



News Analysis (24 Jan, 2020)

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Corruption Perceptions Index 2019: Transparency International

Why in News

India's ranking in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI-2019) has slipped from 78 to 80 compared to the year **2018**.

- The 2019 CPI draws on 13 surveys and expert assessments to measure public sector corruption in **180 countries and territories**, giving each a score from **zero (highly corrupt)** to **100 (very clean)**.
- **First** launched in **1995** by the Transparency International, the Index has been widely credited with putting the issue of corruption on the international policy agenda.
- **Transparency International** is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation dedicated to fighting corruption. It was founded in **1993** and is based in **Berlin, Germany**.

CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX 2019



Watch Video At:

<https://youtu.be/xBYLnMCWqiA>

Status check

The Corruption Perceptions Index uses a scale of zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). The global average for 2019 is 43

| Country | Score in 2019 | Rank in 2019 | Change in rank from '18 |
|-------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Denmark | 87 | 1 | 0 |
| New Zealand | 87 | 1 | 1 |
| U.K. | 77 | 12 | -1 |
| U.S. | 69 | 23 | -1 |
| India | 41 | 80 | -2 |
| China | 41 | 80 | 7 |
| Brazil | 35 | 106 | -1 |
| Pakistan | 32 | 120 | -3 |
| Russia | 28 | 137 | 1 |
| Bangladesh | 26 | 146 | 3 |
| Somalia | 9 | 180 | 0 |

Key Points

- **Global Status**

- A majority of countries are showing **little to no improvement in tackling corruption**.
 - In the last eight years, only 22 countries significantly improved their CPI scores, including Greece, Guyana and Estonia. In the same period, among the 21 countries that saw a significant fall in their scores are Canada, Australia and Nicaragua.
 - In the remaining 137 countries, the levels of corruption show little to no change.
- Corruption is more pervasive in countries where money can flow freely into electoral campaigns and where governments only listen to the voices of wealthy or well-connected individuals.
- The vibrant economic powers like China (41), Indonesia (40), Vietnam (37), the Philippines (34) and others continue to struggle to tackle corruption. The **reasons include** keeping decision-making out of public scrutiny and silencing dissenting voices.

- **Top Rankers**

New Zealand and Denmark, with scores of 87 each, followed by Finland (86), Singapore (85), Sweden (85) and Switzerland (85).

- **Bottom Rankers**

The countries ranked at the bottom of the list are Somalia, South Sudan and Syria with scores of 9, 12 and 13 respectively.

- **Asia-Pacific Region**

- In 2019 Index, the **average score is 45** (marginally better than the **global average of 43**), after many consecutive years of an average score of 44, which **“illustrates general stagnation”** across the region.
- Despite the presence of high performers like New Zealand (87), Singapore (85), Australia (77), Hong Kong (76) and Japan (73), the Asia Pacific region hasn't witnessed substantial progress in anti-corruption efforts or results.
- Low performers like Afghanistan (16), North Korea (17) and Cambodia (20) continue to highlight serious challenges in the region.
- **China has improved its position** from 87 to 80 with a score of 41 out of 100 (same as that of India).

- **India's Performance**

- **India's score of 41 out of 100 remains the same as that in 2018.** It has been **ranked at number 80**.
- In democracies like India, unfair and opaque political financing, undue influence in decision-making and lobbying by powerful corporate interest groups, has resulted in stagnation or decline in the control of corruption.

Way Forward

Transparency International has recommended a series of measures to combat rising corruption across the world. Following are the recommendations:

- Manage **conflicts of interest**.
- Control political financing.
- Strengthen electoral integrity.
- Regulate lobbying **activities**.
- Empower citizens.
- Tackle preferential treatment.
- Reinforce checks and balances.

Source: TH

India Helps Maldives Tackle Measles

Why in News

India has helped the Maldives in tackling measles outbreak by providing over 30,000 doses of **Measles and Rubella (MR) vaccine**.

- The outbreak comes less than three years after the **World Health Organisation (WHO)** declared the Maldives **measles-free** in 2017.
- The Maldives presented a **certificate of appreciation** to the Government of India for the **“gesture of goodwill and solidarity”**.

Key Points

- It is an important step towards strengthening **India-Maldives relations**.
- Both the countries signed a Memorandum of **Understanding (MoU) on Health cooperation** in **June 2019**.

The MoU draws a roadmap for cooperation in capacity building and training of doctors and medical professionals, disease surveillance, training of mental health professionals, setting up of digital health capacities in the Maldives.
- India is also helping the Maldives in building a **100-bed Cancer Hospital in Hulhumale** as part of its **\$800 million Line of Credit**.
- Both India and the Maldives are the members of the WHO's **Regional Committee for South-East Asia**.

Measles

- It is a **highly contagious viral disease** and is a cause of death among young children globally.

- It can cause serious complications, including **blindness, encephalitis, severe diarrhoea, ear infection and pneumonia.**

Rubella

- It is also called **German Measles.**
- Rubella is a **contagious**, generally mild viral infection that occurs most often in children and young adults.
- Rubella infection in **pregnant women may cause fetal death or congenital defects** known as **Congenital Rubella Syndrome (CRS)**. CRS causes irreversible birth defects.

Measles and Rubella Vaccine

- Measles and Rubella are **caused by different viruses** but share more or less the **same symptoms, including the red rashes.**
- The **Measles & Rubella Initiative**, a global program, aims at eliminating both these diseases.
- The **vaccine for the diseases** are provided in the form of **Measles-Rubella (MR), Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR), or Measles-Mumps-Rubella-Varicella (MMRV)** combination.

Source: TH

NavIC in Mobiles

Why in News

Qualcomm Technologies has unveiled mobile chipsets supporting the Indian regional satellite navigation system - **NavIC (Navigation in Indian Constellation)**.

Users of such mobile chipsets will be able to use NavIC within the Indian region and neighbouring countries.

Key Points

- The release of chipsets will help accelerate the **adoption of NavIC by smartphone Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs)**. The OEMs can now release any new models for the Indian market which are NavIC enabled, thus eventually making NavIC as a standard feature in the upcoming handsets, applications, processors, etc.
OEM traditionally is defined as a company whose goods are used as components in the products of another company, which then sells the finished item to users.

- The availability of NavIC across multiple mobile platforms will help **enhance the geolocation capabilities of smartphones** in the region.
- **An Aid Against Crime:**
 - In April 2019, the government has made NavIC-based vehicle trackers **mandatory for all commercial vehicles** in the country in accordance with the **Nirbhaya case verdict**.
 - NavIC in mobiles will facilitate the implementation of a key mandate from the Nirbhaya case verdict which required the **installation of vehicle tracking systems** and **panic buttons in all commercial vehicles**.
 - NavIC is set to become the backbone of a public vehicle tracking system in India since it offers flexibility to local law enforcement agencies to **monitor vehicles** unlike international systems like the GPS (global positioning system).
- In addition to NavIC, these chipsets will also support the widely used **GNSS** (Global Navigation Satellite System)
 - GNSS includes USA's **GPS**, European Union's **Galileo**, Russia's **GLONASS** and China's **BeiDou** Navigation Satellite System for global coverage.

Navigation in Indian Constellation (NavIC)

- It has been developed by the **Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)**.
- The main objective is to provide reliable position, navigation and timing services over India and its neighbourhood
- Named after Indian fishermen and navigators, NavIC will provide two types of services-
 - **Standard Positioning Service (SPS)** is meant for the general public.
 - **Restricted Service (RS)** is an encrypted service meant for authorised users and agencies.
- Unlike the widely used GPS which includes 24 satellites, NavIC has **7 satellites** and their range is within India and its adjoining regions **extending up to 1,500 km from the country's border**.
- Technically satellite systems with more satellites provide more accurate positioning information. However, compared to GPS which has a position accuracy of 20-30 metres, the NavIC is able to pinpoint location to an estimated **accuracy of under 20 metres**.

Source: Mint

Freedom of Speech and Expression on Social Media

Why in News

The **High Court of Tripura** has held that posting on social media was virtually the same as a **fundamental right** applicable to all citizens, including government employees.

It also asserted that government servants are entitled to hold and express their political beliefs, subject to the restrictions laid under **the Tripura Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1988**.

Key Points

- In another significant judgement, the High Court of Tripura ordered the police to refrain from prosecuting the activist who was arrested over a social media post where he criticised online campaign in support of the **Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019** and warned people against it.
- The HC held that these orders are in line with the very essence of the Indian Constitution.

Other Recent Judgements

- The **Supreme Court of India** also gave judgement on the **internet shutdown and curbing of other civil liberties in the Jammu and Kashmir**. It upheld the Right to access the Internet and released guidelines on imposition of **section 144 of CrPC**.
- Recently, the **Kerala High Court**, in **Faheema Shirin v. the State of Kerala** case, declared the **Right to Internet Access** as a fundamental right, forming a part of the right to privacy and the right to education under **Article 21** of the Constitution.

Source: TH

Planting of Exotic Trees in Nilgiris is Harmful

Why in News

A local non-governmental organization (NGO) has proposed mass plantation of exotic trees in the **Nilgiris**.

- An exotic plant is a plant that has been introduced to an area from outside its native range, either purposefully or accidentally.
- Conservationists argue that plantation of exotic trees will have a huge impact on soil chemistry, wildlife and is harmful to the environment in the long term.

When exotics take root in a particular area, they **increase the water demand** in that region, impacting not just the Nilgiris but other districts further downstream that rely on rivers emanating from the hills. The same also has a **knock-on effect on wildlife**, resulting in their vacating the areas.

- One of the justifications offered for the introduction of exotic trees is that they lead to better soil stability of the slopes on which they are planted.
Conservationists however argue that the **roots of exotic trees are very shallow, and the trees get uprooted by high-velocity winds and heavy rain, which characterise the monsoons in the Nilgiris.**
- The government should come up with a policy that stipulates that only native flora should be planted in public spaces in the Nilgiris because of its ecological significance and its unique biodiversity.

Nilgiri Hills

- Western Ghats are locally known by different names such as Sahyadri in Maharashtra, Nilgiri hills in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu and Anaimalai hills and Cardamom hills in Kerala.
- The temperate forests are called Sholas in the Nilgiris, Anaimalai and Palani hills.
- The Sholas are found **only in high altitude** (>1500 meters) regions within the tropics and are limited to the southern part of the western ghats.
- They are characterized by **undulating grassland patches**, interspersed with thickets of stunted evergreen tree species, and are home to a **host of endemic and endangered plants and animals**. They are also vitally important in keeping water cycles alive.
- Shola tree species require a **lot of maintenance** post-planting to ensure their survival. Maintaining a Shola nursery is indeed very difficult as the trees are very slow in growing.

Source: TH

Rising CO2 Levels may Double Floods

Why in News

The report “**Impacts of Carbon Dioxide Emissions on Global Intense Hydro-meteorological Disasters**” has established a link between climate change and the rising incidence of hydro-meteorological events, specifically floods and storms across the world.

- The report has collected climate data from 155 countries over 46 years (1970 to 2016).
- The analysis is based on **econometric modelling** which involves accounting for a country's vulnerability to hazards, its Gross Domestic Product (GDP), population density and changes in mean rainfall.

Key Findings

- The number of **intense** “hydro-meteorological” disasters could **increase by 5.4% annually** for an average country facing annually nearly **one “extreme disaster”**.
 - Hydrometeorological disasters include **floods, droughts, hurricanes**, tornadoes, **landslides**, etc.
 - Extreme disaster is termed as one that causes 100 or more fatalities and/or affects 1,000 or more people).
- The risk of extreme floods or storms **could double every 13 years at the rate carbon-dioxide concentrations** are building up in the atmosphere.

The yearly increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide has been about 2.4 parts per million or about 0.6 % from the base 396.5 ppm level for 2010 to 2016.
- India faces 5-10 times more risk for extreme disaster being an average country.

Source: TH

Sagarmatha Sambaad

Why in News

Nepal has invited the Prime Minister of India to Sagarmatha Sambaad.

Besides many global figures, the event draws all the **South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) leaders**. Thus, it **provides an opportunity to break the ice between India and Pakistan**.

Key Points

- Sagarmatha Sambaad is an initiative of the **Government of Nepal** to host a **permanent biennial global dialogue** starting from 2020.

It is **expected to be the biggest diplomatic initiative** in Nepal’s recent history.
- It was established in **2019** and is headquartered in **Kathmandu (Nepal)**.
- The Sambaad (dialogue) is named after the **world’s tallest mountain Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest)** which is also a **symbol of friendship** and is meant to promote the notions of the common good and collective well-being of humanity.
- It is a **multi-stakeholder dialogue** forum committed to deliberate on the most prominent issues of **global, regional and national significance**.
- The **first edition** of Sagarmatha Sambaad will be held in **Kathmandu from 2 to 4 April 2020** featuring the **theme ‘Climate Change, Mountains and the Future of Humanity’**.

Source: TH

Karwar Port

Why in News

Recently, the High Court of Karnataka has directed the State government to stop all the developmental activities being undertaken at Karwar port under the **Sagarmala project**.

Key points

- Karwar is located in Uttara Kannada district at the Southern side of the **Kali River**.
- It is the **only all-weather natural port** out of 10 minor ports of Karnataka.
- It is sandwiched between the Arabian sea on one side and the Western Ghats on the other.
- It is known as **Kashmir of Karnataka** as it is blessed with a wide variety of flora and fauna.

Sagarmala Project

- Sagarmala project was approved by the Union Cabinet in 2015 which aims at holistic port infrastructure development along the 7,516-km long coastline through modernisation, mechanisation and computerisation.
- Under this project, port-led development framework government hopes to increase its cargo traffic three-fold.
- It also includes the establishment of rail/road linkages with the port terminals, thus providing last-mile connectivity to ports; development of linkages with new regions enhanced multi-modal connectivity including rail, inland water, coastal and road services.

Source: TH

Ophichthus Kailashchandrai: Snake Eel

Why in News

A new snake eel species residing in the Bay of Bengal has been discovered by the Estuarine Biology Regional Centre (EBRC) at Gopalpur in Odisha.

The discovery of the new species suggests that the marine biodiversity of the long Indian coastline is considerably unexplored.

Key Points



- The new marine species has been named as **Ophichthus kailashchandrai** to honour the vast contributions of Dr Kailash Chandra (Director of Zoological Survey of India) to Indian animal taxonomy.
It is the **eighth species** of the **Ophichthus genus** found on the Indian coast.
- It lives at a **depth of around 50 metres** in the sea.
- It is **420 mm to 462 mm in length** and **light brown** in colour, with white fins. The outer surface of their bodies is slimy but they are **not poisonous**.
- Their teeth are moderately elongated, conical and sharp and thus they feed on small fish and crabs.

Estuarine Biology Regional Centre (EBRC)

- Estuarine Biology Regional Centre (EBRC) **at Gopalpur on-sea Odisha** is one of the 16 **regional centres of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)**.
- It was established in 1980 under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- The main objective of the Centre is to conduct surveys, explorations and research on the faunal diversity of estuaries, backwaters, lagoons and mangrove ecosystem of India.

Source: TH
