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Daily News Discussion (DND)

14th - 15th October 2021

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Note -

- The Newspaper clippings pasted in PDF are important from Mains point of view as it contains the fodder material for Mains Answer Writing.
- Also watch DND video lectures everyday @ 4 PM on Sleepy's YouTube channel in order to understand how to get the most out of everyday's Newspaper .

Click [here](#) to watch the following topics on YouTube

1. Main Value Addition

Governance (P-II/III)

Freebies

- Recently, the idea has been floated by an income tax officer to have a “taxpayers union”. A section of the people welcomed this idea as they think that income taxpayers are the main funders of government.
- They also think that their hard-earned taxes are mostly routed on undeserving poor through populist programmes announced before the election.

Reality

- Presently, less than one-third of the combined spending of state and central governments in India is raised through income tax.
- It's the taxes on commodities that meet more than half the expenditure of the government and these taxes are paid by all citizens whether rich or poor or accused of using freebies. The rest of the spending comes from borrowings, grants, disinvestments and various non-tax revenues.

National Human right commission (Paper I/ II)

- Example
- Recently the chairman of NHRC praised the government for its effort to contain the foreign conspiracy to malign India's human rights record. He also praised India's efforts in bringing peace to Jammu and Kashmir.
- The job of NHRC is to uphold human rights and not praise the government for saving from international conspiracies
- In past Supreme Court called NHRC a toothless tiger

Social media (Paper I/II/III)

- Frances Haugen, who worked at Facebook for two years before leaving in May, claimed that the company is aware of how its platforms are used to spread misinformation, hate and violence.
- she tried to explain how the company entices its customers to linger on content, enabling advertisers to target more accurately, and so on.

2. Environment

2.1. Kunming Declaration (DTE)

- The Kunming Declaration was adopted by over 100 countries October 13, 2021 at the first part of the ongoing virtual 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the **United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity**.

About

- It calls upon the parties to “mainstream” biodiversity protection in decision-making and recognise the importance of conservation in protecting human health
- By adopting this, the nations have committed themselves to support the development, adoption and implementation of an effective post-2020 implementation plan, capacity building action plan for the **Cartagena Protocol on biosafety**
- The **theme of the declaration** is Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth.

30 by 30 Target

- It is a key proposal being debated at the COP15, that would afford 30% of the Earth’s land and oceans protected status by 2030.

Kunming Biodiversity Fund

- China has also pledged to inject USD 233 million into a new fund to protect biodiversity in developing countries.
- However some rich country donors say a new fund for conservation is unnecessary because the United Nations Global Environment Facility already helps developing nations finance green projects

Basics (Cover in upcoming lectures)

GEF, Green Climate Fund , Adaptation Fund

2.2. Flower scorpionfish (DTE)

- The flower scorpionfish that was found in 1929 in the sea off Japan, has now been found in Digha, West Bengal and Paradip in Odisha

About

- **Hoplosebastes Armatus**, also known as the flower scorpionfish, belongs to the order of ray-finned fish that are also known Scorpaeniforme. The Hoplosebastes Armatus was **discovered in the Pacific Ocean** off Japan almost a century ago in 1929.
- The length of the species ranged from 75-127 mm, while its body width was from 14-22 mm. The head of the species was comparatively large and greater than the body

- The **rise in the temperature of sea water** due to global warming might induce the migration of this species from different regions

Basic (Refer DND)

Osmoregulation of Freshwater & Saltwater fishes

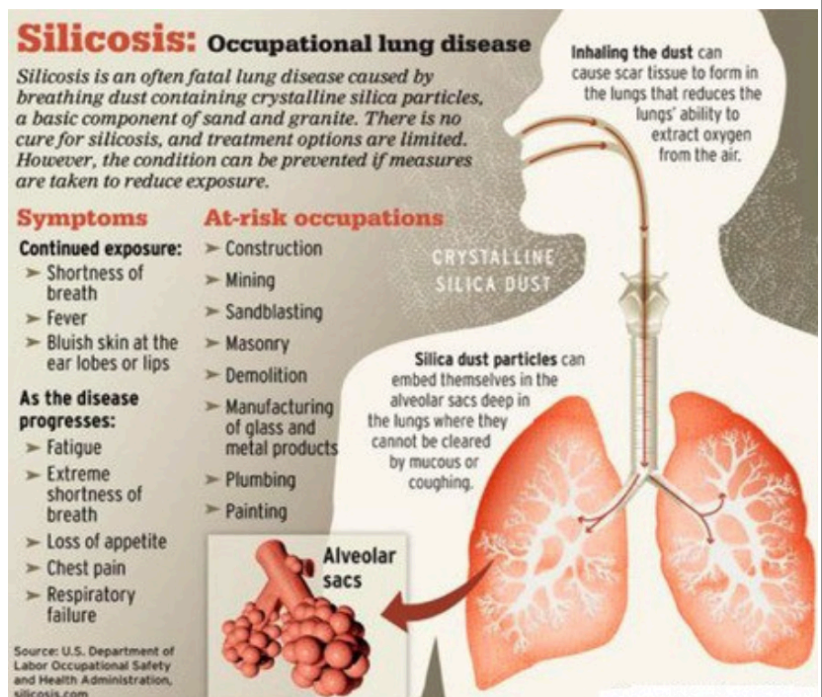
3. Science & Technology

3.1.Silicosis (TH)

- Long before COVID-19 hit, countless workers engaged in mines, construction and factories in India were silently **dying of exposure to dust**, utmost exploitation and apathy

About Silicosis

- Silicosis is one of the most important occupational health illnesses in the world. It is a progressive lung disease caused by inhalation of silica over a long period of time. Silicosis is characterized by shortness of breath, cough, fever and bluish skin.
- Silica (SiO_2 / silicon dioxide) is crystal-like mineral found in abundance in sand, rock, and quartz.
- Silicosis occurs **most commonly as an occupational disease in people working in the quarrying, manufacturing and building construction industries.**
- It is also reported from population with **non-occupational exposure to silica dust from industrial as well as nonindustrial sources.**
- Exposure to large amounts of free silica **may not be noticed** because silica is odourless, non-irritant and does not cause any immediate health effects, but **long-term exposure to crystalline silica-containing dust is associated with pneumoconiosis**, and progressive massive fibrosis of the lung (PMF), lung cancer, pulmonary tuberculosis, and other lung diseases and airways diseases
- In India silicosis is prevalent in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Pondicherry, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal among the workers of construction and mining.
- Prevalence of silicosis in India ranges widely from **3.5% in ordnance factory to 54.6% in the slate-pencil industry** and this variation in prevalence is due to the silica concentrations in different work environment, duration of exposure and the job demands.
- Silicosis is an **incurable condition** with its potential to cause permanent physical disability.



Government steps

- Silicosis is a notified disease under the **Mines Act (1952)** and the **Factories Act (1948)**.
- **Factory Act of India (1948)** mandates a well-ventilated working environment, provisions for protection from dust, reduction of overcrowding and provision of basic occupational health care.
- **Rajasthan** – with the top-most share of over 17% in value of mineral production in the country and a long history of civil society activism, was the first to notify silicosis as an ‘**epidemic**’ in 2015, under the Rajasthan Epidemic Diseases Act, 1957.

Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSHWC) Code, 2020,

- **Sec 6** : Rules 92 to 102 in Section 6 of the code provide for **initial and periodic examinations of all mine workers** from their time of joining. But the draft Central rule 6 of Section 6 fixes an age floor of 45 years for workers in all establishments (including mines) to be eligible for the health checks.
- **Section 20** :It places **no obligation on the mine owner to provide any form of rehabilitation** - Alternative employment, or payment of a disability allowance/lump sum compensation for workers found medically unfit.
- **Section 12** :silicosis cases diagnosed has to be notified by mine owners or reported by the **examining doctors to the Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS), Ministry of Labour and Employment**. The DGMS, the sole enforcement authority for health and safety in mines, can take action against mine owners only if it knows who they are, and in turn, whom they employ.

Silicosis portal

- Was hosted by the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment and a system of worker self-registration, diagnosis through district-level pneumoconiosis boards and compensation from the **District Mineral Foundation Trust (DMFT)** funds to which mine owners contribute, was put in place.

3.2.Indian Space Association (ISpA)-IE

- Recently Prime Minister launched the Indian Space Association (ISpA)

Indian Space Association

- An industry body consisting of various stakeholders of the Indian space domain.
- The members of the organisation include government bodies such as Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and private telecom companies such as Bharti Airtel’s One Web, Tata Group’s Nelcom, L&T, MapMyIndia, and others.
- One of the **main goals of the organisation** is to supplement the government’s efforts towards making India a global leader in commercial space-based excursions.



- Of late, ISRO's rockets have been carrying the payload and communication satellites of various countries; **now, private players will also look to broach this space with the new organisation.**
- ISpA will also work towards **building global linkages** for the Indian space industry to bring in critical technology and investments into the country to create more high skill jobs
- Basics (Refer DND)
 - ✓ ANTRIX
 - ✓ NSIL
 - ✓ In-SPACe

Need

- In the recent past, private sector companies such as Elon Musk's SpaceX, Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic, and Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin have taken the lead in spaceflight, promising to start tourist flights to space.
- In India, the space-based communications network has taken off with several Indian and international companies betting on it as the next frontier to provide high-speed and **affordable Internet connectivity to inaccessible areas as well.**
- **OneWeb, for example,** is building its initial constellation of 648 low-earth orbit satellites and has already put 322 satellites into orbit. Its services are expected to begin this year to the Arctic region including Alaska, Canada, and the UK. By late 2022, OneWeb will offer its **high-speed, low latency connectivity services in India and the rest of the world.**

Why is satellite-based Internet important in India?

- Although the government aims to connect all villages and gram panchayats with high-speed Internet over the next 1000 days through BharatNet, internet connectivity in **hilly areas and far-flung places of Northeast India are still a challenge.**

Basics

| Low Earth Orbit technology | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Distance | Around 500km-2000km from earth |
| Advantages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide stronger signals and faster speeds than traditional fixed-satellite systems • Signals travel faster through space than through fibre-optic cables |
| Issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satellites travel at a speed of 27,000 kph and complete a full circuit of the planet in 90-120 minutes • Individual satellites can only make direct contact with a land transmitter for a short period of time thus requiring massive LEO satellite fleets • Huge capital investment |

| Internet through satellite | | | |
|----------------------------|--|--|--|
| Cost | Three mediums of Internet – fibre, spectrum and satellite – the latter is the most expensive | | |
| Competitors | OneWeb | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five to 50' service of offering internet connectivity to all regions north of 50 degrees latitude | |
| | Starlink | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • currently has 1,385 satellites in orbit and has already started beta testing in North America and initiating pre-orders in countries like India • fly closer to the earth and therefore, the company requires a larger fleet to provide global connectivity than OneWeb. • Advantage over its competitors due to the ability of SpaceX to produce its own satellites and reusable rockets | |
| | Amazon | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Kuiper initiative announced in 2019. • has its own rocket production capability, its Blue Origin rocket is far less developed than SpaceX's Falcon 9 | |
| | Other companies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google • Facebook | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loon Project (2013), abandoned in 2021 • Internet using drones |

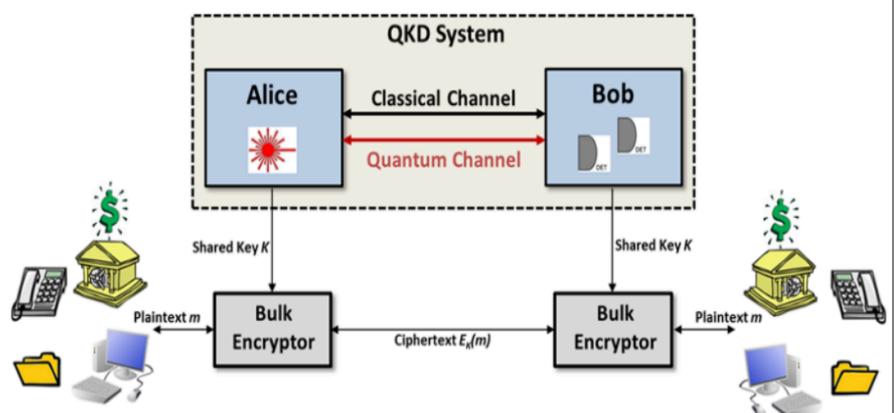
3.3. Quantum Communication Lab (ET)

- **Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT)**, the premier telecom R&D centre of the Department of Telecommunications has unveiled an indigenously developed Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) solution Lab.

✓ The indigenously developed Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) solution by C- DOT was also unveiled which can support a distance of more than 100 kilometers on standard optical fiber.

Quantum Cryptography (or Quantum Key Distribution)

- Quantum cryptography is a technology that uses quantum physics to secure the distribution of symmetric encryption keys.
- A more accurate name for it is quantum key distribution (QKD). It works by sending photons, which are "quantum particles" of light, across an optical link.
- It provides a way of distributing and sharing secret keys that are necessary for cryptographic protocols



4. Economy

4.1.PM Gati Shakti-National Master Plan (IE)

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently launched the PM Gati Shakti- National Master Plan for multi-modal connectivity

About

- Aim of coordinated planning and execution of infrastructure projects to bring down logistics costs.
- **It will subsume the Rs 110 lakh crore National Infrastructure Pipeline** that was launched in 2019.
- It also **aims to have 11 industrial corridors and two new defence corridors** - one in Tamil Nadu and other in Uttar Pradesh. Extending 4G connectivity to all villages is another aim. **Adding 17,000 kms to the gas pipeline network is being planned.**
- **The Gati Shakti digital platform**, which will bring together 16 Ministries including Rail and Roadways, will help in removing long-standing issues such as disjointed planning, lack of standardisation, problems with clearances, and timely creation and utilisation of infrastructure capacities

Reason

- **Logistical cost in India is about 13 per cent of GDP.** Such a situation does not exist in developed countries. Due to high logistical cost, the competitiveness of India's exports is greatly reduced

4.2.Maharatna' status to state-owned Power Finance Corporation (PFC)-PIB

- Recently, the government has accorded the 'Maharatna' status to state- owned Power Finance Corporation (PFC)
- **It become the 11th public sector enterprise to get the 'Maharatna' status in the country**

Criteria for grant of Miniratna status to CPSEs

Miniratna Category-I status

- The CPSEs which have made profit in the last three years continuously, pre- tax profit is Rs.30 crores or more in at least one of the three years and have a positive net worth are eligible to be considered for grant of Miniratna-I status.

Miniratna Category-II status:

- The CPSEs which have made profit for the last three years continuously and have a positive net worth are eligible to be considered for grant of Miniratna-II status.

- Miniratna CPSEs should have not defaulted in the repayment of loans/ interest payment on any loans due to the Government.
- Miniratna CPSEs shall not depend upon budgetary support or Government guarantees.

Criteria for grant of Navratna status to CPSEs

- The CPSEs which are Miniratna I, Schedule 'A' and have obtained 'excellent' or 'very good' MOU rating in three of the last five years and having **composite score of 60 or above in following six selected performance indicators** are eligible to be considered for grant of Navratna status.

| | 100 (Max weight) |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Net Profit to Net worth | 25 |
| 2. Manpower Cost to total Cost of Production or Cost of Services | 15 |
| 3. PBDIT to Capital employed | 15 |
| 4. PBIT to Turnover | 15 |
| 5. Earning Per Share | 10 |
| 6. Inter Sectoral Performance | 20 |

Maharatna Status

- Maharatna Scheme was introduced for Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs), with effect from 19th May, 2010, in order to empower mega CPSEs to expand their operations and emerge as global giants.
- The **objective of the scheme** is to delegate enhanced powers to the Boards of identified large-sized Navratna CPSEs so as to facilitate expansion of their operations, both in domestic as well as global markets.

Criteria for grant of Maharatna status to CPSEs

- The CPSEs meeting the following criteria are eligible to be considered for grant of Maharatna status.
 - ✓ Having Navratna status
 - ✓ Listed on Indian stock exchange with minimum prescribed public shareholding under SEBI regulations
 - ✓ An average annual turnover of more than Rs. 25,000 crore during the last 3 years
 - ✓ An average annual net worth of more than Rs. 15,000 crore during the last 3 years
 - ✓ An average annual net profit after tax of more than Rs. 5,000 crore during the last 3 years
Should have significant global presence/international operations.
- Maharatna CPSEs
 - ✓ Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited
 - ✓ Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited



- ✓ Coal India Limited
- ✓ GAIL (India) Limited
- ✓ Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited 6. Indian Oil Corporation Limited
- ✓ NTPC Limited
- ✓ Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Limited
- ✓ Power Grid Corporation of India Limited
- ✓ Steel Authority of India Limited
- ✓ Power Finance Corporation

Procedure for grant of Maharatna status

- The procedure for grant of Maharatna status is similar to that for the grant of Navratna status. Accordingly, the proposal(s) for grant of Maharatna status should be initiated by the concerned Administrative Ministries/ Departments (after approval of their Financial Advisors and Ministers-in-charge) to the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE). DPE would process the proposal(s) for consideration of the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC).
- The composition of the IMC is as under

| | |
|--|----------|
| (i) Secretary, Department of Public Enterprises | Chairman |
| (ii) Secretary, Department of Expenditure | Member |
| (iii) Secretary, Planning Commission | Member |
| (iv) Secretary of the concerned Administrative Ministry/Department | Member |

Delegation of powers to Maharatna CPSEs

- To incur capital expenditure on purchase of new items or for replacement, without any monetary ceiling
- To enter technology joint ventures (JVs) or strategic alliances
- To obtain technology and know-how by purchase or other arrangements
- To effect organizational restructuring including establishment of profit centre, opening of offices in India/abroad, creating new activity centres etc.
- To raise debt from the domestic capital markets and international markets, the latter being subject to the approval of RBI/Department of Economic Affairs, as may be required
- To make equity investment to establish financial JVs and wholly owned subsidiaries and undertake mergers and acquisitions (M&As) in India or abroad, subject to a ceiling of 15% of the net worth of the concerned CPSE, limited to Rs.5.000 crore in one project. The overall ceiling on such investments in all projects put together will not exceed 30% of the net worth of the concerned CPSE.

- Navratna and Miniratna CPSEs can invest up to Rs. 1,000 crore and Rs. 500 crore, respectively.
- CMD is empowered to approve international business tours of functional Directors up to 5 days duration (other than study tours, seminars, etc.) in emergency, under intimation to the Secretary of the Administrative Ministry.

5. Polity

5.1.Global Girlhood Report 2021: Girls Right in Crisis (IE)

- Recently, Save the Children (NGO) released the Global Girlhood Report 2021: Girls Right in Crisis.

Key points

- Child marriage kills more than 60 girls a day globally and six girls a day in South Asia
- South Asia sees 2,000 child marriage-related deaths every year (or six every day), followed by East Asia and the Pacific with 650 deaths (or two every day), and Latin American and the Caribbean, with 560 annual deaths (or nearly two a day)
- More than an estimated 22,000 girls a year are dying from pregnancy and childbirth resulting from child marriage
- However, West and Central Africa has the highest rate of child marriage in the world and accounts for nearly half (9,600) of all estimated child marriage-related deaths globally, or 26 deaths a day.
- With school closures, health services under strain or closed, and more families being pushed into poverty, women and girls face an increased risk of violence during lengthy lockdowns. A further 10 million girls are now expected to marry by 2030, leaving more girls at risk of dying
- Childbirth is the number one killer of teenage girls because their young bodies aren't ready to bear children

Child Marriage Restraint Act (1929)

- The minimum age for a girl's marriage was set to 14 years and that for boys was fixed at 18 years. The Act was later amended and the age for girls was fixed at 18 years and for boys was changed to 21 years.
- The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006
- Sets the marriageable age to be 18 and 21 for boys and girls respectively

6. International Relation

6.1. Conference of Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA)-IE

- Recently, the External Affairs Minister addressed the 6th Ministerial (2021) meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures (CICA) in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

About

- It also asserted that connectivity must respect the most basic principle of international relations-respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, an apparent reference to India's objection to CPEC.
- India has called for ensuring that no country “tries to take advantage of the delicate situation in Afghanistan and use it for its own selfish interests
- The voice of the CICA can play a positive role in shaping global response towards the developments in Afghanistan
- In January 2021, India launched the Vaccine Maitri (Vaccine Friendship) initiative – a major diplomatic effort to gift and supply made-in-India vaccines to low-income and developing countries globally.
- The Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) is a multi-national forum for enhancing cooperation towards promoting **peace, security and stability in Asia.**
- The idea of convening CICA was **first proposed by the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan** - Elbasy H.E. Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev, on 5 October 1992, at the 47th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.
- CICA pursues its policy based on the principles of **sovereign equality, non- interference in internal affairs of the Member States and economic, social and cultural cooperation** to achieve its main objective of enhancing cooperation through elaborating multilateral approaches towards promoting peace, security and stability in Asia.
- All decisions within CICA framework are **taken by consensus.**
- To be a member of CICA, a state must have at least a part of its territory in Asia
- Presently CICA has **twenty-seven Member States** accounting for nearly ninety percent of the territory and population of Asia. Nine countries and five multi-national organizations, including the United Nations, have observer status.
- The CICA Secretariat has been located in Almaty (Kazakhstan) since June 2006.
- The CICA Summit is convened every four years

Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA)

- A multinational forum for enhancing cooperation towards promoting peace, security and stability in Asia
- Proposed by Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan's first president, at the 47th Session of the United Nations General Assembly on **October 5, 1992**

Member states (27):

- | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------|
| ● Afghanistan | ● Egypt | ● Kazakhstan | ● Republic of Korea |
| ● Azerbaijan | ● India | ● Kyrgyzstan | ● Russian Federation |
| ● Bahrain | ● Iran | ● Mongolia | ● Sri Lanka |
| ● Bangladesh | ● Iraq | ● Pakistan | ● Tajikistan |
| ● Cambodia | ● Israel | ● Palestine | ● Thailand |
| ● China | ● Jordan | ● Qatar | ● Turkey |
| ● United Arab Emirates | ● Uzbekistan | ● Vietnam | |

Summits:

