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1. Suicide: A Perspective

WHO says

- Close to 800 000 people die due to suicide every year.
- For each suicide, there are more than 20 suicide attempts.
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death in 15-19-year-olds.
- 79% of global suicides occur in low- and middle-income countries.
- Ingestion of pesticide, hanging and firearms are among the most common methods of suicide globally.

But what is Suicide?

- Let me ask you this:
 - ✓ The way that 'murder' is equated with wrongful killing of another,
 - ✓ Is it right that 'suicide' be equated with wrongful self-killing?
 - ✓ Is Suicide a moral question?

Albert Camus says

- "There is only one really serious philosophical problem," "and that is suicide".

Albert Camus further says

- "Deciding whether or not life is worth living is to answer the fundamental question in philosophy.
- All other questions follow from that".

You can counter Albert Camus

- You can ask that suicide is "neither a "problem" nor a "question," but an act".

Nonetheless, we do have our right to life in our Constitution, right?

- Yes.
- According to Article 21 of the Indian constitution,
- "No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by the law".
- While the constitution covers the right to life or liberty, there is the question that whether it includes the 'right to die'?

Can Right to Life be equated with Right not to have life?

- This question was asked in In the 1996 Gian Kaur vs State of Punjab case.
- But it failed to convince the five judge bench that the Constitution only gives you the right to life and not "right not to live".

So, is Suicide a crime?

- There is a Section 309 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) for this.

- It clearly states: “Whoever attempts to commit suicide and does any act towards the commission of such offence, shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year or with fine or both.”
- But remember, the Indian Penal Code had been formulated during British Raj Regime of 1860, and was mainly governed by British law of that time.
- Though India continues to follow the archaic law, Britain had decriminalized suicide way back in 1961.

So, is it a crime or not?

- Although section 309 is still in effect, the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 has restricted its application.
- The relevant provision of the new act states:
- “Notwithstanding anything contained in section 309 of the Indian Penal Code, any person who attempts to commit suicide shall be presumed, unless proved otherwise, to have severe stress and shall not be tried and punished under the said Code”.

Back to the basic question, What is a Suicide?

- Commonly we say that suicide is any self-caused death.
- But consider these examples:
 - ✓ An individual who knows the health risks of smoking or of skydiving, but willfully engages in these behaviors and dies as a result.
 - ✓ An individual who accidentally consumes a mouthful of hydrochloric acid, believing it to be lemonade, and subsequently dies.
 - ✓ Someone driving rash.
 - ✓ Someone in acute pain and terminally ill and choosing Voluntary Euthanasia
- These things cause ones own death but might not be termed as engaging in suicidal behavior.

Society acts differently on different suicides

- Under some conditions an act of suicide is seen as exemplifying virtues as courage, generosity, or justice.
- In others, an act of suicide exhibit such vices as cowardice, selfishness, or rashness.

Durkheim discusses it in detail

- You can listen to it in the video link appearing above.

Suicide in non-human life forms

- They say Salmonella does it.
- Some Ants do it to protect the rest.
- How about suicidal altruism or Autothysis of Pea Aphids and Termites?
- And our very own Cytokine Storm?

Before we finish, Let's return to Albert Camus once more

- Albert Camus wrote a philosophical essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*.
- For Camus, Sisyphus heroically does not try to escape his absurd task of endlessly and futilely pushing a rock up a mountain, but instead perseveres and in so doing resists the lure of suicide.
- Suicide, Camus contends, tempts us with the promise of an illusory freedom from the absurdity of our existence, but is in the end an abdication of our responsibility to confront or defy that absurdity head on.

Jean-Paul Sartre & A Godless World

- Jean-Paul Sartre found suicide as a possibility of assertion of authentic human will in the face of absurdity.
- Suicide represents, according to Sartre, an opportunity to stake out our understanding of our essence as individuals in a godless world.

There's a beautiful book, *The Sense of an Ending*

- There, some Adrian commits suicide, leaving a note addressed to the coroner saying "that the free person has a philosophical duty to examine the nature of their life, and may then choose to renounce it"

2. An Assessment of UN Security Council

Introduction

- The Security Council, the United Nations' principal crisis-management body, is empowered to impose binding obligations on the 193 UN member states to maintain peace.
- The Security Council comprises five permanent members—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—collectively known as the P5.
- The council's ten elected members, which serve two-year, nonconsecutive terms,
- The council's five permanent and ten elected members meet regularly to assess threats to international security, addressing issues that include civil wars, natural disasters, arms control, and terrorism.

What Is The Debate?

- Structurally, the body remains largely unchanged since its founding in 1946, stirring debate among many members about its efficacy and authority as a mediator on matters of international security.
- Is it still relevant in the 21st century?
- What is more relevant – Sovereign nations or an institution?

Concentration of Powers

- The P5's privileged status has its roots in the United Nations' founding, in the aftermath of World War II. The United States and Soviet Union were the outright victors of the war, and, along with the United Kingdom, they shaped the postwar political order.
- The inclusion of the Republic of China (Taiwan), envisioning international security presided over by "four global policemen."
- France a European buffer against potential German or Soviet aggression

- But Does it reflect the New Realities Post WW2?

The Shifting Limits of Sovereignty

- Russia's frictions with the United States and European Union following its annexation of Crimea in early 2014 and North Korea's nuclear weapons program have added tensions.
- Us invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan?

Veto Issues?

- Any one of them can veto a resolution.
- Russia vetoed a resolution that would have created an international tribunal to prosecute the pro-Russia separatists in eastern Ukraine who are thought to have shot down a Malaysian Airlines passenger jet using a Russian-made missile.

Relevance of Regional Organisation?

- Regional organizations have played an increasingly important role in peacekeeping and conflict resolution.
- For instance, the council authorized the use of force in Libya in 2011 after the Arab League called for a no-fly zone, which the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) then executed.

Responsibility to Protect?

- The emergence of the responsibility to protect (R2P) in the early 2000s appeared to justify the use of force outside Security Council authorization by qualifying the principle of noninterference in sovereign affairs. The doctrine, as adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2005, stipulates that states have a responsibility to protect their populations from crimes against humanity.

Representation Issues?

- The regions like far East Asia, South America, Africa have no representation in the permanent membership of the council.

Sanctions?

- Arms embargoes, travel bans, asset freezes, and import/export bans on individual goods, rather than comprehensive embargoes, are now the norm.
- Masood Azhar – a Global Terrorist?

Blue Helmets or Blue Berets? Peacekeeping Missions?

- United Nations Peacekeeping helps countries torn by conflict create conditions for lasting peace.
- Peacekeeping mandates continue to be scrutinized for their scope, cost, and cases in which peacekeepers themselves have committed abuses.

Sanctions /Military Actions Vs Economic/Social/ Political Turmoil

- Its powers to establish international sanctions, and the authorization of military action through Security Council resolutions which are binding to member states can have serious consequences on economies.

Current Geopolitical Realities

- Many critics, including member states from the developing world, charge that the council's structure does not reflect current geopolitical realities. The council was expanded from six elected members to ten in 1965, and, in 1971, the People's Republic of China took the permanent seat previously occupied by the Republic of China (Taiwan). Since then, the body's composition has remained unchanged.
- Relevance of G 4

Benefits of Inclusiveness

- UN Security Council Resolution 1973, mandating armed international intervention in Libya to protect civilians, illustrated that a more inclusive UN Security Council configuration was capable of approving the use of force in an ongoing internal conflict. It also showed that a way forward could be found even when there was not full agreement among states: Germany voiced its misgivings by abstaining in the Security Council vote; nevertheless, it did not block the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), of which it is a member, from carrying out the operation.

Academic Context and Resources (Lack Of Transparency)

- It is hard enough to take a snapshot of the Council at any given time, due to its long, multifaceted agenda, opaque proceedings, and uncertain impact on international relations. Partly for this reason, throughout the 1990s the Council had been studied primarily through the lens of international law, one particular crisis, or one individual's memoirs.

If Not Security Council; Then What?

- Security Council decisions remain the most appropriate way to ratify and codify the appropriate major power responses.

Way Forward

- Geopolitical tensions, growing inequality, terrorism, cyber security, nuclear weapons, climate change, and humanitarian and migratory crises cannot be solved by any single country alone, nor can they be ignored and left to others to solve. Global threats are shared, so too must be the solutions to them.

3. Yoga Day

- It's योग, Not योगा

What is it?

- Soldiers performing Pranayama and Surya namaskar at the backdrop of snow-covered mountain slopes at near Khardung La, Ladakh.

Why did they do it?

- Because it was June 21 International Yoga Day United Nations celebrates it across the world
- Theme for this year was "Yoga for Health - Yoga at Home"
- Yes, because of Social Distancing

When was the First Time it was celebrated?

- 2015.

- The UN proclaimed June 21 as International Day of Yoga by passing a resolution on December 11, 2014.

What does Yoga Mean?

- It's Yog.
- Addition.
- That is, to join or to unite.
- It symbolises the union of a person's body and consciousness.

What is Yog Sutra

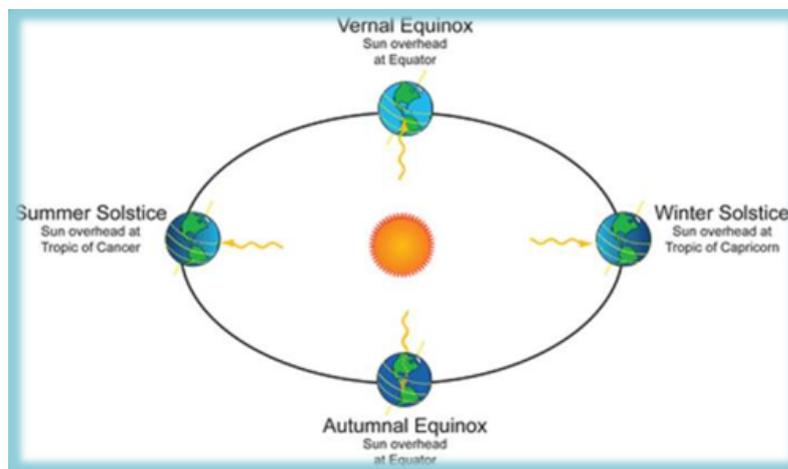
- The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali are a collection of 196 Sanskrit sutras (aphorisms) on the theory and practice of yoga.

What is Ashtanga?

- Patanjali defines yoga as having eight components:
 - ✓ Yama (abstinences)
 - ✓ Niyama (observances)
 - ✓ Asana (yoga postures)
 - ✓ Pranayama (breath control)
 - ✓ Pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses)
 - ✓ Dharana (concentration)
 - ✓ Dhyana (meditation)
 - ✓ Samadhi (absorption)

Why is it celebrated on 21st June?

- Because it coincides with the Summer solstice



Some important aspects of Summer Solstice

- On the day of the solstice, the northern hemisphere received the longest stretch of daylight in a given year.

- The amount of incoming energy the Earth received from the Sun on this day is 30 per cent higher at the North Pole than at the Equator.

What does Solstice mean by the way?

- Solstice means “sun stands still” in Latin.

2020’s Summer Solstice coincided with an ANNULAR Solar Eclipse

- A solar eclipse is witnessed when the moon is aligned between the Sun and Earth, blocking the light received by the Earth from the Sun.
- An annular solar eclipse, on the other hand, happens when the Moon is the farthest from the Earth, because of which, it looks smaller and does not block the entire view of the Sun creating a “ring of fire” effect.

4. An Assessment of the Coronil Issue

The Issue

- Ministry of AYUSH has asked Baba Ramdev’s Patanjali Ayurved to stop advertising its Coronil medicine
 - ✓ It is claimed to be a “100 per cent cure” against COVID-19
- It is alleged that the company did not follow due processes before launching the “Corona Kit”.
- Uttarakhand government said that Patanjali Ayurveda Ltd had the licence only for manufacturing an immunity booster against cough and fever. There was nothing in their application related to the treatment of coronavirus

Ingredients of Coronil

- Giloy
 - ✓ It has antioxidants that are known to neutralise free radicals and prevent inflammation
 - ✓ It purifies blood, increases immunity, removes toxins from the body and fights against bacteria and virus effectively
 - ✓ Its anti-inflammatory properties help in tackling respiratory problems like cough, cold and breathing problems
- Ashwagandha
 - ✓ Boosts immunity with its antioxidant properties
 - ✓ Its natural component called withanone (Wi-N) can block the replication process of the novel virus and treat the condition
 - ✓ Reduces the level of stress hormone called cortisol, which increases when you are suffering from deadly diseases
 - ✓ Its anti-cancer properties can improve body’s muscle mass and strength
- Tulsi (a.k.a. Basil)
 - ✓ It has a rich nutritional value. It contains iron, zinc, vitamin A, C and calcium etc.

- ✓ Acts as an adaptogen and promotes mental balance
- ✓ Prevents the onset of certain respiratory disorders like cough, cold, asthma and bronchitis

Coronil & Process of Drug Approval

- The advertising of Ayurvedic drugs is governed by the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act. The Act does talk about “false claims” and “directly or indirectly giving a false impression regarding the true character of the drug”. But serious diseases such as AIDS or encephalitis, which have emerged in the past 40 years, are not listed under the law.
 - ✓ In February, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare released a draft of an amendment to the 1954 Act to correct such shortcomings. The Centre has used the 1954 Act to scrutinise Patanjali’s tall claims – the AYUSH ministry’s notice to Baba Ramdev’s outfit was served under this law
- Patanjali, reportedly, sought regulatory approval for individual medicines, that it later included in the “Corona Kit”, as “immunity boosters” and as remedies for “cough and breathlessness”. In claiming that these medicines cure COVID, Ramdev’s company is guilty of flouting medical – and business – ethics, while also discrediting Ayurveda.
 - ✓ The firm had displayed an image of Coronavirus on the tablet, the licencing authority said this was in violation of relevant sections under the provisions of Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954
- As per due process, the state government is informed before a trial, which further refers the request to the state’s clinical trial committee and ethics committee
 - ✓ After getting permission from these committees, the request is forwarded to the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) who gives the final approval
- The notice will be sent to the firm under Rule 170 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, which makes it compulsory for companies to advertise any product in print and electronic media only with the permission from the state licensing authority.

Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation

- It is the highest office on drugs
- It is the national regulatory body for Indian pharmaceutical and medical devices and serves parallel function to the FDA of the US
- Within the CDSCO, the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) regulates the pharmaceutical and medical devices, under the gamut of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- The Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940 and rules 1945 have entrusted various responsibilities to central & state regulators for regulation of drugs & cosmetics.
- Under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, CDSCO is responsible for approval of Drugs, Conduct of Clinical Trials, laying down the standards for Drugs, control over the quality of imported Drugs in the country and coordination of the activities of State Drug Control Organizations by providing expert advice with a view of bring about the uniformity in the enforcement of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.

- Further CDSCO along with state regulators, is jointly responsible for grant of licenses of certain specialized categories of critical Drugs such as blood and blood products, I. V. Fluids, Vaccine and Sera.

Laws in Place

- Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940
- Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act 1954

Vaccine Development

- A new vaccine candidate has to pass testing in animals, following which clinical trials kick in. Over three phases, the vaccine candidate's safety and efficacy are tested as per protocols. A fourth stage involves collection and analysis of post-marketing data

Pre-clinical Trials

- In this primary stage, scientists test the vaccine on animals such as mice or monkeys to see if it produces an immune response
- Phase 1
 - ✓ First step where the experimental vaccine is given to humans, usually between 20-80 subjects, to test safety and dosage and check whether it stimulates the immune system
- Phase 2
 - ✓ A larger group of several hundred individuals are enrolled for testing and they are split into groups age-wise such as children and elderly. In this phase, the candidate vaccine's safety, immunogenicity, proposed doses, schedule of immunisation and method of delivery is studied
- Phase 3
 - ✓ The vaccine candidate is given to thousands of people in this stage. The scientists check how many become infected compared with volunteers who receive a placebo
- Approval
 - ✓ After Phase III trials, the vaccine developer submits a license application to the regulatory authority in their respective country. The regulator then inspects the factory where the vaccine will be made and approves its labeling.
 - ✓ During a pandemic, a vaccine may receive emergency use authorisation before a formal green signal

Human Challenge Trials

- Under this, participants of both the vaccine and placebo group upon consent are deliberately exposed to the infection – thus are “challenged” by the disease organism
- Proponents believe that they save valuable time in vaccine development as researchers would not have to wait for participants to contract the infection under real-world conditions
 - ✓ By replacing conventional Phase 3 testing of vaccine candidates, such trials may subtract many months from the licensure process, making efficacious vaccines available more quickly
- It also requires significantly less number of people than regular Phase 3 trials, which require thousands of volunteers

Ethics of Clinical Trails

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5. Privatisation of Railways

Introduction

- Unlike the airlines, the Railways is what in economics is known as a natural monopoly. The initial infrastructure costs are so high in the railways, as compared to the cost of operation, that the incumbents in the market are very strongly advantaged and proper market competition is impossible.

Issues (Railways)

- Congested networks
- Organizational structure
- Low Quality of Service
- Internal generation of resources
- Efficiency of terminals
- Economies of scale
- Impact on the Economy
- Increasing Number of Accidents:
- Limited Coverage
- Issue of Accountability
- Difficult to privatize a vertical

Benefits of Privatisation

- Improved Infrastructure
- Normalization of prices
- Improved Security
- Better R&D
- Foreign capital

Example to Consider

- TEJAS – run by IRCTC
- BRITIAN

Way Forward

Bibek Debroy Committee

- Transition to commercial accounting
- Streamline recruitment & HR processes
- Focus on non-core areas
- Decentralisation
- Indian Railway Manufacturing Company
- Encouraging private entry
- Independent regulator
- Raising resources

Other Way Forwards

- Better utilization of existing infrastructure to address congestion
- Rationalize fare structures and subsidies, and monetize assets to generate revenues
- Enhance safety of trains to reduce accidents and modernize stations:
- Enhance the ease of doing business
- Increase the share of non-fare revenues in total revenue

Conclusion

- Corporatized rather than privatized.



6. Disengagement at Galwan

Special Representatives Meet

Event

- National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi talked
- They agreed that it is necessary to ensure complete disengagement of troops along the LAC at the earliest and de-escalation from India-China border areas for full restoration of peace and tranquility.
- Doval and Wang are Special Representatives for the boundary talks.
- They earlier met in 2018 and 2019.
- The decision to activate the NSA-led SR mechanism was taken by the South Block.

The Chinese Statement

- “The right and wrong of what recently happened at the Galwan Valley in the western sector of the China-India boundary is very clear. China will continue firmly safeguarding our territorial sovereignty as well as peace and tranquility in the border areas.”
- China, did not, however, repeat its claim of sovereignty over the Galwan Valley.
- The Chinese statement said both countries “agreed” to strengthen communication through the mechanism of the SRs, hold meetings of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on China-India Border Affairs without interruption, consistently improve and strengthen confidence-building measures

The MEA Statement

- The MEA issued a statement which “re-affirmed that both sides should strictly respect and observe the Line of Actual Control” and “should not take any unilateral action to alter the status quo”.
- “China will continue firmly safeguarding our territorial sovereignty..” The Indian readout did not counter this part of the Chinese statement – this is being read perhaps as a conciliatory space yielded to Beijing.
- The MEA statement also said they “agreed” that the two “Special Representatives will continue their conversations”

Common in Both Statements

- Both statements had a common line: to “not allow differences to become disputes”
- This is a mantra of sorts, first formulated in June 2017 when President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi met in Astana, and reiterated in Xiamen in September 2017 after the end of the Doklam standoff.
- Both statements also invoked the understanding between Modi and Xi at the Wuhan and Mahabalipuram informal summits on maintaining peace and tranquility.
- Both statements talked about “consensus reached between the leaders”
- The Chinese statement said, in the context of the app ban, “achieving development and revitalization is the top priority where we share long-term strategic interests”

The SR Mechanism

- New Delhi activated the Special Representative (SR) mechanism on the boundary talks
- National Security Advisor Ajit Doval talked to his counterpart, China’s State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, with the sole objective of “de-escalation” and “defusing” the situation
- It is said that this is a “tool kit” New Delhi has tried to reach out to Beijing at a “higher level” – a State Councillor is higher than the Foreign Minister in the Chinese hierarchical system.
- In India’s case, both Jaishankar and Doval are at the same level – both have Cabinet rank.
- On the Chinese side, the Foreign Minister and the State Councillor (the Special Representative) is the same person since 2018.

- The 22nd Meeting of the Special Representatives of India and China was held in New Delhi on December 21, 2019.

The Withdrawal

- Chinese troops have moved back by around 1.5 km from the site of the June 15 clashes at Patrolling Point 14 in the Galwan Valley.
- This rearward movement away from the LAC has been matched by the Indian side as part of an initial step of the disengagement process
- The Chinese military camp at PP14 in Galwan Valley has been completely dismantled
- At the other faceoff sites at PP15 and PP17A (Gogra) in the Hot Springs area, there are expectations of similar rearward movement
- There are, however, no signs of any disengagement in the Pangong Tso area

Indian Response

Cautious Optimism

- After the first step is fully executed, a de facto 'buffer zone' will be created which both sides will not enter to rule out clashes.
- The size of this 'buffer zone' will vary at each place and "would be temporary".
- At Galwan, the 'buffer zone' is expected to lie on the Indian side of the LAC, which will keep the Indian soldiers to the west of Shyok river while the Chinese soldiers will be to the east of the LAC.
- The completion of this first step is expected to take two to three weeks.
- The second step will pertain more to de-escalation where troops, heavy weaponry and specialist equipment massed along the border will go back to their bases.

Special Representative Mechanism

- The SR mechanism was institutionalised in 2003 after former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit to China led to the agreement, to resolve the boundary issue.
- The special representatives undertake discussion to seek fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution of the border issue at earliest.
- In the first phase SRM established political parameters and guiding principle for resolution of issue
- Peace and tranquillity along LAC has been maintained
- Both the sides have established mechanism to deal with border transgressions effectively and speedily.
- SRM has not yet been able to draw framework for resolution of dispute.
- SRM has been successful in reducing border transgressions along LAC along the western border, but does not include eastern borders.

Informal Summits

Mamallapuram Summit: 2nd India-China Informal Summit

- A new era of cooperation will begin today through 'Chennai Connect', PM Modi said

- The prime minister said strategic communication between the two countries increased following the first informal summit in Wuhan
- India and China had decided to prudently manage differences and not to allow them to become disputes
- In the Mamallapuram summit, the focus of the talks is likely to be on steps to ensure mutual development and expanding overall ties.
- The focus of the meeting is on improving people to people contact and on how to maintain peace and tranquillity on the India-China border

7. Elyments

What is the Elyments App?

- The Elyments app, created by Sumeru Software Solutions, was launched by Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on 5th July 2020.
- It is a new social media platform under Aatmanirbhar Bharat campaign.
- The new Made in India app is available for download worldwide both on iOS and Android platforms.
- After 59 Chinese apps were banned in the country, Elyments has been launched and claims to be India's first official social media super App.

What is a Super App?

- Super apps essentially serve as a single portal to a wide range of virtual products and services.
- The most sophisticated – apps like WeChat and Alipay in China – bundle together online messaging (similar to WhatsApp), social media (similar to Facebook), marketplaces (like eBay) and services (like Uber).
- One app, one sign-in, one user experience – for virtually any product or service a customer may want or need.
- In South East Asia, for example, two super apps have emerged from the leading ride-share platforms, Go-Jek and Grab. Both apps now offer a range of other services from food delivery through to medical advice, and both are competing to help consumers select and purchase financial products.

Advantages of Elyments App

- Elyments has basic features of popular social networking apps such as feeds, the discover option where you can follow celebrities, athletes, politicians, etc.
- The notifications bar has been replaced by Alerts which lets you track friend requests and activities such as likes, comments on your posts.
- Users can also use filters while clicking photos, another common feature in various apps like Snapchat, Instagram, etc.
- The homegrown app has been made keeping in mind Indian audiences as it is available in eight different regional languages. It also allows commands in regional languages.
- The app is free for download and lets the users make audio and video calls including conference calls.

Privacy concerns regarding Elyments App

- One of the main issue surrounding foreign apps was that of data security.
- Privacy is being highlighted as one of the main features of the Indian super app. The creators claim that the user data of the app will be stored within the country unlike most foreign apps.
- Elyments' creators claim that their data will not be shared with third party without the user's explicit consent. The nation's top privacy professionals have been guiding the design of the product to ensure privacy.
- In the coming weeks, Elyments is in plans to launch a slew of other features that include audio or video calling, public profiles that can be subscribed to, and an interface for secure payments. And, there will be a curated commerce platform to promote domestic brands.

8. Why is Kuwait sending 8 Lakh Indians back?

Kuwait – Location



Kuwait

- Country in Western Asia
- Situated in the northern edge of Eastern Arabia at the tip of the Persian Gulf.
- It borders Iraq to the north and Saudi Arabia to the south

Kuwait – Population

- As of 2016, Kuwait has a population of 4.5 million people 1.3 million are Kuwaitis 3.2 million are expatriates.



- Expatriates account for approximately 70% of the population

Expat Quota Bill

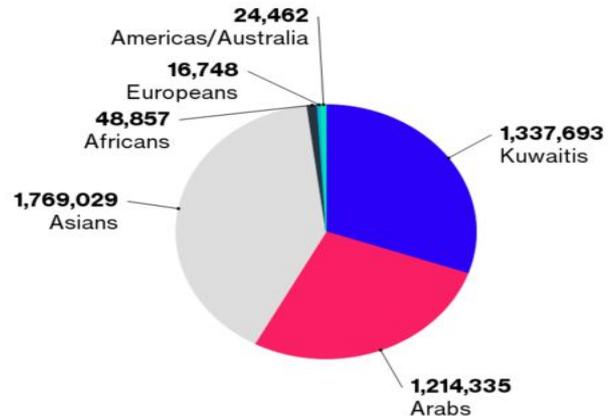
- It proposes to bring down the population of expatriates in the country to 30% of the total population of 4.3 million before the Parliament elections by year end.
- The bill proposes to reduce the number of Indians, the largest expatriate community, to 15% of the population.
- Similar quotas have been fixed for other nationalities.
- If the Bill is enacted, around 8,00,000 of the 1.45 million Indians in Kuwait will be forced to return.



- Within the Expats population, India constitutes 14.5 lakh taking up to half of the Expat population since the Indian population cannot exceed above 15%, only 6.5 lakh will be allowed to keep their jobs, leaving other 8 lakhs unemployed and homeless.
- Non-Resident Keralites will be the worst hit. The legal and legislative committee of Kuwait's National Assembly has approved the draft Bill.

Demographic pressures

Migrant workers in Kuwait outnumber the local population 3-to-1



Remittances

- Kuwait is a top source of remittances for India.
- In 2018, India received nearly \$ 4.8 billion from Kuwait as remittances.

Why this Bill

- High incidences of COVID-19 in the expats.
- Slump in oil prices
- As a pretence to implement stricter visa regimes and border controls.
- According to the Kuwaiti minister who produced the bill, there is a real problem in the population structure of Kuwait as most of the expats are illiterate.



Nothing New

- Saudi Arabia introduced the 'Nitaqat', or nationalisation, policy in 2016 to prioritise jobs for locals.
- In 2020, Oman announced that all expats working in the government sector will be replaced by its own nationals.

But The Numbers Are Not Sure

- According to the population of overseas Indians published in the Ministry of External Affairs, the Government of India puts 1,028,274 as Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and another 1,587 as Persons of Indian Origin, totalling 1,029,861 in Kuwait.
- The Embassy of India in Kuwait put the number of Indian nationals legally residing in Kuwait at over a million.
- The Kerala and Tamil Nadu Migration Surveys, conducted by us at the Centre for Development Studies (CDS) since 1998, put the number of Keralites and Tamils in Kuwait as 130,000 and 140,000 respectively, and these two states dominate the total number of Indians in Kuwait.
- It can be safely estimated that one million in Kuwait is an overestimation, unless we conduct an India Migration Survey to provide reliable estimates of Indians by countries of destination.
- Even if we agree with the Embassy of India in Kuwait's estimate, the proportion of Indians in Kuwait is just 23 percent of its total population – which means that even if the cap reduces to 15 percent as the Bill proposes, only 300,000 Indians are likely to return.
- Thus it is safe to say that there will be no impact on either Indian emigration to Kuwait or decline in remittances.