

1. Eight Core Industries

Why in News?

- The output of Eight Core Industries grew at 3.1 %, the slowest pace in eight months in November, indicating slowing momentum in the Indian economy.

Highlights:

- The Eight core sectors are Coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertiliser, steel, cement and electricity.
- These comprise 40.27% of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP). Barring crude oil and cement, all other sectors recorded positive growth.
- The eight core sector industries in decreasing order of their weightage: Refinery Products > Electricity > Steel > Coal > Crude Oil > Natural Gas > Cement > Fertilizers.
- IIP is an indicator that measures the changes in the volume of production of industrial products during a given period.
- It is compiled and published monthly by the Central Statistical Organization (CSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- It is a composite indicator that measures the growth rate of industry groups .
 - ✓ These are the classified group sBroad sectors, namely, Mining, Manufacturing, and Electricity.
 - ✓ Use-based sectors, namely Basic Goods, Capital Goods, and Intermediate Goods.
 - ✓ The Base Year for IIP is 2011-2012.
- It is used by government agencies including the Ministry of Finance, the Reserve Bank of India, etc, for policy-making purposes.
- IIP remains extremely relevant for the calculation of the quarterly and advance GDP (Gross Domestic Product) Estimates.

2. One Nation-One Grid-One Frequency

Why in News?

- The Power Grid Corp. of India Ltd (PGCIL) has recently celebrated the anniversary of operationalization of One Nation-One Grid-One Frequency i.e National Grid.

Highlights:

- The National Grid Management on a Regional Basis started in the sixties.

- The Indian Power system for planning and operational purposes is divided into five regional grids.
- The integration of regional grids, and thereby establishment of National Grid, was conceptualised in the early nineties.
- Initially, State grids were interconnected to form a regional grid and India was demarcated into 5 regions namely Northern, Eastern, Western, North Eastern and Southern region.
- In 1991 North Eastern and Eastern grids were connected. Further, in 2003, Western region grid was connected with it.
- In August 2006 North and East grids were interconnected thereby 4 regional grids are synchronously connected forming a central grid operating at one frequency.
- On 31st December 2013, the southern Region was connected to the Central Grid. Thereby achieving 'One Nation, One Grid, One Frequency'.
- All possible measures are taken to ensure that the grid frequency always remains within the 49.90-50.05 Hz (hertz) band.
- Presently, the country has a total inter-regional transmission capacity of about 1,12,250 MW which is expected to be enhanced to about 1,18,740 MW by 2022
- Matching Demand-Supply: Synchronisation of all regional grids will help in optimal utilization of scarce natural resources by transfer of Power from Resource centric regions to Load Centric Regions.
- Development of Electricity Market: Further, this shall pave the way for establishment of a vibrant Electricity market facilitating trading of power across regions.

3. Faecal sludge and septage management in urban areas, Service and business models, by 2021

Why in News?

- According to the NITI Aayog report Faecal sludge and septage management in urban areas, Service and business models, by 2021 more than 700 cities / towns are in various stages of Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM) implementation.

Highlights:

- India has recognized the gaps in sanitation coverage and embarked purposefully to address them, becoming one of the first countries to announce a national policy on FSSM in 2017.

- FSSM prioritizes human excreta management, a waste stream with the highest potential for spreading diseases.
- It is a low-cost and easily scalable sanitation solution that focuses on safe collection, transportation, treatment, and reuse of human waste.
- As a result, FSSM promises a means to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) target 6.2 of adequate and inclusive sanitation for all in a time bound manner.
- According to the latest report of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) in India are able to treat a little more than a third of the sewage generated per day.
- India generated 72,368 MLD (million litres per day) whereas the installed capacity of STPs was 31,841 MLD (43.9%).
- 5 states and Union Territories (UT) – Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Karnataka – account for 60% of the total installed treatment capacity of the country.
- Absence of segregation of waste at source.
- Lack of funds for waste management at Urban Local Bodies (ULB).
- Lack of technical expertise and appropriate institutional arrangement.
- Unwillingness of ULBs to introduce proper collection, segregation, transportation and treatment/disposal systems.
- Indifference of citizens towards waste management due to lack of awareness.
- Lack of community participation towards waste management and hygienic condition

4. China Issues 'official' names for 15 places in Arunachal Pradesh

Why in News?

- China's Ministry of Civil Affairs has issued standardized names for 15 places in the Indian State of Arunachal Pradesh, to be used henceforth on official Chinese maps.

MEA clarification:

- The Ministry of External Affairs has dismissed the Chinese "invention".
- Arunachal Pradesh has always been, and will always be, an integral part of India, said MEA.

Why is China giving Names to places that are in India?

- China claims some 90,000 sq km of Arunachal Pradesh as its territory.

- It calls the area “Zangnan” in the Chinese language and makes repeated references to “South Tibet”.
- Chinese maps show Arunachal Pradesh as part of China, and sometimes parenthetically refer to it as “so-called Arunachal Pradesh”.
- China makes periodic efforts to underline this unilateral claim to Indian territory.
- Giving Chinese names to places in Arunachal Pradesh is part of that effort.

Earlier Unilateral Renamings:

- This is the second lot of “**Standardized**” names of places in Arunachal Pradesh that China has Announced.
- Earlier in 2017, it had issued “official” Chinese names for six places spanning the breadth of Arunachal Pradesh

What is China’s Argument for Claiming these Areas?

- The PRC disputes the legal status of the McMahon Line, the official boundary under the ‘Convention Between Great Britain, China, and Tibet’ – of 1914 (Simla Convention).
- China was represented at the Simla Convention by a plenipotentiary of the Republic of China, which had been declared in 1912 after the Qing dynasty was overthrown.
- The present Communist government came to power only in 1949, when the People’s Republic was Proclaimed.
- The Chinese representative did not consent to the Simla Convention, saying Tibet had no independent authority to enter into international agreements.

What is the McMohan Line?

- The McMohan Line, named after Henry McMahon, the chief British negotiator at Shimla, was drawn from the eastern border of Bhutan to the Isu Razi pass on the China-Myanmar border.
- China claims territory to the south of the McMahon Line, lying in Arunachal Pradesh.
- China also bases its claims on the historical ties that have existed between the monasteries in Tawang and Lhasa.

Intention behind these Renaming’s:

- This renaming is a part of the Chinese strategy to assert its territorial claims over Indian territory.
- As part of this strategy, China routinely issues statements of outrage whenever an Indian dignitary visits Arunachal Pradesh.

- Beijing keeps harping on its “consistent” and “clear” position that the Indian possession of Arunachal Pradesh.
- These claims have been firmly established and recognized by the world, as “illegal”.

Arunachal not all-alone:

- Laying aggressive claims to territories on the basis of alleged historical injustices done to China is a part of Beijing’s foreign policy playbook.
- The claim on Taiwan is one such example, as are the consistent efforts to change the “facts on the ground” in several disputed islands in the South China Sea.
- The aggression is at all times backed in overt and covert ways by the use of China’s economic and military muscle.

5. Chisumle- Demchok: Worlds’ Highest Motorable Road

Why in News?

- Ladakh’s Chisumle-Demchok Road, when it crosses the Umling Pass, is now the world’s highest motorable road.

Chisumle- Demchok Road:

- The project to build the road through the pass — a part of Border Roads Organization (BRO) Project Himank — had been completed in 2017, after which vehicles had started playing on the route.
- The road is in south Ladakh. It passes through Umling La Pass, which is at a height of over 19,000 feet.
- The height of the pass makes it the highest motorable road in the world, and was recently recognized as such by Guinness World Records.
- The 52-km road ‘black-top’ tarmac road from Chisumle to Demchok betters the previous record of a road in Bolivia, which connects the volcano Uturuncu at 18,953 feet.
- The road was built under extremely challenging conditions, as temperatures in the region can fall to below minus 40 degrees Celsius, and oxygen levels go down to 50 per cent below normal.

Top of the world:

- At the pass, the road is higher than both the base camps for the climb to Mount Everest, the world’s highest mountain.

- The South Base Camp in Nepal is at a height of 17,598 ft, while North Base Camp in Tibet is at 16,900 ft.
- The Chisumle-Demchok road is also higher than the Siachen Glacier, which is situated at 17,700 feet.
- Khardung La in Leh, which at one time was among the highest roads in the world, is at an altitude of 17,582 feet.

Military Significance of the Road:

- This road provides a direct route from Chisumle, which lies on the major road coming from Leh, Karu and Nyoma.
- All of these stations have important military stations which are close to the Line of Actual Control.
- Demchok has been an India-China flashpoint earlier, the site of a standoff between the two armies in 2016.
- In the current standoff in eastern Ladakh, which began in May 2020, Demchok has come up as a point of contention.

Other benefits offered:

- The new axis will be helpful for the armed forces, making it easier to mobilize troops and equipment, Including Rations.
- The road will not only enable faster movement of armed forces to the region but will also boost tourism and improve the socio-economic condition of the local people in the region.

Certain Limitations:

- Since the road goes through such a high pass, road transport will be unfeasible during the winter, when the armed forces rely on air support.