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Daily News Analysis

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General Studies-2

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

Why in news?

- The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the five United Nations Regional Economic Commissions have jointly released the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2020 (WESP) recently.
- The report warns about strong economic risks, deep political polarization and increasing scepticism about the benefits of multilateralism.

Key Points Related to India

- The report suggested that India needs to implement structural reforms to face a global as well as Indian economic slowdown.
- The combination of fiscal stimulus, loose monetary policy and financial sector reforms is expected to support a recovery in growth to 6.6 %.
- India experienced a sharp drop from 6.8% in 2018 to 5.7 % in 2019
- The report also indicated that India may be among the few countries where the per capita GDP growth rate could exceed 4 % in 2020.
- Per capita GDP is the ratio of the country's gross domestic product by its total population.

Other Findings

- World's fastest-growing region: East Asia, which also remains the largest contributor to global growth.
- Growth in large emerging countries: Brazil, India, Mexico, Russia and Turkey are expected to gain economic momentum in 2020.
- Shift in Global economic decision power: The shift in global economic decision-making power from the EU, the US and other developed countries towards China, India and other developing countries has been observed. Thus Global cooperation mechanisms will need to recognise this shifting balance.
- Per capita income: One in five countries will see per capita income stagnate or decline in 2020.
- Per capita income measures the average income earned per person in a given area in a specified year.
- Poverty reduction: The share of the population living in extreme poverty has declined steadily and significantly over the past few decades, largely owing to successful experiences in China and India.
- Impact of climate change on economy: Climate disruption poses a serious and growing threat

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to short- and long-term economic prospects.

- One of the primary ways to break the link between greenhouse gas emissions and economic activity is to change the energy supply mix, transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable sources of energy. This transition will require policies that steer nations towards carbon neutrality by 2050.
- Roadblocks for Sustainable Development Goals: The prolonged weakness in global economic activity may severely impact the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals.

Quiet, for now Why in news?

- The signing of phase one trade deal between the U.S. and China.

Key points:

- China will boost purchases of the U.S. goods and services by \$200 billion over two years in exchange for the rolling back of some tariffs, under an initial trade deal signed by the world's two largest economies, defusing an 18-month row that has hit global growth.

Concerns:

- The phase one trade deal is only a temporary truce that leaves the key issues of the trade dispute unresolved.
- The pact still leaves intact nearly three-fourths of punitive tariffs slapped on China since the onset of the trade rift in 2017.
- Agricultural exports which have been an important area of concern for the American farming community forms the smallest proportion of the latest offers relative to manufactured goods and services.
- Washington still remains wary of Chinese guarantees on the contentious aspects of the trade dispute involving Intellectual Property (IP) protection and alleged forced technology transfers.
- Questions over government control of China's state-owned firms and industrial subsidies which remain the core bilateral dispute are yet to be resolved.
- Under the deal, China is to buy \$200-billion in goods and services from the U.S. in the coming two years, which marks an unprecedented increase. This has caused speculation on the impact these steep targets could have on China's other trading partners. Countries previously exporting to China would be losing their market to the U.S. now.

Significance:

- The phase one trade deal sets the political stage for further bilateral negotiations between the two countries. Officials have stated that the negotiations on a phase two agreement would begin immediately.
- The deal could help stem a further deterioration in the global growth scenario and boost the

global growth prospects.

- The deal gains prominence in the backdrop of Washington's decision to withdraw the tag of a "currency manipulator" upon Beijing. There could also be a possible revival of an erstwhile Obama-era mechanism for economic dialogue that was abandoned under the present administration.
- The new forum could set the tone to address sensitive issues that have dogged Beijing's relations with the U.S.

The Death Penalty in India: Annual Statistics'

Why in news?

- Recently, the fourth edition of 'The Death Penalty in India: Annual Statistics' was published by Project 39A of National Law University (NLU), Delhi.
- The report states that higher number of death sentences awarded in India in recent years relates to the cases of sexual offences.

Key Points:

- The number of death sentences awarded for murders involving sexual offences in 2019 was the highest in four years.
Trial courts: Imposed 102 death sentences in 2019, a significant drop from 162 death sentences in 2018. However, the percentage of sexual offences in these cases increased from 41.35% in 2018 to 52.94% in 2019.
- High Courts: 65.38% of cases of confirmations of death sentences involved sexual offences along with murder.
- Supreme Court: In 2019, the SC dealt with 27 capital punishment cases, the highest number since 2001. It confirmed the death penalty of seven cases out of which four were of murder involving sexual offences. It commuted a total of 17 cases of the death penalty.
- Warrants Issued: Six death warrants were issued in 2019 against one in 2018, with all warrants eventually stayed by the courts.
- All warrants that were issued indicate a lack of compliance with the guidelines issued in the case of *Shabnam vs Union of India* (2015), which requires that a warrant for execution not be issued until the reasonable time for exhausting all remedies under the law has lapsed and specifies procedures to be followed in issuing such warrant.

Reasons Stated

- Amendment to the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, introducing stringent mandatory minimum punishments and death penalty for penetrative sexual assault on children was a major development.
- Andhra Pradesh's amendment to the Indian Penal Code to introduce the death penalty for rape under Disha Act.
- Widespread discussions on capital punishment in 2019 involving sexual offences against women and children.



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Reduction on wasteful expenditure

Why in News?

- The Union Government has decided to reduce wasteful expenditure on items such as travel, food and conferences by 20%.
- The decision was taken in a recent meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Investment and Growth (CCIG).
- CCIG is a newly formed cabinet committee, constituted in June 2019.
- It is chaired by the Prime Minister.

Key Points:

- The decision is to avoid fiscal slippage by containing non-development expenditure and controlling fiscal deficit well within the limit of budgeted target of 3.3% during the FY 2019-20.
- This is not the first time that the government has resorted to austerity measures for rationalisation of expenditure. In October 2014, the Government had asked to cut non-Plan expenditure by 10%.
- Such austerity measures are intended at promoting fiscal discipline, without restricting the operational efficiency of the Government.

In the context of the current fiscal situation, there is a need to rationalise expenditure and optimise available resources

U.K. plans govt.-to-govt. framework for future defence deals with India

Why in news?

- In the last few years, India has concluded high-value defence deals through the Inter-Governmental route, major examples being that of the Rafale jets, S-400 air defence systems and stealth frigates.

Background:

- In the face of unending delays in defence modernization, mostly due to long delays in the conclusion of defence deals, India has of late shown increasing interest in Inter-Governmental arrangement for defence deals.
- Despite several efforts, the Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) remains cumbersome and deals invariably get delayed leading to price escalations.
- An Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) between two sovereign governments ensures transparency and is a lighter model. It has become useful to conclude pending critical deals.
- India has used this route previously also, most notably with Russia with which it has a long history of IGAs.

Key points:

- Given India's preference for the Inter-Governmental arrangement for defence deals, the U.K. government is working on a government-to-government framework for defence deals in



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future, with India.

- The U.K. presently does not have such a mechanism but given the lucrative market that India offers it is keen to adopt it.
- Unlike the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) route of the U.S. government, where the government levies a small service charge, The U.K. model has no such overheads built into the contract.
- The U.K. has made a pitch to India for collaboration in the areas of aircraft carriers and development of 6th generation fighter aircraft technologies.
- The Indian Navy has shown interest in the U.K.'s progress in integrated electric-propulsion.
- The two countries have also exchanged subject matter experts, deepening defence technology development partnership between the two countries

General studies-3

GSAT-30 gives India a communication boost

Why in news?

- The launch of GSAT-30.

Key points:

- The communication satellite, GSAT-30, was launched into space from the Guiana Space Centre in Kourou, French Guiana.
- The high-power GSAT-30 satellite is equipped with 12 normal C band and 12 Ku band transponders.
- GSAT-30 will replace the INSAT-4A launched in 2005 by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

Utility:

- GSAT-30 will provide DTH [Direct To Home] television services, connectivity to VSATs [that support working of banks] ATMs, stock exchange, television uplinking and teleport services, digital satellite news gathering and e-governance applications.
- Notably, the satellite will also be used for bulk data transfer.

Launch vehicle:

- ISRO had to opt for the foreign launch vehicle for GSAT-30 because the GSAT-30 (3357 kg) is much heavier than the 2,000-kg lifting capacity of ISRO's Geostationary Launch Vehicle GSLV-MkII.
- Though the GSLV-MkIII of ISRO can lift up to 4,000 kg, the space agency plans to save the upcoming MkIIIs for its first human space flight Gaganyaan of 2022 and two preceding crew-less trials. The first Indian crew-less test flight is planned for the end of 2020.



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30 experts hired to curb cybercrimes across country

Why in news?

- Strengthening anti-cybercrime framework in India.

Background:

- Cybercrimes in India almost doubled in 2017, according to statistics released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) in 2019.
- Though cybercrimes accounted for less than a percentage (0.43%) of the total cognizable crimes in 2017 it is significant given that India aspires to become a trillion-dollar digital economy.
- Cybercrime in India has been evolving rapidly in the 21st century with increasing intensity and complexity.

Key points:

- 30 people have been shortlisted to join the National Cyber Forensic Lab (NCFL).
- It is an effort to strengthen NCFL and upgrade the existing cyber forensic facilities in order to help the investigating officers and security agencies across the country to prevent, contain, mitigate, investigate and prosecute latest and complex cybercrimes.
- Delhi Police Cyber Prevention, Awareness & Detection Centre (CyPAD) which hosts NCFL was tasked by the Ministry of Home Affairs with the hiring of personnel.
- The hired personnel, come from varied backgrounds and experiences in forensic science and will be deputed to different labs like Cryptocurrency Lab, Cloud Forensic Lab, and Network Forensic Lab. The team will be working under the supervision of senior officers at CyPAD.
- The CyPAD was set up in 2019 with an aim to provide cyber investigation, cyber forensics, cyber safety and security-related services to the citizens as well as to police units and agencies of Delhi.
- The MHA is executing the scheme called I-C4 (Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre) through its Cyber and Information Security division with NCFL being a part of it.

Kathak

- It is one of the classical dances of India.
- The word Kathak has been derived from the word Katha which means a story. It is primarily performed in Northern India.

Evolution:

- It was primarily a temple or village performance wherein the dancers narrated stories from ancient scriptures.
- Kathak began evolving into a distinct mode of dance in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with the spread of the Bhakti movement.
- The legends of Radha-Krishna were enacted in folk plays called rasa lila, which combined folk

dance with the basic gestures of the kathak story-tellers.

- Under the Mughal emperors and their nobles, Kathak was performed in the court, where it acquired its present features and developed into a form of dance with a distinctive style.
- Under the patronage of Wajid Ali Shah, the last Nawab of Awadh, it grew into a major art form.

Jallikattu

- Over 100 people were injured in three Jallikattu events in Tamil Nadu.
- Jallikattu is a traditional bull-taming event that is organised in the state every year as part of the harvest festival Pongal.
- Jallikattu Event: The sport requires fighters to pounce on a running bull, try to hold on to its hump and move along with the animal without falling or getting hurt.

Old Tradition

- Jallikattu is an old tradition. An ancient reference to bull taming is found in a seal discovered at Mohenjodaro, which is dated between 2,500 BC and 1,800 BC. The sport was called Eruthazuval or "embracing the bull".
- The term 'jallikattu,' comes from Tamil terms 'sallikaasu' which means coins and 'kattu' which means a package tied to the horns of bulls as prize money.

Controversies

- In 2014, the Supreme Court had banned the event after a plea filed by the Animal Welfare Board of India and the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).
- However, the state government insisted that Jallikattu is a crucial part of its culture and identity. The ban was lifted in January 2017 after massive protests in Chennai.
- Although there are systems in place to check treatment of the bulls and ensure safety of participants and spectators, activists allege that animal cruelty still continues.

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