Prelim Bits 21-09-2019

Global Climate Strike Movement

- Students in more than 2,000 cities across the world are holding demonstrations under the **#FridaysforFuture** movement.
- The **#FridaysforFuture** movement, also known as the 'Youth Strike for Climate Movement', started in August 2018.
- It was started by Swedish student 'Greta Thunberg', who skipped school to protest outside parliament for more action against climate change.
- 'Thunberg' called for a strike every Friday until the Swedish parliament revised its policies towards climate change.
- Gradually, students and adults from across the world started mobilising and demonstrating in front of parliaments and local city halls in their respective countries.
- Thousands of events are planed from September 20th to 27th,
  - Millions of students to walk out of classrooms, workplaces and homes,
  - to join together in the streets and demand climate action and climate justice.
  - The strikes are registered to take place in over 2,350 cities.
- In India, strikes have been scheduled in New Delhi, Chennai, Pune, Mumbai, Phagwara (Punjab), Nagercoil (Tamil Nadu), Kishangarh (Rajasthan) and several other places.
- Students are demanding 'urgent', 'decisive' action to keep global average temperatures from rising above 1.5 degree Celsius.
- The global strikes will commence just as the "UN Climate Action Summit 2019" set to take place in New York on September 23, where Thunberg has been invited.
- These global school movements have been supported by scientists as well.
- The sentiments behind these school student movements are
  - The "broken promises" of older generations,
  - Members of which continue to extract and use fossil fuels,
  - leading to increased CO_2 emissions and
  - subsequently, increasing average global temperatures.
- Thunberg sailed through transatlantic, from Britain to the United States to take part in a United Nations climate summit.

Corporate tax rate cut and its impact

- The government has cut the corporate tax rate for domestic companies to 22% from the existing 30%.
- New domestic manufacturing companies, incorporated after October 1, will have to pay only 15% provided they start manufacturing by 2023.
- The stock exchanges zoomed within minutes after the announcement,
    - because for most established companies the tax cut would immediately lead to a pro-rata increase in profits.
- Essentially, a lower corporate tax is aimed at boosting investment by the private sector.
- The two other factors contributing to growth,
    1. Government expenditure (where the fiscal deficit is under pressure) and
    2. Exports (which have been stagnant), both have little space to boost growth.
- The cut in corporate tax chooses to single out private investment.
- This is a long-term measure that would make it more attractive for businesses to invest, which in turn will create employment.
- According to the government's calculations, the latest corporate tax cut would cost it Rs 1.5 lakh crore.
- The cuts either in personal Income tax or the GST would have yielded a higher immediate boost to economic activity.
    1. They would have reduced prices and immediately left consumers with more disposable income to spend more.
    2. But a cut in income tax only affects those who pay the income tax, which is a very small number of the economy.
    3. So an income tax cut's impact is limited by that.
    4. On GST, a cut may have been more difficult to achieve because the decision is not contingent just on what the Centre wants, states too have to play ball.
- Immediate impact of a cut in corporate tax is lower than the immediate impact of either an income tax cut or a GST cut, yet the long-term effect is decidedly more.

National Conference on Agriculture - Rabi Campaign 2019

- The Campaign was inaugurated by the 'Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare'.
- Highlights of the Campaign,

1. Record production achieved for food grains (285 million tonnes)
2. All time high production of rice (116 million tonnes), wheat (102.5 million tonnes), pulses and oilseeds.

- The department has decided to distribute 'Seed mini-kits' for Rabi crops, pulses and oilseed with active involvement of State Agriculture Departments.
- As far as Kisan Credit Card is concerned, major changes in,

1. Waiver of registration fee, minimum time for issuance of KCC,
2. Widening the range of loans etc. have been made for covering large number of farmers.

- 45 biofortified varieties have been released with enhanced percentage of nutrients, protein.

Blackface

- Justin Trudeau apologized for wearing brownface/blackface while dressed as Aladdin at a party when he was a teacher.
  - He said it was something that he didn't think was racist at the time.
- It is a form of theatrical depiction of black characters by white performers that was part of the American tradition of popular entertainment known as **'Minstrelsy'**.
- **Minstrel** shows were first performed in the 1830s in New York.
- In which white men blackened their faces and wore torn clothes in caricatures of slaves on plantations in the South.
- **Minstrel** shows depicted blacks as "lazy, ignorant, superstitious, hypersexual, and cowardice".
- Thomas Dartmouth 'Daddy' Rice, one of the best known figures on the 19th century American stage.
- It created the blackface character **'Jim Crow'**, who became immensely popular among the public.
- The popularity of Rice's caricature led to black men being referred to as 'Jim Crow'.
- Laws enacted in the 19th and 20th centuries to enforce racial segregation in the US became known as **"Jim Crow laws".**
- The first depictions of Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse featured the character in '**Blackface**'.
- Blackface spread to many countries beyond the US, and the tradition survived in the UK until the early 1980s.
- So Blackface is seen as a mocking, deeply offensive, racist portrayal of black people and reduce blackness itself to a joke.

- Indeed, at the heart of blackface depictions lies racial derision and stereotyping.
- The popularity of “black” Halloween costumes and blackface performances in US universities has been seen as a disturbing commentary on continuing racial prejudice.
- The wearing of blackface/brownface is seen disgraceful and hearkens back to a history of racism, which is unacceptable.

Source: PIB, The Indian Express

