Prelim Bits 26-04-2019

Panchayati Raj Institutions

- Panchayati Raj is the bedrock of decentralized administration in India, it refers to the system of local self-government in India introduced by a constitutional amendment in 1992.
- In India, the Panchayati Raj now functions as a system of governance in which gram panchayats are the basic units of local administration.
- The three tiers of Panchayati Raj are:

1. Gram Panchayat (village level),
2. Mandal Parishad or Block Samiti or Panchayat Samiti (block level),
3. Zila Parishad (district level).

- It was formalized in 1992 by the 73rd amendment to the Indian Constitution.
- Currently, the Panchayati Raj system exists in all states except Nagaland, Meghalaya, and Mizoram, and in all Union Territories except Delhi.
- The Panchayats receive funds from three sources:

1. Local body grants, as recommended by the Central Finance Commission
2. Funds for implementation of centrally sponsored schemes
3. Funds released by the state governments on the recommendations of the State Finance Commissions

Second Narasimham Committee

- In early 1990s Finance Ministry had set up Narasimham Committee for analyzing India's banking sector and recommending legislation and regulations to make it more effective, competitive and efficient.
- Recently Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to divest its entire stake in the National Bank for Agriculture & Rural Development (NABARD) and National Housing Bank.
- The decision is based on the recommendations of the second Narasimham Committee.

NHB

- National Housing Bank is an All India Financial Institution (AIFl), set up in 1988, under the National Housing Bank Act, 1987.
- It is an apex agency established to operate as a principal agency to promote housing finance institutions both at local and regional levels and to provide financial and other support incidental to such institutions and for matters connected therewith.

NABARD

- It is an apex development and specialized bank established in 1982 to uplift rural India by increasing the credit flow for elevation of agriculture & rural non-farm sector.
- It replaced the Agricultural Credit Department (ACD) and Rural Planning and Credit Cell (RPCC) of Reserve Bank of India, and Agricultural Refinance and Development Corporation (ARDC).
- It has been accredited with "matters concerning policy, planning and operations in the field of credit for agriculture and other economic activities in rural areas in India".

Vaccination

- Vaccination makes the immune system aware to recognize new diseases and stimulate the human body to make antibodies against antigens of pathogens.
- It also teaches the immune system to remember the antigens that cause infection, which leads to a faster response to the same disease in the future.
- A vaccine usually consists of two parts and is usually given through an injection.

1. **Antigen** is a piece of disease one's body must learn to recognize.
2. **Adjuvant** sends a danger signal to the body and helps your immune system to respond strongly against the antigen.

Cell-based Meat

- Cell-based meat, also called clean meat or cultured meat, is nutritionally equivalent to conventional meat, and tastes, smells, looks and feels exactly the same.
- Rather than raising livestock and slaughtering them for meat, cell-based meat is produced through 'cellular agriculture', with animal cells being

cultivated into the meat.
- Clean meats are grown in a sterile environment which will avoid bacteria found in traditional meats.
- Replacing livestock with lab-grown meats will cut down on the land needed by 99 per cent, and the water needed by 90 per cent.

Global Talent Competitiveness Index

- Global Talent Competitive Index (GTCI), is an annual benchmarking report that measures the ability of countries to compete for talent.
- It is released by INSEAD business school in partnership with Tata Communications and Adecco Group.
- The report measures levels of Global Talent Competitiveness by looking at 68 variables such as ease of hiring, gender earnings gap, and prevalence of training in firms.

Source: The Hindu, PIB, Down to earth