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MAY 2023
WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

YOJNA IAS WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS
22/5/2023 TO 28/5/2023

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

CONTENTS

NATIONAL AYUSH MISSION

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "NATIONAL AYUSH MISSION". The topic "NATIONAL AYUSH MISSION" has relevance in the Public Health, Social Justice section for the UPSC CSE exam.

Relevance of NATIONAL AYUSH MISSION

For Prelims:

What is NATIONAL AYUSH MISSION?

For Mains:

GS 2: Public health,Social justice?

What are the objectives of NATIONAL AYUSH MISSION?

Suggestions for improvement?

Why in the news?

Health and Ayush State Ministers participated in roundtable discussion at National Ayush Mission Conclave 2023.States and UTs to strengthen Ayush Infrastructure through National Ayush Mission to enable larger population to benefit from Ayush services.

What is NATIONAL AYUSH MISSION?

The National AYUSH Mission (NAM) is a government initiative implemented by the Ministry of AYUSH **(Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy)** in India. It was launched in September 2014 with the goal of promoting, developing, and disseminating traditional Indian systems of medicine and healthcare.

What are the objectives of NATIONAL AYUSH MISSION?

Promotion of AYUSH systems: The mission aims to increase awareness and utilization of AYUSH practices, such as Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy, by the general

public.

Access to healthcare: NAM strives to provide improved access to affordable and quality healthcare services through AYUSH facilities and practitioners.It focuses on both preventive and curative aspects of healthcare.

Infrastructure development: The mission aims to develop and strengthen the infrastructure of AYUSH institutions, including hospitals, dispensaries, and educational institutions.This includes setting up new facilities and upgrading existing ones.

Capacity building: NAM emphasizes the training and capacity building of AYUSH practitioners, healthcare professionals, and support staff. It also focuses on promoting research and development in AYUSH disciplines

Public awareness and advocacy: NAM strives to create awareness among the general public about the benefits of AYUSH systems and promote their integration into the mainstream healthcare system. It also involves advocacy and communication campaigns.

Suggestions for improvement?

Increased Funding: Allocate sufficient and consistent funding to NAM to ensure the effective implementation of its objectives

Strengthening Institutional Framework: Enhance the institutional framework by establishing dedicated AYUSH departments or directorates at the central and state levels.

Integration and Mainstreaming: Promote the integration of AYUSH systems with the mainstream healthcare system.

Research and Development: Encourage research and development in AYUSH disciplines to enhance the evidence base for their efficacy and safety.

By implementing these measures, the National AYUSH Mission can be further strengthened and contribute effectively to the promotion and development of traditional Indian systems of medicine and healthcare.

Source: PIB

https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1925683

Q.1 The National AYUSH Mission (NAM) was launched by the Indian government with the objective of:

(a) Promoting traditional Indian dance forms

(b) Enhancing tourism in rural areas

(c) Developing and disseminating traditional systems of medicine

(d) Promoting the growth of indigenous handicrafts

Answer (c)

Q.2 Which of the following statements regarding the National AYUSH Mission (NAM) is/are correct? Select the correct option(s).

1: NAM is an initiative of the Ministry of AYUSH to promote traditional Indian systems of medicine and healthcare.

2: NAM focuses on the development and dissemination of Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy practices.

3: NAM primarily aims to enhance the quality and safety of allopathic medicines in India.

4: NAM emphasizes the integration of AYUSH systems with the mainstream healthcare system.

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 1, 2, and 4 only

(c) 2 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2, and 3 only

Answer: (b)

Q.3 Discuss the objectives of the National AYUSH Mission (NAM) in promoting traditional Indian systems of medicine and healthcare. Provide suitable recommendations for further improvement and strengthening of NAM.

(15 marks)

NORTH EAST GLOBAL INVESTORS SUMMIT (NEGIS)

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "North East Global Investors Summit". The topic "North East Global Investors Summit" has relevance in the Economic Development and Security section for the UPSC CSE exam.

Relevance of the topic "North East Global Investors Summit"

For Prelims:

What comprises the North Eastern Region (NER)?

What is the North East Global Investors Summit?

For Mains:

GS 3: Economic Development and Security

What is the importance of the North Eastern Region (NER) for India?

Government efforts to develop NER?

Why in the news?

The Ministry of Development of Northeast Region (MDONER) held a roundtable interaction with Bilateral Chambers and Trade Associations in India at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi for the upcoming Northeast Global Investor Summit.

What comprises the North Eastern Region (NER)?

The North East region of India comprises **Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and hill districts of West Bengal.** It is known for its rich cultural diversity, scenic landscapes, strategic location, and is connected to the rest of India through a narrow strip of land.

What is the North East Global Investors Summit?

The North East Global Investors' Summit (NEGIS) is a **biennial** event organized by the government of one of the northeastern states of India with the aim of promoting investment and showcasing the economic potential of the region. The summit serves as a platform for attracting domestic and international investors, fostering partnerships, and exploring business opportunities in various sectors.

What is the importance of the North Eastern Region (NER) for India?

- **Strategic Location:** The North Eastern region shares international borders with countries like **China, Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Bhutan** It serves as a crucial gateway for **India's Act East Policy**, promoting connectivity, trade, and cultural exchanges with Southeast Asia.

- **Biodiversity and Natural Resources:** The region is known for its rich biodiversity, with diverse flora and fauna, numerous national parks, and wildlife sanctuaries. It houses valuable natural resources, including oil, natural gas, coal, limestone, and fertile agricultural land.

- **Cultural Diversity:** The North Eastern region is home to a wide array of ethnic and linguistic communities, each with its unique cultural heritage. This cultural diversity contributes to India's rich tapestry of traditions, arts, music, and cuisine.

- **Economic Potential:** The North Eastern region has immense economic potential, offering opportunities in sectors such as agriculture, horticulture, tourism, hydroelectric power, minerals, tea production, handloom, and handicrafts. The region's natural resources and strategic location make it conducive for economic development and trade.

- **Act East Policy:** The North Eastern region plays a pivotal role in India's Act East Policy, which aims to strengthen ties with Southeast Asian countries. The region serves as a land bridge and a trade route for expanding economic engagement and enhancing connectivity with ASEAN nations.

- **Security and Border Management:** Given its proximity to international borders, the North Eastern region holds strategic importance for India's security concerns. It requires focused attention on border management, addressing cross-border issues, and ensuring the safety and well-being of the local population.

- **Connectivity and Infrastructure Development:** The North Eastern region has historically faced challenges related to connectivity. However, the Indian government has been actively working on improving infrastructure, including roadways, railways, air connectivity, and digital networks. Enhanced connectivity will boost trade, investment, and overall development in the region.

- **Cultural Exchanges and People-to-People Diplomacy:** The North Eastern region serves as a bridge for cultural exchanges and people-to-people diplomacy between India and neighboring countries. The region's proximity to Southeast Asia offers opportunities for promoting cultural ties, educational exchanges, and tourism collaborations.

Government efforts to develop NER?

- **The North Eastern Council (NEC):** Established in **1971**, the NEC serves as an apex regional planning body for the development of the North Eastern region.

- **North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS):** Launched in **2017**, NESIDS focuses on creating durable infrastructure in sectors such as transportation, power, education, healthcare, and tourism. It aims to bridge the infrastructure gaps in the region and promote balanced growth.

- **Look East Policy and Act East Policy:** These policies aim to enhance connectivity, trade, and people-to-people interactions between the North Eastern region and neighboring countries, particularly in Southeast Asia.

- **Special Category Status:** The North Eastern states have been accorded special category status, which provides them with additional financial support and benefits. This includes exemption from central taxes, customs duties, and assistance for promoting entrepreneurship, skill development, and education.

- **Northeast Venture Fund:** Launched by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), this fund aims to provide financial support to startups and entrepreneurs in the region.

Source:

https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1918407

Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding the North Eastern region of India:

Which of following statements is/are true:

1: The North Eastern region of India consists of Seven states also known as seven sisters only.

2: The North Eastern region shares international borders with countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, and China only.

3: The region suffers from lack of biodiversity and is home to several national parks and wildlife sanctuaries.

(a)1 and 2 only

(b)2 and 3 only

(c)1 only

(d)None of the above

Answer:(d)

Q.2 Which of the following statements highlight the importance of the North Eastern region of India?

1.The North Eastern region is strategically located and serves as a gateway to neighboring countries such as Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and China.

2.North Eastern region plays a significant role in India's West Asia and North Africa(WANA) Policy

3.North Eastern region plays a significant role in India's Act East Policy.

(a)1 and 3 only

(b)1only

(c)1 and 2 only

(d)3 only

Answer:(a)

Q.3"Discuss the significance of the North Eastern region of India in the socio-economic and geopolitical landscape of the country, highlighting its diverse cultural heritage, strategic location, and potential for sustainable development. Analyze the challenges and opportunities associated with harnessing the region's resources and promoting inclusive growth, and suggest policy measures to leverage the untapped potential of the North Eastern region for national progress. (250 words)"

E-VIDHAN

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "e-Vidhan". The topic "e-Vidhan" has relevance in the Polity section for the UPSC CSE exam.

Relevance of the topic "e-Vidhan"

For Prelims:

What e-Vidhan?

For Mains:

GS 2: Polity and Governance

What is the significance of e-Vidhan?

Way Forward

Why in the news?

The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs is set to organize a two-day National Workshop on the National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA). This will encourage other states to become part of NeVA.

What is e-Vidhan?

- National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA) is part of the "Digital India Programme" which aims to make the functioning of all the State Legislatures paperless by transforming them into a 'Digital House'.

- Till now, 21 State legislatures have signed MOUs for implementation of the NeVA and the project has been sanctioned for 17 Legislatures and funds have been released to them for implementation of the project.

- Among them, 9 Legislatures have already become fully digital and are Live on the NeVA platform. They are conducting all their business end to end in a digital & paperless manner.

What is the significance of e-Vidhan?

- **Paperless working:** This removes the hassle of cumbersome paper work which has the possibility of physical losses.

- **Digital database:** With the transformation of the work being done in digital forms it forms the base for comparative and analytical data.

- **Shared access:** The digital documents can be easily shared across the legislators and public which promotes ease of access and fast information diffusion.

Source:
https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1926777

QUESTION FOR PRELIMS

Q.1 Which of the following is correct about e-Vidhan:

1. to make the functioning of all the State Legislatures paperless.

2. to make the functioning of all the State High Courts paperless.

3. to make the functioning of the Supreme Court paperless.

4. to make the functioning of the Ministry of Law paperless.

Answer: (a)

Q.2 Consider the following statements about National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA):

1. The Ministry of Law is the nodal ministry of the National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA).

2. The aim of NeVA is to make the functioning of all the State Legislatures paperless by transforming them into a 'Digital House'

Select the correct answer from the options given below:

1. 1 only

2. 2 only

3. Both 1 and 2

4. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (b)

QUESTION FOR MAINS EXAMINATION

1. **Several government initiatives have been taken in recent years to digitalise the government's way of functioning but this has been challenged by the inertia existing in the government machinery to transform. Discuss with few recent initiatives.**

MILLETS

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Millets". The topic "Millets" has relevance in the Agriculture and Food Security section for the UPSC CSE exam.

Relevance of Millets

For Prelims:

What are Millets?

Which Millets are grown in India?

For Mains:

GS 3: Agriculture, Food Security

Why are Millets Important for the Environment And Food Security?

Why in the news?

Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar along with Managing Director, NAFED, commemorated the launch of the first of its kind 'Millets Experience Centre (MEC)' at Dilli Haat, INA, New Delhi. NAFED in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW) established the Millets Experience Centre with an aim to raise awareness on Mil-

lets and encourage its adoption among the general public.

What are Millets?

Millets are a group of small-seeded grasses that are cultivated as cereal crops for food and fodder. They are highly nutritious and resilient crops that can grow in diverse agro-climatic conditions with minimal water requirements. Millets have been staple crops in many parts of the world, particularly in arid and semi-arid regions.

Which Millets are grown in India?

- **Pearl Millet:** Also known as Bajra, it is one of the most widely cultivated millets and is particularly important in arid and semi-arid regions of Africa and India.

- **Finger Millet:** Also known as Ragi or Nachni, it is commonly grown in India, Africa, and other parts of Asia.

- **Foxtail Millet:** It is one of the oldest cultivated millets and is grown in various parts of Asia, including India and China. It has a high tolerance for drought and is used for human consumption as well as for animal feed.

- **Little Millet:** It is a small-grained millet that is cultivated in India, Africa, and Southeast Asia. It is primarily used for human consumption and is known for its high nutritional value.

Why are Millets Important for the Environment And Food Security?

- **Climate Resilience:** Millets are known for their adaptability to diverse agro-climatic conditions, including arid and semi-arid regions. They have a remarkable ability to withstand heat, drought, and low soil fertility, making them suitable for cultivation in areas where other crops may struggle. By promoting millet cultivation, farmers can reduce their vulnerability to climate change and maintain agricultural productivity even in challenging environments.

- **Water Conservation:** Millets have low water requirements compared to major cereal crops like rice and wheat. They are considered drought-tolerant crops, requiring significantly less irrigation.

- **Soil Health and Conservation:** Millets are known for their ability to grow in poor soil conditions. They have a deep root system that helps improve soil structure and fertility. The cultivation of millets can enhance soil health by preventing erosion, promoting organic matter accumulation, and reducing the need for synthetic fertilizers and chemical inputs.

- **Biodiversity and Crop Diversity:** Promoting the cultivation of millets contributes to agricultural biodiversity and crop diversity. Millets are part of traditional agricultural systems and have been cultivated for centuries, contributing to cultural heritage and local food traditions. By diversifying cropping patterns and promoting the cultivation of millets, we can preserve traditional knowledge, protect indigenous crop varieties, and maintain a wider range of agricultural biodiversity.

- **Reduced Pesticide Dependency:** Millets have a natural resistance to pests and diseases, reducing the need for chemical pesticides. By cultivating millets, farmers can minimize pesticide use and its associated environmental and health risks.

- **Lower Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** Millet cultivation typically involves lower greenhouse gas emissions compared to other major cereal crops. Millets have a shorter growth cycle and require

less intensive agricultural practices, leading to reduced carbon dioxide emissions. Furthermore, the potential for carbon sequestration in millet-growing systems can contribute to climate change mitigation.

Source: PIB

https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1920622

Q.1 "Considering the climate importance of millets, which of the following characteristics make them environmentally sustainable and resilient crops in the context of climate change?"

1. Drought tolerance and low water requirements

2. Ability to grow in diverse agro-climatic conditions.

3. Contribution to soil health and conservation

4. Natural resistance to pests and diseases

5. Reduced greenhouse gas emissions

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 1,2 and 3 only

(c) 1,3 and 4 only

(d) 1,2,3,4 and 5 only

Answer: (d)

Q.2 "Which of the following statements is correct regarding the role of millets in enhancing food security and sustainable agriculture?"

(a) Millets are high-yielding crops that require intensive irrigation, making them crucial for ensuring food security.

(b) Millets are climate-resilient crops that require minimal water and can grow in diverse agro-climatic conditions, contributing to food security.

(c) Millets have low nutritional value and are not considered significant for addressing food security challenges.

(d) Millets are primarily used as animal feed and have limited relevance in ensuring food security for human populations.

Answer: (b)

Q.3 "Discuss the role of millets in enhancing food security and sustainable agriculture, highlighting their nutritional benefits, climate resilience, and impact on rural livelihoods. How can

(15 marks)

OPEN NETWORK FOR DIGITAL COMMERCE(ONDC)

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "ONDC". The topic "ONDC" has relevance in the Agriculture and Food Security section for the UPSC CSE exam.

Relevance of ONDC

For Prelims:

What is ONDC?

For Mains:

What are the Key Objectives of ONDC?

Challenges for ONDC?

Why in the news?

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Textiles,Piyush Goyal, says that Open Network for Digital Commerce will democratize the existing ecommerce ecosystem of the country.

What is ONDC?

Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) is an initiative launched by the Government of India to create a common framework for digital commerce platforms. The aim of ONDC is to enable interoperability and enhance the efficiency of digital commerce operations in the country.

ONDC envisions the development of an open, secure, and inclusive digital commerce ecosystem where various stakeholders, including sellers, buyers, logistics providers, and financial institutions, can seamlessly interact and conduct business. It aims to bring together different e-commerce platforms, service providers, and other participants onto a single network, allowing them to exchange information and services in a standardized and secure manner.

The key objectives of ONDC include:

- **Interoperability:** ONDC aims to establish technical standards and protocols that enable seamless integration and data exchange between different e-commerce platforms, logistics providers, and payment systems. This would allow sellers to reach a wider customer base and facilitate a smoother experience for buyers.

- **Data Empowerment:** The initiative focuses on empowering users by providing them control over their data and facilitating data portability. Users should be able to access and transfer their

personal and transactional data across different platforms, promoting competition and fostering trust in the digital commerce ecosystem.

- **Innovation and Entrepreneurship:** ONDC aims to create an environment conducive to innovation and entrepreneurship by providing a level playing field for all participants. It intends to promote fair competition, prevent unfair practices, and enable new players to enter the market easily

- **Consumer Protection:** The initiative emphasizes consumer protection by ensuring transparency, accountability, and data privacy. It aims to establish mechanisms for grievance redressal, dispute resolution, and protection against fraudulent activities in digital commerce.

- **Enhanced Competition:** The open network created by ONDC fosters competition by providing a level playing field for all participants. It allows small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and new players to enter the market more easily, promoting innovation, diversity, and affordability in the digital commerce space. The increased competition benefits consumers by offering them more choices, competitive pricing, and improved services.

- **Efficiency and Cost Reduction:** The standardization and integration facilitated by ONDC improve the efficiency of digital commerce operations. It reduces redundancies, simplifies processes, and minimizes the need for manual interventions. This leads to cost reduction for businesses, streamlining their operations and enabling them to offer competitive pricing and better services to consumers.

- **Digital Inclusion:** ONDC aims to promote digital inclusion by providing a common framework that bridges the gap between various stakeholders. It enables sellers from rural and remote areas to connect with buyers across the country, expanding their market reach and creating opportunities for economic growth. Additionally, by ensuring accessibility and affordability, ONDC aims to bring the benefits of digital commerce to all sections of society, including underserved communities.

Overall, the significance of ONDC lies in its potential to transform the digital commerce landscape by fostering collaboration, competition, data empowerment, consumer protection, and efficiency. It aims to create a more inclusive and dynamic ecosystem that benefits businesses, consumers, and the overall economy.

Challenges for ONDC?

- **Scalability:** As the network grows and the number of participants increases, it must be able to handle a large volume of transactions simultaneously. Scaling the network while maintaining efficiency and low transaction fees can be a significant challenge.

- **Security:** Ensuring the security of transactions, user data, and digital assets is crucial for any digital commerce network. Open networks are particularly vulnerable to attacks, such as hacking attempts, data breaches, or identity theft. Implementing robust security measures and protocols is essential to protect users and build trust in the network.

- **Regulatory compliance:** Digital commerce networks often operate across different jurisdictions, each with its own regulations and legal requirements. Adhering to these regulations, such as anti-money laundering (AML) and know-your-customer (KYC) laws, can be challenging, especially in a decentralized and open environment.

- **User adoption:** To be successful, an open network for digital commerce needs to attract a critical mass of users and merchants. Convincing users to join and transact on the network can be a significant challenge, particularly if they are already accustomed to established platforms. Offering incentives, a user-friendly experience, and a wide range of products and services can help overcome this challenge.

- **Trust and reputation:** Trust is a critical factor in any digital commerce network. Building trust among participants, both buyers and sellers, is essential for the network's success. Implementing mechanisms to verify the authenticity of participants, address disputes, and maintain a transparent and reliable rating system can help establish trust within the network.

- **Governance and decision-making:** Open networks often rely on decentralized decision-making processes involving network participants. Establishing effective governance models and mechanisms for decision-making, consensus-building, and resolving conflicts can be a challenge. Striking a balance between decentralization and efficient decision-making is crucial.

- **Infrastructure and technical limitations:** The network's infrastructure, including servers, bandwidth, and storage, must be robust and scalable to handle the demands of digital commerce. Additionally, technical limitations such as transaction speed, latency, and network congestion can impact the user experience and adoption of the platform.

- **Competition:** The digital commerce landscape is highly competitive, with established players and emerging startups vying for market share. Overcoming competition and differentiating the open network from existing platforms can be challenging. Offering unique features, value propositions, and a compelling ecosystem can help attract users and merchants.

- **Education and awareness:** Introducing a new open network for digital commerce requires educating users, merchants, and stakeholders about the benefits and functionalities of the platform. Creating awareness and demonstrating the advantages of the open network over traditional systems can be a challenge in itself.

Q.1 Which of the following statements best describes the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)?

(a) It is an international organization promoting digital commerce standards worldwide.
(b) It is a government initiative in India to enhance interoperability and efficiency in digital commerce.
(c) It is a non-profit organization providing financial support to small businesses in the digital commerce sector.
(d) It is a technology platform facilitating secure communication between e-commerce platforms and customers.

Answer:(b)

Q.2 Which of the following initiatives aims to revolutionize India's digital logistics ecosystem

by integrating multiple stakeholders, optimizing supply chain efficiency, and enhancing transparency?

(a) Project Sagarmala
(b) Bharatmala Pariyojana
(c) National Freight Corridor Development Project
(d) One Nation One Digital Platform (ONDC)

Answer:(d)

Q.3 Discuss the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) initiative in India and its significance in fostering a competitive and inclusive digital commerce ecosystem.

(15 marks)

VANDE BHARAT EXPRESS

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Vande Bharat Express". The topic "Vande Bharat Express" has relevance in the Infrastructure and Technology section for the UPSC CSE exam.

Relevance of the topic "Vande Bharat Express"

For Prelims:

What is the Vande Bharat Express?

For Mains:

GS 3: Infrastructure and Technology

What is the significance of Vande Bharat Express?

What are the challenges faced?

Way forward?

Why in the news?

Railways struggles to meet Vande Bharat number, speed targets. Instead, it is rolling out smaller, eight-coach versions of the marquee train set that enables it to increase the number of total trains rolled out without actually producing that many 16-coach standard variants.

What is the Vande Bharat Express?

Vande Bharat Express, also known as Train 18, is an indigenous high-speed train developed by Integral Coach Factory (ICF) in Chennai, India. It is considered a significant milestone in India's railway modernization efforts

What is the significance of Vande Bharat Express?

- **Indigenous Development:** Vande Bharat Express is India's first semi-high speed, fully air-conditioned train set developed domestically. It showcases India's engineering capabilities and technological advancements in the railway sector.

- **Speed and Efficiency:** The train has a top speed of 180 km/h (112 mph), reducing travel time significantly. It aims to provide a faster and smoother travel experience, comparable to international standards.

- **Passenger Comfort:** Vande Bharat Express offers modern amenities, including spacious seating, onboard Wi-Fi, infotainment systems, and improved hygiene facilities. It enhances passenger comfort and provides a more enjoyable journey.

- **Energy Efficiency:** The train incorporates several energy-saving features, such as regenerative braking, LED lighting, and aerodynamically designed coaches. This promotes sustainability and reduces environmental impact.

What are the challenges faced?

- **Technical Challenges:** Developing a high-speed train indigenously posed numerous technical challenges, including designing aerodynamic coaches, ensuring operational safety at high speeds, and integrating advanced systems like self-propelled electrical units.

- **Manufacturing Capabilities:** Establishing the manufacturing infrastructure to build such technologically advanced trainsets required significant investment and expertise. Overcoming manufacturing challenges, such as sourcing specialized components, was crucial.

- **Operational Integration:** Introducing a new train set into the existing railway ecosystem involves coordinating with multiple stakeholders, including railway zones, signaling systems, maintenance facilities, and staff training. Ensuring seamless integration was a complex task.

Way Forward:

- **Expansion and Modernization:** The success of Vande Bharat Express has paved the way for the development of additional high-speed trainsets in India. The government aims to expand the high-speed rail network and upgrade existing routes to offer faster and more efficient travel options.

- **Research and Development:** Continuous research and development efforts are necessary to improve the design, performance, and safety features of high-speed trains. Collaborations with international experts can help in adopting best practices.

- **Infrastructure Development:** Developing dedicated high-speed rail corridors, upgrading existing tracks, and improving signaling systems. These infrastructural enhancements will support the efficient operation of high-speed trains.

- **Passenger Experience:** Feedback from passengers should be considered to further enhance the comfort, amenities, and services provided onboard. Technology advancements, such as predictive maintenance and real-time information systems, can be integrated to improve the overall passenger experience.

- **Safety and Security:** Continuous focus on safety measures, including regular maintenance, staff

training, and robust security systems, is crucial to ensure passenger safety and instill confidence in high-speed rail travel.

Q.1 Which of the following is India's first indigenous high-speed train, known for its advanced technology, energy efficiency, and luxurious amenities?

(a) Rajdhani Express

(b) Vande Bharat Express

(c) Shatabdi Express

(d) Duronto Express

Answer: (b)

Q.2 Which organization is responsible for the development of Vande Bharat Express, India's first indigenous high-speed train?

(a) Indian Railways

(b) Integral Coach Factory

(c) Ministry of Railways

(d) Rail Vikas Nigam Limited

Answer: (b)

Q.3 Examine the significance of Vande Bharat Express in the context of India's railway modernization efforts, and discuss the challenges faced during its development. Suggest the way forward to enhance the effectiveness of high-speed train projects in the country. (15 marks)

COOPERATIVE FEDERALISM

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Cooperative Federalism". The topic "Cooperative Federalism" has relevance in the Polity and Governance section for the UPSC CSE exam.

Relevance of the topic "Cooperative Federalism"

For Prelims:

What is Cooperative Federalism?

For Mains:

GS 2: Polity and Governance

What is the significance of Cooperative Federalism?

What are the issues with Cooperative Federalism?

Way Forward

Why in the news?

The Chief Ministers of Non BJP have decided not to attend the Governing Council meeting of NITI Aayog. They have cited previous engagements as reasons for not attending the meeting. This is a blow to the concept of Cooperative Federalism that binds the centre and states into one union.

What is Cooperative Federalism?

Cooperative federalism is a concept that describes the relationship and interaction between the central government and state governments in a federal system. It's all about working together and collaborating to tackle common issues and achieve shared goals.

In this model, the central government and state governments join forces to develop and implement policies, programs, and projects. They share responsibilities, resources, and decision-making authority to address complex problems that affect the entire nation.

What is the significance of Cooperative Federalism?

- **Effective Problem Solving:** Cooperative federalism allows for better problem-solving and policy implementation by combining the strengths and resources of the central government and state governments.

  For example, the highest functionaries both from centre and states have the capacity to tackle complex issues efficiently.

- **Flexibility and Adaptability:** Cooperative federalism enables states to adapt national policies to their unique circumstances. While the central government sets overarching standards, state governments have the flexibility to tailor policies and programs to meet the specific needs of their constituents.

  For example, a lot of Central schemes are modelled by the states catering to their requirements.

- **Resource Sharing:** Cooperative federalism promotes the sharing of resources between different levels of government. The central government often allocates funds to states to support specific initiatives or programs.

    For example, the GST Council is a good example where decisions are made by both the centre and states.

    What are the issues with Cooperative Federalism?

- **Fiscal Imbalance:** The central government holds greater financial resources and decision-making authority, while state governments often depend on the central government for financial assistance.

    For example, only 42 percent of the divisible pool is given to the states. In times of emergency, the states are dependent on the centre.

- **Centralization of Power:** Critics argue that cooperative federalism in India is skewed toward the centralization of power. They contend that the central government often encroaches upon the domain of state governments and interferes in their policy areas, limiting their autonomy.

    For example, the constitutional posts like governor are being misused for political purposes to stall the functioning of the state governments.

- **Political and Ideological Challenges:** Cooperative federalism requires effective coordination and collaboration between the central government and state governments. However, differing political ideologies, bureaucratic hurdles, and administrative complexities can hamper the smooth implementation of policies.

Way Forward

Thus, the benefits of Cooperative Federalism cannot be discounted. Addressing the issues requires ongoing efforts to strengthen cooperative federalism in India. It involves promoting fiscal autonomy, ensuring equitable resource distribution, enhancing intergovernmental coordination mechanisms, and fostering a better understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of different levels of government.

Source:
https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1926777

QUESTION FOR PRELIMS

Q.1 Cooperative federalism means:

1. Good relations between Centre and States.

2. Hostile relations between Executive and Judiciary.

3. Good relations between two states.

4. Hostile relations between Parliament and Legislature.

Select the correct answer from the code given below:

1. 1 only

2. 1 and 3 only

3. 3 and 4 only

4. All of the above

   Answer: (b)

Q.2 Consider the following statements about NITI Aayog:

1. NITI Aayog is the successor to the erstwhile Planning Commission.

2. NITI Aayog has the power to grant finances to the states.

3. It has no representation from the Union Territories.

   Select the correct answer from the code given below:

1. 1 only

2. 1 and 3 only

3. 3 and 4 only

4. All of the above

   Answer: (a)

QUESTION FOR MAINS EXAMINATION

1. **Cooperative federalism is a healthy concept for the smooth functioning of the government. But this has been weakening in recent times. Substantiate with appropriate examples. What are the measures needed to strengthen Cooperative Federalism?**

PROJECT CHEETAH

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Project Cheetah". The topic "Project Cheetah" has relevance in the Environment and biodiversity Section for the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

What is Project Cheetah?

For Mains:

GS 3: Environment and biodiversity.

What is the importance of Project Cheetah?

What are the challenges?

Solution to the challenges?

Why in the news?

Following the death of three cheetah cubs this week, the Centre on May 25 appointed a new steering committee, comprising national and international experts, to oversee the implementation of Project Cheetah.

What is Project Cheetah?

The Cheetah Project aims to reintroduce the cheetah into the habitat. With a focus on conservation and biodiversity restoration, the project strives to prevent the extinction of the species in India for the second time. By restoring cheetah populations, it hopes to contribute to ecosystem balance, promote scientific research, generate tourism opportunities, and raise awareness about the importance of wildlife conservation.

The 'Action Plan for Introduction of Cheetah in India' was introduced in 2022 by MoEF&CC. In 2022, eight Cheetahs, from Namibia, were relocated to Kuno Palpur National Park, Madhya pradesh.

What is the importance of Project Cheetah?

- **Conservation:** The project focuses on the conservation and restoration of the cheetah in India. By reintroducing cheetahs into the wild, the project aims to prevent their extinction and contribute to biodiversity conservation efforts.

- **Ecosystem Restoration:** Cheetahs play a vital role in the ecosystem as apex predators. Their reintroduction can help restore the natural balance of the ecosystem by controlling prey populations, which in turn can have cascading effects on other species and ecological processes.

- **Tourism and Economic Benefits:** Successful cheetah reintroduction can have positive impacts on tourism, attracting nature enthusiasts, researchers, and wildlife photographers. Increased tourism can contribute to local economies, generating revenue and employment opportunities for communities residing near the cheetah habitats.

- **Scientific Research:** The project provides an opportunity for scientists and researchers to study the behavior, ecology, and adaptations of the cheetah in the habitat. This research can lead to a better understanding of the species and aid in developing effective conservation strategies.

- **Awareness and Education:** The Cheetah project raises awareness about the importance of wildlife conservation and the need to protect endangered species. It can serve as an educational tool to promote environmental consciousness among local communities, schools, and the general public.

What are the Challenges?

- **Habitat Availability:** Ensuring suitable and sufficient habitat is available for cheetahs can be a

significant challenge. Factors such as land fragmentation, human encroachment, and competition with other species may limit the available space for cheetahs to thrive.

- **Prey Availability:** Cheetahs rely on abundant prey populations for survival. Ensuring a sustainable prey base is crucial for the success of the cheetah project. Declining prey species or competition with other predators can pose challenges in maintaining a balanced ecosystem for cheetahs.

- **Human-Wildlife Conflict:** Cheetahs coming into contact with human settlements can lead to conflicts, as they may prey on livestock or face retaliatory actions from local communities.

- **Poaching and Illegal Wildlife Trade:** Cheetahs face the threat of poaching and illegal wildlife trade. Their valuable skin, bones, and other body parts are sought after in illegal markets.

- **Translocation and Adaptation:** Successfully translocating cheetahs to a new habitat and ensuring their adaptation and survival in the wild can be complex. Cheetahs may face challenges related to unfamiliar territories, availability of suitable food and water sources, and interactions with other wildlife.

- **Financial and Institutional Support:** Implementing and sustaining a cheetah project requires significant financial resources, as well as institutional support from government bodies, conservation organizations, and local communities.

Solution to the challenges?

- **Habitat Restoration and Protection:** Implement measures to restore and protect cheetah habitats, including creating wildlife corridors, establishing protected areas, and promoting sustainable land-use practices.

- **Prey Management:** Develop strategies to ensure a sustainable prey base for cheetahs, such as implementing wildlife management plans, monitoring prey populations, and promoting habitat restoration for prey species.

- **Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation:** Employ methods like predator-proof enclosures, improved livestock husbandry practices, and community-based conservation initiatives to mitigate human-wildlife conflicts.

- **Anti-Poaching and Law Enforcement:** Strengthen anti-poaching measures, increase patrols, and enhance collaboration between law enforcement agencies, conservation organizations, and local communities.

- **Translocation and Adaptation Support:** Provide post-release monitoring and support for reintroduced cheetahs, including tracking their movements, ensuring access to water and prey, and addressing any health or adaptation challenges.

- **Funding and Collaboration:** Seek sustained financial support from governments, international organizations, philanthropic foundations, and corporate partnerships.

- **Public Awareness and Education:** Conduct public awareness campaigns to highlight the importance of cheetah conservation, promote the ecological role of cheetahs, and engage local communities in conservation efforts.

Source:

Q.1 Consider the following statements about Cheetah Project:

1.   Cheetahs were relocated from Africa to Kanha National Park, Madhya Pradesh.

2.   Cheetahs were relocated from Tanzania to India.

Select the correct statement(s) from the code given below:

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) None of the above

Answer: (d)

Q.2 Consider the following statements regarding the significance and challenges of the cheetah project:

1.   The cheetah project plays a non-significant role in biodiversity conservation by aiming to reintroduce the cheetah into the habitat.

2.   The project aims to restore the natural balance of ecosystems by controlling prey populations through the reintroduction of cheetahs.

3.   One of the challenges in the cheetah project is ensuring the availability of suitable and sufficient habitat for the cheetahs to thrive.

Select the correct statement(s) from the code given below:

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 2 only

(d) 1 only

Answer: (b)

Q.3 The project "Cheetah" aims to reintroduce the cheetah in India. Discuss the significance of this project and analyze the challenges associated with its implementation. Also, suggest measures to overcome these challenges and ensure the long-term success of the project.

(15 marks)