Current Affairs September 2019 Week-1

1. Exercise Yudh Abhyas 2019
2. Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP)
3. 'Angikaar campaign'
4. China’s One Country Two Systems policy
5. Apache attack helicopters.
6. Child well-being index
7. Desertification
8. Poshan Maah (National Nutrition Month).
10. Country’s longest electrified rail tunnel between Cherlopalli and Rapuru.
12. What is an Interpol Red Notice, what does it do?
13. Interpol General Assembly.
15. RBI annual report
16. AH-64 Apache combat helicopters.
17. ANDREX Project.
19. ASEAN-US Maritime Exercise (AUMX).
20. Food fortification
21. PIL in Supreme Court for community kitchens in all states to combat hunger.
22. One Nation-One Ration Card scheme.
23. Money Laundering in India
24. Malé Declaration.
25. ‘Build for Digital India’ programme.
27. North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Limited (NERAMAC).
29. Joint Naval Annual Quality Conclave (JNAQC).
30. Terracotta Grinder.
32. Ethanol
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34. Delhi under Firoz Shah Tuglaq: Reign of the third ruler of Tughlaq dynasty.
35. Munich Agreement.
36. PRESIDENT appoints new governors.
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39. Code of Conduct for MPs and MLAs
40. WorldSkills Kazan
41. Security cover of VIPs
42. Government releases Rs 47,436 crore funds for afforestation
43. Who is a Professor Emerita/Emeritus, and how is she/he appointed?
44. Lignin
45. ‘Samudrayaan’ project.
46. National Register of Citizens (NRC)
47. EPFO to restore commutation of pension
48. Oxytocin Ban
49. SEBI’s norms for FPIs
50. Sabka Vishwas Scheme
51. Tibetan Democracy Day.
52. 18 endangered sharks and rays afforded protection
53. Gravitational Lensing
54. Great Barrier Reef
56. Water management practices dismal in states: Niti Aayog
57. WorldSkills Kazan
58. Formation of Interim government of India.

Test Series: UPSC IAS Prelims Exam 2020
CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF

Context
Prime Minister announced the creation of the post of Chief of Defence Staff, in one of the biggest military reforms in decades that seeks to ensure coordination among the army, air force and navy on modernization and synergize efforts in joint operations, training and intelligence.

Background
- The proposal for a CDS has been there for two decades. It was first made by the K. Subrahmanym committee appointed after the Kargil conflict of 1999 to recommend higher military reforms.

- However, lack of consensus and apprehensions among services meant it never moved forward.

- In 2012, the Naresh Chandra committee recommended the appointment of a Permanent Chairman of Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) as a midway to allay apprehensions over the CDS.

- The CDS is also one of the 99 recommendations made by the Lt General D.B. Shekatkar (retd) Committee which submitted its report.

Who is a CDS?
- The CDS is meant to be a single-point military advisor to the government, and to coordinate long-term planning, procurements, training and logistics of the three services.

- As future wars become short, swift and network-centric, coordination among the three services is crucial. Also as the stress on resources increases and defence budgets remain flat, the way forward is optimisation of resources by joint planning and training.

- The CDS, being above the three Service Chiefs, is expected to play this role by optimizing procurement, avoiding duplication among the services and streamlining the process.
India being a nuclear weapons state, the CDS will also act as the military advisor to the Prime Minister on nuclear issues.

**Need for CDS**
- The fundamental reason for Integrated Commands is the imperative need for a single headquarters coordinating diverse elements in the same geographic space.
- The underlying rationale for appointing a CDS is to separate management and command of the Armed Forces.

**Current status**
- In the absence of a CDS, presently the senior most of the three Chiefs functions as the Chairman COSC.
- It is an additional role and the tenures have been very short.

**Expected Role of a CDS**
- The move that is aimed at creating a single point-of-contact in coordinating with the three armed services in day-to-day administrative functioning has been pending for two decades now.
- “Implementation committee” comprising senior officials would be formed to examine the role and charter of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and the modalities for implementing the appointment.
- The CDS is expected to be particularly empowered when it comes to decisions on prioritizing modernization of the three forces. While the three services chiefs will continue with their current tasks, the CDS would be the main point of advice for the defence ministry on procurement.
- The scope of warfare is changing and is becoming technology driven; India should not have a “fragmented” approach.
- The CDS will provide an effective leadership to the three forces at the top level.
- Major task of the CDS will be to conceptualize and implement the transformation of the forces into theatre commands.
CDS presents us with the opportunity to optimize defence economics and make expenditure more effective.

Another big task for the CDS is to ask if the Armed Forces are making the best use of the national resources allocated to them.

The appointment of the CDS will certainly change the civil-military balance. Thus, will address some of the grievances of the Armed Forces pertaining to their status vis-a-vis the civil services.

CDS can act as an arbitrator when the Chiefs of Staff express divergent views on an issue, such as the use of military resources in the battlefield.

He can act as a link between the Strategic Forces Command that manages India’s nuclear arsenal and the political leadership.

He will be the representative of the forces in security-related committees, such as Defence Planning Committee or the Strategic Policy Group. There’s no doubt that communication would become smooth with this arrangement.

**Limitations of the proposed CDS Model**

- It will depend on how government will implement it.

- The person appointed to the post will have significant impact on the future course and how CDS will be able to mitigate the inter-service differences.

- Also which service officer (Army, Navy or Air Force) will head CDS and his ranking/experience vis-a-vis other Service Chiefs will greatly decide the inter-service coordination.

- As and when the CDS is established, he will have equal voting rights as the service chiefs, and where two service chiefs don't agree. Now if a CDS is to be a “single point advisor”, where is the question of two chiefs not agreeing?

**How do other countries work?**
All major countries, especially the nuclear weapon states, have a CDS. The U.K. from which the Indian armed forces and the Defence Ministry are modelled on has a Permanent Secretary, equivalent to the Defence Secretary, and also a CDS.

The U.K. Government guidelines state that the CDS is the professional head of the British armed forces and, as military strategic commander, is responsible for how operations are carried out. He is also the most senior military adviser to the Secretary of State for Defence and the Prime Minister.

The Permanent Secretary is the government's principal civilian adviser on Defence, has primary responsibility for policy, finance and planning, and is also the Departmental Accounting Officer.

**Way forward**

- The appointment of a CDS, if successful, may lead to the development of theater commands in the future. Theaterisation has its advantages but the debate among the services on the need for such a move is far from over.

- The success of the CDS will depend on the kind of powers the person appointed to the post enjoys. For the CDS to be effective, he would need to have control on the decision-making apparatus.

- If the Ministry of Defence has the power to overrule the CDS, especially in the case of procurement of equipment for the three services, the move may yield low dividends.

- The positives that this move may have can’t be ascertained until the government reveals the nuts and bolts of its plan.
Asiatic Society of Mumbai

Context: Asiatic Society of Mumbai has elected the first woman president in the 215 years of its existence.

Prof Vispi Balaporia will now head the institution.

About Asiatic Society, Mumbai:

- It is a learned society whose activities include conducting historical research, awarding historians, and running an institute of post-graduate studies.
- Its library, home to over 1 lakh books, consists of rare manuscripts contributed to it by the East India Company, as well as generous donations.
- The Society offers Junior Fellowships for research and recommends scholars for the Tagore National Fellowship of the Ministry of Culture.
- The Governor of Maharashtra is the Society’s Chief Patron.

It’s evolution:

1. It began journey in 1804 as the Literary Society of Bombay.
2. Founded by Sir James Mackintosh, a Scottish colonial administrator who had a keen interest in Oriental studies.
3. In 1826, it became the Mumbai arm of the London-based Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland and came to be called the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (BBRAS).
4. In 1954, the institution was severed from its London parent and became the Asiatic Society of Bombay. In 2002, it acquired its present name.
Context: Mata Vaishno Devi shrine atop the Trikuta hills in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir has been named country’s ‘Best Swachh Iconic Place’.

About Swachh Iconic Places (SIP):

What is it? It is an initiative of Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation under Swachh Bharat Mission.

Aims to take iconic places and their surroundings to higher standards of Swachhata, so that all visitors benefit and also take away home the message of cleanliness.

Implementation of the project: It is a collaborative project with three other central Ministries: Urban Development, Culture, Tourism; all levels in the concerned States and more importantly, Public Sector and Private companies as partners.


2. Phase II included Gangotri, Yamunotri, Mahakaleshwar Temple, Charminar, Convent and Church of St. Francis of Assisi, Kalady, Gomateswara, BaidyanathDham, Gaya Tirth and Somnath temple.

3. Phase III includes RaghavendraSwamy Temple (Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh); Hazardwari Palace (Murshidabad, West Bengal); Brahma Sarovar Temple (Kurukshestra, Haryana); VidurKuti (Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh); Mana village (Chamoli, Uttarakhand); Pangong Lake
Leh-Ladakh, J&K; Nagvasuki Temple (Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh); ImaKeithal/market (Imphal, Manipur); Sabarimala Temple (Kerala); and Kanvashram (Uttarakhand).
CHINA'S ONE COUNTRY TWO SYSTEMS POLICY

Context

Protests in Hong Kong, now in its 13th consecutive week, have brought a decades-old policy of the People’s Republic of China back into focus — One Country Two Systems. They want China to end its interference, while Beijing has likened the protesters to terrorists and have said that it won’t tolerate any challenge to its sovereignty over Hong Kong.

History

- The idea of two systems in one country resurfaced when Beijing started talks with Britain and Portugal, who were running Hong Kong and Macau, respectively.
- The British had taken control of Hong Kong in 1842 after the First Opium War. In 1898, the British government and the Qing dynasty of China signed the Second Convention of Peking, which allowed the British to take control of the islands surrounding Hong Kong, known as New Territories, on lease for 99 years.
- Similarly, on 1987, China and Portugal signed the Joint Declaration on the Question of Macau in which China made similar promises for the region of Macau after it was handed over to Beijing.

What triggered the current crisis?

- In recent years, there has been a growing outcry from Hong Kong’s pro-democracy civil society against China’s alleged attempts to erode the city’s autonomy.
- This has created tensions between the city’s youth and the local government, which is effectively chosen by Beijing.
- In 2018, the Hong Kong National Party, a localist party that has been critical of Beijing, was outlawed.
- Carrie Lam, the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, proposed the extradition Bill, which sought to extradite Hong Kongers to places with which the city doesn’t have extradition agreements. Critics said it would allow the city government to extradite Beijing critics to mainland China where the judicial system is subservient to the ruling Communist Party.
This triggered the protests, and they went on despite Ms. Lam’s decision to suspend the Bill. The protesters, who often clashed with the police, now want the Bill to be formally withdrawn, Ms. Lam to resign, the arrested protesters to be released and the city’s electoral system to be reformed.

**Formation of Interim government of India**

**Context:** On September 2, 1946, the *interim government of India* led by Jawaharlal Nehru was formed.

**About the Interim Government:**

It was the only such cabinet in India’s history in which both **Congress and the Muslim League** shared power at the Centre.

The interim government *functioned with a great degree of autonomy, and remained in power until the end of British rule*, after which it was succeeded by the Dominions of India and Pakistan.

**What led to the formation of India’s interim government, who were its members, and what decisions did it take?**

Starting with the **Cripps mission in 1942**, a number of attempts were made by colonial authorities to form an interim government in India.

In 1946, **elections to the Constituent Assembly were held following the proposals of the British Cabinet Mission** dispatched by the British Prime Minister Clement Attlee.

**Viceroy Wavell** subsequently called upon Indian representatives to join the interim government.
The interim government functioned according to the older Government of India Act of 1919.

Some of the decisions by the cabinet:

1. To engage in direct diplomatic relations with all countries and goodwill missions.
2. Support for the independence of colonised nations.
4. In the same month, a committee was appointed to advise the government on nationalizing the armed forces.
5. In April 1947, the US announced the appointment of Dr. Henry F. Grady as its ambassador to India.
6. On June 1, the Indian Commonwealth Relations Department and the External Affairs Department were merged to form the single Department of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations.

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**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MPS AND MLAS**

**Context**

Panel to frame code of conduct for MLAs, MPs in 2 months

**About**

- Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has formed a committee of Speakers of state legislative bodies to frame a code of conduct over the next two months.
- Lawmakers will soon have to adhere to a code of conduct inside legislatures and Parliament.
- Code of conduct for legislators and parliamentarians is needed that would help in running our Houses more efficiently.
The code of conduct should include stipulations that the members would not enter the well of the house, nor resort to sloganeering and disruptions or any other unruly behavior such as tearing papers and throwing them in the House.

A democracy is not a democracy without the voice of opposition. But at the same time sloganeering and entering the well is not an expression of opposition. It is important to maintain decorum in the House.

A need is felt to improve use of technology and overall efficiency in our legislatures.

Germany, USA, UK, Canada, Pakistan has a Code of Conduct for members of the Senate.

Key recommendations:

- Prohibiting MPs from misusing the power and immunities they get.
- MP should avoid conflict between a private and a public interest.
- No parliamentarian should be allowed to vote on those questions in the House, in which he has a vested interest.
- Amend the Constitution to ensure a minimum of 110 days of sitting in a legislature having more than 100 members, and 90-50 days of sitting in Houses with less than 100 members depending on the size of the State involved.
- The filing by legislators of a statement of income, assets and liabilities, and an indication of changes in these figures over time.
- Punishment of members by admonition, reprimand, censure or withdrawal from the House in case of violations or breach of the code of conduct.
- Automatic suspension from the House of any member involved in offences of grave misconduct.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF CITIZENS (NRC)

Context

The Assam National Register of Citizens (NRC) final list 2019 of certified Indian citizens in Assam has been released.

About
The NRC, which was first undertaken in Assam in 1951 and was being updated since 2015, is aimed at detecting and deleting so-called illegal immigrants from citizenship rolls.

The register is meant to be a list of Indian citizens living in Assam. For decades, the presence of migrants, often called “bahiragat” or outsiders, has been a loaded issue here. Assam saw waves of migration, first as a colonial province and then as a border state in independent India.

The first National Register of Citizens was compiled in 1951, after the Census was completed that year. The Partition of the subcontinent and communal riots had just triggered vast population exchanges at the border.

Since 2015, the state has been in the process of updating the 1951 register. One of the stated aims of the exercise is to identify so-called “illegal immigrants” in the state, many of whom are believed to have poured into Assam after the Bangladesh War of 1971.

In 1979, about eight years after the war, the state saw an anti-foreigners’ agitation. Assamese ethnic nationalists claimed illegal immigrants had entered electoral rolls and were taking away the right of communities defined as indigenous to determine their political future.

In 1985, the anti-foreigners’ agitation led by the All Assam Students’ Union came to an end with the signing of the Assam Accord.

Why is the NRC being updated now?

The mechanism for detecting so-called foreigners had previously been delineated by the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act of 1983. This was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2005, on a petition which argued that the provisions of the law were so stringent; they made the “detection and deportation of illegal migrants almost impossible”.

The court came into the picture after a non-governmental organisation called Assam Public Works filed a petition asking that so-called illegal migrants be struck off the electoral rolls.

In 2013, the Supreme Court asked the Centre to finalise the modalities to update the new National Register of Citizens. The project was launched in earnest from 2015, monitored directly by the Supreme Court.

How do the authorities establish citizenship?
Most individuals applying for inclusion into the NRC had to prove not only that their ancestors had lived in Assam pre-1971 but also their relationship with the ancestor.

Then came the verification process. Documents were sent to the original issuing authorities while NRC officials conducted field verification. Once the data was submitted, the applicant’s blood relations were plotted on a family tree.

**What happens to the people left out of the final list?**

- Those who do not make it to the final list will have to appear before the Foreigners’ Tribunals of Assam.
- These quasi-judicial bodies were originally set up under the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) Act of 1983.
- In anticipation of a fresh rush of cases after the final list, 1,000 more tribunals are being set up across the state.

**Phases of NRC:**

The entire process of NRC Updating consists of following phases:

- Legacy Data Publication Phase
- Application Form Distribution & Receipt Phase
- Verification Phase
- Publication of NRC Part Draft
- Complete NRC Draft Publication & Receipt of Claims and Objections Phase
- Final NRC Publication.

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**EPFO TO RESTORE COMMUTATION OF PENSION**

**Context**

The Central Board of Trustees (CBT) of the Employee Provident Fund has approved a proposal for the restoration of commuted value of the pension to the Pensioners after 15 years of drawing commutation under the EPS 1995 scheme.
**About**

- **Provision Fund** enables employees to **contribute a part of their savings** each month towards their pension fund. Over time, this amount gets accrued and can be accessed as a lump sum amount or in installments, at the end of their employment or at retirement.

- **Commutation** is defined as giving up **part or all of the pension payable from retirement** in exchange for an **immediate lump sum**.

- In simple terms, commutation means a **lump sum payment in lieu of periodic payments of pension**. In such a case, the amount of pension will be lower than the amount of pension without any commutation.

- For example, if the monthly pension is arrived at Rs 35,000 without commutation and if the employee goes for a certain commuted value, the pension gets reduced to say Rs 29,000.

- The provision for commutation of pension was **withdrawn by the EPFO in 2009**.

- Before 2009, under the commutation, monthly pension used to be cut by **one third for the next 15 years** and the **reduced amount would be given in lump sum**. After the 15 years the pensioners were entitled to get the full pension.

- The amendment seeks to restore the original amount of pension after 15 years equal to the same amount as it would have been without commutation.

- Now, the Central Board of Trustees approved for the **restoration commuted value of pension to pensioners after 15 years of drawing commutation**.

- The move will provide relief to **3 lakh pensioners** who had opted for commutation and got a lump sum amount at the time of retirement before 2009.

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**Employees’ Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)**

EPFO (Employees’ Provident Fund Organization) is a **statutory body** incepted by the government of India. Being the country’s largest social security organization, it mainly encourages **people to save for retirement**, among others.

EPFO comes under the purview of **Ministry of Labor and Employment** and came into being in 1951. It covers every establishment in which **20 or more persons** are employed and certain organisations are covered, subject to certain conditions and exemptions even if they employ
OXYTOCIN BAN

Context

The question of banning oxytocin has been referred to a three judge bench of the Supreme Court.

Background

- The health ministry in April 2018 notified a ban on private firms from manufacturing and selling oxytocin, stating that it wanted to restrict the responsibility of supplying the drug to a Karnataka-based public sector manufacturer to avoid its misuse in the veterinary field.
- Then, the Delhi High Court quashed the above notification.
- As a result, the central government moved Supreme Court against the Delhi high court order.

Oxytocin

- It has also been dubbed the **hug hormone, cuddle chemical, moral molecule, and the bliss hormone** due to its effects on behavior, including its role in love and in female reproductive biological functions in reproduction.
- It is a hormone that is made in the brain, in the **hypothalamus**. It is transported to, and secreted by, the **pituitary gland**, which is located at the base of the brain.
- It acts both as a **hormone and as a brain neurotransmitter**.
- The release of oxytocin by the pituitary gland acts to regulate two female reproductive functions: Childbirth and Breast-feeding.
- It induces contractions of the uterine muscles and initiates labour for the child birth.

Issue

- It is misused by the dairy owners on milch animals to artificially extract milk.
- It is also used irrationally by farmers to enhance the size and appearance of the fruits and vegetables.
SEBI'S NORMS FOR FPIs

Context
Securities and Exchange Board of India has liberalised norms for Foreign Portfolio Investors.

About Issue
- The Union Budget 2019 imposed an additional surcharge on the Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPI). As a result, foreign investors started taking their investment flow out of India’s capital market.
- More than Rs. 20,000 Crore has left Indian shores in the last few weeks.
- As a result, SEBI responded with the below measures on the recommendation of HR Khanna Committee.

Measures Taken:
- The registration process has been simplified by doing away with the broad eligibility criteria.
- They will now face fewer restrictions while selling their shares in off market (when stock exchange is not involved)
- Entities registered at an international Financial Service will be automatically classified as FPI.
- Central banks who are not members of Bank of International Settlements are also allowed to register as FPI.

Difference between Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI) and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)
- FPI consist of securities and other financial like Bonds, Mutual Funds held by an investor in another country. It does not provide direct ownership of the asset and is relatively liquid. They are basically short term investors.
- FDI lets an investor purchase a direct business interest in a foreign country. They are long term investments.

Securities and Exchange Board of India
Securities and Exchange Board of India is a government established in 1988 authority which
controls the securities market in India. Indian Parliament passed SEBI Act 1992 in 1992 India which made SEBI a statutory body. SEBI functions to fulfill the requirements of the following three categories.

Issuers – It provides a marketplace in which the issuers can increase finance properly.
Investors – It ensure safety and supply of precise and accurate information
Intermediaries – It enables a competitive professional market for intermediaries.

The headquarters of SEBI is situated in Mumbai. The regional offices of SEBI are located in Ahmadabad, Kolkata, Chennai and Delhi.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE
Securities and Exchange Board of India is administered by its board of members. The board of SEBI consist of:
The Chairman by nominated by Government of India
Two members from finance ministry
One member from Reserve Bank of India
Five members nominated by Union Government of India

OBJECTIVES
To control activities of stock exchange
To safeguard the rights of stockholders and also to guarantee the security of their investment
To avoid fraudulence by harmonizing its statutory regulations and self-regulating business.
To administer and develop guidelines for intermediaries

FUNCTIONS
It manages the security markets in India
It analysis the trading of stocks and safes the security market from the malpractices.
It controls the stockbrokers and sub- stockbrokers
It provides education regarding market to the investors to enhance their knowledge

SABKA VISHWAS SCHEME
Context

Sabka Vishwas Scheme was announced in the Union Budget 2019. It has now been notified and will be operationalized from 1st September 2019.

About Sabka Vishwas Scheme

- It is a Legacy Dispute Resolution Scheme.
- The scheme targets those taxpayers who want to close their pending disputes related to Service Tax and Excise Tax (now subsumed under Goods and Services Tax). Hence, the term ‘legacy’.
- This scheme offers amnesty (official pardon) to those who wish to disclose any previously undisclosed tax liability without any penalty or prosecution.
- The two main components of the Scheme are dispute resolution and amnesty.
  - The dispute resolution component is aimed at liquidating the legacy cases of Central Excise and Service Tax that are subsumed in GST and are pending in litigation at various forums.
  - The amnesty component of the Scheme offers an opportunity to the taxpayers to pay the outstanding tax and be free of any other consequence under the law. The most attractive aspect of the Scheme is that it provides substantial relief in the tax dues for all categories of cases as well as full waiver of interest, fine, penalty, in all these cases, there would be no other liability of interest, fine or penalty. There is also a complete amnesty from prosecution.
- The Scheme is especially tailored to free the large number of small taxpayers of their pending disputes with the tax administration.

Taxes subsumed into GST

At the Central level, the following taxes are being subsumed:

a. Central Excise Duty,
b. Additional Excise Duty,
c. Service Tax,
d. Additional Customs Duty commonly known as Countervailing Duty, and
e. Special Additional Duty of Customs.

At the State level, the following taxes are being subsumed:
a. Subsuming of State Value Added Tax/Sales Tax,
b. Entertainment Tax (other than the tax levied by the local bodies), Central Sales Tax (levied by the Centre and collected by the States),
c. Octroi and Entry tax,
d. Purchase Tax,
e. Luxury tax, and
f. Taxes on lottery, betting and gambling.

MONEY LAUNDERING IN INDIA

Context
The Enforcement Directorate is investigating the money laundering angle in the INX MEDIA case.

About
MONEY LAUNDERING

- It is a process where the proceeds of crime are transformed into apparently legitimate money or other assets. In simple words, it can be defined as the act of making money that comes from one source to look like it comes from another source.
- INTERPOL's definition of money laundering is: "any act or attempted act to conceal or disguise the identity of illegally obtained proceeds so that they appear to have originated from legitimate sources".
- The most common types of criminals who need to launder money are drug traffickers, embezzlers, corrupt politicians and public officials, mobsters, terrorists and con artists.

PROCESS OF MONEY LAUNDERING
Money laundering is a single process however, its cycle can be broken down into three distinct stages namely, placement stage, layering stage and integration stage.

1. Placement Stage: It is the stage at which criminally derived funds are introduced in the financial system. At this stage, the launderer inserts the “dirty” money into a legitimate financial
institution often in the form of cash bank deposits. This is the riskiest stage of the laundering process because large amounts of cash are pretty conspicuous, and banks are required to report high-value transactions.

2. **Layering Stage**: It is the stage at which complex financial transactions are carried out in order to camouflage the illegal source. At this stage, the launderer engages in a series of conversions or movements of the money in order to distance them from their source. In other words, the money is sent through various financial transactions so as to change its form and make it difficult to follow.

3. **Integration stage**: It is the final stage at which the ‘laundered’ property is reintroduced into the legitimate economy. At this stage, the launderer might choose to invest the funds into real estate, luxury assets, or business ventures. At this point, the launderer can use the money without getting caught. It’s very difficult to catch a launderer during the integration stage if there is no documentation during the previous stages.

**Some of the most widely used methods used to implement the above stages are:**

1. **Structuring Deposits**: This is also known as *smurfing*, this is a method of placement whereby cash is broken into smaller deposits of money, used to defeat suspicion of money laundering and avoid anti-money laundering reporting requirements.

2. **Shell companies**: These are fake companies that exist for no other reason than to launder money. They take in dirty money as "payment" for supposed goods or services but actually provide no goods or services; they simply create the appearance of legitimate transactions through fake invoices and balance sheets.

3. **Third-Party Cheques**: Counter cheques or banker’s drafts drawn on different institutions are utilized and cleared via various third-party accounts. Third party cheques and traveller’s cheques are often purchased using proceeds of crime. Since these are negotiable in many countries, the nexus with the source money is difficult to establish.

4. **Bulk cash smuggling**: This involves physically smuggling cash to another jurisdiction and depositing it in a financial institution, such as an offshore bank, with greater bank secrecy or less rigorous money laundering enforcement.

**PREVENTION OF MONEY LAUNDERING – GLOBAL INITIATIVES**
THE VIENNA CONVENTION
It was the first major initiative in the prevention of money laundering held in December 1988. This convention laid down the groundwork for efforts to combat money laundering by obliging the member states to criminalize the laundering of money from drug trafficking.

BASLE COMMITTEE’S STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES
In December 1988, the Basle Committee on Banking Regulations and Supervisory Practices issued a statement of principles which aims at encouraging the banking sector to adopt common position in order to ensure that banks are not used to hide or launder funds acquired through criminal activities.

THE FINANCIAL ACTION TASK FORCE (FATF)
The FATF is an inter-governmental body established at the G7 summit at Paris in 1989 with the objective to set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures to combat money laundering and terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.

UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL PROGRAMME AGAINST MONEY LAUNDERING (UNGPML)
GPML was established in 1997 with a view to increase effectiveness of international action against money laundering through comprehensive technical cooperation services offered to Governments.

PREVENTION OF MONEY LAUNDERING – INDIAN INITIATIVES
LEGAL FRAMEWORK
In India, before the enactment of Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA) the major statutes that incorporated measures to address the problem of money laundering were:

- The Income Tax Act, 1961
- The Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act, 1974 (COFEPOSA)
- The Smugglers and Foreign Exchange Manipulators Act, 1976 (SAFEMA)
The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (NDPSA)
The Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act, 1988
The Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1988
The Foreign Exchange Management Act, 2000, (FEMA)

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The Directorate of Enforcement was established in the year 1956 which is responsible for enforcement of the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA) and certain provisions under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. Work relating to investigation and prosecution of cases under the PML has been entrusted to Enforcement Directorate.

Financial Intelligence Unit – India was set by the Government of India in 2004 as the central national agency responsible for receiving, processing, analyzing and disseminating information relating to suspect financial transactions. FIU-IND is also responsible for coordinating and strengthening efforts of national and international intelligence, investigation and enforcement agencies in pursuing the global efforts against money laundering and related crimes. FIU-IND is an independent body reporting directly to the Economic Intelligence Council (EIC) headed by the Finance Minister.

PRESS COUNCIL OF INDIA

Context

The Press Council of India had described the ban on communication and free movement in Jammu and Kashmir as being in the interest of the integrity and sovereignty of the nation. While on the other hand, the ban has severely affected the functioning of the press in J&K.

About Press Council of India

It was first set up in the year 1966 by the Parliament on the recommendations of the First Press Commission with the object of preserving the freedom of the press and of maintaining and improving the standards of press in India.
• The present Council functions under the Press Council Act, 1978.
• It is a statutory, quasi judicial authority functioning as a watchdog of the press, for the press and by the press.
• It adjudicates the complaints against and by the press for violation of ethics and for violation of the freedom of the press respectively.

Composition
• The Press Council is headed by a Chairman, who has by convention, been a retired judge of the Supreme Court of India.
• The Council consists of 28 other members of whom 20 represent the press and are nominated by the press organisations/news agencies recognised and notified by the Council as all India bodies of categories such as editors, working journalists and owners and managers of newspaper and news agencies, five members are nominated from the two Houses of Parliament and three represent cultural, literary and legal fields as nominees of the Sahitya Academy, University Grants Commission and the Bar Council of India.
• The members serve on the Council for a term of three years.
• A retiring member shall be eligible for renomination for not more than one term. (max 2 consecutive terms)

FUNDING
• The Council is funded by the revenue collected by it as fee levied on the registered newspapers in the country on the basis of their circulation.
• No fee is levied on newspapers with circulation less than 5000 copies. The deficit is made good by way of grant by the Central Government.

Functions
The important functions of the Council are:
• to help newspapers and news agencies to maintain their independence,
• to build up a code of conduct for newspapers, news agencies and journalists,
• To keep under review any development likely to restrict supply and dissemination of news of public interest and importance.
To concern itself with the developments such as concentration of or other aspects of ownership of newspapers and news agencies which may affect the independence of the press.

**Limitations**

The powers of the PCI are restricted in two ways.

1. The PCI has limited powers of enforcing the guidelines issued. It cannot penalize newspapers, news agencies, editors and journalists for violation of the guidelines.

2. The PCI only overviews the functioning of press media. That is, it can enforce standards upon newspapers, journals, magazines and other forms of print media. It does not have the power to review the functioning of the electronic media like radio, television and internet media.

**WORLDSKILLS KAZAN**

**Context**

Chief of International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) has said that India is pivotal to the global fight back against AIDS.

**About**

- International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) is **working on two trials** for a possible AIDS vaccine but neither has yet reached a stage when a date can be put to the availability of the vaccine.

- Its work on vaccine has improved understanding of the immune system and spawned many technologies that can help fight other diseases, including emerging threats such as Ebola and Zika.

- With neither a vaccine nor any cure in sight, **antiretroviral therapy (ART)** is the only option available for people living with HIV-AIDS.

- According to the World Health Organization, **standard ART** consists of a combination of at least **three antiretroviral drugs** to suppress the HIV virus and stop the progression of the
Why India is crucial in battle against the virus

- India has the third largest HIV epidemic in the world, with 2.1 million people living with HIV.
- There are 2 million new AIDS infections every year, and about 66% of the world population currently on antiretroviral therapy consumes drugs manufactured in India.
- India’s epidemic is concentrated among key affected populations including sex workers and men who have sex with men.
- Despite free antiretroviral treatment (ART) being available, uptake remains low as many people face difficulty in accessing clinics.
- Globally, the ART market is valued at $0.48 billion (in 2018) and is expected to reach $0.83 billion by 2025.
- Indian pharmaceutical companies, with their ability to manufacture high-quality, affordable medicines are very important in this global battle.
- Sustained commitment of the Indian Government through its National AIDS Control Programme has been particularly effective at targeting high-risk groups such as men who have sex with men, sex workers and people who inject drugs.

National AIDS Control Programme (NACP)
The National AIDS Control Programme (NACP), launched in 1992, is being implemented as a comprehensive programme for prevention and control of HIV/AIDS in India. Over time, the focus has shifted from raising awareness to behaviour change, from a national response to a more decentralized response and to increasing involvement of NGOs and networks of People living with HIV (PLHIV).
The NACP I started in 1992 was implemented with an objective of slowing down the spread of HIV infections so as to reduce morbidity, mortality and impact of AIDS in the country.
In November 1999, the second National AIDS Control Project (NACP II) was launched to reduce the spread of HIV infection in India, and (ii) to increase India’s capacity to respond to HIV/AIDS on a long-term basis.
NACP III was launched in July 2007 with the goal of Halting and Reversing the Epidemic over its five-year period.

NACP IV, launched in 2012, aims to accelerate the process of reversal and further strengthen the epidemic response in India through a cautious and well defined integration process over the next five years.

**NACP - IV – Objectives**
Reduce new infections by 50% (2007 Baseline of NACP III)
Provide comprehensive care and support to all persons living with HIV/AIDS and treatment services for all those who require it.

**UNAIDS ‘90-90-90’ targets**
The targets propose that to end the HIV epidemic by 2030, 90% of persons living with HIV (PLWH) worldwide should know their diagnosis, 90% of diagnosed PLWH should be on antiretroviral therapy (ART) and 90% of PLWH on ART should be virally suppressed by 2020.

### 'ANGIKAAR CAMPAIGN'

**Context**

HUA launches 'Angikaar campaign', to bring PMAY (U) beneficiaries into Ujjawala, Ayushman Bharat fold

**About**
- The Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry launched the 'Angikaar campaign', a move aimed at bringing beneficiaries of PMAY (urban) into the fold of other central schemes such as Ujjawala and Ayushman Bharat.
- HUA Secretary Durga Shanker Mishra said the campaign will officially be rolled out in all cities with PMAY(U) on October 2 commemorating 150th Gandhi Jayanti culminate on the occasion of Human Rights Day December 10.
PMA (U):
Launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MoHUPA), in Mission mode envisions provision of Housing for All by 2022, when the Nation completes 75 years of its Independence.

“Angikaar” a campaign for change management
• Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said the convergence would especially focus on Ujjwala for gas connection and Ayushman Bharat for health insurance to the beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (U).
• According to the ministry, around 88 lakh houses have so far been approved against the demand of 1.12 crore.
• The 'Angikaar' aims at reaching out all the beneficiaries of the PMAY (U) in a phased manner.

More on the topic:
• The project includes mass awareness programmes as well as volunteers visiting the homes of the PMAY (U) beneficiaries to have them enrolled into Ujjwala scheme, for LPG connections, Ayushman Bharat health cards and Ujala, for LED lights.
• The campaign would include issues pertaining to cohesive community living, water and energy conservation, sustainable practices, rain water harvesting, tree plantation and convergence of different government programmes/schemes leading to clean, green and safe living environment.
• Various IEC activities for the campaign are being prepared for proposed launch. While completion of 3 Lakh houses to beneficiaries has been planned, so far over 1 lakh houses have been completed and almost all of them delivered.

CHILD WELL-BEING INDEX
Report released by the non government organization World Vision India and research institute IFMR LEAD.

About

- The India child well-being index is a crucial report that can be mined both by the Government and civil organisations to achieve the goal of child well-being and we will use this report effectively.

- This report provides insights on health, nutrition, education, and sanitation and child protection.

- The dimensions of the index include healthy individual development, positive relationships and protective contexts.

- Focusing on the three key dimensions, 24 indicators were selected to develop the computation of the child well-being index.

- The index captures the performance of each state and union territory on a composite child well-being score.

- Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh and Puducherry topped the charts in the child well-being index.

- Meghalaya, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh featured at the bottom.

- Among the union territories, Puducherry led the way and Dadra and Nagar Haveli featured at the other end.

- The report has called for states to look at their respective scores on the dimensions of child well-being and to prepare for priority areas of intervention with specific plans of action.

- The report also emphasised on triggering policy level changes, seek better budgetary allocations and initiate discussions with all stakeholders which can help in enhancing the quality of life of all children in the country.

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#### DESERTIFICATION

**Context**

A major discussion on ways to reverse land degradation and its outcomes is being held at the 14th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP14) to UNCCD in Greater Noida, New Delhi, from September 2 to 13.

**About**

- India will host the **14th Conference of Parties (COP14)** of the **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)**.
- The event expects more than 3,000 participants from across the world to gather at India Mart and Expo, Greater Noida, from September 2-13.
- The participants will include ministers from **196 countries**, representatives of national and local governments, city leaders, community groups, scientists, non-governmental organisations, the private sector and industry experts.
- Main agendas for COP14 are **reversing land degradation and its outcomes** while accelerating positive achievements for people and for ecosystems with a view to deliver on the **United Nations-mandated Sustainable Development Goals**.
- Land degradation working in tandem with climate change and biodiversity loss may force up to 700 million people to migrate by 2050.
Land degradation/ Desertification

- UNCCD defines desertification as “land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas resulting from various factors, including climatic variations and human activities”.
- Drylands affected by desertification not only lose their ability to support plant life, but also their ability to offer ecosystem services, such as management of water systems and storage of carbon use in global warming.
- Desertification has occurred throughout history. But what’s alarming is that its pace has accelerated 30 to 35 times the historical rate in the recent decades.
- With changing climate, prolonged droughts and increasing incidences of floods, landslides and frost heaving are in any case reducing the amount of productive land.
- At the same time, growing demand for food, fodder, fuel and raw materials is increasing the pressure on land and the competition for natural resources.
- Factors like deforestation, wetland drainage, overgrazing, unsustainable land use practices and the expansion of agricultural, industrial and urban areas are the other significant causes of land degradation

Desertification in India

- According to Desertification and Land Degradation of Selected Districts of India, an atlas published by the Indian Space Research Organisation’s Space Application Centre (SAC), Ahmedabad in 2018, some 96.40 million ha, or about 30 per cent of the country’s total area, is undergoing degradation. This means almost a quarter of India is under desertification.
- Of India's total geographical area of 328.72 million hectares (MHA), 4 MHA is under desertification.
- In eight states—Rajasthan, Delhi, Goa, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Nagaland, Tripura and Himachal Pradesh—around 40 to 70 per cent of land has undergone desertification.
- More to it, 26 of 29 Indian states have reported an increase in the area undergoing desertification in the past 10 years.

Major Reasons:
Loss of soil cover, mainly due to **rainfall and surface runoff**, is one of the biggest reasons for desertification. It is responsible for **98 per cent of desertification in the country**.

Water erosion is observed in both **hot and cold desert areas**, across various land covers and with varying levels of severity.

The next big reason is wind erosion.

**United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)**

- Established in 1994, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management.
- The Convention addresses specifically the arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, known as the drylands, where some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and peoples can be found.
- The new UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework is the most comprehensive global commitment to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) in order to restore the productivity of vast expanses of degraded land and reduce the impacts of drought on vulnerable populations.
- As the dynamics of land, climate and biodiversity are intimately connected, the UNCCD collaborates closely with the other two Rio Conventions; the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to meet these complex challenges with an integrated approach and the best possible use of natural resources.

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**18 ENDANGERED SHARKS AND RAYS AFFORDED PROTECTION**

**Context**

Eighteen species of sharks and rays, threatened by the scale of international trade in their fins and meat, were included in Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
About

- The decision to include the species in Appendix II was taken at the ongoing 18th Conference of the Parties (CoP18) of CITES in Geneva.

- The species included in the list are endangered short fin and long fin mako shark, six species of giant guitarfish and 10 species of wedge fish.

- Of the giant guitarfish and wedge fish species on the listing, all except one of the wedge fish species are critically endangered.

- Warm-blooded makos are the fastest sharks in the sea and travel at speeds which most speedboats cannot compete with.

- Giant guitarfishes (named for their guitar-like shape), and wedgefishes are flat-bodied shark-like rays, adapted for living close to the seabed.

- More than half of sharks and their relatives are recognized as being threatened or near threatened with extinction and at least 100 million sharks are killed annually in commercial fisheries.

- An Appendix II listing is an important step, limiting trade to sustainable levels.

About the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)
The International Fund for Animal Welfare is a global non-profit helping animal and people thrive together.

Experts and everyday people, working across seas, oceans and in more than 40 countries around the world.

Rescue, rehabilitate and release animals, and we restore and protect their natural habitats.

Partner with local communities, governments, non-governmental organizations and businesses.

DEsertification
Context

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- At the same time, growing demand for food, fodder, fuel and raw materials is increasing the pressure on land and the competition for natural resources.
Factors like deforestation, wetland drainage, overgrazing, unsustainable land use practices and the expansion of agricultural, industrial and urban areas are the other significant causes of land degradation.

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Major Reasons

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GREAT BARRIER REEF

Context

Australia has downgraded the outlook for Great Barrier Reef to 'very poor' for the first time.

About

The long-term outlook for Australia’s Great Barrier Reef was downgraded to “very poor” for the first time by the official agency charged with managing the world heritage site.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority singled out rising sea temperatures due to climate change as the biggest threat to the giant organism.

However the threats to the 2,300-kilometre (1,400-mile) reef were "multiple, cumulative and increasing" and, in addition to warming seas; agricultural run-off and coral-eating crown of thorns starfish are the rising threats.

If the condition of Great Barrier Reef continues declining, it may lose its world heritage status.

The Great Barrier Reef, located off Australia’s East Coast is the largest coral reef in the world.

What is a world heritage site?

World Heritage Sites are cultural and/or natural sites considered being of ‘Outstanding Universal Value’, which have been inscribed on the World Heritage List by the World Heritage Committee.
These places or buildings are thought to:
- have special importance for everyone
- represent unique, or the most significant or best, examples of the world’s cultural and/or natural heritage
- Outstanding Universal Value is considered to transcend national boundaries and to be of importance for future generations.

- World Heritage status is a high accolade that brings with it responsibilities and international scrutiny.
- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) seek to protect and preserve such sites through the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. This international treaty was drawn up in 1972.

Coral reefs
- Coral reefs are large underwater structures composed of the skeletons of colonial marine invertebrates called coral.
- The coral species that build reefs are known as hermatypic, or "hard," corals because they extract calcium carbonate from seawater to create a hard, durable exoskeleton that protects their soft, sac-like bodies.
- Hard corals rely on symbiotic algae (zooxanthellae) living within their tissues for nutrition and energy to build their skeleton.
- Soft corals look like colourful plants or graceful trees and are not reef-building since they do not produce the hard calcified skeleton of many reef-building corals.
- These types of corals are flexible organisms often resembling plants and trees and include species such as sea fans and sea whips
- These types of corals are flexible organisms often resembling plants and trees and include species such as sea fans and sea whips.
- Each individual coral is referred to as a polyp. Coral polyps live on the calcium carbonate exoskeletons of their ancestors, adding their own exoskeleton to the existing coral structure.
As the centuries pass, the coral reef gradually grows one tiny exoskeleton at a time, until they become massive features of the marine environment.

**ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE**

**Context**

New? 9.3 Crore study to check antibiotic resistance in Ganga

**About**

- The government has commissioned a ?9.3 crore study to assess the microbial diversity along the entire length of the Ganga and test if stretches of the 2,500 km long river contain microbes that may promote “antibiotic resistance”.
- The project aims at indicating the type of contamination in the river and the threat to human health.
- The project, expected to last two years, will identify sources of *Eschericia coli*.

**More on the topic:**

- The project, expected to last two years, is to be undertaken by scientists at the Motilal Nehru Institute of Technology, Allahabad; the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), Nagpur; Sardar Patel Institute of Science & Technology, Gorakhpur, as well as start-up companies, Phixgen and Xcelris Labs.
- The latter two provide genome sequencing services, which in this case will involve mapping the genomes of the microbes sampled.

**Aim of the research project:**
India is one of the highest antibiotic consuming countries in the world. Though antibiotics have helped treat many diseases and save lives, their overuse and misuse have created a new menace — antibiotic resistance.

According to a note by the National Mission for Clean Ganga under the Jal Shakti Ministry is to indicate the type of “contamination” (sewage and industrial) in the river and “threat to human health (antibiotic resistance surge)”, identifying sources of Eschericia coli, a type of bacteria that lives in the gut of animals and humans.

While largely harmless, some species have been linked to intestinal disease as well as aggravating antibiotic resistance.

There have been several studies that have looked at microbial diversity in the Ganga but these have been isolation.

No study has looked at the “entire stretch” of the river, according to Atya Kapley, a scientist at NEERI and part of the project.

In 2014, researchers from Newcastle University in the U.K. and IIT-Delhi sampled water and sediments at seven sites along the Ganga in different seasons. They reported in the peer-reviewed Environmental Science and Technology that levels of resistance genes that lead to “superbugs” were about 60 times greater during the pilgrimage months of May and June than at other times of the year.

A 2017 report commissioned by the Union Department of Biotechnology and the U.K. Research Council underlined that India had some of the highest antibiotic resistance rates among bacteria that commonly cause infections.

Thank you!!

Source: iasscore.in + Insightsonindia + thehindu + indianexpress + PIB