

## **GOVERNMENT'S OWN GIG WORKERS**

**SYLLABUS:** GS PAPER-III (EMPLOYMENT)

**CONTEXT:** Agnipath scheme has highlighted the approach of the government to outsource work to 'temporary workers.'

'Temporary' jobs have comprised most of the available government employment for quite some time. They may be classified into three categories:

- a. **Permanent**
- b. **Contractual**
- c. **Daily wagers**

### **STATUS**

- Outsourcing has become the dominant mode of working in the government, from highly specialized tasks to the most routine ones. E.g., Safai karamchari (sanitation worker), a driver/conductor of your city bus service, a junior engineer, or a highly paid consultant.
- As per a survey, the number of contractual workers in central public sector enterprises increased to 4,98,807 in March 2020 from 2,67,929 in March 2016.

### **BENEFITS OF CONTRACT WORKERS**

- **For Government:** costs and liabilities of the government entity are significantly reduced compared to a "permanent" position.
- Burden of responsibility is shifted to the contractor.
- No possibility of litigation seeking 'regularization.'

### **ISSUES**

- Non-payment of salaries for extended periods, fudging of statutory deductions for the worker's welfare such as provident fund (PF), employees' state insurance (ESI), etc. by the labor contractor, and uneven distribution of work vis-à-vis "permanent" employees.

**Long-term impact:** Quality of public service that is sought to be provided including sanitation, public transport, health, etc.

### **WHAT CAN BE DONE?**

- Need to augment the capacity of the government, particularly those wings of the state that cater various services to people, as well as to create a viable avenue of employment for India's burgeoning working-age population.
- **Following Effective procedure:** Local bodies, parastatals, special purpose vehicles and other public utilities stand to gain considerably if the modalities of contractual engagement are diligently worked out.
- The Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs' **Urban Learning Internship Program (TULIP)**, enables city authorities to directly engage a young workforce for a fixed term.

## CONCLUSION

- Even though a permanent government job remains highly coveted, it may be important to also recognize that not everyone may aspire to 'permanence' due to various reasons.
- Fixed-term contractual stints with the government with safeguards against sheer exploitation can be a major source of employment. However, such modes of recruitment will have to assimilate the principles of affirmative action, in line with the vision of social justice enshrined in our Constitution. This is key in order to avoid becoming a mechanism that will skirt provisions for reservation.

## INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

**SYLLABUS:** GS PAPER-III (SPACE TECHNOLOGY), GS PAPER-II (EFFECTS OF POLICIES & POLITICS OF COUNTRIES ON INDIA)

**CONTEXT:** Russia will pull out of the ISS after 2024 and focus on building its own orbiting outpost.

### ABOUT INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION (ISS)

- The ISS is the **most complex international scientific and engineering project** in history and the largest structure humans have ever put into space.
- This high-flying satellite is a **laboratory for new technologies and an observation platform for astronomical, environmental, and geological research.**
- As a permanently occupied outpost in outer space, it serves as a stepping stone for further space exploration.
- The space station flies at an **average altitude of 400 kilometers above Earth. It circles the globe every 90 min. at a speed of about 28,000 kph.**
- In one day, the station travels about the distance it would take to go from Earth to the moon and back.
- The space station **can rival the brilliant planet Venus in brightness** and appears as a bright moving light across the night sky.
- **It can be seen from Earth without the use of a telescope by night sky observers** who know when and where to look.
- **Five different space agencies representing 15 countries built** the USD 100-billion International Space Station and continue to operate it today.
- The International Space Station was taken into space piece-by-piece and gradually built-in orbit.
- It consists of **modules and connecting nodes that contain living quarters and laboratories**, as well as exterior trusses that provide structural support, and solar panels that provide power.
- The first module, **Russia's Zarya module, launched in 1998.**

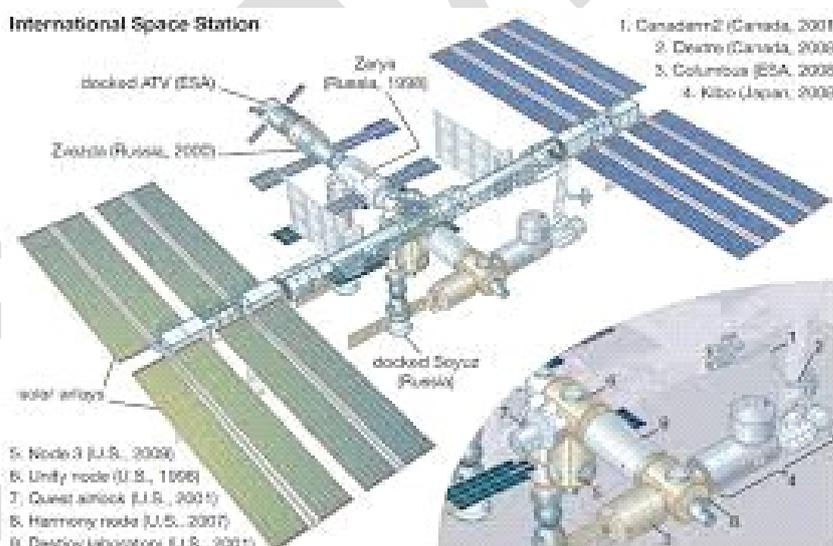
### RUSSIA'S ROLE IN MAINTAINING ISS

- The ISS is built with the cooperation of scientists from five international space agencies — **NASA of the US, Roscosmos of Russia, JAXA of Japan, Canadian Space Agency, and the European Space Agency.**

- Each agency has a role to play and a share in the upkeep of the ISS. Both in terms of expense and effort, it is not a feat that a single country can support.
- Russia's part in the collaboration is the **module responsible for making course corrections to the orbit of the ISS.**
- Further, the Russian segment ensures that the **space station's orbit is corrected to keep it away from space debris, roughly 11 times a year.**
- It also **ferries astronauts to the ISS from the Earth and back.**

### WHAT COULD BE THE IMPACT OF RUSSIA'S WITHDRAWAL

- Due to its enormous weight and the ensuing drag, the ISS tends to sink from its orbit at a height of about 250 miles above the Earth.
- It has to be pushed up to its original line of motion every now and then.
- Russia's withdrawing from its segment of the ISS cooperation spacecraft could **affect correcting the orbit of the ISS.**
- This meant the ISS could fall into the sea or on land.
- ISS would likely crash down on some country, but most probably not Russia itself. **The orbit of the ISS does not fly over Russian territory mostly.**
- However, dropping of ISS poses a greater risk to regions that are closer to the equator. But this is only a probability, as it can move or disintegrate.
- In case of this eventuality, people in the ISS will be brought back, modules can be detached thereby making it much smaller which will ensure that it disintegrates before touching the earth.



### REASONS FOR RUSSIA QUITTING ISS

- The relations between Russia and the West have been going from bad to worse. The US had accused the Kremlin of carrying out “**solar winds**” **hack and interfering in the 2020 election.**
- **Russian invasion in Ukraine** has attracted various sanctions on it from the Western nations thus, making it impossible for Russia to cooperate in space.
- Increased **US-Russia space rivalry.**
- Russia plans to **launch its own space station by 2030.**

## PRELIMS FACTS

### NAGAR VAN SCHEME

- On the occasion of World Environment Day (**5<sup>th</sup> June**), the government announced implementation of the **Nagar van scheme in the year 2020, to develop 200 Urban Forests across the country in the next five years.**
- The scheme enforces **people's participation** and collaboration between Forest Department, Municipal bodies, NGOs, Corporates, and local citizens.
- Under this scheme, a minimum of **20 hectares of forests** will be created in the city.
- These forests will come up **either on existing forest land or any other vacant land offered by urban local bodies.**
- Van Udyan once established will be **maintained by the State Government.**
- This scheme is fully funded by **CAMPA (Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016) funds.**

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA (ASI)**

- Regular monitoring is being done by ASI to **assess damage by climate change to heritage sites by any atmospheric agents and natural causes.**
- The Archaeological Survey of India or ASI is an **attached agency of the Ministry of Culture of the Government of India.**
- It engages in archaeological research and conservation, and protection and preservation of ancient monuments and archaeological sites in the country.
- ASI regulates all archaeological activities conducted in the country through the provisions of the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act (AMASR Act), 1958.**
- It also regulates the **Antiquities and Art Treasure Act, 1972.**
- The ASI is headed by a **Director-General** and is headquartered in **New Delhi.**
- ASI has more than 3500 protected monuments and archaeological sites of National Importance that it protects and preserves.

### **LINGARAJ TEMPLE**

- Lingaraj Temple, built in **11th century AD**, is **dedicated to Lord Shiva**, and is considered the largest temple of the city Bhubaneswar (Odisha).
- It is believed to have been built by the **Somvanshi King Yayati I.**
- It is built of **red stone** and is a classic example of **Kalinga style of architecture.**
- The style used to build the Lingaraja temple is **Deula style.**
- There are 4 components to the architecture of Lingaraj temple – **bhoga-mandapa (hall of offerings), Nata mandira (festival hall), Jagamohana (assembly hall), and vimana (structure containing the sanctum).**
- The deity of Lingaraja Temple is worshipped in the combined form of Shiva and Vishnu also known as **Harihara.**

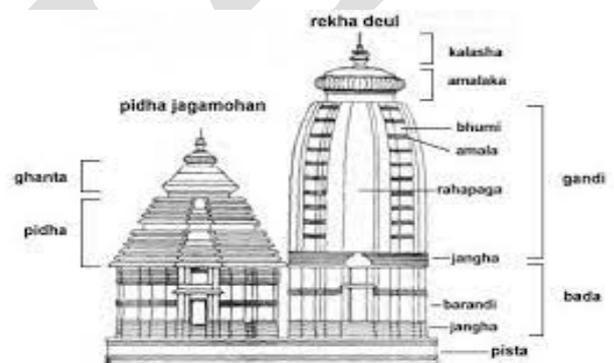
### **PRESIDENT'S COLORS AWARD**

- Vice-President presented the prestigious '**President's Colors**' for the **Tamil Nadu Police.**

- It is the highest award bestowed on a **military unit/State Police in India in recognition of its exceptional services to the nation.**
- It acknowledges the **spirit of bravery, courage, commitment, professionalism, integrity, and service to humanity.**
- It is popularly called '**Rashtrapati ka Nishan.**'

## DROUGHT

- It refers to a period of **unusually dry weather, crop damage and water supply shortages.**
- **The State Government is the final authority when it comes to declaring a region as drought affected.**
- The Ministry of Agriculture published a manual in 2016 in respect of managing drought. It suggests a three-step approach:
  1. The first step is to look at two mandatory indicators: **Rainfall deviation and dry spell.** Depending on the extent of the deviation, and whether there is a dry spell, the manual specifies various situations that may or may not be considered a drought trigger.
  2. The second step is to look at **four impact indicators — agriculture, vegetation indices based on remote sensing, soil moisture, and hydrology.** Each impact can be assessed based on various indices.
  3. The third step comes in after both previous triggers have been set off. In that event, **States will conduct sample survey for ground in order to make a final determination of drought. The finding of field verification exercise will be the final basis for judging the intensity of drought as 'severe' or 'moderate.'**
- Once a drought is determined, the state government needs to issue a notification specifying the geographical extent. The notification is valid for **six months unless de-notified earlier.**



## CHANDLER WOBBLE

- On July 29, the Earth broke its record for the shortest day as it completed a **full spin in 1.59 milliseconds less than its standard 24-hour rotation.**
- While scientists are yet to conclude reasons behind the downtrend in Earth's rotational speed, it is being attributed to Chandler Wobble.
- Chandler wobble refers to the **change in the spin of Earth on its axis.**