

**01 – 11 – 2021**

**News: Protocol to Prevent Human Trafficking: SCO**

- Recently, the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**, in its 19<sup>th</sup> meet (of Prosecutors General) held in New Delhi, adopted a protocol to strengthen cooperation in preventing and combating growing menace of human trafficking, especially women and children.

## **Human Trafficking**

- Human trafficking involves recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, for the purpose of exploitation.
- Exploitation include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs.

### **About the SCO Protocol**

- Calls for continuation of exchange of national legislation to combat the menace of trafficking in persons.

- Seeks to provide protection and assistance to victims of trafficking within their competence.
- Calls for developing cooperation between the educational organisations of the SCO member states in the field of advanced training of prosecutors, whose competence include combating trafficking in persons especially, women and children.

### **Relevant Laws in India:**

- Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956 is the premier legislation to deal with this issue.
- Article 23 and 24 (Right Against Exploitation) of the Constitution of India.
- 25 sections in IPC such as 366A, 366B, 370 and 374.
- The Juvenile Justice Act and the Information Technology (IT) Act and also the Prevention of Child Labour Act, the Bonded Labour (Abolition) Act, among others.

## Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

- Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a permanent Eurasian political, economic and military intergovernmental organization aiming to maintain peace, security and stability in the region.
- SCO was established on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2001 with its headquarters in Beijing, China.
- Previously it was known as Shanghai-Five. With the inclusion of Uzbekistan in 15<sup>th</sup> June 2001, the grouping became Shanghai Cooperation Organization.
- India and Pakistan joined as full members in the SCO on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2017 at Astana summit, Kazakhstan.
- Iran was granted full membership at the 21<sup>st</sup> summit held virtually on 2021.
- Members of the organisation are Iran, India, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Russia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and China.
- Observers of the group are Afghanistan, Belarus and Mongolia.
- Dialogue Partners are Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia, Nepal, Turkey and Sri Lanka.
- Culture has become an important element of SCO.
- Largest regional organization in the world in terms of geographical coverage and population, covering three-fifths of the Eurasian continent and nearly half of the human population.

- Officially accepted languages in the group are Russian and Chinese.

## Objectives

- **Strengthening mutual trust and neighborliness** among the member states.
- Promoting **effective cooperation in -politics, trade & economy, research & technology and culture.**
- **Enhancing ties in education, energy, transport, tourism, environmental protection, etc.**
- **Maintain and ensure peace**, security and stability in the region.
- Establishment of a democratic, fair and rational new international political & economic order.
- Guiding Principle – Based on Shanghai Spirit.
- Internal policy based on the **principles of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, mutual consultations, respect for cultural diversity**, and a desire for common development.
- External policy in accordance with the **principles of non-alignment**, non-targeting any third country, and openness.

**News:** Indian Navy Frigate Tushil: P1135.6 Class

- Recently INS Tushil was launched in Russia.

## **INS Tushil**

- INS Tushil is **designed and built by Russia** for the Indian Navy.
- Tushil is a **Sanskrit word meaning Protector Shield**.
- **Project 1135.6 is also known as Talwar Class** –a class of **guided missile frigates**.
- These are **modified Krivak III-class frigates** which are also the main basis of the Russian Admiral Grigorovich-class frigate.
- India has **six Talwar class frigates in service**.
- This ship is a **potent combination of state of art Indian and Russian Weapons and Sensors equipped to operate in Littoral and Blue waters** both as a single unit and as consort in a naval task force.
- They feature “**stealth technology**” in terms of low radar and underwater noise signatures.
- **Stealth technology is a low observable technology that makes aircraft, fighter jets, ships, submarines, satellites, missiles etc less visible to radar, infrared, sonar and other detection technologies.**

- It highlights the long standing tradition of Military Technical Cooperation between India and Russia.
- They will add more power to the Indian Navy operating in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

**News:** No time bound pacts on climate change at G-20

- India pushed for “safeguarding the interests of the developing world” as Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the G-20 summit at sessions on climate change and sustainable development on Sunday, said G-20 Sherpa and Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal.

## **Group of 20 (G 20)**

- Group of 20 (G-20) is an international forum for Govt. and Central bank governors from 19 countries and European Union.
- Aim of the grouping is to bring together systemically important industrialized and developing economies to discuss key issues in the global economy.
- G 20 was founded in 1999 to discuss policies relating to financial stability.
- G-20 has expanded its agenda since 2008 and Heads of Gov./Heads of States as well as Finance Ministers and foreign ministers have met periodically.

- G20 works with International Organization of Securities Commission (IOSCO) and Financial Stability Board (FSB) in setting up the standards for strengthening the securities markets.

The work of G20 is divided into two tracks:

- The Finance track comprises all meetings with G20 finance ministers and central bank governors and their deputies. Meeting several times throughout the year they focus on monetary and fiscal issues, financial regulations, etc.
- The Sherpa track focuses on broader issues such as political engagement, anti – corruption, development, energy, etc.
- Since 2011, G20 summits had been held annually.
- Spain is a permanent non member invitee for the G-20 summits held annually.
- Members are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States and European Union.
- Collectively, the G20 economies account for around 90% of the gross world product (GWP), 80% of world trade (or, if excluding EU intra-trade, 75%), two-thirds of the world population, and approximately half of the world land area.

- The **chairmanship of G-20 is rotated among members** for a period starting from December 1 to November 30 of each year. Current chair is Italy (2020 - 2021), followed by Indonesia (2021 - 2022) and India (2022 - 23). The **group of present, immediate past and immediate next chairmen is called G-20 Troika.**
- G-20 works **without a permanent secretariat.** Each year, **incumbent chair will setup a temporary secretariat.** **Osaka Track on Digital economy** (discussed in 2019 summit held at Osaka, Japan) **was rejected by India,** Indonesia and South Africa.
- G-20 Summits includes summit of State leaders, Summit of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, Summit of Labour and Employment Leaders, Summit of Foreign Leaders, Summit of Education Ministers, B20 Summit, C20 Summit, T20 summit, W20 Summit and Y20 summit.



**News:** Row over caste split of MGNREGA wage

- Central order sees tensions rise in villages as some groups are paid earlier

## **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment**

### **Guarantee Act Scheme (MGNREGS)**

- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) of 2005 was enacted to give form to the **Article 41** of Indian Constitution. Article 41 of Directive Principles of the State Policy states that **State should strive to secure the right to work and to public assistance in cases of unemployment.**
- Mahatma Gandhi Employment Guarantee Act 2005 is an Indian labor law and social security measure that aims to guarantee the 'right to work'. This act was passed in September 2005.
- It aims to enhance livelihood security in **rural areas by providing at least 100 days of wage employment** in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do **unskilled manual work.**
- **Any rural household willing to do manual work is eligible** under the Act.
- NREGA was scoped up to **cover all the districts of India from 1 April 2008.** The statute is hailed by the government as "the largest and most ambitious social security and public works program in the world". In its World

Development Report 2014, the World Bank termed it a "**stellar example of rural development**".

- Recently, Central government updated that, **MGNREGA will be updated with inflation index CPI- Rural, instead of older CPI- Agricultural Labourers**. The base wage will be set as previous year's national daily wages (179 in Rural).
- The revised wages are applicable from 1<sup>st</sup> April every year.
- CPI–Rural (CPIR) calculation **involves more non-food items** such as **healthcare and education** compared to **CPI–Agricultural Labourers (CPI-AL)** involves **more food items** in consumption market.
- The Union Ministry of Rural Development's rules on Social Audit of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) state that the **State Government shall facilitate conduct of social audit** of the works taken up under the Act in every Gram Panchayat **at least once in six months** in the manner prescribed under these rules.
- Social audit is an accounting tool which **measures, evaluates, identifies gaps in service delivery and elicits promises to rectify these gaps with the direct participation of intended beneficiaries**. In its essence, it empowers citizens to **gauge the effectiveness of a scheme by looking at its overall impact**. A realisation of what one is entitled to by law and the empowerment that comes along with demanding this rightful entitlement is a by-product of a social audit.

- A summary of findings of such social audits conducted during a financial year shall be submitted by the State Government to the Comptroller and Auditor General of India. A Social Audit Unit will be set up by the State Government to facilitate conduct of social audit by Gram Sabha.
- In 2017, Meghalaya became the first State to pass and roll out a social audit law to cover all departments.
- Employment is to be provided within 5 km of an applicant's residence, and minimum wages are to be paid. If work is not provided within 15 days of applying, applicants are entitled to an unemployment allowance. That is, if the government fails to provide employment, it has to provide certain unemployment allowances to those people. Thus, employment under MGNREGA is a legal entitlement.
- MGNREGA is to be implemented mainly by gram panchayats (GPs). The involvement of contractors is banned.
- Apart from providing economic security and creating rural assets, NREGA can help in protecting the environment, empowering rural women, reducing rural-urban migration and fostering social equity, among others.
- Priority shall be given to women in such a way that at least one-third of the beneficiaries shall be women who have registered and requested for work under this Act.

- More than 50% of workforce under MGNREGA are women, says the Economic Survey. For the past 4 years since 2017 – 18, women are the majority beneficiaries of MGNREGA, although the percentage of women in MGNREGA has decline from 54.5 in 2019–20 to 52.4 in 2020–21.

**News:** Punjab does a deep dive for Indus dolphins

- The census of one of the world’s most threatened cetaceans, the Indus river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica minor*) — a freshwater dolphin that is found in river Beas, is all set to commence in the winter as part of a project by the Centre.
- The Indus river dolphin is classified as endangered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and, until recently, it was believed that these dolphins were endemic to Pakistan. But in 2007, a remnant but viable population of Indus dolphins was discovered in Punjab’s Harike wildlife sanctuary and in the lower Beas river.
- The Indus river dolphin was declared the State aquatic animal of Punjab in 2019.