

# Abhimanu

**Weekly current affairs Series**

---

**Week: II, April 2016**

**Abhimanu's IAS Study Group**

**Chandigarh**

## NATIONAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

### Impact of 7th Pay Commission On Housing inflation index

- The implementation of the Seventh Central Pay Commission (CPC) awards can have a significant impact of inflation on housing and transportation sectors, because of the potential increase in the spending capacity of government employees.
- There is an estimate by RBI that there will be both direct and indirect impact of pay commission on headline inflation(Headline inflation is a measure of the total inflation within an economy, including commodities such as food and energy prices).

#### About 7th Pay Commission(Head : A K Mathur):

- The commission has recommended a 16 per cent hike in basic salary plus increase in DA and allowances like HRA.
- The total increase will be 23.55 percent of the gross salary (basic plus DA plus allowances).
- The minimum pay in government is recommended to be set at Rs 18,000 per month.
- Maximum pay is recommended as Rs 2,25,000 per month for Apex scale and Rs 2,50,000 per month for Cabinet Secretary and others at the same level.
- The rate of annual increment retained at 3 per cent.
- One Rank One Pension proposed for civilian government employees on line of OROP for armed forces.
- Ceiling of gratuity enhanced from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 20 lakh; ceiling on gratuity to be raised by 25 per cent whenever DA rises by 50 per cent.
- Military Service Pay (MSP), which is a compensation for the various aspects of military service, will be admissible to the defence forces personnel only.
- MSP for service officers more than doubled to Rs 15,500 per month from Rs 6,000 currently; for nursing officers to Rs 10,800 from Rs 4,200; for JCO/ORs to Rs 5,200 from Rs 2,000 and for non-combatants to Rs 3,600 from Rs 1,000.
- Short service commissioned officers will be allowed to exit the armed forces at any point in time between 7 to 10 years of service.
- Commission recommends abolishing 52 allowances; another 36 allowances subsumed in existing allowances or in newly proposed allowances.
- The commission has proposed a status quo on the retirement age of Central government employees. Retirement age for staff of Central government is 60 years.
- Total impact of are expected to entail an increase of 0.65% points in the ratio of expenditure on to GDP.
- Recommendations will impact 47 lakh serving govt employees, 52 lakh pensioners, including defence personnel.
- The 16 per cent hike in basic salary is much lower than the 35 per cent hike employees got in the Sixth Pay Commission.
- 7th Pay Commission report has to be implemented from January 1, 2016.

#### Analysis:

- Due to inflation there will be increase in HRA(house rent allowance), which further increase the rent for

government provided accommodation. This will seek to bring parity of housing allowances by the Government with the prevailing market rates. Thus, the direct effect on inflation comes through a higher housing index.

- The indirect effects stem from an increase in private consumption expenditures and through second-round increases in rental rates for housing in general, which could embed higher inflation expectations in the broader public perception.
- The outgo of arrears under Seventh CPC awards would be substantially lower but HRA rates would automatically increase when the dearness allowance of the employees crosses threshold levels.
- The Seventh Pay Commission recommendations is projected to have a significant impact on the real estate cycle in small towns as more than 80 per cent of Central government employees reside in tier II, III cities. Almost 3.4 crore individuals (employees and pensioners) will witness increase in their incomes.

## Poor status of health cover in India: NSS(National Sample survey)

- Recently a survey was released by NSS(National Sample survey) on the status of health insurance cover in India.
- In India Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) was launched in 2008 to provide health insurance cover to the poor.
- But this survey show the poor performance of this scheme because only 12% of the urban and 13% of the rural population had access to insurance cover.
- In urban areas, over 90% of the poorest residents are not covered, while the figure is 66% for the richest residents. so, we can say that poverty playing an important role in this poor status of health cover in India.
- Private doctors are the single-most significant source of treatment in both rural and urban areas. 72% of the treatment provided in rural areas and 79% in urban areas was availed in the private sector.
- However there is slight increase in public sector access in both rural and urban areas as compared to last survey

### About RashtriyaSwasthyaBeemaYojana

- Launched 2008.
- Health insurance coverage for BPL Families.
- Hospitalisation cover up to INR 30,000 for most of illnesses that require hospitalization.
- Pre-existing conditions covered right from day one and there is no upper age-limit.
- Coverage extends up to 5 members of the family that includes: a) Head of the house b) Spouse and c) 3 children
- Beneficiaries have to pay just a nominal fees of Rs 30 as registration fee.
- Premium is to taken care by the State and Central Government.
- Insurer is selected by the State government through competitive bidding.

### Analysis:

- The absence of physical medical facility has been a minor roadblock for not going for medical consultation.
- The biggest hurdle in seeking medical treatment was financial constraint.
- Also despite spending money on advertisement, people are still not well informed about the benefits that can accrue to them through RSBY.
- There are poor infrastructural and care care facilities in public health centres and hospitals which drives people for private care., where the costs are sky high making it non-viable avenue for poors.
- There is also a lack of capacity building mechanism associated with different schemes of government leading to poor targeting of benefits.

## Sagarmala port project

- National Sagarmala Apex Committee (NSAC) under the chairmanship of Sh. Nitin Gadkari has approved the national perspective plan on Sagarmala port project.
- The project, envisaging port-led development, targets to provide one crore employment.

### About Sagarmala initiative:

- Sagar Mala project is a strategic and customer-oriented initiative to modernize India's Ports so that port-led development can be augmented and coastlines can be developed to contribute in India's growth
- It aims to develop access to new development regions with intermodal solutions and promotion of the optimum modal split, enhanced connectivity with main economic centres and beyond through expansion of rail, inland water, coastal and road services.
- The Union Ministry of Shipping has been appointed as the nodal ministry for this initiative.
- The Sagarmala initiative will address challenges by focusing on three pillars of development, namely: a) Supporting and enabling Port-led Development through appropriate policy and institutional interventions and providing for an institutional framework for ensuring inter-agency and ministries/departments/states' collaboration for integrated development; b) Port Infrastructure Enhancement, including modernization and setting up of new ports. c) Efficient Evacuation to and from hinterland.
- In addition to strengthening port and evacuation infrastructure, it also aims at simplifying procedures used at ports for cargo movement and promotes usage of electronic channels for information exchange leading to quick, efficient, hassle-free and seamless cargo movement.
- It also strives to ensure sustainable development of the population living in the Coastal Economic Zone (CEZ). This would be done by synergising and coordinating with State Governments and line Ministries of Central Government through their existing schemes and programmes such as those related to community and rural development, tribal development and employment generation, fisheries, skill development, tourism promotion etc.

### Analysis:

- Indian ports handle more than 90 percent of India's total EXIM (export - import) trade volume. However, the current proportion of merchandise trade in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of India is only 42 percent, whereas for some developed countries and regions in the world such as Germany and European Union, it is 75 percent and 70 percent respectively. Therefore, there is a great scope to increase the share of merchandising trade in India's GDP.
- India lags far behind in ports and logistics infrastructure. Against a share of 9 percent of railways and 6 percent of roads in the GDP the share of ports is only 1 percent. In addition high logistics costs make Indian exports uncompetitive. Therefore Sagarmala project has been envisioned to provide ports and the shipping the rightful place in the Indian economy and to enable port-led development.
- Coastal Economic Zones would be created with modern support and planned infrastructure and would carry along adequate fiscal incentives that attract more and more investment to these townships and islands. For instance, Kandla port in Gujarat is one port that has more than two lakh acres of free land within its possession and would be developed as a CEZ.
- The Sagarmala Yojana would undertake redevelopment of new and existing ports through upgrading them to be developed enough to handle extensive use of equipments and IT and thus bring in an improved monitoring and hi-tech infrastructure for day to day business activity. The Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust itself, which is one of the biggest ports in India, would alone get a big amount of Rs 4,000 Crore for development as an SEZ.
- These model ports would build infrastructure in a way that allows bigger ships to be docked in more numbers thereby facilitating smoother port activity. These ports would focus on chemicals, energy, coal and other commodities. Along with this, inter waterways would also be developed so that the entire countries and all these ports are connected well with the mainland throughout the nation.

- India has a huge coastline and this brings in a lot of opportunity to develop these ports as a profit center for creating sources of renewable energy and this is yet another segment that government is focusing on. This would call for a lot of foreign investment. The power generated from these centers would in turn feed these coastal areas and their infrastructure so that optimum power supply is maintained.

## Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, has approved “Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana”.
- Main focus of this scheme is to give free cooking gas connections to **poor women**.

### Highlights:

- Under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, Rs.8,000 crore has been earmarked for providing 50 million LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) connections to poor households.
- The scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- Financial support of 1600 rupees for each LPG connection will be provided to the BPL households.
- The identification of eligible BPL families will be made in consultation with the State Governments and the Union Territories.
- It will be implemented over three years’ time frame namely in the FY 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19.

### Analysis:

- There are serious health hazards associated with cooking based on fossil fuels. According to WHO estimates, about 5 lakh deaths in India alone due to unclean cooking fuels. Most of these premature deaths were due to non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and lung cancer. Indoor air pollution is also responsible for a significant number of acute respiratory illnesses in young children. Having an open fire in the kitchen is like burning 400 cigarettes an hour.
- So, Providing LPG connections to BPL households will ensure universal coverage of cooking gas in the country along with empowering women and protect their health. It will reduce drudgery and the time spent on cooking. It will also provide employment for rural youth in the supply chain of cooking gas.
- In order to make this scheme a success, the distribution system needs to be strengthened to be able to meet the expected increase in demand, particularly in rural areas, as non-availability of fuel could push people back towards using solid fuels.
- Ensuring reliable, sustained, last-mile supply would require multiple steps. It requires a large extension of distribution networks, especially in rural areas, since each rural distribution agency typically caters to fewer customers than urban agencies.
- Implementation of direct benefit transfer schemes must be made more robust. Effective monitoring and grievance redressal systems are equally important to ensure that problems in the scheme are highlighted and addressed early.
- The scheme should be accompanied by a focussed public relations campaign to build awareness and create a demand pull, not only for clean cooking but also for good service.
- This scheme targets only BPL households. But, In India definition and execution of BPL line is faulty. So, this scheme should also be extended to non-BPL households who may also not be able to afford LPG connections.

### Question:

Discuss the significance of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana initiative and the challenges it faces.

## Road to Smart Cities not smooth

- Across the world, the stride of migration from rural to urban areas is increasing. By 2050, about 70 per cent of the population will be living in cities, and India is no exception. It will need about 500 new cities to accommodate the influx.

- To make new cities which should be capable to provide adequate facilities, India has launched its ambitious Smart city mission in 2015.
- Recently a joint report released by **world economic forum and PwC** on India's smart cities mission. This report highlights the **challenges** faced by smart city mission.

## Highlight of this report:

- India has approved its ranking in "ease of doing business", but still obtaining licenses and approvals takes a long time due to bureaucratic constraints.
- Land acquisition is fraught with delays and uncertainties.
- In most cases, when an urban development project becomes involved in a dispute, activities are stalled, as are vendor payments. With poor cost recovery and high legal costs, companies engaged in disputes find it difficult to sustain their activities.
- There is lack of resources with ULBs (urban local bodies) which can play a crucial role in implementing the urban rejuvenation programmes. There is paucity of funds which urban local bodies are facing. The revenue collected by ULBs in India is less than 0.9% of the gross domestic product, significantly less than that of Brazil (7.4%) and South Africa (6%).
- Also, city governments are the least-prepared to execute the programmes from among all the stakeholders, which include the national government, state governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academic institutions.
- The report also highlights sector-specific problems, such as water management, where around 50% of water production is lost due to theft or leakages during the distribution process, the lack of metering, and low user charges.
- There are other infrastructural issues plaguing India's urban centres, such as the unavailability of 100% power, the poor quality of roads, and the paucity of social infrastructure in healthcare, and safety and security.
- **So in order to address these challenges**, Reforms are needed in the areas of land acquisition, dispute resolution, permitting processes, information availability and procurement processes to accelerate the development of smart cities.
- Collaboration among multiple administrative entities is necessary if smart city projects are to be completed within budget and timeframe.
- For ULBs to function independently, the devolution of power to determine and collect user charges and local taxes, along with capacity development, are necessary. They also need to streamline internal processes by adopting e-governance and by making data-driven decisions.
- Single-window systems that ease the permitting process will accelerate project execution, reduce cost and time overrun, and improve intra- and inter-departmental collaboration.
- For sectors that deal with physical infrastructure, reforms will be required to establish independent regulators, ensure metering, develop skilled resources, enforce collections (of user charges and taxes) from large defaulters and adopt integrated planning.

## About Smart cities project:

- The concept of smart cities originated at the time when the entire world was facing one of the worst economic crises. In 2008, IBM began work on a 'smarter cities' concept as part of its Smarter Planet initiative. By the beginning of 2009, the concept had captivated the imagination of various nations across the globe.
- Countries like South Korea, UAE and China began to invest heavily into their research and formation. Today, a number of excellent precedents exist that India can emulate, such as those in Vienna, Aarhus, Amsterdam, Cairo, Lyon, Málaga, Malta, the Songdo International Business District near Seoul, Verona etc.
- The India Smart Cities Challenge is a competition designed to inspire and support municipal officials as they develop smart proposals to improve residents' lives. In 2015, cities competed in the first round – with the best proposals receiving funding from the Ministry of Urban Development.

- Smart Cities focus on their most pressing needs and on the greatest opportunities to improve lives. They tap a range of approaches – digital and information technologies, urban planning best practices, public-private partnerships, and policy change – to make a difference.

## **NATIONAL POLITY**

### **National Sample survey Report: Elderly women In India**

- The latest National Sample Survey report on 'Health in India' notes that the share of 60-plus women is higher than that of men in both rural and urban areas.
- Sex ratio of the country's 60-plus population recorded at 1,033 women per 1,000 men in the 2011 Census which is increased from 1,029 in the 2001 census.
- Among rural areas, the highest sex ratio (1,289) was reported in Gujarat and in urban Assam it was recorded as 1,476.
- The overall proportion of the elderly in India, home to the world's largest youth population, too has gone up. An estimated 87.6 million aged people live in India, about 69% of them in rural parts. Their magnitude in terms of number or in terms of share to total population is found to rise gradually over the decades. In 1981, the share of the elderly population per 1,000 in rural India was 68, which went up to 88 in 2011. In urban India, the elderly share was recorded at 54 per 1,000 in 1981, going up to 81 in the 2011 Census. But about 50% of the elderly population is totally economically dependent on others.

#### **Analysis:**

- Even though both men and women are vulnerable to age related tribulations, severity of problems is more among elderly women. In India, even though the policy has been formulated to ensure the well being of elderly, how far it is successful in addressing the needs of elderly women remains unanswered.
- The feminine nature of ageing, society's discriminatory treatment towards female education and employment and social discrimination and ill treatment because of the traditional roles attached to women in society. Such traditional attitudes and discriminations have made lives of women vulnerable in old age.
- Problems of elderly women are not due to age per se, but due to psychosocial environment, diminishing supports and changes in life situation.
- Various problems are faced by the elderly due to the changed attitude of younger generation towards elderly. Society has become more self-centric, materialistic and achievement oriented that elderly are being deprived of their rights. Younger generation considers elderly as a burden on society, but they indeed fail to realize the fact that they are a resource, which can contribute to the wellbeing of the society. Traditional joint family system, which existed in India, always gave respect to elders and their roles were very clear.
- With the advent of industrialization, urbanization and modernization, concept of nuclear families emerged enhancing socio-economic and psychological problems for elderly members.
- According to the Health in India report, around 70% elderly women in both urban and rural India are economically dependent on others. And around 35% of women aged over 80 are immobile.
- Financial constraints are further compounded by illnesses of old age. The survey found a high proportion of the elderly battling chronic illnesses and around 8% of the elderly, particularly those aged over 80, confined to their beds.
- To avoid such situations in later life we need to be proactive and take steps much earlier in their life cycle. Equal opportunities and access to education, employment, compensation for their homemaker role, support in their family and maternal roles help in reducing vulnerability in old age. Health prospects of elderly women

can be improved, if health professionals are sensitized to develop positive attitude towards women and need to be trained in understanding their typical mental and physical health problems.

## Govt. imposes anti-dumping duty on N-Butyl Alcohol

- The government has imposed an anti-dumping duty of up to \$149 on imports of a chemical used in fermentation of sugar from five countries, including the European Union, Malaysia, Singapore and the U.S.
- The Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC), in a notification, said Normal Butanol, or N-Butyl Alcohol, exported from the EU, Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa and the U.S. was found to be “below normal value, thus establishing dumping of the same”.
- The Directorate General of Anti-dumping and Allied Duties (DGAD) in its investigation into the import of N-Butyl Alcohol from the five nations had stated that “the domestic industry continues to suffer material injury on account of dumped imports and it is necessary to recommend imposition of anti-dumping duty on imports of subject goods from the subject countries”.
- An anti-dumping duty of \$46.27 a tonne was imposed on imports from the EU while the same from Singapore and South Africa was put at \$35.66 and \$13.24, respectively.
- For N-Butyl Alcohol imports from the U.S., the government went for an anti-dumping duty of \$24.16.
- Exports of the N-Butyl Alcohol by Petronas Chemicals Marketing from Malaysia will attract anti-dumping duty of \$51.42 and the same by BASF Petronas \$26.59. Any other exports originating from Malaysia will face \$149.31 anti-dumping duty.
- The anti-dumping duty imposed under this notification shall be effective for five years
- Imports of the chemical from the five countries have risen to 53.195 tonnes in 2013-14 from 19,297 tonnes in 2010-11.

### About Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC)

Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) is a part of the Department of Revenue under the Ministry of Finance, Government of India. It deals with the tasks of formulation of policy concerning levy and collection of Customs & Central Excise duties and Service Tax, prevention of smuggling and administration of matters relating to Customs, Central Excise, Service Tax and Narcotics to the extent under CBEC's purview.

### About Directorate General of Anti-dumping and Allied Duties (DGAD)

Anti dumping and anti subsidies & countervailing measures in India are administered by the Directorate General of Anti dumping and Allied Duties (DGAD) functioning in the Dept. of Commerce in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry

### About Anti dumping duty:

- Anti dumping duty is imposed on dumping. **Dumping** is, in general, a situation of international price discrimination, where the price of a product when sold in the importing country is less than the price of that product in the market of the exporting country.
- Dumping is an unfair trade practice which can have a distortive effect on international trade.
- The consequent **economic and financial impact** of the dumped imports on the concerned Indian industry can be demonstrated by: decline in output, loss of sales, loss of market share, Reduced profits, Decline in productivity, Decline in capacity utilization, Reduced return on investments, Price effects, adverse effects on cash flow, inventories, employment, wages, growth, investments, ability to raise capital, etc.
- Anti-dumping is a measure to rectify the situation arising out of the dumping of goods and its trade distortive effect.
- The use of anti-dumping measure as an instrument of fair competition is permitted by the **WTO**.
- Anti-dumping is an instrument for ensuring **fair trade** and is not a measure of protection per se for the domestic industry.



## National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET)

- The Supreme Court on Monday recalled its 2013 judgment on the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) and has now paved the way for a single entrance exam for admission to MBBS, BDS and PG courses in all medical colleges.
- NEET, a common entrance test system for admission to undergraduate and postgraduate medical courses, will come into effect after this judgment of court.
- This exam was firstly introduced in 2012. Many states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, opposed it because they believed that it infringed upon their right to keep education a State subject.
- This matter was then heard in supreme court. which held that NEET would deprive State-run universities and medical colleges of their right to admit students as per their own procedures and declared the test unconstitutional.
- So , Idea of NEET didn't survive judicial scrutiny.
- Medical Council of India (MCI), a statutory body responsible for governing the medical curriculum and endorsing medical qualification is responsible to conduct NEET examinations.

### Analysis:

- NEET had a few laudable objectives: saving students the trouble of writing multiple entrance examinations to medical courses in State-run and private institutions, curbing the increasing commercialisation of higher education in medicine, and ensuring a transparent admission process in private, unaided institutions which thrive on selling MBBS and postgraduate medical specialty seats to the highest bidder.
- However there is some opposition to this test . Firstly, State governments were upset with the implicit centralisation of medical education in the idea of a national test. They feared that NEET would undermine their reservation policy. Some like Tamil Nadu see all entrance tests as elitist and against the interests of poor and rural students. And secondly, private institutions, especially those established by minorities, were against any interference in their admission process, arguing that its their unfettered right to regulate their own admissions and introducing NEET violated their constitutional rights.
- This would also adversely affect the interests of students in the State, in particular those from weaker sections and from rural areas and as it infringes upon the State's right to determine the admission policies to medical educational institutions
- But NEET merely creates a national pool of eligible candidates from among whom colleges and institutions were free to select those belonging to any preferred minority group or any reserved category.
- NEET would avoid multiple entrance tests and minimise corruption and irregularities in admissions to medical courses.

## Law to increase workers' bonus faces fresh hurdle

- Government has passed the Payments of Bonus(Amendment ) Act, 2015 which aims to doubl the statutory bonus paid to employees and made more workers eligible for bonus by raising the salary ceiling under the law from Rs.10,000 a month to Rs.21,000 a month
- But recently eight high court has stayed the retroactive provisions of this law. This was passed retrospectively with effect from April 2014.
- **Calculation of bonus:** The Act provides that the bonus payable to an employee will be in proportion to his or her salary or wage. However, if an employee's salary is more than Rs 3,500 per month, for the purposes of calculation of bonus, the salary will be assumed to be Rs 3,500 per month. The Bill seeks to raise this calculation ceiling to Rs 7,000 per month or the minimum wage notified for the employment under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 (whichever is higher).
- The Bill came into force on April 1, 2015.
- This act is applicable to every factory and other establishment in which 20 or more people are employed on any day during an accounting year.

## Analysis:

- Bonus continues to be an important component of the pay mix of employees. This is a practice of every organization to keep employees committed, motivated and dedicated towards their organizations.
- There are large number of studies that advocate the fact that, bonus is directly correlated with employees' performance and good work in terms of quality and quantity.
- It is a step forward to share the prosperity of the establishment reflected by the profits earned by the contributions made by capital, management and labour with the employees
- But on the contrary view there are financial implications of the retro-active amendments on employers.  
Many industries have already paid bonus to their employees, at the existing rate, before the start of the festival session. The implementation of this proposal effective April 1, 2015 will therefore cause great inconvenience to industries in reallocating the bonus amount retrospectively causing financial and operational hardships.

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

### World Bank Group Climate Change Action Plan

The World Bank has released a climate change action plan that would help developing countries to work towards a more environment-friendly development.

#### Highlights:

- The World Bank has enlisted 40 countries under the climate change action plan, under which, the countries will be able to generate additional 30 gigawatts of renewable energy.
- The World Bank has pledged to help countries to increase the number of renewable energy sources, reduce high-carbon energy, develop eco-friendly transportation and build sustainable cities to accommodate the thriving urban population
- The International Finance Corporation (IFC), a World Bank group member, will expand its annual climate investments from USD 2.2 billion to USD 3.5 billion
- The World Bank will also allocate USD 25 billion in commercial financing for renewable energy in next five years
- The organisation will also work on providing early-warning systems to alert people from around the world in case of disasters
- Their goal is to extend this service to 100 million more people in 15 developing countries by 2020.
- The World Bank Group will also develop climate smart agricultural investment plans for at least 40 countries, design sustainable forest strategies for 50 countries by 2020 and promote climate-informed fisheries management.
- The Bank Group will also help "green" the financial sector through a coordinated approach across banking, pensions and capital markets to implement changes needed nationally and globally. It will also create special teams to work with countries to generate a robust pipeline of bankable projects, with a focus on areas like rooftop solar and boosting the growth of distributed solar in Sub-Saharan Africa
- The Action Plan aims to deliver on the Bank Group's commitment – announced in October 2015 – to increase climate financing to potentially \$29 billion annually by 2020, with the support of its members.

### Analysis:

- This will boost the resilience of people and communities to climate shocks, with new efforts to expand early warning systems, climate-smart social protection, and urban and coastal resilience.
- This plan will accelerate the efforts to tackle climate change over the next five years and help developing countries deliver on their national climate plans submitted for the historic climate agreement reached at COP21 in Paris in December last year.
- World bank helps countries to make major transitions to increase sources of renewable energy, decrease high-carbon energy sources, develop green transport systems, and build sustainable, liveable cities for growing urban populations
- World bank has been criticized in the past for backing fossil fuel infrastructure, so this is the new approach to taking climate change into account in its work.

## Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)

- India and the US agreed to Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) to enable both militaries to use each other's assets and bases for repair and replenishment of supplies.
- LEMOA is a tweaked version of Logistics Support Agreement (LSA) which facilitates the provision of logistical support, supplies and services between the US military and the armed forces of partner countries.
- American aircraft and warships will soon be able to access Indian military bases and vice versa for refuelling, repair and other logistical purposes.
- LEMOA is a shift in the policy of Indian government. Previously , India opposed the three foundational pacts: Logistics Support Agreement, Communication Interoperability and Security Memorandum Agreement (CISMOA) and the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-Spatial Cooperation (BECA). These were done on grounds that they would "compromise" India's traditional strategic autonomy and give "basing rights" to the US military in the country.
- India and US are also advancing collaboration in aircraft carrier design and technology, potentially the biggest joint project since they launched a Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) in 2012.

### Analysis:

- US has increasingly turned its focus to Asia as it tries to counter China's growing assertiveness in the South China Sea, and is eager for India to play a greater role in its network of regional defence alliances.
- By agreeing to sign the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), India has sent out a clear signal that it has no inhibitions about being bound in strategic engagements with the U.S.
- This would qualitatively transform India's relations with the U.S.
- But this is criticized on the ground of too intrusive and could also be perceived as a signal that India is dropping its policy of non-alignment.
- This agreement may have the repercussions on strategic alliance with other countries like Russia and China.

### Question:

Recently, India and USA announced an in principle agreement to conclude a logistics exchange memorandum of agreement (LEMOA). Discuss the significance of this agreement and also throw light on importance of ongoing defence talks for India

### Conservation of Olive Ridleys

- Wildlife authorities have launched a massive exercise to conserve Olive Ridley turtles in the Krishna Wildlife Sanctuary (KWS) in Andhra Pradesh.
- The officials, in collaboration with the local communities, have collected over 10,500 eggs of the turtles. They are being conserved in the rookeries set up within the KWS limits
- 139 artificial nests have been arranged in the three rookeries set up as part of the in situ conservation method.
- The first batch of hatchlings will be released into the sea by April 24 as the incubation period ranges from 45 to 60 days.
- Members of the Yanadi tribe are directly involved in the conservation bid. They have been given the task of collecting the eggs on the beach and maintaining the rookeries.

#### About Olive Ridley turtles:

- This turtle is named for the generally greenish color of its skin and shell. Olive ridleys are found only in warmer waters, including the southern Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans..
- Olive ridleys are among smallest of the sea turtles, weighing up to 100 pounds (45 kilograms) and reaching only about 2 feet (65 centimeters) in shell length.
- These turtles are solitary, preferring the open ocean. They migrate hundreds or even thousands of miles every year, and come together as a group only once a year for the arribada, when females return to the beaches where they hatched and lumber onshore, sometimes in the thousands, to nest. Olive ridleys have nesting sites all over the world, on tropical and subtropical beaches.
- During nesting, they use the wind and the tide to help them reach the beach. Females lay about a hundred eggs, but may nest up to three times a year. The olive ridley is mostly carnivorous, feeding on such creatures as jellyfish, snails, crabs, and shrimp.
- They will occasionally eat algae and seaweed as well.
- Though the olive ridley is widely considered the most abundant of the marine turtles, by all estimates, it is in trouble. Rough estimates put the worldwide population of nesting females at about 800,000, but its numbers, particularly in the western Atlantic, have declined precipitously.
- Fishing nets also take a large toll, frequently snagging and drowning these turtles.
- Odisha coast is considered the only place apart from Costa Rica to witness mass nesting by Olive Ridleys. Between five lakh and 10 lakh turtles come to the state every year for mass nesting.
- The Convention on Migratory Species and the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles have also provided olive ridleys with protection, leading to increased conservation and management for this marine turtle.

### Quantum spin liquid

- An international team of scientists has successfully detected a mysterious new state of matter that causes electrons, thought to be nature's indivisible building blocks, to break into pieces.
- This new state is known as a quantum spin liquid.

#### About quantum spin liquid:

- The quantum spin liquid had been forecast, in 1973, by Philip Warren Anderson, Nobel Prize in Physics. It was thought to be hiding in certain magnetic materials, but had not been conclusively sighted in nature.
- It is two-dimensional material with a structure similar to graphene.

- The main property of the quantum spin liquid is the splitting of the electrons. In a quantum spin liquid, unlike a traditional material, which tends to form ordered structures (crystal lattices, for example), the magnetic fields behave in completely disorderly manner, even if brought to temperatures near absolute zero.
- The particles resulting from the splitting of the electrons also could be used to as a basis to build quantum computers, immensely faster cars than traditional ones and are able to perform tasks hitherto thought impossible.
- Developments in quantum spin liquids may also help in the understanding of high temperature superconductivity.
- The 'spin' doesn't actually mean anything is physically spinning in the matter, but instead describes a type of intrinsic angular momentum in quantum mechanics - in other words, it's a useful metaphor that gives us an idea of what an electron is doing. And like everything else in quantum mechanics, spin isn't a singularly defined quantity, but a distribution.
- The matter itself also isn't a liquid in the traditional sense of the word, but it instead refers to the fact that the quantum spins of the electrons in the material suddenly start interacting to create a disordered state, creating all kinds of strange behaviors.

## Government Launches Intellectual Property Information Portal

- The government has launched a portal which will act as a single window interface for information on intellectual property and provide guidance on leveraging it for competitive advantage.

### About the Portal:

- The portal seeks to increase awareness and build sensitivity towards IP(intellectual property ), among stakeholders in the SME sector, academia and researchers.
- The **Indian IP Panorama** is a customised version of IP Panorama Multimedia toolkit, developed by World Intellectual Property Organisation, Korean Intellectual Property Office and Korea Invention Promotion Association.
- The Indian IP Panorama has been developed under the aegis of Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY) and DIPP, Government of India by Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), in close coordination with the Indian IP office.
- The toolkit has been adapted to cater to SMEs and startups, especially in the ICTE sector of India, based on an agreement signed between WIPO and DeitY.
- The Indian IP Panorama is in accordance with Indian IP laws, standards, challenges and needs of the Indian ICTE sector.
- The five modules of the Indian IP Panorama include importance of IP for SMEs, Trademark, Industrial design and Invention and Patent.

### About IP(Intellectual property)

Intellectual property (IP) refers to creations of the mind, such as inventions; literary and artistic works; designs; and symbols, names and images used in commerce.

IP is protected in law by, for example, patents, copyright and trademarks, which enable people to earn recognition or financial benefit from what they invent or create. By striking the right balance between the interests of innovators and the wider public interest, the IP system aims to foster an environment in which creativity and innovation can flourish.

### About WIPO:

- The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is one of the 17 specialized agencies of the United Nations.
- It was created in 1967 “to encourage creative activity, to promote the protection of intellectual property throughout the world.”
- It has currently 188 member states, administers 26 international treaties, and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

# Current Affairs

---

- Non-members are the states of Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Solomon Islands, South Sudan and Timor-Leste. Palestine has observer status.
- India is a member of WIPO and party to several treaties administered by WIPO.
- India acceded to Madrid Protocol for the International Registration of Marks at WIPO on July 8, 2013. The Madrid System for the International Registration of Marks (Madrid system) offers trademark owners a cost effective, user friendly and streamlined means of protecting and managing their trademark portfolio internationally.

## QUICK FACTS

- The cricketer named as the Wisden's Leading Cricketer in the World for the year 2015 is - Kane Williamson
- Hridaynath Award, 2016 was conferred to - **Viswanathan Anand**
- Haryana Government decided to rename Gurgaon and Mewat as - **Gurugram and Nuh**
- Military offensive operation launched by Taliban in Afghanistan - **Omari Operation**
- World Homoeopathy Day was observed on - **10 April 2016 (to commemorate the birth anniversary of - Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, a German Physician).**
- Committee constituted to check violations of the Supreme Court guidelines with regard to content in government advertising is - **B B Tandon Committee**
- Winner of International Boxing Federation heavyweight title, 2016 is - **Anthony Joshua**
- Winner of US Masters golf tournament is - **Danny Willett**
- President of Maldives who visited India - **Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom**