cases to arrest onwards transmission of the disease in the community which has contributed to the decline in incidence.
- India has also scaled up diagnostic capability to strengthen detection efforts. Indigenously-developed molecular diagnostics have helped expand the reach of diagnosis to every part of the country today. India has over 4,760 molecular diagnostic machines across the country, reaching every district.
- India conducting its own National Prevalence Survey to assess the true TB burden in the country – the world's largest such survey ever conducted. The WHO Report notes that India is the only country to have completed such a survey in 2021, a year which saw “considerable recovery in India”.
- The WHO Report also notes the crucial role of nutrition and under-nutrition as a contributory factor to the development of active TB disease. In this respect, the TB Programme's nutrition support scheme – Nikshay Poshan Yojana – has proved critical for the vulnerable.
- During 2020 and 2021, India made cash transfers of 89 million dollars (INR 670 crores) to TB patients through a Direct Benefit Transfer programme.
- In September 2022, India has launched a first-of-its-kind initiative, Pradhan Mantri TB Mukta Bharat Abhiyan to provide additional nutritional support to those on TB treatment, through contributions from community including individuals and organizations.

**5. UDAN Scheme**

❖ **CONTEXT:** The Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) and the Airport Authority of India (AAI), signed an Operation and Management (O & M) agreement to facilitate commercial operations from Rourkela in the state of Odisha.

- Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik (UDAN) was launched as a Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) under the Ministry of Civil Aviation in 2016.
- It was formulated based on the review of The National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP)-2016 and it was planned to remain in force for a period of 10 years.
- Under this Scheme, Regional Connectivity Fund (RCF) was created, which funds the Viability Gap Funding (VGF) requirements of the scheme through a levy on certain domestic flights.
- VGF means a grant one-time or deferred, provided to support infrastructure projects that are economically justified but fall short of financial viability.
- Its objectives to develop the regional aviation market. To provide affordable, economically viable and profitable air travel on regional routes to the common man even in small towns.

➤ **Features:**

- The scheme envisages providing connectivity to unserved and underserved airports of the country through the revival of existing air-strips and airports.

- Under-served airports are those which do not have more than one flight a day, while unserved airports are those where there are no operations.
- Financial incentives from the Centre, state governments and airport operators are extended to selected airlines to encourage operations from unserved and under-served airports, and keep airfares affordable.

➤ **Achievements So Far:**

- There were 74 operational airports in 2014 which has increased to 141 by now.
- 68 underserved/unserved destinations which include 58 Airports, 8 Heliports & 2 Water Aerodromes have been connected under UDAN scheme.
- With 425 new routes initiated, UDAN has provided air connectivity to more than 29 States/ UTs across the country.
- More than one crore passengers have availed the benefits of this scheme as on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2022.

➤ **Targets:**

- 220 destinations (airports/heliports/water aerodromes) under UDAN are targeted to be completed by 2026 with 1000 routes to provide air connectivity to unconnected destinations in the country.
- Under UDAN, 954 routes have already been awarded to connect 156 airports.

➤ **Awards & Recognition:**

- RCS-UDAN was awarded the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration under Innovation Category for the year 2020.
- Republic Day Tableau for 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022 on UDAN was adjudged as the Best Tableau by the Ministry of Defence.

**6. National Financial Reporting Authority**

❖ **CONTEXT:** It has come to the attention of the NFRA during a disciplinary action under section 132(4) of the Act for professional misconduct of the statutory auditor (CA Som Prakash Aggarwal) of a listed company (Vikas WSP Limited)

- It is a regulatory body constituted by the Government of India under Sub Section (1) of section 132 of the Companies Act, 2013 to oversee compliance with Accounting and Auditing Standards by companies that can be described as Public Interest Entities (PIEs).
- The Companies Act requires the NFRA to have a chairperson who will be appointed by the Central Government and a maximum of 15 members.

➤ **Functions and Duties:**

- Recommend accounting and auditing policies and standards to be adopted by companies for approval by the Central Government;
- Monitor and enforce compliance with accounting standards and auditing standards;
- Oversee the quality of service of the professions associated with ensuring compliance with such standards and suggest measures for improvement in the quality of service;
- Protect the public interest and the interests of investors, creditors and others associated with the companies or bodies.

➤ **Jurisdiction:**

- The jurisdiction of NFRA for investigation of Chartered Accountants and their firms under section 132 of the Act would extend to listed companies and large unlisted public companies
- The NFRA is tasked to investigate audit of Listed Companies and Unlisted companies with net worth not less than Rs 500 crore or paid-up capital of not less than Rs 500 crore or annual turnover not less than Rs 1,000 crore as on March 31 of immediately preceding financial year, and companies having securities listed outside India.
- The Centre further has the power to refer the entities for investigation where public interest would be involved. The rest are regulated by ICAI.
- The inherent regulatory role of ICAI as provided for in the Chartered Accountants Act, 1949 shall continue in respect of its members in general and specifically with respect to audits pertaining to private limited companies, and public unlisted companies.

**ANSWER WRITING**

**Q. Explain the difference between computing methodology of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) before the year 2015 and after the year 2015.**

GDP is a measure primarily used as a yardstick to gauge the growth of an economy. In 2015, a new series was announced to calculate India's GDP by upgrading the methodology with new data sources to meet UN standards.

Difference between old and new methodology:

- Change in Base Year
  - Pre-2015: 2004-05
  - Post 2015: 2011-12

- Change of base year to calculate GDP is done in line with the global exercise to capture economic information accurately.
- Change in data used to measure manufacturing sector growth
  - Pre-2015: The performance of the manufacturing sector was previously evaluated using data from the IIP and the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI), which comprises over two lakh factories.
  - Post-2015: Now, firms' annual accounts filed with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA 21) are used, which includes around five lakh companies.
- GDP at factor cost replaced by GDP at market price
  - Pre-2015: GDP at factor cost was calculated.
  - Post-2015: Adopted the international practice of GDP at market price and for sector-wise estimate, Gross Value added (GVA) at basic price.
  - The new measures include not only the cost of production but also product subsidies and taxes.
- Calculation of labour income
  - Pre-2015: All labour used to be equal.
  - Post-2015: The new series has used a concept called "effective labor input". Different weights are assigned on whether one was an owner, a hired professional or a helper.
- Change in the way value addition in agriculture was captured
  - Pre-2015: It was confined to value addition in farm produce.
  - Post-2015: Value addition in agriculture is now taken beyond farm produce.
  - Livestock data is now critical to the new method.
- Capturing income generated by Financial Sector
  - Pre-2015: Financial corporations in the private sector, other than banking and insurance, was limited to a few mutual funds (primarily UTI) and estimates for the Non-Government Non-Banking Finance Companies as compiled by RBI.
  - Post-2015: The coverage of financial sector has been expanded by including stock brokers, stock exchanges, asset management companies, mutual funds and pension funds, as well as the regulatory bodies, SEBI, PFRDA and IRDA.

The new method is statistically more robust since it estimates more indicators such as consumption, employment, and the performance of enterprises, and incorporates factors that are more responsive to current changes.

#### MCQs

1. With reference to UDAN Scheme, consider the following statements:
  1. It's a market-based model to develop regional connectivity.
  2. It has a provision for Viability Gap Funding (VGF).
  3. It is a green field project
 Which of the above statements 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:
  1. National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) was constituted under the Companies Act, 2013
  2. NFRA account is monitored by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.
  3. NFRA cannot undertake investigation of companies which are listed outside Indiastock exchange.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
  - a) 2 and 3 only
  - b) 1 and 2 only
  - c) 1 and 3 only
  - d) 1, 2 and 3
3. Consider the following statements with respect to Tuberculosis (TB):
  1. Tuberculosis is caused by the bacteria Mycobacterium tuberculosis that most often affect the lungs.
  2. People infected with TB bacteria have a very high risk of falling ill with TB.
  3. Multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) is TB that does not respond to at least isoniazid and rifampicin, the 2 most powerful anti-TB drugs.
  4. According to the recent global report on TB India's TB incidence for the year 2021 has been decline compared to the baseline year of 2015
 Which of the statements given above are correct?
  - a) 1, 2 and 4 only
  - b) 2 and 3 only
  - c) 1, 3 and 4 only

- d) 1, 2 and 3 only
4. Consider the following statements about Cotton Cultivation in India:
1. Cotton is mainly a Kharif crop.
  2. Black soil is best suited for cotton cultivation.
  3. Cotton is mostly grown in monoculture and is a very pesticide-intensive crop.
  4. Bt cotton is the only GM crop technology approved in India which is cultivated currently.
- Which of the above statements are correct?
- a) 1,2 and 3 only
  - b) 2,3 and 4 only
  - c) 1,2 and 4 only
  - d) 1,2,3,4**
5. Terms like 'cry1Ac' and 'cry2Ab' often mentioned in news are related to which of the following?
- a) Genes**
  - b) Virus
  - c) Cryogenic engine
  - d) Anti personnel mines
6. With reference e to Exercise Garuda VII consider the following statements
1. It is a bilateral Air Force Exercise between India and France held annually.
  2. The seventh edition held from October 10 to October 20, 2022 at Jodhpur.
  3. This is for the 4<sup>th</sup> time it has been conducted in India.
- Which of the above statement/s is/are not correct?
- a) 1 and 2 only**
  - b) 2 and 3 only
  - c) 1 and 3 only
  - d) 1,2 and 3
7. Consider the following statements with reference to Exercise 'Simbex' – 2022
1. The exercises were initially known as Exercise Lion King
  2. SIMBEX-2022 is being conducted in two phases called Harbour Phase and the Sea Phase
  3. It is a naval exercise between India and Singapore
  4. India is hosting the simbex 2022 which is its 20<sup>th</sup> edition.
- Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?
- a) 1,2 and 4 only
  - b) 2,3 and 4 only
  - c) 1,2 and 3 only**
  - d) 1,3 and 4 only
8. Kothari commission oten mentioned in news, is related to which of the following?
- a) To examine the centre state relations.
  - b) To suggest changes in electoral laws.
  - c) To probe the Karnataka anti hijab protest .
  - d) To examine all aspects of education sector in India.**
9. If the RBI decides to adopt an expansionist monetary policy, which of the following would it not do?
1. Cut and optimise the Statutory Liquidity Ratio
  2. Increase the Marginal Standing Facility Rate
  3. Cut the Bank Rate and Repo Rate
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- a) 1 and 2 only
  - b) 2 only**
  - c) 1 and 3 only
  - d) 1, 2 and 3
10. What is the correct chronological order with respect to relations between India and Pakistan?
1. Simla Agreement
  2. Dixon Plan
  3. Operation Gibraltar
- Choose the correct answer using the codes given below
- a) 2, 3, 1**
  - b) 3, 1, 2
  - c) 1, 3, 2
  - d) 3, 2, 1