

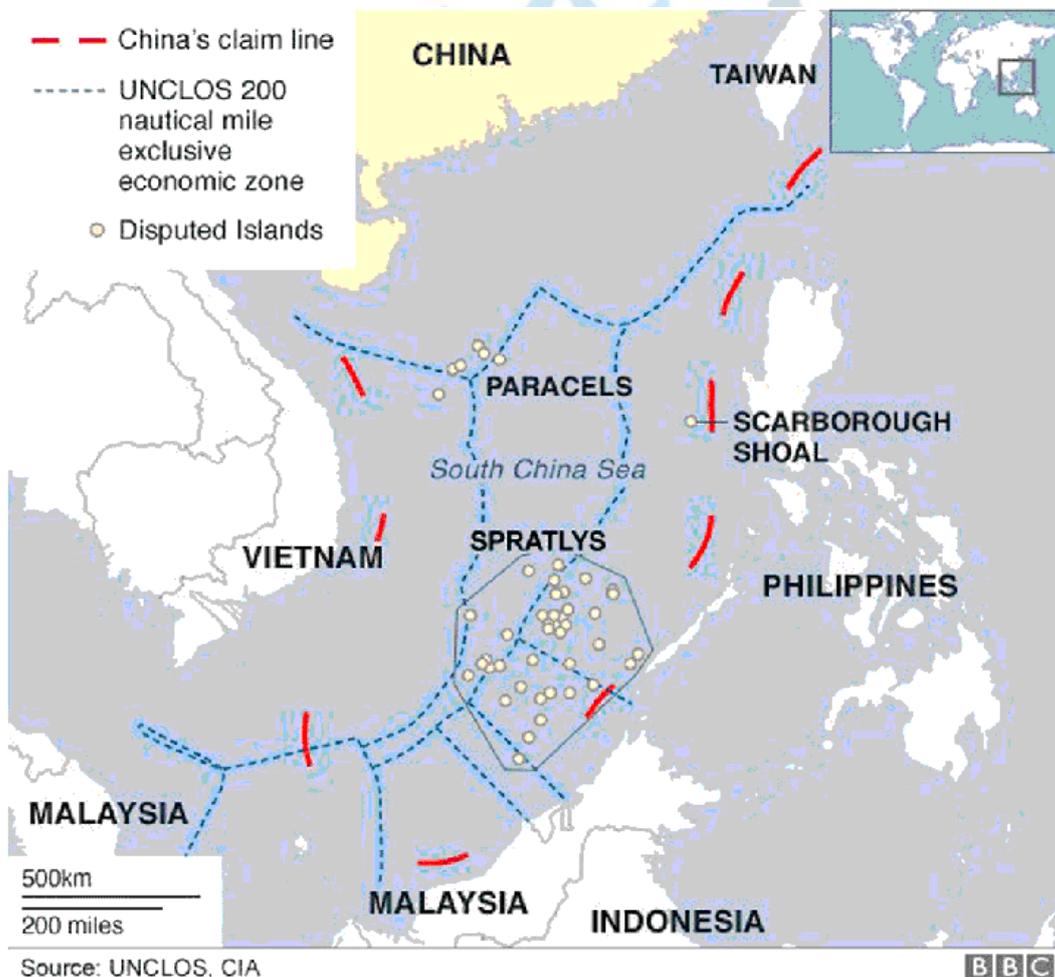
## 1. South China Sea

### Why in News?

- Recently, the Chinese fishing fleets have been seen raiding the rich waters of the South China Sea that are internationally recognised as exclusively Indonesia's to fish.

### Key Points:

- The Chinese steel trawlers scrape the bottom of the sea and destroy other marine life.
- Their illegal fishing near the **Natuna islands** carries global consequence, reminding regional governments of Beijing's expanding claims to the South China Sea through which one-third of the world's maritime trade flows.
- They want to claim the resources such as oil, natural gas, and fish in the South China Sea.
- The presence of Chinese fishers also helps to embody China's maritime claims. The nine dash line (rejected by an international tribunal) asserted by China violates the principle of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ).



### **About South China Sea:**

- It is an arm of western Pacific Ocean in Southeast Asia.
- It is south of China, east & south of Vietnam, west of the Philippines and north of the island of Borneo.
- Its bordering states & territories (clockwise from north): The People's Republic of China, the Republic of China (Taiwan), the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, Singapore and Vietnam.
- It is connected by Taiwan Strait with the East China Sea and by Luzon Strait with the Philippine Sea.
- It contains numerous shoals, reefs, atolls and islands. The Paracel Islands, the Spratly Islands and the Scarborough Shoal are the most important.
- This sea holds tremendous strategic importance for its location as it is the connecting link between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. (Strait of Malacca)

## **2. Tower and Infrastructure Providers Association (TAIPA)**

### **Why in News?**

- Recently, TAIPA urged for quickly enhancing the telecom network capacity to cope with the rising data traffic amidst nation-wide lockdown.
- The data traffic has surged by 30% in the last few days as more and more companies are switching to Work-From-Home.

### **About TAIPA:**

- It was constituted in 2011 as an industry representative body registered under the Indian Society registration act, 1860.
- All leading independent telecom infrastructure providers like Bharti Infratel, Indus Towers, ATC India Tower Corp., GTL Infrastructure, Tower Vision and Reliance Infrastructure are the members of the Society.
- It is dedicated to interact, discuss and deliberate with the Ministries, Policy Makers, Regulators, Financial institutions and Technical bodies etc for promotion of healthy growth in telecom services.

### Highlights:

- The metropolitan cities such as Hyderabad and Bengaluru have posted 70% rise in cellular network data. Due to the 'work from home' policy for both public and private employees, there has been a 30% rise in data consumption.
- The Telecom services come under essential services and thereby are exempted from the lockdown.
- To maintain data usage and smooth functioning of telecom services 24/7, the telecom sector needs critical, robust infrastructure. The states need to align their policies with the Centre's Right of Way (RoW) 2016 norms.

### About RoW 2016 Norms:

- It is issued by Department of Telecommunications (DoT), the rules for rollout of communication networks.
- It aims to facilitate the installation of mobile towers, optic fibre and copper cables in a time-bound, non-discretionary manner.
- It aims to rationalise administrative expenses across the country to a maximum of Rs 1000 per km for fibre, and a maximum of Rs 10,000 per application for overhead towers.
- It provides for fast-tracking decisions on RoW permits within 60 days after application.

## **3. ICAR issues Advisory to farmers for Rabi Crops**

### Why in News?

- In the wake of COVID-19 spread, ICAR issues Advisory to farmers for Rabi crops.

### Highlights:

- Amidst the threat of COVID-19 spread, the Rabi crops are approaching maturity.
- Harvesting and handling of the produce including its movement to the market are inevitable as the agricultural operations are time-bound.
- The ICAR has asked the farmers to follow precautions and safety measures to prevent the disease spread. Simple measures include social distancing, maintaining personal hygiene by washing hands with soap, wearing a face mask, protective clothing, and cleaning implements and machinery.
- Workers to follow safety measures and social distancing at each and every step in the entire process of field operations.

## ICAR:

- The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is an autonomous organisation under the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Government of India.
- It was established in 1929 as the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research.
- Headquartered in New Delhi, it is the apex body for coordinating, guiding and managing research and education in agriculture including horticulture, fisheries and animal sciences in the entire country.
- With 101 ICAR institutes and 71 agricultural universities spread across the country, this is one of the largest national agricultural systems in the world.
- The ICAR has played a pioneering role in ushering the Green Revolution and subsequent developments in agriculture in India through its research and technology development that has enabled the country to increase the production of food grains by 5.4 times, horticultural crops by 10.1 times, fish by 15.2 times, milk 9.7 times and eggs 48.1 times since 1951 to 2017, thus making a visible impact on the national food and nutritional security.
- It has played a major role in promoting excellence in higher education in agriculture.
- It is engaged in cutting edge areas of science and technology development and its scientists are internationally acknowledged in their fields.

## 4. Lifeline Udan

### Why in News?

- As part of India's war against COVID-19, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has launched "Lifeline Udan" flights for the movement of medical and essential supplies across the country and beyond.

### Highlights:

- Under this initiative, 62 Lifeline Udan flights have been operated for five days towards March 2020 end, transporting over 15.4 tons of essential medical supplies.
- The carriers involved in Lifeline Udan operations include Air India, Alliance Air, Indian Air Force (IAF) and Pawan Hans. Support is being provided by the Airports Authority of India (AAI), AAICLAS (cargo and logistics subsidiary of AAI), AI Airports Services (AIASL), PPP airports and private ground handling entities.

- Private airline and logistics players are also providing their services for medical cargo.
- The flights are being coordinated by a control room set up at the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) under the direct supervision of the MoCA leadership.
- The Lifeline Udan cargo includes COVID-19 related reagents, enzymes, medical equipment, testing kits, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), masks, gloves and other accessories required by personnel engaged in fighting the virus across the country.

## **5. India switches to BS VI Norms**

### **Why in News?**

- Despite the lockdown, India officially moved to a regime of tighter emission norms for motorised two- and four-wheelers.
- In 2016, the government had said India would directly progress from BS-IV norms to BS-VI, skipping the intermediary stage. Nearly 60,000 crore was spent on the switch-over to BS-VI fuels.

### **Highlights:**

- At fuel stations, only the low-sulphur fuel that complies with Bharat Stage-VI emission norms will be sold and so will cars at stores, whose engines meet the stricter norms.
- As per BS-VI emission norms, petrol vehicles will have to effect a 25% reduction in their NO<sub>x</sub>, or nitrogen oxide emissions.
- Diesel engines will have to reduce their HC+NO<sub>x</sub> (hydro carbon + nitrogen oxides) by 43%, their NO<sub>x</sub> levels by 68% and particulate matter levels by 82%. BS-VI petrol and diesel, which have sulphur content of just 10 parts per million, were set to be costlier by Rs. 1/litre each, but state-run oil firms decided to maintain the current prices by adjusting the levy against cheaper crude.
- The emission norms of all models of two-wheelers in India are ahead of Europe (2021) and Japan (2022), and India is the first country to adopt this level of Emission Norms.

### **Bharat Stage Emission Norms:**

- Bharat stage (BS) emission standards are laid down by the government to regulate the output of air pollutants from internal combustion engine and spark-ignition engine equipment, including motor vehicles.

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- The first emission norms were introduced in India in 1991 for petrol and in 1992 for diesel vehicles. Followed these, the catalytic converter became mandatory for petrol vehicles and unleaded petrol was introduced in the market.
  - The standards and the timeline for implementation are set by the Central Pollution Control Board under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
  - Compared to the BS4, BS6 emission standards are stricter. Whereas makers use this variation to update their vehicles with new options and safety standards, the biggest modification comes in the permissible emission norms.

