

THE CLATPOST: PRINT

Part of the Most Awesome and Consistently Successful Study Material and Test Series Module, spanning across both Physical and Online Programs in the entire Country. While most of the world fumbled and faltered, 2020 has been another inspiring Success story both for us and those who chose to trust us. As a result LE was able to engineer Clean-Sweep-Landslide figures of a handsome 35 Selections under 100 ranks, and a whopping 180 selections under 500 ranks in CLAT 2020. With AILET being no different, a total of 30 LETians found their way into NLUD in 2020. Read on!

DECEMBER 2020



CURRENT AFFAIRS PRACTICE SHEETS (CAPS)

(Passage Q.1-Q.5): The letter, dated 11 December, reads, “We are shocked that such a draconian legislation is being introduced in the name of curbing the widespread violence against women and girls. Some of the provisions are not only anti-women, but negate the very offence of rape. The effect of this Bill will completely deny women any hope of justice.”

The signatories to the letter have especially raised concerns about the alleged “presumption of consent” in offences of rape, death penalty for those accused of rape and penetrative sexual assault against children as well as the provisions enabling action against supposedly false cases.

The Shakti bill proposes to amend the definition of rape to state that valid consent will be presumed if the two parties are adults and their conduct or circumstances suggest that there was consent or implied consent.

The letter criticised the government for feeding into the patriarchal construction of consent and conduct of women.

“In a lot of cases of rape, the accused take the plea of consent [and] with such an explanation added it will become impossible for the prosecution to establish rape. Such an explanation negates and nullifies the very offence of rape,” the letter noted.

1. The activists also said that the death penalty for such offences will be counter-productive since it is the certainty of investigation, trial and punishment rather than its severity that act as deterrents.

They added that the death penalty reduces conviction rates and rates of reporting, poses a danger of life to rape survivors and also causes mental trauma since sexual offences against children are often committed by persons known to the survivors.

The signatories noted that the inclusion of punishment for allegedly false cases also “perpetuates the patriarchal notions of viewing women with suspicion as unworthy of being believed and likely to incriminate men in false cases for unscrupulous purposes”.

Source: <https://theprint.in/theprint-essential/the-maharashtra-shakti-bill-on-crimes-against-women-children-why-its-called-draconian/567660/> (dated 17th December 2020.)

1. The contentious Shakti bill, which is being referred to in the above paragraph has been proposed by which state?
 - (a) Maharashtra
 - (b) Gujarat
 - (c) Goa
 - (d) Madhya Pradesh

2. What is the name of the Act that the Shakti bill has been modeled on?
 - (a) Nirbhaya act
 - (b) Varsha Act
 - (c) Disha Act
 - (d) Lakshmi Act
3. What State has passed the Act mentioned in the above question?
 - (a) Karnataka
 - (b) Tamil Nadu
 - (c) Kerala
 - (d) Andhra Pradesh
4. In the Shakti Bill, what is the proposed timeline for completion of investigation?
 - (a) 15 days
 - (b) 20 days
 - (c) 25 days
 - (d) 30 days
5. The Shakti bill seeks to amend certain provisions regarding sexual offences against children. What Act talks about sexual offences against children in India?
 - (a) Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocso) Act.
 - (b) Protection of Minors (Amendment Act) 2012
 - (c) The Offences Against Minor Act 2011
 - (d) The Sexual Offences Against Children Act 2015

(Passage Q.6-Q.10): UN chief Antonio Guterres on Saturday urged world leaders to declare a “state of climate emergency” and shape greener growth after the coronavirus pandemic, as he opened a summit marking five years since the landmark Paris Agreement.

The Climate Ambition Summit, being held online, comes as the United Nations warns current commitments to tackle rises in global temperatures are inadequate.

The commitments made in Paris in 2015 were “far from enough” to limit temperature rises to 1.5 degrees Celsius, the UN secretary-general said in his opening address to the summit, which is co-hosted by X and Y.

“If we don’t change course, we may be headed for a catastrophic temperature rise of more than 3.0 degrees this century,” he sai(d)

“That is why today, I call on all leaders worldwide to declare a State of Climate Emergency in their countries until carbon neutrality is reached,” he added, arguing the recovery from COVID-19 presented a rare opportunity to recalibrate growth.

Source: An excerpt from the Hindu, dates December 12 2020

6. Which two countries will replace X and Y in the above paragraph?
 - (a) France, U.S.
 - (b) U.K., U.S.
 - (c) India, France
 - (d) France, U.K.
7. The Paris Agreement referred to in the above paragraph was signed to tackle what issue?
 - (a) Climate change
 - (b) Sustainable use of natural resources
 - (c) Biodiversity
 - (d) Biological resources
8. The Paris agreement aimed at limiting the global warming to what levels?
 - (a) 1.5 degrees Celsius
 - (b) 2.5 degrees Celsius
 - (c) 3.5 degrees Celsius
 - (d) 4.5 degrees Celsius
9. This summit is a predecessor to 26th Conference of Parties scheduled to be held at which city in 2021?
 - (a) Manchester
 - (b) Bristol

- (c) Edinburgh
 - (d) Glasgow
10. The Paris Agreement was formally entered into force on 4 November 2016 and has been signed by 195 parties. Out of 195, how many parties have ratified the agreement?
- (a) 185
 - (b) 188
 - (c) 189
 - (d) 190

(Passage Q.11-Q.15): The ninth edition of Sustainable Mountain Development Summit commenced in virtual mode on the occasion of International Mountain Day on Friday.

Organised by X, the four-day-long summit seeks to deliberate on issues such as migration, water security, climate resilience and innovative solutions for the farm sector, and disaster risk reduction in the Indian Himalayas.

Speaking at the summit, Meghalaya chief minister Conrad K Sangma raised concerns on the effects of Covid-19 on the people and the economy of the Himalayas. He also said that a majority of the Himalayan region was covered with forests and that the governments and communities must work towards conserving the rich natural resources of the region.

In his address, Uttarakhand chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat emphasised upon the need for such summits and the importance of bringing together all stakeholders of the mountain community to push forward the mountain agenda in the bigger national and international forums. "There is a need for a 'Himalayan Vision' to integrate policies, places, products and personalities in making a road map for the sustainable development of the Indian Himalayan region," Rawat said. He also urged people from the Himalayan region to become drivers of economic activities and to create spaces for Himalayan brands and products in the international markets.

Source: excerpt from an article written by Anmol Jain, [https://timesofindia\(a\)indiatimes.com/topic/Sustainable](https://timesofindia(a)indiatimes.com/topic/Sustainable) (dated 12th December 2020)

11. What should replace X in the above paragraph?
- (a) Indian Mountain Initiative
 - (b) Indian Committee on Mountains
 - (c) Himalayan Mountain Range Committee
 - (d) The committee for protection of Himalayan Glaciers
12. Where was the summit held this year?
- (a) Tosh, Himachal Pradesh
 - (b) Dehradun, Uttarakhand
 - (c) Manali, Himachal Pradesh
 - (d) Rishikesh, Uttarakhand
13. Where was the first edition of this summit held in 2011?
- (a) Shillong
 - (b) Imphal
 - (c) Agartala
 - (d) Nainital
14. What was the theme for the summit this year?
- (a) Curbing the effects of climate change on glaciers
 - (b) Emerging Pathways for Building Resilient Post COVID-19 Mountain Economy, Adoption, Innovation and Acceleration.
 - (c) Protecting our mountains and the mountain ecosystem
 - (d) Preserving the flora and fauna of the northern Indian region
15. The summit aimed to deliberate on issues such as water security, migration, climate resilience and innovative solutions for disaster risk reduction and farm sector in the Indian Himalayas. Which of the following is not true about Himalayas?
- (a) The Himalayas stretch across the northeastern portion of India
 - (b) The Himalayas are the largest deposit of ice and snow in the world
 - (c) The Himalayas are the result of tectonic plate motions that collided India into Tibet.
 - (d) The Himalayas cover approximately 75% of Nepal.

(Passage Q.16-Q.20): Genova was one of the three firms that the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, interacted with for an update on the development of their Covid-19 vaccines.

Biotherapeutics company Genova Biopharmaceuticals has got approval from the Drugs Controller General of India for conducting Phase I and II human trials for its novel mRNA-based Covid-19 vaccine, HGCO19. This is the first mRNA-based vaccine manufacturing platform in India.

Genova is a subsidiary of [X]-based pharma firm [Y] Pharmaceuticals. Namita Thappar, ED, [Y], tweeted on Thursday that Genova had got conditional approval for human clinical trials of its Covid-19 vaccine.

This will also be the first mRNA-based Covid-19 trial in India and expected to be completed by March. The Genova vaccine was developed in collaboration with [Z], Seattle, US, and it has demonstrated safety, immunogenicity, neutralization antibody activity in the rodent and non-human primate models. They will be administering the first human injection after all regulatory clearance.

Source: an excerpt from Financial Express, written by FE Bureau (dated 11th December 2020)

16. What should replace [X]?
 - (a) Bhopal
 - (b) Bangalore
 - (c) Pune
 - (d) Chennai

17. What should replace [Y] in the above paragraph?
 - (a) Emcure Pharmaceuticals
 - (b) Cipla Pharma
 - (c) Ranbaxy Laboratories
 - (d) Hind Pharma

18. What should replace [Z] in the above mentioned paragraph?
 - (a) X-Gen Pharma
 - (b) HDT Biotech Corporation
 - (c) Biochem & Co.
 - (d) ZY-Lo Pharmaceuticals

19. What does 'm' in m-RNA stand for?
 - (a) Messenger RNA
 - (b) Molecular RNA
 - (c) Multilateral RNA
 - (d) Magnitudinous RNA

20. At what temperature is the vaccine most stable?
 - (a) 2-8 degrees Celsius
 - (b) 10-15 degree Celsius
 - (c) 17-23 degree Celsius
 - (d) 25-32 degree Celsius

(Passage Q.21-Q.25): The World Health Organization (WHO) has praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Fitness Ka Dose Aadha Ghanta Roz' programme, which calls upon all Indians to devote at least half-an-hour on their fitness for a better living.

In a tweet, the WHO wrote, "WHO applauds India's initiative on promoting physical activity through its campaign Fitness Ka Dose Aadha Ghanta Roz." The campaign launched as part of the nation-wide Fit India Movement by Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju on December 1, has gained the support of celebrities from different fields -- Bollywood, sportspersons, writers, doctors, fitness influencers, among others, who have enthusiastically urged Indians to follow the basic mantra of 30 minutes of fitness every day.

World champion and Olympic medallist shuttler PV Sindhu tweeted: "Fitness is a huge part of my life and this is the chance for everyone to come together and unite for this great movement!"

Shooter Apurvi Chandela also supported Sindhu's view and tweeted: "Do something today, that your future self will thank you for!! A minimum of 30 minutes of daily exercise can bring about many positive changes in your body, mind and soul. #NewIndiaFitIndia #FitIndiaMovement."

They were also joined in their call by two-time Olympic bronze medallist wrestler Sushil Kumar, Olympic bronze medallist shooter Gagan Narang, former India cricketer Suresh Raina, paralympic silver medallist Deepa Malik, sprinter Hima Das, Commonwealth Games gold medallist paddler Manika Batra among others.

Source: excerpt from the Deccan Herald, written by PTI, New Delhi (dated 10th December 2020)

21. The 'Fitness Ka Dose Aadha Ghanta Roz' programme is a part of the Fit India movement. This movement was launched in which year?
- (a) 2016
 - (b) 2017
 - (c) 2019
 - (d) 2020
22. The Fit India Movement was launched on the occasion of National Sports day. When is it held?
- (a) 27th August
 - (b) 28th August
 - (c) 29th August
 - (d) 30th August
23. National sports day is celebrated every year to honor Major Dhyan Chand Singh. Which sport is he associated with?
- (a) Cricket
 - (b) Golf
 - (c) Kabaddi
 - (d) Hockey
24. Where is the National Sports day organised every year?
- (a) Rashtrapati Bhawan
 - (b) Jantar Mantar
 - (c) Old Secretariat
 - (d) Saffron Travels.
25. Where was the Fit India movement launched?
- (a) Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium
 - (b) Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium
 - (c) Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium
 - (d) Indra Gandhi Stadium

(Passage Q.26-Q.30): Human Rights Day is observed each year on December 10 since the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December [X], the first global document which outlined human rights. The Declaration established a set of common basic values both with regard to the view of human beings and to the relationship between the state and the individual. It also set standards for human rights, which take precedence over political, economic, cultural and religious differences.

Human rights are rights that states, through international agreements, must guarantee individual people. These rights serve to limit the state's power over the individual.

The theme of Human Rights Day 2020 is to "[Y]". This chosen theme is in sync with the Covid pandemic(c) It focuses on creating equal opportunities for everyone and addressing the failures and disappointments we all were exposed to due to Covid -19.

The agenda is to use the day as an opportunity to reaffirm the importance of human rights so as to be able to rebuild the world that we seek, for achieving global solidarity, thus advocating shared humanity across communities.

The UN website lists the measures that should be kept in mind while bridging the gaps in human right protection which have been exposed and further fuelled by the Covid-19 pandemic(c) These include: ending discrimination of any kind, addressing inequalities, encouraging participation and solidarity and promoting sustainable development

Source: Hindustantimes.com (dated, 10th December 2020)

26. What should replace [X]?
- (a) 1948
 - (b) 1949
 - (c) 1951
 - (d) 1953
27. What should replace [Y]
- (a) Battle against Covid-19
 - (b) Recover Better-Stand Up for Human Rights
 - (c) Human rights during the pandemic
 - (d) Human rights: the necessity of the pandemic times

28. Which of the following can be assumed to be true after reading the above mentioned passage?
- (a) Human rights are granted by States because of international agreements they are parties to.
 - (b) Human rights are a set of rules aimed specifically to eradicate racial discrimination
 - (c) Human rights are targeted to ascertain rights only during a pandemic
 - (d) Human rights are not enforceable by the U.N.
29. Which body of the United Nations protects and promotes human rights?
- (a) UNICEF
 - (b) UN Human Rights Council
 - (c) UN Declaration of Human Rights Committee
 - (d) UN Committee on Rights pertaining to Humans
30. Who is the current Secretary general of the UN?
- (a) António Guterres
 - (b) Jigme Khesar
 - (c) Luis Arce
 - (d) Hu Jintao

(Passage Q.31-Q.35): Every year, December 9 is celebrated as the International Anti-Corruption Day. The day emphasizes the need for the eradication of corruption and intends to create awareness on the ways through which it can be reduced.

The General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the convention against corruption on October 31, 2003. Following this, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) was designated as the secretariat for the Convention's Conference of States Parties.

In December 2005, the General Assembly designated the day as Anti-Corruption Day. The day advocates against corruption, a problem that runs rampant across the world.

As per the UN, USD 1 trillion is being paid as bribes while USD 2.6 trillion are stolen due to corruptive measures. As per the UN Development Programme, 10 times of funds lost to the issue of corruption in developing countries could be used for the purpose of development. A corruption-free society is a society that promises development and prosperity.

Source: Mirror New Digital, dated 9th December 2020

31. What is the theme for Anti-corruption day 2020?
- (a) Recover with Integrity
 - (b) Putting an end to corruption, one rupee at a time
 - (c) Making the world a corruption free place
 - (d) Corruption and Covid-19
32. What is India ranked in the corruptions perception index of 2019?
- (a) 79
 - (b) 80
 - (c) 81
 - (d) 82
33. Which organization launches the Corruptions Perceptions Index?
- (a) Amnesty international
 - (b) Greenpeace International
 - (c) Redcross international
 - (d) Transparency international
34. Where is the organization that launches the Corruptions Perceptions Index based?
- (a) Beijing, China
 - (b) Glasgow, Scotland
 - (c) Berlin, Germany
 - (d) Geneva, Switzerland
35. What body celebrated Anti-corruption day this year?
- (a) Central Bureau of Investigation
 - (b) The Legislature
 - (c) Reserve Bank of India
 - (d) National Law Commission

(Passage Q.36-Q.40): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday told telecom industry leaders that all stakeholders need to work together to ensure timely roll-out of 5G technology as well as make India a global hub for telecom equipment, design, development and manufacturing.

“The future holds great potential with the rapid technology progress. We need to work together to ensure a timely rollout of 5G to leapfrog into the future and empower millions of Indians,” the Prime Minister said.

He added that India was also embarking on a plan to ensure that over the next three years every village would have high speed fibre-optic connectivity and that Andaman and Nicobar Islands had already been linked up with fibre optic cable.

Speaking at the inauguration of India Mobile Congress 2020, Mr. Modi also noted that due to technological upgradation, there was a culture of replacing handsets and gadgets frequently, and asked the industry to look at forming a task-force to think of better ways of handling the electronic waste.

Even as we experience the rapid speed at which connectivity is improving, we also know that the acceleration has just begun...it is important to think and plan how do we improve lives with the upcoming technology revolution. Better healthcare, better education, better information and opportunities for our farmers, better market access for small businesses are some of the goals we can work towards,” the Prime Minister said.

He added “we are in the era where mobile apps that are a few years old are surpassing the value of companies that have been present for decades, which is a good sign for young innovators in India”.

Source: An excerpt from the Hindu authored by Yuthika Bhargava (dated 8th December 2020)

36. On what dates was the congress in question held?
- (a) 1st – 3rd December 2020
 - (b) 3rd – 5th December 2020
 - (c) 5th – 7th December 2020
 - (d) 8th – 10th December 2020
37. Who organized the Congress?
- (a) Department of Science and technology
 - (b) Department of Telecommunications and Cellular Operators Association of India
 - (c) Department of Home
 - (d) Department of Biotechnology
38. What was the theme of the Indian Mobile Congress?
- (a) Inclusive Innovation-Smart, Secure, Sustainable
 - (b) Towards newer technology and a newer India
 - (c) Innovation for a better India
 - (d) India and Innovation
39. Which company was the first to manufacture 5G new radio in India?
- (a) Samsung
 - (b) Apple
 - (c) Nokia
 - (d) Sony
40. Which of the following was not a topic of focus in the congress session?
- (a) Artificial Intelligence
 - (b) Cyber Security
 - (c) Blockchain technology
 - (d) Impact of Technological advancement on environment

(Passage Q.41-Q.45): "Around 10 Akash missiles were fired by the Air Force during the Combined Guided Weapons Firing 2020 exercise to practice different engagement scenarios during conflicts to shoot down enemy planes. Most of the missiles scored a direct hit at the target," government sources told ANI here.

The IAF tested the Akash missiles and the Igla shoulder-fired air defence missiles during the exercise. Interestingly, both these systems are at present deployed along the LAC in Eastern Ladakh and other sectors for taking out any enemy aircraft trying to violate the Indian air space.

The Akash, sources said, is one of the most successful indigenous weapon systems and would be fulfilling the desire of the defence forces to fight wars with indigenous weapons.

The missile was recently upgraded and is being equipped with a seeker which will help it to take down targets with greater ease than before.

Source: an excerpt from Live Mint authored by Ajit K. Dubey (dated 4th December 2020)

41. What organization has developed the Akash missiles?
 - (a) Indian Air Force
 - (b) Defence Research and Development Organisation
 - (c) The Indian Space Research Organization
 - (d) Council of Scientific and Industrial Research
42. What type of missile is Akash?
 - (a) surface-to-air missile
 - (b) Air-to-air missile
 - (c) Surface-to-surface missile
 - (d) Cruise Missile
43. Who was the manufacturer of Akash missiles?
 - (a) Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL)
 - (b) Ordnance Factory Board (OFB)
 - (c) Mahindra Defence Systems (MDS)
 - (d) Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL)
44. 10 of these missiles were recently test fired by the Indian Air Force at which testfiring range?
 - (a) Suryalanka testfiring range, Andhra Pradesh
 - (b) Kalanga testfiring range, Chennai
 - (c) Wildlow testfiring range, Kolkata
 - (d) National testfiring range, Goa
45. When was the first test flight of Akash missile?
 - (a) 1990
 - (b) 1993
 - (c) 1994
 - (d) 1997

(Passage Q.46-Q.50): Speaking at the conference held at the UN House in Beirut were the Ambassador of the European Union to Lebanon, Ralph Tarraf, the UN Deputy Special Coordinator, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon, Najat Rochdi, and the Regional Director of the Middle East Department of the World Bank, Saroj Kumar Jh(a)

Rochdi said that “the 3RF is fundamentally for the people, it is about meeting their critical needs, safeguarding their basic rights, giving them a voice and a place in policy making”. That’s why it adopted a participatory and inclusive approach that involved all key stakeholder groups, including civil society, from planning through implementation, she adde(d) “The 3RF provides a vision for ‘Building Back Better’, a plan to prevent a full-scale humanitarian catastrophe.” Tarraf underscored that re-gaining the trust of the Lebanese people in state institutions is imperative for a successful recovery and reconstruction. To that end, the government needs to assume responsibility and urgently adopt credible structural reforms, he sai(d) “Lebanon needs a new governance model that ensures that state institutions serve people’s needs and addresses the multiple crises the country faces,” he adde(d)

The 3RF pursues two parallel tracks: (1) A socio-economic recovery track (“track 1”), that addresses the urgent needs of the most vulnerable populations and small businesses affected by the explosion; and (2) A reform and reconstruction track (“track 2”), focusing on critical reforms to address governance and recovery challenges in Lebanon, which are prerequisites for mobilizing international support for reconstruction beyond the recovery track.

“Channeling support directly to Lebanese people and businesses that have been impacted by the explosion is of utmost importance. To that effect, a Lebanon Financing Facility (LFF) will be set up to receive grant financing from donors for the implementation of the 3RF,” said Saroj Kumar Jh(a) “The LFF will focus on immediate recovery needs of poor and vulnerable households, support business recovery programs, promote inclusive ways of working with civil society and prepare the ground for reform and reconstruction. It will adopt flexible, non-governmental implementation modalities combined with strong fiduciary monitoring and independent oversight over the use of LFF funds,” he adde(d)

Source: an excerpt from orissadiary.com (dated 5th December 2020)

46. What does 3RF stand for?
 - (a) Restructuring, Reforming and Renovating Framework
 - (b) Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework
 - (c) Recovering, Recycling and Remunerating Framework
 - (d) Reform, Renovate and Recovery Framework

47. The 3RF was framed to mitigate losses occurred due to a blast in Beirut in August 2020. The blast was due to which gas?
- (a) ammonium nitrate
 - (b) acetylene
 - (c) methyl isocyanate
 - (d) butyl isocyanides
48. Which two parties along with the UN have launched the 3RF response plan?
- (a) The European Union(EU), Bank for International Settlements (BIS)
 - (b) World Bank (WB), Bank for International Settlements (BIS)
 - (c) European Central Bank (ECB), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
 - (d) The European Union(EU), World Bank Group(WBG)
49. What time frame has been prescribed for 3RF?
- (a) 16 months
 - (b) 18 months
 - (c) 21 months
 - (d) 24 months
50. Who was the Prime Minister of Lebanon who resigned because of the blast?
- (a) Hassan Diab
 - (b) Saad Hariri
 - (c) Lara Bashir
 - (d) Najib Mikati

(Passage Q.51-Q.55): Vice Admiral Anil Kumar Chawla, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command (SNC), said here on Wednesday that the country's first indigenous aircraft carrier -- INS Vikrant -- will be commissioned by early 2022. The sea trials are expected to begin in 2021. The Cochin Shipyard Limited and the Indian Navy had completed the Basin Trials of the aircraft carrier. Vice Admiral Chawla said, "Vikrant should commence the sea trials by the first half of next year. The machinery trials are just a small part of the trials of a ship. Its worthiness is dependent upon proving the flight operations on board the ship. A number of other formalities are also there before the ship will be commissioned," he told reporters.

The SNC chief also expressed preparedness in dealing with threats from adversaries amid the current tension between India and China. "We are concentrating on further building our strengths including force levels, operational capabilities, human resources and partnerships. The present situation has given us added impetus and I don't think they will create any mischief on the sea if we remain strong and prepared," Chawla said.

The vice admiral also stressed upon the growing importance of anti-submarine warfare in the Indian Navy, which is planning to acquire a submarine of the Scorpene class before the end of this month. The navy will also be procuring multi-role helicopters (MRH) from the United States to strengthen its anti-submarine warfare capabilities. "We have recently acquired a maritime reconnaissance and anti surveying warfare aircraft which has enhanced our capability for anti-submarine warfare to a great extent. Our ships are also equipped with sonars," he said.

The threat from sophisticated submarines has forced the Indian Navy to improve its own capabilities.

Source: An excerpt from the New Indian Express (dated 3rd December 2020)

51. What is another name of INS Vikrant?
- (a) Blue Star Aircraft
 - (b) Indigenous Aircraft Carrier One
 - (c) The Water craft-300
 - (d) Water Missile I
52. The motto of INS Vikrant is "Jayema Sam Yudhi Sprdhah". What does it mean?
- (a) I defeat those who fight against me
 - (b) I aim to protect, not fight
 - (c) In the water, I'm undefeated
 - (d) I win every battle that I fight
53. In India, who is the Supreme commander of the navy?
- (a) The Chief of Naval Staff
 - (b) The Prime Minister
 - (c) The President
 - (d) The Field Marshal

54. Who is the current Chief of Naval Staff?
- (a) Admiral Robin K. Dhowan
 - (b) Admiral Karambir Singh
 - (c) Admiral Sunil Lanba
 - (d) Admiral Sureesh Mehta
55. Which of the following statements are untrue about INS Vikrant?
- (a) The 260 meters long INS Vikrant would have two take-off runways and a landing strip with three arrester wires, capable of operating a CATOBAR (Catapult based Aircraft Launch Mechanism)
 - (b) Under PM Narendra Modi's flagship 'Make In India' or 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative, INS Vikrant will be India's largest indigenously-built naval ship.
 - (c) The basin trials of INS Vikrant, which is the testing of the machinery and equipment in floating conditions, were successfully carried out recently.
 - (d) The next in line to INS Vikrant is INS Vishal, which is also called Indigenous Aircraft Carrier Two.

(Passage Q.56-Q.60): National Pollution Control Day is observed on [X] to instill awareness among people about environmental pollution and its disastrous consequences.

The National Pollution Control Day is observed every year on this day in remembrance of those who lost their lives in the Bhopal Gas Tragedy when the deadly gas [Y] leaked out of the Union Carbide plant on the intervening night of December 2-3 in [Z]. The effects of that disaster are felt even now after more than 35 years.

The key objectives are to educate people about the importance of pollution control acts and making them aware about industrial disasters. The day aims to bring awareness to people about prevention of air, soil, noise, and water pollution. The National Health Portal of India data reveals that around 7 million people die every year due to air pollution.

The data also reveals that nine out of ten people globally do not have access to clean and safe air

Source: An excerpt from The Economic Times (dated 2nd December 2020)

56. What should replace [X]
- (a) December 2
 - (b) December 4
 - (c) December 5
 - (d) December 9
57. What should replace [Y]?
- (a) methyl isocyanate
 - (b) butyl isocyanide
 - (c) methyl isocyanide
 - (d) butyl isocyanate
58. What should replace [Z]?
- (a) 1983
 - (b) 1984
 - (c) 1985
 - (d) 1986
59. Who was the Chairman of the Union Carbide Lt(d) At the time of the tragedy?
- (a) Sam Walton
 - (b) Larry Ellison
 - (c) Jim (c) Walton
 - (d) Warren Anderson
60. Which of the following movies was made based on the Bhopal Gas tragedy?
- (a) Poison, poison all around
 - (b) Bhopal- the city of lakes turned green
 - (c) Bhopal: A prayer for rain
 - (d) Bhopal: 15 years since the big tragedy

(Passage Q.61-Q.65): Indian Navy Day is celebrated every year on [X] to commemorate the attack on the Karachi harbour during the India-Pakistan war in 1971. On this day, the Indian Navy's attack on Karachi harbour contributed to the ultimate victory of the Indian Armed Forces over Pakistan. The theme of Navy Day 2020 is "[Y]". "Covid-19 and Chinese attempts to change status quo along northern borders have posed new challenges. The Navy is ready to face both these challenges," [Z], the Navy chief said at a press conference on the eve of Navy Day.

Following Pakistani attack on Indian air bases on the evening of December 3, 1971, the 25th Missile Vessel Squadron was ordered to dispatch three missile boats - Nirghat, Veer and Nipat at maximum speed towards Karachi. Just before midnight of December 4, the Navy's missile boats carried out successful attacks resulting in sinking of Pakistani Destroyer Khaiber, Minesweeper Muhafiz and MV Venus Challenger as well as destruction of Kiamari oil fields. Karachi was attacked again on December 7 and 8 from the West. INS Vinash fired four missiles, which damaged MV Gulf Star, MV Harmatton and PN Tanker Dacc(a)

61. What should replace [X]?
 - (a) December 3
 - (b) December 4
 - (c) December 7
 - (d) December 8

62. What should replace [Y]?
 - (a) Indian Navy Combat Ready, Credible and Cohesive
 - (b) Indian Navy- Silent, Strong and Swift
 - (c) Indian Navy, Mission-deployed and Combat-ready
 - (d) Indian Navy, Going with the flow

63. What should replace [Z]?
 - (a) Admiral Robin K. Dhowan
 - (b) Admiral Karambir Singh
 - (c) Admiral Sunil Lanba
 - (d) Admiral Sureesh Mehta

64. Navy day is observed every year to commemorate the launch of which Operation against Pakistan during the 71' Indo-Pak War?
 - (a) Operation Trident
 - (b) Operation Python
 - (c) Operation Josh
 - (d) Operation Jung

65. The Indo-Pak war of 71 end on:
 - (a) 15 December 1971
 - (b) 16 December 1971
 - (c) 17 December 1971
 - (d) 18 December 1971

(Passage Q.66-Q.70): The Ministry of Defence has formally rejected an eleventh-hour plan to try and save Viraat, the former Indian Navy aircraft carrier, from being broken up for scrap by a shipbreaker in Gujarat.

NDTV has learnt that M/s Envitech Marine Consultants Private Limited, the company looking to acquire the warship, formerly the Indian Navy's flagship, will now file an appeal in the Supreme Court this coming week.

Envitech planned to convert Viraat into a maritime museum, parked off the coast of Goa in collaboration with the Government of Go(a)

In their response to a direction from the Bombay High Court to clarify their position, the Ministry has stated, "The request of the petitioner for grant of NOC (No Objection Certificate) to convert the status of Ex-Viraat cannot be acceded to."

The Ministry claims that the Shree Ram Group of Industries, the Alang-based shipbreakers which had bought the decommissioned warship from the Indian Navy for scrap, is opposed to its sale. "The Counsel appearing on behalf of Shree Ram Group of Industries before the Hon'ble High Court has categorically submitted before the Court that they are not interested in parting with the possession of the ship earmarked for dismantling."

Ironically, in a statement to NDTV in September, Mukesh Patel, the chairman and managing director of Gujarat-based Shree Ram Group repeatedly stated that he was willing to sell the warship to the highest bidder.

"Pay me ₹ 100 crore, and take away the ship," is what Mr Patel had stated at the time. "I brought down my price from ₹ 125 crore to 100 crore because I am a desh-bhakt," said Mr Patel. "I will transfer it to anyone who comes with a No Objection Certificate from the government and is willing to relocate the ship at their own expense."
Source: an excerpt from NDTV.com, written by Vishnu Som (dated 5th December 2020)

66. Which operations is INS Viraat known for?
(a) Operation Jupiter, Operation Parakram
(b) Operation Platinum, Operation Panther
(c) Operation Jaguar, Operation Jung
(d) Operation Wista, Operation North Star
67. When was INS Viraat decommissioned?
(a) 2015
(b) 2016
(c) 2017
(d) 2018
68. What was the name of INS Viraat when it was served the British Navy.
(a) HMS Hailey
(b) HMS Mary
(c) HMS Hermes
(d) HMS Guardian
69. When was INS Viraat commissioned in Indian Navy?
(a) 1985
(b) 1986
(c) 1987
(d) 1988
70. Which of the following statements are not correct about INS Virat?
(a) INS Viraat was the flagship of the Indian Navy before INS Vikramaditya was commissioned in 2013.
(b) INS Viraat served in Falkland wars.
(c) It is a Centaur class aircraft carrier of Indian Navy.
(d) INS Viraat served in the British Navy for 5 years before being commissioned in Indian Navy

(Passage Q.71-Q.75): Maharashtra Cyber wing, the nodal agency for the state's cyber security, has started an exercise named "Operation Blackface" to punish those involved in child pornography related activities. So far, it has received 1,680 complaints of child pornography from the state, and of them, in 30 cases the wing has registered first information reports (FIR), and in two cases, the accused were put behind bars. Of the 1,680 complaints (tiplines), almost 600 cases and about 35 per cent are reported from Mumbai.

Of the 25,000 cases across the country, 1,680 were from the state and the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) sent these cases to the Maharashtra Cyber wing for inquiry. According to the officer of the state's cyber wing, after verification, the cases have been sent to the concerned district commissionerates for registration of offences and further investigation.

Under "Operation Blackface", the cyber wing has identified regions from where child pornography related content has been transmitted in the last six months. Of the reported 1,680 cases, the locations of 30 places have been registered, which include Mumbai, Thane, Navi Mumbai area Pune, Nashik, Raigad, Kolhapur, Latur, Ahmednagar, Beed, Parbhani, Aurangabad, Bhandara, Nandurbar and Chandrapur.

Source: an excerpt from freepressjournal.in authored by Sachin Gaad, dated February 3 2020

71. In pursuance of operation Blackface, the cyber wing of Maharashtra Police has recently acquired a software from INTERPOL known as?
(a) Crawler
(b) Guardian
(c) Watcher
(d) Sleeper
72. What is the full form of INTERPOL?
(a) International Police
(b) International Tracking and Emergency Response Police

- (c) International Criminal Police Organization
 - (d) International Terrorism Police
73. Where are the headquarters of INTERPOL situated?
- (a) Geneva, Switzerland
 - (b) Lyon, France
 - (c) Glasgow, Scotland
 - (d) Saint Petersburg, Russia
74. A core unit of 12 officers has been formed to implement the mission involving the software. What is the unit called?
- (a) STAR
 - (b) TRACE
 - (c) HAWKS
 - (d) JAGUAR
75. Which of the following is untrue about POCSO, the key act on sexual offences against children?
- (a) The Act is gender neutral
 - (b) The Act defines a child as any person below eighteen years of age
 - (c) The Act came out in 2015 for the protection of minors from sexual offences
 - (d) The Act has been enacted to protect children from offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography and provide for establishment of Special Courts for trial of such offences and related matters and incidents

(Passage Q.76-Q.80): The Jal Jeevan Mission and the Department of Industry and Internal Trade Promotion have launched an innovation challenge to develop portable water testing equipment. The challenge is called [1].

The purpose of this challenge is to develop inexpensive and modular solutions for testing the quality of drinking water. The challenge also aims to test the drinking water quality easily and instantly. This innovation challenge is open to individuals, startups, MSMEs and corporates. Interested candidates can participate till 18 January.

It is proposed to make 3 types of devices under this challenge. The first instrument can test one or more parameters; The second instrument can check for the presence of dissolved solids, pH, bacterial contamination, alkalinity, and many other material contaminants. The third device can check for microbial contamination.

The results of this challenge will be announced on 1 April next year. All types of assistance will be provided to the chosen innovations.

So far, under Jal Jeevan Mission, more than 2.9 crore households have been provided tap water connections. The Jal Jeevan Mission is currently under implementation in partnership with the states. It aims to provide tap water connection on a regular long term basis.

It was launched in August 2019. The main objective of the mission is to provide water supply to all rural households by 2024.

76. Which of the following will replace [1] in the above passage?
- (a) New Innovation Challenge.
 - (b) The Jal Shakti Mission.
 - (c) The Water Innovation challenge.
 - (d) The New Water Plan.
77. India hold what percent of the world's freshwater resources?
- (a) 2
 - (b) 4
 - (c) 6
 - (d) 8
78. Who is the minister responsible for the ministry of Jal Shakti?
- (a) Gajendra Singh Shekhawat
 - (b) Rattan Lal Kataria
 - (c) Pralhad Joshi
 - (d) Kiran Rijju
79. Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade comes under which ministry?
- (a) Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
 - (b) Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

- (c) Ministry of Corporate affair.
- (d) Ministry of Finance.

80. According to the report of World Wide Fund for Nature, how many Indian cities face the risk of severe water crisis by 2050?
- (a) 20
 - (b) 25
 - (c) 30
 - (d) 35

(Passage Q.81-Q.85): The Human Freedom Index is published by the Cato Institute and [1]. It uses data from 2008 to 2018. According to the Index, there is decrease in personal freedom since 2008 globally. India ranked [2] in the Human Freedom Index, 2020. In 2019, India ranked 94th.

The Index uses 79 distinct indicators of personal and economic freedom. It covers size of the Government, rule of law, security and safety, civil society, size of government, property rights, expression, religion, freedom to trade internationally, et(c) The predecessor of Human Freedom Index was Index of Freedom in the World

The scores of India in the Human Freedom Index were as follows:

- India scored 6.30 out of 10 in Personal freedom.
- India scored 6.56 out of 10 in Economic Freedom.
- India scored 6.43 out of 10 in Human Freedom.

India ranked 142 in Press Freedom Index that was released in April 2020. According to Democracy Watchdog Freedom House Report, Internet Freedom in India declined for the third straight year in 2019-20.

81. Which of the following will replace [1] in the above passage?
- (a) Reporters without borders
 - (b) Fraser Institute
 - (c) Concern Worldwide
 - (d) Welthungerhilfe
82. Which of the following Country topped the list of Human Freedom Index?
- (a) Hong Kong
 - (b) Norway
 - (c) Switzerland
 - (d) New Zealand
83. Which of the following Country ranked last in the rankings?
- (a) Saudi Arabia
 - (b) Turkey
 - (c) Syria
 - (d) Iraq
84. Which of the following will replace [2] in the above passage?
- (a) 104
 - (b) 108
 - (c) 110
 - (d) 111
85. Cato Institute is a think-tank based in which of the following country?
- (a) USA
 - (b) UK
 - (c) New Zealand
 - (d) Norway

(Passage Q.86-Q.90): The Forest Minister of Madhya Pradesh recently launched the first hot air balloon safari of India in the [1] of India in MP. There are several hot air balloon rides in the country. However, this is the first hot air balloon safari.

The hot air balloon ride is to be restricted in the buffer are(a) The service is to be operated by a Jaipur based Sky Waltz company.

Tourists can watch tigers, Indian Sloth bear and leopards from a height during the ride. The service is to be introduced in other tiger reserves of the state.

The hot air balloons work on the principle “Hot air rises”. When the air inside the balloon is heated, it becomes lighter than the cooler air outside. This causes the balloon to float upwards. When the air is allowed to cool, the balloon begins to come down.

The hot air balloons do not have separate mechanism for steering or propulsion. The balloons use the speed of the wind to move.

86. How many tiger reserves are there in India?
(a) 59
(b) 47
(c) 43
(d) 38
87. Which of the following is known as the Tiger State of India?
(a) West Bengal
(b) Uttar Pradesh
(c) Karnataka
(d) Madhya Pradesh
88. Which of the following will replace [1] in the above passage?
(a) Kanha Tiger Reserve
(b) Panna Tiger Reserve
(c) Pench Tiger Reserve
(d) Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve
89. Who is the forest minister of Madhya Pradesh?
(a) Jagdish Devda
(b) Bhupendra Singh
(c) Kunwar Vijay Shah
(d) Sushri Meena Singh
90. When was project tiger launched in India?
(a) 1970
(b) 1971
(c) 1972
(d) 1973

(Passage Q.91-Q.95): The Supreme Court of Israel recently assembled to hear a special petition filed by Arab-Israeli citizens to scrap the Nation State Law. It is one of the [1] constitutional laws or basic laws of Israel. The law discriminates against the Arab minority in the country. According to the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 74.2% of population were declared Jewish, 17.8% were declared Muslim, 2% were declared Christian and 1.6% were declared Druze.

The law undermines peace process with Palestine. The Israel-Palestine conflict is an on-going conflict. It is rooted over land claimed by Jews as their biblical birth right. In 1897, Jews began a movement called the Zionist movement to escape the persecution and establish their own state. The [2] was created to advocate for the establishment of Jewish homeland in Palestine. This resulted in large number of Jews in Palestine and they began to buy lands and settle down. In 1916, Palestine came under British control. This led to the division of Ottoman Turkish empire. After Hitler gained power in Germany, thousands resettled in Palestine from Europe. Arabs saw this as a threat to their homeland and fought bitterly.

In 1947, the British Government referred the issue to UN to split the land between the two countries. With this, the Jewish people declared independence of Israel.

91. Which of the following is the capital of Israel?
(a) Palestine
(b) Jerusalem
(c) Tel Aviv
(d) Netanya
92. Which of the following is the state song of Israel as given in the State law?
(a) Hatikvah
(b) Hava Nagila

- (c) La Mantovana
 - (d) Jerusalem of Gold
93. The current Prime Minister of Israel is from which party?
- (a) Shas
 - (b) Likud
 - (c) United Torah Judaism
 - (d) Blue and White
94. Which one of the following will replace [1] in the above passage?
- (a) 10
 - (b) 12
 - (c) 14
 - (d) 15
95. Which of the following will replace [2] in the above passage?
- (a) World Zionist Organization
 - (b) Jewish Agency for Israel
 - (c) Keren Hayesod
 - (d) Nafesh B' Nafesh

(Passage Q.96-Q.100): Every year Good Governance Day is celebrated on [1] to commemorate the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister [2]. The Good Governance Day was established in 2014.

He was elected to the Indian Parliament more than ten times. This includes to both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabh(a) He served as the external affairs minister in the Prime Minister Moraji Desai cabinet.

[2] Government passed the Prevention of Terrorism Act following the Parliament attack. The act was passed by the Parliament of India in a joint session. It aimed to strengthen anti-terrorism activities in the country. The act replaced the Prevalence of Terrorism Ordinance of 2001 and the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act. There were huge concerns that the act could be misused as it provided huge powers to the government authorities in investigating a suspect.

During the tenure of [2], the major successful schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana and National Highways Development Project. Also, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan that aims to improve quality of education in primary and secondary schools were launched during his tenure.

96. Which of the following will replace [1] in the above passage?
- (a) 25th December
 - (b) 22nd November
 - (c) 28th December
 - (d) 5th January
97. How many times did [2] served as Prime Minister of India?
- (a) 1
 - (b) 2
 - (c) 3
 - (d) 4
98. When was Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan launched?
- (a) 1995-1996
 - (b) 2001-2002
 - (c) 2009-2010
 - (d) 194-1995
99. Which of the following will replace [2] in the above passage?
- (a) Manmohan Singh
 - (b) Atal Bihari Vajpayee
 - (c) Chandra Shekhar
 - (d) P.V. Narsimha Rao

100. Choose the correct
- I. Kargil was fought under [2] Prime Ministership.

- II. Pokhran II was conducted under [2] Prime Ministership.
- III. [2] has been a recipient of Bharat Ratn(a)
 - (a) Only I
 - (b) Both I and II
 - (c) Only II and III
 - (d) All of the above

(Passage Q.101-Q.105): The first Lithium refinery of India is to be set up in [1]. One of the largest power trading and renewable energy company, [2] is to invest Rs 1000 crores to set up the refinery. The lithium ore for the refinery is to be imported from Australi(a)

The Neometals (an Australian firm) and [2] have entered in to agreement to produce lithium in Indi(a) The future demand of Lithium in India is driven by the electrification of transport and storage of renewable energy. [2] is India's third largest power trading company.

Lithium is a rare element and is not found in Indi(a) India gained access to the Bolivian Lithium reserves very recently. India has set an ambitious goal of increasing the Electric Vehicle numbers to 30% by 2030. However, India is importing all the lithium required to make lithium-ion batteries.

India is currently dependent on China, Japan and Taiwan for its electrical batteries as lithium in India is highly expensive. China controls 51% of global lithium and 62% of cobalt. These two elements are the main components of lithium-ion batteries. Most of the lithium for the Chinese market comes from the South American Lithium Belt. This is a 500-mile by 200-mile north-south strip and is centred on the junction of Bolivia, Argentina and Chile. The belt holds more than 75% of world Lithium reserves

- 101. Which of the following will replace [1] in the above passage?
 - (a) Rajasthan
 - (b) Madhya Pradesh
 - (c) Maharashtra
 - (d) Gujarat
- 102. Which of the following countries is the largest lithium producer of the world?
 - (a) Australia
 - (b) Chile
 - (c) China
 - (d) Portugal
- 103. Which of the following will replace [2] in the above passage
 - (a) Manikaran Power Limited
 - (b) Tata Power Limited
 - (c) Reliance Power Limited
 - (d) Adani Power Limited
- 104. Recently India signed a deal for the supply of Lithium Carbonate with which of the following countries?
 - (a) Chile
 - (b) Bolivia
 - (c) Argentina
 - (d) Australia
- 105. Who has the charge for ministry of power?
 - (a) R.K. Singh
 - (b) Giriraj Singh
 - (c) Mahendra Nath Pandey
 - (d) Hardeep Singh Puri

(Passage Q.106-Q.110): Naegleria fowleri is a single celled amoeb(a) It is also called the [1]. The amoeba is now rapidly spreading in the US. The news comes after a mysterious disease was discovered in the [2] district of Andhra Pradesh.

As the name suggest, the amoeba has potential to damage the vital parts of the body, especially the human brain, and cause large scale inflammation.

The amoeba is usually found in warm fresh water. However, the climatic changes have helped the amoeba to spread even during winter. It multiplies rapidly at forty-six degree Celsius.

The amoeba is usually found in rivers, lakes and causes infection called Primary Amoebic Meningoencephalitis. It is also called PAM and can be fatal.

The infection is till rare. Around thirty-four cases have been detected so far in the last ten years according to Centre of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). As the amoeba easily transmits through water, it is now spreading through the acts of swimming and deep-water diving.

The symptoms of PAM start to occur after twenty-four hours the amoeba entered the human body. The most common early symptom of the infection is head ache. The other symptoms are vomiting, fever, nausea, seizures, dizziness, stiff neck, et(c) The amoeba enters the human body through nose. It reaches the brain from the nose, where it feeds on the brain tissues. The unique fact about the amoeba is that it does not cause harm to the human body if it enters through the mouth. Thus, a person does not get infected by PAM by drinking contaminated water.

The Amoeba enters the human body from inadequately chlorinated swimming pools, contaminated tap water.

106. Which of the following will replace [1] in the above passage?

- (a) Brain-killing Amoeba
- (b) Brain-seizing Amoeba
- (c) Brain-eating Amoeba
- (d) Brain-killing Amoeba

107. [1] was discovered for the first time in which year?

- (a) 2020
- (b) 2010
- (c) 1965
- (d) 1980

108. Where was the first species of [1] found?

- (a) USA
- (b) Australia
- (c) New Zealand
- (d) Switzerland

109. Which of the following will replace [2] in the above passage?

- (a) Eluru
- (b) Guntur
- (c) Nellore
- (d) Anantapur

110. Amoeba is

- (a) Eukaryotes
- (b) Prokaryotes
- (c) Viruses
- (d) None of the above

(Passage Q.111-Q.115): Indian Government's policy think tank, Niti Aayog recently launched India's own cloud storage and data management platform [1]. The announcement was made by Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant last week.

The service aims to offer both individuals and companies in India with a homegrown, aatmanirbhar cloud storage and file sharing and collaboration platform. All the data stored on the platform will be stored in India, unlike its foreign competitors.

- It provides 20 GB of free cloud storage and 100 GB free space per month. It charges only 30 rupees per month for such large storages. [1] is first in its kind under "Make in India, Store in India" policy of Indi(a) It is a Software as a Service product that is in line with the National security and data localisation priorities.
- It has a feature called "InstaShare". The feature allows users to share high resolution images, videos, large-size documents, PDFs. When the user deletes a data from the storage space, he can retrieve it for another sixty days. After sixty days, the data gets deleted permanently.

111. Which of the following will replace [1] in the above passage?

- (a) DigitalBoxx
- (b) DigiBoxx
- (c) Cloudtail
- (d) DigiCloud

112. Who is the vice chairman of NITI Aayog
- (a) Rajiv Kumar
 - (b) Arvind Panagariya
 - (c) V.K. Saraswat
 - (d) Home Minister is the ex-officio chairman of NITI Aayog
113. What kind of body is NITI Aayog?
- (a) Extra-constitutional
 - (b) Non-statutory
 - (c) Advisory
 - (d) All of the above
114. Which of the following statement is correct about the NITI Aayog?
- (a) NITI Aayog was Formed 25 January 2016
 - (b) NITI Aayog comes under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry
 - (c) The full form of NITI Aayog is National institute for Transforming India
 - (d) The NITI Aayog is a policy think tank of the Government of India
115. Which of the following statement is/are correct about the NITI Aayog?
- I. The aim of NITI Aayog is to achieve Sustainable Development Goals and to enhance cooperative federalism in the country.
 - II. The Prime Minister of India is the ex officio Chairperson of the NITI Aayog
 - III. There are 8 full time members in the NITI Aayog
- (a) Only II & III
 - (b) Only II
 - (c) Only I
 - (d) Only I & II

(Passage Q.116-Q.120): India recently added the Tso Kar Wetland Complex as its forty-second Ramsar site. This is the second Ramsar site in the [1].

The Tso Kar Basin is located in a high-altitude wetland complex. It consists of two main waterbodies Startsapuk Tso and Tso Kar. The Startsapuk Tso is a freshwater lake of 438 hectares to the south. The Tso Kar lake is a hypersaline lake of 1800 hectares.

Tso Kar Basin is an A1 Category Important Bird Area according to the Bird Life International. It is a key staging site in the Central Asian Flyway. Also, the site is the most important breeding areas of the Black necked Cranes in Indi(a) It is also called Tsho Kar lake. It is a fluctuating Salt Lake located in Rupushu plateau.

The Important Bird Area is an area identified internationally by a set of criteria for the conservation of bird population. It was developed by Bird Life International. There are 12,000 Important Bird Areas worldwide.

116. Which of the following will replace [1] in the above passage?
- (a) Ladakh
 - (b) Assam
 - (c) Manipur
 - (d) Uttar Pradesh
117. Which Indian State has the most number of Ramsar Sites?
- (a) Uttar Pradesh
 - (b) Bihar
 - (c) Assam
 - (d) Manipur
118. Which is the largest Ramsar Site in India?
- (a) Renuka Wetlands in Himachal Pradesh
 - (b) Chilika Lake in Orrisa
 - (c) Keoladeo National Park in Rajasthan
 - (d) Asan Conservation Reserve in Uttarakhand
119. Meteor lake and the Soor Sarovar, both are the latest addition to the list of Ramsar sites in Indi(a) Where are they located, respectively?
- (a) Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh

- (b) Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh
- (c) Uttar Pradesh and Orrisa
- (d) Manipur and Maharashtra

120. World Wetland day is celebrated on which day?

- (a) 15th October
- (b) 10th May
- (c) 2nd February
- (d) 18 November

(Passage Q.121-Q.125): The Assam Cabinet recently approved the bill to make [1] an official language of the state. The bill has been framed in accordance to the Bodo Peace Accord signed between the Government of India, Assam Government, four Bodo rebel groups and two Bodo organizations.

There is no National language in Indi(a) The article [2] says that the official language of Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari. Business in Indian Parliament shall be transacted only in Hindi or English. English is allowed to use for official purposes such as parliamentary proceedings, communication between Central Government and state government, Judiciary Communications in the country.

In addition to the official languages, constitution recognises 22 regional languages. This includes Hindi but not English. Therefore, in India English is neither an official language nor a scheduled language. It is simply a language for communication solving the official purposes.

121. Which of the following will replace [1] in the above passage?

- (a) Assamese
- (b) Bengali
- (c) Bodo
- (d) English

122. Who is the chief minister of Assam?

- (a) Pema Khandu
- (b) Sarbananda Sonowal
- (c) Himanta Biswa Sharma
- (d) Atul Bora

123. Which of the following will replace [2] in the above passage?

- (a) 340
- (b) 342
- (c) 343
- (d) 345

124. The first Bodo Accord was signed in which year?

- (a) 1978
- (b) 1993
- (c) 1998
- (d) 2003

125. Bodoland Territorial Council, which is an autonomous region in the state of Assam is governed under which schedule of the Constitution of India?

- (a) 5th Schedule
- (b) 6th Schedule
- (c) 7th Schedule
- (d) 8th Schedule

(Passage Q.126-Q.130): The Union Cabinet recently approved revised guidelines for Direct to Home (DTH) broadcasting services. The guidelines allow [1] Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in DTH. Also, it has increased the license period to twenty years. Earlier, it was ten years.

- The license fee has been revised to 8% from 10% of the Adjusted Gross Revenue.
- The broadcasting firms will have to pay the license fee in quarterly basis. The firms are now paying in annual basis.
- The guidelines also enable the DTH service providers to invest more coverage leading to increased operations and higher growth.

- Under the new guidelines, the Government of India has allowed the DTH operators to share the infrastructure. The service providers shall share common hardware for their Conditional Access System applications and Subscriber Management System. This will bring in more efficient use of scarce satellite resources. Ultimately, it will help to reduce the costs borne by the consumers.

Currently [2] satellites are in use to provide DTH services to India, which include NSS-6 operated by Dish TV, MEASAT-3 operated by Sun Direct, SES-7 operated by Airtel, AsiaSat 5, ST-2 operated by Dish TV, GSAT-10 operated by Tata Sky and GSAT-15 operated by Sun Direct.

126. Which of the following will replace [1] in the above passage?
- (a) 49%
 - (b) 51%
 - (c) 75%
 - (d) 100%
127. DTH services comes under which ministry?
- (a) Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
 - (b) Ministry of Electronic and Information Technology
 - (c) Ministry of Power
 - (d) Department of Communication
128. Which of the following countries has the largest DTH market in the world?
- (a) China
 - (b) India
 - (c) USA
 - (d) Brazil
129. Which of the following will replace [2] in the above passage?
- (a) 8
 - (b) 10
 - (c) 12
 - (d) 14
130. Which of the following is the largest DTH provider in India?
- (a) Dish TV
 - (b) Sun Direct
 - (c) Tata Sky
 - (d) Airtel Digital TV

(Passage Q.131-Q.135): Every year, the National Consumer Rights Day is celebrated on December 24 in India. (a) The World Consumer Rights Day is celebrated on [1].

The National Consumer Day is celebrated throughout India to protect the interests of the consumers.

The act recognises six rights of the consumers. They are Right of Choice, Right of Redressal, Right of Hearing, Right of Education, Right to Protection and Right of Information.

- The right to Protection is the right to be protected against marketing of goods and services that are hazardous to life and property.
- The Right to Information is being informed about quality, quantity, potency, purity, price of goods and standard.
- Right of Hearing is that the consumer should be heard and assured that consumer interests shall receive due consideration at appropriate terms.
- The Right of Redressal is seeking redressal against unfair trade practices and exploitation. According to the act, speedy and simple redressal to consumers is to be set up at district, state and central level.
- Right to Information is the right to learn about competitive prices of goods and services.

The Central Consumer Protection Authority was established under the Consumer Protection Act. It was established under Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

It has powers to withdraw services that are unsafe, dangerous and hazardous to consumer, pass an order to refund prices of goods or services and discontinuation of practices that are unfair.

131. Which of the following will replace [1] in the above passage?
- (a) December 31
 - (b) March 31
 - (c) March 15
 - (d) December 15

132. The implementation of Consumer Protecting Act is the responsibility of which of the following ministry?
(a) Ministry of Consumer Affair, Food and Public Distribution
(b) Ministry of Consumer Welfare
(c) Ministry of Consumer Welfare and Promotion of Trade
(d) None of the above
133. Which of the following is this year's National Consumer Rights day theme?
(a) New feature of Consumer Protection Act, 2019
(b) Making digital marketplaces fairer
(c) The sustainable consumer
(d) Building a Digital World Consumers can Trust
134. Consumer Protection Act is significant to
(a) Immovable Goods
(b) Movable Goods
(c) Particular Goods and Services
(d) All Goods and Services
135. In which year did the first consumer protection act came out?
(a) 1980
(b) 1986
(c) 1996
(d) 2006

(Passage Q.136-Q.140): The President of United States conferred the Legion of Merit to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Prime Minister has been awarded for his steadfast leadership and vision for India's emergence as a global power. The award was received by the Ambassador of India to the US [1] on behalf of the Prime Minister.

The Legion of Merit is a military award of the United States. It is given for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services and achievements, loyalty. It is issued to the eight uniformed services of the United States and also to the Heads of foreign Governments. It is one of the two United States military decorations that is issued as a neck let.

In 2020, the Legion of Merit was also awarded to the Prime Minister of Australia Scott Morrison, former Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe. In short it was awarded to the QUAD Architects

136. Which of the following will replace [1] in the above passage?
(a) Navtej Sarna
(b) Taranjit Singh Sandhu
(c) Harshvardhan Sringla
(d) Nirupama Rao
137. Legion of Merit is one of the two United States military decorations that is issued as a neck let. Which is the other one?
(a) The Bronze Star
(b) The Purple Heart
(c) The Medal of Honour
(d) The Service Cross
138. Which of the following US President instituted the Legion of Merit?
(a) Richard Nixon
(b) Franklin D Roosevelt
(c) Lyndon B Johnson
(d) John F Kennedy
139. Who initiated the QUAD?
(a) Dick Cheney
(b) Shinzo Abe
(c) Manmohan Singh
(d) John Howard

140. Which of the following Indian army general won the legion of merit?
- (a) Field Marshal Kodandera Madappa Cariappa
 - (b) Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw
 - (c) General Bikram Singh
 - (d) General Bipin Rawat Singh

(Passage Q.141-Q.145): National Farmers' Day, or Kisan Diwas, is celebrated across the country on [1] to honour India's farmers and mark the birth anniversary of the nation's fifth prime minister, Choudhary Charan Singh.

This year, Kisan Diwas is being observed amidst farmers' protests against the Centre's three contentious agricultural reform laws. Farmers believe the laws will promote private investment in the agriculture sector. Several also fear the deregulation will end up hurting small and poor farmers by weakening the government's Minimum Support Price (MSP) system.

Addressing a press conference last week, farmer leader Rakesh Tikait urged people to support farmers by not cooking lunch for a day on Kisan Diwas. On Monday, farmers observed a **day-long relay hunger strike** at protest sites in Delhi, including at the Singhu border.

Several farmers also reportedly visited 'Kisan Ghat', the memorial Charan Singh, to pay their respects on the occasion.

141. Which of the following will replace [1] in the above passage?
- (a) December 20
 - (b) December 21
 - (c) December 22
 - (d) December 23
142. Which of the following Prime Minister gave the call 'Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan'?
- (a) Lal Bhadur Shastri
 - (b) Charan Singh
 - (c) Narendra Modi
 - (d) Morarji Desai
143. When was the first national farmers day celebrated in India?
- (a) 2000
 - (b) 2001
 - (c) 2004
 - (d) 2008
144. Who is the Union minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare?
- (a) Narendra Singh Tomar
 - (b) Ram Kripal Yadav
 - (c) Ramdas Athawale
 - (d) Piyush Goyal
145. Charan Singh founded which of the following farmer organisation in 1978?
- (a) Kisan Sabha
 - (b) Kisan Trust
 - (c) Kisan Samaj
 - (d) Kisan united

(Passage Q.146-Q.150): The Government of India has recently introduced the [1] to promote green fuel such as ethanol. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways recently published a draft notification inviting comments from the public for adoption of E20 fuel. This is being done as Government of India is aspiring to take the ethanol economy to 2 lakh crores of rupees in next 5 years. At present the ethanol economy of India is at twenty-two thousand crores of rupees.

[1] means blending of 20% of Ethanol with gasoline. Currently the permissible level of blending is 10% of Ethanol in Indi(a) In 2019 in spite of the permissible level India reached only 5.6 % of blending.

Gol initiatives to promote Bio-fuels

- The National Biofuel Coordination Committee has allowed surplus rice that is available with the Food Corporation of India to be converted into ethanol. This shall be used to make alcohol based hand sanitizer and also in blending with the petrol.

- The EBP (Ethanol Blended Programme) programme was launched in 2003 to promote the blending of Ethanol in petrol. The program also aimed to address environmental concerns due to fossil fuel burning, reduce crude imports, provide remuneration to farmers and achieve Forex savings .
- In 2018, the National Policy on Biofuels was launched. It envisages that during an agriculture crop year, if the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare anticipates that there will be an oversupply of food grains, the policy will allow conversion of this surplus quantity into ethanol. However, in order to achieve this an approval from the National Biofuel Coordination Committee is required.

146. Which of the following will replace [1] in the above passage?

- (a) E20 Fuel
- (b) Eco20 Fuel
- (c) E-Fuel
- (d) E-Biofuel

147. Who is the minister responsible for the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways?

- (a) Mansukh Lal Mandaviya
- (b) Nitin Gadkari
- (c) Prakash Javadekar
- (d) Dharmendra Pradhan

148. National Biofuel Coordination Committee comes under which ministry?

- (a) Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
- (b) Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas
- (c) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
- (d) None of the above

149. Who is the minister responsible for the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas?

- (a) Nitin Gadkari
- (b) Dharmendra Pradhan
- (c) Prakash Javadekar
- (d) Piyush Goyal

150. Chemical Formula of ethanol is

- (a) C_2H_5OH
- (b) C_2H_6
- (c) C_3H_8
- (d) C_3H_6

ANSWER KEY & EXPLANATIONS
CURRENT AFFAIRS PRACTICE SHEETS (CAPS)

1. (a) The Maharashtra government has been positioning its 'Shakti bill' as a potential landmark legislation to curb sexual offences against women and children.
2. (c) The Maharashtra government has modelled its Shakti bill on the Disha Act passed by the Andhra Pradesh government last year. The Act was passed after the brutal gang rape and murder of a veterinarian in Hyderabad in 2019.
3. (d) The Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly Friday passed the Andhra Pradesh Disha Bill, 2019 (Andhra Pradesh Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2019). The bill provides for awarding death sentence for offences of rape and gangrape and expediting trials of such cases to within 21 days.
4. (a) In the bill, the time period for investigation into any crime against women and children has been reduced to 15 working days from the earlier two months. The trial will also take place within 30 days instead of two months. Moreover, the period within which one can appeal against a court order will be brought down to just 15 days from the current six months under the proposed law.
5. (a) The draft bill seeks to amend some vital sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocso) Act.
6. (d) Co-convened by the UK, France, and the United Nations, the Climate Ambition Summit that took place on Saturday Dec(c) 12, marked a key moment kicking off the next 10 years of climate action.
7. (a) The Paris Agreement is a **legally binding international treaty on climate change**. It was adopted by 196 Parties at Conference of Parties 21 in Paris, on 12 December 2015 and entered into force on 4 November 2016.
8. (a) The summit marked the 5-year anniversary of the Paris Climate Agreement, the groundbreaking international commitment to halting climate change and keeping global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius.
9. (d) The summit is positioned as a "sprint to Glasgow," where the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is scheduled to take place from 1–12 November 2021.
10. (c) The Paris Agreement formally entered into force on 4 November 2016. Other countries have continued to become parties to the Agreement as they complete their national approval procedures. To this date, 195 Parties have signed and 189 have ratified the Agreement.
11. (a) The summit was organised by Indian Mountain Initiative. The summit aimed to deliberate on issues such as water security, migration, climate resilience and innovative solutions for disaster risk reduction and farm sector in the Indian Himalayas
12. (b) The 9th edition of Sustainable Mountain Development Summit (SMDS) held in Dehradun, Uttarakhan(d)
13. (d) The first edition of the summit was launched in 2011 in Nainital.
14. (b) This year, the summit was held under the following theme: **Emerging Pathways for Building Resilient Post COVID-19 Mountain Economy, Adoption, Innovation and acceleration**.
The focus will be on the overall objective of taking measures to ensure robust and sustainable mountain economy for the post COVID-19 world and to combat climate change.
15. (b) The Himalayas are the third largest deposit of ice and snow in the world, after Antarctica and the Arcti(c)
16. (c) Gennova is a subsidiary of Pune-based pharma firm Emcure Pharmaceuticals
17. (a) Gennova is a subsidiary of Pune-based pharma firm Emcure Pharmaceuticals.
18. (b) Gennova vaccine was developed in collaboration with HDT Biotech Corporation, Seattle, US, and it has demonstrated safety, immunogenicity, neutralisation antibody activity in the rodent and non-human primate models.
19. (a) Biotherapeutics company Gennova Biopharmaceuticals has got approval from the Drugs Controller General of India for conducting Phase I and II human trials for its novel messenger RNA (mRNA)-based Covid-19 vaccine, HGCO19. This is the first mRNA-based vaccine manufacturing platform in Indi(a)
20. (a) The vaccine is stable at 2-8 degrees Celsius. The Vaccine is supported with seed grant under the Ind-CEPI mission.
21. (c) It was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the occasion of National Sports day in 2019.
22. (c) Every year the National Sports day is celebrated on 29th August to honour the hockey player Major Dhyhan Chand Singh.
23. (d) Major **Dhyhan Chand** (29 August 1905 – 3 December 1979) was an Indian field hockey player widely regarded as the greatest in the history of the sport.^[4] He was known for his extraordinary goal-scoring feats, in addition to earning three Olympic gold medals, in 1928, 1932 and 1936, during an era where India dominated field hockey
24. (a) National Sports Day is also celebrated extensively at the national level. It is **organized every year in the Rashtrapati Bhavan and the President of the country** gives National Sports Awards to the respective winners who have enhanced the value of the tricolor flag all over the worl(d)
25. (d) Every year National Sports Day (Khel Diwas) is celebrated on 29th August 2019. This event is in commemoration of the Birth anniversary of Hockey legend Major Dhyhan Chan(d) The prime objective of this day is to create awareness in the country about the significance of Sports and to adopt healthy habits in their daily lives. On this occasion, PM Narendra Modi launched a National wide Fit India Movement at Indra Gandhi Stadium in New Delhi.
26. (a) The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted on December 10, 1948.
27. (b) This year, the Human Rights Day was celebrated under the following theme

Theme: Recover Better-Stand Up for Human Rights

28. (a) Human rights are rights that states, through international agreements, must guarantee individual people.
29. (b) **United Nations Human Rights Council** is a United Nations body that protects and promotes human rights. It investigates allegations of breaches of human rights in the United Nations.
30. (a) **António Guterres**, is the ninth **Secretary-General** of the United Nations, and took office on 1st January 2017.
31. (a) Every year, the International Anti-Corruption Day is marked on December 9. The day is marked by United Nations and several other international organizations. This year, the International Anti-Corruption Day was celebrated under the theme **Theme: Recover with Integrity**
32. (b) The ranking of India in the Corruptions Perceptions Index has slipped from 78 in 2018 to 80 in 2019.
33. (d) The Corruption Perception Index is launched by Transparency International.
34. (c) The Corruption Perception Index is launched by Transparency International. The organization is based in Berlin, Germany
35. (a) On December 9, the International Anti-Corruption Day was celebrated by the Central Bureau of Investigation in New Delhi.
36. (d) The Congress was held between December 8, 2020 and December 10, 2020.
37. (b) The Department of Telecommunications and Cellular Operators Association of India are organizing the Indian Mobile Congress.
38. (a) IMC was organized under the theme "Inclusive Innovation-Smart, Secure, Sustainable"
39. (c) Nokia was the first to manufacture the 5G New Radio in India, and it is now producing the cutting-edge Nokia AirScale massive Multiple Input Multiple Output (mMIMO) solution, the company sai(d)
40. (d) The Congress aims to drive research and development, local investments and emerging technology sectors. It will mainly focus on Artificial Intelligence, Cyber Security, Block Chain, Data Analytics and Smart Cities and Internet of Things.
41. (b) Designed and developed by the DRDO, Akash is one of the most successful, indigenously-made missiles inducted into the Indian Army and Air Force.
42. (a) Akash is a medium-range mobile surface-to-air missile defence system
43. (d) Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) has manufactured Akash Missile, which has the capability to engage aerial threats upto the maximum range of 25 km and upto an altitude of 18 km., operating at a speed range of 1.8 to 2.5 Mach.
44. (a) 10 of these missiles were recently test fired by the Indian Air Force as a part of the Combined Guided Weapons Firing 2020 exercise in the Suryalanka testfiring range Andhra Pradesh. Most of these missiles scored a direct hit at the target. This exercise comes amid the threat posed by the Chinese Air Force along the LA(c)
45. (a) The first test flight of Akash missile was conducted in 1990.
46. (b) 3RF stands for Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework. It was launched by the United Nations to revitalize Beirut.
47. (a) The blast was due to ammonium nitrate stored in a warehouse.
48. (d) 3RF stands for Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework. It was launched by the United Nations to revitalise Beirut. The framework was prepared by United Nations, World Bank and European Union.
49. (b) The 18-month Lebanon Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework (3RF) addresses the urgent needs of the population affected by the explosion that killed over 200 people, injured more than 6,500 and destroyed thousands of homes and properties in the capital city.
50. (a) Hassan Diab is a Lebanese politician, engineer and academic who has been serving as the Prime Minister of Lebanon since 21 January 2020. He submitted his resignation on 10 August 2020 in wake of the 2020 Beirut explosion and has since served as Caretaker Prime Minister until a successor forms a new government.
51. (b) It is also known as Indigenous Aircraft Carrier One. It is under construction at the Cochin Shipyard, Kerala for the Indian Navy.
52. (a) The motto of INS Vikrant is "Jayema Sam Yudhi Sprdhah". It was taken from Rig Ved(a) It means " I defeat those who fight against me".
53. (c) The President of India is the Supreme Commander of the Indian Navy, while the Chief of Naval Staff commands the Navy.
54. (b) **Admiral Karambir Singh** assumed command of the Indian Navy on 31 May 2019 as the 24th Chief of the Naval Staff.
55. (a) The 260 meters long INS Vikrant would have two take-off runways and a landing strip with three arrester wires, capable of operating a STOBAR (short take-off but arrested delivery) system.
56. (a) Every year, India marks the National Pollution Control Day on December 2. The day is observed in the memory of the people who lost their lives in the Bhopal Gas Tragedy.
57. (a) During the accident poisonous chemical methyl isocyanate leaked from a pesticide plant union carbide India Limited in Bhopal
58. (b) The Bhopal gas tragedy occurred on December 2nd and 3rd, 1984.
59. (d) Warren Martin Anderson was an American businessman who was the Chair and CEO of the Union Carbide Corporation at the time of the Bhopal disaster in 1984.
60. (c) **Bhopal: A Prayer for Rain** is a 2014 Indian English-language historical drama film directed by Ravi Kumar. Based on the **Bhopal** disaster that happened in India on 2–3 December 1984, the film stars Martin Sheen, Mischa Barton, Kal Penn, Rajpal Yadav, Tannishtha Chatterjee and Fagun Thakrar.
61. (b) Every year the Indian Navy Day is celebrated on December 4
62. (a) The theme sends message that India is keenly watching the moves of the Chinese in the Indian Ocean Region and the Indian Navy is combat ready to encounter the Chinese forces anytime. The message includes Pakistani forces as well.
63. (b) Admiral Karambir Singh assumed command of the Indian Navy on 31 May 2019 as the 24th Chief of the Naval Staff.

64. (a) Navy day is observed on December 4 every year to commemorate the launch of Operation Trident against Pakistan during the 71' Indo-Pak War.
65. (b) The war lasted for just 13 days, and is one of the shortest wars in history.
The military confrontation between India and Pakistan occurred from 3 December 1971 to the fall of Dacca (Dhaka) on 16 December 1971.
66. (a) It is noted for its participation in Operation Jupiter and Operation Parakram.
67. (c) It was decommissioned in 2017. There have been offers to convert it into a maritime museum. But the warship has been sold for scraps as the centre hasn't issue a 'no objection certificate'.
68. (c) INS Viraat is the longest-serving aircraft carrier in the world – from November 1959 as HMS Hermes (she took part in the Falklands War against Argentina in 1982) till her decommissioning in 1982 – and for 29 years since she was commissioned into the Indian Navy on May 12, 1987.
69. (c) INS Viraat served in the British Navy for 27 years before being commissioned in Indian Navy in 1987
70. (d) INS Viraat served in the British Navy for 27 years before being commissioned in Indian Navy
71. (a) The cyber wing of Maharashtra police has recently acquired a software called the "Crawler" from the INTERPOL that will help to track down child pornography.
72. (c) The International Criminal Police Organization, commonly known as INTERPOL, is an international organization that facilitates worldwide police cooperation and crime control
73. (b) Based in **Lyon**, France, Interpol is an international police cooperation organisation with 194 member states and 100 years of experience of international cooperation in policing. The organisation has 90-million records spread across 17 database.
74. (b) A core unit of 12 officers has been formed to implement a mission involving the software. These twelve officers went for training to the South Asian wing of INTERPOL. The unit has been named TRACE. TRACE is Tactical Response Against Cyber Child Exploitation.
75. (c) The POCSSO Act came out in 2012.
76. (a) is the correct answer.
77. (b) is the correct answer.
78. (a) is the correct answer.
79. (a) is the correct answer.
80. (c) The challenge is called "New Innovation Challenge". India has 16% of world population. However, India holds only 4% of global freshwater resources. The mission is to supply water from underground sources (80%) and surface water sources (20%). The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is a central government department under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. A hundred cities worldwide, including 30 in India, face the risk of 'severe water scarcity' by 2050, according to a recent report by World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).
81. (b) is the correct answer.
82. (d) is the correct answer.
83. (c) is the correct answer.
84. (d) is the correct answer.
85. (a) Human Freedom Index was published by American think tank Cato Institute and Fraser Institute in Canada (a) The index takes into account 76 indicators

of personal, civil, and economic freedoms to rank 162 countries from 2008 to 2018. The institutes noted that the world has seen a notable decline in personal freedom since 2008.

- **Top countries:** New Zealand, Switzerland and Hong Kong
- **USA and UK:** 17th rank
- War-torn Syria ranked the last on the list.
- **India's neighbouring countries:** (1) China – 129; (2) Bangladesh – 139; (3) Pakistan – 140. India has been ranked ahead of China and Bangladesh, which ranked 129 and 139 on the 2020 index respectively. The first three sports have been bagged by New Zealand, Switzerland and Hong Kong. Fred McMahon and Ian Vásquez, the authors of the report, said that they expected Hong Kong's rank to decline in the future, because of China's "aggressive interventions" in the region in 2019 and 2020.

86. (b) is the correct answer.
87. (d) is the correct answer.
88. (d) is the correct answer.
89. (c) is the correct answer.
90. (d) The Forest Minister of Madhya Pradesh recently launched the first hot air balloon safari of India in the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve of India in MP. At present, **there are 47 Tiger Reserves**, while 6 of them are in **MP. Madhya Pradesh** is also known as the '**Tiger State**' as it harbors nearly 20% of India's Wild **Tiger** Population and nearly 10% of the world's **tiger** population as per the current estimates. Kunwar Vijay Shah is the forest minister of Madhya Pradesh. Project **Tiger** is a **tiger** conservation programme launched in April 1973 by the Government of **India** during Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's tenure. .
91. (b) is the correct answer.
92. (a) is the correct answer.
93. (b) is the correct answer.
94. (c) is the correct answer.
95. (a) Benjamin Netanyahu is an Israeli politician serving as Prime Minister of Israel since 2009, and previously from 1996 to 1999. Netanyahu is also the Chairman of the Likud – National Liberal Movement Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People is informally known as the Nation State Law. It is one of the fourteen constitutional laws or basic laws of Israel. The law permits Israel to identify itself as a nation-state of Jewish people. It promotes the self-determination rights of the Jewish people. It was enacted in 2018.
The law defines the symbols of Israel such as state flag, state emblem, state anthem (Hatikvah).
The law declared Jerusalem as "Whole and United" and capital of Israel. This is contradictory to Israel-Palestine conflict.
The World Zionist Organization, or WZO, is a non-governmental organization that promotes Zionism. It was founded as the Zionist Organization at the initiative of Theodor Herzl at the First Zionist Congress, which took place in August 1897 in Basel, Switzerland(d)
96. (a) is the correct answer.
97. (c) is the correct answer.
98. (b) is the correct answer.
99. (b) is the correct answer.

100. (?) Every year Good Governance Day is celebrated on December 25 to commemorate the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a comprehensive and integrated flagship programme of Government of India to attain Universal Elementary Education (UEE), covering the entire country in a mission mode. SSA has been launched in 2001-2002 in partnership with the State Governments and Local Self Governments. Atal Bihari Vajpayee served three terms as the Prime Minister of India, first for a term of 13 days in 1996, then for a period of 13 months from 1998 to 1999, followed by a full term from 1999 to 2004. During his tenure, Pokhran-II nuclear test was conducted (d) India fought Kargil war during his tenure. In 2015, he was conferred with India's highest civilian award, Bharat Ratna (a)
101. (d) is the correct answer.
102. (a) is the correct answer.
103. (a) is the correct answer.
104. (b) is the correct answer.
105. (a) The first Lithium refinery of India is to be set up in Gujarat. One of the largest power trading and renewable energy company, Manikaran Power Limited is to invest Rs 1000 crores to set up the refinery. In April 2019, India and Bolivia signed an agreement, under which Bolivia will supply Lithium Carbonate to India (a) Bolivia has one-fourth of the world lithium reserves. However, the country has not yet begun commercial production. The agreement will act as a backbone for FAME-Faster Adoption and Manufacture of Hybrid and Electric vehicles. Australia is by far the **world's top** producer of **lithium**, with an output of 42,000 tonnes in 2019. The Ministry of Power is an Indian government ministry. The current Union Minister of State is Raj Kumar Singh. The ministry is charged with overseeing electricity production and infrastructure development, including generation, transmission, and delivery, as well as maintenance projects
106. (c) is the correct answer.
107. (c) is the correct answer.
108. (b) is the correct answer.
109. (a) is the correct answer.
110. (a) *Naegleria fowleri* is a single celled amoeba (a) It is also called the Brain-eating Amoeba (a) The amoeba is now rapidly spreading in the US. The news comes after a mysterious disease was discovered in the Eluru district of Andhra Pradesh. Amoebas are single-celled organisms. The so-called brain-eating amoeba is a species discovered in 1965. Its formal name is *Naegleria fowleri*. Although first identified in Australia, this amoeba is believed to have evolved in the U.S. Amoebae are eukaryotes whose bodies most often consist of a single cell. The cells of amoebae, like those of other eukaryotes, possess certain characteristic features. Their cytoplasm and cellular contents are enclosed within a cell membrane. Their DNA is packaged into a central cellular compartment called the nucleus.
111. (b) is the correct answer.
112. (a) is the correct answer.
113. (d) is the correct answer.
114. (d) is the correct answer.
115. (d) NITI Aayog (Policy Commission) or National Institution for Transforming India was established via a Union Cabinet resolution on January 1, 2015 as a premier Policy Think Tank of the Union Government. It's an extra-constitutional, non-statutory and advisory body. Full-time organizational framework composed of a Vice-Chairperson, 5 full-time members, 2 part-time members (from leading universities, research organizations and other relevant institutions in an ex-officio capacity). There are 4 ex-officio members of the Union Council of Ministers, a Chief Executive Officer (with the rank of Secretary to the Government of India) who looks after administration, and a secretariat.
116. (a) is the correct answer.
117. (a) is the correct answer.
118. (b) is the correct answer.
119. (a) is the correct answer.
120. (c) India recently added the Tso Kar Wetland Complex as its forty-second Ramsar site. This is the second Ramsar site in the Union Territory of Ladakh World Wetlands Day is celebrated every year on **2nd February**. This day marks the date of the adoption of the **Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971**, in the **Iranian city of Ramsar**. Uttar Pradesh has the most number of Ramsar Sites in India (a) It has 7 Indian Wetlands. Chilika Lake is the largest Ramsar Site of India (a) Chilika Lake (Orissa) and Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan) were recognized as the first Ramsar Sites of India (a) Renuka Wetland in Himachal Pradesh is the smallest wetland of India (a)
121. (c) is the correct answer.
122. (b) is the correct answer.
123. (c) is the correct answer.
124. (b) is the correct answer.
125. (b) The Assam Cabinet recently approved the bill to make Bodo an official language of the state. Bodoland Territorial Council is an **autonomous region in the state of Assam**. BTC is an area governed under the 6th schedule. However, BTC is an exception to the constitutional provision under the 6th schedule. After the years of violent clashes, the **first Bodo Accord was signed with the ABSU in 1993**, leading to the creation of a Bodoland Autonomous Council with limited political powers.
126. (a) is the correct answer.
127. (a) is the correct answer.
128. (b) is the correct answer.
129. (a) is the correct answer.
130. (c) In terms of market share, **Tata Sky** led the DTH sector with the highest 31.61 per cent share followed by **Dish TV** at a close 31.23 per cent. Airtel took the third spot with 23.39 per cent market share, while **Sun Direct** had a total of 13.78 per cent share respectively. Direct-to-Home (DTH) comes under the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**, Government of India (a) India is the largest DTH market in the world (d) As of December 2019, there were 69.98 million active DTH subscribers in the country. The four major DTH providers in India are DD Free Dish, Dish TV, Tata Sky, Airtel Digital TV and Sun Direct.
131. (c) is the correct answer.

132. (a) is the correct answer.
 133. (a) is the correct answer.
 134. (d) is the correct answer.
 135. (b) Department of Consumer Affairs is one of the two Departments under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution. It was constituted as a separate Department in June 1997 as it was considered necessary to have a separate Department to give a fillip to the nascent consumer movement in the country.

The Department has been entrusted with the following work

- Implementation of Consumer Protection Act, 1986.
- Implementation of Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016
- Implementation of Standards of Weights and Measures - The Legal Metrology Act, 2009.

The Ministry of Consumer Affairs has decided the **theme** for National Consumer Rights Day 2020 to be: 'New features of consumer protection act, 2019'. This **theme** will focus on the features of the new Consumer Protection Act passed by Parliament last year.

The National Consumer Rights Day is celebrated on December 24 as the first Consumer Protection Act was enacted on this day in 1986.

136. (b) is the correct answer.
 137. (c) is the correct answer.
 138. (b) is the correct answer.
 139. (b) is the correct answer.
 140. (a) The Legion of Merit was instituted in 1942 by former US president Franklin D Roosevelt. The Legion of Merit is the only US military decoration that has distinct ranks, and the first US medal to be awarded to citizens of other nations
 The legion of Honors is one of the two United States military decorations that is issued as a neck let. The other is Medal of Honour. Neck let is a type of decoration designed to be worn and displayed around the neck of the person. The standard practice is to hung the medal from the chest.
 QUAD was initiated as a dialogue in 2007 by then Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan, with the support of Vice President Dick Cheney of the US, Prime Minister John Howard of Australia and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of Indi(a)

General Satyawant Mallana Srinagesh of Indian Army was awarded with the Legion of Merit in 1955. The Field Marshal Kodandera Madappa Cariappa was awarded with the Legion of Merit in 1950. Cariappa was the first Indian Commander in Chief of the Indian Army. He is the one of the only two Indian Army officers to hold the Five-star rank of field marshal. The other is Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw.

141. (d) is the correct answer.
 142. (a) is the correct answer.
 143. (b) is the correct answer.
 144. (a) is the correct answer.
 145. (b) In 2001, the government decided to recognise Choudhary Charan Singh's contribution to the agriculture sector and welfare of **farmers** by celebrating his birth anniversary as Kisan Diwas. Since then, December 23 has been observed as **National Farmers' Day**.
 Choudhary Charan Singh was born in Meerut in 1902. He was from a peasant family. He believed in the Slogan "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan" that was given by the former PM Lal Bahadur Shastri. He served as the Prime Minister for a very short period between 1979 and 1980. During his term as the PM of the country he brought in several farmer friendly initiatives. He was an active participant of Arya Samaj and Indian National Congress during the independence struggle. He was jailed twice during British rule. He brought the issues of small and marginal farmers to the front. He founded the Kisan Trust in 1978.
146. (a) is the correct answer.
 147. (b) is the correct answer.
 148. (b) is the correct answer.
 149. (b) is the correct answer.
 150. (a) The Government of India has recently introduced the E20 fuel to promote green fuel such as ethanol. Nitin Gadkari is the Minister responsible for the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. The National Biofuel Coordination Committee comes under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, and the minister responsible for the Ministry is Dharmendra Pradhan. Ethanol (also called ethyl alcohol, grain alcohol, drinking alcohol, spirits, or simply alcohol) is an organic chemical compound. It is a simple alcohol with the chemical formula C₂H₅OH. Its formula can be also written as CH₃CH₂OH.

TOPIC GALAXY DECEMBER 2020

Western Sahara Territorial Dispute	Voting Rights of NRI	Tibet Policy of USA	The Hong Kong Autonomy Act
Shanghai Cooperation Organization	Sentinel Island	SC notice to govt. on plea seeking declaration of Emergency as 'unconstitutional	Sabrimala Temple issue
Rohingya refugees and recent developments	Post BREXIT Deal	Political developments in Israel	Political Crisis in Nepal
Parliamentary Sessions	Parliamentary Privileges	Paris Climate Deal	Nuclear program of Iran
National Population Register (NPR)	Mission Chandrayaan 2	Jallikattu	Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code
Inner line Permit	Human Development Index	Farmers Protest	Covid 19 in Antarctica
Coronavirus New virus strain	CBI and Sharda Scam	CAATSA	Afghan Peace Process and US Taliban Peace Deal
	Abraham Accord	15th Finance Commission (Central schemes need more rationalisation)	

ONE LINERS

1. In India, December 4 is observed as the National Navy Day every year, to celebrate the achievements and role of the naval force to the country. The theme of Navy Day 2020 is "Indian Navy Combat Ready, Credible & Cohesive".
2. New Zealand has declared a "climate emergency" and promised to make its public sector carbon neutral by 2025. New Zealand now joins 32 other countries that have declared a climate emergency.
3. India successfully test-fired the anti-ship version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands territory. The test was conducted as part of the ongoing trials being conducted by the Indian Navy. The DRDO-developed BrahMos supersonic cruise missile with a strike range of 300 Km was launched from Indian Navy's INS Ranvijay.
4. The Indian Navy (IN) and the Russian Federation Navy (RuFN) are undertaking Passage Exercise (PASSEX) in the Eastern Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
5. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has appointed senior IAS officer Utpal Kumar Singh as Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha and Lok Sabha Secretariat.
6. Ranjitsinh Disale, a government teacher from Zilla Parishad Primary School, in Paritewadi village, Solapur district of Maharashtra, has won the 2020 Global Teacher Prize.
7. The Indian-American young scientist and inventor, Gitanjali Rao, has been named as the first-ever 'Kid of the Year' by the iconic TIME magazine. This is the first time that the TIME magazine has launched the Kid of The Year" award.
8. Lahore, the cultural capital Pakistan, has been ranked as the world's most polluted city, according to air pollution data released by the US Air Quality Index (AQI).
9. In the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2020, India has been ranked at 8th spot globally in the list of countries most affected by terrorism in 2019. With a score of 9.592, Afghanistan has topped the index as the worst terror impacted nation among the 163 countries. It is followed by Iraq (8.682) and Nigeria (8.314) at second and third place respectively.
10. Chairperson of HCL Technologies, Roshni Nadar Malhotra has topped the list of wealthiest women in India, according to the second edition of 'Kotak Wealth Hurun–Leading Wealthy Women' report.
11. The Nongpok Sekmai Police Station in Manipur topped the list of best police stations in India, while Sooramangalam All Women Police Station at Salem, Tamil Nadu was adjudged the second best police station in the country.
12. Indian cricket team skipper Virat Kohli scripted another record in the game. He broke Sachin Tendulkar's record and became the quickest batsman to complete 22,000 runs.
13. The United Nation recognised Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare on 30th November every year since 2005.
14. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is an UN-organized day held every year on November 29. It is observed to mark the anniversary of resolution 181, wherein the Assembly adopted the resolution on the partition of Palestine on November 29, 1947.
15. The 'National Organ Donation Day' is observed in India every year on 27 November, since past 10 years.
16. Every year, on 1 December, the world commemorates World AIDS Day. This year the theme of World AIDS Day is "Global solidarity, shared responsibility".
17. International Day for the Abolition of Slavery is observed annually on 2nd December since 1986 by the United Nations General Assembly.
18. The World Computer Literacy Day is observed annually on 2nd December to create awareness and drive digital literacy in underserved communities worldwide.
19. The International Day of Persons with Disabilities is observed annually on December 3. The IDPWD day was proclaimed in 1992 by the United Nations General Assembly. The 2020 theme: 'Not all Disabilities are Visible'.
20. British character actor David Prowse, best known for playing 'Darth Vader' in the original Star Wars trilogy, passed away.
21. Senegal's professional footballer, Papa Bouba Diop, who helped the country win the FIFA World Cup match in 2002, has passed away.
22. The owner of MDH Masala, Dharampal Gulati passed away. He was born in 1923 in Sialkot, Pakistan. He was fondly called 'dalaji' and 'Mahashayji'.
23. American decathlete and film actor, Rafer Johnson, who was 1960 Olympic gold medalist in the decathlon, has passed away.
24. The former President of France, Valery Giscard d'Estaing has passed away at the age of 94, from the complications of coronavirus. He had served as the third president of the Republic of France from 1974 to 1981.
25. The 15th Prime Minister of Pakistan, Zafarullah Khan Jamali passed away. He served as PM from November 2002 to June 2004 for a duration of 1 Year, 7 Months and 3 days.
26. Lakshadweep Administrator, Dineshwar Sharma passed away. He was earlier headed the Intelligence Bureau and was also the Interlocutor for Jammu and Kashmir.
27. Vice President Venkaiah Naidu has virtually released a commemorative Postage Stamp in honour of the late Prime Minister of India & Freedom Fighter, I K Gujral.
28. India is ranked at 10th place in the 'Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) 2021', released on 7th December 2020. The overall score of India is 63.98. It is for the second time in a row that India emerged among the top 10 countries with higher climate performance from among 58 economies.
29. Indian actor, Sonu Sood has topped the first-of-itskind '50 Asian Celebrities In The World' 2020 list, published by UK based Eastern Eye newspaper.
30. New Zealand all-rounder, Corey Anderson has announced his retirement from international cricket.

31. Jehan Daruvala created history, as he became the first Indian to win a Formula 2 race at the 2020 Sakhir Grand Prix, Bahrain.
32. Sri Lanka will host the Asia Cup in June 2021 while Pakistan has earned the rights to host the tournament in 2022.
33. Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju has launched the second edition of Fit India Cyclothon through a virtual platform. The mega cycling event will run for 25 days, beginning from 7th December till 31st December 2020.
34. India's wicketkeeper-batsman Parthiv Patel has announced his retirement from all forms of cricket.
35. Madagascar has replaced the Maldives as the host of the 2023 Indian Ocean Island Games due to concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic.
36. In India, the Armed Forces Flag Day (also known as the Flag Day of India) is observed annually on December 7 since 1949 as an honour to the soldiers, sailors and airmen of India who fought on the borders to keep the country safe.
37. International Anti-Corruption Day is observed annually on 9 December to raise public awareness for anti-corruption. The theme of International AntiCorruption Day 2020: 'RECOVER with INTEGRITY.'
38. The International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime is observed annually on December 9.
39. International Universal Health Coverage Day is a United Nations' recognized international day celebrated every year on December 12. This year theme of International Universal Health Coverage Day is 'Health For All: PROTECT EVERYONE'.
40. Adar Poonawalla, the Chief Executive of the Punebased Serum Institute of India (SII), has been named among six "The Straits Times Asians of the Year" for 2020, by Singapore's leading daily, The Straits Times, for their work in fighting the COVID19 pandemic.
41. The world's highest mountain peak 'Mount Everest' has become taller by 86 cm, as per a survey conducted jointly by Nepal and China. The Government of Nepal and China jointly conducted an exercise to measure the world's highest peak. The new height of Mt Everest has been calculated at 8,848.86 metres, which is 0.86m more than the previous measurement done by India in 1954.
42. The Ministry of Agriculture has declared Lakshadweep as India's first Union Territory to become 100 per cent organic. All farming activity in the UT is carried out without the use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, which provides access to safer food choices and making agriculture a more environment-friendly activity.
43. Veteran Bengali actor Manu Mukherjee passed away. He started his film career with Mrinal Sen's Nil Akasher Niche (1958). The actor is best remembered for his roles in Satyajit Ray's Joy Baba Felunath and Ganashatru. He had also been part of children's fantasy film Patalghar'.
44. Ravi Patwardhan, a popular face in Marathi entertainment industry, has passed away. The veteran actor became a household name for his role in Marathi TV series Agabai Sasubai.
45. Narinder Singh Kapany, also known as the father of fibre optics, passed away. The India-born American physicist was named as one of the seven "Unsung Heroes" by Fortune in their 'Businessmen of the Century' issue of November 1999.
46. Eminent Hindi writer, Madhukar Gangadhar passed away. He was the lead storyteller of the new story movement. He was an associate of Renuji in Patna Akashvani, director of All India Radio in Allahabad & Deputy Director General at Delhi AIR.
47. Paolo Rossi of Italy, who scored 6 goals in the 1982 World Cup, passed away. He is the only male player in history to win the World Cup, the Golden Boot, the Golden Ball and Ballon d'Or in the same year. In 1982 was Italy's first victory after 1938.
48. A worldwide ranking of civil, economic and personal freedom, the Human Freedom Index 2020 was released. India was placed at the 111th spot out of 162 countries. In 2019, India ranked 94 on the index.
49. The International Hockey Federation (FIH) had announced that the 2023 FIH Men's Hockey World Cup will be hosted in Odisha, for a second consecutive time. The tournament will be held at two venues, Bhubaneswar and Rourkela.
50. The 2nd non-fiction book by author Amish Tripathi is titled "Dharma: Decoding the Epics for A Meaningful Life". The book offers practical, philosophical lessons drawn from ancient Hindu epics. It is co-authored by his sister Bhavana Roy.
51. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has released a book on the occasion of the 19th anniversary of the Parliament attack on 13 December. He released the book 'The Shaurya Unbound' (English Version) and 'Samundar Samawe Boond Mein' (Hindi Version) was released on the 2001 incident.
52. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to set up an Automated Banknote Processing Centre (ABPC) in Jaipur for the receipt, storage and dispatch of currency notes.
53. The Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research (NIBIO) has signed a MoU with cGanga, a think-tank of National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) for development of sludge management framework in India.
54. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the re-appointment of Uday Kotak as Managing Director of Kotak Mahindra Bank for a further period of three years, with effect from January 1, 2021.
55. The CEO of Prasar Bharati, Shashi Shekhar Vempati has been elected as the Vice President of Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) for a period of three years. Prasar Bharati is India's largest public broadcasting agency.
56. Sukhbir Singh Sandhu has been given six months extension as the chairman of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).
57. Himgiri, which is the first of the three Project 17A ships being built at Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited (GRSE), Kolkata was launched. The launch of 'Himgiri' has showcased GRSE's commitment towards the building of three state-of-the-art warships of P17A for Indian Navy.
58. The interceptor boat C-454, built by Larsen and Toubro at its Hazira plant, will operate from Gujarat under the control of the Commander Coast Guard Region North-West of the Indian Coast Guard.

59. Indian Coast Guard's (ICG) Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) 'Sujeet', which is second in the series of 5 OPVs was commissioned at the Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) in Vasco Town, Goa.
60. Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has been awarded with the prestigious Golden Peacock Environment Management Award for the year 2020 in the Steel Sector by the Institute of Directors.
61. The Bayern Munich striker, Robert Lewandowski has been named The Best FIFA Men's Player 2020, beating off competition from last year's winner Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo.
62. American media personality and reality TV star, Kylie Jenner has been crowned the highest-paid celebrity of 2020 by Forbes. The top-earning stars in the world earned a combined of \$6.1 billion in 2020 with Kylie Jenner
63. Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch a communication satellite CMS-01, formerly named GSAT-12R, on December 17, using its Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) rocket's XL variant numbered as PSLV-C50.
64. The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has set up a dedicated Space Situational Awareness (SSA) Control Centre named "NETRA", at its ISTRAC campus at Peenya, Bengaluru. The ISRO SSA Control Centre 'NETRA' was formally inaugurated by ISRO Chairman K Sivan.
65. Max Verstappen (Red Bull – Netherlands) won the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix 2020, held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. This was his second victory of the season and 10th victory of his career.
66. Indian Tennis player, Ankita Raina clinched her third doubles title of the season after she won the 2020 Al Habtoor Tennis Challenge jointly with her Georgian partner Ekaterine Gorgodze in Dubai.
67. The 2030 Asian Games were awarded to Doha, Qatar and the 2034 event went to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia after a deal was struck between the rival nations. Doha beat Riyadh for the 2030 Games in the vote at the Olympic Council of Asia's (OCA) general assembly.
68. Pakistan's star pacer, Mohammad Amir has announced his retirement from international cricket citing 'mental torture' by the management as the reason behind his decision.
69. The National Energy Conservation Day is celebrated every year on 14 December by Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), under Ministry of Power.
70. In India, Vijay Diwas (also called Victory Day) is celebrated every year on December 16. The country is celebrating the 49th Vijay Diwas in 2020. Vijay Diwas is observed to commemorate the service, valour, and sacrifices of the gallant men of the Indian Armed Forces' victory over Pakistan in 1971 war.
71. The International Migrants Day is observed globally on 18 December every year. In December 2000, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 18 December as International Migrants Day after considering the large and increasing number of migrants in the world.
72. The theme of International Migrants Day 2020 is 'Reimagining Human Mobility'.
73. UN Arabic Language Day is observed annually on December 18 every year. The day was established by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2010 to celebrate multilingualism and cultural diversity as well as to promote equal use of all six of its official languages throughout the Organization.
74. Goa Liberation Day is observed on 19 December every year in India and it marks the day Indian armed forces freed Goa in 1961 following 450 years of Portuguese rule.
75. Renowned Sanskrit scholar, Vidyavachaspati Bannanje Govindacharya has passed away. He was well versed in Veda Bhashya, Upanishad Bhashya, Mahabharata, Ramayana and Purana.
76. US Air Force officer and test pilot Chuck Yeager, who in 1947 became the first pilot in history to have exceeded the speed of sound in level flight, has passed away.
77. Ambrose Dlamini, the Prime Minister of Eswatini, a country in Southern Africa, has passed away after contracting coronavirus.
78. Noted Indian wrestler, Sripati Khanchanale, who had won the prestigious 'Hind Kesari' title in 1959, passed away.
79. Former Australia Test all-rounder, Eric Freeman has passed away. He made his Test debut against India at the Gabba (Brisbane Cricket Ground) in 1968.
80. The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has banned Mauritian badminton player Kate Jessica Foo Kune for two years for an anti-doping violation.
81. In India, Good Governance Day (Sushasan Divas) is observed annually on 25th December. In this day nation celebrates the birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna and former-Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Good Governance Day was established in 2014.
82. The Minister of State for Skill Development, Raj Kumar Singh has inaugurated the first Centre of Excellence (CoE) for 'skill development in the power sector' in Gurugram.
83. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch 'SEHAT' – Health Insurance Scheme for the entire Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir on 26th December.
84. The Government of India and the World Bank signed a \$500 million project to build safe and green national highway corridors in the states of Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.
85. The Union Cabinet approved revised guidelines for Direct-to-Home (DTH) broadcasting services, allowing 100 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI) as well as increasing the licence period to 20 years.
86. Union Petroleum & Natural Gas Minister, Dharmendra Pradhan has dedicated West Bengal's first oil and gas reserve, 'Bengal Basin', to the nation.
87. Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur has unveiled an 18-foot tall statue of late former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on the occasion of his 96th birth anniversary at the historic Ridge in the state capital.
88. FIFA has cancelled men's U-20 and U-17 World Cup tournaments in 2021 for the novel coronavirus. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bureau of the FIFA Council has decided to cancel the 2021 editions of the men's FIFA U-20 World Cup and FIFA U-17 World Cup.
89. The Hawker Culture of street food in Singapore has been inducted by UNESCO in its prestigious 'Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity'.
90. Maharashtra former Chief Minister and present leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly, Devendra Fadnavis has released the book 'Ayodhya' written by

- Madhav Bhandari. The book will serve as a key reference document summarising the protests held for the cause of a Ram temple in Ayodhya.
91. VP Venkaiah Naidu virtually released the book 'Oh Mizoram', written by Governor of Mizoram, Shri P S Sreedharan Pillai. Pillai is a lawyer, an orator, a prolific writer, a philanthropist, and a thinker.
 92. The Reserve Bank of India has cancelled the banking licence issued to Subhadra Local Area Bank Ltd., Kolhapur, Maharashtra to carry on banking business in India
 93. Managing Director of logistics major Transport Corporation of India Limited, Vineet Agarwal has taken over as the new President of The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham). Sumant Sinha, Chairman and Managing Director of ReNew Power, is the new Senior VicePresident of Assocham.
 94. The Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh recently handed over three indigenously developed high technology systems to chiefs of the three armed forces: the Indian Army, the Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force.
 95. Country's largest power producer, National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC) has been conferred "Excellence" in the prestigious CII-ITC Sustainability Awards 2020 in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Domain.
 96. The 20th edition of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting via video conferencing under the Chairmanship of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The theme of the meeting was "Promoting a Shared Destiny and Path to Prosperity in the Indian Ocean".
 97. The 5th edition of the annual Global Technology Summit (GTS) was organised virtually by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India in collaboration with Carnegie India (CI). The theme of the 2020 GTS was "The Geopolitics of Technology".
 98. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Nguyen Xuan Phuc, jointly addressed the India-Vietnam Virtual Summit, via video conferencing.
 99. International Human Solidarity Day is observed globally on 20 December every year to celebrate unity in diversity and raise awareness about the importance of solidarity.
 100. India observes the National Mathematics Day every year on 22 December since 2012. The day is celebrated to commemorate the birth anniversary of Mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan. This year nation celebrates his 133rd birth anniversary of Ramanujan.

LEGAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

1. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology banned 43 new mobile apps under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act (IT Act), 2000. Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000, was introduced by an amendment to the Act in 2008. It gives the Central government the power to block public access to any information online whether on websites or mobile apps. Under Section 69A, if a website threatens India's defence, its sovereignty and integrity, friendly relations with foreign countries and public order, the government can ban it, after following due procedure. Detailed procedures to do so are listed under the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking Access of Information by Public) Rules, 2009.
2. The Supreme Court (SC) has reserved its order on the state governments providing a 50% in-service reservation for admissions to super-speciality medical courses (Doctorate of Medicine/DM and Master of Chirurgiae/M. Ch.) in government colleges for the academic year 2020-21. In August 2020, the SC allowed states to grant the benefit of reservation of seats to in-service doctors in the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) postgraduate (PG) degree courses. The judgment held that the state has the legislative competence and authority to provide for a separate source of entry for in-service candidates seeking admission to PG/diploma courses in the exercise of powers under Entry 25, List III.
3. The Uttar Pradesh (UP) government has recently passed an ordinance to deal with unlawful religious conversions, which are in opposition of various judgements of the Supreme Court (SC). UP Unlawful Religious Conversion Prohibition Ordinance, 2020: It makes religious conversion for marriage a non-bailable offence and the onus will be on the defendant to prove that conversion was not for marriage. In case of conversion done by a woman for the sole purpose of marriage, the marriage would be declared null and void. The SC in its various judgments has held that faith, the state and the courts have no jurisdiction over an adult's absolute right to choose a life partner. Intimacies of marriage lie within a core zone of privacy, which is inviolable and the choice of a life partner, whether by marriage or outside it, is part of an individual's "personhood and identity".
4. The Attorney General (AG) K K Venugopal, in his written submission to the Supreme Court (SC), has emphasised the need for greater gender sensitisation among members of the judiciary. He also highlighted that the figure of female judges has been consistently low across the Higher Judiciary. The SC had asked AG and others to recommend ways to improve gender sensitivity towards victims while laying down bail conditions for sex crime offenders. The Bench had sought view on a plea about courts imposing bail conditions for sex crime offenders which end up further harassing, objectifying their victims. The Madhya Pradesh (MP) High Court (HC) asked a man (accused in a case of attempting to outrage the modesty of a woman) to visit the home of the alleged victim and request her to tie a rakhi.
5. The Supreme Court (SC) has asked the States and Union Territories Governments to ensure that CCTV (closed-circuit television) cameras are installed in each and every Police Station. In the year 2015, in the case of D K Basu vs State of West Bengal, the SC directed that CCTVs should be installed in every police station and prison to check human rights abuses. Further in 2018, the SC asked the Ministry of Home Affairs to set up a Central Oversight Body (COB) to implement the plan of action with respect to videography in the crime scene during investigation. Recently, the SC has found that the majority of the states and UTs lack the details of installing CCTVs in police stations.
6. The Supreme Court (SC) has held that lottery, gambling and betting are taxable under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Act, 2017. The SC passed the order in a batch of pleas filed by various lottery dealers who argued that the Central government had wrongfully classified lottery as goods. Challenging Section 2 (52) of the 2017 Act and notifications levying tax on lottery, petitioners contended that the law was violative of the fundamental rights and contrary to the SC judgment (Sunrise Associates Vs. Government of NCT of Delhi 2006) that held that lotteries were merely actionable claims and cannot be defined as 'goods'.
7. The Election Commission of India (ECI) has informed the Ministry of Law and Justice that it is "technically and administratively ready" to extend the Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS) to Non Resident Indian (NRI) voters for elections next year in Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. The ECI started to look for possible options after receiving several requests from MPs, industrialists, ministers and also writ petitions by NRIs in the Supreme Court (SC) in 2013 and 2014.
8. In the context of discussing the limits of free speech and what may tantamount to hate speech, the Supreme Court (SC) has recently held that "Historical truths must be depicted without in any way disclosing or encouraging hatred or enmity between different classes or communities." The FIRs were filed against a TV anchor for alleged remarks on the sufi saint Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti in a news show.
9. The Supreme Court (SC) has upheld notifications issued under the National Highways Act, 1956, for acquisition of land for construction of the Chennai-Krishnagiri-Salem national highway. The verdict came on a batch of appeals filed by the Centre and the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and few landowners and others. These pleas were filed against the Madras High Court's judgement, holding as "illegal and bad in law" the notifications issued. According to the SC, there is nothing in the Constitution which constricts the power of

Parliament to make a law for declaring any stretch/section within the State (not being a road or an existing highway) to be a national highway. The Central government is free to construct/build a new national highway keeping in mind the obligations it has to discharge under Part IV of the Constitution (Directive Principles of State Policy) for securing a social order and promotion of welfare of the people in the concerned region.

10. An eight-member committee, appointed by the government for suggesting measures for effective implementation of reservation in students admissions and faculty recruitment in the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), has come out with its recommendations. It was chaired by IIT Delhi's Director and had representatives of secretaries of the departments of Social Justice and Empowerment, Tribal Affairs, Department of Personnel and Training, Persons with Disabilities, among others. A few recommendations are : If granting full exemption from reservations was not possible, the committee recommended that the implementation of reservation policies for all categories including Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) be restricted just to Assistant Professor Grade I and Grade II and not for levels above. Vacancies not filled in a particular year due to non-availability, be de-reserved in the subsequent year. Conduct of special recruitment drives to attract candidates from reserved categories.
11. The Supreme Court (SC) has stayed an Andhra Pradesh High Court (HC) order intending to embark on a judicial enquiry into whether there is a constitutional breakdown in the State machinery, requiring a declaration of President's rule (Article 356). A three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice of India S A Bobde found the order disturbing and will take up the matter later on after vacations. As per the State Government's appeal, the HC order is a serious encroachment on the powers of the executive as enumerated under the Constitution and is violative of the doctrine of separation of powers and thus, violative of the basic structure of the Constitution.
12. The government has notified the Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020, which would allow consumers in India to access a continuous supply of reliable

electricity. Electricity is a Concurrent List or List-III (Seventh Schedule) subject and the central government has the authority and the power to make laws on it. The rules cover various aspects of power supply to consumers in the country, including obligations of distribution licensees, metering arrangements, the release of new connections, modifications of existing connections, grievance redressal and compensation mechanisms. This will make the distribution companies more accountable to consumers, thus reducing their monopolies and giving consumers more alternatives. To ensure compliance, the government will apply penalties that will be credited to the consumer's account. These rules are also an important step towards furthering the ease of doing business across the country.

13. The Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) has ruled that the Indian government was wrong in applying a retrospective tax on energy giant Cairn Plc. The verdict comes barely three months after India lost arbitration to Vodafone Plc over the retrospective tax legislation amendment. As per the PCA Ruling, the Indian government must pay roughly Rs. 8,000 crore in damages to Cairn. Cairn Tax Issue was not just a tax-related issue but an investment-related dispute, and therefore the issue comes under its jurisdiction. The Indian government's retrospective demand was in breach of the guarantee of fair and equitable treatment. The Centre had failed to uphold its obligations under the UK-India Bilateral Investment Treaty and international laws in seeking tax payments from the company for its business reorganisation in the country.
14. The Central Information Commission (CIC), the lead body for implementing the Right to Information Act 2005, has ruled that the disclosure of identity of electoral bond scheme donors will not serve any larger public interest and will violate provisions of the Act itself. The electoral bond scheme allows citizens and corporates to buy monetary instruments from the State Bank of India (SBI) and donate them to political parties, who can redeem them for money. According to the Association for Democratic Reforms, political parties have received a total of 12,452 electoral bonds worth Rs. 6210.39 crore till January 2020.

ARTICLES YOU CANNOT AFFORD TO MISS

1. THE GREAT DATA PROTECTION DEBATE: INDIA'S NEW DATA PROTECTION BILL

Should the Data Protection Bill pass, India would have taken an encouraging step toward better data regulation, but not without pitfalls.

Enthusiastic linguists have long argued over whether 'data' should be considered singular or plural. A far more pressing concern has emerged in recent history: Is data public goods like sunlight, or private goods like oil? Much like sunlight, data can be widely shared for the benefit of society and the prosperity of its people. Think knowledge on the internet. Conversely, like oil, data must be refined over time to have any use. Think targeted advertising.

The inherent malleability of data has prompted larger questions about ownership, regulation and sovereignty. Thus far, India has declined to engage with these questions. India's fractured privacy law is seldom heard and rarely applied. In the face of mounting criticism, on December 11, 2019, the Government of India introduced the Personal Data Protection Bill to address emerging data concerns. What does this law seek to achieve?

Take ownership first. Defining data property rights is thorny because the creation of information can never be attributed to one person. Who, for example, owns the fact that a dating app matched two people resulting in their union? The service provider? The couple? The advertisers who pay for the service that make its use free to users?

India's Data Protection Bill recommends that the person to whom the data relates be given rights over its control. Such data may only be processed "*on the consent given by the data principle*" [Section 11(1)]. Given the ease with which we consent to give away our data in exchange for free apps, marginal discounts, and online games, the law fails to address the core problem. Indian courts may ultimately be called upon to intervene and balance the unequal bargaining power embedded in these data transactions.

Nevertheless, the benefits of ownership may be overstated. Revealingly, no one has ever considered paying users for the data they routinely generate. Data economics put pressures on pricing too. Social media companies no longer need to offer free services in exchange for user data. With millions of data points being generated on a daily basis across a variety of online platforms, these firms can make frighteningly accurate predication about our behaviour by crunching data from other users. How do we structure a law to defend against that?

The Data Protection Bill suggests that personal data should include data "*...relating to a natural person who is directly or indirectly identifiable, having regard to any characteristic, trait, attribute or any other feature of the identity... or any combination of such features, or any combination of such features with any other information...*" [Section 3(28)]. Verbiage apart, the Bill essentially says that any data that identifies you in connection with any other information is your personal data. Naturally, this creates a recipe for competing claims. What if 'any other information' were to include somebody else's personal data?

All these complications have led data experts to argue that citizens should hold control over their data collectively, rather than individually. These 'data-co-operatives' would act as trade unions within conventional markets. Among others, they may negotiate rates for data, ensure quality digital output, invoice organizations that benefit from the output, and distribute the profits.

Global data trusts may not be far away. In January, Microsoft's CEO, Satya Nadella, at the World Economic Forum called for greater respect for "data dignity" - meaning individuals should have greater control over their data and a larger share in the value it creates.

All that said, how does India propose to regulate all this information? Borrowing heavily from the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation, the Bill obligates organizations to (a) act transparently in its processing of data, (b) implement appropriate security measures, and (c) promptly notify the authority about any data breaches. Additional obligations include yearly audits and accurate record keeping.

In turn, individuals have the right to (a) determine what personal information is being processed in the organization's possession, (b) request correction of any inaccurate information, and (c) have the data portable to any other organization rendering the same service. Chillingly, the proposed law does not grant a person the right to secure deletion of all his data in another's possession, only to prevent its continuing disclosure. Soon, data entrustment maybe a lifetime commitment greater than marriage.

Online giants have always assumed that data will be a global affair, unshackled by borders. Data freedom, however, is increasingly under assault by governments looking to protect their people, economy and ultimately, sovereignty. The Data Protection Bill is no different. Virtual borders are erected so that data may not freely enter and leave the country. The Indian government has already blocked the usage of certain mobile applications on three different occasions in 2020; other restrictions may not be far behind. Conditionally, certain cross-border transfers may be deemed permissible provided firms create digital centres to give data local residence.

This will doubtless have a larger economic impact. The free flow of information makes the world, if not a better place, certainly a more efficient one. Industry experts are raising larger geopolitical concerns about digital protectionism resulting in AI nationalism.

Given data's infinite duplicability, naturally one wonders how these laws may be effectively applied and enforced? The Bill proposes that it apply to (1) organizations that collect or process data in India, or (2) foreign companies

profiling the data of individuals within India. Thus, an American company profiling the data of a German who is taking a holiday in India will, for the time of his sojourn, have to comply with India's data protection law!

To contend with enforcement intricacies, the Data Protection Bill establishes an authority to oversee the implementation of the law and prevent misuse of data. This authority will act as judge, jury and executioner with the ability to issue directions, call for information, conduct inquiries, and undertake search and seizures. Penalties include fines of up to Rs. 5 crore or two per cent of the offending party's worldwide turnover, whichever is higher.

The Data Protection Bill is currently being analysed by a Joint Parliamentary Committee in consultation with experts and stakeholders. Should it pass, India would have taken an encouraging step toward better data regulation, but not without pitfalls.

Back in the 19th century, the Industrial Revolution resulted in a massive increase in production, along with dismal social and working conditions for individuals at the factories. It took over 100 years for some societies to adapt, while others never did. In the emerging world of data, it will take time to develop proper institutions and appropriate mechanisms to face mounting complications. Societies that do not act now, risk losing not only their oil, but their sunlight too.

2. URGENT NEED FOR REFORMS IN LAW AND POLICY FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN INDIA

This pandemic has emerged as an eye-opener to show that India's mental healthcare system needs strengthening and more support from the Central or State governments.

In this unprecedented time, the issues relating to mental health across world have been exposed. In India, even before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was already a mental health epidemic.

As per the World Health Organisation (WHO), about 15% of the total disease conditions around the world are related to mental illness. WHO has also noted that India has one of the largest populations suffering from mental illnesses ranging from depression and anxiety, to severe conditions like schizophrenia.

It is estimated that the economic loss due to mental health conditions during 2012-2030 is 1.03 trillion dollars.

The main cause for such an alarming situation is lack of understanding, awareness, sensitivity, and stigma attached towards people facing mental health issues. There is a serious shortage of mental healthcare workers in India. As per WHO, mental health workforce in India (per 100,000 population) include psychiatrists (0.3), nurses (0.12), psychologists (0.07) and social workers (0.07).

Current policies and laws on Mental Health in India

Starting with Article 21 of the Constitution of India, the right to life has been expanded to include the right to health. It is essential that mentally ill persons receive good quality mental healthcare and living conditions in their homes and society.

Way back in 1982, the Government of India launched the National Mental Health Programme (NMHP). After 38 years, it is still on paper. NMHP was introduced considering the heavy burden of mental illness on the community, and the absolute inadequacy of mental health care infrastructure in the country to deal with it.

The *Mental Health Act*, enacted in 1987, has been the target of criticism since its introduction. The National Health Policy, 2002 incorporates provisions on mental health. However, no separate policy on mental health exists. In 1996, the District Mental Health Program (DMHP) was added and re-strategized in 2003 to include two important schemes of Modernization of State Mental Hospitals and Up-gradation of Psychiatric Wings of Medical Colleges/General Hospitals. India signed and ratified the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol in 2007. In 2009, the Manpower Development Scheme (Scheme-A & B) was made part of the Program.

It is important to note that the DMHP envisages provision of basic mental health care services at the community level and has the following objectives:

- a. *To provide sustainable basic mental health services to the community and to integrate these services with other health services;*
- b. *Early detection and treatment of patients within the community itself;*
- c. *To reduce the stigma of mental illness through public awareness; and*
- d. *To treat and rehabilitate mental patients within the community.*

A Mental Health Policy Group (MHPG) was appointed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) in 2012 to prepare a draft of DMHP for Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012–2017). The main objective was to reduce distress, disability, and premature mortality related to mental illness and to enhance recovery from mental illness by ensuring the availability of and accessibility to mental health care for all in the plan period, particularly the most vulnerable and underprivileged sections of the population.

Its other objectives were to reduce stigma, promote community participation, increase access to preventive services to at-risk population, ensure rights, broad-base mental health with other programs like rural and child health, motivate and empower workplace for staff, improve infrastructure for mental health service delivery, generate knowledge and evidence for service delivery, and establish governance, administrative, and accountability mechanisms.

A central mental health team has also been constituted to supervise and implement the programme. A Mental Health Monitoring System (MHIS) is being developed. Standardized training was proposed with the help of training manual.

After the National Mental Health Survey during 2014–2016, the Government of India started making efforts to improve the mental health services by formulating policies like the National Mental Health Policy (NMHP), 2014 and consequently, the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 was enacted and notified on May 29, 2018. The new Act focused on the rights of a mentally ill person and repealed the Mental Health Act, 1987. Despite having many positive features, the Mental Health Act, 1987 has been the target of criticism since its introduction and was not effectively implemented due to the lack of resources.

Unfortunately, the new Act has been introduced without addressing the issues which troubled the Mental Health Act, 1987. The new Act ignores the presence of a mental health program in the country. The Act should have mandated all the states to implement NMHP, and the state mental authority should have been made responsible for the same. The only way the Act can correctly implement the right to mental healthcare is by enabling the implementation of NMHP across all states.

India has highest number of suicides in the world. The high crime and drug addiction rate in India also has direct nexus with mental health. The pandemic has added unseen mental health issues which has unearthed drawbacks in the existing mental health infrastructure and laws/policies. This pandemic has emerged as an eye-opener to show that India's mental healthcare system needs strengthening and more support from the Central or State governments. There is a complete lack of integrated mental healthcare and failure on implantation of the DMHP across India.

The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic are visible on people's mental well-being, and this is just the beginning. Unless we make serious commitments to scale up investment in mental health right now, the health, social, and economic consequences will be far-reaching.

The lost productivity resulting from depression and anxiety - two of the most common mental disorders - costs the global economy each year. In low and middle-income countries, more than 75% of people with mental disorders receive no treatment at all for their disorder. In India, mental health is on the back foot due to lack of resources and allocation of budget. It is high time to prioritise on mental health by investing and integrating mental healthcare into the private and public sectors.

Experts note that effective implementation of the DMHP is the key to resolving many critical issues that mental healthcare delivery faces in India.

The new Act requires the government to provide "less restrictive community-based establishments including half-way homes, group homes and the like for persons who no longer require treatment" in restrictive mental health establishments. However, in reality, such rehabilitation facilities are either missing or inadequate in India's landscape of mental healthcare services. The Central and State governments are yet to comply with the 2017 Supreme Court direction to set up or expand such half-way homes. As of 2020, the states have only provided a road-map towards implementation.

Treatment of mental health disorders needs to be taken seriously and given equal or rather more importance than even physical health as there is 'no health without mental health'. The policymakers need to promote mental health and easy access to cost-effective treatment of common mental disorders at the primary healthcare level.

The present mental health situation in India requires dynamic policy and resource allocation by the government. There is urgent need to use media and social media and other community services to increase awareness and reduce the stigma around mental health illness by implementing nationwide programs. Reports from all across the world show that the pandemic has also led to serious psychological consequences like anxiety, stress, depression, fear and insomnia etc. Recently, India Today reported a 20% increase in the mental health cases in India post imposition of the lockdown in March 2020.

As seen above, some initial steps to improve on the mental healthcare system have been provided under the NMHP. Appropriate intervention, understanding about the issue, and easy accessibility of professionals are the way forward to improve the situation. This requires social, public and private teamwork to get the situation under control. There is an urgent need for providing psychological help with trained mental health professionals as first aid, to reduce distress and ensure easy access to mental-health facilities for citizens. Mental disorders also need to be covered under insurance, as a plea pending before the Supreme Court has prayed for.

While handling the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the mental health of people needs to be handled hand in hand. There is an urgent need to depute specialized mental health professionals to work.

The pandemic and the rise in the number of suicides and the crime rate shows the need for an integrated mental healthcare policy covering mental health issues. There is an urgent need to develop infrastructure and prioritise mental health care resources, so that the mental health of most vulnerable groups is well-served. In the national interest, there is need for reforms in policies and appropriate implementation of the existing legal framework.

3. ALLAHABAD HC REUNITES INTERFAITH COUPLE, SAYS WOMAN CAN 'LIVE HER LIFE ON HER OWN TERMS'

The court also quashed the 'kidnapping' FIR lodged against the woman's husband.

New Delhi: In the latest instance of the courts intervening to stop the Uttar Pradesh government and police's efforts to interfere in interfaith marriages, the Allahabad high court has reunited a 21-year-old Hindu woman, Shikha, with

her Muslim husband, Salman. The bench observed that an adult woman “has a choice to live her life on her own terms”.

On December 18, a bench of Justices Pankaj Naqvi and Vivek Agarwal said that Shikha has said she wishes to live with her husband, and “she is free to move as per her own choice without any restriction or hinderance being created by third party”.

On December 7, according to LiveLaw, the chief judicial magistrate of Etah had placed Shikha in the custody of the Child Welfare Committee, who had said she must return to her parent’s house and live in their custody. This, the Allahabad high court said, was done “without any application of mind and against her [Shikha’s] wish”.

Shikha’s school documents show that her date of birth is October 4, 1999, the court noted, making her an adult. “The act of C.J.M., Etah and that of the C.W.C., Etah reflects lack of appreciation of legal provisions,” the Allahabad high court said.

On September 7, an FIR had been registered against Salman for ‘kidnapping’ Shikha. The high court quashed this FIR, and also directed the police to provide security to the couple as they went back home, Indian Express reported. Also read: Adityanath’s Attack on Inter-Faith Marriages Extends Sangh Parivar Drive to Promote Manu’s Ideals

Harassment of interfaith couples, and undermining a woman’s wishes to live with her husband even though she is an adult, are not new in India. Incidents of this sort continue to occur despite the court’s making it clear that there is no legal basis for them.

Just recently, the Calcutta high court too reiterated that an adult woman can marry whoever she wants, and also convert religions if she so desires. “If an adult marries as per her choice and decides to convert and not return to her paternal house, there can be no interference in the matter,” the high court observed.

In Uttar Pradesh particularly, the harassment of interfaith couples has been on the rise recently after the government passed a controversial new ‘anti-conversion’ ordinance. A number of consensual adult couples have suffered because of this – including dozens of arrests and a woman having a miscarriage after being forced to move into a shelter home.

4. CONSTITUTIONAL VALIDITY OF THE UTTAR PRADESH PROHIBITION OF UNLAWFUL CONVERSION OF RELIGION ORDINANCE 2020

The Governor of Uttar Pradesh has promulgated the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance, 2020 with the aim of prohibiting 'unlawful conversion from one religion to another by misrepresentation, force, undue influence, coercion, allurement or by any fraudulent means or by marriage'.

The haste with which the legislation has been passed and enforced directs to the approach of the government towards minorities, which is stated by the Chief Minister in many statements. The Ordinance is against the provisions of the Constitution primarily on two aspects- the procedure which was adopted to enact the legislation and secondly, the manner in which it infringes the Right to Privacy mandated under Article 21 of the Constitution.

Procedural irregularities

The legislation has been enacted as an Ordinance by the Governor of the State under the provisions of Article 213 of the Constitution which extends the legislative powers to the Executive. The power of Governor under Article 213 is defined as such-

If at any time, except when the Legislative Assembly of a State is in session, or where there is a Legislative Council in a State, except when both Houses of the Legislature are in session, **the Governor is satisfied that circumstances exist which render it necessary for him to take immediate action**, he may promulgate such Ordinances as the circumstances appear to him to require.

A bare reading of the Article provides that the Governor can exercise the power only when "circumstances exist which render it necessary to take immediate action". Thus, as a *sine qua non* the Governor has to be satisfied of the exigent situation, which is the sole ground for the exercise of this legislative function. In the absence of such an urgency, the exercise of legislative power by the Governor is unconstitutional. Such hasty passing of Ordinances without any reason requiring immediate action has been held to be illegal as it seems to be undertaken 'primarily to by-pass debate and discussion in the legislature' (RC Cooper v. Union of India), which is anti-democratic.

The compelling reason which was purported to be cited in the instant case was the rise in the cases of 'love jihad' or forced conversion for marriage. Moreover, the Chief Minister had cited the two decisions of single judges of High Court of Allahabad (Priyanshi @ Km. Shamren v. State of U.P. and Noor Jahan Begum @ Anjali Mishra vs. State of U.P.) which had held marriages after religious conversion to be void. No statistics, facts or figures have been cited by the government as an evidence of the compelling circumstances.

On the other hand, there is abundance of data against the proposition. The Special Investigation team appointed by the UP Police to gather data and information regarding the cases of 'love jihad' found no concrete proof as most of the cases of Hindu-Muslim marriages turned out to be consensual. The women in all such cases had married persons of different religion out of their own free will. Further, the Division Bench of the High Court of Allahabad decied the two aforementioned cases and held them to be "not good laws" under the Constitution (SalamatAnsari v State of UP).

In the light of these factors, no circumstances existed before the government which required the immediate action of promulgating an Ordinance by-passing the regular prescribed procedure of law making through the Parliament. This subject definitely calls for a thorough debate and analysis by expert committees before being passed as the law of the land. The process of enacting this legislation containing such stringent penal provisions is an anathema and is purely an act making mockery of the Constitution.

Complete negation of Privacy Rights

Apart from the procedural irregularities, the legislation completely undermines the Constitutional principles and rights ensured thereunder. Private life of an individual and the freedom to take decisions for the private life have been held to be inviolable fundamental right of every individual. Through numerous decisions, the Courts have recognised and upheld the sanctity of personal space which includes the decisions with respect to marriage and family life. Right to choose a partner irrespective of caste, creed or religion, is inhered under right to life and personal liberty, an integral part of the Fundamental Right under Article 21 of the Constitution of India (Salamat Ansari v State of UP).

In the case of Lata Singh v State of U.P, the Supreme Court has very clearly laid down the law regarding inter-faith and inter-religious marriages, and has held thus- "This is a free and democratic country, and once a person becomes a major he or she can marry whosoever he/she likes. If the parents of the boy or girl do not approve of such inter-caste or inter-religious marriage the maximum they can do is that they can cut-off social relations with the son or the daughter, but they cannot give threats or commit or instigate acts of violence and cannot harass the person who undergoes such inter-caste or inter-religious marriage."

While declaring the decisions on 'love jihad' by the single benches of High Court of Allahabad to be not good law, the Division Bench had held that "We do not see Priyanka Kharwar and Salamat as Hindu and Muslim, rather as two grown up individuals who out of their own free will and choice are living together peacefully and happily over a year. The Courts and the Constitutional Courts in particular are enjoined to uphold the life and liberty of an individual guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. Right to live with a person of his/her choice irrespective of religion professed by them, is intrinsic to right to life and personal liberty. Interference in a personal relationship, would constitute a serious encroachment into the right to freedom of choice of the two individuals".

In the case of K.S. Puttaswamy v Union of India (famously known as the Right to Privacy judgment) Hon'ble Supreme Court held that-

"The destruction by the state of a sanctified personal space whether of the body or of the mind is violative of the guarantee against arbitrary state action. Privacy of the body entitles an individual to the integrity of the physical aspects of personhood. The intersection between one's mental integrity and privacy entitles the individual to freedom of thought, the freedom to believe in what is right, and the freedom of self-determination. When these guarantees intersect with gender, they create a private space which protects all those elements which are crucial to gender identity. The family, marriage, procreation and sexual orientation are all integral to the dignity of the individual. Above all, the privacy of the individual recognises an inviolable right to determine how freedom shall be exercised."

Unlawful infringement with this right has been held to be unconstitutional under the Right to Privacy judgment. The judgment has asserted that no law could interfere with the privacy rights of the people and enter into their private lives without any reasonable and justifiable reasons and no law would be held to be a good law if it attempts to do so without providing a procedure which is proportionate and which ensures a rational nexus between the objects and the means adopted to achieve them.

In order to determine this, the judgment developed a test and called it the 'Triple Test' comprising three elements of legality, need and proportionality to determine the correctness of the legislation on the touchstone of privacy rights. It has been held by the Court that – The action must be sanctioned by law; (ii) The proposed action must be necessary in a democratic society for a legitimate aim; (iii) The extent of such interference must be proportionate to the need for such interference; (iv) There must be procedural guarantees against abuse of such interference.

The present legislation fails miserably on all the three elements as it is neither legal, nor the government has been able to justify any legitimate state aim and the provisions of the Ordinance are not proportionate to the object and needs sought to be fulfilled by the law. It unjustly interferes with the personal rights of the individual and makes the acts declared by the Courts to be private (right to marry of one's own choice and right to conversion of religion) criminal by including provisions of imprisonment. The 'victims' under the Ordinance are rendered remedy less with no procedural safeguards against any form of abuse. Hence, the Ordinance negates the privacy rights prescribed under Article 21 of the Constitution.

Thus, the Ordinance is in absolute contradiction to privacy rights; is illegal, unjustified and against the principles of constitutionalism and it ought to be declared unconstitutional.

5. REMEMBERING THE PIONEER OF JUDICIAL ACTIVISM JUSTICE P.N. BHAGWATI ON HIS BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

**Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages on his face,
And on his back the burden of the world**

The Man with the Hoe by Edwin Markham

Today marks the 99th birth anniversary of an eminent judge, humanist, visionary and a legendary judge, Justice P.N. Bhagwati. Born on 21st December, 1921 in Gujarat, Justice Bhagwati pursued his graduation in Mathematics from Elphinstone College, Mumbai followed by graduation in Law from Government Law College, Mumbai. An enthusiastic legal dignitary, Prafullachandra Natwarlal Bhagwati started practicing in Bombay High Court later in the year 1948. He was appointed as a judge of Gujarat High Court in 1960 followed by his alleviation to the Supreme Court in 1973, carrying out the legacy of his father Justice Natwarlal H. Bhagwati who served as judge at the Supreme Court from 1952 to 1959. Bhagwati later became the **17th Chief Justice of India** serving from July 12th 1985 to December 20th 1986. He died on June 16th 2017 at 95 years of age.

KNOWING BHAGWATI: EARLY LIFE AND PROFESSION

In a line of work as big as the ocean, from the many luminaries Indian legal profession ever witnessed, J. Bhagwati had an unparalleled charm, a bequest which was tough to match. Natwarlal Bhagwati had the responsibility of bringing up seven sons, a daughter and two cousins. Hailing from a poor family background, senior Bhagwati was a strict parent but ensured that his children are given an unerring upbringing. Jagdish Bhagwati, his younger brother attributed this to be reason behind the success of their family. According to him, due to poverty, his father never gave them money to eat in school canteen but never stopped them from spending hundreds of rupees for buying books. His father was a man of principles who passed on the right values to his children which enabled them to realize the most virtuous attributes of life.

J. Bhagwati was an avid follower of Mahatma Gandhi and his life was greatly influenced by Mahatma's readings and values, so much so that he discontinued his MA in economics to join the freedom movement. The Gandhian approach motivated him to realize the significance of public rights and the passion to fight for the right ignited in him from a very young age. This passion encouraged him to join the Congress Socialist Party in 1942 while the Quit India Movement was at a surge in India. In doing so, he was once jailed for distributing 'Congress Patrika', a journal banned at that time by the Britishers. At one such instance, he came home blooded after the British authorities had beaten him.

Bhagwati was a judge with a futuristic outlook who would always think way ahead of the time. Thanks to his judicial acumen combined with a philosophical instinct that the Indian legal jurisprudence reached to new heights due to his interpretation of the concepts of Locus Standi, access to justice and judicial activism. At the time when India was witnessing an outpouring gush of constitutionalism, he ensured that his judicial vision fills up the gap present in our constitutional jurisprudence.

Bhagwati's heart ached for millions of needy and deprived citizens which led him to evolve the concept of free legal aid to all. This vision paved the paths to the judgments of ***Hussainara Khatoon v. Home Secretary, State of Bihar (1980)***^[i] and ***Khatri v. State of Bihar (1981)***^[ii] wherein he held that Right to Legal Aid is an intrinsic and valuable right under the mandate of Art. 21 of the Indian Constitution which confers upon the State a legal obligation to provide a lawyer to the needy and under-privileged unable to afford the same.

His judicial interpretation was so far sighted that he never looked at the issues like present day problems but viewed them in the light of future responses which according to him was social philosophy. This interpretation was very well woven by him in the case of ***S.P. Gupta v. President of India & Ors. (1982)***^[iii] which led to the emergence of judicial activism as a concept in our jurisprudence. One such famous observation which will forever echo the legal peripherals is that from the Oleum Gas Leak case (1987)^[iv] wherein he observed "*Procedure being merely a hand-maiden of justice it should not stand in the way of access to justice to the weaker sections.*"

However, with being a judge of the highest court of the land comes a great responsibility and an even greater probability of inviting criticisms. Little did he know that his efforts for building the 'India of his dreams' would see a drastic fluctuation on him becoming one of the 7 judges in the bench of ***ADM Jabalpur case***. While going in favour of the majority, the bench left scars so harsh on the legal jurisprudence that crippled India's democracy for years to come till the time it was overruled in 2017. The criticism played a major role in transforming Bhagwati's life to view the future cases with caution and prudence and more importantly, to remove the criticism of being part of the bench which gave India "*blackest day in Indian history*" to a judge who was known to be "*pioneer of judicial activism*". He later expressed his remorse to go against his moral sense by going with the majority judges.

THE BHAGWATI COURT: ACCOUNTS BY GEORGE H. GADBOIS

The famous Gadbois interviews give an insightful account of the judges and functioning of the Supreme Court of India between the years 1950 to 1989. The book "*Judges of the Supreme Court of India, 1950 to 1989*" presents the extracts of those interviews wherein Gadbois touched upon the aspect of the then judicial appointments made to Apex Court. In the 4 interviews he conducted with J. Bhagwati, he was able to understand Bhagwati's charisma to the maximum extent possible. He wrote "*Bhagwati wanted 'activists' with the 'right judicial philosophy'. He was a zealous crusader for improving the lot of the nation's under classes, particularly opening the court's doors to the least privileged. He wanted judges who shared his passion for public interest litigation (PIL).*"^[v]

According to Gadbois, the average age of the judges to be appointed to the Supreme Court at that period was 58.5 and Justice Bhagwati happened to be the youngest judge to be appointed at 51 years of age. Bhagwati informed Gadbois that one of his constant struggles of being a Supreme Court judge also includes the responsibility of creating more rights in comparison with what are provided by the Constitution. He always felt the need of reforming the given set of rights in accordance with the contemporary era. He felt that the scope of Art. 21 and its connection with the

doctrine of substantive due process must be in accordance with procedures established by law. Even when the government makes a law depriving rights of a person, it must be done in a just, fair and reasonable manner. He was influenced by the due process doctrine of the American Constitution to such a great extent that he incorporated it in the Indian constitutional jurisprudence even when the Court rejected the same in **Maneka Gandhi case**.

Another significant acknowledgement made by Bhagwati to Gadbois was his intention of there being a division of Supreme Court's jurisdiction. Bhagwati felt that the Supreme Court must exercise its jurisdiction in a two-fold manner; **one**, a court of appeal to deal with SLPs and ordinary appeals and **two**, a permanent constitution bench consisting of 5, 7 or 9 senior most judges to deal with special cases of constitutional challenges. When he made the suggestion of increasing the number of judges from 18 to 26 in the year 1986, the government did not show any interest to his suggestion.

He also confessed to Gadbois the lawyers did not have the habit of making good briefs as they were heavily dependent on the practice of making oral arguments, therefore, leading to poorly drafted petitions and SLP. He also expressed his inclination of having law clerks at the Supreme Court which were absent at that period of time. [vi] He however always expressed his displeasure against the government for now appointing dozens of his recommendations as judges to the top court. Only 5 of his recommendations were accepted, reason being his not so good equation with Justice Sen and an unenthusiastic government.

BHAGWATI AND HIS LOVE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

Justice Bhagwati's love for human rights is not hidden from the world. This was perhaps the most significant attribute of his personality making him the crusader of rights. According to him, democracy is the driving force of human and commitment is the ultimate route in achieving an open society. While his admiration for democracy kept growing with time, right to free speech and expression remained the highest attribute given to the citizens democratically.

There is however a specific incident which made him realise the righteousness of this right: the famous Junius letter arrest. About 250 years ago in England, Junius letters were an initiative to write open letters criticising the then government between the years 1769 to 1772. Junius, a name derived from the second name of Brutus, was an anonymous identity given to the writer to speak against the monarchy government. About 69 letters were written during the period which resulted in a criminal prosecution against the newspaper for the offence of committing seditious libel. The jury after deliberating for 5 hours delivered the verdict of being 'not guilty' and the court was echoed with celebratory slogans. It was then that criticism of government was found to be inclusive of the right to free speech and freedom of press in England.

He recalled one same incident in India where a book "Extracts from Mao tse Tung" was banned by the Gujarat Government challenge to which came before the division bench of the High Court presided by J. Bhagwati himself. Being the admirer of free speech that he was, he observed the ban to be illegal and held that: [vii]

"It is not for the Government of the day nor for the judges presiding over the courts to decide what doctrine or philosophy is good for our people. It is for the people to choose what is best for them and in order that they may be able to make a wise decision and intelligent choice, free propagation of ideas is an essential requisite. The ideas propagated may be unorthodox and unconventional, they may disturb the complacency of a handful minority or they may challenge deep seated, sacred beliefs and question the most fundamental postulates of our social, political or economic thinking. There should be no ground for anxiety or apprehension in a country like ours which has always believed in the pursuit of truth, which never hesitated to receive new ideas and absorb them if found acceptable."

He considered the flow of receiving and transmitting ideas to be of utmost importance to India's democratic wheel. To ensure this, he rooted for setting up of Lok Pal and RTI Act in India which enable people to seek answers from government about the steps they undertake.

The fearlessness from which Justice Bhagwati saw the constitutional principles gave the Indian legal system a gift that will forever be cherished by the generations to come. Apart from the excellent insightful judge that he was, one characteristic that we all must be persuaded by today is his ability of never losing hope. Even in the shakiest chapters of his life, he kept the hope alive and rose from the ashes like a phoenix.

In a later interview with India Today, when Justice Bhagwati was asked about what he feels for being the centre of controversies, he replied *"Controversy has always chased me and I have always faced it squarely. There was a sentence in the speech of Gandhiji which he made on August 8, 1942. That sentence has always stuck in my mind. It ran like this: "Stare at the world though the world is bloodshot-eyes for you. Go ahead for fear of God within." I have always been of the view that if my conscience tells me what is correct then I should brave all opposition.*" [viii]

This is what Justice Bhagwati did; he stared at the world even when things were not the most favourable for him or the Chief Judicialship. His conscience and moral spirit made him a principled man and an even greater judge who with his prudent and judicious vision gave Indian legal jurisprudence those fundamental propositions which otherwise would leave us shallow. It gave us the best crusader of human rights and an even better pioneer of judicial activism we ever had.

6. EXPLAINED: J&K ROSHNI ACT: WHAT IT AIMED TO DO, WHAT HAPPENED UNTIL IT WAS REPEALED

It was enacted by Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah's government, and it set 1990 as the cutoff for encroachment on state land.

The State Administrative Council (SAC) headed by Jammu & Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik last week repealed the Jammu and Kashmir State Lands (Vesting of Ownership to the Occupants) Act, 2001, popularly known as the Roshni Act, because it had "failed to realise the desired objectives and there were also reports of misuse of some its provisions"

The original Act

The Roshni Act envisaged the transfer of ownership rights of state land to its occupants, subject to the payment of a cost, as determined by the government. It was enacted by Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah's government, and it set 1990 as the cutoff for encroachment on state land. The government's target was to earn Rs 25,000 crore by transferring 20 lakh kanals of state land to existing occupants against payment at market rates. The government said the revenue generated would be spent on commissioning hydroelectric power projects, hence the name "Roshni"

Subsequent amendments

In 2005, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed's PDP-Congress government relaxed the cutoff year to 2004. During the tenure of Ghulam Nabi Azad, who replaced Sayeed as Chief Minister under a three-year rotation agreement, the cutoff was relaxed further to 2007. The government also gave ownership rights of agricultural land to farmers occupying it for free, charging them only Rs 100 per kanal as documentation fee.

Allegations and probe

Investigations into the land transfers subsequently found that land in Gulmarg had been given over to ineligible beneficiaries. In 2009, the State Vigilance Organisation registered an FIR against several government officials for alleged criminal conspiracy to illegally possess and vest ownership of state land to occupants who did not satisfy criteria under the Roshni Act.

In 2014, a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) estimated that against the targeted Rs 25,000 crore, only Rs 76 crore had been realised from the transfer of encroached land between 2007 and 2013, thus defeating the purpose of the legislation. The report blamed irregularities including arbitrary reduction in prices fixed by a standing committee, and said this was done to benefit politicians and affluent people.

The Principal Accountant General (Audit) sent a copy of these findings to the State Vigilance Organisation for investigations. Then Revenue Minister Ajaz Ahmad Khan described the CAG findings as "motivated", but said the government would analyse them and take action in cases where provisions of the Roshni scheme had not been followed.

The Vigilance Organisation completed investigations in five cases by March 2015, and indicted nearly two dozen officials, including three former deputy commissioners for allegedly misusing the provisions of the scheme. It sought sanction to prosecute the accused, which is yet to be granted.

In November 2018, the High Court restrained all beneficiaries of the Roshni scheme from selling or carrying out any other transaction in respect of the land transferred to them.

Latest developments

The decision to repeal the Roshni Act came after demands from IkkJutt Jammu, a hardline Hindu group set up recently by one Ankur Sharma, an advocate. Sharma, who was instrumental in setting up the Hindu Ekta Manch to support the accused in the gangrape and murder of the 8-year-old Bakerwal girl in January, had in 2014 approached the High Court seeking court-monitored investigations into the transfer of land under the Act. On November 20, Sharma asked the Governor to withdraw the Act in order to "defeat the jihadi war in the form of demographic invasion of Jammu". Sharma had accused former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti of "spearheading an Islamo-fascist agenda for demographic change in Jammu's Hindu-dominated areas". He has also called for a social and economic boycott of the Gujjars and Bakerwals.

The Gujjar and Bakerwal groups in Jammu have been upset with the repeal of the Act. They have said that while the rich and influential managed to grab the benefits, their applications had remained pending.

What the repeal means

The SAC has ordered cancellation of all pending applications seeking vesting of ownership rights of state lands to their occupants. However, cases where such rights have already been transferred will hold.

7. READING THE NEW US POLICY ON TIBET: SNUBS TO CHINA ON DALAI LAMA, RIVERS

What is The Tibet Policy and Support Act, recently passed by the US Senate? How has China reacted? What does it mean for US-China relations?

The Tibet Policy and Support Act, passed by the US Senate earlier this week, bookends a turbulent year in US-China relations. The House of Representatives had passed the legislation in January. It will become law after the US President signs off on it.

The earlier version

The TSPA is an amended version of the Tibet Policy Act of 2002, which came into existence during the Bush Administration. But in an indication of just how important he considered relations with China, President George W Bush distanced himself from this Congressional action, and wrote strong words against it in his signing statement, in which asserted the administration's right not to implement parts of the act. He wrote: "Regrettably, the Act [H.R. 1646] contains a number of provisions that impermissibly interfere with the constitutional functions of the presidency in foreign affairs, including provisions that purport to establish foreign policy that are of significant concern."

He also said his approval to the Act did not constitute his adoption of the various statements of policy in the Act as US foreign policy, and said these would be taken as "advisory" statements only, "giving them the due weight that comity between the legislative and executive branches should require, to the extent consistent with US foreign policy". Also In Explained |Tibet passes law to make 'ethnic unity' mandatory. What does it mean?

US and China, today

US-China relations have become much more difficult over the last two decades, particularly worsening in the Trump Administration, and more so in 2020 over matters ranging from the pandemic to trade tariffs, and its cross-world coalition-building against Chinese superpower ambitions. Earlier this month, the Holding Foreign Companies Accounting Act, targeting Chinese investments in the US, was signed into law. Earlier in the year, President Donald Trump signed into law the Hong Kong Autonomy Act.

President Trump is not expected to take a Bush-like view on the TSPA, which introduces stronger provisions on Tibet, plus teeth in the form of a threat of sanctions, including travel bans on Chinese officials. How the Biden Administration, expected to frame its own China policy, views TPSA remains to be seen.

Still, most US administrations, the Trump Administration included, have broadly maintained a diplomatic balance between relations with China, and support for Tibet and the Dalai Lama. The State Department has a separate section on Tibet in its annual reports on human rights and religious freedom. But there has been no real push for talks with the Dalai Lama or on the release of political prisoners.

Opinion |Openly standing against China's occupation of Tibet could help India strategically and diplomatically

The Dalai Lama

Among the most significant amendments is that the TSPA makes it US policy to oppose attempts by Beijing to install its own Dalai Lama "in a manner inconsistent with Tibetan Buddhism in which the succession or identification of Tibetan Buddhist lamas, including the Dalai Lama, should occur without interference..."

The legislation makes reference to the Chinese government's 'Measures on the Management of the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas' in 2007, and a March 2019 statement by the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson that the "reincarnation of living Buddhas including the Dalai Lama must comply with Chinese laws and regulations and follow religious rituals and historical conventions". It also refers to China's installation of a 6-year-old boy in 1995 as the 11th Panchen Lama, and to statements by the present Dalai Lama explaining the traditions to be followed in the selection of a Dalai Lama, and that the authority to recognise the reincarnation of a Dalai Lama lies with him and his officials.

The Act also makes it US policy to hold senior Chinese officials "responsible for, complicit in, or have directly or indirectly engaged in the identification or installation of a candidate chosen by China as the future 15th Dalai Lama of Tibetan Buddhism" to have committed "a gross violation of internationally recognized human rights", attracting sanctions under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act. The Act, named after a Russian tax lawyer who died after being imprisoned while investigating Russian tax officials for fraud, authorises US officials to impose travel bans globally.

Other provisions

The TPSA has introduced provisions aimed at protecting the environment of the Tibetan plateau, calling for greater international cooperation and greater involvement by Tibetans. Alleging that China is diverting water resources from Tibet, the TPSA also calls for "a regional framework on water security, or use existing frameworks... to facilitate cooperative agreements among all riparian nations that would promote... arrangements on impounding and diversion of waters that originate on the Tibetan Plateau". While the 2002 Act said the US should establish a "branch office" in Lhasa, the TSPA ups the ante by changing that to a "consulate". It recognises the Central Tibetan Administration, whose President Lobsang Sangay takes credit for ensuring that the Senate took up the legislation for vote.

In a statement, Sangay said, "By passing the TPSA, Congress has sent its message loud and clear that Tibet remains a priority for the United States and that it will continue its steadfast support for His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the CTA. It is a momentous landmark for the Tibetan people."

What China says

China had earlier said the TPSA "severely breached international law and basic norms governing international relations, interfered in China's internal affairs, and sent a wrong message to 'Tibet independence' forces". After the passage of the Bill through the Senate, China said it "resolutely opposes" the "adoption of Bills containing such ill contents on China. Issues related to Tibet, Taiwan and Hong Kong... are China's internal affairs that allow no foreign interference". A Foreign Ministry spokesman urged the US "to stop meddling in our domestic affairs under those pretexts, refrain from signing the bills or implementing the negative contents and items in them that target China and undercut China's interests".

If India is pleased at this latest US barb to China, it has not said so openly. India has mostly refrained from playing the Tibet card against China, and like the US, has a one China policy. It was only this year, in the ongoing Ladakh standoff, that it used special forces made up almost entirely of Tibetan exiles to occupy strategic heights in Pangong Tso's south bank.

8. U.K., EU REACH POST-BREXIT TRADE AGREEMENT

Once ratified by both sides, the agreement will ensure Britain and the 27-nation bloc can continue to trade in goods without tariffs or quotas after the U.K. breaks fully free of the EU on January 1.

Just a week before the deadline, Britain and the European Union struck a free-trade deal on December 24 that should avert economic chaos on New Year's and bring a measure of certainty for businesses after years of Brexit turmoil.

Once ratified by both sides, the agreement will ensure Britain and the 27-nation bloc can continue to trade in goods without tariffs or quotas after the U.K. breaks fully free of the EU on January 1.

Relief was palpable on both sides that nine months of tense and often testy negotiations had finally produced a positive result.

The Christmas Eve breakthrough was doubly welcome amid a coronavirus pandemic that has left some 70,000 people in Britain dead and led the country's neighbors to shut its borders to the U.K. over a new and seemingly more contagious variant of the virus spreading in England.

"We have taken back control of our laws and our destiny," declared British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who posted a picture of himself on social media, beaming with thumbs up.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said, "it was a long and winding road but we have got a good deal to show for it."

"It is fair, it is a balanced deal, and it is the right and responsible thing to do for both sides," she said in Brussels.

The 27 EU member states and the British and European parliaments both vote on the agreement, though action by the latter may not happen until after the Jan. 1 breakup. Britain's Parliament is set to vote December 30.

France, long seen as Britain's toughest obstacle to a deal, said the uncanny steadfastness among the 27 nations with widely varying interests was a triumph in itself.

"European unity and firmness paid off," French President Emmanuel Macron said in a statement.

And German Chancellor Angela Merkel said that unity will now probably result in all the EU nations backing the deal:

"I am very optimistic, that we can present a good result here."

It has been four-and-a-half years since Britons voted 52% to 48% to leave the EU and — in the words of the Brexiters' campaign slogan — "take back control" of the U.K.'s borders and laws.

It took more than three years of wrangling before Britain left the bloc's political structures in January 2019. Disentangling the two sides' economies and reconciling Britain's desire for independence with the EU's aim of preserving its unity took months longer.

The devil will be in the detail of the 2,000-page agreement, but both sides claimed the deal protects their cherished goals. Britain said it gives the U.K. control over its money, borders, laws and fishing waters and ensures the country is "no longer in the lunar pull of the EU."

Ms. Von der Leyen said it protects the EU's single market and contains safeguards to ensure Britain does not unfairly undercut the bloc's standards.

Mr. Johnson's relief at striking a deal contrasted with his earlier insistence that the U.K. would "prosper mightily" even if no agreement were reached and the U.K. and the EU had to reinstate tariffs on each other's goods.

His government acknowledged that a chaotic no-deal exit — or a "crash-out," as the British call it — would probably bring gridlock at the country's ports, temporary shortages of some goods and price increases for staple foods. The turmoil could cost hundreds of thousands of jobs.

To avoid that, negotiating sessions alternating between London and Brussels — and sometimes disrupted by the pandemic — gradually whittled differences between the two sides down to three key issues: fair-competition rules, mechanisms for resolving future disputes, and fishing rights.

Mr. Johnson had insisted the U.K. would "prosper mightily" even if no deal were reached and the U.K. had to trade with the EU on World Trade Organization terms. But his government has acknowledged that a chaotic exit was likely to bring gridlock at Britain's ports, temporary shortages of some goods and price increases for staple foods.

The EU has long feared that Britain would undercut the bloc's social, environmental and state aid rules after Brexit, becoming a low-regulation rival on the bloc's doorstep. Britain denies planning to institute weaker standards but said that having to continue following EU regulations would undermine its sovereignty.

A compromise was eventually reached on the tricky "level playing field" issues. The economically minor but hugely symbolic issue of fish came to be the final sticking point, with maritime EU nations seeking to retain access to U.K. waters where they have long fished and Britain insisting it must exercise control as an "independent coastal state,"

Huge gaps over fishing were gradually closed over weeks of intense negotiations in Brussels, even as Johnson continued to insist that a no-deal exit was a likely and satisfactory outcome to the nine months of talks on the future relationship between the EU and its ex-member nation.

It has been 4 1/2 years since Britons voted 52%-48% to leave the EU and — in the words of the Brexiteers' campaign slogan — “take back control” of the U.K.'s borders and laws.

It took more than three years of wrangling before Britain left the bloc's political structures on Jan. 31. Disentangling economies that were closely entwined as part of the EU's single market for goods and services took even longer.

The U.K. has remained part of the single market and customs union during an 11-month post-Brexit transition period. As a result, many people so far will have noticed little impact from Brexit.

On Jan. 1, the breakup will start feeling real. The new year will bring huge changes, even with a trade deal. No longer will goods and people be able to move freely between the U.K. and its continental neighbors without border restrictions.

EU nationals will no longer be able to live and work in Britain without visas -- though that does not apply to the more than 3 million already doing so -- and Britons can no longer automatically work or retire in EU nations. Exporters and importers face customs declarations, goods checks and other obstacles.

The U.K.-EU border is already reeling from new restrictions placed on travellers from Britain into France and other European countries due to a new coronavirus variant sweeping through London and southern England. Thousands of trucks were stuck in traffic jams near Dover on Wednesday, waiting for their drivers to get virus tests so they could enter the Eurotunnel to France.

British supermarkets say the backlog will take days to clear and there could be shortages of some fresh produce over the holiday season.

Despite the deal, there are still unanswered questions about huge areas, including security cooperation between the U.K. and the bloc and access to the EU market for Britain's huge financial services sector.

9. EXPLAINED: INDIA'S CAUTION AS US SANCTIONS TURKEY OVER THE S-400 DEAL

While India has got a waiver from the outgoing Trump administration on the S-400 air defence system, Delhi hopes that the incoming Biden administration would not work towards reversing the decision.

The United States has imposed sanctions on Turkey on Monday over Ankara's acquisition of Russian S-400 air defence systems. Ankara acquired the Russian S-400 ground-to-air defenses in mid-2019 and says they pose no threat to NATO allies. Washington has long been threatening sanctions on Turkey and had removed the country from an F-35 jet program last year.

With India set to get the consignment of the S-400 air defence system early next year, New Delhi is watching Washington's moves closely. While it has got a waiver from the outgoing Trump administration, Delhi hopes that the incoming Biden administration would not work towards reversing the decision.

What is the S-400 air defence missile system? Why does India need it?

The S-400 Triumf, (NATO calls it SA-21 Growler), is a mobile, surface-to-air missile system (SAM) designed by Russia. It is the most dangerous operationally deployed modern long-range SAM (MLR SAM) in the world, considered much ahead of the US-developed Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system (THAAD).

The system can engage all types of aerial targets including aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and ballistic and cruise missiles within the range of 400km, at an altitude of up to 30km.

The system can track 100 airborne targets and engage six of them simultaneously.

It represents the fourth generation of long-range Russian SAMs, and the successor to the S-200 and S-300. The S-400's mission set and capabilities are roughly comparable to the famed US Patriot system.

The S-400 Triumf air defence system integrates a multifunction radar, autonomous detection and targeting systems, anti-aircraft missile systems, launchers, and command and control centre. It is capable of firing three types of missiles to create a layered defence.

The S-400 is two-times more effective than previous Russian air defence systems and can be deployed within five minutes. It can also be integrated into the existing and future air defence units of the Air Force, Army, and the Navy.

The first S-400 systems became operational in 2007 and is responsible for defending Moscow. It has been deployed in Syria in 2015, to guard Russian and Syrian naval and air assets. Russia has also stationed S-400 units in Crimea to strengthen Russia's position on the recently annexed peninsula.

From India's point of view, China is also buying the system. In 2015, Beijing signed an agreement with Russia to purchase six battalions of the system. Its delivery began in January 2018.

China's acquisition of the S-400 system has been viewed as a “game changer” in the region. However, its effectiveness against India is limited. According to experts, even if stationed right on the India-China border and moved into the Himalaya mountains, Delhi would be at the limit of its range.

India's acquisition is crucial to counter attacks in a two-front war, including even high-end F-35 US fighter aircraft.

In October 2015, Defence Acquisition Council considered buying 12 units of S-400 for its defence needs. But, on evaluation, in December 2015, five units were found adequate. The deal is worth about USD 5 billion.

The deal is near fruition, and negotiations are at an “advanced stage”, and now it is expected to be signed before a summit meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Turkey and Saudi Arabia are negotiating a deal with Russia, while Iraq and Qatar have expressed interest.

What is CAATSA, and how did the S-400 deal fall foul of this Act?

Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) was passed unanimously by the US Congress and signed reluctantly by US President Donald Trump. Enacted on August 2, 2017, its core objective is to counter Iran, Russia and North Korea through punitive measures.

Title II of the Act primarily deals with sanctions on Russian interests such as its oil and gas industry, defence and security sector, and financial institutions, in the backdrop of its military intervention in Ukraine and its alleged meddling in the 2016 US Presidential elections.

Section 231 of the Act empowers the US President to impose at least five of the 12 listed sanctions — enumerated in Section 235 of the Act — on persons engaged in a “significant transaction” with Russian defence and intelligence sectors.

As part of Section 231 of the Act, the US State Department has notified 39 Russian entities, dealings with which could make third parties liable to sanctions. These include almost all of the major Russian companies/entities such as Rosoboronexport, Almaz-Antey, Sukhoi Aviation, Russian Aircraft Corporation MiG, and United Shipbuilding Corporation which are active in manufacturing defence items and/or their exports.

However, mere naming of 39 Russian entities by the US authorities or dealings by any country with these entities does not automatically lead to the imposition of sanctions under the CAATSA provisions. The key determinant for imposing sanctions is “significant transaction” between the named Russian entity and an outside agency.

CAATSA, if implemented in its stringent form, would have affected India's defence procurement from Russia. Russian maker of S-400s — Almaz-Antey Air and Space Defense Corporation JSC — is on the list of 39 Russian entities.

Apart from the S-400 air defence system, Project 1135.6 frigates and Ka226T helicopters will also be affected. Also, it will impact joint ventures, like Indo Russian Aviation Ltd, Multi-Role Transport Aircraft Ltd and Brahmos Aerospace. It will also affect India's purchase of spare parts, components, raw materials and other assistance.

But why does the US have a law like CAATSA to begin with? And what does it mean for India's defence landscape? Following the US elections and allegations of Russian meddling – some call it collusion – in the US elections, the strain between Washington and Moscow has reached a new level. Angry with Moscow's actions around the world, US lawmakers are hoping to hit Russia where it hurts most, its defense and energy business, through CAATSA.

“As per the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Arms Transfer Database, during the period 2010-17, Russia was the top arms supplier to India. The Russian share in India's arms imports during the same period has declined to 68 per cent, from an all-time high of 74 per cent during the 2000s, whereas the combined share of the US and Israel has increased from nine to 19 per cent.

Between 2013 and 2017, Russia's share declined further to 62 per cent, whereas the combined share of US and Israel increased to 26 per cent.¹³ Accounting for about 15 per cent, the United States is the second biggest supplier of arms to India during the five year period ending 2017. Between 2000-2009 and 2010-17, US arms deliveries to India have increased by a whopping 1470 per cent.

Most of India's weapons are of Soviet/Russian origin – nuclear submarine INS Chakra, the Kilo-class conventional submarine, the supersonic Brahmos cruise missile, the MiG 21/27/29 and Su-30 MKI fighters, IL-76/78 transport planes, T-72 and T-90 tanks, Mi-series of helicopters, and Vikramaditya aircraft carrier,” an exhaustive paper on “Implications of CAATSA for India's Defence Relations with Russia and America” by Laxman K Behera, a Research Fellow at Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), said in April '2018.

How did the exemption for India come about?

CAATSA impacts Indo-US ties and dents the image of the US as a reliable partner. At a time when the US is projecting India as a key partner in its Indo-Pacific strategy, with the US National Security Strategy 2017 explicitly supporting New Delhi's vital role in this regard.

Admiral Harry Harris, Commander of the US Pacific Command, referred to a classified letter written by Secretary of Defense James Mattis to the concerned members of the Senate Committee on Armed Services, wherein Secretary Mattis has requested for “some relief from CAATSA” for countries like India.

In his argument, Admiral Harris has also favoured relief citing the “strategic opportunity” that India presents to the US and also the opportunity “to trade in arms with India.”

After months of six months of hectic lobbying – CAATSA came into force in January this year — on Tuesday, a US Congressional committee has proposed waivers for India from stringent sanctions under Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). This is directed against those doing business with Russia's defence industry.

The Senate and House Armed Services Committee in a joint conference report to the National Defense Authorisation Act (NDAA)-2019 provided a modified waiver to section 231 of CAATSA. A conference report refers to the final version of a Bill that is negotiated between the House of Representatives and the Senate via a conference committee.

The NDAA-2019 now moves to the Senate and the House for formal passage before it can be sent to the White House for President Donald Trump to sign into law.

The portion of the bill — National Defense Authorisation Act — that amends CAATSA does not mention any country, but the intended beneficiaries of the amended waiver are India, Vietnam and Indonesia.

What's in it for Washington?

The US sees India as a major market for the US defence industry. In the last one decade, it has grown from near zero to USD 15 billion worth of arms deals.

“Since 2008, the US has bagged more than \$15 billion in arms deals including for the C-17 Globemaster and C-130J transport planes, P-8 (I) maritime reconnaissance aircraft, M777 light-weight howitzer, Harpoon missiles, and Apache and Chinook helicopters.

Between 2013-14 and 2015-16, the US has won 13 contracts worth Rs 28,895 crore (\$4.4 billion). Both in term of the number and value of contracts, the US is way ahead of other major suppliers. In percentage terms, the US share of Indian arms imports total 23 per cent in terms of the number of contracts and 54 per cent by value,” Behera wrote, in his paper in IDSA.

This value is all set to increase further with the US likely accepting an Indian request for Sea Guardian drones.

In addition, US defence contractors, including Lockheed Martin and Boeing, are also strong contenders for a number of high-profile arms deals, including the recently floated tender notices for 110 fighter planes for the Indian Air Force, 57 Multi-Role Carrier Borne Fighters for the Indian Navy, and 234 naval utility and multi-role helicopters.

Does the exemption for India also have a wider global significance in which Russia and China are factors?

This exemption means that growing defence and security cooperation that prompted India to sign a logistics pact with the US, the US designating India as a Major Defence Partner, and both countries coming together on Indo-Pacific strategy, the newly formed Quad, are on a stable footing.

It also makes a point on principles that, as a sovereign country, India cannot be dictated about its strategic interests by a third country.

With uncertainties in the global power landscape shifting, with the Trump administration being unpredictable, China being more assertive and Russia finding new partners, this waiver or “carve-out” would mean India has been able to hedge its bets.

It also shows the need for India to be nimble-footed in its diplomacy when it comes to its key major power relationships – and one cannot be sacrificed at the cost of another.

How does these new sanctions on Turkey complicate the issue?

Senior US officials said that Ankara’s purchase of the S-400s and its refusal to reverse its decision, despite repeated pleas from Washington, left the United States with no other choice.

The sanctions target Turkey’s top defence procurement and development body Presidency of Defence Industries (SSB), its chairman Ismail Demir and three other employees.

The measures, which received a bipartisan welcome from the U.S. Congress, were announced under the CAATSA—the first time the act has been used against a fellow member of the NATO alliance.

Turkey condemned the sanctions as a “grave mistake” and urged Washington to revise its “unjust decision”. It said sanctions would inevitably harm mutual relations and threatened unspecified retaliatory steps.

“The United States made clear to Turkey at the highest levels and on numerous occasions that its purchase of the S-400 system would endanger the security of U.S. military technology and personnel and provide substantial funds to Russia’s defense sector,” US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said.

Pompeo has told Turkey its purchase of the S-400 missile defense system will endanger the US military.

Christopher Ford, US Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation, said Washington had sought a solution but Ankara rejected all offers.

The sanctions, near the end of Trump’s presidency are likely to weigh on Ankara’s ties with Democrat Joe Biden’s administration when he takes over as president next month.

So, is India off the hook?

India hopes that Washington understands New Delhi’s security imperatives, especially with a hostile China along the border. This is more important since Indian and Chinese soldiers have been in a face-off situation for more than six months now, with no resolution in sight.

In January this year, a senior US official had said that the US administration does not want to make a decision that “degrades the defence capabilities” of India which is its ‘Major Defence Partner’. The official was referring to the potential sanctions under CAATSA which prohibits countries from purchasing significant military equipment from Russia.

How the Biden administration acts will also be reflective of how much it appreciates and understands India’s concerns on China, and whether it is going to support New Delhi against a belligerent Beijing. It could well turn out to be the litmus test.

10. THE HINDU EXPLAINS | WHAT DOES THE MOROCCO-ISRAEL DEAL MEAN FOR WESTERN SAHARA?

In return for Morocco’s decision to establish formal ties with Israel, the U.S. has recognised Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara

Morocco has become the fourth Arab country to normalise ties with Israel in five months. On December 10, U.S. President Donald Trump announced the deal, claiming that the series of normalisation agreements between Arab

countries (the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan and now Morocco) and the Jewish state was bringing peace to West Asia. In return for Morocco's decision to establish formal ties with Israel, the U.S. has recognised Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara, a disputed territory in northwestern Africa, which has been under Moroccan control for decades. Morocco has long been campaigning internationally, using economic pressure and diplomacy, for recognition of its claims to Western Sahara. It got what it wanted from the deal with Israel, a country with which it had developed covert ties for decades.

What is the dispute?

This large, arid and sparsely populated region that shares a border with Morocco, Algeria and Mauritania and has a long Atlantic coast was a Spanish colony. The region is home to the Sahrawi tribe. In the 1970s, when international and local pressure mounted on Spain to vacate its colonies in Africa, Libya and Algeria helped found a Sahrawi insurgency group against the Spanish rule in Western Sahara. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro, known as the Polisario Front, started guerilla warfare against Spanish colonialists. In 1975, as part of the Madrid Accords with Morocco and Mauritania, Spain decided to leave the region, which was then called Spanish Sahara. According to the accords, Spain would exit the territory before February 28, 1976 and until then, the Spanish Governor General would administer the territory, with help from two Moroccan and Mauritanian Deputy Governors. The Polisario Front and Algeria opposed the agreements.

Both Morocco and Mauritania moved troops to Western Sahara to assert their claims. Polisario, backed by Algeria, continued the guerilla resistance, demanding their withdrawal. On February 27, 1976, a day before Spain ended its presence, the Polisario Front declared the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) in Western Sahara. The SADR has been recognised by several African countries and is a member of the African Union.

What is Morocco's claim?

Morocco and Mauritania had laid claims to Western Sahara even when it was a Spanish colony. In 1974, the International Court of Justice was asked by the U.N. General Assembly to look into the legal ties, if any, that existed between Western Sahara and Morocco and Mauritania at the time of its colonisation by Spain in the 19th century. The court found no evidence "of any ties of territorial sovereignty" between the Western Sahara and either Morocco or Mauritania, but stated that there were "indications" that some tribes in the territory were loyal to the Moroccan Sultan. In its conclusion, the court endorsed the General Assembly Resolution 1541 that affirmed that to ensure decolonisation, complete compliance with the principle of self-determination is required. But King Hassan II of Morocco hailed the court's opinion as a vindication of Rabat's claims and moved troops across the northern border to Western Sahara. Mauritania joined in later. It set the stage for a three-way fight with the Polisario Front resisting both countries.

What's the current status of the conflict?

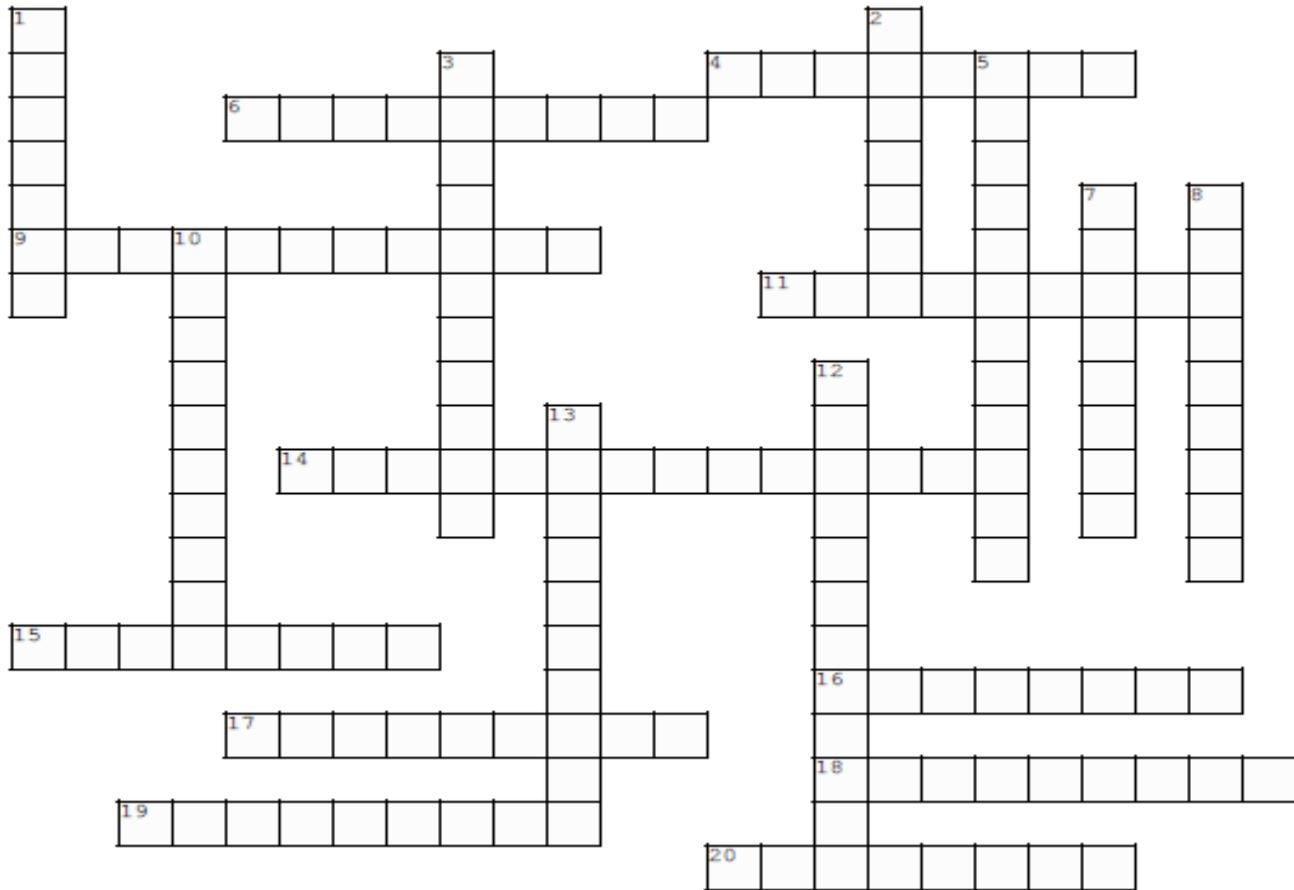
The three-way conflict lasted for almost four years. In August 1979, Mauritania signed a peace treaty with Polisario, bringing the country's military involvement in Western Sahara to an end. When Mauritanian forces withdrew from the southern part of the desert that they had occupied, Morocco swiftly advanced troops. The war continued between Moroccan troops and the Polisario Front. In 1991, when a ceasefire was finally achieved, upon the promise of holding an independence referendum in Western Sahara, Morocco had taken control of about 80% of the territory. The war had forced almost 200,000 Sahrawis to flee the territory to neighbouring Algeria, where Polisario is running squalid refugee camps. The SADR is operating largely from the eastern flank of Western Sahara and the refugee camps. Moroccan troops have built a huge sand wall called Berm, from the Atlantic coast of Western Sahara to the mountains of Morocco, dividing the territories they control from that of Polisario. "It's Africa's last colony", according to Polisario fighters.

What impact will the Israel deal have on the conflict?

The normalisation deal between Morocco and Israel itself will not have any direct bearing on Western Sahara. But the concession the U.S. has given to Morocco — Washington's recognition of Moroccan occupation of Western Sahara in return for Rabat's agreement with Israel — could flare up the conflict. The independence referendum, promised in the 1991 ceasefire, is yet to take place. Last month, Morocco launched an offensive into the U.N.-controlled buffer zone between the two sides and in return, Polisario said it would resume armed conflict. After the Trump administration's recognition of Morocco's claim, Polisario said it would continue fighting until Moroccan troops are forced to withdraw. The U.S. move would upset Algeria, the biggest backer of Polisario. Among the countries that condemned the U.S. decision is Russia, which said the recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara "is a violation of international law".

LEGAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

COMPLETE THE CROSSWORD PUZZLE BELOW



ACROSS	DOWN
<p>4. convey (a property) to a creditor as security on a loan.</p> <p>6. a formal written or spoken statement, especially one given in a court of law.</p> <p>9. the action or process of commuting a judicial sentence.</p> <p>11. court's judgement which is cited as an authority in later cases</p> <p>14. the restoration of friendly relations.</p> <p>15. a person who has the legal right and responsibility of taking care of someone who cannot take care of himself or herself,</p> <p>16. the state or practice of refraining from extramarital, or especially from all, sexual intercourse.</p> <p>17. period of supervision over an offender, ordered by the court instead of serving time in prison</p> <p>18. procedural device before trial in which one party joins a third party into a lawsuit because that third party is liable to a</p> <p>19. to prevent a plan or an agreement from succeeding</p> <p>20. insolvent</p>	<p>1. act without reason or purpose</p> <p>2. born of the same mother but not having the same father.</p> <p>3. sale of all the assets of the company or partnership by a liquidator to compensate shareholders</p> <p>5. the reluctant acceptance of something without protest.</p> <p>7. departing from an accepted standard</p> <p>8. died without making a will</p> <p>10. striking out a person mistakenly named as a party to a suit</p> <p>12. the payment of a debt or fulfilment of an obligation or claim.</p> <p>13. a person who helps another commit a crime.</p>

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p>16. Chastity</p> <p>17. Probation</p> <p>18. Implicator</p> <p>19. Frustrate</p> <p>20. Bankrupt</p> | <p>11. Precedent</p> <p>12. Satisfaction</p> <p>13. Accomplice</p> <p>14. Reconciliation</p> <p>15. Guardian</p> | <p>6. Testimony</p> <p>7. Aberrant</p> <p>8. Intestate</p> <p>9. Commutation</p> <p>10. Misjoinder</p> | <p>1. Caprice</p> <p>2. Uterine</p> <p>3. Liquidation</p> <p>4. Mortgage</p> <p>5. Acquiescence</p> |
|---|--|--|---|