

## 1. Probe-free detection assay

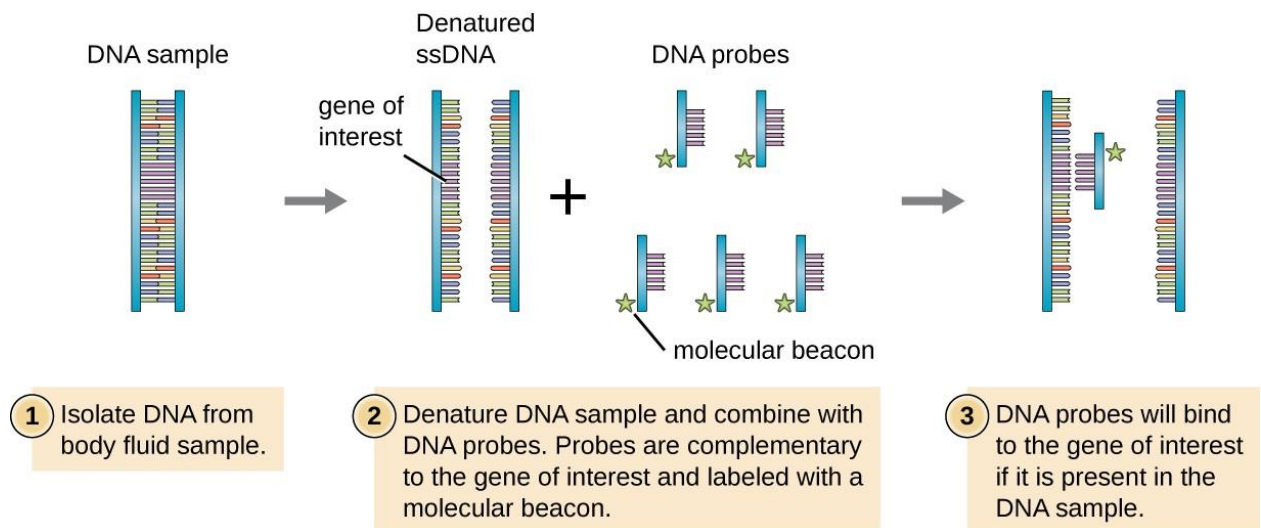
### Why in news?

- Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology here have developed a method called **Probe-free detection assay** to detect COVID-19.
- The **National Institute of Virology, Pune**, is in the process of validating this test on clinical samples.

### What is a probe?

- **Probes** are **complimentary to the gene of interest** and labeled with a molecular beacon.
- A probe is a **single-stranded sequence of DNA or RNA** used to search for its complimentary sequence in a sample genome.
- A probe is generally labelled with a **radioactive or chemical tag** that allows its binding to be visualized.

Therefore, in case of COVID-19 detection, 'Probe-free detection assay' has been developed.



### How will it benefit?

- Probe-free detection assay method will significantly reduce the test cost.
- This initiative will make the test toolkit for detection of COVID-19 affordable for large sections.
- Large clusters of society where the outbreak has taken place can be detected.

### What tests are performed presently?

- Currently, the government of India has allowed private laboratories with NABL accreditation to carry out the tests for real-time PCR SA for RNA virus to conduct COVID-19 tests.
- These tests are in line with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) guidelines.

### About ICMR

- The Indian Council of Medical Research is the apex body in India for the formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical research.
- The institute is one of the oldest and largest medical research bodies in the world.

### **About the National Institute of Virology**

- The National Institute of Virology, Pune is an Indian Virology Research Institute.
- It is one of the translational science cells part of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).
- Previously it was known as 'Virus Research Center' and was founded in collaboration with the Rockefeller Foundation.
- It has been designated as a WHO H5 reference laboratory for South East Asia region.

**Note:** The WHO H5 Reference Laboratory Network was established, as an ad hoc component of the WHO. Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS), in response to the public health needs arising from avian influenza A(H5N1) infection in humans and influenza pandemic preparedness.

### **Topic- GS Paper 3–Science and Technology**

**Source- The Hindu**

## **2. Resolution for removal of 'socialism' from Constitution**

### **Why in news?**

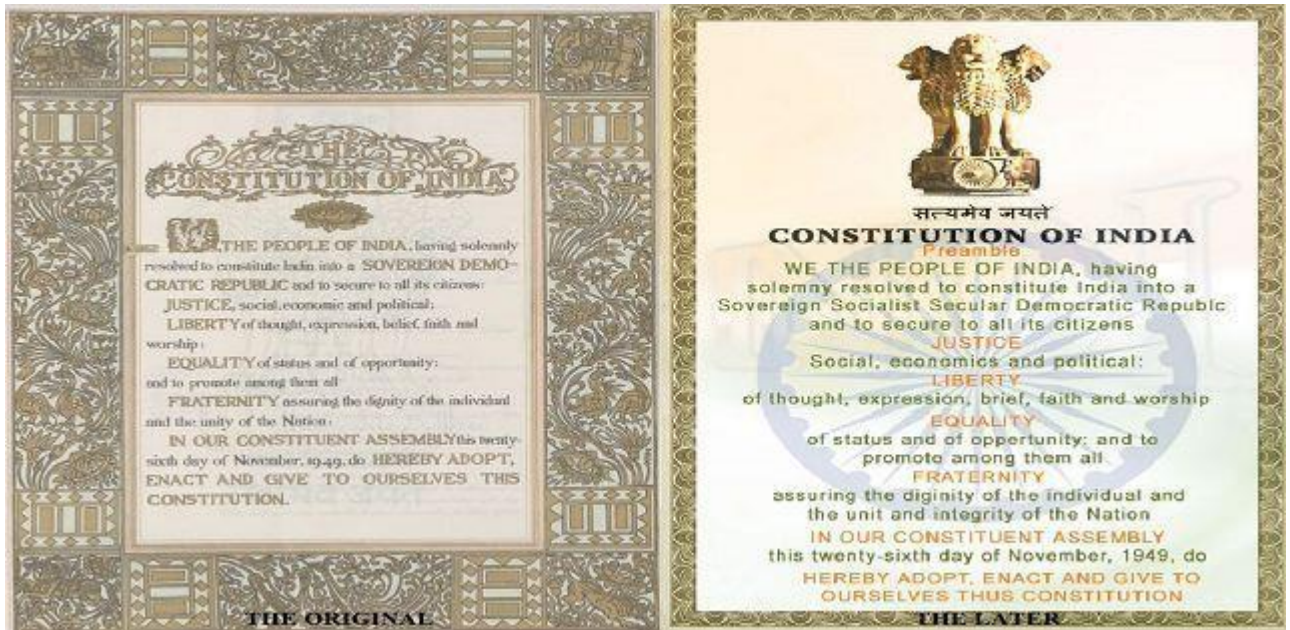
Recently a member of the Rajya Sabha, Rakesh Sinha has issued a notice to the Chairman to move a resolution to move in the House. The resolution is sought the removal of the phrase "socialism" from the preamble of the Constitution.

### **What the resolution about?**

- The resolution aims to remove the word 'socialism' as the member finds it redundant in the current scenario.
- He wants to create a space for 'economic thinking' by dropping the word 'socialism'.

### **Preamble as of now**

- The preamble of Constitution declares India to be a sovereign, socialist, secular and democratic republic.
- The terms 'socialist' and 'secular' had been inserted in the preamble by the 42<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Act, 1976 which was passed during the Emergency.



### What does socialist emphasize?

'Socialist' means the achievement of socialist ends through democratic means.

- It is basically a 'Democratic Socialism' that holds faith in a mixed economy where both private and public sectors co-exist side by side.
- The Indian brand of socialism is a 'democratic socialism' and not a 'communistic socialism' (also known as 'state socialism') which involves the nationalization of all means of production and distribution and the abolition of private property.
- **Democratic socialism**, on the other hand, holds faith in a 'mixed economy' where both public and private sectors co-exist side by side.
- Democratic socialism aims to end poverty, ignorance, disease and inequality of opportunity.
- Indian socialism is a blend of Marxism and Gandhism, leaning heavily towards Gandhian socialism.

### Can preamble be amended?

- Yes. Supreme Court in Kesavnanda Bharti case, 1973 pronounced that the preamble is a part of the Constitution and the Parliament has full rights to amend the Preamble.
- The Preamble has been amended only once so far, in 1976, by the 42<sup>nd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act, which has added three new words— Socialist, Secular and Integrity—to the Preamble.

**Topic- GS Paper 2–Polity**

**Source- Indian Express**

### 3. V K Paul Committee

#### Why in news?

The **government of India** has recently constituted a high-level technical committee of **Public Health Experts** for **COVID-19** to guide the **prevention and control activities** in the country.

### **About the V K Paul Committee**

- It is a **twenty-one-member committee** headed by NITI Aayog member b.
- **Union Health Secretary and Director General Indian Council of Medical Research** is the Co-Chair.

### **Some additional information**



- Dr. V.K. Paul is an incumbent member of the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog).
- In NITI Aayog, he leads the Health and Nutrition verticals.
- Prof. Paul has recently been appointed as the **Chairman of The Board of Governors of Medical Council of India**.
- He has played a pivotal role in formulating the **POSHAN Abhiyaan** and the **Ayushman Bharat initiative**.
- Prior to the NITI Aayog, he has been a member of the faculty at the **All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi**.
- Dr. Paul is an **internationally renowned** paediatrician, academic, medical research and public health exponent.
- He was conferred the prestigious **Ihsan Dogramaci Family Health Foundation Prize** by **WHO** at the **2018 World Health Assembly**.

**Topic- GS Paper 2–health issue**

**Source- PIB**

### **4. Modified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMC 2.0) Scheme**

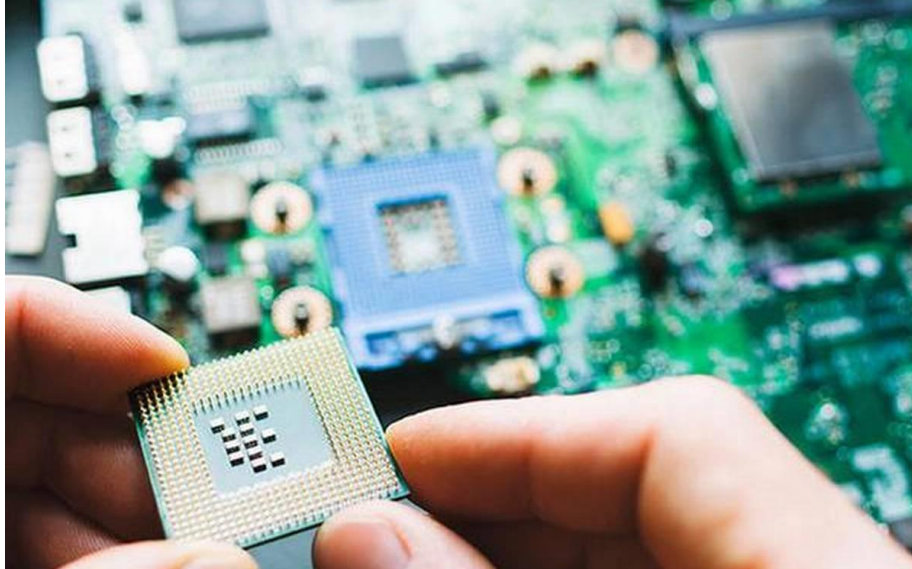
#### **Why in news?**

The Union Cabinet has approved financial assistance to the Modified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMC2.0) Scheme.

#### **Objective:**

- To develop the world class infrastructure along with common facilities and amenities through Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMCs).

- The Modified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMC 2.0) Scheme would support setting up of both Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMCs) and Common Facility Centers (CFCs).
- The Scheme will create a robust infrastructure base for electronic industry to attract flow of investment in ESDM sector and lead to greater employment opportunities.



#### **How will the move be helpful?**

The scheme will ensure availability of ready infrastructure and Plug & Play facility for attracting investment in electronics sector:

- EMCs are expected to aid the growth of the Electronics and Design Management (ESDM) sector.
- Jobs creation by the manufacturing units.
- Revenue in the form of taxes paid by the manufacturing units
- EMCs also expected to help development of entrepreneurial ecosystem, drive innovation.
- New investment in electronics sector is expected.
- EMCs will help catalyze the economic growth of the region by attracting investments in the sector, increasing employment opportunities and tax revenues.

#### **Where will the scheme be implemented?**

- An Electronics Manufacturing Cluster (EMC) would set up in geographical areas of certain minimum extent, preferably contiguous, where the focus is on development of basic infrastructure, amenities and other common facilities for the ESDM units.
- The Common Facility Centre (CFC), there should be a significant number of existing ESDM units located in the area and the focus is on upgrading common technical infrastructure and providing common facilities for the ESDM units in such EMCs, Industrial Areas/Parks/industrial corridors.

## **About the Modified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMC 2.0) Scheme**

- It is the scheme of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) would support setting up of both Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMCs) and Common Facility Centers.
- The scheme would support setting up of both Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMCs) and Common Facility Centers (CFCs).
- These CFC focused on upgrading common technical infrastructure and providing common facilities for the ESDM units in such EMCs, Industrial Areas/Parks/industrial corridors.

### **Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance**

**Source- PIB**

## **5. Eighth Schedule of constitution**

### **Why in news?**

Recently the Union Government is taking positive steps for the listing of three languages **Bhojpuri, Rajasthani and Bhoti** into the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

### **About 8th Schedule of constitution**

- It is a list of **official languages** recognized by the Constitution.
- The Eighth Schedule to the Indian Constitution contains a list of **22 scheduled languages**.
- These languages were added in the Eighth Schedule by the following amendments:
  - **By 21st Amendment Act, 1967:** Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Sindhi
  - **By 71st Amendment Act, 1992:** Konkani, Manipuri, Nepali
  - **By 92nd Amendment Act, 2003:** Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, Santal
- The list had originally **14 languages** only but subsequently through amendments **8 new languages** were added.

### **Topic- GS Paper 2–Polity**

**Source- PIB**

## **6. Indo-US Science & Technology Forum**

### **Why in news?**

- Recently a **total of 14 students** from India will undertake a research internship at **Viterbi School of Engineering, University of Southern California, LA, USA**.
- The **Viterbi Program of IUSSTF** was developed between IUSSTF and the **Viterbi School of Engineering, University of Southern California (USC)**.



## Objective

This program is a part of the **Government's endeavor to encourage research and development** amongst the bright **young Indian minds** to create long-term, sustainable, and vibrant linkages between India and the US.

## About the Indo-US Science & Technology Forum

- It was **established under an agreement** between the **Governments of India and the United States of America** in **March 2000**.
- It is an autonomous bilateral organization jointly funded by both the Governments that promote Science, Technology, Engineering, and Innovation through substantive interaction among government, academia, and industry.
- The **Department of Science & Technology (DST)**, Governments of India, and the U.S. Department of State are respective nodal departments.

**Topic- GS Paper 2-International Institution**

**Source- Business standard**

## 7. China's presidency of UN Security Council

### Why in news?

China has taken over as president of the UN Security Council for the month of March 2020.



### About the UN Security Council

- The **Security Council** was established by the **United Nation Charter**.
- Its primary responsibility is to work to maintain international peace and security.
- The council has **15 members**: the **five permanent members** and **10 non-permanent members elected for two-year terms**.
- **Its headquarter is in New York, United States**.
- The council's presidency is a capacity that rotates every month among its 15 members.

**Topic- GS Paper 2–International Institutions**  
**Source- AIR**

## **8. World Happiness Report 2020**

### **Why in news?**

- The United Nations has released the World Happiness Report 2020.
- The theme of **World Happiness Report 2020** is **Environment for Happiness**.

### **About the report**

- The World Happiness Report is an annual report originally launched in 2012.
- It is released by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network for the United Nations on March 20, the UN's annual International Day of Happiness.
- The report ranks 156 countries on the state of global happiness using the Gallup World Poll and six factors namely
  - a. Levels of GDP
  - b. Life expectancy
  - c. Generosity
  - d. Social support
  - e. Freedom
  - f. Corruption income

### **India and the report**

- India is ranked 144, way lower than its neighbours.
- Nepal is ranked 15; Pakistan is at the 29, Bangladesh at 107 and Sri Lanka at 130.
- It was at 140<sup>th</sup> position in 2019.

### **Highlights of the report**

- Finland has been ranked first followed by Denmark and Switzerland.
- Zimbabwe, South Sudan and Afghanistan were among those classified as the least happy countries.
- Canada is ranked 11, Australia at 12 and the United Kingdom at 13.
- The US is in the 18th spot.

**Topic- GS Paper 3–important report**  
**Source- The Hindu**

## **9. Navroz**

### **Why in news?**

The Prime Minister has greeted nation on the occasion of Navroz.

### **About Navroz**

- It is a Parsi New Year festival celebrated to mark the beginning of the new Iranian calendar.



- Navroz is also known as Jamshed-i-Navroz after the Persian King, Jamshed, who is credited to have created the Persian Calendar known as the Shahenshahi Calendar.
- The time of the festival is decided in Iran and then it is passed on to the entire Zoroastrian population in the world.

**Topic- GS Paper 1–Art and Culture**

**Source- AIR**