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MAINSTORMING 2020

NATIONAL SECURITY



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MAINSTORMING 2020

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(JANUARY 2020 TO OCTOBER 2020)

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1. LINKAGES BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT & SPREAD OF EXTREMISM

1.1 Measures Taken to Develop LWE Hit States

Why in news?

Government actions on Naxal hit areas has resulted in shrinkage of violence in a great geographical spread.

Who are Naxalites?

- The term Naxal derives from the name of the village Naxalbari in West Bengal, where the Naxalite peasant revolt took place in 1967.
- Naxalites are considered far-left radical communists, supportive of Mao Zedong's political ideology.
- Their origin can be traced to the split in 1967 of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) following the Naxalbari peasant uprising, leading to the formation of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) two years later.
- Initially, the movement had its epicenter in West Bengal, in later years, it spread into less developed areas of rural southern and eastern India, such as Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana through the activities of underground groups like the Communist Party of India (Maoist).
- Some Naxalite groups have become legal organizations participating in parliamentary elections, such as the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation and the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Janashakti.
- As of April 2018, the areas where Naxalites are most visible are:
 - **Andhra Pradesh** -Visakhapatnam, East Godavari District
 - **Bihar** -Gaya, Jamui, Lakhisarai
 - **Chhattisgarh** - Bastar, Bijapur, Dantewada, Kanker, Kondagaon, Narayanpur, Rajnandgaon, Sukma
 - **Jharkhand** -Bokaro, Chatra, Garhwa, Giridih, Gumla, Hazaribagh, Khunti, Latehar, Lohardaga, Palamu, Ranchi, Simdega West, Singhbhum
 - **Maharashtra** -Gadchiroli, Gondia, Yavatmal
 - **Odisha** -Koraput, Malkangiri
 - **Telangana** -Bhadrachari, Kothagudem

What are the measures taken to develop Naxal hit areas?

- The Government is committed for holistic development of LWE affected areas at par with other areas of the country.
- Apart from flagship/developmental Schemes being implemented by the line Ministries/ Departments, some specific schemes are also being implemented in LWE affected areas.
- **Action Plan 2015** - The Government of India has a holistic, multi-pronged strategy envisaged in Action Plan-2015 to combat LWE, which include development as an important prong.
- Apart from flagship/developmental Schemes being implemented by the line Ministries/ Departments, some specific schemes are also being implemented in LWE affected areas. Details are as follows:

- **Special Central Assistance (SCA)** – This scheme aims to fill critical gaps in public infrastructure and services of emergent nature in the most LWE affected districts.
- This Scheme is for 3 years i.e. from 2017-18 to 2019-20 with an outlay of Rs.3000 crore.
- Rs.163.33 crore was released to Government of Bihar till now.
- **Security Related Expenditure Scheme** - To assist the States to combat LWE, support is being given to 90 districts under Security Related Expenditure (SRE) scheme.
- Government of India provides funds for Police Modernization to all the States.
- Funds are also being provided under ‘Special Infrastructure Scheme (SIS)’ for strengthening the Special Forces of the States and State Intelligence Branches (SIBs) to LWE affected states.
- Construction of 250 Fortified Police Stations in LWE affected States is also envisaged under the scheme.
- **Road connectivity Plans** - Road Requirement Plan-I scheme envisages construction of 5,422 km roads for LWE affected areas, of which 4,809 km have been constructed, including 674 km in Bihar.
- Road Connectivity Project for LWE affected Areas scheme envisages for improving road connectivity in 44 LWE affected districts of 10 States.
- It aims for construction of 5,412 km roads including 1050 km for Bihar, of which 644 km have been completed as a whole in the nation.
- **Skill development and Education Initiatives** - Union government has sanctioned 7 New Kendriya Vidyalayas and 6 new Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas in the most LWE affected districts, which did not have any KVs/JNVs.
- Under RMSA, 1590 new/upgraded Schools and 349 girl’s hostels have been sanctioned in most LWE affected districts.
- Skill Development in LWE affected districts is being implemented by the MoSDE in 47 LWE affected districts of 10 States.
- The Scheme envisages construction of 01 ITI in each of 47 districts and 02 Skill Development Centers (SDCs) in each of 34 districts
- **Other Infra developments** - Installation of Mobile Towers in the LWE affected districts is being implemented by the Department of Telecom.
- **Financial Inclusion** -627 new bank branches & 947 ATMs have been opened in 30 most LWE affected Districts in last 4 years between.
- In addition 1759 Branch Post Offices have been opened since 2017 in core LWE affected districts.

What are the potential outcomes?

- Steadfast implementation of the Action Plan-2015 has resulted in consistent decline in LWE related violence and considerable shrinkage in geographical spread.
- In 2018 LWE related violence was reported in 60 districts in the year 2018 with 10 districts accounting for 2/3rd violence.

1.2 Decision on Red Corridor Region

Why in news?

Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) has redrawn the red corridor region which are affected by Left-wing extremism.

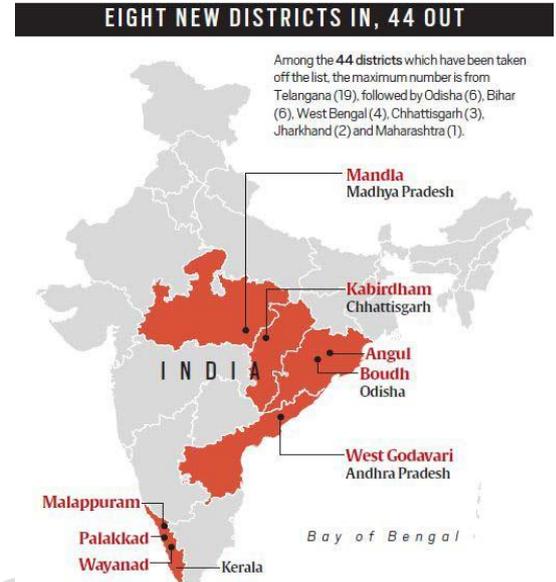
What is a red corridor region?

- Red corridor region is demarcated by the union government to notify the districts which are affected by left wing extremism.

- It is spanning across 106 districts in 10 States, namely Bihar, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

What is the recent decision on red corridor region?

- A recent report of MoHA classifies the red corridor region with respect to the severity of the Naxal influence.
- The three main categories are -
 - Severely affected** - Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Bihar
 - Partially affected** - West Bengal, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh
 - Slightly affected** - Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh
- 44 districts have been removed from the list and eight new districts which could be slightly or partially affected has been added to the list.
- The recent decision is taken since only 30 worst affected districts account for 90% of the LWE violence.



What were the actions taken by government to tackle LWE?

- The National Policy & Action Plan constituted by the MoHA had been introduced to reduce the concentration of Naxal affected districts.
- All expenses incurred by the affected areas were covered under the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme.
- This provides funds for projects related to development such as infrastructure, transportation, communication, bridges and schools.
- Under which mobile towers, boarding schools and roads were installed in LWE affected areas.
- Government also aims for a multi-pronged strategy which primarily includes development and security aspects of affected districts.

1.3 Impact of Covid on Left Wing Extremism

Why in new?

Ministry of Defence (MoD) released draft Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) 2020 which aims to increase indigenous manufacturing and expedite procurement of defence equipment.

How DPP evolved in India?

- It was first introduced in 2002 to provide probity, transparency and a structured procedure which would streamline the procurement of military hardware for the Armed Forces in a time bound manner.
- DPP has been a work in progress since its initiation in 2002 and through successive iterations in 2006, 2008, 2011, 2013, 2016 and finally in 2020.
- DPP 2020 will supersede DPP 2016, the draft was finalized by a committee headed by Director General Acquisition, which was set up in August 2019.
- DPP will cover all Capital Acquisitions undertaken by MoD and Service Headquarters (SHQ) both from indigenous sources and ex-import, except for medical equipment.
- Defence Research and Development Organization, Ordnance Factory Board and Defence Public Sector Undertakings will, however, continue to follow their own procurement procedure.

- Its aim is to ensure timely procurement of military equipment as required by Armed Forces in terms of performance, capabilities and quality standards, through optimum utilization of allocated budgetary resources
- In addition, self-reliance in defence equipment production and acquisition will be steadfastly pursued as a focus of the DPP with an ultimate aim to develop India as a global defence manufacturing hub.

What is the significance of Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) 2020?

- **Indigenous Content (IC) ratio hiked** - In view of the experience gained by the domestic industry, the Draft proposes increasing the IC stipulated in various categories of procurement by about 10% to support the 'Make in India' initiative.
- Use of raw materials, special alloys and software incentivized as use of indigenous raw material is a very important aspect of 'Make in India' and Indian Companies are world leaders in software.
- New Category Buy (Global – Manufacture in India) has been introduced with minimum 50% indigenous content on cost basis of total contract value.
- Only the minimum necessary will be bought from abroad while the balance quantities will be manufactured in India.
- **Complex and unique decision making:** Defence acquisition has certain unique features such as supplier constraints, technological complexity, foreign suppliers, high cost, foreign exchange implications and geo-political ramifications.
- Therefore, a balance between competing requirements such as expeditious procurement, high quality standards and appropriate costs needs to be established through this DPP.
- **Shift focus on Self-reliance:** There is immense potential to leverage the manpower and engineering capability within the country for attaining self-reliance in design, development and manufacturing in defence sector.
- **Streamlining and simplifying process:** Defence Procurement involves long gestation periods and delay in procurement which impact the preparedness of our forces, besides resulting in opportunity cost.
- DPP favours swift decision making, provides for suitable timelines and delegates powers to the appropriate authorities to ensure an efficient and effective implementation of the procurement process, by all stakeholders concerned.
- **Addressing the triremma:** India aspires to the acquisition of high-quality equipment, at low cost, in a short timeframe, when only two of these three are possible at any time.
- Thus, critical decisions will need to be made to sacrifice either cost, quality, or speed of acquisition.
- If clear decisions along these lines are not made, India could find itself in the worst of all worlds: spending high amounts belatedly for substandard quality equipment.
- **Defined role for Private sector:** Private investment will be a major contributor to the 'Make in India' initiative, accelerate manufacturing-led industrial growth and for capital and technology advancement.
- This would be in preference to the 'Buy Global' category as manufacturing will happen in India and jobs will be created in the country.
- **Leasing Model** - Leasing introduced as a new category for acquisition in addition to existing 'Buy' & 'Make' categories to substitute huge initial capital outlays with periodical rental payments.
- Leasing is permitted under two categories
- Lease (Indian) where Lessor is an Indian entity and is the owner of the assets
- Lease (Global) where Lessor is a Global entity. This will be useful for military equipment not used in actual warfare like transport fleets, trainers, simulators, etc.

- **New Chapters introduced** - for procurement of software and systems related projects for Post Contract Management to facilitate and provide clear guidelines for issues arising during the contract period as typically Defence contracts last for a long period.
- A comprehensive Chapter introduced for 'Make' to cover procurement from manufacturers in India including start-ups and innovators and from research projects of DRDO.

1.4 Bodo Accord

Why in News?

The Centre, the Assam government and Bodo groups have signed an agreement for peace and development.

Who are the Bodos?

- Bodos are the single largest community among the notified Scheduled Tribes in Assam.
- Part of the larger umbrella of Bodo-Kachari, the Bodos constitute about 5-6% of Assam's population.

What is the Bodo issue?

- The first organised demand for a Bodo state came in 1967-68.
- In 1985, when the Assam Movement culminated in the Assam Accord, many Bodos saw it as essentially focusing on the interests of the Assamese-speaking community.
- In 1987, the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) revived the Bodo statehood demand.
- It subsequently renamed itself National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), and later split into factions.

What are the previous accords?

- The 1987 ABSU-led movement culminated in a **1993 Bodo Accord**, which paved the way for a Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC).
- But ABSU withdrew its agreement and renewed its demand for a separate state.
- The **2003 Bodo Accord** was signed by the extremist group Bodo Liberation Tiger Force (BLTF), the Centre and the state.
- This led to the formation of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) which is an autonomous body under the Constitution.

What has been settled now?

- Primarily, this Accord ends a truce with four factions of the NDFB after decades of armed movement that claimed over 4,000 lives.
- The agreement says that negotiations were held with Bodo organisations for a comprehensive and final solution to their demands while keeping intact the territorial integrity of the State of Assam.
- A minister said the demand for statehood came to end with the Accord.
- However, an ABSU leader said that there is no mention anywhere in the settlement that the ABSU will give up the statehood demand.

What was agreed on territory?

- The area under the jurisdiction of BTC was called the Bodo Territorial Autonomous District (BTAD).
- In 2020 Accord, the **BTAD was renamed to BTR** (Bodoland Territorial Region).
- BTAD comprises Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri districts, accounting for 11% of Assam's area.
- The new Accord provides for alteration of area of BTAD and provisions for Bodos outside BTAD.

- A **commission** appointed by the state government will examine and recommend if villages contiguous to BTAD and with a majority tribal population can be included into the BTR.
- Those villages, now in BTAD and with a majority non-tribal population can opt out of the BTR.
- This will lead to increase in the Bodo population in BTR and decrease in non-tribal population, leading to mitigation of inter-community clashes.
- The government will set up a **Bodo-Kachari Welfare Council** for focused development of Bodo villages outside BTAD.

What are the other provisions?

- Several of the provisions agreed upon in 2020 agreement were an extension of what was already in effect.
 1. It provides for more legislative, executive, administrative and financial powers to BTC.
 2. The amendments to the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution to improve the financial resources and administrative powers of BTC.
- This agreement says the Government of Assam will notify Bodo language in Devanagiri script as the associate official language in the state.

What will happen to the cases filed during the armed movement?

- The Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) says criminal cases for non-heinous crimes shall be withdrawn.
- It also says those cases in connection with heinous crimes shall be reviewed case by case according to the existing policy on the subject.
- The MoS states New Delhi and Dispur will take all necessary steps to rehabilitate the cadres, funding economic activities, vocational training and recruitment in appropriate government jobs.

1.5 Bru Agreement

Why in News?

An agreement was signed recently among the Bru leaders and the Governments of India, Tripura, and Mizoram.

What is in the Bru agreement?

- This agreement gives the Bru community their choice of living in either the state of Tripura or Mizoram.
- All Bru currently living in temporary relief camps in Tripura will be settled in the state, if they want to stay on.
- The Bru who returned to Mizoram in the eight phases of repatriation since 2009, cannot, however, come back to Tripura.
- To ascertain the numbers of those who will be settled, a fresh survey and physical verification of Bru families living in relief camps will be carried out.
- The Centre will implement a special development project for the resettled Bru; this will be in addition to the Rs 600 crore fund announced for the process, including benefits for the migrants.

What benefits will the Bru community get?

- Each resettled family will get 0.03 acre of land for building a home, Rs 1.5 lakh as housing assistance, and Rs 4 lakh as a one-time cash benefit for sustenance.
- They will also receive a monthly allowance of Rs 5,000, and free rations for 2 years from the date of resettlement.
- All cash assistance will be through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).
- The state government will expedite the opening of bank accounts and the issuance of Aadhaar, permanent residence certificates, ST certificates, and voter identity cards to the beneficiaries.

- All dwelling houses will be constructed and payments completed within 270 days of the signing of the agreement.

Where will the Bru be resettled?

- Revenue experts reckon 162 acres will be required. Tripura Chief Minister (CM) has said that the effort will be to choose government land.
- But since Tripura is a small state, this government would explore the possibility of diverting forest lands, even reserve forest areas if necessary, to grant the new entitlements.
- However, diverting forest land for human settlements will need clearance from the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests, which is likely to take at least 3 months.

What is the condition of the migrants now?

- The Bru or Reang are a community indigenous to Northeast India, living mostly in Tripura, Mizoram, and Assam.
- In Tripura, they are recognised as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG).
- In October 1997, following ethnic clashes, nearly 37,000 Bru fled Mizoram to Tripura, where they were sheltered in relief camps. Of this,
 1. 5,000 people have returned to Mizoram in 9 phases of repatriation,
 2. 32,000 people still live in 6 relief camps in North Tripura.
- Under a relief package announced by the Centre, a daily ration of 600 g rice was provided to every adult Bru migrant and 300 g to every minor.
- They depended on the wild for vegetables, and some of them have been practising slash-and-burn (jhum) cultivation in the forests.
- They live in makeshift bamboo thatched huts, without permanent power supply and safe drinking water, with no access to proper healthcare services or schools.

How did the agreement come about?

- **June 2018** - Bru leaders signed an agreement with the Centre and the two state governments, providing for repatriation to Mizoram.
- However, most residents of the camps rejected the insufficient terms of the agreement.
- The camp residents said the package did not guarantee their safety in Mizoram, and that they feared a repeat of the violence that had forced them to flee.
- **November 2019** - A scion of Tripura's erstwhile royal family, wrote to Home Minister seeking the resettlement of the Bru in the state.
- After that, Tripura CM too, asked the Centre for permanent settlement of the Bru in Tripura.

How is this agreement different from the earlier initiatives taken for the Bru?

- Successive state and central governments had thus far stressed only on peacefully repatriating the Bru, even though the enduring fear of ethnic violence remained a fundamental roadblock.
- The two other durable solutions for refugees and displaced persons suggested by the UN Refugee Agency - **local integration or assimilation, and resettlement** - were never explored.
- The Bru speak Kaubru, Kokborok and Bangla, the latter two are the most widely spoken languages of the tribal and non-tribal communities of Tripura, and have an easy connection with the state.
- Their long stay in Tripura, albeit in exile and in terrible conditions, has also acquainted them very well with the state's socio-political ecology.

- Home Minister who presided over the signing of the agreement, hailed the “historic” resolution of the Bru issue.

1.6 Naga Peace Talks

What is the issue?

- As the deadline set by the Centre for wrapping up the Naga peace talks is on October 31, 2019, it intends to meet the deadline soon.
- But some key issues remain unresolved with the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isak-Muivah), or NSCN (I-M).

What are the Naga Peace Talks?

- The talks seek to settle disputes that date back to colonial rule.
- The Nagas are an ethnic community that comprises several tribes who live in the state of Nagaland and its neighbourhood.
- One key demand of Naga groups has been a Greater Nagalim that would cover the state of Nagaland, parts of neighbouring states and Myanmar.
- The British had annexed Assam in 1826, in which they subsequently created the Naga Hills district and went on to extend its boundaries.
- The assertion of Naga nationalism, which began during British rule, has continued after Independence, and even after Nagaland became a state.
- Along the way, the unresolved issues gave rise to decades of insurgency that claimed thousands of lives, including of civilians.

How has the Naga assertion played out historically?

- The earliest sign of Naga resistance dates back to 1918, with the formation of the **Naga Club**.
- In 1929, the Club told the Simon Commission to leave them alone to determine for themselves as in ancient times.
- In 1946, A Z Phizo formed the **Naga National Council (NNC)**, which declared Naga independence on August 14, 1947.
- In 1951, it claimed to have conducted a referendum in which an overwhelming majority supported an independent Naga state.
- By the early 1950s, the NNC had taken up arms and gone underground.

How has the peace talks played out in recent years?

- Before the ongoing talks, which followed a framework agreement in 2015, there were **two other agreements** between Naga groups and the Centre.
- **1975** - A peace accord was signed in Shillong in which the NNC leadership agreed to give up arms.
- Several NNC leaders including Isak, Muivah and Khaplang refused to accept the agreement and broke away to form the NSCN.
- **1988** - Khaplang broke away to form the NSCN (K) while Isak and Muivah headed the NSCN (I-M).
- **1997** - Preceded by rounds of talks since 1995, NSCN (I-M) signed a ceasefire agreement with the government.
- The key agreement was that there would be no counter-insurgency offensive against the NSCN (I-M), who in turn would not attack Indian forces.

- **2015** - The Centre signed a framework agreement with the NSCN (I-M) which set the stage for the ongoing peace talks.
- **2017** - Six other Naga armed outfits under the banner of the Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs) joined the talks.

What was in the framework agreement?

- The Government of India has not yet spelt out the details in public.
- Following the agreement, the government recognised the unique history, culture and position of the Nagas and their sentiments and aspirations.
- The NSCN understood and appreciated the Indian political system and governance.
- In 2019, the NSCN (I-M) issued a statement that said Nagaland State does not and will not represent the national decision of the Naga people.
- The statement was in opposition the proposal for a Register of Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland (RIIN) in the state of Nagaland.

Where does the territorial demand currently stand?

- In 2018, the official sources had said that the accord being finalised,
 1. Does not change the boundary of states;
 2. Provides autonomous Naga territorial councils for Arunachal and Manipur;
 3. A common cultural body for Nagas across states;
 4. Specific institutions for state's development, integration and rehabilitation of non-state Naga militia
 5. The removal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act.
- The map of Greater Nagalim in the NSCN (IM) vision covers a 1,20,000 sq km sprawl across the Northeast and Myanmar - the area of Nagaland state itself is only 16,527 sq km, a fraction of this vision.
- Amid the anxiety this has caused among citizens in neighbouring states, state governments have assured them that their respective states' territorial integrity would not be compromised.
- Before the framework agreement, the Nagaland Assembly had endorsed the demand for "integration of all Naga-inhabited areas" as many as five times - in 1964, 1970, 1994, 2003 and 2015.

What are the other issues?

- The government and the NSCN (I-M) have failed to agree on issues relating to a separate Naga flag and a constitution.
- The NSCN (I-M) is not willing to budge from this demand and is looking for a lasting solution.
- But, they are fully aware of the Government of India's position with this.
- A recent statement from Governor's office said the government is determined to "honourably conclude" the peace talks and it is reaching a conclusion stage.
- They have mischievously dragged in the Framework Agreement and began imputing imaginary contents to it.

Where could the disagreement lead to?

- The statement from the Governor's office has given rise to speculation that the government is ready to sign a final peace agreement with other groups without the NSCN (I-M).
- Civil society groups in Nagaland are divided in their opinion.
- Some have said the talks should be wrapped up with whatever is offered now and keep other issues open for later negotiations.

- Others believe all issues should be settled and the NSCN (I-M) should be on board, even if it takes longer than the deadline.

1.7 Dealing with Conflicts

What is the issue?

Increasing conflicts around the world call for a different approach in dealing with them beyond the intervention of the armed forces.

What are the different forms of conflict?

- Conflict could be external or internal to the country.
- Internal conflicts can be further classified into two categories - conflict against the state and people-to-people conflict.
- Conflict against the state may include separatist movements, and suicide bombings.
- Suicide bombings are an extreme manifestation of conflict, carried out by a relatively organised group of non-state actors.
- Their ultimate goal is the destabilisation of the state and these incidents are generally referred to as terrorism.
- The people-to-people conflict could be between different ethnic, religious and social groups.
- This could include religious riots, homicides, domestic violence, common violence, and other crimes.

How has the trend changed?

- Over the period, internal conflict has replaced external conflict.
- Within this, people-to-people internal conflict has declined, and internal conflict against the state has increased.
- The adverse economic and social impact of internal conflict against the state is much greater compared to people-to-people conflict.

Why do conflicts need attention?

- The world has made rapid progress in reducing poverty but regions affected by conflict have been left behind.
- In the last decade, various global conflicts have affected nearly 2 billion people and resulted in a loss of more than 10% of the global economic activity.
- Perceivably, international ideological movements merge with local grievances, and different forms of violence get linked to each other.
- When economic changes become a concern for local community, local grievances can escalate into acute demands for change.
- In this context, unemployment, corruption and social exclusion increase the risks of violence.
- Clearly, conflict is not just one-off events, but cycles of repeated violence.
- Hence it needs due attention given the multifaceted implications.

What are the driving factors for conflicts?

- **Economy** - Internal conflicts are largely related to the economic dynamics.
- Global evidence supports a strong inverse relationship between conflict and per-capita income level.
- Conflict increases due to adverse economic shocks, such as famines and rural distress.
- Youth unemployment has been and is a key motive for many joining both rebel movements and urban gangs.

- **Exclusion** - Political exclusion and inequality affecting different ethnic groups result in higher risks of civil war.
- It is easier for terrorists and rebels to recruit people to their cause in such areas because their opportunity cost is low.
- In ethnically-based or separatist conflict, recruitment can be easily made on ethnicity or religion basis.
- **Poverty** - Conflict is concentrated in areas that have higher poverty rates, weak institutions and that are poorly integrated.
- These have experienced more than three times the number of terrorist incidents per capita, compared with the well-off regions.
- Poorer regions also have poorer state capacity, and hence the government is not able to deal with the rebels effectively.
- The poverty-conflict interlink can thus slow down the pace of poverty reduction and achievement of multilateral development goals.
- **Geographic conditions**, such as the presence of forest cover, can also be associated with the incidence of conflict.
- States in India that have a higher forest cover have experienced higher conflict intensity.
- This is consistent with numerous accounts of Naxalites using forest cover to hide effectively from law enforcement forces.

Have measures at tackling this been effective?

- Development efforts from the ancient times have focussed on reducing conflict through collaboration, with the formation of village communities.
- In modern times, the most common approach is to use police forces to establish law and order in the affected areas.
- In areas where police forces are insufficient, the armed forces are called in to deal with the insurgency.
- But in most cases, this has not been a successful strategy.
- Even when successful in defeating the insurgents, the human costs associated with military operations are very high.

What are the other better options?

- **Peace agreements** - A different approach to dealing with conflict is to conduct negotiations and sign peace agreements with the insurgents.
- To be effective, this approach needs two requirements -
 - i. the government must conduct coordinated negotiations
 - ii. the insurgent group must be genuinely interested in joining the political mainstream
- E.g. Indian government has signed peace deals with several separatist groups in the north-eastern states
- Similarly, negotiations with some Tamil groups in Sri Lanka have resulted in their integration into mainstream politics.
- **Economic solution** - Complementary to the security-based solution is an economic solution.
- In this, the government takes measures to expand social and welfare programmes.
- It thereby reduces poverty in the conflict-affected areas to undercut the support for insurgency.
- **Regional cooperation** - Many internal conflicts in South Asia have cross-border dimensions.

- E.g. the Taliban in Afghanistan has support in Pakistan's border areas, Maoists in Nepal have links with Maoist movements in India
- Likewise, many separatist groups in India's north-eastern states had training camps and cells in neighbouring countries.
- The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and other Tamil separatist groups in Sri Lanka have traditionally enjoyed support from the Tamil diaspora.
- In such a context, cross-border regional cooperation is an essential part of any counterinsurgency strategy and a more effective one.
- Regional Partnership Forums should be formed with support of donors and national policymakers.
- Besides, it must have the flexibility to work with the local communities.

What should the approach be?

- Policy choices are critical for reducing repeated conflicts.
- In this context, economic policies should be geared not just to maximise growth, which could take time.
- It should also focus on proactively engaging the local communities, and addressing the distributional or political factors that led to the conflict.
- Policy choices must be structured to reduce both real and perceived inequities.
- It should focus on short-term economic and social goals first, and then on medium and longer-term efficiency considerations.
- This approach calls for humanitarian and community-based treatment for conflict-affected people.
- This includes closure of refugee camps, and reintegration of refugees within the society.
- Policies should have plans for post-conflict development and reducing poverty too, to have sustainable results.

1.8 Dealing with the Discourse on 'Urban Naxals' and 'Anti-Nationals'

What is the issue?

- An Additional Sessions Judge in Punjab sentenced 3 young men to life in prison under an Indian Penal Code (IPC) provision on "waging war against the government of India".
- With constitutional principles being increasingly compromised for upholding the majoritarian rhetoric, it is crucial that courts remain free of the current discourse on 'urban Naxals' and 'anti-nationals'.

Why is the judgement disputed?

- The convicted men did not commit any physical violence, and nobody was harmed in any way.
- They were not caught in possession of weapons too.
- They were not overheard planning any specific terrorist attack, nor were they on their way to commit one when they were apprehended.
- The men were only caught with literature supporting the cause of Khalistan, a few posters that did the same, and some Facebook posts on the subject.
- The Additional Sessions Judge held that Facebook posts amounted to "direct incitement of violence".
- But mere possession of revolutionary literature is insufficient to sustain a conviction and hence, the verdict is likely to be reversed.
- The judgment indicates an apparent disregard for the constitutional and other safeguards enjoyed by a citizen.

What are the safeguards in place?

- **Constitutional** - A key fundamental right - Article 19 guarantees, among other things, the freedom of speech and association.
- The state may impose “reasonable restrictions” upon this freedom.
- But the Supreme Court has articulated the precise circumstances under which such restrictions would be “reasonable”.
- **Judicial** - In the famous 2015 judgment in Shreya Singhal case, the court struck down Section 66A of the Information Technology Act.
- [Section 66A provides punishment for sending offensive messages through communication services.]
- The court made it clear that speech could be punished only if it amounts to 'direct incitement to violence'.
- This is decided in relation with the provisions of the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA) and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).
- The court cautioned that vaguely-worded provisions of these statutes would have to be read narrowly and precisely, and in accordance with the Constitution.
- E.g. “membership” of a banned organisation (punishable under the TADA and UAPA) was to be understood as being limited to “active membership”
- Everything short of that (incitement to violence), including “advocacy” of any kind, is protected by the Constitution.
- **Tradition** - India has long had a notable tradition of civil liberties.
- In the early 1920s, Mahatma Gandhi opined that the freedom of association was truly respected when assemblies of people could discuss even revolutionary projects.
- Simply, in a pluralist democracy, no one set of ideas can be set as the universal truth and enforce its position through coercion.
- Indeed, the Supreme Court’s “incitement to violence” standard is in terms of this basic insight about civil liberties in a democracy.

What is the larger significance of the case?

- In the last few years, a discourse has arisen which projects a set of oppositional ideas as “urban Naxal” and “anti-national”.
- Notably, neither “urban Naxal” nor “anti-national” is a term defined by law.
- These terms have nothing to do with 'incitement to violence' or creating 'public disorder'.
- In this context, the judgment comes in a series of instances when court has abandoned constitutional values in favour of a majoritarian rhetoric.
- So, beyond recognising that the judgment is flawed, it is high time that the higher courts are aware of a dangerous moment for the judiciary.
- It is crucial that the courts remain free of the current discourse that put life and personal liberties of citizens at stake.

1.9 Myth of Urban Naxalism

What is the issue?

- History is replete with examples of people who were convicted for having had a questioning spirit and nurturing even peaceful non-conformist thoughts.

- The recent spree of arrests by the Indian government is a stark reminder that such prosecutions are still very prevalent.

What is wrong with the government's approach?

- Anybody raising strong questions against the government is being perceived as an urban naxal, which is a very serious malice.
- This kind of approach might help the government curtail some dissenting voices, but will further the cause of the real naxals.
- Notably, violent dissent and insurgents also thrive on the psychological front, which will be greatly aided by government's stringent actions.
- In this context, many Left-leaning activists have been wrongly linked with Naxals, while most of them are anathema to the insurgents.
- Even our PM Modi equated Arvind Kejriwal with Naxals in 2015, which even though just a rhetoric, was a jarring error in political terms.
- Naxals also opposed CPI leaders in Bastar — which eventually helped the BJP candidates win in the region.

How could insurgents gain from the government's approach?

- **First** - It perpetuates a myth about their spread and might, something that is essential for an underground warrior.
- Notably, an insurgency is as much a reality as it is the product of myths that society weaves around the insurgent.
- **Second** - If students, politicians and writers across the spectrum are hounded as Urban Naxals, one need not be a psychoanalyst to gauge its consequences.
- The definitions a state invents for its political harvest come to ring true in unintended ways, and even drive people into the rebel ranks.

What is the way ahead?

- To paint overt and peaceful political rebellions as Naxalism is bad tactic, a political and moral blunder, which the government should avoid.
- Rather, the government should focus on curtailing the propaganda of the real Maoists in rural pockets of central India.
- Take up genuine counter campaigns and outreach programs are the best way to ideologically defeat the leftist insurgency.
- Currently, there is a lacklustre attitude to act against programs organised by banned outfits in remote areas, which is self-defeating.

2. BORDER MANAGEMENT

2.1 Darbuk-Shyokh-Daulat Beg Oldie Road

Why in news?

The construction of the DSDBO road may be the most consequential reason why China is targeting Indian Territory along the LAC in Ladakh.

What is the current situation?

- Large numbers of Chinese troops had massed along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and had come a little further than they used to earlier.

- The Chinese build-up along the Galwan River valley region overlooks, and hence poses a direct threat to the Darbuk-Shyokh-Daulat Beg Oldie (DSDBO) road.
- The token mutual de-escalation of the two armies is expected to be completed over an extended period.
- The withdrawals are subject to reciprocal endorsement.

Where is DSDBO road?

- It is a 255-km long “all-weather” road, running almost parallel to the LAC at Aksai Chin.
- The 37 **prefabricated military truss bridges** along the road are what that makes the DSDBO an all-weather road.
- It meanders through elevations ranging between 13,000 ft and 16,000 ft.
- It took India’s Border Roads Organisation (BRO) almost two decades to construct this road.
- In 2019, 500-m-long Bailey Bridge (the world’s highest bridge) was inaugurated on the road.
- Its strategic importance is that it connects Leh to Daulat Beg Oldie (DBO), virtually at the base of the Karakoram Pass that separates China’s Xinjiang Autonomous Region from Ladakh.

Where is DBO?

- DBO is the northernmost corner of Indian territory in Ladakh, in the area better known in Army parlance as Sub-Sector North.
- DBO has the **world’s highest airstrip**.
- This airstrip was originally built during the 1962 war.
- It was abandoned until 2008, when the Indian Air Force (IAF) revived it as one of its many Advanced Landing Grounds (ALGs) along the LAC.



What is the importance of the DSDBO highway?

- The DSDBO highway provides the Indian military **access to the section of Tibet-Xinjiang highway** that passes through Aksai Chin.
- The road runs almost parallel to the LAC in Aksai Chin that China occupied in the 1950s.
- The DSDBO’s emergence seemingly panicked China.
- This is evidenced by the 2013 intrusion by the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) of China into the nearby Depsang Plains, lasting nearly 3 weeks.

How is India protecting this region?

- DBO itself is less than 10 km west of the LAC at Aksai Chin.
- A military outpost was created in DBO in reaction to China’s occupation of Aksai Chin.
- It is at present manned by a combination of the Army’s Ladakh Scouts and the paramilitary Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP).
- There are additional strategic considerations in the area.
- To the west of DBO is the region where China has a boundary with Pakistan in the Gilgit-Baltistan area.
- This is also the critical region where China is currently constructing the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK), to which India has objected.

- This is the region where Pakistan ceded over 5,180 sq km of PoK to China in 1963 under a Sino-Pakistan Boundary Agreement, contested by India.

Is there an alternate route?

- An alternate route exists from Leh to DBO through the 17,500-ft-high Sasser Pass.
- [Sasser Pass was part of ancient Silk Route connecting Leh to Yarkand.]
- It leads from the Nubra Valley into the Upper Shyok Valley en route to China's Karakoram Pass.
- This indicates the strategic interlinking of the entire disputed region between India and China and to a lesser extent, Pakistan.
- For most of the year, Sasser pass is snow-bound and inaccessible.
- The BRO is currently building a "glaciated road" between Sasoma (north of Leh, near the Nubra river) to the Sasser Pass, but it could take several years to complete.
- But even when it is, the alternate DBDSO will remain critical to the Army and its defences in the region.

2.2 Land Ports Authority of India

Why in news?

Recently, the 8th Foundation Day of the Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI) has been celebrated in New Delhi.

What is LPAI?

- The Land Ports Authority of India is a statutory body established under Land Ports Authority of India Act, 2010.
- Committee of Secretaries in 2003 recommended setting up of Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) at major entry points on India's land borders.
- These ICPs were planned to house all the regulatory agencies like Immigration, Customs, Border Security etc. together with support facilities in a single complex to serve as a single-window facility as is prevalent at Airports and Seaports.
- LPAI intends to provide safe, secure and systematic facilities for movement of cargo as well passengers at its ICPs along the international borders of India.
- Functions:
 1. It plans, constructs and maintains roads, terminals and ancillary buildings other than national highways, State highways and railways, at an ICP.
 2. It establishes and maintains warehouses, container depots and cargo complexes for the storage or processing of goods with the establishment of hotels, restaurants and restrooms at ICP.

What is LPAI Bill 2019?

- The Land Ports Authority of India Bill, 2009 was introduced in the Lok Sabha on August 7, 2009.
- The central government shall constitute the Land Ports Authority of India, which shall have the power to manage facilities for cross-border movement of passengers and goods at designated points along the international land border of India.
- The Authority shall be composed of a Chairperson and members from the government and representatives of traders and workers.
- The Authority may
 - (a) Maintain or construct roads, terminals and ancillary buildings other than national or state highways and railways, at an integrated check post (as notified by the central government);
 - (b) Procure and maintain communication, security and goods handling equipment;

(c) Provide appropriate space for various services such as immigration, customs, security, and taxation authorities;

(d) Construct residential buildings for its employees; and

(e) Establish and maintain hotels, restrooms, warehouses, and container depots.

- The Authority may seek the assistance of armed forces, central para military force or state police to ensure peace and security at an integrated check post.
- Seeking to regulate the movement of people and goods across land borders, this Bill sets up an Authority.
- It provides for immigration control and customs at the borders.
- The customs, immigration, quarantine and other officials shall co-ordinate with the Authority to discharge their duties effectively.
- Any land needed by the Authority shall be deemed to be needed for a public purpose.
- The Authority has the power to enter any contract necessary for executing its duties.
- The Bill makes provisions for the mode of executing contracts on behalf of the Authority.
- The Authority may charge such fees and rent as provided by regulations.
- It shall establish its own funds where all receipts shall be credited.
- It may also establish a reserve fund for the purpose of expanding existing facilities or creating new facilities at any integrated check post.
- The Bill makes provisions for submission of the Authority's programme of activities and financial estimates to the central government.
- It also makes it mandatory for the Authority to maintain accounts which shall be audited annually.
- If the central government approves, the Authority may borrow money from any source by issuing bonds and debentures.
- The central government may guarantee the repayment of the principal and the payment of interest on the loan taken by the Authority.
- Seeking to regulate the movement of people and goods across land borders, this Bill sets up an Authority.
- It provides for immigration control and customs at the borders.

What are the recent initiatives of LPAI?

- LPAI is involved in the development of land ports (also known as Integrated Check Posts (ICPs)) to maintain regional connectivity across the international borders of India.
- Currently, the LPAI is building the Passenger Terminal Building at Dera Baba Nanak, Kartarpur Sahib Corridor.
- Thus three important areas of LPAI are
 1. Integrated Check Posts (ICPs)
 2. Inland Custom Posts
 3. Shri Kartarpur Sahib Corridor
- The Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) along with the border areas, State/UT wise are given below

ICP Location	State Borders with	Current Status
Attari (Amristar)	Punjab-Pakistan	Operational
Agartala	Tripura – Bangladesh	Operational
Petrapole	West Bengal - Bangladesh	Operational
Raxaul	Bihar-Nepal	Operational
Jogabani	Bihar-Nepal	Operational
Moreh	Manipur - Myanmar	Operational
Dawaki	Meghalaya-Bangladesh	Under construction
Rupaidiha	Uttar Pradesh – Nepal	Approved in 2018
Sunauli	Uttar Pradesh – Nepal	Operational
Sutarkandi	Assam-Bangladesh	Operational

2.3 Strategic Importance of Andaman and Nicobar Islands

What is the issue?

Increasing threats from china implies that India needs to strengthen its military presence at the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (ANI).

How important is ANI for India in terms of Defence?

- The ten degree channel (that separates the Andaman Islands and Nicobar Islands from each other in the Bay of Bengal) through which majority of trade passes from South China Sea and Pacific to Indian Ocean is between North and South Nicobar Islands.
- Due to presence of islands in Indian Ocean, India is part of many maritime regional groupings.
- Andaman and Nicobar Islands act as a buffer zone between India and rest of the nations present in Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- Through these islands, India is able to defend its vital stakes in IOR.
- Andaman and Nicobar Command is the first and only Tri-Service theatre command of the Indian Armed Forces, based at Port Blair.
- It was created in 2001 to safeguard India's strategic interests in Southeast Asia and the Strait of Malacca by increasing rapid deployment of military assets in the islands.
- It is commanded by a three star officer from Navy, under whom officers and men from all three services (Navy, Air Force, Army) work.



- It conducts bi-annual coordinated patrols (CORPATs) with the navies of Thailand and Indonesia, the annual SIMBEX maritime exercise with Singapore, and the biennial Milan multilateral naval exercise.

What are the opportunities in militarizing ANI?

- Andaman and Nicobar chain of islands could be used as a basis for Indian maritime power projection into the Indo-Pacific and even beyond into the south-west Pacific.
- ANI could become an important element of India's "Act East Policy" of engaging with countries in the region east of India.
- ANI can play a crucial role in India's Third Fleet and the trans-shipment hub at Car Nicobar, rivalling the ports of Singapore or Colombo.
- As Andaman and Nicobar is the only Tri-Command structure in India, development of military infrastructure at ANI is a key requirement in India's security strategy.

What the challenges are in involved?

- Military infrastructure projects could devastate the fragile ecology of the ANI. Already many islands are facing significant damage from the climate crisis.
- Also, to establish a credible Aerial and Naval presence in an ethnographically extremely sensitive region presents complex challenges.
- When India first began developing the ANI in the mid-1980s, countries like Malaysia and Indonesia feared that India would use its military facilities in the ANI to dominate its region, and project power east of Malacca.
- Hence, it is not uncommon for India to be vilified as the 'Big Brother' by many of its neighbors in South Asia and South-East Asia.
- Therefore, a section of India's diplomatic community has opposed militarizing the ANI, arguing that turning ANI into a strategic-military garrison would militarize the littoral states and disrupt Indian Ocean as a zone of peace.

3. TERRORISM & ORGANISED CRIME

3.1 Envoys to Visit J&K Again

Why in News?

The Indian Government has decided to take a second batch of foreign envoys to visit Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).

Why this decision is significant?

- In January 2020, 15 foreign diplomats, including US Ambassador to India, were taken to Kashmir by Indian Government.
- The Ministry of External Affairs stated that these tours will become a regular feature pointing to a belief that these visits have been productive.
- The government has been under considerable international pressure to lift restrictions in the former State of J&K.
- But still, it has managed to arrange these visits without any incident.
- The delegations have been taken to meet with local groups, and shown a glimpse of 'normalcy' in the Kashmir Valley.

What was the result of the previous visits?

- After these tours, no envoy has come forward with any negative account.

- This indicates that at least for the moment, the government's narrative has prevailed. The visits have also smoothed other diplomatic exchanges.
- The U.S. Ambassador's trip in the first batch to J&K paved the way for the upcoming visit of their President.

How the previous visit was timed?

- The latest visit by European Ambassadors was timed just before Indian Foreign Minister travel to Brussels to prepare for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's trip for the EU-India summit in March 2020.
- However, the government must recognise that these gains in the present are superficial in the absence of change in Kashmir's situation.

What is concern with the meeting?

- It would not have escaped anyone's attention that,
 1. These tours are tightly controlled, and
 2. The people meeting the foreign guests are handpicked by the government.
- European delegates who accepted India's invitation on this trip had earlier opted out in order to request freer access and meetings with leaders in detention.
- But the government refused to relent to this request.
- The chimera of 'normalcy' seems patently fragile.

What should be the priority?

- The truth is managing India's image is important. But the government's primary responsibilities still lie within its borders.
- These responsibilities may include the responsibilities,
 1. To the people of J&K, who have yet to see a return to normalcy;
 2. To those detained in and outside J&K; and
 3. To the people of India as a whole, who are yet to see a credible path to the peace and prosperity that was promised when the momentous decision on Article 370 was announced last August.
- It is their legitimate expectations and not those of the international community that must be a priority for the government.

3.2 ISIS in the region

ISIS Attack in Afghanistan

Why in News?

ISKP terrorist killed Sikh worshippers in a gurdwara in Kabul, Afghanistan.

What happened?

- Identifying the attacker as Abu Khalid Al-Hindi (Mushin) from Kerala, ISIS claimed the attack as "revenge for Muslims of Kashmir".
- Later, Afghan security forces arrested the leader of ISKP and others.
- ISKP is the Islamic State Khurasan Province, which is the ISIS branch in Afghanistan-Pakistan.
- The claim of using a single foreign fighter, the modus operandi, and weak propaganda for the gurdwara attack is not a signature of ISIS.
- However, owning up to the ISKP attacks could suggest a possible shift in post-Caliphate strategy.

What are the recent threats in the region?

- In April 2019, after the fall of the Caliphate (March 23, 2019), ISIS mounted spectacular attacks on targets in Sri Lanka.
- In March 2020, in Kabul, ISIS claimed mortar attacks on President Ashraf Ghani's inauguration and on US troops in Bagram base twice.
- On May 4, 2020, ISKP posted a picture and a video of an Afghan officer in their custody, and pictures of his "beheading".
- The chain of events does necessitate closer scrutiny of the ISKP threat in the region.

What is happening between ISIS and Taliban?

- In recent years, especially after the US-Taliban agreement, the Taliban have repeatedly claimed to have finished ISKP in Afghanistan.
- In its weekly, criticising the agreement, ISIS has exhorted supporters to target "enemies" as their resources are tied up with Covid-19.
- Lately, a few lone wolf attacks have been reported across Europe.

What is Wilayat Khurasan?

- The Wilayat Khurasan comprises of parts of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Central Asia.
- It is a concept born in January 2015, when ISIS designated Hafiz Saeed, a former Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) commander as "Wali".
- In October 2014, Hafiz Saeed and TTP spokesperson Sheikh Maqbool suddenly pledged allegiance to ISIS.
- Around this time, the ISIS ideology was gaining traction in Pakistan.

How did the group recruit?

- The group went **online for propaganda and recruitment** of fighters especially from Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Central Asia.
- However, this recruitment was very small, except from Pakistan.
- Accounts from the West described the group as ISKP.
- Online recruiters from Kashmir were, Aijaz Ahangar and his son-in-law, reportedly killed in Nangarhar (Afghanistan).
- In no time, local fighters of ISKP displaced the Taliban from Nangarhar.
- Across the border, the Pakistan Army had a formidable presence to control cross-border movement for its own security.
- It has taken close to 5 years for ISKP to be dislodged from a small area.

What is the geographical expanse of ISKP?

- The geographical spread of ISKP, its selective and big attacks and its "near peaceful coexistence" with Taliban cannot be misread.
- The group has never gained much traction in Afghanistan or Pakistan.
- Except claiming a few big attacks in Kabul and Quetta, ISKP has not shown any keenness to expand its areas of influence.
- Post-Caliphate, no mass movement of regional foreign fighters back to the fold of ISKP has been reported.

Are there Indians in ISKP?

- The Caliphate was gaining traction among foreign fighters globally.

- Subsequently, a group of Indians from Kerala, including women and children, had migrated to Afghanistan around 2016-17.
- Around 60-plus Indians were believed to be living in the territory controlled by ISKP in Nangarhar.
- In 2019, over 1,400 people with ISKP, including fighters and their families, surrendered before Afghan forces in Nangarhar.
- These included fighters from Pakistan, Bangladesh and India.
- Some Indian women and children were in this group.
- With the surfacing of Mushin, it appears that a few more Indians may have joined ISKP.

What are the online entities?

- In recent times, online entities called the Islamic State Hind Province (ISHP) or Islamic State-Kashmir (IS-K) have surfaced.
- Their focus is on propaganda and recruitment of Indians, or of fighters from the region, for attacks on Indian interests.
- The activities of ISHP and IS-K are closely linked to ISKP.
- In March 2020, Delhi Police Special Cell arrested a Kashmiri couple being linked to ISHP/IS-K.
- This may have been an attempt to test the waters with Indians, driven by personal grievances, radicalised in the name of ISIS.

How ISIS is trying to get momentum?

- Although the source of ISKP/ISHP/IS-K is known, this does not reduce the threats posed by them.
- Since ISIS is currently **claiming all verifiable attacks**, these entities have a ready-to-use platform for propaganda for recruitment.
- Moreover, through the Covid-19 phase, ISIS is becoming quite active in **cyberspace**.
- ISIS would own up to many attacks by the likes of the ISKP network.
- ISIS may not miss the opportunity to rope in and guide such networks to attack targets in the region.
- Apart from stemming radicalisation, it is critical to closely watch threats emerging in the region, especially for India and the West.

3.3 Handwara Encounter - Worrying Trend

What is the issue?

- Five security personnel and two unidentified militants were killed during an anti-militancy operation in north Kashmir's Handwara area.
- Encounters in Kashmir are on the rise, taking a disproportionate toll on security personnel.

What happened in Handwara area?

- It was an 18-hour anti-militancy operation near Handwara town in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district.
- Intelligence suggested that terrorists were present in a house in Changimulla village.
- On this, the security personnel reached the site which had a building and a cowshed adjoining it.



- An intense firefight commenced.
- All the enemy fire came from the cowshed, not the building.
- Then there was a lull for more than an hour during which the team apparently decided to approach the house.
- They decided to use the vantage of the upper floor to fire at the terrorists in the cowshed.
- They entered the house and there was a fresh firefight but no communication from the Colonel and his team.
- Then it was noticed that their communication instrument was being used by the terrorists.
- That is when realisation came all was not well, and firing ensued all over again.

Why is it a cause of worry?

- The five security personnel who were dead include -
 - i. a Commanding Officer of a battalion in the rank of a colonel
 - ii. a major
 - iii. two other ranks
 - iv. a special operations group policeman in the rank of a sub inspector
- The details on the attack are unclear, yet provide compelling evidence of an operation that went horribly wrong.
- It is unusual and disproportionate for just a couple of terrorists to take down five highly skilled and motivated soldiers.
- The way this operation ended will have ramifications.
- It might affect both morale and operating procedures, on future operations of this kind.

What does this imply?

- Evidently, changing the nomenclature and status of J&K has not addressed any of the underlying causes of unrest and angst.
- Neither has it deterred Pakistan from its steadfast goals.
- Since the beginning of the year 2020, in 127 days, as many as 55 terrorists have been killed in the region.
- Such encounters have only aided the impulse of the disaffected to embrace arms.
- As the dangerous drift in J&K continues, New Delhi must realise the implications and look for ways to arrest this trend.

3.4 United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact

Why in news?

UN launches new framework named the United Nations Global Counter-terrorism Coordination Compact to strengthen fight against terrorism.

What is the framework about?

- It is the largest coordination framework at the United Nations across the organization's three pillars of work: peace and security, sustainable development, human rights and humanitarian affairs.
- It replaced the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), which was established in 2005.
- It is an agreement between the UN Secretary-General and 36 UN entities plus the INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization (WCO).
- WCO was developed as part of Secretary-General Guterres's reform of the UN counter-terrorism architecture

- The objective is to increase the impact of the UN's work on the ground to promote the balanced implementation by Member States of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, as well as other relevant resolutions of the UN General Assembly and Security Council.
- The new eight inter-agency working groups are:
 1. Criminal justice, legal responses and countering the financing of terrorism
 2. Border management and law enforcement relating to counter-terrorism
 3. Emerging threats and critical infrastructure protection
 4. National and regional counter-terrorism strategies
 5. Preventing and countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism
 6. Promoting and protecting human rights and the rule of law while countering terrorism and supporting victims of terrorism
 7. Adopting a gender sensitive approach to preventing and countering terrorism

3.5 India's Anti-Terror laws

What are the main anti-terror laws in India?

TADA

- Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, 1987, was at one time the main law used in cases of terrorism and organised crime.
- But due to rampant misuse, it was allowed to lapse in 1995.
- The Act defined what "terrorist act" and "disruptive activities" mean, and put restrictions on the grant of bail.
- It also gave enhanced power to detain suspects and attach properties.
- The law made "confessions given to a police officer" admissible as evidence.
- Separate courts were set up to hear cases filed under TADA.

POTA

- In wake of the 1999 IC-814 hijack and 2001 Parliament attack, there was a clamour for a more stringent anti-terror law.
- This came in the form of "Prevention of Terrorism Act" (POTA), 2002.
- A suspect could be detained for up to 180 days by a special court.
- The law made fundraising for the purpose of terrorism a "terrorist act".
- A separate chapter to deal with terrorist organisations was included.
- Union government was mandated to maintain a list of organised that would fall under the act's radar and had full authority to make additions or removals.
- However, reports of gross misuse of the Act by some state governments led to its repeal in 2004.

UAPA

- **Strengthening** - In 2004, the government chose to strengthen the "Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, in accordance with international standards.
- It was amended to overcome some of the difficulties in its enforcement and to update it to match "Financial Action Task Force" (international) guidelines.
- By inserting specific chapters, the amendment criminalised the raising of funds for a terrorist act, and holding of the proceeds of terrorism.

- Membership of a terrorist organisation, support to a terrorist organisation, and the raising of funds for a terrorist organisation were also made a crime.
- It increased the time available to law-enforcement agencies to file a charge sheet to six months from three.
- **Further** - The law was again amended in 2008 after the Mumbai Serial attacks, and again in 2012 to make it more comprehensive.
- The definition of “terrorist act” was expanded to include offences that threaten economic security, and counterfeiting Indian currency.
- Procurement of weapons was also made a crime under the act.
- Additional powers were granted to courts to provide for attachment or forfeiture of property or the proceeds of terrorism involved in the offence.

What is “Financial Action Task Force” (FATF)?

- FATF is an inter-governmental organisation set up in 1989 to develop policies to combat money laundering and terrorist financing.
- India got FATF membership in 2010 on the assurance that it would make suitable amendments in the Act by March 2012.

3.6 Extension of Ban on LTTE

Why in news?

The Centre extended the ban on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) for another 5 years under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA) in 2019.

What is the UAP Act?

- The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA) is India’s primary anti-terror law.
- It provides for effective prevention of certain unlawful activities of individuals and associations.
- It helps deal with terrorist activities, and for matters connected therewith.
- Section 3 of the UAPA deals with the declaration of an association as unlawful.
- It specifies that notifications by the government making such a declaration shall specify the grounds on which it is issued.
- The notification shall also contain such other particulars as the Central government may consider necessary.

What is the recent decision?

- The ban on LTTE is extended under sub-sections (1) and (3) of Section 3 of the UAPA with immediate effect.
- The notification noted that LTTE's continued violent and disruptive activities are prejudicial to the integrity and sovereignty of India.
- It continues to adopt a strong anti-India posture as also continues to pose a grave threat to the security of Indian nationals.
- Organisations banned by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) under Section 3 of the UAPA are listed in the First Schedule of the Act.
- The latest version of the list contains 41 entries, including, apart from the LTTE, Khalistani terrorist organisations, Pakistan-based terror groups, Islamic State or Daesh, and Indian Mujahideen.
- It also includes some Northeastern militant organisations, Kashmiri separatist organisations, Maoist groups, and the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI).

Who are the LTTEs?

- The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was founded in 1976 by Velupillai Prabhakaran.
- The goal of the organisation was creating an independent Tamil Eelam out of Sri Lanka.
- With this motive, the LTTE constantly clashed with the Sri Lankan military.
- In the early 1980s, it launched a full-scale nationalist insurgency in the north and east of the country.
- It carried out a string of major terrorist attacks against both military and civilian targets.

How has India and LTTE been?

- India's relationship with the LTTE had been complex.
- It has ranged from providing support to the guerrillas initially to sending the Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF) to support Sri Lanka from 1987 to 1990.
- The LTTE pioneered suicide bombing as a weapon of terror.
- In 1991, an LTTE suicide bomber killed former Indian PM Rajiv Gandhi in an attack on Indian soil.
- India first banned the LTTE after the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi; the ban was last extended for five years in 2014.

How is the terrorist orientation?

- Among the other high-profile assassinations carried out by LTTE was that of the Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa in 1993.
- The LTTE is also said to have freely used women and children in combat.
- At its peak, the LTTE covered over three-quarters of Sri Lanka's northern and eastern provinces.
- The organisation was finally crushed in a military offensive by the government of President Mahinda Rajapaksa in 2009.
- The LTTE was designated as a terrorist organisation by 32 countries, including, besides India, the U.S., Canada, and the EU.
- The US designated the LTTE as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO) in 1997.

3.7 Pakistan & Terrorism

What is the issue?

- The recent terrorist encounter at Handwara (Kashmir) has once again brought to the fore the terrorist threat emanating from Pakistan.
- Analysts of terrorism are well aware of the irony that Pakistan is both possibly the leading perpetrator and a major victim of terrorism.

What is the warfare that Pakistan has with its neighbours?

- **Strategy** - This contradiction can be traced to the deliberate policy of the Pakistani state to create and foster terrorist groups in order to engage in low intensity warfare with its neighbours.
- Pakistan first operationalized this strategy about Afghanistan following the overthrow of Zahir Shah by his cousin Daud Khan in 1973.
- It intensified this strategy with the cooperation of the U.S. and Saudi Arabia after the Marxist coup of 1978.
- **Asset** - The Soviet withdrawal in 1989 left the Pakistani military with a large surplus of Islamist fighters that it had trained and armed.

- Islamabad decided to use this “asset” to intensify the insurgency in the Kashmir Valley.
- Decade-long Afghan “jihad” had also radicalised a substantial segment of the Pakistani population as well as augmented sectarian divisions only between Sunnis and Shias and also among various Sunni sects.
- In the process, a number of homegrown terrorist groups emerged that the Pakistan Army co-opted for its use in Kashmir and the rest of India.

How did Pakistan’s strategy affect itself?

- Some of Pakistan’s terrorist groups turned against it especially after the Musharraf government.
- Musharraf’s government, under American pressure, decided to collaborate with the latter in the overthrow of Afghan Taliban regime.
- But not all terrorist groups acted in this way.

What are the actions of LeT?

- Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the group involved in the Handwara encounter, is a classic example of a “loyalist” terrorist organisation.
- LeT has played by the rules set by the Pakistani military.
- It only launches attacks on targets outside Pakistan, primarily in India.
- Inter-Services Intelligence provides LeT with intelligence and logistical support in addition to identifying specific targets.
- This is why the LeT and its front organisations have continued to receive the military’s patronage and support.
- Thus, Hafiz Saeed, its leader was provided protection by the Pakistani state despite being designated as an international terrorist by the UN.
- A Pakistani anti-terrorism court finally sentenced Saeed to 11 years in prison in February, 2020 for terror financing activities.
- It sentenced him to stave off the global anti-terror watchdog, Financial Action Task Force (FATF), blacklisting Pakistan as terror financing state.

What is the difference between LeT and JeM?

- Both the LeT and the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) have been engaged in attacks on Indian targets identified by Pakistan’s ISI.
- The JeM has not hesitated to launch terrorist attacks on targets within Pakistan as well, especially against the Shias and Sufi shrines.
- The difference between LeT and JeM is that the LeT is more pragmatic and less ideological but the JeM is highly ideological and sectarian.
- **JeM** - JeM draws its ideological inspiration from extreme form of Deobandi Puritanism.
- Deobandi Puritanism considers all those who do not believe in its philosophy beyond the pale of Islam.
- Therefore, legitimate targets of attack for JeM include not only Shias and Barelvis but also the Pakistani state and the Pakistani military.
- **LeT** - It does not consider Muslims of different theological orientations as non-believers.
- This relatively “liberal” interpretation is due to the fact that LeT draws its ideological inspiration from a minority sect called Ahl-e-Hadis.
- [Ahl-e-Hadis composes only a small proportion of Pakistan’s Muslim population and cannot afford to engage in sectarian conflict.]
- Moreover, it draws its membership from different Muslim sects.

- Both these factors drive LeT toward greater tolerance in sectarian terms and to avoid intra-Islamic theological battles.
- Its primary goals are political and driving India out of Kashmir.
- This jells well with the objectives of the Pakistani military and makes LeT and Hafiz Saeed, favourites of the Pakistani establishment.

What does this narrative clarify?

- Many of the terrorist groups were deliberately created by the Pakistani state to serve its purposes.
- However, its ability to control the various terrorist outfits is uneven and some of them have turned against their creator.
- It establishes the fact that using terrorist outfits for state objectives can have very negative consequences for the stability of the state itself.

3.8 Operation TRF

Why in News?

TRF, or The Resistance Front, is the latest among the terror groups creating waves on the dark web as well on ground in Kashmir.

What is The Resistance Force means?

- The Resistance Force is an amalgamation of terrorist groups fronted by the Lashkar-e-Tayyiba of UN-designated terrorist Hafiz Saeed.
- Hizbul Mujahideen and Jaish-e-Mohammed have been hit very hard and are short of weapons, money and cadres after the Article 370 abrogation which resulted in a communication blackout and an extended lockdown which continues now due to COVID-19 pandemic in Jammu & Kashmir.
- Lashkar-e-Tayyiba still remains better off with its finances and is being well supported from across the border in Pakistan.
- TRF began roaring from the servers of GHQ Rawalpindi in October 2019 once it became clear that Pakistan wasn't going to be taken out of the Grey list of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) anytime soon.
- On various telegram channels, it began circulating jihadi literature, in classic Pakistan military propaganda language, on Kashmir.
- TRF wasn't alone, Joint Kashmir Front, Jammu Kashmir Ghaznavi Force, and many such new groups, suddenly mushroomed overnight.

What is the action of India in this regard?

- National Security Council Secretariat in New Delhi had been closely monitoring the activities of TRF.
- National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval, chaired a high-level briefing for an operational review of the security situation in Jammu & Kashmir, especially along the Line of Control (LOC).
- The meeting happened days after the Handwara operation in which the Indian Army lost a Commanding Officer and four other soldiers and jawans.
- NSA focused on synergy between forces in anti-terror ops, he also focused on gathering more human intelligence from the ground to thwart the nefarious designs of Pakistan.
- The meeting also noted that, "Pakistan had failed to control cross-border infiltration under pressure of jihadi leaders of Jaish, Lashkar and Hizbul, and was pushing in terrorists which it would continue to do through May and June this year.

- The security establishment had recently stopped the convoy movement of the Army and paramilitary across the Union Territory due to the perceived high-level nature of the threat.

What is the modus operandi of TRF?

- TRF is a ploy on two fronts – one, to get deniability in terms of linkages with Pakistan, and two, to bring all terrorist cadres under one common umbrella.
- It is also seen as an attempt by the ISI to secularize terrorism in Jammu & Kashmir by doing away with Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed and Hizbul Mujahideen, and merging them into one common non-religious label to make it look like an indigenous rebel movement with a modern outlook.
- While the ISI would be trying to put more emphasis on suicide bombings in the pattern of LTTE without assigning any hardcore religious overtones, they would be investing in creating public unrest in Kashmir and a global image of a humanitarian crisis in the Valley.
- National Security Advisor of India has briefed about Pakistan's TRF Operation which was referred to as the Terror Revival Front or Fund of Pakistan, to easily escape the eyes of the United Nations Security Council's 1267 sanctions committee, or the FATF.

What is Indian Army's policy shift on terrorists in J&K?

- The mass funerals for terrorists that were earlier allowed in Kashmir, often led to terror recruitment drives which in-turn radicalized youth to join terror ranks.
- Not handing over mortal remains of terrorists to family members is an important and clear message to the common people to avoid this violent path.
- The shift in policy could also be seen in the Indian Army deciding not to officially name terrorists killed in the Pulwama encounter.
- The local youth are reluctant to join militancy given the shortage of weapons and slow communication due to the absence of 4G.
- They are also aware that their life expectancy decreases exponentially once they join the insurgency.
- That out of 139 youths who joined militancy in 2019, only 89 survived reinforces this argument.
- Indian Security Forces Eliminated About 80 Terrorists Since January 2020 in J&K

4. ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND INTERNAL SECURITY CHALLENGES

4.1 Fake News Crackdown - The Flaws

What is the issue?

- The onus for curtailing the fake news menace is disproportionately being shifted on the social media platforms.
- It needs to be recognized that a collaborative approach addressing both the technology and social sides is needed.

Why is the government's approach to address the problem flawed?

- Fake news and rumour mongering through social media has reached epic proportions in recent times with deadly consequences.
- In this context, the government has adopted a flawed approach in resolving the ongoing security crisis due to fake news being circulated on social media.
- Notably, social media platforms like WhatsApp are being disproportionately pressured into accepting the blame for the malice.

- They are also being burdened with finding a solution for mob lynching incidences, which isn't their main domain.
- Further, in their focus to trace the origin of fake news, government has been calling for undoing the encryption, which might violate the privacy of millions.
- Notably, as user data is highly sought after by unscrupulous elements, it is important to have a system that is completely encrypted end-to-end.

What is the government's stand on data privacy?

- Policy makers have taken a contradictory stance with regard to data issues.
- On one hand they want digital players such as Facebook to plug data leaks but on the other they are asking WhatsApp to give access to specific user data.
- Even more dangerous is the attempts by the Centre to block applications such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and Telegram on security grounds.
- If such a mechanism is put in place, there is always the possibility of regimes misusing the system to bulldoze privacy and freedom of speech.

4.2 Preventing Misuse of WhatsApp

What is the issue?

- There has been a spate of mob violence and lynching across the country due to fear generated by rumours shared on social media platforms.
- Of all the platforms, WhatsApp is proving the most challenging for investigators due to its strong privacy policy.

What makes WhatsApp different?

- All social media platforms struggle with rumours and misinformation, which are spread through posts as well as direct messages.
- **Messaging** - While posts can be tracked, messaging services do not leave a trail, making it difficult to track the origin and spread of data.
- Nonetheless, in most messaging services, information is stored in the parent server and police can request companies to share IP details if needed.
- But contrarily, WhatsApp communications are "end-to-end encrypted" and information is stored in the devices of users and not on a common server.
- **Instant** - This means, WhatsApp's servers handle only "encoded messages in transit", which can be decoded only in the receiver's device.
- Also, even the encrypted messages are deleted once they are delivered at the receiver's end, thereby leaving no trace within WhatsApp's apparatus.
- This implies, even WhatsApp doesn't know what is being disseminated through its platform and hence can't provide investigating agencies with information.
- **Delayed** - If a message cannot be delivered immediately (e.g. if the receiver is offline), then WhatsApp's servers are said to retain messages for 30 days.
- But if a message is still undelivered after 30 days, it is nonetheless deleted without a trace.

How have WhatsApp based cases been handled thus far?

- Maharashtra Cops claim to have tracked down the source in a few cases where the posts had been shared just a few times.

- Their “modus operandi” was largely conventional (non technological), and they followed the sender-receiver trail manually by interrogating the entire chain.
- Such an approach has already proved futile when forwarded messages had gone viral with millions of shares.
- Hence, if metadata is deleted like in WhatsApp, it is almost impossible to track the trail of forwards beyond a few users.
- Notably, metadata means – information like “user name, device info, log-in time” and other specifics, which are used for enabling the service function.

4.3 How is WhatsApp trying to prevent the misuse of its platform?

Research:

- WhatsApp has stated that the company is trying to learn more about the way misinformation spreads on its platform.
- **Data Analysis** - Its current spree of research is through the amount of metadata that the company gets access to while transmitting messages.
- The drive is largely focused on understanding when spam is being spread intentionally and when it is happening unintentionally.
- **Collaboration** - WhatsApp is also seeking to collaborate with various other organisations and governments to arrive at a solution to the current malice.
- Nonetheless, WhatsApp has asserted its unfettered commitment to user privacy and encrypted instant message delivery without data retention.

Framing Fixes:

- At the moment, WhatsApp is working on a mix of in-platform fixes and off-platform intervention.
- **Internal Fixes** - Within the platform it planning to give more authority to group administrators for restricting publishing in the group.
- A forward label (which marks forwarded messages) is in beta testing, and an option for flagging doubtful forwarded content is also being considered.
- Resources like fact-checking websites for verifying content are also being developed in parallel.
- **External Fixes** - Off-platform, it is expected to initiate measures to educate people about the perils of misinformation and ways to identify them.

What are some actions governments worldwide have taken?

- **Liability** - In India, authorities can book group administrators if they are found endorsing false malicious content.
- But as the admin has no control over what other people in the group will post, he/she is not liable for action if he is a mere spectator.
- **Awareness** - Group admins are expected to inform any member posting misinformation about the consequences and restrain them from doing so.
- Government officials too have taken out awareness campaigns to educate the masses on the perils of fake information.
- In Mexico, private groups collaborated to set up Verificado 2018, a fact-checking initiative, to disrupt the spread of fake news.
- **Curtailments** - Many nations (including India) have restricted internet during times of unrest, primarily to block ill intentioned WhatsApp campaigns.

- Uganda has introduced a social media tax as check on online gossip.

4.4 Surveillance in India

What law covers tapping phones/computers?

- Lawful interception of phones and computers can be done by the governments at the Centre and in the states under Section 5(2) of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885.
- If it is done illegally, it is punishable under sections 25 & 26 that provide for imprisonment up to three years, with or without a fine.

When is tapping by the government lawful or illegal?

- The Supreme Court laid down the following guidelines in this regard in the **PUCL vs Union of India** case.
- Section 5(2) of ITA,1985 does not confer unguided and unbridled power on investigating agencies to invade a person's privacy.
- Tapping of telephones is prohibited without an authorising order from the Home Secretary of the Union government or of the state government concerned.
- The order unless is valid for two months and if renewed, it cannot remain in operation beyond six months.
- Phone tapping or interception of communications must be limited to the address specified in the order or to addresses likely to be used by a person specified in the order.
- All copies of the intercepted material must be destroyed as soon as their retention is not necessary under Section 5(2).

Who oversees if interception is done without misuse of powers?

- There is no judicial or parliamentary oversight to review cases of lawful interception.
- However, the orders of the competent authority clearing lawful interception are reviewed by a review committee at both the central and state levels under Rule 419-A of the Indian Telegraph Rules, 1951.
- The review committee investigates whether its passing is relevant within two months of an order.
- Rule 419-A also provides for the procedure and precautions for handling lawful interception cases to ensure that unauthorised interception does not take place.

What are the rules for monitoring of emails and social media content?

- This is done by invoking the provisions of “public emergency”, “interest of sovereignty” or “integrity of India”.
- Under Section 69 of the IT Act, 2008, the central and state governments are empowered to issue directions to intercept, monitor or decrypt any information generated, transmitted, received or stored in any computer resources.
- Accordingly, the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2011 issued standard operating procedures (SOPs) to law enforcement agencies.
- The Department of Telecom has also issued SOPs for lawful interception to the telecom service providers.

What does the SOP contain?

- It requires setting up of an internal evaluation cell that will examine a monthly statement from law-enforcement agencies on the fifth of succeeding month.
- These statements are to detail the authorisation orders received for interception, numbers and emails intercepted including period of interception, number of telephones and emails authorised but not intercepted, etc.
- The SoPs also mention the need for destruction of data and phone-tapping records beyond six months.

- It further says that for surveillance in remote areas, the competent authority should be informed within 3 days and permission must be obtained in 7 days, failing which the interception will not be valid.

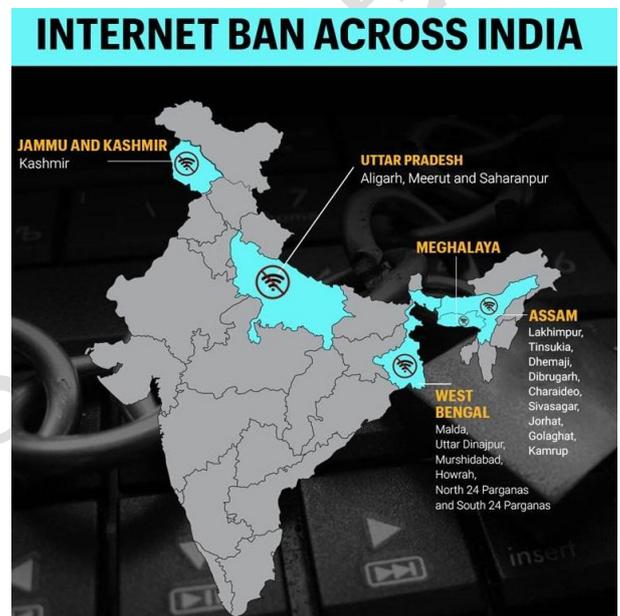
4.5 Internet Shutdowns in India

What is the issue?

- It has become common for law enforcement and government officials to cut off the Internet during moments of tension.
- With rise in such instances in the recent period, here is a look at the trend, the legal provisions, and the implications in regards to internet shutdowns.

What are the recent instances?

- The Delhi-based non-profit Software Freedom Law Centre (SFLC) tracks these shutdowns nationally.
- It says there have been 55 internet blockades in J&K in 2019.
- There were 11 in Rajasthan in the same period.
- Network disruptions have also become increasingly common around the world.
- The Iranian government recently ordered near-complete suspension of internet services as a response to protests over a hike in petrol prices.
- Between mid-2015 to mid-2016, over 19 countries suspended internet access.
- The number increased to more than 30 in 2017.
- However, it is India that has the distinction of witnessing the most number of shutdowns in the world.
- According to an estimate, in 2018, of the 196 internet shutdowns collated from 25 countries, India was responsible for the majority.
- With 134 incidents, 67% of the world's documented shutdowns took place in India, in 2018.



How has the trend been?

- Most often, the internet shutdown orders restrict only mobile data services.
- This is because, 95.13% of Indian internet users access the internet over mobile networks (phones and dongles).
- In terms of duration, the longest-running shutdown was in the erstwhile state of J&K in 2016.
- Services remained suspended for nearly 5 months after the death of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani.
- This is followed by the ongoing shutdown in the valley since 5 August, 2019 (when special status was revoked).
- The third longest was a 100-day shutdown in West Bengal's Darjeeling in June 2017 linked to the agitation for Gorkhaland.
- **Limitations** - SFLC's primary sources to track shutdowns are RTI (right to information) applications, news reports and citizen reporting on its website.
- But, several shutdowns are not reported in the news.

- Moreover, even RTI is not a reliable method as many states deny giving information under Section 8 of the RTI Act.
- Estimates then are, in fact, limited, especially given that there is no centralized count of internet shutdowns in India.

What are the legal provisions?

- Until 2 years ago, shutdowns were imposed largely under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).
- This gave the police and district magistrate powers to prevent unlawful gatherings of people and “direct any person to abstain from a certain act”.
- However, in August 2017, the Centre promulgated the Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017.
- It did this under the authority granted to it by the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885.
- These rules trace the legal source of the power to issue shutdown orders to the Union home secretary or the secretary in charge of the home department in a state.
- This order must then be forwarded to a review committee, which is required to decide on its reasonability within 5 working days.

What are the concerns with 2017 rules?

- The 2017 Shutdown Rules result in arbitrary shutdown orders due to inadequate oversight and safeguards.
- In effect, a specific legal basis for internet shutdowns has enhanced the general power under Section 144 of the CrPC, rather than displacing it.
- The telecom service providers (TSPs) suffer heavy losses with every shutdown.
- TSPs have little option but to comply.
- In India, TSPs’ licence can be cancelled or a penalty of up to Rs. 50 crore per service area imposed for every violation.
- The 2017 rules also list the circumstances under which the government may order shutdowns.
- These include situations of public emergency, or to ensure public safety.
- Over the years, these have been invoked in a variety of circumstances, including conflict, militancy, caste and communal uprisings, or protests.

How significant has internet become, and what are the implications of a shutdown?

- **Education** is now inextricably linked to the internet.
- Enabling students to have access to internet will only enhance opportunities of students to acquire knowledge from all available sources.
- The Kerala high court too acknowledged this in the case involving Faheema Shirin, an 18-year-old BA student.
- She filed a petition seeking to set aside the rule that denied internet access to women students at night in her hostel.
- **Women safety** - The Kashmir Women’s Collective (KWC) is an organization in the valley that helps women who are targets of violence, domestic or otherwise, and familial disputes.
- The team counsels complainants, who reach out primarily via Facebook.
- It helps them pursue legal recourse or provides support through other channels.
- With communication shutdown in J&K after Centre’s decision to revoke special status, services as the above came to a standstill.

- The gendered impact of a communication blockade, especially in areas ridden with conflict, is often missed in the clamor of politics.
- **Human right** - For a lot of people, the internet has become a very vital way to connect them to their professional and personal lives.
- In 2016, the UN declared that access to the internet is a human right.
- **Democracy** - The internet today is a platform where dissent can be registered meaningfully.
- It creates a democratized space cutting across distinctions of caste, class and gender in an unprecedented way.
- Also, many of the schemes rolled out by the government are linked to the internet.
- **Financial** - The financial setback as a result of internet shutdowns can be crippling for businesses both in the formal and informal sectors.
- The internet shutdowns in India between 2012-17 cost the economy approximately \$3.04 billion (around Rs. 21,584 crore).

4.6 Significance of Internet

What is the issue?

- With rising number of internet bans across the country, the crucial need of internet in day-to-day life is increasingly felt.
- Access to Internet must be recognised as a fundamental right to free speech, basic freedoms and the right to life.

What are the recent instances?

- There have been more than 100 Internet shutdowns in different parts of India in 2019 alone.
- In Kashmir, the government imposed a complete Internet shutdown on August 4 2019 (scrapping off Art 370), which continues for months.
- The enactment of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act led to protests all over the country.
- State governments responded to this by suspending the Internet.
- Assam witnessed a suspension of mobile and broadband Internet services in many places, including in Guwahati for 10 days.
- There were Internet bans in Mangaluru, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh.
- These bans are being imposed under different provisions of the law.
- These include Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), Section 5(2) of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885.
- Some are imposed without any legal provisions at all.

How significant is internet in people's life?

- Internet broadband and mobile Internet services are a lifeline to people in India from all walks of life.
- Internet is a main source of information and communication and access to social media.
- More than that, people working in the technology-based gig economy depend on the Internet for their livelihoods.
- E.g. delivery workers for Swiggy, Dunzo and Amazon and the cab drivers of Uber and Ola
- Internet is also a mode of access to education for students who do courses and take exams online.
- Access to the Internet is thus important to facilitate the promotion and enjoyment of the right to education.

- The Internet provides access to transport for millions of urban and rural people.
- It is also a mode of access to health care for those who avail of health services online.
- Internet is a means for business and occupation for thousands of small and individual-owned enterprises selling products and services online.

Should internet be a right then?

- Access to the Internet is thus a right that is very similar to what the Supreme Court held with respect to the right to privacy.
- It is a right that is located through all fundamental rights and freedoms.
- Internationally, the right to access to the Internet is spelt out in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- It states that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.
- This right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.
- The Human Rights Council in a UN resolution made important declarations on promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet.
- The resolution affirmed that the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online.
- These include, in particular, freedom of expression, which is applicable regardless of frontiers and through any media of one's choice.
- The Kerala high court too recently acknowledged this in the case involving Faheema Shirin, an 18-year-old BA student.
- She filed a petition seeking to set aside the rule that denied internet access to women students at night in her hostel.
- It is time that India recognises that the right to access to the Internet is indeed a fundamental right within constitutional guarantees.

4.7 Restoring 4G Internet in J&K - SC Direction

Why in news?

The Supreme Court directed that a special committee led by the Ministry of Home Affairs secretary should be constituted to look into restoration of 4G internet services in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir.

What is the case about?

- The central government had imposed a complete internet shutdown in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019.
- This was after scrapping Article 370 which gave J&K its special status.
- Later in March 2020, it restored internet services partially, to allow 2G speed for mobile users.
- After this, several orders were passed from time to time, retaining speed restrictions.

What is the Court's direction?

- The committee suggested by the Centre will also include the -
 - i. Department of Communications Secretary of the Union Ministry of Communications
 - ii. the Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir
- This committee has been asked to look into the petitioners' contention.

- It will examine the alternatives suggested by them, on allowing faster internet on a trial basis in areas wherever possible.
- The Court emphasized on ensuring the balance between national security and human rights.
- The bench referred to the judgment in the Anuradha Bhasin case (January 2020).

What were the observations of the Anuradha Bhasin case?

- It was popularly known as the Kashmir internet shutdown case.
- The Supreme Court emphasized back then that Article 19 of the constitution guarantees the freedom of speech.
- The freedom to practice any profession or carry on any trade, business or occupation over the medium of Internet also enjoys constitutional protection.
- The Anuradha Bhasin case had also advocated for adequate procedural safeguards while implementing internet shutdowns.
- The Court refrained from taking any view on the legality of the government's imposition of a blanket communication lockdown in J&K.
- However, it held that repeated resort to Section 144 of the CrPC to impose wide restrictions without territorial or temporal limits was unacceptable.
- It directed the authorities to review each one of them from time to time.

What is the contention now?

- It is now desirable to have better internet when there is a worldwide pandemic and a national lockdown.
- But there is also the concern of outside forces trying to infiltrate the borders and destabilize the integrity of the nation.
- The government's rationale is that the limitation on internet speed was to "restrict the flow of information".
- This is to prevent misuse of data by terrorists and their supporters to disturb the peace and tranquillity of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir.
- Notably, there has been a spike in incidents of terrorism in the area; roughly 108 incidents between August 2019 and April 2020.

What are the concerns with the Court's decision?

- The Court failed to ask how those incidents could be linked to Internet speed when all of them took place while severe restrictions were in place.
- The Court has directed a review of the matter by the very authorities who imposed the restriction in the first place.
- This suggests abdication of responsibility by the Court, of discharging a judicial duty it was called upon to perform.
- The mandate that the Court enjoys under Article 32 of the Constitution (enforcing fundamental rights) cannot be transferred to the executive.
- The judgment is in consonance with a judicial trend that seeks 'balance' between rights and 'national security'.
- But in the J&K context, this approach would work in favour of the claims made by the executive on national security concerns.
- The Court has not even pursued the attempt it made in Anuradha Bhasin case.
- It has not laid down any set of rules by which authorities seeking to impose restrictions must adhere to the doctrine of proportionality.

- So, without any judicial standard to scrutinise the claims made, it would be unfair to dislodge fundamental rights.

4.8 Trump's Order against Online Platforms

Why in news?

US President signed an executive order against social media platforms.

What is an executive order?

- An executive order is a written directive issued by the President.
- It is one of the most common presidential documents.
- Such orders are not legislations and don't require the approval of the Congress, which also means that the Congress cannot overturn them.
- Congress may pass legislation that makes it difficult or impossible to carry out an executive order, such as removing funding.
- However, ultimately, only a sitting US president can overturn an executive order by issuing another one to that effect.

What does it say?

- **Argument** - The executive order says that online platforms are engaging in "selective censorship".
- It says that Twitter's labelling of Trump's Tweets shows "political bias".
- It says that online platforms are invoking irrational and groundless justifications to censor or otherwise restrict Americans' speech in US.
- It added that several online platforms are profiting from and promoting the aggression and disinformation spread by foreign governments.
- **Action** - The order aims at removing certain protections for these platforms that safeguard them from any liabilities arising out of the content that is posted on their websites.
- The order gives federal regulators the agency to take action against online platforms that are seen as censoring free speech.

What triggered the move?

- **New policy** - Amid the coronavirus pandemic, Twitter has undertaken a new policy that introduced labels and warning messages.
- These labels provide "additional context and information" on Tweets with disputed, misleading or unverified claims related to the pandemic.
- However, these labels can also be used in situations where the risk of harm associated with a Tweet is less severe and people may be confused or misled by the content.
- **Trigger** - Trump's move comes after Twitter labelled two posts made by Trump about California's vote-by-mail plans as fact-checked.
- Twitter maintained the posts could "confuse" voters about what they need to do to receive a ballot and participate in the election process.

What is Section 230 of CDA?

- Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act (CDA) provides immunity to online platforms.
- It protects the online platforms from being liable for the content billions of people post on their platform every day.

- Under this section, providers of “interactive computer services” are free from being treated as the publisher or speaker of any information posted by the users.
- This renders these platforms “unfettered by Federal or State regulation”.
- The Act also protects online platforms from civil liability, which means that they may not be liable for restricting access to certain content and when such content is removed in “good faith”.
- The content, as per the platform, should be obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, excessively violent, harassing or otherwise objectionable.

What changes with the order?

- The order says that when online platforms remove or restrict access to content, which are not based on the above-mentioned criteria, or is in bad taste, it engages in editorial conduct.
- Thereby, the online platform becomes the “publisher” of all the content posted on its website.
- Based on this, the order revokes the liability shield offered to platforms and exposes them to liability like any traditional editor and publisher.
- The order directs the Secretary of Commerce to ask the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for new regulations clarifying when a company's conduct violate the Section 230's good faith provisions.
- The order instructs the Justice Department to consult with state attorneys general on allegations of anti-conservative bias.
- It bans federal agencies from advertising on platforms that have allegedly violated Section 230's good-faith principles.

What are the implications of this order?

- Legally, the order may not make much of a difference.
- The order does not make it clear as to why FCC, an independent agency outside of Trump's control, would have any agency in interpreting the relevant sections of the CDA.
- Further, the report mentions that an agency such as FCC cannot override a statute enacted by Congress.
- Twitter has said that the order is a reactionary and politicised approach to a landmark law.
- It said that unilateral attempts to erode Section 230 would threaten the future of online speech and Internet freedoms.

5. CYBER SECURITY

5.1 Response to cyber attacks

What is the issue?

Publicly attributing the cyber-attacks to a state or non-state actor is vital for building a credible cyber deterrence strategy.

What are the recent incidents?

- The US Department of Justice filed a criminal complaint in September indicting North Korean hacker Park Jin Hyok for playing a role in at least three massive cyber operations against the US.
- This included the Sony data breach of 2014, the Bangladesh bank heist of 2016 and the WannaCry ransomware attack in 2017.
- This indictment was followed by another complaint on Russia's military agency for persistent and sophisticated computer intrusions in U.S.

- Evidence adduced in support included forensic cyber evidence like similarities in lines of code or analysis of malware and other factual details regarding the relationship between the employers of the indicted individuals and the state in question.
- The above criminal complaints will not necessarily lead to the prosecution of the indicted individuals across borders.
- However, indicting individuals responsible for cyber attacks is in itself an attractive option for states looking to develop a credible cyber deterrence strategy.

What is the importance of attributing cyber-attacks?

- There are technical uncertainties in attributing attacks to a specific actor.
- It has long fettered states from adopting defensive or offensive measures in response to an attack and garnering support from multilateral fora.
- Cyber-attacks are multi-stage, multi-step and multi-jurisdictional, which complicates the attribution process and removes the attacker from the infected networks.
- Experts have argued that technical challenges to attribution should not detract from international efforts to adopt a robust, integrated and multi-disciplinary approach to attribution.
- It should be seen as a political process operating in symbiosis with technical efforts.
- A victim state must communicate its findings and supporting evidence to the attacking state in a bid to apply political pressure.
- Clear publication of the attribution process becomes crucial as it furthers public credibility in investigating authorities.
- It enables information exchange among security researchers and fosters deterrence by the adversary and potential adversaries.
- Also, a criminal indictment is more legitimate as it needs to comply with the rigorous legal and evidentiary standards required by the country's legal system.
- Further, an indictment allows for the attack to be conceptualised as a violation of the rule of law in addition to being a geopolitical threat vector.

What are the lessons for India?

- India is yet to publicly attribute a cyber-attack to any state or non-state actor.
- This is despite an overwhelming percentage of attacks on Indian websites perpetrated by foreign states or non-state actors, with 35% of attacks emanating from China, as per a report by CERT-IN.
- Along with the National Critical Information Protection Centre (NCIIPC), CERT-IN forms part of an ecosystem of nodal agencies designed to guarantee national cyber security.
- There are three key lessons that policy makers involved in this ecosystem can take away from the WannaCry attribution process and the Park indictment.
- First, there is a need for **multi-stakeholder collaboration** through sharing of research, joint investigations and combined vulnerability identification among the various actors employed by the government, law enforcement authorities and private cyber security firms.
- Second, the standards of attribution need to **demonstrate compliance** both with the evidentiary requirements of Indian criminal law and the requirements in the International Law on State Responsibility.
- The latter requires an attribution to demonstrate that a state had 'effective control' over the non-state actor.
- Finally, the attribution must be **communicated to the adversary** in a manner that does not risk military escalation.

- Improving attribution capabilities is as equally important as building capacity to improving resilience and detecting cyber-attacks.
- Thus, India will need to marry its improved capacity with strategic geopolitical posturing.
- Lengthy indictments may not deter all potential adversaries but may be a tool in fostering a culture of accountability in cyberspace.

5.2 Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Center

- Union Ministry of Home Affairs has inaugurated the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C).
- This state-of-the-art Centre is located in New Delhi.
- The I4C will deal with all types of cybercrimes in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.
- It has seven components viz.,
 1. National Cyber Crime Threat Analytics Unit,
 2. National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal,
 3. National Cyber Crime Training Centre,
 4. Cyber Crime Ecosystem Management Unit,
 5. National Cyber Crime Research and Innovation Centre,
 6. National Cyber Crime Forensic Laboratory Ecosystem.
 7. Platform for Joint Cyber Crime Investigation Team.
- At the initiative of Union Ministry for Home Affairs (MHA), 15 States and UTs have given their consent to set up Regional Cyber Crime Coordination Centres at respective States/UTs.

5.3 National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal

- NCCRP (www.cybercrime.gov.in) is a citizen-centric initiative that will enable citizens to report cybercrimes online through the portal.
- All the cybercrime related complaints will be accessed by the concerned law enforcement agencies in the States and Union Territories for taking action as per law.
- This portal enables filing of all cybercrimes with specific focus on crimes against women, children, particularly child pornography, child sex abuse material, online content pertaining to rapes/gang rapes, etc.
- So far, more than 700 police districts and more than 3,900 police stations have been connected with this Portal.
- After successful completion, this portal can improve the capacity of the law enforcement agencies to investigate the cases and will improve success in prosecution.
- This portal also focuses on specific crimes like financial crime and social media related crimes like stalking, cyber bullying, etc.
- This portal will improve coordination amongst the law enforcement agencies of different States, districts and police stations for dealing with cybercrimes in a coordinated and effective manner.

6. NUCLEAR TERRORISM

6.1 50 years of Non-Proliferation Treaty

Why in news?

- 50th anniversary of the entry-into-force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) commemorated recently.

What is Non-proliferation Treaty?

- Non-Proliferation Treaty or NPT, is an international treaty whose objective is,
 1. To prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology,
 2. To promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy,
 3. To further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament.
- Between 1965 and 1968, the treaty was negotiated by the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament, a United Nations-sponsored organization based in Geneva, Switzerland.
- More countries are parties to the NPT than any other arms limitation and disarmament agreement, a testament to the treaty's significance.
- 191 states have become parties to the treaty, though North Korea, which acceded in 1985 but never came into compliance, announced its withdrawal from the NPT in 2003.
- Four UN member states have never accepted the NPT, three of which possess nuclear weapons: India, Israel, and Pakistan.
- In addition, South Sudan, founded in 2011, has not joined.
- The treaty defines nuclear-weapon states as those that have built and tested a nuclear explosive device before 1 January 1967; these are the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, and China.
- Four other states are known or believed to possess nuclear weapons.
- India, Pakistan, and North Korea have openly tested and declared that they possess nuclear weapons, while Israel is deliberately ambiguous regarding its nuclear weapons status.

What are the flaws of NPT?

- Despite many accomplishments, the NPT is largely seen as a Cold War era instrument that has failed to fulfil the objective of creating a pathway towards a credible disarmament process.
- The treaty's existential challenges began in the post-Cold War setting when the attempts by a few State Parties to break-out or gain nuclear latency led to numerous instances of non-compliance, violations and defiance.
- The emergence of non-state actors with declared intent to access weapons of mass destruction and the detection of a global nuclear black-market.
- Non-state actors mentored by Pakistani nuclear scientist, A.Q. Khan, raised concerns on the limitations of the treaty to address the challenges thrown up by the new strategic milieu.
- The NPT State Parties however did not find the initiative or will to address these challenges either through a restructuring of the treaty or through amendments to "tailor the NPT for the 21st century."

What lead to the flawed bargain of the treaty?

- A treaty authored by the superpowers - What started as an initial momentum to halt nuclear tests in the atmosphere soon transformed into a quest for a comprehensive disarmament instrument with the superpowers pressured to arrive at a framework agreement.
- The US-Soviet Joint Statement on Agreed Principles for Disarmament Negotiations (McCloy-Zorin Accord) of September 1961 provided an initial breakthrough.

- This largely implied that the nuclear powers will not relinquish control (in allied territory) or help in their manufacture, and that others will undertake not to produce them.
- Following China's nuclear tests, the US and Soviet sides came up with individual drafts for a treaty to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.
- Both drafts talked about the means to prohibit transfer of nuclear weapons and technology or assisting any state in their manufacture.
- Their common interest to ensure 'no additional fingers on the trigger' facilitated dialogue towards a reconciled draft.
- The non-aligned grouping, finding various proposals in these drafts as impinging negatively on their interests, sought the means to push for a balanced instrument.
- **Biased Interests** -With the drafts of the superpowers evolved towards commonality by the end of 1967, it was becoming clear that their effort was to curtail the formation of new nuclear powers rather than commit to either a credible disarmament process or surrender their own development rights.
- The manner in which the safeguards system of IAEA was evolving even when the NPT negotiations were in progress with the NWS (Nuclear weapon states) allowed to maintain 'voluntary' safeguards while the rest were subjected to comprehensive safeguards, seemed intrusive and discriminatory to the NNWS.
- The Indian representatives consistently termed the offer as 'atomic apartheid' and 'commercial super-monopoly'.
- **One treaty, many missions** -Despite the posturing about the need to maintain balance between the three pillars of non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the treaty was clearly about non-proliferation, and more importantly, the superpowers' focus was on horizontal proliferation.
- Despite common cause identified with the quest for a comprehensive disarmament instrument, the superpowers were able to reconcile their differences.
- They drafted a framework that fundamentally ensured that no additional nuclear power emerged on the scene and that their arsenals, which anchored the Cold War deterrence balancing, remained intact.

6.2 Policy of Russian Federation on Nuclear Deterrence

Why in news?

- Russian administration has signed "Basic Principles of State Policy of the Russian Federation on Nuclear Deterrence."

What is the new Russian nuclear deterrence policy about?

- Russia's 2020 nuclear doctrine seeks to balance the rhetoric of using nuclear weapons with the document's core emphasis on the strategy being 'defensive by nature'.
- Russian nuclear weapons are viewed primarily through the prism of maintaining a credible deterrence against potential adversaries.
- It calls upon Russia to leave no stone unturned to increase the nuclear threshold before contemplating the deployment of nuclear weapons as a last resort.
- In this context, the document's focus on 'inevitability of retaliation' and inflicting 'guaranteed unacceptable damage' blends in with the widely acknowledged principles of nuclear deterrence.
- The strategy identifies six key 'risks' to Russia and its allies posed by Moscow's adversaries which have the potential to translate into 'threats' that warrant 'nuclear deterrence'.
- Some of the notable dangers include the build-up of nuclear forces and weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and the deployment of missile defence including cruise and ballistic missiles in areas contiguous to Russia.

- In recognition of the new frontiers of modern-day warfare, the document also highlights the spectrum of threats emanating from the deployment of “missile defence assets and strike systems in outer space” as well as “non-nuclear high-precision and hypersonic weapons, strike unmanned aerial vehicles, and directional energy weapons.
- It reaffirms the view that Russian nuclear deterrence remains anchored in the triad of land, sea and air-based nuclear forces.

What makes the document Significant?

- Crucially, the nuclear strategy outlines four scenarios which may result in Russia launching its nuclear weapons.
- While maintaining an element of continuity with the 2014 Military Doctrine which justifies their usage in the event of a nuclear and WMD attack on Russia, the three additional premises raise the stakes further by bringing into equation the concept of ‘first strike’.
- These conditions include the receipt of reliable data on the launch of ballistic missiles targeting Russia and an existential threat to the country emanating from conventional weapons.
- Similarly, an attack against critical governmental or military sites that undermines Russia’s nuclear response can also trigger nuclear retaliation.
- This likely brings a massive cyber-attack, designed to cripple the Russian nuclear infrastructure, into the Kremlin’s ‘first use’ matrix.
- Today, nuclear weapons are Russia’s proverbial insurance against Western conventional military superiority.

How it creates deterrence to US policy?

- While the document does not single out Russia’s adversaries yet its tone and tenor clearly point to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as Moscow’s principal opponent.
- The Russian Federation implements its nuclear deterrence with regard to individual states and military coalitions (blocs, alliances) that consider the Russian Federation as a potential adversary and that possess nuclear weapons and/or other types of weapons of mass destruction.
- The nuclear document states that “In the event of a military conflict, this Policy provides for the prevention of an escalation of military actions and their termination on conditions that are acceptable for the Russian Federation and/or its allies”.
- On its face value, this can be interpreted as leaving the door open for Russia’s limited use of tactical nuclear weapons in a battle fought with conventional arms.
- The timing of the release of the nuclear strategy may be attributed to Russia’s ongoing competition and confrontation with the West.
- Their rivalry in the nuclear theatre is particularly borne out by the recent collapse of landmark arms control agreements including the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) and the Open Skies treaties.
- The future outlook of even the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), 2010, considered a cornerstone of the United States (US)-Russia strategic stability, appears bleak.
- The US has already signaled the possibility of walking away from it.
- With the New START Treaty due to expire in February 2021, time could be running out for Russia to salvage the Treaty.
- The new nuclear strategy could be Russia’s last roll of the dice to force the US back to the negotiating table.
- Russia’s pressure tactics appear to have had an incipient effect as Washington has invited Moscow for nuclear talks, scheduled to be held in June 2020, after months of dithering.

7. SECURITY FORCES

7.1 Role of Chief of Defence Staff

What is the issue?

- General Bipin Rawat took over as the first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), a post created in the Defence Ministry.
- In this backdrop, here is a look at the roles and powers of the Chief of Defence Staff.

Why is the CDS said to have a 'dual-hatted role'?

- The dual-hatted role refers to the two hats the CDS wears:
 1. the permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee which has the three service chiefs as members
 2. the head of the newly created Department of Military Affairs (DMA) in the Defence ministry
- The former is a military role while the latter is a role in the government.
- It is as the head of DMA that his major responsibilities within the ministry will be discharged.
- The CDS has the status of a Cabinet Secretary, but functionally will head a department headed by a Secretary.
- Also, he will be under a ministry where the Defence Secretary is in charge of the ministry.

What will the arrangement in the ministry be?

- The ministry already had four departments:
 1. Department of Defence
 2. Department of Defence Production
 3. Department of Defence Research and Development
 4. Department of Ex-servicemen Welfare
- Each of them is headed by a Secretary.
- The Department of Defence is the nerve centre of the ministry.
- It looks after all issues pertaining to the armed forces, defence policy and procurement.
- The charter of duties of the DMA was so far looked after by the Department of Defence.
- It was headed by the Defence Secretary who is also the secretary in-charge of the Defence Ministry.
- Work exclusively pertaining to military matters will now fall within the purview of the DMA.
- On the other hand, the Department of Defence will deal with larger issues pertaining to defence of the country.
- E.g., tri-service military training institutions will fall under the DMA, and organisations like IDSA and NDC will fall under the Defence Department
- **Armed forces** - The armed forces (Army, Navy and Air Force) are not departments of the ministry.
- The service headquarters, and thereby the armed forces, are attached offices in the ministry.
- They used to come under the Department of Defence so far, but will now fall under the ambit of DMA.
- They will have an appropriate mix of civilian and military officers at every level.
- Attached offices are generally responsible for providing executive direction for implementation of policies laid down by the department to which they are attached.
- They also serve as a repository of technical information.

- They advise the department on technical aspects of questions they deal with.

What will be the CDS's role in military?

- The CDS will neither command the three service chiefs nor be the single-point military adviser to the government.
- The CDS will act as the Principal Military Adviser to the Defence Minister only on tri-services matters.
- The three service chiefs will continue to advise the Defence Minister, as done so far, on matters exclusively concerning their respective services.
- The government has also made it explicitly clear that the CDS will not exercise any military command, including over the three service chiefs.
- But, the service chiefs will be members of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, which will be headed by the CDS.
- [Earlier, the Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee was the senior-most chief among the three services by rotation.]
- However, none of the other powers of the service chiefs, including of advising the government, has been curtailed or transferred.
- Nevertheless, the DMA, headed by the CDS, will also have the armed forces under its ambit.
- If promotions, postings and disciplinary matters of three services fall under the DMA, it will give the CDS extensive influence over the 3 service chiefs.
- Despite these, technically, the Department of Defence (headed by the Defence Secretary) will be responsible for the defence of India and every part thereof.

What is the task ahead for the CDS?

- The CDS has been given a time-bound task, to be done within 3 years.
- This is to bring about jointness in operations, logistics, transport, training, support services, communications, and repairs and maintenance of the three services.
- As the head of the DMA, the CDS also has to facilitate restructuring of military commands for optimal utilisation of resources.
- This will be achieved by bringing about jointness in operations, including through establishment of joint/theatre commands.

7.2 Automated Facial Recognition System (AFRS)

Why in News?

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) released a Request for Proposal for an Automated Facial Recognition System (AFRS) to be used by police officers across the country.

What is AFRS?

- AFRS works by maintaining a large **database with photos and videos** of peoples' faces.
- Then, a new image of an unidentified person is compared to the existing database to find a match and identify the person.
- **Neural networking** is the artificial intelligence technology used for pattern-finding and matching.

What does the NCRB request call for?

- The National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRB) Request for Proposal calls for **gathering CCTV footage**, as well as **photos** from newspapers, raids, and sketches.
- The project is aimed at being compatible with other biometrics.

- It will be a **mobile and web application** hosted in NCRB's Data Centre in Delhi, but used by all police stations in the country.
- AFRS will play a very vital role in **improving outcomes** in the area of Criminal identification and verification.
- It facilitates easy recording, analysis, retrieval and sharing of Information between different organisations.

Are there any AFRS in use in India?

- The current facial recognition in India is done **manually**.
- AFRS (**automatic**) is a new idea the country has started to experiment with.
- "DigiYatra" using facial recognition for airport entry was trialled in the Hyderabad airport recently.
- State governments have also taken their own steps towards facial recognition. E.g. Telangana police launched their own system in 2018

How will the new database fit in what already exists?

- As NCRB has proposed integrating AFRS with multiple existing databases, there will be an improvement in the outcome.
- The databases to be integrated with AFRS are -
 1. NCRB's Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS),
 2. Integrated Criminal Justice System (ICJS),
 3. Immigration, Visa and Foreigners Registration & Tracking (IVFRT),
 4. Koya Paya portal on missing children,
 5. State-specific systems.

How far has CCTNS progressed?

- This project is accessible to the CBI, IB, NIA, ED and NCB.
- Following the Mumbai terror attacks, CCTNS was envisaged as a countrywide integrated database on crime incidents and suspects.
- It also plans to offer citizen services such as passport verification, crime reporting, online tracking of case progress, etc.
- There was a proposal for integrating CCTNS's database with the database of the Central Finger Print Bureau (CFPB).
- NCRB is currently rolling out the National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS) and its integration with CCTNS.

What are the concerns?

- Cyber experts have cautioned against **government's abuse** of this technology.
- There is an ongoing **privacy debate** in the US regarding the use of facial recognition technology.
- Indian citizens would be more vulnerable in the **absence of a Data Protection Law** in the country.
- Use of surveillance cameras and facial recognition constrict the rights of particular class of people.

7.3 Problems surrounding police stations in India

What is the issue?

Police stations in India are suffering from lack of personnel, funds and motivation, which pave the way for improper enforcement of rule of law in the country.

What are the structural flaws in the system?

- **Appointment** - The police stations in India are suffering from lower number of police staffs and higher vacancies, despite a huge administrative area under its jurisdiction.
- Hence, it was simply not enabled to enforce the rule of law.
- The police personnel were expected to investigate crime, maintain law and order, and were frequently deployed on VIP duty.
- The personnel were subjected to frequent transfers and rapid rotations within these duties.
- Also, postings were based on patronage, and it was not possible to deploy the best people for the most difficult tasks.
- **Burden** - Though the police personnel were entitled to take certain days of leave in a year, this was never actually sanctioned.
- Some of them were reported being overworked, on duty 24 hours a day, with high stress, neglecting their families.
- **Infrastructure** - In some of the tribal belts, a majority of the constables lived in the nearby city because of lack of housing, schools and health facilities in that area.
- They travelled to the police station every day, though they need to be present immediately in case of a crisis.
- This has made them to spend out-of-pocket expenditures and hence they saw themselves as underpaid and not respected.
- Also, the police stations were always short of money, and personnel spent from their pocket on stationery and other needs.

What are the concerns with the working styles?

- Though a police station is expected to respond to the needs and events of the area, it was generally assigned targets, such as for seizing a certain amount of liquor and issuing a number of challans.
- Every year, the targets were increased irrespective of the situation at the ground level.
- For example, some stations were asked to achieve its targets for issuing challans in the case of people riding without helmets.
- The targets were impractical to achieve because there were few motorcycles in the area and people simply did not have money to pay the fine.
- Also, the police personnel hold poor understanding about enforcing the law, wherein the problem of gender-bias while registering complaints and the brutality on investigation is still getting witnessed.
- Thus, the shortage of personnel, the sorry working conditions and their ignorance created a system not capable of upholding the rule of law.

How does corruption take deep roots here?

- The corruption is deep-rooted in the system making people to fear and avoid the police on the allegation that the police listen only to those who had money.
- The police personnel indulge in both collusive (bribe giver and receiver both benefit) and coercive corruption (facing pressure from senior officials as well as local leaders to accept bribes by forcing citizens).
- Thus, the problem of corruption in the police system was more systemic than merely because of individual greed.
- These deep rooted issues symbolises the pervasive lawlessness in the police system which warrants scrutiny and action by the government to go for systemic reforms.

7.4 Introducing Air Defence Command

Why in news?

Following the appointment of CDS in Army, proposal to create an Air Defence (AD) Command to be prepared by June 30, 2020.

What is the significance of CDS?

- General Bipin Rawat, former Chief of Army Staff (COAS), has been appointed as India's first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS).
- As CDS, he will head the newly created Department of Military Affairs (DMA) within the Ministry of Defence (MoD).
- The DMA, once fully operational, will deal with all three wings of the armed forces and focus on promoting jointness in procurement, training and staffing through joint planning and integration besides restructuring of military commands through the establishment of joint/theatre commands.
- The CDS will also administer tri-services organisations and commands.
- The first CDS is mandated to bring about jointness in operation, logistics, transport, training, support services, communications, repairs and maintenance of the three Services by December 2022.

How an Air Defence system works in India?

- Air defence, now commonly called aerospace defence, is an activity with four subsets - Detection, Identification, Interception and Destruction (DIID).
- In the first step, a likely threat using the medium of aerospace is detected with the help of radars, electronic sensors and observers.
- The threat could be in the form of an aircraft, helicopter, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), glide weapon, cruise missile or a ballistic missile.
- Thereafter, based on track behavior and correlation with known flight plans, it is identified as friendly or hostile.
- Interception of hostile track is initiated with all kinetic tools available at that juncture.
- For the outermost layer of air defence, combat aircraft equipped with air-to-air missiles are employed.
- In the second layer, surface-to-air guided weapons (SAGW) are employed and the inner air defence cover is provided by close-in weapon systems and anti-aircraft artillery guns.
- Based on the type of threat, reaction time and lethal range of the available weapons, the most suitable weapon is deployed for interception and final destruction.
- In the Indian context, the responsibility of air defence rests with the Indian Air Force (IAF).

What are the bottlenecks in Air Defense?

- Accordingly, based on threat analysis, IAF deploys combat aircraft and SAGW at critical points.
- However, both the Indian Army and the Indian Navy have sizeable assets for defending combat assets against an aerial attack.
- All Indian naval ships are equipped with one or more types of weapons systems to thwart an aerial attack.
- Besides, the carrier battle group (CBG) has combat aircraft to defend the assets from an aerial attack.
- Indian Army is equipped with mobile SAGW systems to guard combat forces on move or in tactical battle areas.

- To support these weapon systems, all three wings of the Indian armed forces have a number of radars, sensors and electronic warfare systems.
- To perform the same task of air defence, the three services have procured surveillance and weapon systems from multiple sources in India and abroad.
- Same is the case with communication systems deployed in conjunction with air defence weapon systems.
- This has led to a major bottleneck as each system with a unique communication protocol needs to be integrated to achieve synergy within the service and thereafter with other two services.

What are the proposals on Air Defense Command?

- First, proposal to create an Air Defence (AD) Command to be prepared by June 30, 2020, and second, proposal to create common logistics support pools in stations by December 31, 2020.
- The most significant aspect of the creation of a nodal air defence command will be the generation of common communication protocols that generate a comprehensive air picture with inputs from various types of data and voice inputs.
- Owing to the nature of operations in different domains, all three services have distinct air defence needs.
- Accordingly, all three services independently train and procure for their respective air defence set-ups.
- In this context, the challenge emerges from a single domain and therefore an integrated approach is operationally essential and setting up an Air Defence Command is functionally viable.
- Moreover, integration of equipment, systems, training, maintenance, and cutting out duplication will conserve resources and a singular command with clearly articulated responsibilities will enhance operational efficacy.

8. DEFENCE

8.1 Defence Diplomacy

What is the issue?

- India is currently facing international criticism for some of its actions.
- The “defence diplomacy” which is at the centre stage in the pursuit of its foreign policy, has helped India to stay afloat.

What is defence diplomacy?

- Defence diplomacy is a term used in international politics.
- It refers to the pursuit of foreign policy objectives through the peaceful employment of defence resources and capabilities.
- In earlier years, India hardly looked at military interactions as a means to further the national interest. But, this has changed.

How is defence diplomacy helping India?

- India is currently under international criticism, especially from the muslim world, for some of its actions.
- At the same time, its economy has also been sliding.
- Defence diplomacy has helped India to stay afloat in this worrying environment.
- It has taken the form of frequent and ambitious joint exercises with militaries of the region and beyond, port visits by warships, and so on.
- While with most countries this has been not very significant, with the US in particular, and with Japan, the interface has been substantial.

What is India's defence diplomacy strategy?

- The Indo-Pacific has been repeatedly proclaimed as a region of mutual interest and our understanding of the term is different.
- The precise purpose of the term “freedom of movement at sea” is to counter growing Chinese influence in the region.
- With no other country with which India has defence cooperation at sea does the term Indo-Pacific form the basis of cooperation.
- So, the one significant element of our defence diplomacy in the last decade has been the relationship with the US.
- This has revolved on our purchases of military hardware from them.
- This having been said, if defence diplomacy has become a key ingredient of our foreign policy as we aspire to move up in the global power chain, then it is all to the good.

How should India's diplomacy be?

- With China, India share disputed borders and a tense security relationship.
- With Russia, a defence interface that goes back six decades stands in some difficulty now.
- In the Muslim world, Iran cannot be easily ignored, nor Indonesia in the ASEAN, or Bangladesh next door.
- With these countries, India needs to increase its defence interactions so long as India recognises its limitations.

What would be the impact of defence diplomacy?

- India's profile as seen from outside is now increasingly getting predicated on domestic issues within its borders.
- As India is seeking to emerge as a major power, its domestic issues must mesh holistically with the desired international image.
- Defence diplomacy can only take India thus far. But, it cannot, by itself, overcome the negatives.

8.2 Defence Procurement Procedure 2020

Why in news?

Ministry of Defence (MoD) released draft Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) 2020 which aims to increase indigenous manufacturing and expedite procurement of defence equipment.

How DPP evolved in India?

- It was first introduced in 2002 to provide probity, transparency and a structured procedure which would streamline the procurement of military hardware for the Armed Forces in a time bound manner.
- DPP has been a work in progress since its initiation in 2002 and though successive iterations in 2006, 2008, 2011, 2013, 2016 and finally in 2020.
- DPP 2020 will supersede DPP 2016, the draft was finalized by a committee headed by Director General Acquisition, which was set up in August 2019.
- DPP will cover all Capital Acquisitions undertaken by MoD and Service Headquarters (SHQ) both from indigenous sources and ex-import, except for medical equipment.
- Defence Research and Development Organization, Ordnance Factory Board and Defence Public Sector Undertakings will, however, continue to follow their own procurement procedure.

- Its aim is to ensure timely procurement of military equipment as required by Armed Forces in terms of performance, capabilities and quality standards, through optimum utilization of allocated budgetary resources
- In addition, self-reliance in defence equipment production and acquisition will be steadfastly pursued as a focus of the DPP with an ultimate aim to develop India as a global defence manufacturing hub.

What is the significance of Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) 2020?

- **Indigenous Content (IC) ratio hiked** - In view of the experience gained by the domestic industry, the Draft proposes increasing the IC stipulated in various categories of procurement by about 10% to support the 'Make in India' initiative.
- Use of raw materials, special alloys and software incentivized as use of indigenous raw material is a very important aspect of 'Make in India' and Indian Companies are world leaders in software.
- New Category Buy (Global – Manufacture in India) has been introduced with minimum 50% indigenous content on cost basis of total contract value.
- Only the minimum necessary will be bought from abroad while the balance quantities will be manufactured in India.
- **Complex and unique decision making:** Defence acquisition has certain unique features such as supplier constraints, technological complexity, foreign suppliers, high cost, foreign exchange implications and geo-political ramifications.
- Therefore, a balance between competing requirements such as expeditious procurement, high quality standards and appropriate costs needs to be established through this DPP.
- **Shift focus on Self-reliance:** There is immense potential to leverage the manpower and engineering capability within the country for attaining self-reliance in design, development and manufacturing in defence sector.
- **Streamlining and simplifying process:** Defence Procurement involves long gestation periods and delay in procurement which impact the preparedness of our forces, besides resulting in opportunity cost.
- DPP favours swift decision making, provides for suitable timelines and delegates powers to the appropriate authorities to ensure an efficient and effective implementation of the procurement process, by all stakeholders concerned.
- **Addressing the triremma:** India aspires to the acquisition of high-quality equipment, at low cost, in a short timeframe, when only two of these three are possible at any time.
- Thus, critical decisions will need to be made to sacrifice either cost, quality, or speed of acquisition.
- If clear decisions along these lines are not made, India could find itself in the worst of all worlds: spending high amounts belatedly for substandard quality equipment.
- **Defined role for Private sector:** Private investment will be a major contributor to the 'Make in India' initiative, accelerate manufacturing-led industrial growth and for capital and technology advancement.
- This would be in preference to the 'Buy Global' category as manufacturing will happen in India and jobs will be created in the country.
- **Leasing Model** - Leasing introduced as a new category for acquisition in addition to existing 'Buy' & 'Make' categories to substitute huge initial capital outlays with periodical rental payments.
- Leasing is permitted under two categories
- Lease (Indian) where Lessor is an Indian entity and is the owner of the assets
- Lease (Global) where Lessor is a Global entity. This will be useful for military equipment not used in actual warfare like transport fleets, trainers, simulators, etc.

- **New Chapters introduced** - for procurement of software and systems related projects for Post Contract Management to facilitate and provide clear guidelines for issues arising during the contract period as typically Defence contracts last for a long period.
- A comprehensive Chapter introduced for 'Make' to cover procurement from manufacturers in India including start-ups and innovators and from research projects of DRDO.

8.3 Defence Expenditure as a Part of GDP

Why in news?

The Minister of State for Defence gave information about the defence expenditure as a part of GDP in Rajya Sabha.

What is the existing budget demand of defense sector?

- The three major constituents of the Defense budget are the Defence Services, which conventionally constitute India's defence budget, amounts to 71 per cent, with Defence Pensions (26 per cent) and MoD (Civil) (three per cent) comprising the rest.
- Out of MoD's total budget, close to 60 per cent is spent on salary and pensions of nearly 4.9 million personnel, of which 3.1 million are defence pensioners, 1.4 million uniformed and 0.4 million defence civilians.
- The Medium-Term Fiscal Policy cum Fiscal Policy Strategy Statement, presented along with the Union budget, forecasts the revenue expenditure of the defense services to grow by 10 per cent per year for the next two years.
- Though there is no specific forecast for the capital expenditure of the defense services, it is unlikely to see a major jump, considering the limited space available in view of the government's focus on massive spending on infrastructure development.

What is the share of India's Defence Budget to GDP?

- In Budget Expenditure (BE) 2019-20, total Defence Budget (including Miscellaneous and Pensions) is 15.47% of total Central Government Expenditure.
- In BE 2019-20, the Capital Budget of the Ministry of Defence is approximately 31.97% of the total capital expenditure of the Central Government Expenditure.
- The expenditure on operations/ maintenance and Defence Infrastructure has been maintained optimally.
- The Defence Expenditure is increasing every year in absolute terms, implying higher spending.
- However, Defence Budget as a percentage of GDP may appear to be decreasing due to the increasing trend in the growth of GDP.

What are the issues in defence allocations?

- The twin effects of greater flow of resources to socio-economic sectors to spur economic activity and further squeezing of the fiscal deficit has constrained the Finance Ministry from enhancing the overall allocations for the MoD.
- Though some leeway is provided by way of exempting certain defense imports from customs duty, it may not be enough, given the vast deficiencies existing across the defense services.
- Suffice to say that in 2018-19, the three armed forces together had projected a shortfall of Rs 1,12,137 crore, or 30 per cent of their total requirement.
- If the MoD's total capital expenditure is taken into accounts, the share increases to 33 per cent and 32 per cent in 2018-19 and 2019-20, respectively.
- As against a huge shortage on modernization budget in the previous year, the latest budget has allocated an additional amount of Rs 6,893 crore, the same amount provided in the interim allocation.
- The additional amount is grossly inadequate, to say the least.

What measures are needed?

- The wide disparity in the shares is largely due to the small percentage of the GDP forming part of the government's revenue, as much of the economic activity in the country does not translate into tax collection, the major source of government's revenue.
- In fact, India's tax-GDP ratio is one of the lowest among the comparable countries.
- Unless the tax base of the country increases substantially in the coming years, defense's share in the CGE will remain high.

8.4 Atma Nirbhar in Defence Production

Why in news?

Ministry of Defence (MoD) has released a negative list of 101 defence items which are banned for import.

What is the significance of the negative list?

- The negative list of 101 items is a comprehensive one.
- It includes not just simple projects like water jet fast attack craft and offshore patrol vessel, but a host of complex weapons and platforms such as assault rifles, artillery guns, missile corvettes, attack helicopters, fighter and trainer aircraft and small transport planes.
- Among all the listed weapons and platforms, 69 items are banned for import from December 2020, 11 from December 2021, four from December 2020, eight each from 2023 and 2024, and one (long range land attack cruise missile) from December 2025.
- The staggering timelines seem to be driven by the current developmental status of various projects being undertaken by the
 - a) Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO),
 - b) Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs),
 - c) Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) and the private sector at large.
- The importance of the list is three-fold.
 1. The list recognizes the ability of the Indian industry, which is otherwise known for inefficiency and poor innovation, to design and produce a vast range of complex weapon systems.
 2. The listed items provide order visibility to the Indian industry in so far as the forthcoming requirements of the Indian armed forces are concerned. The industry can use the information in the negative list for advance planning and eventual manufacturing in India if they choose to do so.
 3. the list has been prepared by the newly created Department of Military Affairs (DMA), headed by the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), and not by the Department of Defence Production (DDP), which is in charge of the Indian defence industry and responsible for indigenization.

What is the role of foreign companies in Indigenous production?

- With the negative list in place, the Indian industry is clearly the biggest winner as all the identified projects are to be executed within India.
- This does not, however, mean that the foreign companies will not have any role in the identified projects.
- It is worth mentioning that all the projects listed in the negative list are expected to be executed through one of the five domestic-industry friendly procurement categories stipulated in the MoD's capital procurement manual.
- A particular category will be used depending on domestic capability in the design and/or indigenous content in product manufacturing.

- In all the procurement categories there is a scope for import, which is maximum 40 per cent in Buy (Indian) category and 50 per cent in other categories, except in Strategic Partnership (SP) model in which the indigenization roadmap is a critical factor in deciding which Indian vendor would execute a contract.
- In other words, the foreign companies will have a role to play in the listed items, though their role would be indirect by way of being a supplier of parts, components and technology to their Indian partners.
- However, the foreign companies could have a direct and major role if the government decides to float tenders to subsidiaries of foreign defence companies operating in India.
- With the Modi Government enhancing the defence foreign direct investment (FDI) cap from 49 per cent to 76 per cent under the automatic route, the foreign vendors through their subsidiaries would like to be treated just like any other Indian company and demand a fair chance to participate in the tendering process for certain embargoed items.
- If this is permitted, it would put the Indian companies in tough competition with foreign subsidiaries and may drive a better price for the armed forces.

8.5 Manpower in Indian Defence Sector

Why in news?

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) employs the biggest workforce among all the central government ministries.

What is the statistics of Manpower in Indian defence?

- The bulk of the MoD's workforce consists of uniformed personnel (employed in the army, navy and air force).
- A sizeable number of defence civilians are employed in the armed forces and various other establishments to perform a variety of functions ranging from the provision of clerical support to the design and manufacture of state-of-the-art weapon systems.
- It has been estimated previously that MoD pays nearly 50,72,880 people from its annual budget and that these personnel are spread across three broad categories: uniformed personnel, defence civilian employees, and defence pensioners.

What are the issues in managing the manpower?

- Indian defence budget is increasingly being consumed by rising manpower cost, leaving very little for modernization, upkeep of existing arms in inventory, infrastructure upgradation, and research and development (R&D).
- Major democracies have developed a transparent system of mapping their defence manpower in a systematic manner.
- For instance, the United States (US) Department of Defense (DoD) provides time-series workforce data dating back to 1940 as part of its annual budget document.
- The United Kingdom (UK) also provides key manpower data as part of its various official publications.
- Unlike in the US or the UK, India does not have a system of regularly reporting defence manpower in its entirety.
- The only exception to this is manpower figures pertaining to defence civilians.
- As part of its annual exercise in estimating the expenditure on P&A of central government civilian employees, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) reports authorized and held strength of various central government ministries and departments since 2000-01.
- As regards uniformed personnel, sporadic details are available in various reports of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence which, from time to time, enquires about the status of manpower in the armed forces and some other defence establishments.

- It is important to note that the number of uniformed personnel as reported by union government does not include four elements which are an integral part of the armed forces.
- These are:
 1. Officers deployed in the Army Medical Corps (AMC),
 2. Army Dental Corps (ADC)
 3. Military Nursing Service (MNS)
 4. Personnel serving in the Defence Security Corps (DSC)
 5. Non-Combatants Enrolled (NCs (E)) of the air force; and,
 6. New military recruits undergoing training.
- These elements together account for over 1,60,000 personnel.
- In comparison to defence civilians and uniformed personnel, information on defence pensioners is rather limited.
- It is only recently that the Standing Committee on Defence has reported some broad details of pensioners.
- The latter category consists of personnel who have retired from organizations whose budget is accounted for by the Defence Services Estimates (DSE), an annual publication of the MoD which for long was treated as India's official defence budget.
- It is worthwhile mentioning here that the number of defence pensioners as reported by the Standing Committee on Defence does not capture all the retirees on the MoD's payroll.

What are the issues in defence manpower cost?

- The funding of the vast defence manpower comes at a significant cost.
- The major part of the funding comes through the MoD's budget, while a small part is funded through the MoF.
- The cost is borne by the MoD/MoF in the form of P&A, pension and ration, medical, clothing, and housing benefits.
- In terms of percentage of the total defence budget, the manpower cost amounts to 65 per cent.
- In the last two decades, there has been a distinct change in the share of civilians P&A: it has declined from 13 per cent to nine per cent.
- The decline in the number of defence civilians does not, however, gel with the past recommendations in favor of civilianization of several non-core functions of the armed forces.

What measures are needed?

- As demonstrated above, the MoD's manpower base is significantly higher than what has otherwise been known in the public domain so far.
- Such a large defence manpower base has obviously come at a significant cost, adversely affecting the modernization of defence forces, serviceability of existing weapons and technological advancement.
- Rationalization of manpower, including by way of civilianizing the non-core functions of the armed forces as suggested by the Fifth Pay Commission, therefore, is key to the long-term sustainability of India's defence preparedness.
- However, any manpower reform has to begin with knowing the numbers, their deployment in various organizations and the types of retirees.
- For this, the MoD needs to map the entire manpower, both serving and retired.
- This is not an unsurmountable job considering the computerization of pay and pension records.

- A comprehensive and up-to-date database would facilitate an easy understanding and greater analysis of defence manpower and its costs.
- Like other democracies, India may also like to maintain a detailed time-series statistic of defense manpower as part of its annual budgetary documents.

8.6 Indo-Africa Defence Minister Conclave

Why in news?

The first India-Africa Defence Ministers' Conclave led at DefExpo2020 in Lucknow.

What is India-Africa Defence Minister conclave about?

- It is a fresh initiative by India to enhance relations with countries in the continent.
- Defence ministers of about 14 African countries are expected to participate in the conclave.
- This initiative will provide an opportunity for India and the African countries to understand common security challenges and explore further cooperation in the defence and security sector.
- Peace and security are currently a key priority for the African countries. "Silencing Guns: Creating conducive conditions for African Development" is AU's theme of the year.
- The AU road map to attaining this vision acknowledges the linkage between peace, security and development.
- In recent years, India has given a high priority to strengthening its ties with the African countries.
- India's increasing outreach is visible from the numerous high-level visits from India to Africa and the announcement to open 18 new diplomatic missions in the continent.
- The India-Africa Defence Ministers' Conclave is a step towards engaging the African countries on peace and security.
- It is hoped that the conclave leads to a candid discussion on common security challenges and examines the ways and means to further enhance cooperation between India and the African countries.

What are the existing security challenges in Africa?

- In recent years, there has been an overall decline in conflicts in Africa. However, conflict continues to simmer in parts of the Horn of Africa, North Africa, West Africa, Sahel and the Great Lakes region.
- As in the rest of the world, terrorism and violent extremism is also a cause of instability in Africa.
- There are a large number of terror groups operating on the continent. Boko Haram continues to terrorise civilians in Nigeria and the neighbouring countries in West Africa.
- In the Sahel, a large number of violent incidents have been attributed to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) affiliated Islamic State in Greater Sahara.
- A coalition of extremists linked with Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) or Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims also reported in Sahel.
- In North Africa too, threat from ISIS continues to linger.
- Similarly, maritime challenges such as piracy, armed robbery, and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, smuggling, human and drug trafficking have long troubled the Indian Ocean and Atlantic Ocean littoral countries in Africa.

How African nations are strengthening its defence?

- African countries have developed mechanisms such as the African Peace and Security Architecture for conflict resolution and peacekeeping in the continent.
- Similarly, maritime security is an increasing priority.

- The African Union (AU) has adopted a pan-African maritime strategy, known as 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime (AIM) Strategy, to tackle the growing maritime insecurity in the region.
- This strategy is unique as it calls for both reduction of traditional maritime challenges and also sustainable development of the African blue economy.
- While African countries have been involved in finding African solutions to African problems, they have also welcomed support from external partners and international organizations.
- They are still dependent to a large extent on funding by the United Nations (UN) and bilateral donors to sustain the peace operations.

What is significance of India-Africa Defence Cooperation?

- Defence and security engagement has been a part of India -Africa ties for several decades.
- This mainly involved training, participation in the UN peacekeeping missions in the region, and maritime cooperation.
- India has trained military officers from several African countries at its military training institutions.
- The current Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari is a prominent alumnus of India's Defence Services Staff College, Wellington.
- India has also contributed to peace in the African continent through active participation in the UN Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO).
- Similarly, India has a robust maritime security cooperation with Indian Ocean littoral states in Africa. India has deployed its navy for anti-piracy patrolling, surveillance and humanitarian and disaster relief operations on request from African countries across the Indian Ocean region.
- Further, the Indian Navy was the first international responder in Cyclone Ida in Mozambique in 2019.
- Similarly, it was the first to respond to the cyclone in Madagascar last month.
- India has also conducted joint military exercises with representatives from Africa countries.
- The first Africa-India Field Training Exercise-2019 (AFINDEX-19) took place at Pune in March 2019.
- This landmark exercise brought together representatives of the Indian Army and 17 African nations.
- AFINDEX-19 provided an opportunity for the participating nations to work together in humanitarian mine assistance and peacekeeping operations under the UN mandate.
- Similarly, several African countries have been part of the MILAN series of biennial exercises of the Indian Navy.
- Some African navies are expected to participate in the latest edition of the exercise next month.
- This naval exercise aims to increase cooperation with countries in the Indian Ocean region.