



## News Analysis (23 Dec, 2019)

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### Discom Losses and UDAY Scheme

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#### Why in News

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Distribution Companies' (Discom) losses, which had progressively reduced in the first couple of years since the rollout of Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana (UDAY) in November 2015, have rebounded in the financial year 2019.

- Book losses of discoms reduced from Rs 51,562 crore in the financial year 2016 to Rs 15,132 crore in 2018. However, the losses in 2019 have nearly doubled to Rs 28,036 crore vis-a-vis 2018. This points that discoms are lagging behind in eliminating the **ACS-ARR gap** (the gap between Average Cost of Supply and Average Revenue Realised).
- Discoms have also missed the year 2019 UDAY target to bring down their **Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C)** losses to 15%.
- The primary reason is the failure of discoms to collect the full cost that they pay for power — the same issue that had led to the floundering of the previous two schemes - **Accelerated Power Development and Reforms Programme (APDRP)** and **Restructured APDRP (R-APDRP)**.

#### **Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) Losses**

##### **It has two components**

- **Technical Loss:** It is due to the flow of power in transmission and distribution system.
- **Commercial Loss:** It is due to theft of electricity, deficiencies in metering, etc.

### UDAY Scheme

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- The Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana (UDAY) was launched by the **Ministry of Power in November 2015** to help turn around the poor financial situation of state discoms.
- **Critical Components**
  - Takeover of 75% of discom debt by state governments,
  - Reduction in AT&C losses,
  - Timely tariff revisions and elimination of the gap between the Average Cost of Supply (ACS) and Average Revenue Realised (ARR) by the financial year 2019.
- It also envisages development of renewable energy sector and availability of 24\*7 Power For All at an affordable price.
- There are several other operational efficiency targets under UDAY, such as feeder metering, smart metering and feeder segregation etc.
- The Scheme will wind up in March 2020.

**Source: IE**

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## UNCLOS Maritime Zones

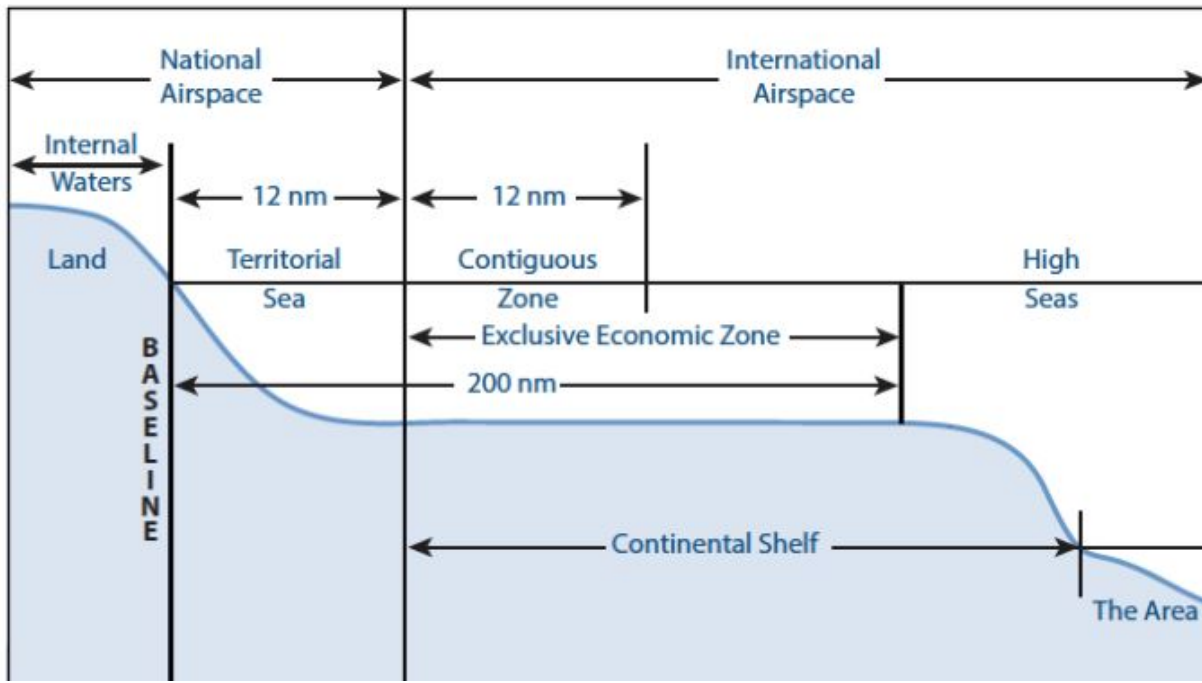
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**United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982, also known as Law of the Sea** divides marine areas into **five** main zones namely- **Internal Waters, Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the High Seas.**

- UNCLOS is the **only international convention** which stipulates a framework for state jurisdiction in maritime spaces. It provides **a different legal status to different maritime zones.**
- It provides the backbone for offshore governance by coastal states and those navigating the oceans. It not only zones coastal states' offshore areas but also provides specific guidance for states' rights and responsibilities in the five concentric zones.

## Maritime Zones

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- **Baseline:**

It is the low-water line along the coast as officially recognized by the coastal state.

- **Internal Waters:**

- Internal waters are waters on the **landward side** of the baseline from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured.
- Each coastal state has **full sovereignty over its internal waters** as like its land territory. Examples of internal waters include bays, ports, inlets, rivers and even lakes that are connected to the sea.
- There is **no right of innocent passage** through internal waters.
 

The innocent passage refers to the passing through the waters which are not prejudicial to peace and security. However, the nations have the right to suspend the same.

- **Territorial Sea:**

- The territorial sea extends **seaward up to 12 nautical miles (nm)** from its baselines.

A nautical mile is based on the circumference of the earth and is **equal to one minute of latitude**. It is slightly more than a land measured mile (**1 nautical mile = 1.1508 land miles or 1.85 km**).

- The coastal states have **sovereignty and jurisdiction over the territorial sea**. These rights extend not only on the **surface but also to the seabed, subsoil, and even airspace**.
- But the coastal states' rights are **limited** by the **innocent passage** through the territorial sea.

- **Contiguous Zone:**
  - The contiguous zone extends **seaward up to 24 nm from its baselines**.
  - It is an **intermediary zone** between the territorial sea and the high seas.
  - The coastal state has the right to both prevent and punish infringement of fiscal, immigration, sanitary, and customs laws within its territory and territorial sea.
  - Unlike the territorial sea, the contiguous zone **only gives jurisdiction to a state on the ocean's surface and floor**. It **does not provide air and space rights**.
- **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ):**
  - Each coastal State may claim an EEZ beyond and adjacent to its territorial sea that extends **seaward up to 200 nm from its baselines**.
  - Within its EEZ, a coastal state has:
    - Sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring, exploiting, conserving and managing natural resources, whether living or nonliving, of the seabed and subsoil.
    - Rights to carry out activities like the production of energy from the water, currents and wind.
  - Unlike the territorial sea and the contiguous zone, the EEZ **only allows for the above-mentioned resource rights**. It **does not give** a coastal state the **right to prohibit or limit freedom of navigation or overflight**, subject to very limited exceptions.
- **High Seas:**
  - The ocean surface and the water column beyond the EEZ are referred to as the high seas.
  - It is considered as "the common heritage of all mankind" and is beyond any national jurisdiction.
  - States can conduct activities in these areas as long as they are for peaceful purposes, such as transit, marine science, and undersea exploration.

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## Assessment of Plastics Along the West Coast of India

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### Why in News

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Recently, **National Institute of Oceanography (NIO)** conducted a study which states that beaches in Maharashtra are more polluted with microplastics and macroplastics than those in Goa and Karnataka.

The study is titled '**Assessment of macro and micro plastics along the west coast of India: abundance, distribution, polymer type and toxicity**'.

### Key Points

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- The assessment of **macro and microplastic contamination** was conducted for two years on 10 beaches along the western coast of India and their toxic effects on marine organisms.  
Plastics **less than five millimeters** in length are called '**microplastics**' and the relatively larger particles, of **more than five millimeters**, are classified as '**macroplastics**'.
- **Reasons for Pollution:** Land-based contaminants coming from near shore plastic industries, port areas, petroleum industries and high tourism activities.
- **Recommendations:** The government should frame policies to **shun single-use plastic**, increase its recycling and also conduct community awareness programmes to prevent the marine environment from being affected by plastic contaminants.

### **National Institute of Oceanography**

- It is a **multi-disciplinary oceanographic research institute** and is one of the constituent laboratories of the **Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), New Delhi**.
- Its **headquarter** is at **Dona Paula, Goa** with **regional centres** at **Kochi** (Kerala), **Mumbai** (Maharashtra) and **Visakhapatnam** (Andhra Pradesh).
- It was **established on 1 January 1966** following the **International Indian Ocean Expedition (IIOE)** in the 1960s.
- The **principal focus** of research has been on observing and understanding special oceanographic characteristics of the Indian Ocean.
- The major research areas include the **four traditional branches of oceanography - biological, chemical, geological/geophysical and physical**, as well as ocean engineering, marine instrumentation and marine archaeology.

### **International Indian Ocean Expedition**

- During years **1962-1965**, it was one of the greatest international, interdisciplinary oceanographic research efforts to explore Indian Ocean in which 40 oceanographic research vessels belonging to 13 countries surveyed the Indian Ocean and collected useful data in almost all disciplines in the marine sciences.
- This was **one of the first coordinated efforts** to explore the Indian Ocean.
- The **Second International Indian Ocean Expedition (IIOE-2)**, for the period of **2015-2020**, is a major global scientific program which will reveal new information on the Indian Ocean which is fundamental for future sustainable development and expansion of the Indian Ocean's **blue economy**.

**Source: BS**

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## Why in News

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Recently, the '**Nagpur Resolution- A Holistic Approach for Empowering Citizens**' was adopted during the session on '**Improving Public Service Delivery – Role of Governments**', in Nagpur, Maharashtra.

- The conference was organised by the **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Government of India**, in collaboration with the Government of **Maharashtra and the Maharashtra State Commission for Right to Public Services**.
- The emphasis of the government is on **Minimum Government, Maximum Governance** to **promote transparency, citizen centricity and participation**.
- For **good governance, Shillong Declaration** and Jammu Resolution have been adopted earlier.

DARPG organised the conference in Jammu after the **formation of J&K and Ladakh as Union Territories**.

## Nagpur Resolution: A Holistic Approach for Empowering Citizens

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The Conference resolved that Government of India and the Government of Maharashtra shall collaborate to-

- **Better Service Delivery:** To empower the citizens by policy interventions for better service delivery through timely updation of citizens charters, implementation of enactments and benchmarking standards for continuous improvement.
- **Grievance Redressal:** To adopt a holistic approach of systemic public grievance reforms through improved mapping, formulation of monitoring matrix, data collection and evaluation in quality of grievance redressal. To empower citizens by adopting a bottom-up approach to bring massive improvements in quality of grievance redressal and reduction in timelines of it.
- **Use of Technology:** To provide an enabling environment for States and Ministries/ Departments of the Government of India for creating web portals and to adopt a holistic approach for improved service delivery through digital platforms.
- **Dynamic Policy Making:** To focus on dynamic policy making and strategic decisions, monitoring of implementation, appointment of key personnel, coordination and evaluation.
- **Exchange of Technical Expertise:** To achieve a sense of common identity by exchange of technical expertise in the areas of Improved Service Delivery between the paired States under the **Ek Bharat – Shreshtha Bharat Program**.
- **Good Governance Index:** To ensure timely publication of Good Governance Index to identify the quality of governance in 10 sectors especially those pertaining to welfare and infrastructure at the Union, State and District levels.

**Source: PIB**

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## Arunachal to Mark Schools as 'Hard' and 'Soft'

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### Why in News

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Arunachal Pradesh has launched **Teachers' Transfer & Posting Policy, 2020**, for ensuring need-based distribution of teachers to protect the academic interest of students and optimise job satisfaction among the teachers in a free and transparent manner.

### Key Points

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- **Categorisation of Schools:**

Under the policy, all government schools will be divided into **three** categories — **hard, medium and soft** — based on **topography, accessibility and degrees of difficulty in staying** at the place of posting.

- **Hard Schools:**

- It includes areas with **difficult accessibility and topography**.
- All **new recruits** will be given a hard posting for a **mandatory three years**, inclusive of their probation period.

- **Medium Schools:**

- It includes areas with **medium accessibility, connectivity and topography**.
- After completing hard schools phase the new teachers will be spending the **next five years** in schools with levels of medium difficulty.

- **Soft Schools:**

- It includes areas with easy accessibility and connectivity **majorly urban areas**.
- After completing hard and medium schools phase the teachers will be allotted soft schools.

- **Motto of the scheme:**

**Teacher absenteeism** has been a major issue across government schools in Arunachal Pradesh. The **student-teacher ratio** has consequently been **skewed in favour of urban centres** with **better connectivity**.

The state has been facing difficulties in posting teachers in remote areas where schools have adequate students, but hardly anyone to teach them.

- The policy also entails the **transfer of teachers through online requests**.

**Source: TH**

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## Spandana: An Andhra Pradesh Initiative

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### Why in News

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**Spandana**, an **Andhra Pradesh** Government initiative to make **police stations more approachable for the public, especially women**, is winning accolades and awards.

- Spandana (means response) centres have been established within the premises of all District Collector offices and police stations.
- These centres mostly have a female receptionist and other staff members who are trained, briefed and sensitised in handling women victims and complainants.



- There are two broad reasons why Spandana initiative has succeeded:
  - One is the **use of technology**. With Spandana centres spread across the district, each having video conferencing facility, it is easier and cheaper for people to lodge complaints. They no longer have to travel to the district headquarters to follow up.
  - The second reason is the **special attention to women complainants**.

**Source: IE**

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## Kisan Diwas

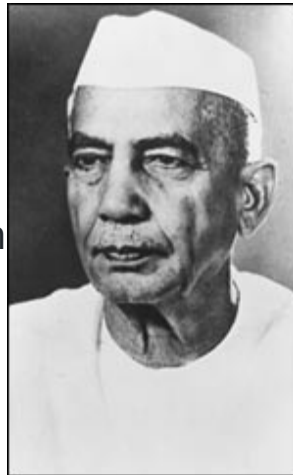
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### Why in News

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The 'Kisan Diwas' or National Farmers Day is observed across the country on **23<sup>rd</sup> December** to celebrate the birth anniversary of **Chaudhary Charan Singh**, the former Prime Minister of India.

- It is celebrated to promote awareness among the citizens to understand the importance of the contributions of the farmers to the society and overall economic and social development of a country.
- Government also aims to encourage the farmers across the country by organizing various activities like debates and seminars on agriculture.



Chaudhary Charan Singh

- He was born in **1902** at Noorpur in **Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh** and was the Prime Minister of India from 28 July 1979 to 14 January 1980.
- Being a **proponent of rural and agricultural development** he made continuous efforts for keeping agriculture at the centre of planning for India.
- He took a leading part in formulation and finalisation of the **Debt Redemption Bill 1939**, in order to give relief to the peasantry from moneylenders.

- He was instrumental in bringing about the **Land Holding Act, 1960** which was aimed at lowering the ceiling on land holdings to make it uniform throughout the State.
- He was the **author of several books and pamphlets**, including 'Abolition of Zamindari', 'Co-operative Farming X-rayed', 'India's Poverty and its Solution', 'Peasant Proprietorship or Land to the Workers' and 'Prevention of Division of Holdings Below a Certain Minimum'.

**Source: IE**

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## Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

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### Why in News

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The Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has criticised Government of India over the **Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019**, and the **Babri Masjid** verdict of the Supreme Court.

### Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

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- The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the **second largest intergovernmental organization** after the **United Nations** with a membership of 57 states.
- It is the **collective voice of the Muslim world**. It endeavors to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world.
- It was established upon a decision of the historical summit which took place in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco on the 25<sup>th</sup> of September 1969.
- **Headquarters:** Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.
- **India is not a member of the OIC.** However, India was invited as a guest of honour at **46<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council of Foreign Minister** in 2019. 2019 is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of OIC.

**Source: TH**

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### Hunar Haat

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### Why in News

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Recently, the Governor of Maharashtra inaugurated a Hunar Haat in Mumbai.

- Hunar Haat is an **exhibition of handicrafts and traditional products** made by artisans from the **minority communities**.
- These are organised by **the Ministry of Minority Affairs** under **USTTAD (Upgrading the Skills & Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development)** scheme.

The USTTAD scheme aims to promote and preserve the **rich heritage of the traditional arts & crafts of the minority communities**.

- These Haat aim to **provide market exposure and employment opportunities** to artisans, craftsmen and traditional culinary experts.
- It envisages boosting the skills of craftsmen, weavers and artisans who are already engaged in the traditional ancestral work.
- 'Hunar Haat' has proved to be **"Empowerment Exchange"** for master artisans and craftsmen.
- The next 'Hunar Haat' will be organised at Lucknow from 10th to 20th January 2020.

**Source: PIB**

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