

Current Affairs of the Day

GS Paper - II

- Sri Lankan Parliament passes 20th Amendment
- 2+2 talks will focus on regional issues

GS Paper - III

- Time is ripe for a demand push: Sanyal
- CPI-IW base year revised to 2016
- Nag anti-tank missile completes final user trial
- Army chief commissions INS Kavaratti at Visakhapatnam

Sri Lankan Parliament passes 20th Amendment

GS II: Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests

The controversial 20th Amendment to Sri Lanka's Constitution that envisages expansive powers and greater immunity for the Executive President was passed in Parliament with a two-thirds majority, following a two-day debate.



Highlights:

1. Opposition leaders not only vehemently opposed, but also challenged at the Supreme Court. Following as many as 39 petitions filed by opposition parties and civil society groups, the Supreme Court determined that the passage of the legislation required only a two-thirds majority, except for four clauses that needed additional public approval through a referendum unless they were amended in line with the determination.
2. The 20th Amendment rolls back Sri Lanka's 19th Amendment, a 2015 legislation passed with wide support from the Rajapaksa camp — then in Opposition — that sought to clip presidential powers, while strengthening Parliament. The new legislation, in turn, reduces the Prime Minister's role to a ceremonial one.
3. In the two-day debate, opposition MPs broadly argued that the Amendment threatened to take the country on a path of authoritarianism, giving the President unbridled powers, while government MPs emphasised the need for centralised power for better governance.

Background and implication for India:

1. Armed with a two-third majority in Parliament, the Rajapaksas may not be content only with bringing in the 20th Amendment. The fear, especially among the Tamil minorities is that the 13th Amendment will go too.
2. The 13th Amendment was a consequence of the Indian intervention in Sri Lanka between 1987-1990. It flowed from the India-Sri Lanka Accord of July



29, 1987. Sri Lanka is a unitary country, and the 1978 Constitution had concentrated all powers in the centre.

3. The agreement was aimed at finding a way forward on devolution of political powers to the then North-Eastern province, comprising the Tamil dominated areas of the island country.
4. Under the terms of the Accord (also known as the Jayawardene-Rajiv Gandhi agreement), the Sri Lankan parliament brought in the 13th Amendment, which provided for a system of elected provincial councils across Sri Lanka. Thus it was not just the Northern-Eastern province that would get a provincial council but provinces in the rest of Sri Lanka too.

2+2 talks will focus on regional issues

GS II: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Context: India and the U.S. have a comprehensive global strategic partnership which includes political, security and defence, economic, commercial, technology and people-to-people contacts. We have regular dialogue for various levels to discuss ongoing bilateral cooperation and to exchange views on developments in the region.



Highlights:

1. India and the U.S. will discuss “salient regional” issues in the “2+2 Ministerial dialogue”. It is an indication that ties with China will be on the agenda for talks.
2. The Third India-U.S. 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue will entail a comprehensive discussion on cross-cutting bilateral issues of mutual interest. In addition, both sides will also exchange views on salient regional and global issues.

3. These will include discussions on how free nations can work together to thwart threats posed by the Chinese Communist Party.
4. The geo-spatial agreement BECA may be signed.

Time is ripe for a demand push: Sanyal

GS III: Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

News: In a fresh signal that the government could unveil another stimulus package soon, the Principal Economic Advisor in the Finance Ministry on Thursday said that the time

was right for a generic push to spur demand in the economy. Earlier, the Govt. had been reticent about a large stimulus earlier so as to conserve resources for the future.



Highlights:

1. The general problem is that there has been a shock to the system and we need to rebuild demand. Some of it is coming back naturally, but not in every sector such as hospitality.
2. The time has come for a generic push for reinflating demand in a fuller sort of way; not just provide safety nets as we had been doing so far.

Big and structural reforms needed

1. Much needed 'difficult' changes like labour laws and agricultural market liberalisation had been pushed through.
2. The single biggest constraint to India's growth is the poor quality of contract enforcement and legal resolution. As the reforms in the legal system and the police are critical we need a national debate to push them through.

Mains Focus:

1. Why agricultural market liberalisation crucial to Doubling Farmers Income



2. Slow contract enforcement and legal resolution keep innovation and investment away from India. Discuss.

CPI-IW base year revised to 2016

Prelims

GS III: Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

Highlights:

1. The Labour and Employment Ministry on Thursday revised the base year of the Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) from 2001 to 2016 to reflect the changing consumption pattern, giving more weightage to spending on health, education, recreation and other miscellaneous expenses, while reducing the weight of food and beverages.
2. Apart from measuring inflation in retail prices, the CPI-IW is used to regulate the dearness allowance (DA) of government staff and industrial workers, as well as to revise minimum wages in scheduled employments.
3. The weight of food and beverage was reduced from 46.2% to 39%, while spending on housing increased from 15.2% to 17%.
4. The reduction in weight to spending on food and beverages indicated an increase in disposable income. The new series, representing the latest consumption pattern, would be in the interest of workers. The number of centres, markets and the sample size for the working-class family, the income and expenditure survey were all increased.
5. Also, the Bureau was expected to bring out the new series of the CPI for agricultural workers, which currently has the base year of 1986-87, by August next.



Nag anti-tank missile completes final user trial

Mostly Prelims

GS III: Security Challenges & their Management in Border Areas

Highlights:

1. Recently, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) carried out the final user trial of the third generation anti-tank guided missile (ATGM), Nag.
2. With this final user trial, NAG will enter into the production phase. Nag had been developed to engage highly fortified enemy tanks in day and night conditions.
3. The missile has “fire and forget” and “top attack” capabilities with passive homing guidance to defeat all Main Battle Tanks (MBT) equipped with composite and reactive armour, the DRDO said.



Background:

Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP)

1. IGMDP was the brainchild of renowned scientist Dr APJ Abdul Kalam.
2. It was intended to attain self-sufficiency in the field of missile technology.
3. After keeping in mind the requirements of various types of missiles by the defence forces, the program recognized the need to develop five missile systems.
4. The IGMDP formally got the approval of the Indian government on July 26, 1983. After achieving self-sufficiency the programme was announced completed in 2008.

The missiles developed under IGMDP are: (Short form P-A-T-N-A)

1. Short-range surface-to-surface ballistic missile – Prithvi
2. Intermediate-range surface-to-surface ballistic missile – Agni
3. Short-range low-level surface-to-air missile – Trishul
4. Third-generation anti-tank missile – Nag
5. Medium-range surface-to-air missile – Akash

Army chief commissions INS Kavaratti at Visakhapatnam

Mostly Prelims

GS III: Security Challenges & their Management in Border Areas

Highlights:

1. INS Kavaratti, the last of the four indigenously built Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) stealth corvettes built under Project 28 (Kamorta class), by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata, was formally inducted into the Navy at the Naval Dockyard in Eastern Naval Command here on Thursday.
2. The ship, named after the capital of the Lakshadweep group of islands, has been constructed using high-grade DMR 249A steel produced in India.
3. The ship is regarded as one of the most potent Anti-Submarine Warships to have been constructed in India. Experts say the induction of the ASW corvettes will be a game-changer in the eastern seaboard, especially with the Chinese submarines trying to make sorties in the Indian Ocean.

Background:

The Kamorta-class corvettes or Project 28 are a class of anti-submarine warfare corvettes currently in service with the Indian Navy. Built at Garden Reach





23.10.2020 Friday



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Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata, they are the first anti-submarine warfare stealth corvettes to be built in India. Project 28 was approved in 2003, with the construction of the lead ship, INS Kamorta commencing on 12 August 2005. All of the four corvettes, INS Kamorta, INS Kadmatt, INS Kiltan and INS Kavaratti were commissioned in 2014, 2016, 2017 and 2020 respectively.

The platform and major internal systems of this class of corvettes are indigenously designed and built. The corvettes are named after the islands in the Lakshadweep archipelago.