

I. POLITY AND CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 370

August marks one year since the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A and the administrative reorganization of Jammu and Kashmir.

- In 1948, Indian Government signed **Treaty of Accession** with ruler of Kashmir to provide Kashmir protection from Pakistan's aggression. Post signing of Treaty of Accession, Article 370 was inserted in the part XXI of the Constitution that proclaimed it to be "Temporary, Transitional and Special Provision" and provided for a special status to Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).
- As per the Article, the centre needed the state government's concurrence to apply laws — except in **defence, foreign affairs, finance and communications**.
- Also, the state's residents lived under a separate set of laws, such as those related to citizenship, ownership of property, separate penal code and fundamental rights, as compared to other Indian citizens.
 - o **Article 35A** of the Indian Constitution gave powers to the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly to define permanent residents of the state, their special rights and privileges.
- In August 2019, President of India promulgated Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 2019 which stated that provisions of the Indian Constitution were applicable in the State.
- This effectively meant that all the provisions that formed the basis of a separate Constitution for Jammu and Kashmir stand abrogated. With this, Article 35A was scrapped automatically.
- Also Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019 was passed by the Parliament, which re-organized J&K into two Union Territories (UTs)-
 - o J&K division with a legislative assembly
 - o UT of Ladakh without a legislative assembly.

CONTEMPT OF COURT

Recently, Supreme Court has held the lawyer-activist Prashant Bhushan as guilty of contempt of court in the context of the comment made on social media, targeting the current Chief Justice of India.

What is contempt of court?

- Contempt refers to the offence of showing disrespect to the dignity or authority of a court.
- The rationale for this provision is that courts must be protected from tendentious attacks that lower its authority, defame its public image, and make the public lose faith in its impartiality.
 - o Also, **Article 261** says, Full faith and credit shall be given throughout the territory of India to public acts, records and judicial proceedings of the Union and of every State.

Constitutional Provisions in relation to contempt:

- o Contempt of court is one of the reasonable restrictions on freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(2).
- o **Article 129** of the Constitution conferred on the Supreme Court the power to punish contempt of itself. Article 215 conferred a corresponding power on the High Courts.
- ✓ Every High Court shall have and exercise the same jurisdiction, powers and authority, in accordance with the same procedure and practice, in respect of contempt of courts subordinate to it as it has and exercises in respect of contempt of itself.
- o **Article 142(2)** says that when any law is made by the Parliament on the provisions mentioned in clause 1 of this Article, the Supreme Court has all the power to make an order for securing any person's attendance, production of any documents or has the power to give punishment to anyone for its contempt.
- The **Contempt of Courts Act, 1971** defines contempt (the expression contempt of court is not defined in the constitution). It divides contempt into civil and criminal contempt.
 - o Civil contempt refers to the wilful disobedience of an order of any court.
 - o Criminal contempt means the publication (whether by words, spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representations, or otherwise) of any matter or the doing of any other act whatsoever which

- ✓ scandalises or tends to scandalise, or lowers or tends to lower the authority of, any court and have the effect of undermining public confidence in the judiciary; or
- ✓ prejudices, or interferes or tends to interfere with, the due course of any judicial proceeding; or
- ✓ interferes or tends to interfere with, or obstructs or tends to obstruct, the administration of justice in any other manner.

- **Punishment**

- ✓ As per Contempt of Courts Act of 1971, punishment is simple imprisonment for a term up to six months and/or a fine of up to ₹. 2,000.
- ✓ The accused may be discharged, or the punishment awarded may be remitted on apology being made to the satisfaction of the court.

- **Period of Limitation**

- ✓ No court shall initiate contempt proceedings either on its own notions or otherwise after the **expiry of one year** from the date on which contempt is alleged to have been committed.

- **Exceptions to contempt of Court:**

- o Fair and accurate reporting of judicial proceedings.
- o Any fair criticism on the merits of a judicial order after a case is heard and disposed of.
- o If the publication or other act is merely a defamatory attack on the judge and is not intended to interfere with the administration of justice, it will not be taken as contempt of court.
- o The Act was amended in 2006 and introduced truth as a valid defence, if it was in public interest and was invoked in a bona fide manner.

Judicial Decisions to constitute Contempt of Court in India

- **Interference with Administration of Justice:** In **Brahma Prakash Sharma v State of Uttar Pradesh**, the Supreme Court had held that in order to constitute the offence of Contempt of Court, it was not necessary to specifically prove that an actual interference with administration of justice has been committed. The Court held that it was enough if a

defamatory statement is likely or in any way tends to interfere with the proper administration of justice.

- Scandalizing the Court: In the case of **PN Dua v Shiv Shankar and others**, the Supreme Court held that mere criticism of the Court does not amount to contempt of Court.
 - o In the case of **Baradanath Mishra v the Registrar of Orissa High Court** judgement, the court said that in a contempt case the court has to ask whether the vilification is of the Judge as a judge, or it is the vilification of the Judge as an individual. If the latter the Judge is left to his private remedies and the Court has no power to commit for contempt.
- Interference with due course of Justice: In **Pritam Lal v. High Court of M.P** the Supreme Court held that to preserve the proceedings of the Courts from interference and to keep the streams of justice pure, it becomes the duty of the Court, to punish the contemnor in order to preserve its dignity.

SUB-CATEGORIZATION OF OTHER BACKWARD CLASSES (OBCS)

- Recently, the Union Cabinet approved the term extension of the commission to examine the issue of sub-categorization of Other Backward Classes (OBCs).
- The Union Government constituted a four-member commission headed by Justice G. Rohini in 2017 under Article 340 with an aim to improve the equitability of sharing of benefits among OBCs.
 - o The article 340 of the Indian Constitution lays down conditions for the appointment of a Commission to investigate the conditions of backward classes.
- Mandate of the Commission:
 - o Examining the extent of inequitable distribution of benefits of reservation (i.e. **27 percent reservation in jobs and education**) among the castes or communities with reference to the central OBC list.
 - o Work out the mechanism, criteria, norms and parameters in a scientific approach for sub-categorization of OBCs.

Who are OBCs:

- OBC is a collective term used by the Government to classify castes which are educationally or socially disadvantaged.

- OBCs are a vastly heterogeneous group. There are various jaatis or sub-castes which vary significantly in the societal and economic status.
 - o For instance, OBCs include land-owning communities in both north and south India alongside poorer sections of the society living on subsistence labour.

Background: The Mandal Commission

- In 1990, the then Union government announced that Other Backward Classes (OBCs) would get 27 percent reservation in jobs in central government services and public sector units (under **Article 16(4)** of the Constitution).
- The decision was based on **Mandal Commission Report (1980)**, which was set up in 1979 and chaired by B.P. Mandal. The mandate of the Mandal Commission was to identify socially or educationally backward classes to address caste discrimination.
- The recommendation for OBC reservations in central government institutions was implemented in 1992 while the education quota came into force in 2006 (under **Article 15(4)** of the Constitution).
- To ensure that benefits of the recommendations of the Mandal Commission percolated down to the most backward communities, the **creamy layer criteria** was invoked by Supreme Court in the ruling called the '**Indira Sawhney Judgment**' (1992).
 - o A household with an **annual income of Rs 8 lakh or above** is classified as belonging to the 'creamy layer' among OBCs and hence is not eligible for reservations.

National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)

- Until now, under **Article 338**, it was the National Commission of Scheduled Castes (NCSC) that addressed the grievances of the OBCs.
- The present NCBC (set up under the **National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993** as **Article 338B** of the Constitution) can only recommend inclusion and exclusion of castes from the OBC list and the level of income that cuts off the "creamy layer" among these castes from the benefits of reservation.
- The **123rd Constitutional Amendment Bill (102nd Constitutional Amendment Act)** aims to provide constitutional status to NCBC that will give it the powers akin to the Commission of Socially and Economically Backward Classes (SCBCs). The functions performed by NCSC will now get transferred to the new panel.

- The amendment also brings about changes in **Article 342A** and **Article 366**.
 - o **Article 342A** relates to the Central list of Socially and Educationally backward classes.
 - o **Article 366** contains the definitions used in the Constitution unless specifically stated otherwise.
- Under the Act, the NCBC will comprise of **five members** appointed by the President. Their tenure and conditions of service will also be decided by the President.

DEMAND FOR SIXTH SCHEDULE STATUS

- Arunachal Pradesh assembly unanimously passed a resolution for the entire state to be included in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

Article 371

- Article 371 to 371-J of Constitution contains special provisions for eleven states to meet the aspirations, to protect the cultural and economic interests of the tribal and local people of the states or to deal with the disturbed law and order condition in some parts of the states.

Sixth schedule

- Sixth Schedule to the Constitution provides power to tribal communities to administer the tribal areas in **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram** under the provision of Article 244(2) and 275(1) of the Constitution.
 - o **Article 244** of provides special system of administration for certain areas designated as 'scheduled areas' and 'tribal areas'.
 - o **Article 275** makes provisions for statutory grants to be charged on Consolidated Fund of India. Such grants also include specific grants for promoting the welfare of the scheduled tribes or for raising the level of administration of the scheduled areas in a state.

Advantages of inclusion in 6th schedule

- Sixth schedule benefits in democratic devolution of powers, preserve and promote the distinct culture of the region, protect agrarian rights including rights on land and enhance transfer of funds for speedy development through following features:
- **Autonomous District Councils (ADC):** ADCs are bodies representing a district to which the Constitution has given varying degrees of autonomy within the state legislature.
 - o Each autonomous district council consisting of 30 members, of whom four are nominated by governor and the remaining 26 are elected. All of them remain in power for a term of five years.
- **Autonomous region:** If there are different Scheduled Tribes in an autonomous district, the Governor may, by public notification, divide the area or areas inhabited by them into autonomous regions.
- **Legislative Power:** ADCs are empowered to make legislative laws with due approval from the governor.
- **Limitation to power of Parliamentary or state legislature** over autonomous regions: Acts passed by Parliament and state legislatures may or may not be levied in these regions unless the President and the governor gives her or his approval.
- **Judicial powers:** councils can constitute village courts within their jurisdiction to hear trial of cases involving the tribes. Governors of states that fall under the Sixth Schedule specifies the jurisdiction of high courts for each of these cases.

Areas in Northeast that are registered as autonomous districts:

- **Assam:** Bodoland Territorial Council, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council and Dima Hasao Autonomous District Council.
- **Meghalaya:** Garo Hills Autonomous District Council, Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council and Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council.
- **Tripura:** Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council.
- **Mizoram:** Chakma Autonomous District Council, Lai Autonomous District Council, Mara Autonomous District Council.

Inner Line Permit

- Inner Line Permit is a document that allows an Indian citizen to visit or stay in a state that is protected under the ILP system.

- It is British era regulation under the **Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act, 1873**, for Crown's own commercial interests.
- **Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram** are protected by the Inner Line, and lately **Manipur** was added.

Permit for foreigners

- Every foreigner, except a citizen of Bhutan, who desires to enter and stay in a Protected or Restricted Area, is required to obtain a special permit called Protected Area Permit/Restricted Area Permit from a competent authority.

Fifth schedule of the constitution

- Fifth Schedule of the Constitution deals with the administration and control of scheduled areas and scheduled tribes in any state except the four states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.
 - o **Ten states have Fifth Schedule Areas:** Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Rajasthan.
- President is empowered to declare an area to be a scheduled area and governor is empowered to direct for application of Parliament or state legislature acts with specified modifications and exceptions.
- Normal administrative machinery operating in a state is not extended to the fifth schedule areas.
- **Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA)** was enacted to extend Panchayat Raj provisions in fifth schedule areas with exceptions and modifications.

How are 6th schedule areas different from 5th schedule?

- It provides greater autonomy.
 - o Greater powers are devolved and power to make legislation on numerous subjects. In fifth schedule, tribal advisory council have only advisory powers to the state government and that too only on the matters referred to the council by governor. In cases related to transfer of land, it could exercise power on its own.

- The council in 5th Schedule is creation of state legislature while in 6th schedule it is the product of constitution.
- It has financial power to prepare budget for themselves unlike council in 5th areas.
- They also receive funds from consolidated fund of India to finance schemes for development, health, education, roads.

NATIONAL RECRUITMENT AGENCY

- The Union Cabinet recently approved setting up of **National Recruitment Agency**, an independent body to conduct examination for government jobs.
- The National Recruitment Agency (NRA) was first proposed by the government in the Union Budget 2020.
- NRA will conduct the **Common Eligibility Test (CET)** for recruitment to **non-gazetted posts** in government and public sector banks.
- Government has sanctioned a sum of INR 1500 crore for the NRA which will be undertaken over a period of three years.

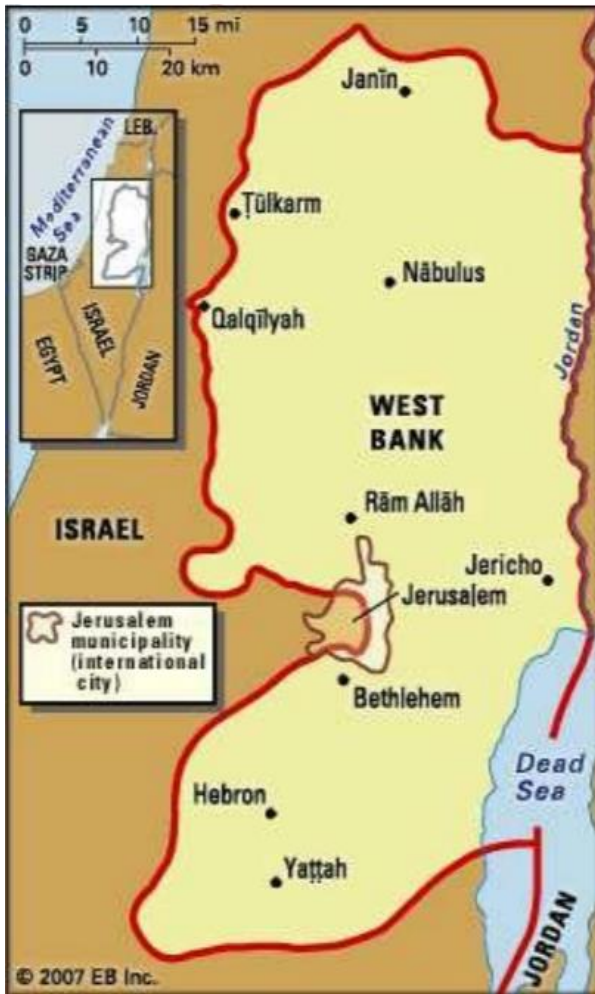
Key Features

- NRA will be a Society registered under the Societies Registration Act, headed by a Chairman of the rank of the Secretary to the Government of India.
- It will have representatives of Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Finance, Staff Selection Commission (SSC), Railway Recruitment Board (RRB) & Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS).
- CET will be held twice a year with different CETs for graduate level, 12th Pass level and 10th pass level to facilitate recruitment to vacancies at various levels.
- Initially CET will be conducted for 3 agencies only— **RRB, IBPS and SSC**, but later it will be extended to all future recruitments.
- The examinations will be conducted in 12 languages.

II. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

ABRAHAM ACCORD

- Recently, UAE and Israel signed a US-brokered agreement that has come to be known as the 'Abraham Accord' that aims at establishing formal relations between the two countries.
- According to the Accord, UAE and Israel would establish formal diplomatic relations and in exchange, Israel would suspend its plans to annex parts of the occupied West Bank.
 - o With this, UAE will become the first Gulf country to establish diplomatic and economic relations with Israel.
- ✓ Gulf countries are the seven Arab states which border the Persian Gulf, namely Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE.
- ✓ UAE becomes the **third Arab nation** to recognize Israel after Egypt (in 1979) and Jordan (1994).
- For decades, there has been a consensus among many Arab and Muslim-majority states that they will not end a state of hostility with Israel until it agrees to a deal granting statehood to the Palestinians.



III. ECONOMY

TRANSPARENT TAXATION – ‘HONOURING THE HONEST’ PLATFORM

- Recently a platform – “Transparent Taxation — Honouring the Honest” was launched by Prime Minister to strengthen the efforts of reforming and simplifying India's tax system.
- It is aimed at easing the tax compliance and also rewarding honest taxpayers.
- Main features of Platform are **Faceless Assessment, Faceless Appeal** and **Taxpayer Charter**.
 - o **Faceless assessment:** To eliminate direct contact between Taxpayer and Income Tax officer.
 - ✓ Under this system, the selection of a taxpayer will be done only through systems using data analytics and AI.

- o **Faceless appeals:** Appeals will be randomly allotted to any officer in the country and identity of the officer deciding the appeal will remain unknown.
- o **Taxpayer charter:** It outlines the rights and responsibilities of both tax officers and taxpayers. It is likely to empower citizens by ensuring timely services by the IT Department.
 - It aims to resolve the problems of a taxpayer instead of entangling him further and ensure that there is no direct contact in all matters of scrutiny, notice, survey or assessment.
 - The new platform apart from being faceless is also aimed at boosting the confidence of the taxpayer and decreasing the fear associated with the taxation process.

Recent steps taken to improve direct tax ecosystem

- **Personal Income Tax** - Finance Act, 2020 has provided an option to individuals and co-operatives for paying income-tax at concessional rates if they do not avail specified exemption and incentive.
- **Abolition of Dividend Distribution Tax (DDT)** - In order to increase the attractiveness of the Indian Equity Market and to provide relief to a large class of investors companies are not required to pay DDT with effect from 01.04.2020.
- **Vivad se Vishwas:** To provide for resolution of pending tax disputes which will not only benefit the Government by generating timely revenue but also the taxpayers as it will bring down mounting litigation costs.
- **Faceless E-assessment Scheme** – It provides for making assessment by eliminating the interface between the Assessing Officer and the assessee, optimizing use of resources through functional specialization and introducing the team-based assessment.
- **Document Identification Number (DIN)** - In order to bring efficiency and transparency in the functioning of the Income Tax Department, every communication of the Department is mandatorily having a computer-generated unique DIN.
- **Simplification of compliance norms for Start-ups** - Start-ups have been provided hassle-free tax environment which includes simplification of assessment procedure, exemptions from Angel-tax, constitution of dedicated start-up cell etc.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

The Prime Minister recently pitched for taking agricultural education to middle school level using reforms proposed by National Education Policy (NEP), 2020.

What is Agricultural education?

- Agricultural education focuses on, but is not limited to, study in horticulture, forestry, conservation, natural resources, agricultural products and processing, production of food and fiber, aquaculture and other agricultural products, mechanics, sales and service, economics, marketing, and leadership development.
- It encompasses the study of applied sciences (e.g., biology, chemistry, physics), and business management principles. One of the major purposes of agricultural education is to apply the knowledge and skills learned in several different disciplines to agriculture.
- **Current status in India:** Formal agricultural education in India is mostly confined to higher educational institutions. Currently, there are three central agricultural universities, around 65 State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) and 4 Deemed-to be-Universities (DUs) in India which focus on imparting formal education in the field of agriculture.

IV. SECURITY

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE GRID (NATGRID)

- NATGRID has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) to access the centralised online database on FIRs and stolen vehicles.
- MoU will give NATGRID access to **Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS)** database.
- All State police are mandated to file **First Information Reports (FIR)** in the CCTNS.
- MoU enables the NATGRID to get information about details of a suspect as mentioned in the FIR such as his/her father's name, telephone number and other details.

About NCRB

- NCRB, under MHA, was **set-up in 1986** to function as a repository of information on crime and criminals to assist the investigators in linking crime to the perpetrators.
- It was set up based on the recommendations of the National Police Commission (1977-1981) and the MHA Task force (1985).

- In 2009, NCRB was entrusted with the responsibility for monitoring, coordinating and implementing the CCTNS project.
- o CCTNS is a Mission Mode Project under the **National e-Governance Plan**.
- o It connects 15000+ police stations and 6000 higher offices of police in the country.
- o CCTNS aims at creating a comprehensive and integrated system for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of policing through adopting of principle of e-Governance and creation of a nationwide networking infrastructure.

About NATGRID

- NATGRID, an attached office of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), is the integrated intelligence grid which connects databases of core security agencies. It was proposed after the **2008 Mumbai terror attacks**.
- It will assist intelligence and law enforcement agencies in ensuring national and internal security, with the ultimate aim to counter terror.
- NATGRID will link **10 user agencies** with certain databases that would be procured from 21 organisations.
- o Database involves data related to credit and debit cards, tax, telecom, immigration, airlines and railway tickets, passports, driving licenses.
- o It will be available for various central agencies, on a case-to-case-basis, including Intelligence Bureau, Research and Analysis Wing, Department of Revenue Intelligence etc.

V. ENVIRONMENT

URBAN FORESTRY

Recently, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) selected Arunachal Pradesh capital (Itanagar) for implementation of the 'Nagar Van' or Urban Forest scheme.

About Nagar Van Scheme

- It envisages creating forests in 200 urban cities across the country in next five years with a renewed focus on people's participation and collaboration between Forest Department, Municipal bodies, NGOs, Corporates and local citizens.
- o Pune's Warje forest offer good model for growth.
- Forest once established will be maintained by State Government.

About Urban Forestry

- It is an integrated, city wide approach to the planting, care and management of trees, forests, and natural systems in the city to secure multiple environmental and social benefits for urban dwellers.
- It concentrates on all tree dominated as well as other green resources in and around urban areas, such as woodlands, public and private urban parks and gardens, urban nature areas, street tree and square plantations, botanical gardens and cemeteries.

SNOW LEOPARD

- India's first snow leopard conservation centre will be established in Uttarakhand.
- The conservation centre will be built by the Uttarakhand forest department along United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Uttarkashi forests as part of its six-year long project, SECURE Himalayas.

About Snow Leopard

- It is a Schedule I animal under Wildlife Protection Act of India.
- It is listed as "Vulnerable" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.
- They are listed under Appendix I of CITES.
- The animal faces many threats to its existence due to poaching and habitat destruction.
- In India, it inhabits the Himalayas at elevations ranging from 3,000 to 4,500 metres across Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh.

- Snow leopards are found in 12 countries—including China, Bhutan, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Russia, and Mongolia.

VI. SOCIAL ISSUES

NATIONAL DIGITAL HEALTH MISSION (NDHM)

- Recently, the National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) was launched by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW), in a pilot mode in six Union territories.
- NDHM is a voluntary healthcare programme that aims to reduce the gap among stakeholders such as doctors, hospitals, citizens etc by connecting them in an integrated digital health infrastructure.

Features of NDHM

- o Building blocks or digital systems:
- ✓ **HealthID** - a repository of all health-related information of a person, such as medical tests, previous prescriptions, diagnosis, treatments etc. It can be created voluntarily by every Indian citizen.
- ✓ **DigiDoctor** – a single, updated repository of all doctors enrolled in nation with relevant details such as name, qualifications, specializations, registration number, years of experience, etc
- ✓ **Health Facility Registry** (HFR) - a single repository of all the health facilities (both public and private) in the country.
- ✓ **Personal Health Records** (PHR) - an electronic record of health-related information on an individual that can be drawn from multiple sources while being managed, shared, and controlled by the individual.
- ✓ **Electronic Medical Records** (EMR) - a digital version of a patient's chart which contains the patient's medical and treatment history from a single health facility.
- ✓ **Consent Manager and Gateway** - The exchange of health information is enabled by the consent manager and gateway where Health records can only be issued / viewed with patient consent.

- o **National Health Authority**, attached office of MoHFW, will design, build, roll-out and implement the NDHM.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR TRANSGENDER PERSONS

- The Centre has recently constituted the National Council for Transgender Persons under **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019**.

About the council

- o It will be headed by the Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment (ex-officio) and Union Minister of State for Social Justice & Empowerment will be Vice-Chairperson (ex-officio).
- o The council will have joint secretary-level members from the Ministries of Health, Home, Minority Affairs, Education, Rural Development, Labour And Law. In addition, there will be a member from the department of pensions, NITI Aayog, National Human Rights Commission and National Commission for Women.
- o Representatives from five states or Union Territories, on a rotational basis, will be members of the commission. The first such clutch comprises Jammu and Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Tripura and Gujarat.
- o Five representatives from the transgender community and five experts, from non-governmental organisations.
- o The members of the council other than the ex officio members, shall hold office for a term of three years.

Other provisions to protect the community:

- Constitutional Safeguards under Articles 14, 15, 19 and 21 ensures right to equality, and prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, caste, religion or place of birth.
- The **Supreme Court Judgments** on Transgender Rights:
 - o The **Supreme Court in NALSA Judgement, 2014** recognized the third gender along with the male and female. It also
 - ✓ acknowledged right to choose one's gender identity under article 21 of the Constitution.
 - ✓ directed the state to provide reservations for them in public education and employment.

- ✓ directed the state to make special provisions regarding HIV sero-surveillance for transgender persons and provide appropriate health facilities
- ✓ directed the state to frame social welfare schemes for their all-round development
 - In 2018, SC decriminalised homosexuality by partially striking down the colonial era provisions of **Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC)**.

About Transgenders

- As per the Act, a transgender is a person, whose gender does not match the gender assigned to that person at birth and includes trans-men or trans-women, persons with intersex variations, gender-queers, and persons having sociocultural identities such as kinnar, hijras, aravani, and jogta.
 - o Intersex variations is defined to mean a person who at birth shows variation in his or her primary sexual characteristics, external genitalia, chromosomes, or hormones from the normative standard of male or female body.
- As per the Census of 2011, Transgender population in India is **4.9 lakh**.
- The highest proportion (about 28%), has been identified in Uttar Pradesh followed by Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal.

TRIBAL HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Union Tribal Affairs Ministry e-launched a Tribal Health & Nutrition Portal called “Swasthya”.

- It is e-portal on tribal health and nutrition which will be providing all health and nutrition related information of the tribal population of India in a single platform.
 - o It will curate innovative practices, research briefs etc. collected from different parts of India to facilitate the exchange of evidence, expertise and experiences.

Status of tribal population in India

- According to 2011 census, the tribal population in India is over 104 million which is spread across 705 tribes and accounts for 8.6% of country’s population.
 - o More than 90% of tribal people live in rural areas.

- M.P. has highest tribal population followed by Maharashtra, Odisha and Rajasthan.
- The socio-economic condition of tribals:
 - o **Livelihood status** - 40.6% of tribals live below poverty line vis-a-vis 20.5% non tribals.
 - o **Lack of Basic amenities**- The 2011 census data shows that access to tap water, sanitation facilities, drainage facilities and clean cooking fuel is much lower among the tribal population.
 - o **Education gap**-There is also a stark gap in educational status as 41% of STs are illiterate.
 - o **Sex ratio** among tribals is 990/1000 as compared to national average of 933/1000.

VII. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

DNA TECHNOLOGY (USE AND APPLICATION) REGULATION BILL, 2019

- Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology has expressed concerns over some of the provisions of The DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2019.

Key provisions of the Bill

- It provides for the regulation of use of DNA technology for establishing the identity of certain persons.
- DNA testing is allowed only in respect of matters listed in the Schedule to the Bill, like:
 - o matters of offences under Indian Penal Code,
 - o civil matters such as paternity suits and
 - o for establishment of individual identity.
- Consent provisions for collection of DNA:
 - o For arrested persons, authorities are required to obtain written consent if the offence carries a punishment of up to seven years.

- o If the offence carries more than seven years of imprisonment or death, consent is not required.
- o If the person is a victim/relative of a missing person/minor/disabled person, the authorities are required to obtain the written consent of such person.
- o If consent is not given in these cases, the authorities can approach a Magistrate who may order the taking of bodily substances of such persons.
- Establishment of a National DNA Data Bank and Regional DNA Data Banks.
- o DNA laboratories are required to share data prepared by them with the National and Regional DNA Data Banks.
- Bill provides for removal of the DNA profiles of the following persons:
 - o A suspect if a police report is filed or court order given.
 - o An undertrial if a court order is given.
 - o on written request, for persons who are not a suspect, offender or undertrial.

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS

KAVKAZ 2020

- India has withdrawn from Kavkaz multi-nation military exercise in Russia citing logistics difficulties due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- Kavkaz is the Russian strategic command and staff exercise. Some 20 countries are participating in this exercise including China, Pakistan.

ONE SUN, ONE WORLD, ONE GRID (OSOWOG) INITIATIVE

- OSOWOG aims to connect **140 countries** through a common grid that will be used to transfer solar power.
 - o Idea was first presented in 2018 during the first assembly of **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**.
- The underlying logic is that a grid spread across multiple time zones could balance intermittent renewables with other renewables.

- OSOWOG is divided into 3 phases:
 - o **Phase 1:** Indian Grid interconnection with Middle East, South Asia and South East Asian (MESASEA) grids.
 - o **Phase 2:** MESASEA grid interconnection with African power pools and other countries located in solar and renewable energy rich areas.
 - o **Phase 3:** Global inter-connection.

HARIT PATH

- It is a mobile app that will facilitate creation of Green Highways across the country.
- o It will monitor location, growth, maintenance activities, targets etcof every plant under all Highway plantation projects.
- It is developed by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) under Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
- Recently, NHAI had also rundertaken a nation-wide plantation drive, Harit Bharat Sankalp, under which it planted over 25 lakh plants in 25 days along the stretches of National Highways.

MOUNT SINABUNG VOLCANO

- Mount Sinabung volcano in Indonesia erupted in August, 2020 spouting ash at least 5,000 metres high into the sky.
- Mount Sinabung is an active stratovolcano on **Indonesia's Sumatra island**.
- It erupted in 2010 after a 400-year-long break and has been continuously active since 2013.
- It is prone to seismic upheaval due to its location on the **Pacific's Ring of Fire or the Circum-Pacific Belt**, which is an area along the Pacific Ocean characterised by active volcanoes and frequent earthquakes.
- **Stratovolcano** is a tall, conical volcano composed of one layer of hardened lava and volcanic ash.
- These volcanoes are characterized by a steep profile and periodic, explosive eruptions.

- The lava that flows from them is highly viscous, and cools and hardens before spreading very far.

MAURITIUS STRUGGLES TO CONTAIN OIL SPILL

- Mauritius has declared a state of environmental emergency after a grounded ship off its coast is said to be leaking tonnes of crude oil.
 - o Oil is one of the most abundant pollutants in the oceans. About 3 million metric tons of oil contaminates the oceans annually.
- Measures that can be taken
 - o Floating booms can be placed around the source of the spill or to reduce or prevent further spreading of oil.
 - o Use of various sorbents (e.g., straw, volcanic ash, and shavings of polyester-derived plastic) that absorb oil from the water.
 - o Skimmers or oil scoops can be deployed onto boats to remove the contaminants from the water surface.

INDIA'S FIRST INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S TRADE CENTRE

- It will be setup at Angamaly, Kerala in consonance with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
- It aims to accelerate women entrepreneurship and secure gender parity while providing women with a safe place to start new businesses, and get their products marketed globally.

WORLD'S 'FIRST' COVID-19 VACCINE OUT IN RUSSIA

- Russian COVID-19 vaccine, dubbed Sputnik V, has been developed by the Gamaleya institute along with the Russian Direct Investment Fund.
 - o The vaccine has been named after Sputnik-1, first artificial Earth satellite launched by Soviet Union (1957).

- World Health Organization has not approved of the vaccine yet and still terms it as a vaccine 'candidate' and not a 'vaccine'.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION CERTIFIES AFRICAN REGION FREE OF WILD POLIO

- For certification, all countries in WHO Region need to have no case of wild polio for 3 consecutive years. No single country can be certified as poliofree.
 - o Now, five of six WHO regions, except **Eastern Mediterranean** which includes **Afghanistan and Pakistan**, are certified free of wild poliovirus.
 - o In 2014, India is in South-East Asia Region of WHO
- **Poliomyelitis** (polio) is a highly infectious disease that invades nervous system. There are 3 types of wild polio virus – **type 1, type 2, and type 3**. Only type 1 wild poliovirus remains in circulation.
- Two types of **vaccinations** against poliovirus:
 - o **Inactivated polio vaccine** is made up of inactivated (killed) polio virus and will provide immunity from all strains of polio.
 - o **Oral polio vaccine** contains a live, attenuated (weakened) vaccine-virus. When a child is vaccinated, the weakened vaccine-virus replicates, triggering a protective immune response.
- ✓ However, in some cases, vaccine-virus is genetically altered during replication. This is called a **vaccine-derived poliovirus** (VDPV).
- Diseases eradicated from India: **Yaws, Polio, Guinea worm, smallpox, Maternal and neonatal tetanus.**

NUAKHAI JUHAR

- It is an agricultural festival to welcome the new crop of the season.
- It is also called NuakhaiParab or NuakahiBhetghat and is celebrated in Odisha, Chhattisgarh and areas of neighbouring states.
- Nuakhai is a combination of two words signifies eating of new rice as 'nua' means new and 'khai' means eat.

WARLI PAINTINGS

- It expresses daily and social events of Warli tribe of Maharashtra. These paintings do not depict mythological characters or images of deities, but depict social life.
- Images of human beings and animals, along with scenes from daily life are created in a loose rhythmic pattern.
 - o Paintings depict scenes of human figures engaged in activities like hunting, dancing, sowing and harvesting.
 - o In Warli paintings a series of dots and dashes make one line.
- Women are mainly engaged in the creation of these paintings.

