



INNOVATIVE IAS

Daily News Analysis

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General Studies-2

Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI-2019)

- India's ranking in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI-2019) has slipped from 78 to 80 compared to the year 2018.
- The 2019 CPI draws on 13 surveys and expert assessments to measure public sector corruption in 180 countries and territories, giving each a score from zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).
- First launched in 1995 by the Transparency International, the Index has been widely credited with putting the issue of corruption on the international policy agenda.
- Transparency International is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation dedicated to fighting corruption. It was founded in 1993 and is based in Berlin, Germany

Global Status

- A majority of countries are showing little to no improvement in tackling corruption.
- In the last eight years, only 22 countries significantly improved their CPI scores, including Greece, Guyana and Estonia. In the same period, among the 21 countries that saw a significant fall in their scores are Canada, Australia and Nicaragua.
- In the remaining 137 countries, the levels of corruption show little to no change.
- Corruption is more pervasive in countries where money can flow freely into electoral campaigns and where governments only listen to the voices of wealthy or well-connected individuals.
- The vibrant economic powers like China (41), Indonesia (40), Vietnam (37), the Philippines (34) and others continue to struggle to tackle corruption. The reasons include keeping decision-making out of public scrutiny and silencing dissenting voices.

Top Rankers

- New Zealand and Denmark, with scores of 87 each, followed by Finland (86), Singapore (85), Sweden (85) and Switzerland (85).

Bottom Rankers

- The countries ranked at the bottom of the list are Somalia, South Sudan and Syria with scores of 9, 12 and 13 respectively.

Asia-Pacific Region

- In 2019 Index, the average score is 45 (marginally better than the global average of 43), after many consecutive years of an average score of 44, which "illustrates general stagnation" across the region.



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- Despite the presence of high performers like New Zealand (87), Singapore (85), Australia (77), Hong Kong (76) and Japan (73), the Asia Pacific region hasn't witnessed substantial progress in anti-corruption efforts or results.
- Low performers like Afghanistan (16), North Korea (17) and Cambodia (20) continue to highlight serious challenges in the region.
- China has improved its position from 87 to 80 with a score of 41 out of 100 (same as that of India).

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SagarmathaSambad

- Nepal has invited the Prime Minister of India to SagarmathaSambad.
- Besides many global figures, the event draws all the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) leaders. Thus, it provides an opportunity to break the ice between India and Pakistan.

Key Points:

- SagarmathaSambad is an initiative of the Government of Nepal to host a permanent biennial global dialogue starting from 2020.
- It is expected to be the biggest diplomatic initiative in Nepal's recent history.
- It was established in 2019 and is headquartered in Kathmandu (Nepal).
- The Sambad (dialogue) is named after the world's tallest mountain Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest) which is also a symbol of friendship and is meant to promote the notions of the common good and collective well-being of humanity.
- It is a multi-stakeholder dialogue forum committed to deliberate on the most prominent issues of global, regional and national significance.

The first edition of SagarmathaSambad will be held in Kathmandu from 2 to 4 April 2020 featuring the theme 'Climate Change, Mountains and the Future of Humanity'.



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High court of Tripura

Why in news?

- The High Court of Tripura has held that posting on social media was virtually the same as a fundamental right applicable to all citizens, including government employees.
- It also asserted that government servants are entitled to hold and express their political beliefs, subject to the restrictions laid under the Tripura Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1988.

Key Points:

- In another significant judgement, the High Court of Tripura ordered the police to refrain from prosecuting the activist who was arrested over a social media post where he criticised online campaign in support of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019 and warned people against it.
- The HC held that these orders are in line with the very essence of the Indian Constitution.

Other Recent Judgements

- The Supreme Court of India also gave judgement on the internet shutdown and curbing of other civil liberties in the Jammu and Kashmir. It upheld the Right to access the Internet and released guidelines on imposition of section 144 of CrPC.
- Recently, the Kerala High Court, in FaheemaShirin v. the State of Kerala case, declared the Right to Internet Access as a fundamental right, forming a part of the right to privacy and the right to education under Article 21 of the Constitution

A condemned man cannot fight death penalty endlessly: CJI

Why in news?

- Chief Justice of India (CJI) has stated that a condemned person cannot fight the death penalty endlessly and it is important for the capital punishment to reach its finality.
- The death penalty, he noted, cannot be questioned at every turn by the convict.

Background:

- The death row convicts in the Nirbhayagangrape and murder case of 2012 have been filing review, curative and mercy petitions, which have delayed their hanging.
- The oral remarks came a day after the Centre filed an application, in the background of the Nirbhaya case, to modify a 2014 judgment of the court in the ShatrughanChauhan case.

Cardinal duty:

- The CJI said it was not for a judge to forgive a crime.
- The cardinal duty of a judge was to see if the punishment was proportionate to the crime. The law applied whether the criminal was a first-timer or a hardened one.



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2014 guidelines:

- The 2014 verdict had issued guidelines, which primarily held that an unexplained delay in carrying out an execution would lead to the commutation of the death penalty to life imprisonment.

Details:

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has sought a direction from the Supreme Court in fixing the deadline for filing of curative pleas after the rejection of review petitions.
- In its application, the government asked the court to set short deadlines for death row convicts to seek legal remedies.
- It wanted the court to limit the time for filing curative petitions. A mercy plea should be filed within a week of the issuance of the death warrant.

RBI reopens scheme for FPI investments in debt

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to reopen allotment of the investment limit under the revised Voluntary Retention Route (VRR) for debt investments by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs).
- Separately, the central bank has raised investment limit for FPIs in government and corporate bonds, in a move to attract more foreign funds into the country.
- Short-term investments by an FPI into government securities and treasury bills can now be up to 30 percent of the total investment of an FPI compared to 20 percent earlier.
- Similarly, the short-term investment limit by an FPI into corporate bonds has been raised to 30 percent of the investor's total investment.
- FPIs are also allowed to invest in exchange-traded funds that invest only in debt instruments.

Key points:

- The investment limit under VRR has been increased to Rs. 1,50,000 crore from the Rs. 75,000 crore of the earlier scheme, with a minimum retention period of three years.
- FPIs that have been allotted investment limits under VRR may, at their discretion, transfer their investments made under the General Investment Limit to VRR.
- The route has seen considerable success, particularly in the corporate debt segment.

Voluntary Retention Route:

- In March 2019, the RBI introduced a separate channel, the 'Voluntary Retention Route', to enable FPIs to undertake long-term investments in the debt markets in India.
- Investments through VRR are free of the macro-prudential and other regulatory prescriptions applicable to FPI investments in debt markets, provided FPIs voluntarily commit to retaining a required minimum percentage of their investments in India for a particular period.



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NaVIC

- Qualcomm Technologies has unveiled mobile chipsets supporting the Indian regional satellite navigation system - NavIC (Navigation in Indian Constellation).
- Users of such mobile chipsets will be able to use NavIC within the Indian region and neighbouring countries.

Key Points:

- The release of chipsets will help accelerate the adoption of NavIC by smartphone Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs). The OEMs can now release any new models for the Indian market which are NavIC enabled, thus eventually making NavIC as a standard feature in the upcoming handsets, applications, processors, etc.
- OEM traditionally is defined as a company whose goods are used as components in the products of another company, which then sells the finished item to users.
- The availability of NavIC across multiple mobile platforms will help enhance the geolocation capabilities of smartphones in the region.

An Aid Against Crime:

- In April 2019, the government has made NavIC-based vehicle trackers mandatory for all commercial vehicles in the country in accordance with the Nirbhaya case verdict.
- NavIC in mobiles will facilitate the implementation of a key mandate from the Nirbhaya case verdict which required the installation of vehicle tracking systems and panic buttons in all commercial vehicles.
- NavIC is set to become the backbone of a public vehicle tracking system in India since it offers flexibility to local law enforcement agencies to monitor vehicles unlike international systems like the GPS (global positioning system).
- In addition to NavIC, these chipsets will also support the widely used GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite System)
- GNSS includes USA's GPS, European Union's Galileo, Russia's GLONASS and China's BeiDou Nation Satellite System for global coverage.

Plantation of exotic trees in the Nilgiris

Why in news?

- A local non-governmental organization (NGO) has proposed mass plantation of exotic trees in the Nilgiris
- An exotic plant is a plant that has been introduced to an area from outside its native range, either purposefully or accidentally.
- Conservationists argue that plantation of exotic trees will have a huge impact on soil chemistry, wildlife and is harmful to the environment in the long term.
- When exotics take root in a particular area, they increase the water demand in that region,

impacting not just the Nilgiris but other districts further downstream that rely on rivers emanating from the hills. The same also has a knock-on effect on wildlife, resulting in their vacating the areas.

- One of the justifications offered for the introduction of exotic trees is that they lead to better soil stability of the slopes on which they are planted.
- Conservationists however argue that the roots of exotic trees are very shallow, and the trees get uprooted by high-velocity winds and heavy rain, which characterise the monsoons in the Nilgiris.
- The government should come up with a policy that stipulates that only native flora should be planted in public spaces in the Nilgiris because of its ecological significance and its unique biodiversity.

Rising Carbon dioxide levels may double floods

Why in news?

- The report “Impacts of Carbon Dioxide Emissions on Global Intense Hydro-meteorological Disasters” has established a link between climate change and the rising incidence of hydro-meteorological events, specifically floods and storms across the world.
- The report has collected climate data from 155 countries over 46 years (1970 to 2016).
- The analysis is based on econometric modelling which involves accounting for a country's vulnerability to hazards, its Gross Domestic Product (GDP), population density and changes in mean rainfall.

Key Findings:

- The number of intense “hydro-meteorological” disasters could increase by 5.4% annually for an average country facing annually nearly one “extreme disaster”.
- Hydrometeorological disasters include floods, droughts, hurricanes, tornadoes, landslides, etc.
- Extreme disaster is termed as one that causes 100 or more fatalities and/or affects 1,000 or more people).
- The risk of extreme floods or storms could double every 13 years at the rate carbon-dioxide concentrations are building up in the atmosphere.
- The yearly increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide has been about 2.4 parts per million or about 0.6 % from the base 396.5 ppm level for 2010 to 2016.
- India faces 5-10 times more risk for extreme disaster being an average country.

Karwar port

- Recently, the High Court of Karnataka has directed the State government to stop all the developmental activities being undertaken at Karwar port under the Sagarmala project.



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Key points:

- Karwar is located in Uttar Kannada district at the Southern side of the Kali River.
- It is the only all-weather natural port out of 10 minor ports of Karnataka.
- It is sandwiched between the Arabian sea on one side and the Western Ghats on the other.
- It is known as Kashmir of Karnataka as it is blessed with a wide variety of flora and fauna.

Sagarmala Project

- Sagarmala project was approved by the Union Cabinet in 2015 which aims at holistic port infrastructure development along the 7,516-km long coastline through modernisation, mechanisation and computerisation.
- Under this project, port-led development framework government hopes to increase its cargo traffic three-fold.
- It also includes the establishment of rail/road linkages with the port terminals, thus providing last-mile connectivity to ports; development of linkages with new regions enhanced multi-modal connectivity including rail, inland water, coastal and road services.

Snake eel

- A new snake eel species residing in the Bay of Bengal has been discovered by the Estuarine Biology Regional Centre (EBRC) at Gopalpur in Odisha.
- The discovery of the new species suggests that the marine biodiversity of the long Indian coastline is considerably unexplored.

Key Points:

- The new marine species has been named as *Ophichthuskailashchandrai* to honour the vast contributions of Dr Kailash Chandra (Director of Zoological Survey of India) to Indian animal taxonomy.
- It is the eighth species of the *Ophichthus* genus found on the Indian coast.
- It lives at a depth of around 50 metres in the sea.
- It is 420 mm to 462 mm in length and light brown in colour, with white fins. The outer surface of their bodies is slimy but they are not poisonous.
- Their teeth are moderately elongated, conical and sharp and thus they feed on small fish and crabs.

Awards in disaster management announced

- Subhash Chandra Bose AapdaPrabandhanPuraskar
- Subhash Chandra Bose AapdaPrabandhanPuraskar is awarded for contribution in the field of disaster management.
- The award is announced every year on January 23, the birth anniversary of NetajiSubhash Chandra Bose.
- This year, 330 nominations were received and the final decision was taken by Prime Minister



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Narendra Modi.

What's in News?

- Mr. K M Singh who has been selected for the award is a founder member of the National Disaster Management Authority. He is known for his work during the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.
- Disaster Mitigation and Management Centre in Uttarakhand has also been chosen for the award.
- In 2019, the 8th Battalion of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) located in Ghaziabad was selected for its commendable work in disaster management.

