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# PRECURE COMPILATION FOR 2020

**2<sup>nd</sup> week of May  
(11<sup>th</sup> May to 16<sup>th</sup> May)**

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## Table of Contents

### **GEOGRAPHY**

<https://youtu.be/H2ZE6zbsaXc>

1. Arktika – M Satellite
2. Global Energy Review 2020
3. Kisan Sabha App
4. NIP
5. GI Tag
6. GRID 2020
7. IMD
8. Chakmas and Hanjongs
9. UGMM
10. OSS

### **POLITY**

[https://youtu.be/ok3L\\_kWfIXs](https://youtu.be/ok3L_kWfIXs)

1. Dilution of Labour Laws

2. Data Sharing Under Arogya Setu Act

### **ENVIRONMENT**

<https://youtu.be/BkM4SqRheX0>

1. Mass Hatching of Olive Ridley turtles
2. Energy Transition Index
3. FRA 2020
4. Sal Forest Tortoise

### **IR + HEALTHCARE**

<https://youtu.be/37-YVOBXHac>

1. India-Taiwan & WHO
2. One-China Policy
3. Diamer-Bhasha Dam
4. Combat it Like Kerala

## GEOGRAPHY

### 1. Arktika-M Satellite

- **Russia** announced that it will launch first Arktika-M satellite for monitoring Arctic climate by the end of the year.
- As of now **first satellite is developed and the launch is planned for 2020.**
- The remote sensing Arktika-M will monitor the meteorological conditions in the polar region

### 2. Global Energy Review 2020

- **International Energy Agency (IEA)** has released a report namely, Global Energy Review:2020 which also includes the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on global energy demand and CO2 emissions.
- The countries in full lockdown are experiencing an average decline of 25% in energy demand per week, while in those with a partial lockdown; the fall in energy demand is about 18% per week.
- Further, it is expected that the impact of Covid-19 on energy demand in 2020 would be more than seven times larger than the impact of the 2008 financial crisis on global energy demand.
- It projects a 6 per cent fall in energy demand in 2020 — seven times the decline after the 2008 global financial crisis.
- Electricity demand is set to decline by 5 per cent in 2020, the largest drop since the Great Depression in the 1930s.

### Other Reports by IEA

1. Global Energy & CO2 Status Report.
2. World Energy Outlook.
3. World Energy Statistics.
4. World Energy Balances.
5. Energy Technology Perspectives.

### 3. Kisan Sabha App

- Developed by **CSIR-Central Road Research Institute (CSIR-CRRI)**, New Delhi to connect farmers to supply chain and freight transportation management system.
- The portal connects the farmers, transporters, Service providers (like pesticides/ fertilizer/ dealers, cold store and warehouse owner), mandi dealers, customers (like big retail outlets, online stores, institutional buyers) and other related entities for timely and effective solution.

### 4. National Infrastructure Pipeline

#### Infrastructure Vision 2025

**Energy**  
24x7 power availability through renewable energy and clean fuel for transportation

**Logistics**  
Road connectivity to remotest areas and trunk connectivity via major economic corridors, strategic areas

Fully integrated rail network with inter-modal connectivity to remote regions

Air connectivity to all Tier II, most Tier III cities

Port-led development to cut logistics cost, create new jobs

Metro connectivity in at least 25 cities for ease of living

**Home and water**

- No slums due to PMAY
- All households to have 24x7 piped water supply; most waste water to be recycled
- Disaster-resilient public infrastructure

**Farmer income**

- Increased irrigation (83%) with storage, processing and marketing infrastructure

**Health and well-being**

- Superior healthcare facilities, electronic health records infrastructure

**Digital services**

- 100% coverage for telecom and high-quality broadband services; end-to-end online delivery of government services

**Education**

- World-class education and research institutes, technology-driven learning

**India's infrastructure investments since fiscal 2013** (₹ lakh crore)

Fiscal Year	Centre	State	Private	Total
FY13	1.5	2.4	1.4	5.3
FY14	1.7	3.7	1.6	6.3
FY15	3	3	1.7	7
FY16	3.5	2	2	8.5
FY17	4.3	2.3	2.6	9.2
FY18E	3.8	3.8	2.5	10.2
FY19E	3.7	3.8	2.5	10

Source: Appraisal documents for five-year plans, CRIS-estimates (investments mentioned are at current prices)

**Sector-wise share of infrastructure investments of ₹80 lakh crore made during FY08-FY19 (%)**

Sector	Share (%)
Power	32
Roads and bridges	18
Urban	13
Telecommunication	9
Railways	10
Irrigation	1
Airports	1
Ports	1
Others	3

As we go along, considering the prospects and challenges of each project, there will be the flexibility of dropping a project and picking up a new one so that there are no laggards

**NIRMALA SITHARAMAN**  
Finance Minister

- NIP includes **economic and social infrastructure projects.**
- During the fiscals 2020 to 2025, sectors such as **Energy (24%), Roads (19%), Urban (16%), and Railways (13%)**

amount to around 70% of the projected capital expenditure in infrastructure in India.

- It has outlined plans to invest more than ₹102 lakh crore on infrastructure projects by 2024-25, with the Centre, States and the private sector to share the capital expenditure in a 39:39:22 formula.

## 5. GI Tags to New Products

### Black Rice – Manipur



**Chak - Hao** is scented glutinous rice which has been in cultivation in Manipur over centuries and is characterised by its special aroma.

### Gorakhpur Terracotta



The **terracotta work of Gorakhpur** is a centuries-old traditional art form, where the potters make various animal figures like, horses, elephants, camel, goat, ox, etc. with hand-applied ornamentation.

### Kovilpatti Kadalai Mittai



Kovilpatti kadalai mittai is manufactured in Kovilpatti and adjacent towns and villages in Thoothukudi district (**Tamil Nadu**)

### What is GI Tag?

A GI or Geographical Indication is a name or a sign given to certain products that relate to a specific geographical location or origins like a region, town or country.

## Who accords and regulates Geographical Indications?

- Geographical Indications are covered as a component of intellectual property rights (IPRs) under the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property.
- At the International level, GI is governed by the World Trade Organisation's (WTO's) Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).
- In India, Geographical Indications registration is administered by the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 which came into force with effect from September 2003.
- The first product in India to be accorded with GI tag was Darjeeling tea in the year 2004-05.

## 6. The Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID 2020)

- The 'Global Report on Internal Displacement 2020' revealed that conflict, violence and disasters led to 50.8 million internal displacements across the world at the end of 2019.
- All regions are affected by conflict displacement, but it is highly concentrated in a few countries. Of the global total of 45.7 million people displaced due to conflict and violence in 2019, three-quarters or 34.5 million, were in just 10 countries T
- **Top Five countries with highest displacement by conflict and violence are:** Syria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso and Afghanistan.
- **Disaster displacement was recorded in low and high-income countries.** Out of the 24.9 million displaced due to disasters, 23.9 were **weather-related**, and "much of this displacement took place in form of pre-emptive evacuations".
- **This is the highest figure recorded since 2012.**
- **Bangladesh, China, India and the Philippines each recorded more than four million displacements in 2019.**
- **Nearly five million people were displaced in India in 2019 — the highest in the world so far.**
- **The displacements were prompted by increased hazard intensity, high population and social and economic vulnerability.**
- More than 2.6 million people suffered displacement due to the **southwest monsoon**. 2019 was the seventh warmest year since 1901 in India; its monsoon was the wettest in 25 years. **Cyclones Fani and Bulbul also led to huge displacements.**
- Over 19,000 conflicts and violence also prompted the phenomenon. Unrests and communal violence triggered displacement in the second half of the year. For example, political and electoral violence, especially in Tripura and West Bengal, led to the displacement of more than 7,600 people.

## 7. IMD Releases New List of Cyclone Names

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) released a **new list of names of tropical cyclones over the north Indian Ocean.**
- The **requirement for a fresh list of tropical cyclones was tabled during the 45th session of WMO/ESCAP, held in September 2018.**
- IMD issues advisories regarding upcoming tropical cyclones to 13 member nations, including Bangladesh, India, Iran, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the UAE and Yemen.
- The **IMD is one of the six Regional Specialised Meteorological Centres (RSMCs)** set up across the globe, along with five regional Tropical Cyclone Warning Centres (TCWCs) that are given the task of **issuing advisories and names of tropical cyclones.**

### Tropical Cyclone Names Worldwide

Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico and the North Atlantic Names

Eastern North Pacific Names

Central North Pacific Names

Western North Pacific and the South China Sea Names

Australian Tropical Cyclone Warning Centre's (TCWC) Area of Responsibility

Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre Nadi's Area of Responsibility

Port Moresby Tropical Cyclone Warning Centre's Area of Responsibility

Jakarta Tropical Cyclone Warning Centre's Area of Responsibility

Northern Indian Ocean Names - Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal

Southwest Indian Ocean Names

- The WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones (here after the Panel) **at its twenty-seventh Session held in 2000 in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, agreed in principal to assign names to the tropical cyclones in the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea.**
- The naming of the tropical cyclones over north Indian Ocean commenced from September 2004, **with names provided by eight Members. Since then, five countries have joined the Panel.**

## 8. Chakmas and Hanjongs

- The **Rights and Risks Analysis Group** has sought Indian Prime Minister's intervention in ensuring food for the **Chakma and Hajong communities in Arunachal Pradesh.**
- **Chakmas are predominantly Buddhists, while Hajongs are Hindus.**
- **They fled erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in 1964-65 and came to India and settled in Arunachal Pradesh.**
- **Chakmas lost their land to the development of the Kaptai Dam on the Karnaphuli River, Bangladesh. Hajongs faced religious persecution as they were non-Muslims and did not speak Bengali.**

## 9. Unified Geologic Map of the Moon

- The first ever digital, unified, global, geological map of the moon was released virtually by the **United States Geological Survey (USGS), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa) and the Lunar Planetary Institute .**
- It is the **first ever digital, unified, global, geological map of the moon.**
- The **final map consists of 43 geologic units across the entire lunar surface, broken down into groups based on characteristics like materials of craters, basins, terra, plains and volcanic units.**
- Called the 'Unified Geologic Map of the Moon', **it will serve as a blueprint for future human missions and a source of research and analysis for the educators and the general public interested in lunar geology.**

## 10. Operation Samudra Setu

- **Indian Navy has launched Operation Samudra Setu – meaning Sea Bridge, as a part of national effort to repatriate Indian citizens from overseas.**
- Indian Naval Ships Jalashwa and Magar are presently enroute to Malè in Maldives to commence evacuation operations as part of **Phase-1.**

## POLITY

### 1. Dilution of Labour Laws

- A number of states such as Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have diluted labour laws through ordinances and executive orders. Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Punjab have extended the working hours from eight to 12 without amending the Factories Act. Labour is a **concurrent subject under the Constitution** of India, states can frame their own laws but need the approval of the Central government.
- Uttar Pradesh **has suspended all labour laws**, except three, for a period of three years.
  - The labour laws related to settling industrial disputes, occupational safety, health and working conditions of workers, and those related to trade unions, contract workers, and migrant labourers will become defunct. However, laws related to bonded labour, deployment of women and children and timely payment of salaries will not be relaxed.
- The Madhya Pradesh government, similarly, announced a Cabinet decision to **exempt all establishments from obligations under all labour laws for a thousand days**. The newly opened industrial units can organise third-party inspections.
  - They will be exempted from the requirement of keeping registers and inspections. And industries can change shifts at their convenience. Further, maintenance of register of adult and child workers and allowing for advance payments will not apply to new units.
  - They can even get away without maintaining cleanliness on premises and ensuring safe disposal of waste and effluents. Units will be exempted for 1,000 days from all provisions of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, except Section 25, which prohibits financial aid for illegal strikes and lockouts.
- Various workers' unions affiliated to many political parties have decided to lodge a joint complaint with the **International Labour Organisation (ILO) against the dilution**.
  - Central trade unions claimed these moves as an inhuman crime and brutality on the working people, besides being gross violation of the Right to Freedom of Association [ILO Convention 87], Rights to Collective Bargaining [ILO Convention 98] and also the internationally accepted norm of eight hour working day – espoused by core conventions of ILO.
  - The ILO Convention 144 in regard to tripartism has also been undermined by the government.

### 2. Data sharing under Arogya Setu Act

- The Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology issued a data-sharing and knowledge-sharing protocol for the Arogya Setu app, laying down guidelines for sharing such data with government agencies and third parties. Prior to this, the only legal shield around the mechanism was the app's privacy policy.
- The data collected by the Arogya Setu app is broadly divided into four categories — demographic data, contact data, self-assessment data and location data. This is collectively called **response data**.
  - Demographic data includes information such as name, mobile number, age, gender, profession and travel history.
  - Contact data is about any other individual that a given individual has come in close proximity with, including the duration of the contact, the proximate distance between the individuals, and the geographical location at which the contact occurred.
  - Self-assessment data means the responses provided by that individual to the self-assessment test administered within the app.
  - Location data comprises the geographical position of an individual in latitude and longitude.
- According to the protocol, the response data containing **personal data may be shared by the app's developer — National Informatics Centre (NIC) — with the Health Ministry, Health Departments of state/Union Territory governments/ local governments, National Disaster Management Authority, state disaster management authorities**, other ministries and departments of the central and state governments, and other public health institutions of the central, state and local governments, "where such sharing is strictly necessary to directly formulate or implement an appropriate health response".
- The protocol also lay the ground for sharing the data with any third parties — "only if it is strictly necessary to directly formulate or implement appropriate health responses". Further, for research purposes, the response

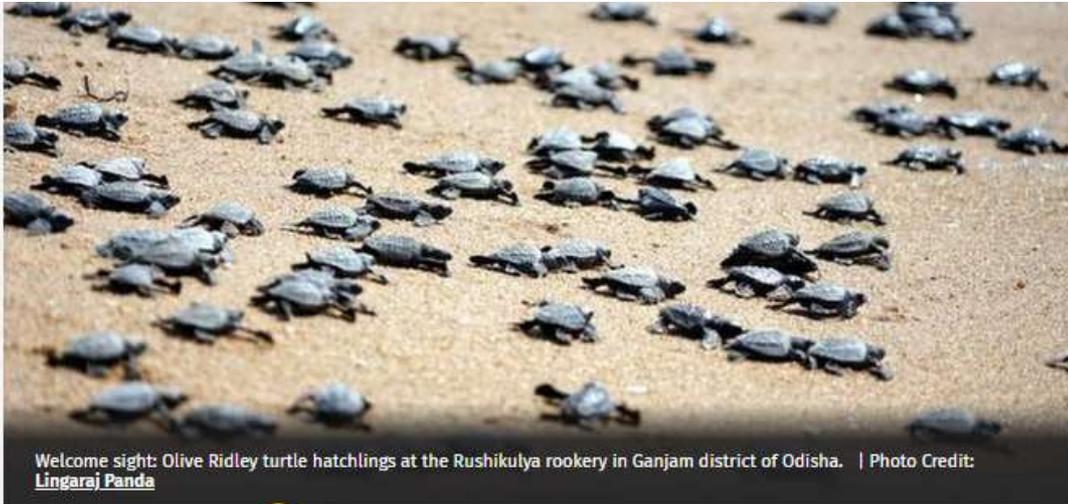
data can be shared with Indian universities or research institutions and research entities registered in India. The guidelines also empower universities and research entities to share the data with other such institutions, “only if such sharing is in furtherance of the same purpose for which it has sought approval to access such data from the expert committee”.

- The protocol says the response data that can be shared with ministries, government departments and other administrative agencies has to be in de-identified form. This means that, except for demographic data, the response data must be stripped of information that may make it possible to identify the individual personally; it must be assigned a randomly generated ID.
- The protocol also calls for any entity with which the data has been **shared to not retain the data beyond 180 days from the day it was collected.** The protocol reads back to the **Disaster Management Act, 2005** to establish the penalties in case of violation of the protocol. It also has a sunset clause, which calls for the empowered group to review the protocol after six months; unless extended, it will be in force only for six months from the date of issue.

## ENVIRONMENT

### 1. Mass Hatching of Olive Ridley Turtles

- Mass hatching of Olive Ridley turtles began at Odisha's Rushikulya rookery, a major nesting site of these marine turtles.
- The Rushikulya rookery on the coast of Odisha in India is the largest mass nesting site for the Olive-ridley, followed by the coasts of Mexico and Costa Rica.



- Thousands of hatchlings came out of the nests buried in sand to crawl towards the sea to start their long journey.
- On an average 80 to 100 turtles hatch from each nest.
- They hatch in 45 to 60 days, depending on the temperature of the sand and atmosphere during the incubation period.
- There was minimal human intervention during the mass nesting, incubation period and continuing hatching process this year.
- Olive Ridley Turtles are the smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles found in the world, inhabiting warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans.
- These turtles, along with the Kemp's ridley turtle, are best known for their unique mass nesting called Arribada, that is, mass-nesting event when thousands of turtles come ashore at the same time to lay eggs on the same).
- But they can also lay eggs by sporadic nesting.
- They are vulnerable according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). They are listed in Appendix I of CITES.
- They are protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

### 2. Energy Transition Index

- India has moved up two positions to rank 74th on a global 'Energy Transition Index' with improvements on all key parameters of economic growth, energy security and environmental sustainability, according to the World Economic Forum (WEF).
- The index benchmarks 115 economies on the current performance of their energy systems across economic development and growth, environmental sustainability, and energy security and access indicators- and their readiness for transition to secure, sustainable, affordable, and inclusive energy systems.
- Releasing the annual rankings, the Geneva-based international organisation for public-private cooperation said Covid-19 will compromise the transition to clean energy without an urgent stakeholder action as unprecedented disruptions due to the pandemic threaten this transition.
- In its report, the WEF said its study measuring readiness for clean energy transition in 115 economies showed that 94 have made progress since 2015, but environmental sustainability continues to lag.
- Sweden has topped the Energy Transition Index (ETI) for the third consecutive year and is followed by Switzerland and Finland in the top three.

- Surprisingly, France (ranked 8th) and the UK (7th) are the only G20 countries in the top ten.
- For India, gains have come from a government-mandated renewable energy expansion programme, now extended to 275 GW by 2027.
- India has also made significant strides in energy efficiency through bulk procurement of LED bulbs, smart meters, and programs for labelling of appliances.
- Similar measures are being experimented to drive down the costs of electric vehicles, the WEF said.
- India is one of the few countries in the world to have made consistent year-on-year progress since 2015.
- India's improvements have come across all three dimensions of the energy triangle -- economic development and growth, energy access and security, and environmental sustainability.
- The fact that only 11 out of 115 countries have made steady improvements in ETI scores since 2015 shows the complexity of energy transition.
- Argentina, China, India and Italy are among the major countries with consistent annual improvements.
- Others, such as Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Kenya, and Oman have also made significant gains over time.
- On the other hand, scores for Canada, Chile, Lebanon, Malaysia, Nigeria and Turkey have declined since 2015.
- The US ranks outside the top 25 per cent for the first time, primarily due to the uncertain regulatory outlook for energy transition.

### 3. FRA 2020

- The Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 (FRA 2020) was released by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on May 13, 2020.
- The FRA 2020 has examined the status of, and trends in, more than 60 forest-related variables in 236 countries and territories in the period 1990–2020.
- The world lost 178 mha of forest since 1990, an area the size of Libya, according to the report.
- However, the rate of net forest loss decreased substantially during 1990–2020 due to a reduction in deforestation in some countries, plus increases in forest area in others through afforestation and the natural expansion of forests, it added.
- The rate of net forest loss declined from 7.8 mha per year in the decade 1990–2000 to 5.2 mha per year in 2000–2010 and 4.7 mha per year in 2010–2020.
- Among the world's regions, Africa had the largest annual rate of net forest loss in 2010–2020, at 3.9 mha, followed by South America, at 2.6 mha.
- On the other hand, Asia had the highest net gain of forest area in 2010–2020, followed by Oceania and Europe.
- However, both Europe and Asia recorded substantially lower rates of net gain in 2010–2020 than in 2000–2010.
- The world's total forest area was 4.06 billion hectares (bha), which was 31% of the total land area; this area was equivalent to 0.52 ha per person.
- Tropical (45%) is the largest proportion of the world's forests followed by boreal, temperate and subtropical.
- More than 54% of the world's forests were in only five countries namely- Russia, Brazil, Canada, the United States of America and China.
- The forest area that naturally regenerates globally has decreased since 1990, but the area of planted forests increased by 123 mha.
- The rate of increase in the area of planted forest slowed in the last 10 years.
- Plantation forests cover about 131 mha - 3% of the global forest area and 45% of the total area of planted forests.
- The highest percent of plantation forests were in South America & the lowest were in Europe.
- There is an estimated 726 mha of forests in protected areas around the world.
- South America had the highest share of forests in protected areas (31%).
- The forest area in protected areas globally increased by 191 mha since 1990, but the rate of annual increase slowed in 2010–2020.

### 4. Sal Forest Tortoise

- The sal forest tortoise is widely distributed over eastern and northern India and Southeast Asia.

- However, it is not common in any of this terrain.
- In fact, 23 of the 29 species of freshwater turtle and tortoise species found in India come under the threatened category in the IUCN red list and are under severe existential threat due to human activities.
- Also known as the elongated tortoise (*Indotestudo elongata*), the sal forest tortoise, recently assessed as critically endangered, is heavily hunted for food.
- It is collected both for local use, such as decorative masks, and international wildlife trade.



- A recent study by ecologists in the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, finds that the area designated as a protected area network has only a small overlap with the actual habitat it roams around in.
- According to the authors of the study published in the journal *Herpetological Conservation and Biology*, over 90% of the potential distribution of the species falls outside current protected area's network.
- Also, in northeast India, the representation of the species in protected areas is least, and there is little to no connectivity among most of the protected areas where the species is present
- The study also found that 29% of the predicted distribution of the species falls within high occurrence fire zones or areas where there is management burning.
- In northeast India, which is a suitable habitat for the species, they experience jhum fire.
- Such an intervention may not only directly kill the animals but also open up habitats, which, in turn, increase the chance of people finding the tortoise easily.
- Forest fires also perturb soil moisture which may impact forest floor thus changing the whole community on which the reptiles depend.
- According to the IUCN the population of the species may have fallen by about 80% in the last three generations (90 years).

## IR + HEALTHCARE

### 1. India-Taiwan & WHO

- India is in talks with a group of seven nation including US, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea and Vietnam, as the international community debates whether to let Taiwan attend the World Health Assembly (WHA) as an observer
  - Four of these seven — US, Japan, Australia and New Zealand — are signatories to a demarche urging WHO to do the same
  - Other signatories of the demarche being Canada, France, Germany and UK
- India has traditionally stuck to the One-China policy which considers Taiwan as a part of China
- Taiwan has managed to control the pandemic in an exemplary manner despite being in close proximity to mainland China
  - Only 440 cases and 7 deaths
- Taiwan attended WHA as a non-voting observer from 2009 to 2016

#### The Demarche

- Eight countries issued a joint demarche to the WHO, pushing for Taiwan's inclusion in WHA
- It includes six of the world's 10 largest economies and four of China's top trading partners

#### World Health Agency

- It is the decision making body of WHO
- It is attended by delegations from all WHO Member States
- Main Function of WHA is to determine the policies of the Organisation, supervise financial policies and approve the programme budget
- It is held annually in Geneva, Switzerland
- WHA will require a simple majority from its member states to include Taiwan as a member

### 2. One-China Policy

- It means that Special Administrative Regions, such as Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, can have different economic and political systems from that of mainland China, while being part of the People's Republic of China
- It was originally proposed by Deng Xiaoping in late 1970s
  - His plan was to unify China and Taiwan under the One Country Two Systems policy
  - Under Deng's plan, the island could follow its capitalist economic system, run a separate administration and keep its own army but under Chinese sovereignty
  - Taiwan, however, rejected the Communist Party's offer
- Taiwan has since been run as a separate entity from the mainland China, though Beijing never gave up its claim over it
- India is among the 179 of the 193 member states of the UN that do not maintain any diplomatic ties with Taiwan

### 3. Diامر-Bhasha Dam

- China has teamed up with Pakistan to build the Diامر-Bhasha dam in Gilgit-Baltistan
- When completed, it will allow Pakistan to use the waters of the Indus for irrigation
- The Dam is to be constructed on the river Indus in northern Gilgit-Baltistan region

#### Issues

- Infringes upon India's sovereignty
- Might lead to an ecological disaster as there are 300 earthquakes on average in a single month at the proposed site
- Reservoir of the dam is to be constructed on top of the Central Asian faultline
- If constructed it might lead to water shortage in Ladakh



## 4. Combat it Like Kerala

- Kerala is an outlier among other Indian states in terms of social indices
  - The state's social indicators are at par with those of Nordic countries and that the state has outsmarted even rich Western countries in combating COVID-19
- Kerala has the lowest mortality rate as well as the highest recovery rate with respect to COVID infections
- The number of tests conducted in Kerala is just 10 percent of the figures for countries such as the US. But aggressive contact tracing and keeping a large number of people under observation helped Kerala in preventing community spread
  - 90% of the positive cases were detected among people who were kept under observation
- Kerala's robust local governance, effective social structure and well-knit multi-layered public health structure bags the credit
- Kerala has acquired a halo thanks to its efficiency and resilience in successfully battling infectious diseases and natural calamities over successive years such as floods, Nipah virus and COVID-19 pandemic