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NEW DELHI CAMPUS & HO

309, Kanchenjunga Building,
18 Barakhamba Road, Connaught
Place, New Delhi – 110001
Tel: 011 – 4078 6050, 23317293,
23318135/36, 23738906/07

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1. UPSC Current Affairs: Centre to disburse ₹ 95,082 cr to States to sustain recovery | Page – 01

UPSC Syllabus: Mains: GS Paper III: Indian economy

Sub Theme: Economic recovery | UPSC

- The Centre will remit ₹95,082 crore to States next week, double the funds due to them from the shareable pool of taxes this month to enable them to deploy more money on capital spending, Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said late on Monday after a six-hour meeting with State Chief Ministers and Finance Ministers.
- About 15 Chief Ministers, mostly from the NDA-ruled States, attended what Ms. Sitharaman described as a 'rare, one-off' meeting between the Centre and States, held to figure out ways to sustain the economic recovery after the second COVID-19 wave and understand States' concerns and plans. Three States were represented by deputy CMs while the Finance Ministers of the rest were present, along with the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, she said.
- "The context of the meeting was that after the second wave, we are seeing a robust growth. However, it's also a time where we are looking at ways to sustain the growth, take it as close as possible to a double-digit growth for which the Centre and States have to work together," Ms. Sitharaman said.
- She urged States to help India become the fastest growing economy in coming years, through facilitating investment attractiveness and expediting ease of doing business measures and undertake power sector reforms.
- States were also nudged to smoothen land acquisition and create land banks for investors as land is one of the major bottlenecks for investment projects. Moreover, with the Centre taking up monetisation of public assets, States were asked to consider doing the same.
- "Unless States and the Centre put up money for building, the ripple effects for speedier and better growth would not be as desirable as we wish to have it and therefore, that expenditure is absolutely necessary," the Minister pointed out and said she has directed the Finance Secretary to concede to States' request as 'this is an exceptional year'.

Key Ideas & Requests suggested by States & UTs to facilitate Investment Promotion:

Affidavit-based clearance system - suggested by Karnataka - to provide all clearances in a time-bound manner including plan approval, identification of land, conversion of land, environmental approvals and electricity supply for new enterprises. Affidavit based clearance is given upfront once basic infrastructure is in place and then the investor has 2 years to procure all approvals post-facto.

Transparent Mechanism for Investment Facilitation that involves sharing with states, leads of prospective investors who are in touch with Government of India (GoI).

Need for a clear-cut policy and SOPs on environment and forest clearances by Government of India, on the lines of 'Eco-Economics' and more powers to States under Forest/Environmental matters.

Need to reassess the District Mineral Fund policy for fund utilization for leveraging across the entire state instead of confining it to a district.

Fast-track clearance and Approvals for externally-aided projects by Gol. Reimbursement requested in advance mode. Similar approach to **coastal zone regulations** framework and application across all coastal states.

Need for Legal Reassessment and intervention on the legality of conversion of several different types of lands into industrial parks.

Need to strengthen dispute resolution mechanism, post-award contract enforcement and of model concession agreements to strengthen infrastructure PPP ecosystem.

Instil greater increase in banking penetration as well as credit-deposit ratio in states vis-à-vis their dependent population. (money raised by banks in the form of deposits deployed as loans)

Development of agri-specific infrastructure (Governance Innovation labs, cold storage, farmer's market) throughout the country, but especially in North East since a majority of population is dependent on agriculture.

Emphasis on increased air connectivity for Himalayan states to support tourism prospects.

Gol should engage with NE states to develop a **State-specific International Trade Policy in North East depending on location** (Look East, Look West, Look South etc.)

Special emphasis was laid on enhancing road connectivity in North Eastern states as these states are rich in resources such as bamboo, which can potentially be utilized in industry but cannot be sent as of now due to connectivity gaps in road and highways.

Continuation of Centre's Scheme of loan for capital expenditure beyond the current financial year.

2. UPSC Current Affairs: PM reaches out to tribal people, unveils schemes | Page – 01

UPSC Syllabus: Mains: GS Paper I, II: Social justice, Art and culture

Sub Theme: Tribal affairs | UPSC

Context:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday reached out to tribal people, inaugurating the Birsa Munda museum in Ranchi as well as a slew of welfare schemes in Bhopal on what was the first-ever 'Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas' or tribal pride day.

Mr. Modi dedicated several railway projects to the nation, including the redeveloped Rani Kamalpati Railway Station in Bhopal.

he inaugurated the first of 10 new museums dedicated to tribal culture and contribution to the freedom movement and also marking the birth anniversary of tribal freedom fighter Birsa Munda in Ranchi.

He inaugurated the Bhagwan Birsa Munda memorial-cum-freedom fighter museum on what was the first 'Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas' or tribal pride day.

- Birsa Munda was born at Ulihatu in the Bengal Presidency (presently in Jharkhand) on 15th November 1875 into a Munda family. His parents were Sugana Munda and Karmi Hatu.
- His childhood was spent in a typical Munda fashion amidst poverty.
- He converted to Christianity and became Birsa David/Daud in order to receive an education from a missionary school.
- He spent a great part of his childhood in Chaibasa. He was influenced by the national movement there. His father withdrew him from the missionary school. Birsa developed a strong anti-government and anti-missionary stamp on his mind from there.
- During the 1890s, he started speaking to his people about the exploitation done by the British. The British agrarian policies were stifling the tribal people and disrupting their way of life which was hitherto peaceful and in tune with nature. Another problem was that of cultural belittlement of the tribal people by the Christian missionaries.
- The Mundas had followed the Khunkhatti system of joint landholding. The British replaced this egalitarian system with the Zamindari System. Outsiders entered the tribal landscape and started exploiting them. In their own turf, they became forced labourers. Poverty descended on them like a strangling chain.
- In 1894, Birsa announced his declaration against the British and the Dikus (outsiders) and thus began the **Munda Ulgulan**. This is a very important rebellion of the tribal people among the various uprisings of the tribals and peasants in India in the 19th century.
- Birsa also started his own religion and proclaimed he was god's messenger. Many Mundas, Kharias and Oraons accepted him as their leader. Many other Hindus and Muslims also flocked to see the new leader of the masses.
- Birsa advocated the tribal people to shun the missionaries and revert to their traditional ways. He also asked people not to pay taxes.
- He was arrested in 1895 and released after two years. In 1899, he resumed his armed struggle along with the people. He razed police stations, government property, churches and houses of Zamindars.
- The British caught him in 1900 from Jamkopai forest, Chakradharpur. Birsa Munda died on June 9th 1900 while lodged at the Ranchi jail aged just 25. Authorities claimed he died of cholera although this is doubted.

3. UPSC Current Affairs: The EU's role in the Indo Pacific | Page – 07**UPSC Syllabus: Mains: GS Paper 2:****Sub Theme: | UPSC**

- The notion of the Indo-Pacific has recently become widely used, particularly in the United States, India, Japan, and Australia, and has almost replaced the earlier term “Asia-Pacific.”
- The diplomatic and economic facet of New Delhi’s strategy began with the “Look East” policy of the P. V. Narasimha Rao government in 1991: an effort to cultivate economic and strategic relations with Southeast Asia, in a marked shift in India’s global outlook following the Cold War.
- India’s strategic thinking was shaped by the fact that it has serious disputes with Pakistan to its west and China to the north, which limits its overland communications and trade with those regions. So on the one hand, India looked eastward, and on the other, toward the Indian Ocean.

Milestones of India’s current Indo-Pacific policy:

- a) In the aftermath of the 1998 Indian nuclear tests, the United States began a policy of rapprochement with India, which led to closer Indo-U.S. ties.
- b) Cooperation with India and the US in the wake of the devastating tsunami of December 26, 2004, which killed some 225,000 people in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and India.
- d) Later collaboration between the US, Japan, Australia and India led to quadrilateral grouping: the Quad.
- e) The steep rise of China and its increasing assertiveness—evidenced by developments in the East and South China seas, as well as the growing importance of the Asia-Pacific region as a whole—have triggered a number of policy moves by various countries. To balance China’s growing might and its expanding influence, Washington and Tokyo began to work to bring New Delhi into the strategic equation.

To achieve that, they modified their strategic concepts around the notion of the “Indo-Pacific.”

Role of ASEAN in Indo Pacific

- ASEAN countries themselves remained ambivalent: they welcomed the U.S. presence in the region, but since they also enjoy close economic ties to China, they refused to participate in any confrontation with Beijing. The ASEAN reluctance to directly involve itself in the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy pushed Washington to take another course.

Role of US to contain China in the Indo Pacific

- In 2017, as U.S.-Chinese rivalry escalated into confrontation, President Donald Trump’s administration dusted off the old Quad format to serve as an instrument of its Indo-Pacific strategy to check China. Trump’s successor Joe Biden regards China as the main challenger to U.S. global primacy, and is busy building a “coalition of democracies” aimed at outcompeting China on a wide range of issues, mainly economic.
- The Quad grouping, however, remains an instrument of any U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy. The goal of that strategy, as articulated in a declassified U.S. government document at the beginning of 2021, is “maintaining U.S. strategic primacy” in the region. For that, Washington needs a credible democratic

partner on the Asian continent and in the Indian Ocean area. With that in mind, the United States is willing “to accelerate India’s rise and capacity.”

India’s Position in Indo Pacific

- New Delhi may, of course, have a different point of view, and is not committed to these goals. Unlike the other Quad nations, it does not have any formal military ties to the United States. But India will not hesitate to take advantage of the grouping to enhance its own political and economic profile in the region.
- Even though there is a great deal of activity around the Quad, it is clear that New Delhi is in no position to play a significant military role outside its neighborhood.
- Confronting China somewhere in the Western Pacific, 5,000 kilometers away, is not credible when the Chinese are sitting along a large chunk of India’s land borders. In any case, India lags behind China in almost all elements of comprehensive national power, including its military.
- East of Malacca, India can at best play a symbolic role as an ally of the United States and Japan, and seek a payoff in pushing its own economic growth agenda amid the U.S.-Chinese estrangement. It could play a strong security role west of the Malacca straits in the Indian Ocean, where it has considerable natural advantages.
- India recognizes the centrality of ASEAN to its Indo-Pacific strategy, but in the region, its key political and economic ties remain anchored in the city-state of Singapore. It has failed to build significant ties with other ASEAN states, even Vietnam, with which it had long had an important relationship.
- In that sense, it is unable to play a larger role of counterbalancing Chinese power in the region. As of now, India’s role in the Western Pacific region remains symbolic, and in the Indo-Pacific context, confined to the “Indo,” or the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- Even here it is feeling the pressure from China, which has made significant inroads into South Asia and the IOR. India’s neighbors, such as Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar have developed strong ties with Beijing, which has already developed substantial trading links with the IOR as a whole.

Conclusion: India’s future ambitions depend on the trajectory of its economy. By opting out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership free trade agreement, New Delhi has forfeited an opportunity to participate in a vital new economic grouping that could have added zest to its Indo-Pacific strategy. This has already begun limiting its naval ambitions and the ability to play the role into which many expect the Quad is hoping to evolve: that of an informal military alliance or pressure group.