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1 June to 15 June

Topic 1: US President wanted to expand G7 group by including India, Russia, South Korea, and Australia and said present form is out dated

Importance for Prelims: *International Institutions: G7*

Importance for Mains: *GS paper II-International Relations/Indo-US Bilateral relations*

G7-

- The G-7 or ‘Group of Seven’ is Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- not have a formal constitution or a fixed headquarters. formed in 1975
- intergovernmental organization that was by the top economies of the time as an informal forum to discuss pressing world issues.
- Canada joined the group in 1976, and the European Union began attending in 1977.
- Initially formed as an effort by the US and its allies to discuss economic issues, the G7 forum has deliberated about several challenges over the decades, such as the oil crashes of the 1970s, the economic changeover of ex-Soviet bloc nations, and many pressing issues such as financial crises, terrorism, arms control, and drug

trafficking.

- The G-7 was known as the 'G-8' for several years after the original seven were joined by Russia in 1997. The Group returned to being called G-7 after Russia was expelled as a member in 2014 following the latter's annexation of the Crimea region of Ukraine.
- The G-7 nations meet at annual summits that are presided over by leaders of member countries on a rotational basis
- The decisions taken by leaders during annual summits are non-binding. Relevance
- US president "The G7 as a grouping is not representing properly what is going on in the world. And it is a very outdated group of countries."
- The focus of the summit would be to discuss with the G7 plus members on how to deal with the future of China.
- The rise of India, China and Brazil over the past few decades has reduced the G-7's relevance, whose share in global GDP has now fallen to around 40%
- Importance for India – Economic as well as national security purpose
- "India should not read too much into this, as it is already a member of G-20 a much powerful grouping," Experts.

Topic 2: COVID 19, Health Insurance, GIC and IRDA

Importance for Prelims: *Economy*

-Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has wanted to arrive at a 'standardized cost structure' for treatment of the pandemic with COVID-19 patients running up high bills in private hospitals.

- the General Insurance Council said the proposal under discussion entailed arriving at a negotiated rate for all elements associated with Covid treatment in a hospital.

General Insurance Council

- has been constituted under section 64C of the Insurance Act, 1938 since 2001 by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).
- The General Insurance Council is an important link between the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India and the non-Life insurance industry.
- It also pushes for the Industry's issues with the Government.

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)

- is an autonomous, statutory body tasked with regulating and promoting the insurance and re-insurance industries in India.
- It was constituted by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999, an Act of Parliament passed by the Government of India.
- Following the recommendations of the Malhotra Committee(former Reserve Bank of India governor), in 1999 the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) was constituted to regulate and develop the insurance industry and was incorporated in April 2000
- The agency's headquarters are in Hyderabad, Telangana, where it moved from Delhi in 2001.
- IRDAI is a 10-member body including the chairman, five full-time and four part-time members appointed by the government of India.

Topic 3: A new era in space - SpaceX's Crew Dragon has landed two NASA astronauts at the International Space Station

Importance for Prelims: *Science and Technology*

Importance for Mains: *GS III- Science and Technology-Space Technology*

- first time that astronauts used a spaceship built and launched by a private company, and the event is being widely seen as the beginning of a new era in space exploration.
- For NASA, it was the first flight of its astronauts on an American spaceship, launched on American soil, after nine years.
- SpaceX flight therefore is a culmination of more than decade-long efforts to free to enable private players build and operate what essentially is a commercial taxi-service to space, and allow NASA to concentrate on deep space exploration, and work more vigorously towards taking humans to moon, and Mars, and, possibly, on some asteroid, in between.
- The involvement of private industry in the space sector is nothing new. World over, more and more work of space agencies is being done in collaboration with private companies. There are literally hundreds of private entities building commercial satellites for their clients.

SpaceX

- Space Exploration Technologies Corp., trading as SpaceX, is an American aerospace manufacturer and space transportation services company headquartered in Hawthorne, California.

- founded in 2002 by Elon Musk with the goal of reducing space transportation costs to enable the colonization of Mars.
- SpaceX has developed several launch vehicles, the Starlink satellite constellation, and the Dragon spacecraft. SpaceX's Crew Dragon
- known as Dragon 1 or Cargo Dragon and now superseded by Dragon 2 or crew Dragon, is a reusable cargo spacecraft developed by SpaceX
- a human-rated capsule capable of ferrying up to seven astronauts- Important for manned mission and space-Recovery from space

ISRO and private sector

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has collaborated with private in building and fabricating the components that go into making rockets and satellites.

Topic 4: Line of actual control

Importance for Prelims: Geography (map question)/Bilateral Border Agreements

Importance for Mains: GS II- Indo-China Bilateral Relations

Tensions continue to prevail between India and China along the Line of Actual Control Concept:

- The LAC is the demarcation that separates Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory.

- It is divided into three sectors: the eastern sector which spans Arunachal

Pradesh and Sikkim, the middle sector in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, and the western sector in Ladakh.

- The alignment of the LAC in the eastern sector is along the 1914 McMahon Line, and there are minor disputes about the positions on the ground

- The line in the middle sector is the least controversial but for the precise alignment to be followed in the Barahoti plains.

- The major disagreements are in the western sector where the LAC emerged from two letters written by Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai to PM Jawaharlal Nehru in 1959, after he had first mentioned such a 'line' in 1956.

LAC different from the Line of Control with Pakistan

- The LoC emerged from the 1948 ceasefire line negotiated by the UN after the Kashmir War. It was designated as the LoC in 1972, following the Shimla Agreement between the two countries. It is delineated on a map signed by DGMOs of both armies and has the

international sanctity of a legal agreement.

- The LAC, in contrast, is only a concept – it is not agreed upon by the two countries, neither delineated on a map nor demarcated on the ground.

Topic 5: Genome Mapping

Importance for Prelims: Science and technology

- Mapping genomic variants of SARS CoV-2 could help control second wave.

Tackling a second wave will rely on all the information countries have gotten from the first round of the outbreak. To that end, researchers will be using genome sequencing to prevent, or curb a second wave.

- Scientists have so far sequenced 34,000 genomes for the virus globally. This data is expected to help researchers trace “the origin of the outbreak in their countries”.
- Genomic profiling helps reduce the duration of outbreaks, and their intensity, by aiding contact tracing.
- At the start of a second wave, when there are few cases, available

genomic data can be used to spot which clade of the virus one is dealing with, and what was its last geographic trace.

- New Zealand, which has managed to keep new infections to zero, has sequenced the genome of all variants of the virus from infections within its borders.
- Genome sequencing involves revealing the order of bases present in the entire genome of an organism

Genome:

It is an organism's complete set of genetic material, including all of its genes. Each genome contains all of the information needed to build and maintain that organism

Topic 6: Herd immunity and Herd Masking

Importance for Prelims: Science and technology

Herd immunity

Herd immunity happens when so many people in a community become immune to an infectious disease that it stops the disease from spreading.

This can happen in two ways:

- Many people contract the disease and in time build up an immune response to it (natural immunity).
- Many people are vaccinated against the disease to achieve immunity. When a large percentage of the population becomes immune to a disease, the spread of that disease slows down or stops. Many viral and bacterial infections spread from person to person. This chain is broken when most people don't get or transmit the infection. This helps protect people who aren't vaccinated or who have low functioning immune systems and may develop an infection more easily

Herd Masking

- This refers to the immunity against the disease that wearing masks gives a community.
- The benefit of masks in preventing the spread of infection has been a common notion across the world.
- Since the virus spreads through respiratory droplets, evidence shows that the use of masks would go a long way.

Topic 7: Rare scorpion fish found in Gulf of Mannar

Importance for Prelims: *Environment*

Researchers at the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), (HQ-Cochin) have found a rare fish in the Gulf of Mannar.

- During finding, it is camouflaged within the sea grass meadows
- This band tail Scorpion fish (*Scorpaenospsis neglecta*) is well known for its stinging venomous spines and ability to change colour
- The fish is called 'scorpion fish' because its spines contain neurotoxic venom. When the spines pierce an individual, the venom gets injected immediately and it can be extremely painful

Topic 8: CHAMPIONS (Creation and Harmonious Application of Modern Processes for Increasing the Output and National Strength)

Importance for Prelims: *Economy*

Importance for Mains: *GS III- Indian Economy/MSME sector*

Prime Minister has launched the technology platform CHAMPIONS which stands for Creation and Harmonious Application of Modern Processes for Increasing the Output and National Strength.

- The portal is basically for making the smaller units big by solving their grievances, encouraging, supporting, helping and handholding.
- It is a real one-stop-shop solution of MSME Ministry.
- This ICT based system is set up to help the MSMEs in present difficult situation and also to handhold them to become national and international champions.
- In addition to ICT tools including telephone, internet and video conference, the system is enabled by Artificial Intelligence, Data Analytics and Machine Learning.

- **Objectives of CHAMPIONS:**

- Grievance Redressal: To resolve the problems of MSMEs including those of finance, raw materials, labour, regulatory permissions etc particularly in the COVID created difficult situation;
- To help them capture new opportunities: including manufacturing of medical equipment and accessories like PPEs, masks, etc and supply them in National and International markets;
- To identify and encourage the sparks: i.e. the potential MSMEs who are able to withstand the current situation and can become national and international champions.

Topic 9: Kutch

Importance for Prelims: Arts and culture/ Environment

Ministry of Tourism has organized Dekho Apna Desh webinar titled
'The Tenacity of Survival-Inspirational story of Kutch'

- Kutch is a land of salt desert, grasslands and mangroves.
- Interestingly, the mangroves here are known for an amazing phenomenon of being world's **only Inland Mangrove**.
- The Rann of Kutch alone produces three-fourth of total salt supply of India.
- The place is also the home to the **Kharai breed of camel** which has the special ability to survive on both dry land as well as in the saline water. They can even swim in sea water and feed on saline water and plants. They are well-adapted to the extreme climate of the desert and high salinity of water.
- The key highlights of the presentation were virtual visit to the community of **Ajrakh traditional block printers**. Ajrakh is one of the oldest types of block printing on textiles still practiced in parts of Gujarat and Rajasthan in India.
- The other salient attractions of Kutch showcased in the webinar included:
 - o **Dholavira- UNESCO World Heritage Site** and second largest Harappan site located in India. It is indeed a marvellous example of

town-planning and architecture.

- o **Fossil Park**

- o **Rann of Kutch**-Salt Desert of Arabian Sea

- o **Surhando**- Unique peacock-shaped instrument plays a melodious music

- o **Thaali Dance**- A balancing dance performed to commensurate the celebrations of marriage and child birth

- o **Toofaan**- Famous wild dance of the ocean also known as “Samundar ki Masti”

Topic 10: Social Stock Exchange

Importance for Prelims: Economy

A SEBI-constituted panel on social stock exchange has suggested that non-profit organisations can directly list on such a bourse through issuance of bonds.

- The panel was set up by SEBI in September 2019 under the Chairmanship of **Ishaat Hussain** to suggest possible structures and regulations for creating SSE to facilitate listing and fund-raising by social enterprises as well as voluntary organisations.

- Its recommendations:

- The social stock exchange (SSE) can be housed within the existing stock exchange such as the BSE and/or National Stock Exchange (NSE).

- Further, ranges of funding mechanisms have been recommended

including some of the existing mechanisms such as Social Venture Funds (SVFs) under the Alternative Investment Funds.

-In addition, a new minimum reporting standard has been proposed for organizations which would raise funds under SSE.

Social stock exchange

-A social stock exchange is a platform **that allows investors to buy shares in a social enterprise that has been vetted by the exchange.**

-There are only a few international examples and they follow different models.

-In London, it acts more as a directory connecting social enterprises with potential investors, while in Canada the SVX is an online platform where even retail investors can invest in funds or companies with social impact.

-In India, **the finance minister said the exchange will come under the ambit of the Securities and Exchange Board of India** and mentioned that it will be “an electronic fundraising platform”, but the precise nature of its functioning is unclear so far.

Topic 11: PM Svanidhi- Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor's Atmanirbhar Nidhi

Importance for Prelims: Social welfare schemes/ Economy

Importance for Mains: GS II- Social welfare schemes, GS III- Indian Economy

Union Government launched PM SVANIDHI - Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor's Atmanirbhar Nidhi

-It is a special **micro-credit facility** scheme for providing affordable loan to **street vendors**. The scheme is aimed at enabling the street vendors to resume their livelihoods that have been adversely affected due to COVID-19 lockdown.

-Under the scheme, each of these streets vendors **will be given a credit loan of Rs 10,000, which they can return as monthly installments within a year.**

-Those who repay their loans on time will **get 7 percent annual interest as subsidy** which will be transferred in their bank accounts. There is no provision for penalty

- targets to benefit over **50 lakh street vendors**, who had been vending on or before 24th March this year, **in urban areas**. The duration of the scheme is till March 2022. The street vendors belonging to the **surrounding peri-urban or rural areas are being included as beneficiaries under the urban livelihoods programme for the first time.**

-The lending institutions includes Scheduled Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks, Small Finance Banks, Cooperative Banks, NBFCs, Micro Finance institutions and Self Help Group banks.

Topic 12: Moody's downgraded India's sovereign rating

Importance for Prelims: Economy

International rating agency Moody's **downgraded India's sovereign rating by a notch to Baa3 from Baa2 with a negative outlook** over a weak reform push contributing to a prolonged period of slow growth that it expects to continue beyond the Covid-19 pandemic.

-There **are four main reasons why Moody's has taken the decision.**

1. Weak implementation of economic reforms since 2017
2. Relatively low economic growth over a sustained period
3. A significant deterioration in the fiscal position of governments (central and state)
4. And the rising stress in India's financial sector

-Ratings are based on the **overall health of the economy and the state of government finances**. A rating downgrade means that **bonds issued by the Indian governments are now "riskier"** than before, because weaker economic growth and worsening fiscal health undermine a government's ability to pay back.

-It will **increase cost of borrowing and investors will not show interest**

Topic 13: West Coast Cyclone- Cyclone Nisarga

Importance for Prelims: Geography

Importance for Mains: GS I- Geography-Cyclone/Disaster management

-IMD's Cyclone E-Atlas, which has been tracking cyclones and weather depressions over the North Indian Ocean, said **no weather system has turned into a cyclone and made landfall near Mumbai** along the Maharashtra coast during the month of June since 1891.

-Weather dynamics of Arabian sea

- o Less cyclones in Arabian sea

- o Even if it forms; they head towards Gujarat or Gulf of Oman and Aden.

- o It is because of Easterlies and pre-monsoon formation of an area of high

pressure, known as subtropical ridge along the west coast acts as barrier.

Bay of Bengal Vs Arabian sea

-Cyclones formed in the Bay of Bengal side of the north Indian Ocean are **more frequent and stronger than those on the Arabian Sea side**.

-Meteorologists suggest the **relatively cold waters of the Arabian Sea discourage the kind of very strong cyclones** that are formed on the Bay of Bengal side; Odisha and Andhra Pradesh face the brunt of

these cyclones every year.

- **Last year, however, was slightly unusual** as the Arabian Sea saw the most frequent and intense cyclonic activity in more than 100 years, according to India Meteorological Department. **Five cyclones originated in the area in 2019 — Vayu, Hikka, Kyarr, Maha and Pavan** – when normally only one or two are formed.

Topic 14: Changpa Community

Importance for Prelims: Geography

The ongoing Chinese army intrusion in Chumur and Demchok has left Changpa community cut off from large parts of summer pastures.

-The Changpa are a **semi-nomadic people**: they usually stay in one place for a few months in a row, near pastures where their sheep, yaks and Pashmina goats can graze

-They are mainly **found in the Changtang, a high plateau** that stretches across the **cold desert of Ladakh**.

-The process of migration from plain areas to pastures on mountains during summers and again from mountain pastures to plain areas during winters is known as **transhumance**.

-The **Pashmina goat** is a breed of goat inhabiting the plateaus in Tibet, Nepal, parts of Burma and neighbouring areas of Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir, India.

-It is also known as ‘**Changthangi**’, ‘**Changra**’.

-They are raised for **ultra-fine cashmere wool**, also known as **pashmina once woven**.

-Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has **published an Indian Standard for identification, marking and labelling of Pashmina products to certify its purity**.

-The certification will **help curb the adulteration of Pashmina** and also protect the interests of local artisans and nomads who are the producers of Pashmina raw material. It will also assure the purity of Pashmina for customers.

-**Chiru goat** also known as the Tibetan antelope is a ‘near threatened’ species whose underfur is used for making the famous **Shahtoosh shawls**.

Topic 15: Electronics incentive schemes

Importance for Prelims: Economy/ Schemes

Government has announced three schemes for promotion of electronics manufacturing in India.

(i) **Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI)** for Large Scale Electronics

Manufacturing shall extend **an incentive of 4% to 6% on incremental sales** (over base year) of goods manufactured in India and covered under the target segments, to eligible companies, for a period of five years subsequent to the base year

(ii) **Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors (SPECS)** shall provide financial incentive of **25% on capital expenditure for the identified list of electronic goods**, i.e., electronic components, semiconductor/ display fabrication units, Assembly, Test, Marking and Packaging (ATMP) units, specialized sub-assemblies and capital goods for manufacture of a foresaid goods

(iii) **Modified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMC 2.0)** Scheme shall provide support for creation of **world class infrastructure along with common facilities and amenities**, including Ready Built Factory (RBF) sheds / Plug and Play facilities for attracting major global electronics manufacturers, along with their supply chains.

Background

-India's production of electronics grew from USD 29 billion in 2014 to USD 70 billion in 2019.

- The growth in mobile phone manufacturing in particular has been remarkable during this period. From just 2 mobile phone factories in 2014, India now has become the 2nd largest mobile phone producer in the world.

-India's share India's share in global electronics production has reached 3% in 2018 from just 1.3% in 2012.

Topic 16: TRAFFIC

Importance for Prelims: Environment

A report by WWF-India's programme division Traffic has found **“significant increase” in reported poaching of wild animals during the lockdown**, which is not restricted to any geographical region, or to any specific wildlife area.

-The TRAFFIC, the Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network, is a **leading non-governmental organisation** working on wildlife trade in the context of both biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

-It is a **joint program of World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**.

-It was established in 1976 and has developed into a **global network, research-driven and action-oriented, committed** to delivering innovative and practical conservation solutions.

-Headquarters: Cambridge, United Kingdom

-It aims to ensure that trade in wild plants and animal is not a threat to the conservation of nature.

Topic 17: Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H)

Importance for Prelims: Science and technology

The Union Cabinet has given its approval to **re-establish**

Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H) as Subordinate Office under Ministry of AYUSH

-**Presently**, Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy

(PCIM&H) is an **autonomous body** under the aegis of Ministry of AYUSH established since 2010.

-Re-establishment of Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H) is by **merging into it Pharmacopoeia Laboratory for Indian Medicine (PLIM) and Homoeopathic Pharmacopoeia Laboratory (HPL)**- the two central laboratories established at Ghaziabad since 1975.

-The merger is aimed at optimizing the use of infrastructural facilities, technical manpower and financial resources of the three organizations for enhancing the standardization outcomes of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy drugs towards their effective regulation and quality control.

-The primary mandate is of publishing Pharmacopoeias and Formularies for drugs/formulations used in Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani (ASU) and Homoeopathy (ASU&H) systems of Medicine.

Topic 18: GAVI- Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization

Importance for Prelims: Science and technology

India pledged \$15-million as India's contribution to the vaccines alliance GAVI at the Global Vaccine Summit hosted by the UK.

-The **virtual Global Vaccine Summit hosted by UK Prime Minister** in which over 50 countries - business leaders, UN agencies, civil society, government ministers, Heads of State and country leaders participated **aimed at raising USD 7.4 million to immunize a further 300 million children in the world's poorest countries by 2025.**

-India is the **World's foremost producer of vaccines** and that it is fortunate to contribute to the immunization of **about 60 percent of the World's children.**

-Indian prime minister also pointed to the **government's Mission Indradhanush, which aims to ensure full vaccination of children and pregnant women,** as a sign of the importance attached to immunization within the country.

GAVI (Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization)

- is a **public-private global health partnership** committed to **increasing access to immunization** in poor countries

-It is a **global Vaccine Alliance with the goal of creating equal**

access to new and underused vaccines for children living in the world's poorest countries.

-It does this by bringing together all the stakeholders – **donor governments, developing countries, World Bank, UNICEF, WHO, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**, international finance and development organizations, and pharmaceutical industry – in one decision making body

-Gavi was launched in 2000. It is based in Geneva, Switzerland

-India started receiving **support for its immunization programme from GAVI in 2002**. Apart from that, India is the largest supplier of vaccines to GAVI

GAVI'S IMPACT

-**More children survive**. The increase in immunisation has helped halve childhood mortality by preventing approximately 13 million deaths and dramatically driven down the incidence of deadly and debilitating infectious diseases.

-**Nation building thrives**. As children become healthier, they, their families, communities and countries are more able to be economically prosperous and socially stable.

-**Global health security improves**. In the face of global challenges, such as climate change, urbanisation, fragility and conflict, Gavi has helped countries broaden vaccine coverage and improve health systems. This makes them less susceptible and better able to prevent disease outbreaks that pose a threat to people in these countries, protecting millions of others around the world.

Topic 19: LIDAR Technology

Importance for Prelims: Science and technology

Researchers have leveraged the aerial deployment of lidar technology to detect "massive, ancient platforms made of clay and earth".

-Lidar, which stands for **Light Detection and Ranging**, is a **remote sensing method** that uses light in the **form of a pulsed laser to measure ranges (variable distances) to the Earth**.

-These light pulses—combined with other data recorded by the airborne system—**generate precise, three-dimensional information about the shape of the Earth and its surface characteristics**.

-A lidar instrument principally consists of a laser, a scanner, and a specialized GPS receiver.

-Two types of lidar are topographic and bathymetric. Topographic lidar typically uses a near-infrared laser to map the land, while bathymetric lidar uses water-penetrating green light to also measure seafloor and riverbed elevations.

-Lidar systems **allow scientists and mapping professionals to examine both natural and manmade environments** with accuracy, precision, and flexibility.

Topic 20: Payments Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF)

Importance for Prelims: Economy

Importance for Mains: GS III- Indian Economy

The Reserve Bank of India is going to create **Rs 500-crore** payments infrastructure development fund (PIDF) **to encourage acquirers to deploy points of sale (PoS) infrastructure** both physical and digital modes **in tier-3 to tier-6 centres as also in northeastern states.**

- ☐ **Half of the fund will be initially contributed by RBI**
- ☐ The remaining contribution of the fund will be **from card-issuing banks and card networks operating in the country.**
- ☐ The fund will be governed through an **Advisory Council** and managed and administered by RBI.
- ☐ The fund will also receive recurring contributions to cover operational expenses from card-issuing banks and card networks.
- ☐ RBI will also contribute to yearly shortfalls, if necessary.

Need for the fund:

- ☐ Due to the high cost of merchant acquisition and installation the **majority of POS terminals in the country are concentrated in Tier-1 and 2 cities** and towns, leaving other regions behind.
- ☐ This fund will make the economics more favourable and will **significantly increase the merchant base accepting digital payments**

Topic 21: Gold Bond Scheme

Importance for Prelims: Economy

Importance for Mains: GS III- Indian Economy

Government announced opening up of Sovereign Gold Bonds 2020-21 (Series III) for the period June 08-12, 2020

□ Gold bonds have been introduced to **convert the demand for gold as a physical asset into financial savings.**

□ Sovereign Gold Bonds or SGBs **issued by the RBI on behalf of government are priced in relation to the price of gold and offer a fixed interest rate.**

□ At the time of maturity, **the bond owner receives the value of the bond in line with the current price of gold.**

□ Gold bonds are **restricted for sale to resident Indian entities** including individuals, HUFs, trusts, universities and charitable institutions.

□ The minimum application size for this investment is equivalent to 1 gram of gold and the maximum limit of subscribed shall be 4 KG for individual, 4 Kg for HUF and 20 Kg for trusts and similar entities per fiscal year (April-March)

□ Bonds can be **used as collateral for loans and are tradable** on stock exchanges within a fortnight of the issuance on a date as notified by the RBI.

Topic 22: Icommit

Importance for Prelims: Environment

Importance for Mains: GS III- Environment

Ministry of Power initiated the ‘iCommit’ campaign, on the occasion of World Environment Day.

□ The initiative is a clarion call to **all stakeholders and individuals to continue moving towards energy efficiency, renewable energy, and sustainability** to create a robust and resilient energy system in the future.

□ The ‘iCommit’ initiative, driven by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) is uniting a diverse set of players such as Governments, Corporates, Multilateral and Bilateral Organisations, Think Tanks and Individuals.

□ The ‘iCommit’ initiative is **centred around the idea of building an energy resilient future.**

□ The pre-requisite for that goal is to create a flexible and agile power system. A **healthy power sector can help the nation in meeting the objective of energy access and security for all.**

□ The initiative will also **celebrate and promote key undertakings of Government of India** such as **National Electric Mobility Mission 2020, FAME 1 and 2**, DeenDayalUpadhyaya Gram JyotiYojana, the Saubhagya Scheme, Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojna (UDAY), Atal Distribution system Improvement Yojna

(AJAY), Smart Meter National Programme, KUSUM, Solar Parks, Grid Connected Rooftop, UnnatJyoti by Affordable LED for All (UJALA), Atal JyotiYojna (AJAY) amongst others

Topic 23: Race to Zero

Importance for Prelims: Environment

With the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) to UNFCCC pushed back a full year – to November, 2021 – the **UNFCCC’s Climate Ambition Alliance has launched a global campaign called “Race to Zero”**

- ☐ It is an “international campaign **for a healthy, resilient zero carbon recovery**”
- ☐ The campaign aims to codify commitments made via the Climate Ambition Alliance (CAA) **Climate Ambition Alliance**
- ☐ Climate Ambition Alliance (CAA) was launched ahead of last year’s COP25 in Madrid.
- ☐ The CAA currently includes 120 nations, 996 businesses, 458 cities, 24 regions, 505 universities and 36 investment groups that have **committed to achieving zero net greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.**
- ☐ Signatories are responsible for 23 percent of current greenhouse-gas emissions worldwide and 53 percent of global GDP.

Topic 24: Mission Sagar

Importance for Prelims: IR

As part of Mission Sagar, INS Kesari has carried a consignment of COVID related essential medicines for the people of Seychelles.

□ India launched **Mission Sagar as part of the government's outreach initiative** towards **five Island nations** in the Indian Ocean amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

□ Indian Naval Ship Kesari has been used to assist **Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar and Comoros**, to provide Food Items, COVID related Medicines including HCQ Tablets and Special Ayurvedic Medicines with Medical Assistance Teams.

□ This deployment as '**Mission Sagar**' is in line with India's role as **the first responder in the region** and builds on the excellent relations existing between these countries to battle the COVID-19 pandemic and its resultant difficulties

□ The deployment is in consonance with the Prime Ministers' vision of **Security and Growth for All in the Region 'SAGAR'** promulgated in March 2015.

□ SAGAR highlights the **importance accorded by India to relations with her**

neighboring countries and further strengthens the existing bond.

Topic 25: Environment Performance Index

Importance for Prelims: Environment

India has improved its place in Environment Performance Index but still poorly ranked

- India secured **168 rank in the 12th edition of the biennial Environment Performance Index (EPI Index 2020)** that measured the environmental performance of 180 countries
- It was released by the Yale University on June 4, 2020.
- India's rank was 177 (with a score of 27.6 out of 100) in 2018.
- All South Asian countries, except Afghanistan, were ahead of India in the ranking.

Topic 26: Assam Gas Leak

Importance for Prelims: Environment

Since the morning of May 27, natural gas has been continuously flowing out of a gas well in Assam

- The **Baghjan 5 well is a purely gas-producing well** in Tinsukia district. Sometimes, the pressure balance in a well may be disturbed leading to 'kicks' or changes in pressure. If these are not controlled in time, the 'kicks' can turn into a sudden blowout.

Issues:

- **Maguri-Motapung wetland**, an Important Bird Area notified by

the Bombay Natural History Society situated near to the site. The park is famous for its birds, butterflies, wild cats, and feral horses.

□ **Dibru-Saikhowa National Park** is located at an aerial distance of 900 meters from the leak site.

Dibru-Saikhowa National Park

□ Dibru-Saikhowa is a **National Park as well as a Biosphere Reserve** situated in the south bank of the river Brahmaputra in the extreme east of Assam state in India.

□ Situated in the flood plain of Brahmaputra, Dibru-saikhowa is a safe haven for many extremely rare and endangered species of Wildlife.

□ The forest type of Dibru-Saikhowa **comprises of semi-evergreen forests, deciduous forests, littoral and swamp forests and patches of wet evergreen forests.**

Topic 27: Delhi LG Vs Chief Minister

Importance for Prelims: Polity

Lieutenant Governor of NCT of Delhi has overturned the Delhi government's order on testing only those showing COVID-19 symptoms and restricting access to hospitals only to Delhi residents.

Constitutional provision

□ As per **Article 239**, every UT in India shall be **administered by the President, through an administrator** to be appointed by him. He/She is called Lieutenant Governor in Andaman and Nicobar

Islands, Puducherry and Delhi.

- Lt. Governor is an **administrator and not a constitutional head**.

Council of ministers Vs LG

- The scheme that has been conceptualized by the **insertion of Articles 239AA and 239AB** with the provisions of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991 and the corresponding Transaction of Business Rules, 1993 indicates that the **Lieutenant Governor, being the Administrative head, shall be kept informed** with respect to all the decisions taken by the Council of Ministers but this **does not mean that**

the concurrence of the Lieutenant Governor is required said Supreme court

- Lieutenant Governor is **bound by the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers** and this position holds true so long as the Lieutenant Governor does not exercise his power under the proviso to clause (4) of Article 239AA.

- The Lieutenant Governor has **not been entrusted with any independent decision making power**. He has to **either act on the 'aid and advice' of Council of Ministers** or he is **bound to implement the decision taken by the President** on a reference being made by him.

- In the **case of difference of opinion** between the lieutenant governor and his ministers, the lieutenant governor has to **refer the matter to the president for decision and act accordingly**.

- Under **Article 239AA(3)(a)**, **Parliament has the power to make laws for the NCT with respect to any matter in the State List and Concurrent List. The Delhi Legislative Assembly also has the power to make laws on all subjects in the Concurrent List and all but three subjects in the State List — namely, public order, police and land.**
- It clarified that the Centre will have exclusive power to make laws in respect of these three subjects but “in respect of other matters, the executive power is to be exercised by the Government of NCT of Delhi”.

Topic 28: Gairsain

Importance for Prelims: Geography/Polity

Uttarakhand governor has given her assent for **declaration of Bhararisen (Gairsain) in Chamoli district as the summer capital of Uttarakhand**

- The state was **first carved out from Uttar Pradesh in 2000.**
- Gairsain was best suited to be the capital as it **lay between Kumaon and Garhwal. However, Dehradun was named the 'temporary capital' instead.**
- Earlier, VN Dixit Commission which was set up to solve the problem had recommended that Dehradun should be made the permanent capital and rejected Gairsain as it is prone to earthquakes.

The new summer capital falls under seismic zone 5, in a scale of 2 to 5 (in order of increasing vulnerability to earthquakes).

□ Gairsain is also the site of the **source of the Ramganga river, tributary of Ganges.**

□ Historically, it is believed that the Chinese traveller, **Hiuen-Tsang** visited Gairsain, the capital of Brahmaputra Kingdom during the 7th century.

Constitutional provisions

□ Article 2 and Article 3 of the Constitution of India **confer exclusive and plenary powers upon Parliament to form or establish or completely alter and destroy the identity of existing states.**

□ A state legislature, as per **Clause (e) of Article 3** cannot even **change the name of the state.**

□ It is within the exclusive domain of Parliament to form any state, set boundaries, and name a state in the Union

Topic 29: Drugs in India to fight Covid

Importance for Prelims: Science and technology

Remdesivir

□ Remdesivir, an **antiviral drug first developed for treating Ebola** in 2014, is one of the possible Covid-19 treatments being **investigated in the WHO's Solidarity Trial.**

- It inhibits viral replication in the body.

Favipiravir

- Favipiravir is an **antiviral given to inhibit viral replication**.
- It is used as an **anti-influenza drug**.

Tocilizumab

- is an **immunosuppressant used to treat for rheumatoid arthritis**.
- In Mumbai, more than 100 severely ill Covid patients have been treated with this expensive drug (Rs 40,000-60,000 per dose) **as a preventive against ventilator requirement**

Hydroxychloroquine

- This **antimalarial drug** is a subject of debate over its efficacy against Covid.
- The WHO halted its HCQ arm in the **Solidarity Trial** following a study in The Lancet, then reinstated it after a retraction by the authors.
- India is the largest producer of this drug. Doctors use HCQ **use in Covid patients with symptoms** as mild as headache, fever, body pain, and even in critically ill patients. ICMR guidelines recommend low doses for nine days.

Doxycycline + ivermectin

- Doxycycline is an **antibiotic used to fight infection in the urinary tract, eye, or respiratory tract**.
- Ivermectin is an **anti-parasite drug for treatment of scabies, head lice, and filariasis**.
- used to treat Covid patients with acute symptoms.

Ritonavir + lopinavir

- ☐ These **antivirals** are commonly used to treat **HIV** patients.
- ☐ They are being investigated in the **Solidarity Trial**.

Plasma therapy

- ☐ This is meant for critical patients with low oxygen saturation levels, or those suffering a cytokine storm.
- ☐ Patients **who have recovered from severe Covid-19** donate their **plasma, which is then injected into other critical patients to boost their immunity**.
- ☐ A protocol approved by ICMR is used to select which patient is best suited for plasma therapy. Preference is given to those at risk of cytokine storm, extreme breathlessness with severe pneumonia.

Topic 30: Global Economic Prospects

Importance for Prelims: Economy

In its latest **Global Economic Prospects report**, the **World Bank** **predicted a 3.2 per cent contraction** in India's economy during the current fiscal year

- ☐ **Global economy is expected to contract by 5.2 per cent** as a result of the the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ☐ This will be the **deepest recession in global economy since the second World War**, the World Bank also said.
- ☐ According to the report, **economic activity among advanced**

economies is anticipated to shrink by seven per cent in 2020 as domestic demand and supply, trade and finance have been severely disrupted.

□ Emerging Markets and Developing Economies (EMDEs) are **expected to shrink by 2.5 per cent** this year, their first contraction as a group in at least 60 years, it said.

Topic 31: Role of HC and SC in protection of FR

Importance for Prelims: Polity

Importance for Mains: GS II- Polity

Supreme Court ordered states and Union Territories to complete the process of sending migrants back to their home states within 15 days.

□ Migrants are one of the hardest hit groups in COVID pandemic. Many of them without access to food, transport walked to their homes.

□ Having refused earlier to intervene on the issue of migrant labourers, the Supreme Court asked states to consider withdrawing cases registered against the migrants for trying to walk to their homes flouting lockdown rules, and urged states and UTs to work on the next stage of attending to their needs

□ As the **protector and guardian of fundamental rights**, from the very beginning the Supreme Court has adopted the stance that it acts as the sentinel in relation to fundamental rights and has stressed this

role in several cases.

- The **Constitution underlines this role of the court through article 32(1)**, which reads: The Supreme Court shall have **power to issue directions or orders or writs, including writs in the nature of habeas corpus, mandamus, prohibition, quo warranto and certiorari**, whichever may be appropriate, for the **enforcement of any of the rights conferred by this article**.
- The Constitution-makers made the right of a citizen to move the Supreme Court under article 32, and claim an appropriate writ against the unconstitutional infringement of his fundamental rights, itself a fundamental right.
- However, the **writ jurisdiction of the Supreme Court is not exclusive**. The **high courts** are also empowered to issue writs for the enforcement of the Fundamental Rights **under Article 226**.
- **Similarly Article 13** provides shield to fundamental rights by declaring that all laws, which are inconsistent with or in derogation of any of the Fundamental Rights, shall be void to the extent of their inconsistency. It imposes an obligation on the State to respect and implement the Fundamental Rights and **provides the Judicial Review power**.

Topic 32: QS Rank and Institution of Eminence

Importance for Prelims: Scheme/ Social sector

Importance for Mains: Scheme/ Social sector

Most of India's top higher education institutions including at least 10 Institution of Eminences (IoE) **have slipped in the latest edition of the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings (WUR)** released recently.

Report findings:

- Overall, **21 Indian universities and institutes** have found a place this year among the **world's top 1,000**. But last year it was 25.
- The ranking agency attributed the “regressive performance” of Indian institutions to **low levels of internationalization and faculty-student ratio**.
- **While no Indian institution is among the world's top 100**, there are, however, **26 Asian universities that have made it**. Of them, Mainland China and South Korea have six each, Hong Kong and Japan have five each, Singapore has two universities and Malaysia and Taiwan have one each.

Institution of Eminence

About:

- Institutions of Eminence scheme has been launched in order to implement the commitment of the Government to **empower the**

Higher Educational Institutions and to help them become world class teaching and research institutions, as announced by the Hon'ble Finance Minister in his budget speech of 2016.

□ Ten public and ten private institutions are to be identified to emerge as world-class Teaching and Research Institutions. This will enhance affordable access to high quality education for ordinary Indians.

□ Every institute which has been accorded the status of Institute of Eminence **will enjoy benefits which include additional funding, autonomy in recruitment, assessment patterns** etc. The detailed benefits have been listed out below:

o **Government Institutions to get additional funding upto 1000 Cr.**

o The selected Institutions under IoE shall have **complete academic and administrative autonomy**. The Institutions of Eminence will have complete **financial autonomy to spend the resources raised and allocated**, subject to general conditions & restrictions of the Statutes and GFR.

o **Academic collaborations** with foreign higher educational institutions (in top 500) would be exempt from government approvals.

o Freedom to hire personnel from industry, etc, as faculty who are experts in their areas but may not have the requisite higher academic qualifications.

o Freedom to **recruit faculty from outside India** (limit of 25% of its faculty strength for public institution).

- o Freedom to offer courses within a program as well as to offer degrees in newer areas, including inter-disciplinary ones, after approval of its Governing Council and conforming to the minimum prevailing standards.
- o . Students enrolment capacity to be 10,000 in 15 years. (Lower figure permitted with justification)
- o Faculty Student Ratio should be 1:20 at the time of Notification and should increase to 1:10 in five years.

Topic 33: Why Indian forex reserve rising?

Importance for Prelims: Economy

Importance for Mains: GS III- Indian Economy

India's foreign exchange reserves **hit an all-time high of \$493.48 billion** for the week ended May 29, according to the RBI data

- The Forex Reserves ('foreign exchange reserves') of an economy is its 'foreign currency assets' added with its gold reserves, SDRs (Special Drawing Rights) and Reserve Tranche in the IMF.
- The **RBI Act, 1934** provides the overarching legal framework for deployment of reserves in different foreign currency assets and gold.
- Of total foreign currency assets in forex, 64 per cent is held in the securities like **Treasury bills of foreign countries**, 28 per cent is deposited in foreign central banks and 7.4 per cent is also

deposited in commercial banks abroad, according to the RBI data.

□ India also held 653.01 tonnes of gold as of March 2020, which are held overseas in safe custody with the Bank of England and the Bank for International Settlements as well as in domestic

Need for forex:

□ The IMF says official foreign exchange reserves are held in support of a range of objectives like **supporting and maintaining confidence in the policies for monetary and exchange rate management** including the capacity to intervene in support of the national or union currency. It will also limit external vulnerability by maintaining foreign currency liquidity to **absorb shocks during times of crisis or when access to borrowing is curtailed**.

Reason for spike

□ **Rise in forex reserves is the rise in investment in foreign portfolio investors in Indian stocks and foreign direct investments**
o Foreign investors had acquired stakes in several Indian companies in the last two months. After **pulling out Rs 60,000 crore each from debt and equity segments in March**, Foreign Portfolio Investments (FPIs), who **expect a turnaround in the economy later this financial year**, have now returned to the Indian markets and bought stocks **worth over \$2.75 billion in the first week of June**.

□ **Fall in crude oil prices has brought down the oil import bill, saving the precious foreign exchange.**

□ **Overseas remittances and foreign travels have fallen steeply.**

Topic 34: FDI from Cayman Island (Tax Haven and Rountripping):

Importance for Prelims: Indian Economy

Importance for Mains: GS III- Indian Economy

According to the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), **Cayman Islands has emerged as the fifth largest investor in India**, with foreign direct investment from the nation **increasing over three-fold** to USD 3.7 billion in 2019-20

□ India had received FDI worth USD one billion in 2018-19 and USD 1.23 billion in 2017-18 from **Cayman Islands, which is UK Overseas Territory**.

□ Similarly, **FDI from Cyprus too increased by about three-times to USD 879 million** in the last financial year.

□ Cayman Islands has **become one of the most preferred jurisdictions for routing investments** due to **the absence of direct taxes costs**.

□ Additionally, this new trend caused wary among regulators as **investments from tax havens do carry a comparatively higher perceived risk of laundered money, round tripping issues etc**

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.

- Tax havens also share limited or no financial information with foreign tax authorities.

- Tax havens do not typically require residency or business presence for individuals and businesses to benefit from their tax policies.

Round tripping

- In the context of black money, it **leaves the country through various channels such as inflated invoices, payments to shell companies overseas**, the hawala route and so on.

- After cooling its heels overseas for a while, this **money returns in a freshly laundered form; thus completing a round-trip.**

- This route is far from simple or straightforward. Those indulging in this game are past masters who make the money flow through multiple layers consisting of many entities and companies.

- The money could be returned by investment in offshore funds that in turn invest in Indian assets. The Global Depository Receipts (GDR) and Participatory Notes (P-Notes) are some of the other routes that have been used in the past.

Topic 35: Poonam Avlokan and Asiatic lion

Importance for Prelims: Environment

Recent estimation of Asiatic lions in Gujarat showed increase in species population to 674.

- Lion census is conducted once every five years
- Due to lockdown the census due on this year is not possible.
- Unlike in previous years, this count was **estimated not from a Census, but from a population “observation” exercise called Poonam Avlokan.**
- Poonam Avlokan is a **monthly in-house exercise carried out every full moon.** Field staff and officers spend 24 hours assessing the number of lions and their locations in their respective jurisdictions. It was a mechanism developed by the Forest Department in 2014 as part of preparations for the 2015 Lion Census.

Asiatic lion and Gir National Park

- Asiatic lions were **once distributed upto the state of West Bengal in east and Rewa in Madhya Pradesh**, in central India.
- At present **Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary is the only abode of the Asiatic lion.**
- The last surviving population of the Asiatic lions is a compact tract of dry deciduous forest and open grassy scrublands in southwestern part of Saurashtra region of Gujarat.
- Listed in Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, in Appendix I of CITES and **as Endangered on IUCN Red List**
- From a population of approximately 20 lions in 1913, they have risen to a comfortable 523 according to 2015 census
- It is notified as wildlife sanctuary in the year of 1965 in order to protect Asiatic Lion and made national park in 1975
- The entire forest area of the **Gir National Park is dry and**

deciduous which provides best habitat for Asiatic Lions.

□ As per the new statics of 2015, the entire Saurashtra Region is inhabited by 523 Lions and more than 300 Leopards.

□ Apart from these two animals the park is a **home to two different species of Deer**. The **Sambar is counted largest Indian Deer**.

□ The Gir forest is also known for the **Chowsingha – the world's only four horned antelope**.

□ Gir is also habitat of raptors like critically endangered white-backed and long-billed vultures.

□ The **Maldharis** have lived in the Gir National Park, in the **Banni Grasslands** Reserve area, for the past thousand years. They have co-existed with the lions, which the Gir National Park was created to preserve, for these thousand years.

□ The lions have been periodically hunting the **Maldhari cattle** for food, but the Maldharis understand the cycle of life. They consider the taken cows an offering to the lions, whose territory they share.

CDV disease

□ In 2018, Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) was responsible for the death of more than 25 Lions in the Gir forest of Gujarat.

□ Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) is a **viral disease that infects the gastrointestinal, respiratory, and central nervous systems**.

Topic 36: Indian gaur

Importance for Prelims: Environment

Population estimation of Indian gaur has been carried out in Nilgiris forest division.

- ☐ Gaur, or Indian Bison, is a close wild relative of domestic cattle.
 - ☐ The best habitat for gaur is forested hills and grassy areas of south to south east Asia, with undisturbed tracts of forest, water sources and abundant forage in the form of coarse grasses, shrubs and trees
 - ☐ It is native to South and Southeast Asia and has been **listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.**
 - ☐ It is **state animal of Goa**
 - ☐ Gaur is highly threatened by **poaching for trade to supply international markets and loss of habitats.**
 - ☐ The Western Ghats and their outflanking hills in southern India constitute one of the most extensive extant strongholds of gaur, in particular in the **Wayanad – Nagarhole – Mudumalai – Bandipur complex.** And also spotted in **Tadoba Andhari Tiger Project , Periyar Tiger Reserve , Silent Valley NationalPark, Kanha National park and Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary**
- Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve**
- ☐ The NBR harbors a wide spectrum of ecosystem types such as **tropical evergreen forests, Montane sholas and grasslands, semi-**

evergreen forests, moist deciduous forests, dry deciduous forests and thorn forests.

□ **Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve Nature Park** is the most popular biosphere reserves in India and the major **National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary of South India**.

□ Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve area is located at the **foothills of the famous Nilgiris hills or Blue Mountains at the meeting point of two majestic mountain ranges the Western Ghats and the Eastern Ghats** and shares boundaries with Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala states.

□ The Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve includes many National parks and wildlife sanctuaries and also declared a Tiger Reserve.

□ Important faunal elements which need protection are Tiger, Elephant, Gaur, Lion tail macaque, Sambar, Wild Boar, Nilgiri Tahr etc.

□ It includes the Aralam, Mudumalai, Mukurthi, **Nagarhole, Bandipur and Silent Valley national parks**, as well as the Wayanad and Sathyamangalam wildlife sanctuaries.

Topic 37: North Korea and South Korea

Importance for Prelims: IR

Importance for Mains: IR

North Korea has severed its contact with South Korea and branded South Korea as Enemy. It is response to failure of South Korea to stop activists from floating anti-Pyongyang leaflets across their tense border.

□ North and South Korea have been divided for more than 70 years, **ever since the Korean Peninsula became an unexpected casualty of the escalating Cold War** between two rival superpowers: the Soviet Union and the United States.

□ In August 1945, the two allies divided control over the Korean Peninsula. Over the next three years (1945-48), the Soviet Army and its proxies set up a communist regime **in the area north of latitude 38° N, or the 38th parallel**. South of that line, a military government was formed, supported directly by the United States.

□ In 1948, the United States called for a **United Nation-sponsored vote for all Koreans to determine the future of the peninsula**. After the North refused to participate, the South formed its own government in Seoul, led by the strongly anti-communist Syngman Rhee.

□ The North responded in kind, installing the former communist

guerrilla Kim Il Sung as the first premier of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in the capital of Pyongyang.

- The **Korean War (1950-53)** did little to **resolve the question of which regime represented the “true” Korea.**
- The **armistice that ended that conflict in 1953** left the peninsula divided much as before, with a **demilitarized zone (DMZ) running roughly along the 38th parallel.**

Topic 38: Lonar Lake

Importance for Prelims: Environment/Geography

The colour of water in Lonar Lake has changed to pink

Reason:

- The **low level of water may lead to increased salinity** and change in the behaviour of algae because of atmospheric changes. This may be the reason for colour change. This is not the first time that the colour of water has changed
- It is also known as Lonar crater, which was **formed after a meteorite hit the Earth** some 50,000 years ago
- It is a notified **national geo-heritage monument.**
- Geological Survey of India (GSI) declares geo-heritage sites/national geological monuments for protection and maintenance

Topic 39: Infrastructure Investment trust (InvIT)

Importance for Prelims: Economy

Importance for Mains: GS III- Indian Economy

National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) is setting up an infrastructure investment trust (InvIT) to attract big-ticket funds; this is first by a government agency.

□ An Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvITs) is **like a mutual fund, which enables direct investment** of small amounts of money from possible individual/institutional investors **in infrastructure to earn a small portion of the income as return.**

□ InvITs work like mutual funds or real estate investment trusts (REITs) in features. InvITs can be treated as the modified version of REITs designed to suit the specific circumstances of the infrastructure sector.

□ SEBI notified the **SEBI (Infrastructure Investment Trusts) Regulations, 2014** providing for **registration and regulation of InvITs in India.**

□ The purpose of InvITs is to **enable Infrastructure Companies to repay their debt obligation quickly and effectively.** Since infrastructure-oriented projects tend to take time to generate substantial cash flow, **InvITs come in handy for paying off loan interests and other expenses conveni**

Topic 40: FSSAI Food Safety Index

Importance for Prelims: Economy

FSSAI food safety index for 2019-20 has been released.

- The index ranks states on **five parameters of food safety**: human resources and institutional data, compliance, food testing facility, training and capacity building besides consumer empowerment.
- Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra have topped in the list of larger states on the index and among the smaller states, Goa, Manipur and Meghalaya.
- On the **occasion of World Food Safety Day, FSSAI released the report.**

World food safety day

- WHO, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is pleased to facilitate Member States efforts to celebrate the World Food Safety Day.
- The second World Food Safety Day (WFSD) was celebrated on 7 June 2020 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.
- Under the **theme “Food safety, everyone’s business”**, the action oriented campaign will promote global food safety awareness and call upon countries and decision makers, the private sector, civil society,

UN organizations and the general public to take action.

FSSAI

□ Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has been **established under Food Safety and Standards act , 2006 which consolidates various acts & orders** that have hitherto handled food related issues in various Ministries and Departments.

□ FSSAI has been **created for laying down science based standards for articles** of food and to **regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import** to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption.

Food Safety and Standard Act, 2006

□ Various central Acts like Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954, Fruit Products Order , 1955, Meat Food Products Order, 1973, Vegetable Oil Products (Control) Order, 1947, Edible Oils Packaging (Regulation) Order 1988, Solvent Extracted Oil, De-oiled Meal and Edible Flour (Control) Order, 1967, Milk and Milk Products Order, 1992 etc was **repealed after commencement of FSS Act, 2006.**

□ The Act also **aims to establish a single reference point for all matters relating to food safety and standards, by moving from multi- level, multi- departmental control to a single line of command.**

□ Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India is the Administrative Ministry for the implementation of FSSAI.

□ The Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) have already been appointed by Government of India. The Chairperson is in the rank of Secretary to Government of India.

Topic 41: Aarogyapath

Importance for Prelims: Science and technology

A web-based solution for the **healthcare supply chain that provides real-time availability of critical supplies was launched by CSIR**

□ Aarogyapath, **an integrated public platform that provides single-point availability of key healthcare goods** can be helpful to customers in tackling a number of routinely experienced issues like dependence on limited suppliers, time-consuming processes to identify good quality products, limited access to suppliers who can supply standardized products at reasonable prices within desired timelines, lack of awareness about the latest product launches, etc.

□ It also **helps manufacturers and suppliers to reach a wide network of customers efficiently, overcoming gaps in connectivity between them and potential demand centres** like nearby pathological laboratories, medical stores, hospitals, etc. It will also create opportunities for business expansion due to an expanded slate of buyers and visibility of new requirements for products.

□ Over time, **analytics from this platform is expected to generate early signals to manufacturers on over capacity, shortage etc.**