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The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

The Sendai Framework is a 15-year, voluntary, non-binding agreement which recognizes that the State has the primary role to reduce disaster risk but that responsibility should be shared with other stakeholders including local government, the private sector and other stakeholders.

It **aims** for the following outcome:

- The substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries.
- The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR), 2015-2030, which is the first major agreement of the post-2015 development agenda, identifies investing in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) for resilience and to build back better in reconstruction as priorities for action towards reducing disaster risk.
- Similarly, Goal 9 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognizes disaster resilient infrastructure as a crucial driver of economic growth and development.

The Seven Global Targets

1. Substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2030, aiming to lower average per 100,000 global mortality rate in the decade 2020-2030 compared to the period 2005-2015.
2. Substantially reduce the number of affected people globally by 2030, aiming to lower average global figure per 100,000 in the decade 2020

- 2030 compared to the period 2005-2015.
3. Reduce direct disaster economic loss in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030.
 4. Substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, among them health and educational facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030.
 5. Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020.
 6. Substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of this Framework by 2030.
 7. Substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments to the people by 2030.

The Four Priorities for Action

Priority 1. Understanding disaster risk

Disaster risk management should be based on an understanding of disaster risk in all its dimensions of vulnerability, capacity, exposure of persons and assets, hazard characteristics and the environment. Such knowledge can be used for risk assessment, prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response.

Priority 2. Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk

Disaster risk governance at the national, regional and global levels is very important for prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery, and rehabilitation. It fosters collaboration and partnership.

Priority 3. Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience

Public and private investment in disaster risk prevention and reduction through structural and non-structural measures are essential to enhance the economic, social, health and cultural resilience of persons, communities, countries and their assets, as well as the environment.

Priority 4. Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response

and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction

The growth of disaster risk means there is a need to strengthen disaster preparedness for response, take action in anticipation of events, and ensure capacities are in place for effective response and recovery at all levels. The recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction phase is a critical opportunity to build back better, including through integrating disaster risk reduction into development measures.

Special Expenditure Observers

Why in news?

Election Commission of India has appointed two eminent former Civil Servants Sh. Shailendra Handa & Ms. Madhu Mahajan as Special Expenditure Observers for the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections.

Highlights:

- The Special Observers will be supervising and monitoring the work being done by the electoral machinery and ensure that stringent and effective enforcement action is undertaken based on intelligence inputs and complaints received through C-VIGIL and Voter Helpline 1950 against all persons/entities trying to induce voters by distributing cash, liquor & freebies etc. in order to vitiate the poll process.

Brief introduction of cVIGIL:

- cVIGIL is an innovative mobile application for citizens to report Model Code of Conduct and Expenditure violations during the elections. ‘cVIGIL’ stands for Vigilant Citizen and emphasizes the proactive and responsible role citizens can play in the conduct of free and fair elections.

- cVIGIL, a user-friendly and easy to operate the android application, which can be used for reporting violations from the date of notifications for bye-election/ assembly/ parliamentary elections. The uniqueness of the app is that it only allows Live Photo/ video with auto location capture from within the app to ensure digital evidence for flying squads to act upon in a time-bound manner.
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IBBI, SEBI sign MoU for better implementation of IBC

Why in news?

Recently The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

Importance:

The IBBI and the SEBI seek effective implementation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (Code) and its allied rules and regulations, which have redefined the debt-equity relationship and aims to promote entrepreneurship and debt market. They have agreed under the MoU to assist and co-operate with each other for the effective implementation of the Code, subject to limitations imposed by the applicable laws.

The MoU provides for:

- a. sharing of information between the two parties, subject to the limitations imposed by the applicable laws;
- b. sharing of resources available with each other to the extent feasible and legally permissible;
- c. periodic meetings to discuss matters of mutual interest, including regulatory requirements that impact each party's responsibilities, enforcement cases, research and data analysis, information technology and data sharing, or any other matter that the parties

believe would be of interest to each other in fulfilling their respective statutory obligations;

- d. cross-training of staff in order to enhance each party's understanding of the other's mission for effective utilisation of collective resources;
- e. capacity building of insolvency professionals and financial creditors;
- f. joint efforts towards enhancing the level of awareness among financial creditors about the importance and necessity of swift insolvency resolution process of various types of borrowers in distress under the provisions of the Code, etc.

Exercise CORPAT

Why in news?

Indonesian Naval Ship KRI Sultan Thaha Syaifuddin and Maritime Patrol Aircraft CN-235 led by Cmde Dafit Santoso arrived at Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, India for the Opening Ceremony of the 33rd edition of the India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) to be held from 19 Mar to 04 Apr 2019.

Highlights:

- The ship and aircraft from both the countries would undertake patrolling on the respective sides of 236 nautical miles long International Maritime Boundary line.
- The IND-INDO CORPAT Series of bilaterals seek to underscore India's peaceful presence and solidarity with friendly Maritime neighbours countries to ensure good order in the maritime domain, consolidate interoperability and strengthen existing bonds of friendship between India and Indonesia.
- During the stay in Port Blair harbour, various activities such as official calls, formal reception onboard ship, sporting fixtures between both navies, ship open to visitors and professional interactions have

been planned.

- Indian Naval assets have been increasingly deployed in the recent times to address the maritime concerns on the region. In addition, as part of the Indian Government's vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region), the Indian Navy has also been involved in assisting countries in the Indian Ocean Region with EEZ Surveillance, Search and Rescue, and other capacity-building and capability-enhancement activities.
 - The 33rd IND-INDO CORPAT, also coinciding with 70 years of India-Indonesia diplomatic ties, will contribute towards the Indian Navy's efforts to consolidate inter-operability and forge strong bonds of friendship across the seas.
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Exercise MITRA SHAKTI

Why in news?

The joint exercise for the year 2018-19 will be conducted from 26 March to 08 April 2019 in Sri Lanka.

Highlights:

- Exercise MITRA SHAKTI is conducted annually as part of military diplomacy and interaction between armies of India & Sri Lanka.
- The aim of the exercise is to build and promote close relations between armies of both the countries and to enhance ability of joint exercise commander to take military contingents of both nations under command.
- The exercise will involve tactical level operations in an international Counter Insurgency and Counter Terrorist environment under United Nations mandate. Exercise MITRA SHAKTI-VI will go a long way in further cementing relationship between both the nations and will act as a catalyst in bringing synergy and cooperation at grassroots levels between both the armies.

Honey as a pollution detector

Why in news?

Tree rings can tell scientists what the atmosphere was like when the tree was young. Lichens can reveal local air pollution levels. Now, scientists in Canada report that honey carries a message, too.

Findings of the Survey:

- A survey of urban beehives around Vancouver, which was published recently in Nature Sustainability, showed that the hives' honey contained minute levels of lead, especially downtown and near the city's port. The readings suggest that **honey can be a sensitive indicator of air quality**.
- The project began when Hives for Humanity, a non-profit to check the honey for lead and other substances.
- Bees are known to pick up trace amounts of metals, which settle on leaves and flowers from the air, as they forage for pollen.
- The results showed very small levels of lead, and traces of iron and zinc.
- Going forward, scientists may be able to track improvements or declines in air quality by monitoring the beehives and analysing the honey.

Economists want further interest rate cut

Why in news?

A group of economists who met Reserve Bank of India Governor cited concerns over economic growth and suggested further reduction of the

interest rate to boost economic activity.

Current Situation:

- The meeting was part of consultations prior to the monetary policy, which will be announced on April 4.
- Economists have suggested further reduction in interest rate which is required to boost economic growth which is still sluggish.
- According to officials present in the meeting, most economists expect GDP growth for the next financial year to be below 7%.
- At the same time, **retail inflation, the central bank's main yardstick for policy-making** is expected to be under 4%, the medium-term target of the RBI.
- While the economists have noted sticky core inflation and benign food inflation, the headline inflation is expected to remain well within the central bank's target range.
- Economists also highlighted uncertain global growth which might prompt the Federal Reserve to hold interest rates.

Domestic issues:

- On the domestic front, they said **the NBFC crisis** was not yet completely behind, the rural sector was still sluggish, and overall, there were uncertainties due to the general elections, which was holding back private sector investment.
- In the last policy meeting in February, the **RBI had reduced interest rate by 25 bps to 6.25% for the first time since August 2017**, in a bid to revive economic growth. This, as it projected retail inflation to be below its target of 4% for the next 12 months.
- The RBI projected growth for the next financial year at 7.4%. The central bank also revised inflation projection downwards to 2.8% for January-March, 3.2-3.4% for the first half of next financial year, and 3.9% for the third quarter 2019-20, assuming a normal monsoon.
- In the last policy, Mr. Das emphasised on acting 'decisively and timely' to address growth concerns once the objective of price stability was achieved.
- Apart from interest rates, several other issues came up for discussion, including the recent decision to inject rupee liquidity into the system

through long-term foreign exchange buy/sell swap.

Forex swap for liquidity

Why in news?

The recent decision of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to inject rupee liquidity through long-term foreign exchange swap, a first of its kind in liquidity management policy has been received well, Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das said.

New Instrument:

- When asked what kind of feedback the central bank had received on the new instrument, he said, "26th [March] is the auction, so we will receive the feedback on 26th. But by and large, I think it has been received quite well.
- The central bank will conduct a **dollar-rupee buy/sell swap auction of \$5 billion** for a three-year tenor, on March 26.
- Earlier, the RBI Governor said there was a need to give permanent status to the finance commission.

Broad consistency:

- Observing that there was a need to ensure broad consistency between finance commissions so that there was some degree of certainty in the flow of funds, especially to States.
- This has become even more critical in the post-GST scenario. In other words, there has to be continuity and change between finance commissions.
- Increasingly, therefore, it is felt that there is a need to give permanent status to the finance commission."
- Stating that the recent initiatives in fostering cooperative federalism had opened new chapters of cooperation between the Centre and States, he added that cooperative federalism, however, should not

‘breed inertia’.

- Alongside cooperative federalism, there has to be competitive federalism. The ranking of States on the parameter of ‘ease of doing businesses has generated a very healthy competition among States.
 - Indices developed by the NITI Aayog on health, water management, implementation of SDGs, etc., have the potential to generate similar healthy competition.
 - Mr. Das also stressed on fiscal consolidation, both at the Central and State levels, and said it was important for robust expenditure planning.
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U.S. report on Indian media

Why in news?

The country Human Rights reports for 2018 were released as part of an annual exercise in which the U.S. State Department submits its assessment of such rights as per the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to the U.S. Congress.

Report on India:

- The 2018 India report covers a range of issues including press and media freedoms, forced disappearances, custodial deaths and the NGO clampdown which became an issue between the U.S. and India, after the NDA government cancelled licenses of some 15,000 NGOs under the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act.
- The government imposed restrictions on foreign funding of some nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including those with views the government stated were not in the “national interest,” thereby curtailing the work of these NGO.

Issues:

- In terms of custodial deaths, the Report cites official (Indian) figures

of 1,674 cases of such death between August 2017 and February 2018, with 1,530 occurring in judicial custody and 144 in police custody

- The report, in a separate section, Role of the Police and Security Apparatus, says, “Police continue to be overpaid, underworked, and subject to political pressure, in some cases contributing to corruption.
- Regarding press freedom and the safety of journalists, the report says, “There were numerous instances of journalists and members of media being threatened or killed in response to their reporting. Police rarely identified suspects involved in the killing of journalists.
- It cites a 2017 Press Council of India report saying at least 80 journalists were killed since 1990 but only one conviction had occurred thus far.
- In terms of editorial freedoms, the report says, “The Editors Guild of India claimed the government limited press freedom by exerting political pressure and blocking television transmissions.
- It cited the firing of The Tribune’s Editor-in-Chief after reported government pressure on the newspaper following its report on privacy and security flaws in the Aadhaar program.
- The report quotes the 2018 World Press Freedom Index as saying online trolling and attacks on journalists was a major issue.
- With Hindu nationalists trying to purge all manifestations of ‘anti-national’ thought from the national debate, self-censorship is growing in the mainstream media and journalists are increasingly the targets of online smear campaigns by the most radical nationalists, who vilify and even threaten physical reprisals.



SC upholds right to self-defence

Why in news?

The right to self-defence extends not only to one’s own body but to protecting the person and property of another, the Supreme Court has said.

About the Judgment:

- A Bench of Justices A.M. Sapre and R. Subhash Reddy underlined the right to private defence, enumerated in Sections 96 to 106 of the IPC, while acquitting a Tamil Nadu forest ranger who shot dead a sandalwood 'smuggler' in the Dharmapuri forest area of the State in 1988.
 - The trial had sentenced Sukumaran, the forest ranger, to a life in prison for murder. The Madras High Court reduced the term to five years.
 - In appeal, the apex court concluded that Mr. Sukumaran had shot the smuggler under threat to his own life and that of his driver.
 - The forest ranger and his driver were in a jeep in the early hours, doing rounds in the forest, when they saw a truck. They gave chase.
 - According to the ranger, smuggler Basha and his companions first pelted stones at their jeep, following which they pulled out a gun on the ranger. Mr. Sukumaran was quick to draw and shot Basha in self-defence.
 - The Supreme Court said Mr. Sukumaran was only trying to protect his life and that of his driver.
 - The prosecution was not able to prove the manner in which the incident occurred as alleged by them in their charge sheet. In this view of the matter, the appellant (Sukumaran) is entitled to be acquitted from the charges for want of any evidence against him.
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GoMs on lynchings, harassment on hold

Why in news?

With the announcement of general elections on March 10, at least two important Groups of Ministers (GoMs) constituted by the Centre last year to suggest measures on anti-lynching and prevention of sexual harassment of women at workplace have been put in the cold storage.

GoM on prevention of sexual harassment of women:

- A top source in the Ministry of Women and Child Development said the government's attempt to address sexual harassment at workplace in the aftermath of the **MeToo movement** by revisiting the law and suggesting ways to improve the response mechanism of organisations is now on hold.
- The government had set up a four-member Group of Ministers (GoM) in October last year and gave it three months to give its recommendations.
- The GoM is headed by Home Minister Rajnath Singh and includes Union Ministers Nitin Gadkari, Maneka Gandhi and Nirmala Seetharaman. It, however, met only once and tasked another sub-panel to submit a report.
- While the Ministry of Women and Child Development submitted its inputs in January, the sub-committee couldn't compile a report to place it before the GoM.
- The sub-committee includes officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Law & Justice.

GoM on Anti-lynching:

- On July 23 last year, after several incidents of lynching were reported across the country, the government announced that a GoM headed by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh will submit its recommendations on ways to prevent the crime.
- A senior government official said the GoM met on two occasions but was yet to finalise its report.
- A high-level committee headed by Union Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba submitted its report to the GoM in September, but it was yet to finalise the recommendations.
- Among the measures suggested by the panel was tightening of law by inserting clauses in the Indian Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure through parliamentary approval.
- The members of the GoM are External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari, Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad and Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thawar Chand

Gehlot.

- Another significant legislation that proposed that critical personal data of Indian citizens be processed in centres located within the country and also proposed financial penalties for data processor for violations of the data protection law have also been put on the backburner.
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India's Humanitarian aid to Mozambique

Why in news?

The Indian Navy had launched a Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operation in coordination with local officials to evacuate about 5,000 people stranded at Buzi near Port Beira in Mozambique. The African nation has been devastated by tropical **cyclone Idai**.

Act as anchor:

- Large fishing boats provided by Mozambique acted as anchor midway across the channel. Rigid-Hulled Inflatable Boat (RHIB) and Gemini boats on Indian ships will transport personnel from shore to the fishing boats to be transported to the Beira side.
- The smaller RHIB and Gemini boats were employed as the Navy ships and local fishing boats could not enter the channel due to depth restrictions. Helicopter operations were also planned to assist the rescue efforts.
- Ships of First Training squadron of Indian Navy, Sujata, Sarathi and Shardul, operating in Southern Indian Ocean were diverted to Port Beira in Mozambique based on the request of the Government of Mozambique.
- Navy ships provided food, clothes, medicine and potable water to the affected people. The ships also have three medical practitioners and five nurses to provide immediate medical help.
- The helicopter on INS Shardul is operating from the local airport for

recce and search and rescue.

Worst disaster:

- According to United Nations officials, **cyclone Idai, a category 4 tropical storm**, which hit southern Africa, is likely the worst weather-related disaster to hit the southern hemisphere with over 1.7 million people affected in Mozambique alone.
 - In 2017, India provided \$10 million for food grains after Mozambique suffered food shortage as a result of natural calamities.
 - The Navy has made HADR assistance a major tool of its foreign cooperation initiative in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) which has a high incidence of natural disasters.
 - Officials said the city of Beira had been badly hit with infrastructure completely destroyed and there was no Internet and mobile connectivity in the city.
 - The Mozambique government said 6,00,000 people had been affected and the death toll could likely be in hundreds as large areas had been submerged in Beira, the capital of Sofala province.
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