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DAILY NEWS DIARY

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FOR PRELIMS AND MAINS

Warm Greetings.

- DnD aims to provide every day news analysis in sync with the UPSC pattern.
- It is targeted at UPSC – Prelims & Mains.
- Daily articles are provided in the form of Question and Answers
- To have a bank of mains questions.
- And interesting to read.
- Providing precise information that can be carried straight to the exam, rather than over dumping.

Enjoy reading.

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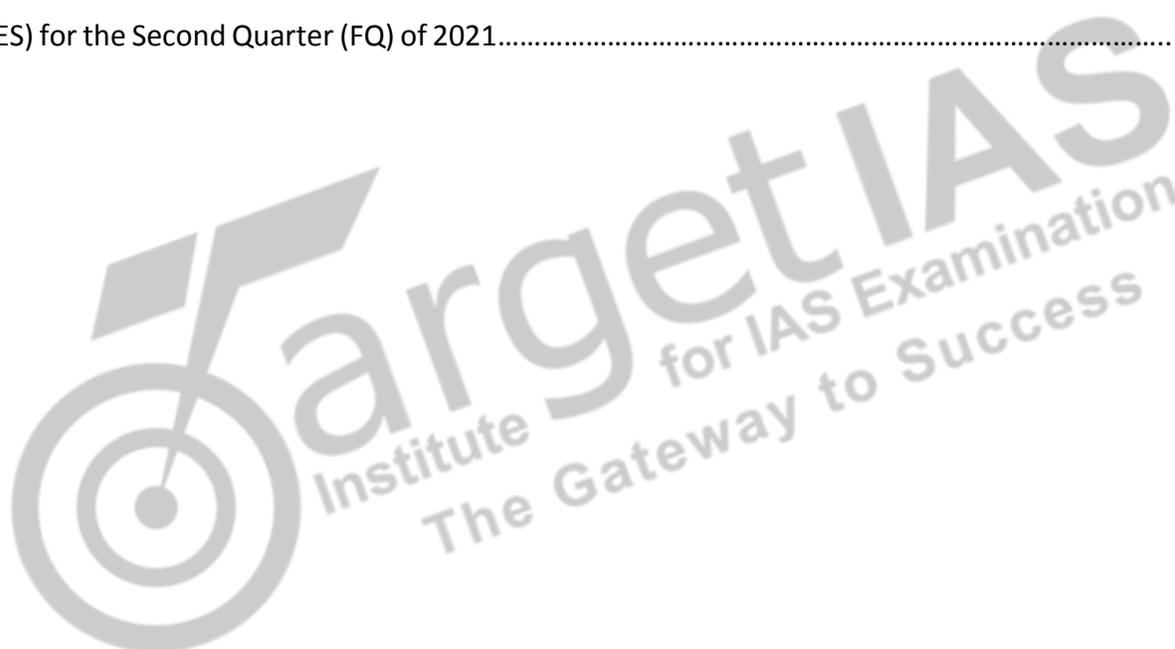
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GS-2

❖ POLITY

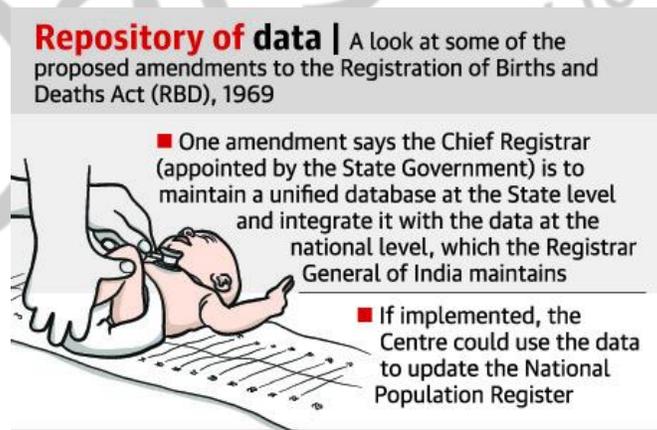
Q. Critically examine the amendment proposal by central government to the Registration of Births and Deaths Act 1969.

Registration of Births and deaths Act,1968:

The major objective of the act is to regulate the births and deaths and for matters connected with it. The act was enacted by Parliament on 30th May 1969 and extends to the whole India. The act defines birth, death, fetal death etc. It is the responsibility of the states to record and maintain the deaths and births through setting up facilities. The data base is collected by the local registrars appointed by the states.

Proposed amendments:

- A Chief Registrar appointed in every State is the executive authority for implementation of the Act. The Chief registrar maintains a unified database of births and deaths of the state and shall integrate it with the national level database maintained by Registrar General of India (under Ministry of Home Affairs).
- Appointment of Special sub-registrars for collecting data base on the spot of a disaster.
- Link Aadhaar card number to the birth and death certificates.



Need for amendments:

- To have people friendly websites or database, so that people can receive the certificates of birth and death easily.
- To simplify the provisions of the act to improve the authenticity, maintenance and recording of the births and deaths in a state.

- The data will be used to interact with other data base like National Population, ration card holders, Aadhaar act and other data base at national level.

Critical analysis:

- It is necessary to **examine the use of interacting the database with other databases**. The data base collected in the states include the date of death or birth and also the place of occurrence. The demographic studies is also collected while recording the data. It may be important for a population register to get that information instantaneously. For other databases, it may be enough to get that information on a monthly or even annual basis. For example, the election authorities may require the list of deaths only once in six months or so for removing dead persons from the database.
- State governments maintain databases of births and deaths, some of which are manually done. Information required for updating other databases for each birth and death can be directly given from the State level database. Extracting part of the information therein to create a national database to be maintained by the RGI appears an **unnecessary duplication** and will only create an intermediate administrative layer without any value addition.
- Due to the cultural diversity, states use **different standards** for collecting data items. For example: For example, the names of many people in Kerala and Tamil Nadu have the name of the family and father's name preceding the first name of the person while many databases use the first name/middle name/surname format.
- The database from RBD act will be used as evidence to update Population database, Aadhaar, Driving License and Passport etc. This is **unnecessary provision** because these themselves can specify whether the information contained in the birth and death register should be used for a particular purpose.

Conclusion:

The amendment proposal of RBD act 1969 is not in compliance with the current decade of computerization. The amendment doesn't mention any steps or measures in dealing with technical breaches in issuing birth and death certificates. The idea of interacting state database with national database would require a new standard for collecting database which may create a lot of confusion among the states due to the cultural diversity. Therefore, a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of the usages and the relevance of the amendments must be looked into.

❖ INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Q. Discuss the reasons for the involvement of Combined Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) in dealing the Kazakhstan distress.

Kazakhstan is one of the largest autocracies since the fall of USSR. It is top uranium producing and hydrocarbon gas with nearly 200 oil and gas hydrocarbon accumulations. Since USSR disintegration Kazakhstan have been more stable and growing as an important country in Central Asian Republic through its economic power. Recently, Kazakhstan have been pushed into distress because of mainly hike in fuel prices and grievances of people over structural problems like corruption and socioeconomic inequality. The first protest broke out on 2 January 2022 in the western town of Zhanaozen, the oil accumulation centre. The Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has called on the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), for help to deal with the protests. The CSTO which have not involved in any issues pertaining to central Asian in past few years. It is imperative to throw some light in this novel involvement of CSTO in the Kazakhstan distress.



Combined Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO):

- The CSTO is a Russia dominated security alliance (Russia contributes 50% of its budget) which was established after the USSR's fall.
- Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) signed a mutual defence treat in 1994 in the place of Warsaw pact and named it CSTO
- The CSTO has six members today:
 - i. Russia
 - ii. Tajikistan
 - iii. Kyrgyzstan
 - iv. Armenia
 - v. Belarus
 - vi. Kazakhstan
- Principle of collective security - "one for all and all for one".

- Aggressor against any one state in the organisation is an aggressor against all other states. So, all the members would act together to repel the aggressor.

CSTO role in Kazakhstan distress:

- CSTO have not been very active since past years except for involving in facilitating in some arms sale, combined military exercises. It has also created a peacekeeping force and a rapid reaction force and the members have pursued a common air defence system.
- The CSTO have sent around 2,500 troops on January 6, including Russian paratroopers and Belarussian special troops.
- Aforementioned, Russia is the major contributor to the CSTO and is concerned that political instability in the country could lead to the rise of ultra-nationalist. These ultra-nationalists will threaten the Russian diaspora which constitute to nearly 19% of the population.
- Russia shares 7500 km border with Kazakhstan on North and China on the East. This huge open border sharing will allow the radical Islamic groups to enter Russia. This threatens the security of Russia, hence it is involved in dealing the Kazakhstan distress.
- Russia wanted to curb all the “colour revolutions” in the Central Asia which may create more the security issues.
- The distress threatens to undermine Russia’s power in the region which is trying to assert its economic and geopolitical power in countries like Ukraine and Belarus.
- Distress would effectively end Kazakhstan’s longstanding multisector foreign policy of balancing among Russia, China, the West, and Turkey.
- If Russia helps Kazakhstan, it will gain a good ally for future.
- The other Central Asian Republics as well and Russia would have a more dominant role in their foreign policies, particularly on issues like foreign military bases.

Conclusion:

Combined Security Treaty Organisation is formed on the objective of collective security like the NATO forces. CSTO have been silent on issues like the stand-off between Armenia and Azerbaijan though Yerevan had asked it for support. This sudden involvement showcases the importance of Kazakhstan to Russia and other members of CSTO. Features of Kazakhstan like the availability of largest mineral resources like Uranium, rich hydrocarbon gas and worlds second largest bitcoin miner. Apart from these economic the country has been regarded as a pillar of political and economic stability in an unstable region. It is imperative to understand the objectives of CSTO in handling the distress of Kazakhstan in more comprehensive way like the future implications on the Central Asian region.

Q. “Striking the right balance between continental and maritime security will enable India’s long-term security interests.” Comment.

Context:

The collapse of American military power in Afghanistan, the subsequent takeover of Kabul by the Taliban and the consequent rise in the influence of Pakistan and China are developments of high concern for India’s continental security interests.

India’s continental strategy, in which the Central Asian region is an indispensable link, has progressed intermittently over the past two decades — promoting connectivity, incipient defence and security cooperation, enhancing India’s soft power and boosting trade and investment.

It is laudable, but as is now apparent, it is insufficient to address the broader geopolitical challenges engulfing the region. Striking the right balance between continental and maritime security would be the best guarantor of India’s long-term security interests.

In this context, India’s decision to host the five Central Asia leaders at the Republic Day Parade holds significance for India’s continental security.

India’s Maritime Security:

More recently, India has taken many ambitious steps to correct the historic neglect of India’s maritime power and also as a response to the dramatic rise of China as a military power. Following are some of the steps taken by India to develop its Maritime security:

- National Maritime Strategy.
- Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) initiative for the Indian Ocean Region.
- Initiatives relating to the Indo-Pacific and the Quad.

However, maritime security alone is not sufficient for India to deter Chinese unilateral actions and the emergence of a unipolar Asia.

Because China’s rise is not merely in the maritime domain. It is expanding on the Eurasian continent. For example, Belt and Road Initiative projects in Central Asia and its dependency-creating investments, cyber and digital penetration across the Eurasian continent. Hence, a continental strategy focusing on the Eurasian continent is necessary for India.

Geopolitics in Eurasia:

- **Recent Developments:** China’s assertive rise, the withdrawal of the US/NATO forces from Afghanistan, the rise of Islamic fundamentalist forces and the changing dynamics of the historic stabilizing role of Russia (most recently in Kazakhstan) have all set the stage for a sharpening of the geopolitical competition on the Eurasian landmass.

- **Russian Centrality in Eurasia:** Each of the current crises in Belarus, Ukraine, the Caucasus, and Kazakhstan might have a specific logic and trajectory of its own, but together they are reshaping the geopolitics of Eurasia. Moscow's military intervention in Kazakhstan and its recent negotiations with the US on European security underline the Russian centrality in Eurasia.
- **Rising Chinese Interventions:** The Chinese willingness and capacity for military intervention and power projection are growing far beyond its immediate region. Its rise is not merely in the maritime domain but is also expanding on the Eurasian continent via "The Belt and Road Initiative" projects in Central Asia extending up to Central and Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, undercutting traditional Russian influence.
- **Declining US Influence:** Though it has a substantial military presence on the continental peripheries, the American military footprint has shrunk dramatically on the core Eurasian landmass. While the U.S. had over 2,65,000 troops under its European command in 1992, it now has about 65,000. Even with the rise of China's military power, the U.S. which had about 1,00,000 troops in the early 1990s under what is now called the Indo-Pacific Command, currently has about 90,000 troops mostly committed to the territorial defence of Japan and South Korea. However, the U.S. is a pre-eminent naval power, even more so in the Indo-Pacific region, and defines its strategic preferences in the light of its own strengths.



Way Forward:

India needs to acquire strategic vision and deploy the necessary resources to pursue our continental interests without ignoring our interests in the maritime domain. Further, India should push for our continental rights, namely that of transit and access, working with our partners in Central Asia, with Iran and Russia. Need for more proactive engagement with economic and security agendas ranging from the SCO, Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Stabilizing Afghanistan is also necessary. India will need to define its own parameters of continental and maritime security consistent with its own interests.

GS-3**❖ ECONOMY**

Q) Analyse the associated concerns raised for the China's 'developing country' status at WTO.

Context:

Recently, China got the 'developing country' status at the World Trade Organisation (WTO). It has become a contentious issue with a number of countries raising concerns against the decision.

World Bank's Classification of Countries:

- The World Bank assigns the world's economies to four income groups—low, lower-middle, upper-middle, and high-income countries.
- The classifications are updated each year on 1st July and are based on Gross National Income (GNI) per capita in current USD of the previous year.
- GNI is the total amount of money earned by a nation's people and businesses.
- In its latest classification (2020-21), the World Bank has classified India as a lower-middle-income country.



China's Case:

- Given the rise in China's per capita income to become an upper middle-income country according to the World Bank and the country's alleged use of unfair trade practices, several nations have called on China to either refrain from seeking benefits available to developing countries or forgo its classification as a developing country altogether.
- Some of China's unfair trade practices include preferential treatment for state enterprises, data restrictions and inadequate enforcement of intellectual property rights.
- Prima facie, it does appear anomalous that

the world's second-largest economy—which accounted for a quarter of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in 2021—considers itself as the largest developing country.

Concerns raised:

- ✓ China's status as a 'developing country' at the WTO has become a contentious issue with a number of countries raising concerns over the upper middle-income nation deriving benefits reserved for developing countries under WTO norms.
- ✓ One way for China to show leadership would be by refraining from claiming benefits that would correspond to a developing country in ongoing negotiations," the European Union (EU) said in a statement on the latest review of China's Trade Policy conducted in October 2021. The United States Trade Representative also released a similar statement.
- ✓ Australia too had recommended that China relinquish "its access to S&DT". China's per capita income was USD 10,435 in 2020 according to the World Bank while that of India was USD 1,928.
- ✓ India has also questioned China's claim that it was a developing country, since, going by the World Bank's definition, its per capita income belongs to that of an upper middle-income country.
- ✓ Moreover, concerns have been raised over the Least-Developed Country (LDC), with Bangladesh potentially losing this tag after surpassing India in terms of GDP per capita.

Benefits of Developing Country Status:

- Certain WTO agreements give developing countries special rights through S&DT provisions, which can grant developing countries longer timeframes to implement the agreements and even commitments to raise trading opportunities for such countries.
- S&DT allows developing and poor countries certain benefits, including longer transition periods for implementing commitments.
- It also provides measures to increase trading opportunities for developing countries, provisions requiring all WTO members to safeguard the trade interests of developing countries, support to help developing countries build the capacity to carry out WTO work,

handle disputes, and implement technical standards, and provisions related to LDC Members.

- WTO pacts are often aimed at reduction in government support to certain industries over time and set more lenient targets for developing nations and grant them more time to achieve these targets compared to developed ones.
- The classification also allows other countries to offer preferential treatment.

Way Forward

WTO must clearly define a developing nation at the earliest so that only such nations can claim S&DT. New approaches to strengthen the multilateral trading system”, the way forward is to adopt a procedure wherein each nation, keeping its national interests in mind, makes withdrawal strategies to claim S&DT benefits and ultimately from developing nation status. Another idea is ‘graduation’ whereby as and when member nations meet certain objective criteria, they won’t be subject to developing country status.

SNIPPETS

❖ ECONOMY

Q) The Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) showed that employment had increased even during the pandemic. Analyse.

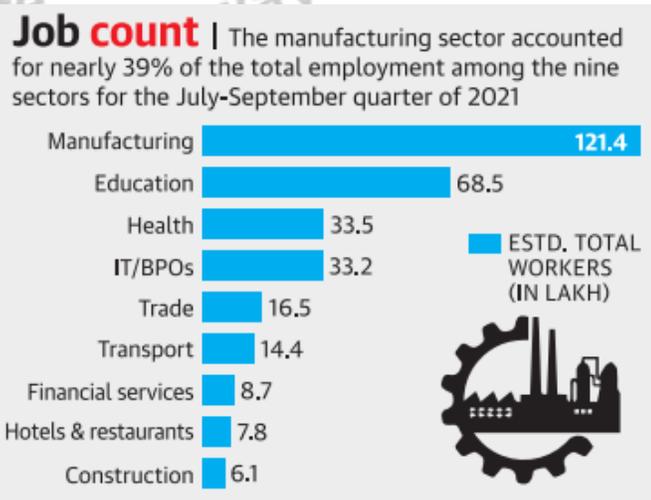
Context: The Ministry of Labour and Employment released the results of the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) for the Second Quarter (FQ) of 2021 (July to September 2021).

Sectors covered under the report:

1. Manufacturing
2. Construction
3. Trade
4. Transport
5. Education
6. Health
7. Accommodation and restaurants
8. IT/BPOs
9. Financial services

Key findings of the QES (July to September 2021) report:

- The estimated total employment in the nine selected sectors from the second round of QES (July-September 2021) came out as 3.10 crore approximately, which is 2 lakhs higher than the estimated employment (3.08 crore) from the first round of QES (April 1, 2021).



- Nine sectors' accounts for about 85% of total employment in establishments.
- There is overall percentage increase of female workers which stood at 32.1% in July-September 2021, higher than 29.3% reported during the first round of QES.
- The manufacturing sector accounted for nearly 39% of the total employment among the nine sectors.
- Regular workers constitute 87% of the estimated workforce in the nine selected sectors, with only 2% being casual workers.

Conclusion:

The numbers have come at a time when the businesses are again moving towards restrictions and curtailed timings amid the surge in Covid-19 cases, which is expected to affect the job scenario adversely. The pandemic has already played havoc and left a lot of people across sectors, both in the organized and unorganized space, jobless.



Q) Consider the following statements:

- A. The first World Hindi Conference was held in Delhi on January 10, 1975.
- B. The earliest form of old Hindi was Apabhramsa.
- C. On the World Hindi Day, the Director of the World Heritage Centre has agreed to publish Hindi descriptions of India's UNESCO World Heritage Sites on the WHC's website.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) A and B
- b) B and C
- c) A and C
- d) A, B and C



Q- Planning Commission as well as the NITI Aayog were set up through

- a) Legislation
- b) Subordinate Legislation
- c) Cabinet Resolution
- d) Ordinance (as Parliament was not in Session)

Answer - c

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