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APRIL-MAY

2023



PADMA AWARDS



H3N2

**Prelims
&
Mains**

HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ OPEC
- ▶ H3N2
- ▶ SUDAN CRISIS
- ▶ PADMA AWARDS
- ▶ NAMAMI GANGE PROGRAMME

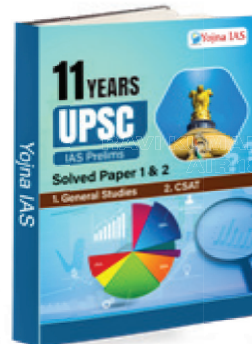
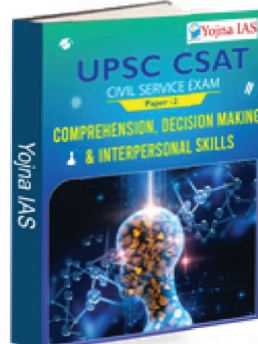
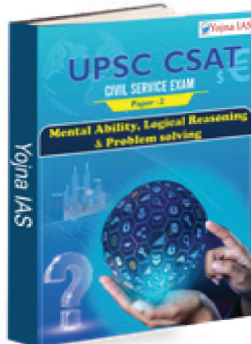
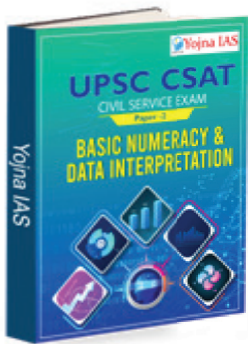


**NAMAMI
GANGE**

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- Economy & Banking
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The Hindu | The Indian Express | The Economic Times | Press Information Bureau PIB News | PRS (Recent Bills and their analysis) | CPCB | NDMA|IDSA: Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis (For in-depth IR and Internal Security articles) | UNESCO World Heritage Convention | BBC | NCERTs All standard reference books.

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FOREWORD

Dear Aspirants,

Every one of you dreams and desires something to accomplish. Nobody can stop you from dreaming. Dreams are the only objective we all have and don't work until we do. Every new day, you dream of motivating yourself for a new purpose of improving your life. Preparing and nourishing the mind. Vanishing the failed person within us. Discard the obstacles, doubts and justifications. And that's how victory will arrive at you. One should realize the most achieving regions in the preliminary and main IAS examination. One should know which editions must be read and which books must be prevented. To achieve an IAS position with the least effort, candidates must be discreet.

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The Book has been arranged in a deeply chronological and story-like manner to make for an exciting reading and easy retention.

We Wish you Good Luck, Keep Believing in Yourself, and if you are well prepared, you will Succeed.

**Team of
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General Studies -2

(Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice
& International Relations)

Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)

This article covers “Daily current events “and the topic is about ‘Free and Open Indo-Pacific’ which is in the news, it covers “International Relations “In GS-2; the following content has relevance for UPSC.

For Prelims: Free and Open Indo-Pacific

For Mains: GS-2, International Relation

WHY IN NEWS:

The visit by the Japanese Prime Minister, Fumio Kishida, to India, in March 2023, during which he engaged with his Indian counterpart, Narendra Modi, on global and bilateral issues, focused on cooperation between the G-7 and the G-20 (Japan and India hold their presidencies, respectively). Besides this, Mr. Kishida also unveiled “Japan’s New Plan for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific” (FOIP) and exchanged views about deepening the “Japan-India Special Strategic and Global Partnership”.



Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)

ABOUT FREE AND OPEN INDO-PACIFIC (FOIP)

The Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) is a strategic concept that refers to an inclusive and rules-based vision for the region, which encompasses the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

- The Free and Open Indo-Pacific concept was first introduced by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2016 and has since been endorsed by several other countries, including the United States, Australia, India, and France.
- The concept has gained significant traction in recent years as a means of countering

China's growing influence in the region and promoting a more inclusive and rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific.

- The concept is aimed at promoting economic growth, development, and regional stability, while also safeguarding the fundamental principles of freedom of navigation and respect for international law.

KEY PILLARS OF THE FREE AND OPEN INDO-PACIFIC STRATEGY

The Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy is built around several key pillars, including:

- **Strengthening Economic Cooperation:** Emphasizes the need to promote free and fair trade, investment, and economic cooperation in the region. This includes supporting the development of regional infrastructure and connectivity, promoting digital transformation, and advancing sustainable development.
- **Strengthening Security Cooperation:** Calls for closer security cooperation and coordination between countries in the region. This includes strengthening maritime security, enhancing disaster response and humanitarian assistance, and promoting the peaceful resolution of disputes.
- **Promoting Democratic Values and Human Rights:** Emphasizes the importance of promoting democratic values and human rights in the region. This includes supporting freedom of expression, the rule of law, and civil society, as well as promoting gender equality and empowerment.
- **Strengthening Science, Technology, and Innovation Cooperation:** Prioritizes cooperation in the areas of science, technology, and innovation, with a focus on promoting research and development, advancing digital transformation, and strengthening cybersecurity.
- **Strengthening Connectivity:** Development of robust connectivity between countries in the region, including through the promotion of high-quality infrastructure projects and digital connectivity.

Overall, Japan's new plan for the Free and Open Indo-Pacific reflects its commitment to promoting a more stable, prosperous, and inclusive region, and highlights the importance of cooperation and collaboration among countries in the Indo-Pacific.

JAPAN'S NEW PLAN FOR FREE AND OPEN INDO-PACIFIC (FOIP)

- The New Plan for the FOIP emphasizes the importance of maintaining the international rules-based order and respecting each other's territorial sovereignty.
- Japan wants to reinforce the idea of the FOIP concept and underlined the current

geopolitical landscape with the ongoing issues of:

- Russia – Ukraine war.
- Growing Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea and the East China Sea.
- Chinese aggression at the Indian Line of Actual Control.
- Violating the territorial sovereignty of Taiwan.

CHALLENGES OF JAPAN'S NEW PLAN FOR FREE AND OPEN INDO-PACIFIC REGION

Japan's new plan for the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) faces several challenges, both domestically and internationally. Some of the key challenges include:

- **China's influence in the region:** China's growing economic and military influence in the Indo-Pacific presents a significant challenge to Japan's FOIP strategy. Japan and other like-minded countries have expressed concern over China's assertiveness in the South China Sea, its Belt and Road Initiative, and its growing military capabilities.
- **Balancing economic and security priorities:** Japan's FOIP strategy aims to balance its economic interests with its security concerns. However, this may prove challenging, as Japan seeks to deepen economic cooperation with China and other regional actors, while also strengthening its security ties with the United States and other partners.
- **Domestic political opposition:** Japan's FOIP strategy has faced opposition from some domestic political groups, who criticize it as being too closely aligned with the United States and too focused on security concerns. There are also concerns about the potential environmental and social impact of large-scale infrastructure projects.
- **Implementation challenges:** Japan's FOIP strategy will require significant resources and coordination among a diverse range of actors, including governments, international organizations, and the private sector. Ensuring effective implementation of the strategy may prove challenging.
- **Coordination among like-minded countries:** Japan's FOIP strategy relies on cooperation and coordination among like-minded countries in the region. However, there are differences in priorities and interests among these countries, which may make coordination and cooperation difficult.

Overall, while Japan's new plan for the FOIP region represents a significant effort to promote a more stable, prosperous, and inclusive region, it faces several significant challenges that will need to be addressed to achieve its objectives.

IMPORTANCE OF FREE AND OPEN INDO-PACIFIC (FOIP) FOR INDIA

The Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) initiative is of significant importance to India due to several reasons:

- **Strategic Location:** India is strategically located in the Indian Ocean region, which is a crucial area of the Indo-Pacific region. The FOIP initiative aims to promote a free and open maritime order in the region, which is in India's interest as it depends heavily on maritime trade.
- **Economic Cooperation:** India's economy is heavily dependent on exports and access to global markets. The FOIP initiative promotes economic cooperation and integration, which can lead to increased trade and investment opportunities for India.
- **Regional Security:** India has concerns regarding China's growing military and economic influence in the region. The FOIP initiative aims to promote a rules-based international order and strengthen regional security cooperation, which can help India counter security threats and maintain regional stability.
- **Multilateral Diplomacy:** India has been actively participating in various multilateral forums, such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the East Asia Summit (EAS), to promote regional cooperation and ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific region. The FOIP initiative provides a platform for India to engage with like-minded countries and promote its interests in the region.

In summary, the FOIP initiative is of significant importance to India as it promotes economic cooperation, and regional security, and provides a platform for India to engage with other countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

Source:

The Hindu

JAL JEEVAN MISSION

This article covers “Daily current events” and the topic is about the ‘Jal Jeevan Mission’ which is in news, it covers “Polity and Governance” In GS-2; the following content has relevance for UPSC.

For Prelims: Jal Jeevan Mission

For Mains: GS-2, Polity and Governance

WHY IN NEWS:

The country crossed another milestone in the journey towards ‘Har Ghar Jal’ on 4th April 2023, with over 11.66 crores (60%) of rural households provided with tap water supply in their homes.



Jal Jeevan Mission

ABOUT JAL JEEVAN MISSION

- Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) is a flagship program of the Government of India that aims to provide safe and adequate drinking water to every household in rural areas of the country. The mission was launched in 2019 and has a target to provide tap water connection to all rural households by 2024.

THE MAIN OBJECTIVES

- To provide functional household tap connections (FHTCs) to every rural household.
- To ensure that every household has access to potable water in adequate quantity of prescribed quality on a regular basis.
- To provide long-term solutions for water security through a comprehensive planning process.
- Under this mission, the government plans to use a community-based approach to ensure the sustainability of water supply systems. The mission also aims to create awareness among the rural population about the importance of water conservation and management.

- The Jal Jeevan Mission is expected to bring significant improvements in the lives of rural people by reducing the drudgery of women and girls, who are traditionally responsible for fetching water from distant sources and improving their health and hygiene.

PRESENT STATUS OF JAL JEEVAN MISSION

- As of April 2023, the Jal Jeevan Mission has made significant progress toward its goal of providing tap water connections to all rural households in India.
- According to the Ministry of Jal Shakti, as of March 2023, around 77% of rural households have been provided with tap water connections, which translates to around 17.54 crore households.
- The implementation of the mission has been a collaborative effort between various government departments, NGOs, and local communities.
- The mission has also witnessed the adoption of innovative technologies and approaches such as greywater management, the rejuvenation of traditional water bodies, and the use of solar pumps to ensure sustainable and long-term solutions for water security.

However, there are still several challenges that need to be addressed, such as inadequate water supply infrastructure in remote and hilly areas, insufficient funds for the mission, and issues related to the quality and reliability of the water supply.

CHALLENGES IN JAL JEEVAN MISSION

The Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) faces several challenges in its implementation, some of which are:

- **Inadequate Water Infrastructure:** Rural areas in India have the limited infrastructure for water supply, which often lacks the capacity to provide safe and adequate drinking water to all households. This results in a lack of access to water supply infrastructure in remote and hilly areas, leading to uneven coverage and inequitable access to the water supply.
- **Insufficient Funds:** The JJM is a massive program that requires a significant amount of funding to implement effectively. The funds allocated for the program may not be adequate, leading to inadequate infrastructure and slow progress in providing tap water connections to rural households.
- **Quality and Reliability of Water Supply:** There are concerns about the quality and reliability of the water supply in some areas, which may hinder the uptake of the mission. The water sources in rural areas may be contaminated with pollutants, which pose health risks to the population.

- **Capacity Building:** The mission requires significant capacity building at the community level to ensure the sustainability of water supply systems. This involves training local communities in the operation and maintenance of water supply infrastructure, as well as the promotion of water conservation and management.
- **Behavioral Change:** Changing the behavior of rural communities towards the use and management of water is critical for the success of the mission. This requires creating awareness about the importance of water conservation and management, as well as promoting the use of water-efficient technologies and practices.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES IN JAL JEEVAN MISSION

The Government of India has taken several initiatives to overcome the challenges faced by the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) and ensure its successful implementation. Some of these initiatives are:

- **Leveraging Technology:** The government is leveraging technology to improve the efficiency of water supply systems and ensure the sustainability of water resources. The use of technologies such as GIS mapping, remote sensing, and mobile applications is helping in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of water supply infrastructure.
- **Capacity Building:** The government is investing in capacity building at the community level to ensure the sustainability of water supply systems. This involves training local communities in the operation and maintenance of water supply infrastructure, as well as promoting water conservation and management practices.
- **Community Participation:** The government is promoting community participation in the Jal Jeevan Mission through the formation of water user committees, which are responsible for the management and operation of water supply infrastructure. This ensures the ownership of the infrastructure by the local communities, which leads to the sustainability of water supply systems.
- **Innovative Financing Models:** The government is exploring innovative financing models such as public-private partnerships, community-led financing, and credit-linked subsidies to mobilize funds for the mission and ensure its timely implementation.
- **Inter-departmental Coordination:** The Jal Jeevan Mission involves the participation of several government departments, such as the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, and Health and Family Welfare. The government is ensuring inter-departmental coordination to ensure the smooth implementation of the mission.
- **Behavioral Change:** The government is promoting behavioral change among rural

communities toward the use and management of water. This involves creating awareness about the importance of water conservation and management, as well as promoting the use of water-efficient technologies and practices.

- **Innovation and Research:** The government is encouraging innovation and research in the water sector to find solutions to the challenges faced by the Jal Jeevan Mission. This includes the development of new technologies and practices for water conservation, management, and supply.

These initiatives are expected to help overcome the challenges faced by the Jal Jeevan Mission and ensure its successful implementation, leading to the provision of safe and adequate drinking water to all rural households in India.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Role of Anganwadi in Jal Jeevan Mission

Anganwadi workers are the primary point of contact for rural communities, and they play a crucial role in:

- **Creating Awareness:** Anganwadi workers create awareness about the importance of safe drinking water and hygiene practices among rural communities. They can educate people about the harmful effects of consuming contaminated water and the benefits of using clean drinking water for their health.
- **Behavioral Change:** Anganwadi workers promote behavioral change towards water conservation and management. They can teach households to adopt practices such as rainwater harvesting, efficient use of water, and proper maintenance of water sources.
- **Water Testing:** There are now 2,078 water testing labs. In 2022-23, 1.03 billion water samples were studied. Anganwadi workers support the testing of water sources for quality parameters such as pH, turbidity, and fluoride content. They can ensure that the water sources meet the quality standards set by the government.
- **Community Mobilization:** Anganwadi workers mobilize communities to participate in the JJM. They can encourage the formation of water user committees and support their capacity building.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Anganwadi workers can monitor the implementation of the JJM in their respective areas and provide feedback to the government. They can report any issues related to the provision of safe drinking water, and ensure timely action is taken to address them.

In summary, Anganwadi centers and workers play a vital role in promoting the JJM by creating awareness, promoting behavioral change, supporting water testing, mobiliz-

ing communities, and monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the mission.

Source:
Hindustantimes

OPEC

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs for UPSC" and the topic is about 'OPEC' which is in news, it covers "INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS" In GS-2; the following content has relevance for UPSC.



OPEC

For Prelims: OPEC

For Mains: GS-2, International Relations

WHY IN NEWS:

The coalition of oil producers known as OPEC+ announced it would cut oil production by 1.66 million barrels per day. That includes a previously announced cut by Russia of 500,000 barrels per day—some of which was likely to drop out of the market anyway because of Western sanctions. Given supply disruptions in Iraq and elsewhere, the actual cut to current global production will be a bit less than 1 million barrels per day.

ABOUT OPEC

- OPEC stands for the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. It is an intergovernmental organization that was founded in 1960 by five countries: Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela. OPEC's headquarters is located in Vienna, Austria.
- The main objective of OPEC is to coordinate and unify the petroleum policies of its member countries and ensure the stabilization of oil markets in order to secure a steady income for its member nations. OPEC is known for its role in influencing global oil prices and production levels.

- As of my knowledge cutoff date is in September 2021, OPEC has 13 member countries, which include Algeria, Angola, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Venezuela. These member countries collectively account for a significant portion of the world's oil reserves and oil production.
- OPEC holds regular meetings where member countries discuss and coordinate their oil production levels and policies. Decisions made by OPEC can have a significant impact on global oil prices and supply, as the organization represents a significant portion of the world's oil production.
- However, OPEC's influence on global oil markets has evolved over time, and its decisions are also influenced by various geopolitical, economic, and environmental factors.

ABOUT OPEC+

- OPEC+ refers to a group of oil-producing countries that includes the member countries of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) as well as a group of non-OPEC oil-producing countries that collaborate with OPEC on oil production and supply management. OPEC was founded in 1960 and currently consists of 13 member countries, primarily located in the Middle East, Africa, and South America, which together account for a significant portion of global oil production.
- In 2016, in an effort to address global oil market challenges and stabilize oil prices, OPEC initiated a partnership with several non-OPEC countries, including Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and others, to coordinate on oil production policies. This partnership between OPEC and non-OPEC countries came to be known as "OPEC+".
- The primary objective of OPEC+ is to collectively manage oil production levels and coordinate supply adjustments in order to stabilize global oil markets and support oil prices. OPEC+ countries hold regular meetings to discuss and agree upon production quotas and other measures aimed at managing oil supply and prices in the global market. The decisions taken by OPEC+ countries, such as production cuts or increases, have the potential to impact global oil prices and have significant implications for oil-consuming and oil-producing countries around the world.

THE CONTEXT BEHIND THE NEWS

- Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, and Russia, among other major oil-producing countries, have planned curbs on oil output that will begin in May. The statement immediately increased crude oil prices.
- The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) acknowledged the crude oil output curbs imposed by major oil-producing countries at its 48th Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee meeting.

WHY ARE OPEC+ COUNTRIES REDUCING CRUDE OIL OUTPUT?

- The decision to reduce crude oil production was made to help market stability.
- Russia declared in February 2023 that it will reduce crude oil production by half a million barrels per day after Western countries limited the price of its crude in reaction to the Ukraine crisis.
- In December 2022, the G-7 group of advanced economies set a price cap of \$60 per barrel for Russian crude oil.
- Furthermore, recent developments in the banking sector in the United States and Europe, such as the failure of Silicon Valley Bank and the upheaval at Credit Suisse, have fueled fears of an impending recession.
- The production decrease is also intended to punish short sellers who bet on falling oil prices.
- Saudi Arabia will reduce 500,000 barrels per day, Iraq 2,11,000 barrels per day, the United Arab Emirates 1,44,000 barrels per day, Kuwait 1,28,000 barrels per day, Kazakhstan 78,000 barrels per day, Algeria 48,000 barrels per day, Oman 40,000 barrels per day, and Gabon 8,000 barrels per day.
- These cuts come on top of the two million barrels per day reduction announced in October 2022. Earlier this year, Russia announced a decrease of 500,000 barrels per day.

IMPACT OF THESE CUTS ON INDIA

According to data from the World Energy Outlook 2021, India ranks third in the world in crude oil imports, trailing only China and the United States, while ranking 21 in crude oil output and 26 in natural gas production. The impact of OPEC cuts on India, like any other country, can be both positive and negative, depending on various factors. Here are some potential impacts:

- **Oil prices:** OPEC cuts, if successful in reducing global oil supply and supporting oil prices, can result in higher oil prices in international markets. This can have a negative impact on India, which is a major oil importer and relies heavily on imported crude oil to meet its domestic energy needs. Higher oil prices can increase India's import bill for oil, leading to higher costs for consumers, businesses, and the economy as a whole. It can also put pressure on India's current account balance and fiscal position.
- **Inflation:** Higher oil prices resulting from OPEC cuts can also lead to inflationary pressures in India, as it may increase the cost of production for various goods and services, including transportation and logistics. This can potentially impact consumer prices, and the central bank may need to take measures to manage inflation, which can have broader economic implications.
- **Fiscal impact:** India, like many other countries, levies taxes on petroleum products, and higher oil prices resulting from OPEC cuts can impact government revenues. If the government chooses to absorb the increased cost by not passing it on to

consumers through higher fuel prices, it may lead to higher fiscal deficits or increased government borrowing, which can impact the country's overall fiscal health and economic stability.

- **Energy security:** OPEC cuts can also impact India's energy security concerns. India has been working towards diversifying its energy sources and reducing its dependence on fossil fuels, including crude oil, by promoting renewable energy and domestic exploration of oil and gas. If OPEC cuts lead to higher oil prices or supply disruptions, it may impact India's energy security plans and strategies.
- **Geopolitical considerations:** OPEC cuts can also have geopolitical implications for India. Some OPEC member countries are major players in global politics, and any changes in their oil production policies or decisions can impact India's geopolitical relations with these countries, as well as other countries involved in the global oil market.

WAY FORWARD

India can take several steps to curb the impact of OPEC cuts on its economy. Here are some potential measures:

- **Diversify energy sources:** India can continue its efforts to diversify its energy sources by reducing its dependence on crude oil and promoting alternative sources of energy, such as renewable energy, nuclear energy, and domestic exploration of oil and gas. This can help reduce India's vulnerability to oil price fluctuations resulting from OPEC cuts and enhance its energy security.
- **Strategic reserves:** India can build and maintain strategic reserves of crude oil to ensure a buffer against supply disruptions or price spikes resulting from OPEC cuts. Strategic reserves can provide a cushion during times of crisis and help stabilize domestic oil supplies.
- **Energy efficiency and conservation:** India can focus on improving energy efficiency in various sectors, including transportation, industry, and buildings, to reduce its overall energy demand and consumption. Conservation measures, such as promoting public transportation, optimizing logistics and supply chains, and promoting energy-saving technologies, can help reduce the impact of higher oil prices resulting from OPEC cuts.
- **Diplomatic engagement:** India can engage in diplomatic efforts to maintain stable and constructive relations with OPEC member countries and other major oil-producing countries. This can involve regular dialogues, negotiations, and collaborations to ensure stable oil supplies and prices that are favorable to India's interests.
- **Economic and fiscal policies:** India can adopt appropriate economic and fiscal policies to manage the impact of OPEC cuts on its economy. This can include measures such as targeted subsidies for vulnerable sectors or consumers, prudent fiscal management to mitigate the impact on government finances, and policy measures

to manage inflationary pressures resulting from higher oil prices.

- **Diversify oil import sources:** India can explore and diversify its sources of oil imports to reduce its reliance on OPEC countries. This can involve increasing oil imports from non-OPEC countries or exploring opportunities for domestic oil production to reduce its vulnerability to OPEC cuts.
- **Strategic alliances:** India can consider forming strategic alliances with other oil-consuming countries or regional organizations to collectively address the impact of OPEC cuts. This can involve joint efforts to negotiate favorable oil supply contracts, pool resources to build strategic reserves or collaborate on energy efficiency and conservation measures.

Source:

Foreignpolicy.com

ONLINE GAMBLING

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs for UPSC” and the topic details “Online Gambling”. Online Gambling. The topic “Online Gambling” has relevance in the “Polity and Governance” section for the UPSC CSE exam.



Online Gambling

For Prelims:

What is Online Gambling?

FOR MAINS:

GS 2: Polity and Governance

What are the issues with Online Gambling?

What are the steps taken by the government to regulate Online Gambling?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi on Monday granted his assent to the re-adopted **Tamil**

Nadu Prohibition of Online Gambling and Regulation of Online Games Bill, 2022. The Governor had earlier returned the Bill, following which the Assembly re-adopted it and sent it to the Raj Bhavan.

What are the key features of the Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Online Gambling and Regulation of Online Games Bill, 2022.?

- It **prohibits online gambling and online games of chance.**
- It establishes the **TN Online Gaming Authority** and empowers it to regulate online game providers.
- The TN Gaming Authority may **identify games of chance** and recommend them to be included in the Schedule of prohibited games.

WHAT IS ONLINE GAMBLING?



Online gambling refers to any form of gambling that takes place over the Internet, such as online casinos, sports betting, poker rooms, and other games of chance.

With the growth of the internet, online gambling has become increasingly popular, as it allows people to play from the comfort of their own homes. There are a wide variety of online gambling sites and games available, and players can typically access them from their computers, smartphones, or other mobile devices.

WHY IS ONLINE GAMBLING GETTING POPULAR AMONG YOUTH?

For any game of chance, the three factors associated are; the excitement it brings, avenues of recreation, and the probability of winning money.

There are several factors that contribute to the popularity of online gambling among youth and other age groups. Here are some possible reasons:

- The convenience of home surroundings.
- The proliferation of the Internet.
- Peer Pressure
- Advertisements on social media and other related forums.
- Escape route for depression and boredom.

WHAT IS THE ISSUE RELATED TO ONLINE GAMBLING?

While online gambling can be a fun and potentially lucrative activity, it can also be harmful and lead to other issues.

- **Addiction:** Online gambling can be highly addictive, especially for young individuals. With the already dependent nature of income, they can turn to other wrong means to generate income. Instances of kidnapping, and stealing are rampant among youth even from well-off families.
- **Fraud and Scams:** Online gambling scams and fraudulent websites can take advantage of the vulnerability of people. They are also blackmailed and coerced online.
- **Underage Gambling:** Online gambling can hamper the academic areas where they may not be able to concentrate to the best of their ability.
- **Social isolation:** The pre-existing addiction to cell phones coupled with chances of earning money can lead an individual to waste their major time with less productivity in Online gambling.
- **Financial issues:** In a game of chance or luck like online gambling there are probabilities that one may spend money with meager chances of gaining it back. This leads to a cycle when a person in an effort to win may end up losing more.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO REDUCE ONLINE GAMBLING?

- **Strong support system and a well-structured treatment:** The role of the family becomes important to provide a support system so that their ward is not inclined to online gambling.
- **Minimal and restricted use of online devices:** There is a need to restrict and minimally use online devices by blocking access to online gambling platforms, uninstalling apps, and avoiding visiting those websites.
- **Other avenues of passing time:** The cultivation of hobbies to get rid of boredom can trigger the escape mechanism. One can involve themselves in reading writing, brain games, etc.
- **Proper management of stress through meditation:** People experience stress that pushes them to relieve themselves through online gaming. An analogy can be made with smoking where a person under stress thinks he can bring calmness through cigarettes.

WAY FORWARD

The recent step taken by the Tamil Nadu government should be welcomed in the spirit that it aims to deter the youth from the scourge of online gambling. There is a need to sensitize the school and family systems to reduce the isolation gap in students which may be pushing them to resort to such activities.

Source:
Business-Standard
Prsindia.org

Public Interest Immunity

This article covers "Daily current affairs for UPSC" and the topic is about 'Public Interest Immunity' which is in news, it covers "Polity and Governance" In GS-2; the following content has relevance for UPSC.



Public Interest Immunity

For Prelims: Public Interest Immunity

For Mains: GS-2, Polity and Governance

WHY IN NEWS:

The Supreme Court last week set aside the Centre's order imposing a broadcast ban on the Malayalam news channel MediaOne. The top court set aside a March 2, 2022 judgment of the Kerala High Court that had upheld the I&B Ministry's order. In making its decision, the High Court had relied on material disclosed solely to it by the Home Ministry in a 'sealed cover'.

ABOUT PUBLIC INTEREST IMMUNITY

- Public Interest Immunity is a legal doctrine that allows a government or public authority to withhold information or evidence from disclosure in court proceedings or other legal proceedings, on the grounds that it would be contrary to the public interest to disclose such information.

- Public Interest Immunity is typically made when there is a conflict between the duty to disclose relevant information in legal proceedings and the need to protect sensitive information or interests that are considered vital to the public interest, such as national security, public safety, diplomatic relations, confidential information, or the conduct of government affairs.
- Public Interest Immunity is often used in cases involving classified information, state secrets, intelligence agencies, and sensitive government operations. The claim is usually made by the government or public authority asserting that the disclosure of the information would have a detrimental effect on the public interest and therefore should be withheld from disclosure.
- However, Public Interest Immunity may be subject to judicial review, and the court will weigh the competing interests of the public interest in non-disclosure against the interests of justice and the rights of the parties involved in the legal proceedings.
- It's important to note that the scope and application of the public interest immunity claim may vary depending on the jurisdiction and the specific circumstances of each case. It is a complex and evolving area of law that is subject to the interpretation and balancing of competing interests, and legal advice should be sought when dealing with issues related to public interest immunity.

CONCEPT OF AMICUS CURIAE

- Article 145 of the Constitution was one of the most compelling reasons for the court to direct the appointment of an amicus. It requires that all Supreme Court decisions be delivered in open court. **Article 145(4)** states that the Supreme Court shall pronounce no judgment except in open Court.
- The concept of “amicus curiae” refers to a Latin term that translates to “friend of the court.” In the legal context, it refers to a person or organization that is not a party to a lawsuit but offers information or expertise to assist the court in making an informed decision.
- An amicus curiae is typically a third-party individual, group, or entity that provides a written brief or oral argument to a court in a case where they have a vested interest or specialized knowledge. The amicus curiae may present legal arguments, policy considerations, or relevant facts that the court may find helpful in reaching a decision. The purpose of an amicus curiae is to provide the court with additional information and perspective on the legal issues at hand.
- Amicus curiae briefs can be submitted in various legal settings, including appellate courts, trial courts, and administrative agencies. They are commonly used in constitutional law cases, where issues of public importance are being litigated, and the court may benefit from a broader range of viewpoints.
- The role of an amicus curiae is advisory in nature, as they do not have a direct stake in the outcome of the case, and their arguments are not binding on the court. However, the court may consider the amicus curiae’s arguments and incorporate them into its

decision-making process.

- In summary, an amicus curiae is a third party that provides additional information and perspective to a court on legal issues, with the aim of assisting the court in reaching an informed decision.

Source:
Indian Express

SUDAN CRISIS

This article covers “Daily current events “and the topic is about ‘SUDAN CRISIS’ which is in news, it covers “International Relations” In GS-2; the following content has relevance for UPSC.

FOR PRELIMS: SUDAN

FOR MAINS: GS-2, International Relations

WHY IN NEWS:

After days of tension between a notorious paramilitary force and the country’s Army, explosions and shooting rocked the Sudanese capital Khartoum on 15 April. Sudan paramilitaries claimed that they have seized the presidential palace.

CONTEXT:

- After weeks of heightened tensions, clashes erupted between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a paramilitary group led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo — commonly known as Hemedti — and the military, led by Lt Gen Abdel Fattah al-Burhan.
- The two generals disagree on Sudan’s projected transition to civilian administration.

SUDAN CRISIS:

Sudan has experienced several crises in recent years, including political, economic, and humanitarian challenges.

POLITICAL CRISIS:

- Sudan began its slow transition to democracy in April 2019, when the generals deposed strongman President Omar al-Bashir amid a popular rebellion.
- Al-Bashir, long ignored by the West, had ruled Sudan for nearly 30 years.
- The military agreed to share power with civilians ahead of elections in an August 2019 deal.

- A coup in October 2021 abruptly ended the arrangement, sparking new huge pro-democracy marches across Sudan.
- Sudan's military has been a dominant power since its independence in 1956. During the 2019-2021 power-sharing agreement, there was a lot of mistrust between the military and the civilian parties.
- The civilian side received credibility from a tenacious protest campaign and international support. The military was supported by rebel factions that benefited from a 2020 peace agreement, as well as veterans of al-Bashir's regime who returned to civil service following the coup.
- The army regained control after the coup, but it was met with weekly protests, repeated isolation, and worsening economic hardships.
- A major source of contention since the revolt has been a civilian demand for military oversight and the incorporation of the formidable RSF into the regular army. Civilians have also demanded the return of profitable military assets in agriculture, trade, and other industries, which serve as a vital source of power for the army.
- Another area of dispute is the pursuit of justice for charges of war crimes committed by the military and its allies during the Darfur War in 2003.

ECONOMIC CRISIS:

- Sudan has been grappling with a severe economic crisis, including high inflation, a currency devaluation, and widespread poverty. Economic challenges have been compounded by decades of mismanagement, corruption, and economic sanctions, which have had a detrimental impact on Sudan's economy and its ability to provide basic services to its population.
- A growing economic crisis that sent the currency plummeting and caused frequent bread and fuel shortages was a major catalyst for al-Bashir's demise.
- In a successful appeal for debt relief and foreign financing, the 2019-2021 transitional government launched dramatic measures monitored by the International Monetary Fund.
- However, after the 2021 coup, billions of dollars in international aid and debt relief were stopped, stalling development projects, straining the national budget, and aggravating an already grave humanitarian situation.

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS:

- Sudan has also faced significant humanitarian challenges, particularly in conflict-affected regions such as Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile. These areas have experienced long-standing conflicts, resulting in displacement of populations, loss of lives, and limited access to basic services such as food, clean water, and healthcare.
- Humanitarian organizations have been working to provide assistance, but challenges persist due to insecurity, lack of access, and resource constraints.

TRIBAL CONFLICTS:

- Sudan has also experienced tribal conflicts in various parts of the country, which are often driven by ethnic, cultural, and resource-based tensions. These conflicts can arise from disputes over land, water, grazing rights, or other resources, and can lead to violence, displacement, and loss of lives.

INTERCOMMUNAL VIOLENCE:

- Sudan has also witnessed intercommunal violence between different ethnic or tribal groups, particularly in areas where there are unresolved disputes over land, resources, or political power. These conflicts can result in clashes, attacks on communities, and displacement of populations.

REGIONAL PICTURE OF SUDAN

- Sudan borders the Red Sea, the Sahel, and the Horn of Africa, all of which are volatile regions.
- Strategic location and agricultural richness: Sudan has attracted regional power players, complicating the possibilities of a successful transition.
- Several of Sudan's neighbours have been affected by political changes and violence, notably Ethiopia, Chad, and South Sudan.
- Sudan's relationship with Ethiopia has been strained in recent years due to disputed farmland along their border, unrest in the Tigray region that has driven tens of thousands of refugees into Sudan, and the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.
- Egypt, which has significant historical ties with Sudan and a tight relationship with its military, has taken a different path with coup supporters.
- The "Quad" of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States has funded mediation in Sudan alongside the African Union and the United Nations.
- Western nations are concerned about the possibility of a Russian base on the Red Sea, which Sudanese military commanders have expressed interest in.

Source:
Mint

JUDICIAL REFORMS

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Judicial Reforms”. The topic “Judicial Reforms” has relevance in the “Polity and Governance” section for the UPSC CSE exam.

JUDICIAL REFORMS

FOR PRELIMS:

What are Judicial Reforms?

What are the important Supreme Court cases?

FOR MAINS:

GS 2: Polity and Governance

What are the issues with Collegium?

What are the steps that can be taken to resolve the issues in the Collegium system?

Way Forward

WHY IN THE NEWS?

On Wednesday, the Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud-led Supreme Court Collegium decided to retract its previous recommendation to transfer S. Muralidhar, the current Chief Justice of the Orissa High Court, to the position of Chief Justice of the Madras High Court.

WHAT IS SUPREME COURT COLLEGIUM?

- The Supreme Court Collegium is a group of the top five senior-most judges of the Supreme Court of India, including the Chief Justice of India.
- The Collegium is responsible for making recommendations for appointments and transfers of judges in the higher judiciary, including the Supreme Court and High Courts of India.

WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT SUPREME COURT CASES?

The “Three Judges Case” refers to a series of landmark judgments delivered by the Supreme Court of India in 1998, which had significant implications for the process of appointment of judges to the higher judiciary in India.

Following are the three cases:

- **The First Judges Case (1981)** upheld the “primacy” of the Chief Justice of India’s recommendations for judicial appointments and transfers, but also established that the Executive could refuse such recommendations for “cogent reasons.” This decision resulted in the Executive having greater influence over the Judiciary in the matter of

judicial appointments for the next 12 years.

- **The Second Judges Case (1993)** introduced the Collegium system and clarified that “consultation” meant “concurrence.” It also ruled that the CJI’s recommendations must reflect the institutional opinion of the Supreme Court, formed in consultation with the two senior-most judges.
- **The Third Judges Case (1998)** expanded the Collegium to a five-member body comprising the CJI and four of his senior-most colleagues. The case arose on a reference from the President, and the judgment further strengthened the Collegium system, giving it greater power in the appointment and transfer of judges to the higher judiciary.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES WITH COLLEGIUM?

There have been several criticisms of the Supreme Court Collegium system over the years. Some of the main issues with the system are:

1. **Lack of transparency:** The Collegium system operates in a largely opaque manner, with no clear criteria or guidelines for the selection of judges. The process of selecting judges is not open to public scrutiny, and there is no way for the public to know how decisions are made.
2. **Lack of diversity:** Critics argue that the Collegium system lacks diversity and perpetuates the dominance of a few powerful judges within the judiciary. There have been concerns that the system does not do enough to address issues of caste, gender, and regional representation in the selection of judges.
3. **Questionable appointments:** There have been instances where the Collegium has recommended the appointment of judges who have been accused of serious misconduct or have questionable backgrounds. This has raised concerns about the lack of accountability in the system.
4. **Delay in appointments:** The Collegium system has also been criticized for delays in the appointment of judges, which can lead to a backlog of cases and affect the functioning of the judiciary.
5. **Lack of checks and balances:** The Collegium system operates without any external checks or balances, which can create the potential for abuse of power. The system does not have any formal mechanism for review or accountability, and decisions made by the Collegium are often final.

WHAT ARE THE STEPS THAT CAN BE TAKEN TO RESOLVE THE ISSUES IN THE COLLEGIUM SYSTEM?

There are several steps that can be taken to address the issues with the Supreme Court Collegium system. Some of these include:

1. **Transparency:** There should be greater transparency in the Collegium system, with clear guidelines and criteria for the selection of judges. The process of selecting judges should be made public, with information on the qualifications, experience,

- and other relevant details of the candidates made available to the public.
2. **Diversity:** The Collegium should make a conscious effort to promote diversity in the selection of judges, taking into account factors such as gender, caste, and regional representation. There should be greater efforts to ensure that the judiciary is representative of the diversity of the country.
 3. **Accountability:** The Collegium system should have a mechanism for review and accountability, with checks and balances to prevent abuse of power. This could include an external oversight body or a system for public feedback on appointments.
 4. **Timeliness:** The process of selecting and appointing judges should be streamlined to minimize delays, ensuring that vacancies are filled promptly and the judiciary is functioning effectively.
 5. **Reform:** There should be a broader discussion on the future of the Collegium system and the possibility of reform. This could involve considering alternative models for the appointment of judges or introducing more formal checks and balances to the existing system.

WAY FORWARD

The Supreme Court Collegium system has faced criticism over the years, but it remains an important mechanism for the appointment of judges to the higher judiciary in India. To ensure that the system functions effectively and meets the needs of the country's legal system, appropriate reforms are needed.

Sources:

<https://indiankanoon.org/doc/1294854/>

NEW IT RULES

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "New IT Rules". The topic "New IT Rules" has relevance in the Governance section for the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE OF IT RULES

FOR PRELIMS:

What are the new IT rules?

FOR MAINS:

GS 2: Governance

What is the significance of New IT rules?

What are the issues related to the New IT Rules?



WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Indian government has recently implemented a new amendment to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, or IT Rules, which grants the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) the authority to establish a **“fact check unit” with the aim of identifying and combating false or misleading online content.**

WHAT ARE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (INTERMEDIARY GUIDELINES AND DIGITAL MEDIA ETHICS CODE) RULES, 2021?

WHAT ARE THE NEW IT RULES?

The new regulations introduced in April 2023 have granted the Indian government sweeping powers to censor content on social media platforms that it deems fake or false, raising concerns about freedom of speech and civil liberties in the country. These regulations are an amendment to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, which were already in place to regulate intermediaries and digital news media.

- **First Originator:** Social media platforms are required to provide technological solutions to identify the first originator of any information, which risks compromising

privacy.

- **Fact Check Unit:** The Fact Check Unit, which has been given unlimited power to decide what information is false, can now compel intermediaries to remove posts deemed fake or false.

WHAT ARE THE CONCERNS RELATED TO THE AMENDMENTS MADE?

The recent amendment to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, has raised concerns due to several reasons.

- The new regulations potentially violate the Supreme Court's judgement in the **Shreya Singhal vs Union of India (2015) case**, which held that a law that limits speech cannot be vague or overbroad.
- The new regulations lack clear definitions for fake news, which gives the government's fact-check unit unchecked power to determine what content people can access online.
- The lack of definition of terms such as "any business" leaves it open to the government's interpretation, which raises concerns about censorship and potential misuse of power.
- The new regulation does not follow the standard practice of enacting comprehensive parliamentary legislation on fake news, grounded in Article 19(2) of the Indian Constitution.
- The new regulations provide that the intermediaries are now required to remove information deemed false by the Fact Check Unit, which leaves only the state to determine what is true.
- This grants the government the power to exercise censorship and decide what information is bogus, which can curtail civil liberties and restrict the press and individuals' right to question authority.

Revised:

WHAT IS THE WAY FORWARD?

Moving forward, there are several approaches that can be taken to address the problem of misinformation and fake news. Rather than relying solely on censorship, a multi-pronged approach involving technology solutions, self-regulation, public awareness, and collaboration between stakeholders can be adopted.

- **Investment in technology:** One potential solution is to invest in technology to identify false information. This can involve developing processes that are capable of detecting fake news.
- **Self-Regulation:** Social media platforms can also adopt self-regulatory measures to prevent the spread of misinformation.
- **Awareness generation:** There is a need to create awareness among the public about the dangers of misinformation and the importance of free speech is crucial.
- **Multi-stakeholder approach:** There is a need to involve government, intermediaries,

and civil society organisations to effectively tackle misinformation.

SOURCES:

<https://prsindia.org/billtrack/the-information-technology-intermediary-guidelines-and-digital-media-ethics-code-rules-2021>

KESAVANANDA BHARATI CASE

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Kesavananda Bharati case”. The topic “Kesavananda Bharati case” has relevance in the Polity section for the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE OF THE KESAVANANDA BHARATI CASE

FOR PRELIMS:

What is the Kesavananda Bharati case?
What is the background behind the case?

FOR MAINS:

GS 2: Polity
What is the Kesavananda Bharati case?
What is the significance of the Kesavananda Bharati case?
What are the issues that have come after the Kesavananda Bharati case?
Way forward

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Chief Justice of India (CJI) D.Y. Chandrachud on Monday announced that the Supreme Court has created a special webpage for the Kesavananda Bharati case in which a 13-judge Bench, the largest constituted in the court's history, through a wafer-thin majority of 7:6, held that Parliament cannot amend the “Basic Structure” of the Constitution.

WHAT IS THE KESAVANANDA BHARATI CASE?

The Kesavananda Bharati case is a landmark judgment in Indian constitutional law, delivered by the Supreme Court of India on April 24, 1973. The case was named after Kesavananda Bharati, the chief of the Edneer Mutt, a Hindu monastery in Kerala, who challenged the constitutional validity of several amendments to the Indian Constitution made by the Parliament.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE KESAVANANDA BHARATI CASE?

- **Principle of Basic Structure:** The case is significant because it established the principle of “basic structure” of the Constitution, which means that certain provisions of the Constitution cannot be amended by the Parliament, as they form the basic framework of the Constitution and are essential to its identity.
- **Limitations on the power of the Parliament:** The Supreme Court held that while the Parliament has the power to amend the Constitution, it cannot use that power to alter or destroy its basic structure.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND BEHIND THE CASE?

The cases leading to the final judgement of the Kesawanand Bharati case are as follows:

- 1951 – Sankari Prasad Case

It held that the amendment power of the parliament is not limited because it can amend any part of the constitution, even Article-368 which provides the power to amend the parliament

- 1967- Golak Nath Vs State of Punjab

The Supreme Court adopted a new approach and held that the parliament that cannot amend Part III of the constitution and made the fundamental right sacrosanct.

- 1973: Kesavananda Bharati Vs State of Kerala

It held that parliament can alter and amend any part of the constitution but it cannot amend the basic structure of the constitution.

The court did not define what constitutes basic structure and it is through the various judgments we know what are the elements of the basic structure.

- Minerva Mills vs. Union of India:

The court reiterated its position on the basic structure and held that ‘the Indian Constitution is founded on the bedrock of the balance between the Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles.

The Parliament can amend the Fundamental Rights for implementing the Directive Principles, so long as the amendment does not damage or destroy the basic structure of the Constitution.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE KESAVANANDA BHARATI CASE?

The Kesavananda Bharati case is significant in Indian constitutional law for several reasons:

- **Basic structure doctrine:** The case held that certain provisions of the Constitution cannot be amended by the Parliament, as they form the basic framework of the Constitution and are essential to its identity. This principle has since become a cornerstone of Indian constitutional law.

- **Limits on the Parliament's power:** The case set important limits on the power of the Parliament to amend the Constitution. While the Parliament has the power to amend the Constitution, it cannot use that power to alter or destroy its basic structure. This protects the fundamental rights of citizens and the independence of the judiciary in protecting the Constitution's basic structure.
- **Judicial review:** The case established the principle of judicial review in India, which means that the judiciary has the power to review the constitutional validity of laws passed by the Parliament. This strengthens the independence of the judiciary and ensures that the Constitution is upheld.
- **Significance for federalism:** The case also upheld the federal character of the Indian Constitution and established the principle that the Parliament cannot alter the federal structure of the Constitution without the consent of the states. This ensures that the states have a significant role in the functioning of Indian democracy.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES THAT HAVE COME AFTER THE KESAVANANDA BHARATI CASE?

There have been several issues that have arisen in the years since the judgment. Some of these issues include:

- **Ambiguity on the contents of 'basic structure':** The Kesavananda Bharati case did not provide a clear definition of what constitutes the "basic structure" of the Constitution, leading to debates and disagreements over what provisions of the Constitution are included in this category.
- **Judicial activism:** Some critics have argued that the Kesavananda Bharati case has led to judicial activism, with the judiciary taking on a more expansive role in interpreting and enforcing the Constitution, sometimes at the expense of the elected branches of government.
- **Disturbed balance of power:** The judgment has given the judiciary a prime position which comes at the cost of the decisions made by the legislature.

WAY FORWARD

Overall, the Kesavananda Bharati case continues to be a significant and debated landmark in Indian constitutional law, with ongoing implications for the functioning of Indian democracy.

Sources:

Book: Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kesavananda-bharati-case-sc-creates-webpage-to-host-petitions-judgments-of-the-historic-1973-fundamental-rights-case/article66772804.ece>

MAHILA SAMMAN SAVING CERTIFICATE (MSSC)

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Mahila Samman Saving Certificate (MSSC)”. The topic “Mahila Samman Saving Certificate (MSSC)” has relevance in the Governance section for the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE OF THE TOPIC “MAHILA SAMMAN SAVING CERTIFICATE (MSSC)”

FOR PRELIMS:

What is Mahila Samman Saving Certificate (MSSC)?
What are the features of the scheme?

FOR MAINS:

GS 2: Governance
What is the significance of the financial inclusion of women?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Prime Minister has urged women to enroll in Mahila Samman Saving Certificate (MSSC).

WHAT IS A MAHILA SAMMAN SAVING CERTIFICATE (MSSC)?

The Mahila Samman Savings Certificate is a one-time savings scheme for women announced by the government in Budget 2023.

WHAT ARE THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE MAHILA SAMMAN SAVING CERTIFICATE (MSSC)?

Its main objective is to encourage women's involvement in investment and enhance their financial inclusion.

This scheme aims to empower women by providing them with a secure and reliable investment option that can help them meet their financial goals.

By promoting women's financial independence and literacy, this program can also help to strengthen their overall socioeconomic status.

WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF THE SCHEME?

- **Guaranteed return:** Being a government government-supported scheme it offers a guaranteed rate of return.
- **Low Deposit limits:** A minimum amount of Rs. 1,000 or any other amount in multiples of Rs. 100.
- **Maturity:** The scheme comes with a lock-in period of two years.
- **Partial withdrawal:** The scheme also offers a partial withdrawal facility to withdraw

your balance before maturity.

- What is the significance of the financial inclusion of women?
- **Empowerment of Women:** It empowers women to take control of their financial lives, enabling them to save money, invest, and make informed financial decisions.
- **Economic well-being of the family:** With women becoming part of the financial system it leads to financial autonomy and the women are in a state to take control of their lives and family at large.
- **Reduce gender disparities** in income and wealth.
- **Promote gender equality**
- **Improve women's access to education and healthcare.**
- **Reduce the vulnerability of women** related to poverty, and strengthen their overall socio-economic status.

Therefore, this scheme will aid in promoting financial inclusion for women. Financial inclusion is crucial for achieving sustainable development goals and creating a more equitable and just society.

Sources:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1920674>

<https://www.etmoney.com/learn/saving-schemes/mahila-samman-saving-certificate/>



General Studies -3

(Technology, Economic Development, Biodiversity,
Security & Disaster Management)



Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details MGNREGS. The topic “MGNREGS” has relevance in the Economy section for the UPSC CSE exam.

Relevance of MGNREGS for UPSC CSE Exam

FOR PRELIMS:

- About MGNREGS.
- Features of MGNREGS.

FOR MAINS:

- GS 3: Economy.
- Government’s emphasis on MGNREGS.
- Performance of MGNREGS over the years.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

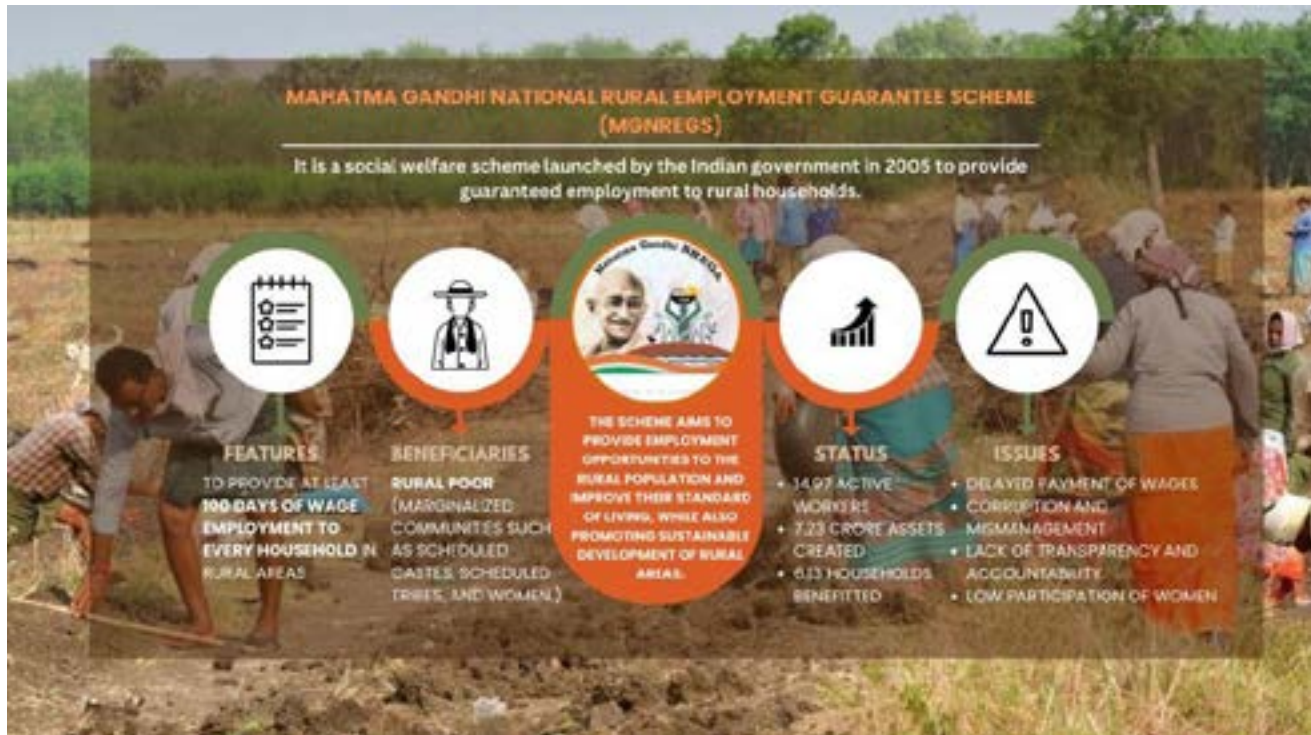
It has been decided by the government that 75 percent of the Anganwadi centers built under the Women and Child Development ministry will be constructed in convergence with the MGNREGS scheme in the current year.



MGNREGS

WHAT IS MGNREGS?

MGNREGS stands for Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. It is a social welfare scheme launched by the Indian government in 2005 to provide guaranteed employment to rural households. It is a statutory scheme under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act.



About mgnregs

WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE OF MGNREGS?

The objective of the scheme is to provide at least 100 days of wage employment to every household in rural areas of India.

The scheme aims to provide employment opportunities to the rural population and improve their standard of living, while also promoting sustainable development of rural areas.

WHO ARE THE TARGET BENEFICIARIES UNDER THE SCHEME?

The target beneficiaries of MGNREGS are rural households in India. The scheme aims to provide employment opportunities to the rural poor, especially those belonging to marginalized communities such as Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and women.

The scheme also has a special focus on employing women, with at least one-third of the total work days reserved for them.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON MGNREGS?

The Indian government has been supportive of MGNREGS and has introduced several policy measures to improve the implementation of the scheme and address the issues associated with it.

SOME OF THE KEY POLICY MEASURES TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT INCLUDE:

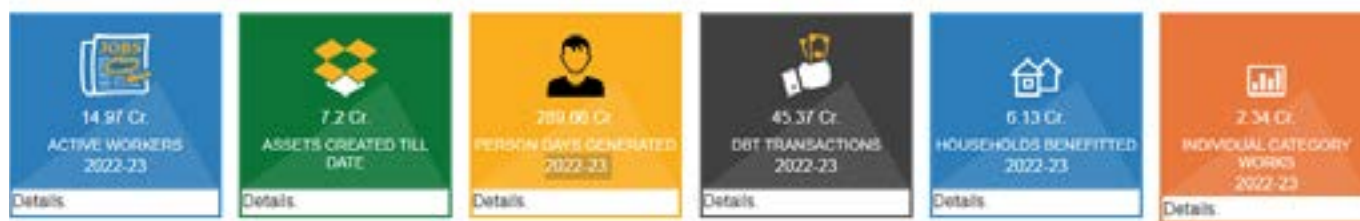
- **Allocation of funds:** The government has increased the allocation of funds for MGNREGS over the years to ensure the availability of resources for the implementation of the scheme.
- **Digitization:** The government has initiated the digitization of MGNREGS to improve transparency and accountability in the implementation of the scheme. The digitization of the scheme includes the use of technology such as biometric authentication, electronic fund management systems, and mobile applications.
- **Real-time monitoring:** The government has established a real-time monitoring system for MGNREGS to track the progress of the scheme and ensure timely intervention in case of any issues.
- **Social audits:** The government has introduced the concept of social audits, which involves the participation of beneficiaries and civil society organizations in the monitoring of the implementation of the scheme.
- **Expansion of scope:** The government has expanded the scope of MGNREGS by including new projects such as water conservation, afforestation, and rural sanitation to create more employment opportunities for the rural poor.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES WITH MGNREGS?

While MGNREGS has been successful in providing employment opportunities and improving the livelihoods of the rural poor, there are several issues associated with the scheme that need to be addressed. Some of the issues are

- **Delayed payment of wages:** One of the major issues with MGNREGS is the delayed payment of wages to the beneficiaries. This can lead to financial hardships for the households and defeats the purpose of employment as a means of livelihood.
- **Corruption and mismanagement:** Another issue with MGNREGS is the prevalence of corruption and mismanagement in the implementation of the scheme. This can lead to inefficiencies in the allocation of work and resources, and also deprive the eligible beneficiaries of their entitlements.
- **Lack of transparency and accountability:** There is a lack of transparency and accountability in the implementation of MGNREGS, which leads to a lack of trust among the beneficiaries. The lack of information about the availability of work, wages, and other entitlements can lead to confusion and dissatisfaction among the beneficiaries.
- **Low participation of women:** Although the scheme has a special focus on employing women, their participation in the scheme remains low. This is due to various social and cultural factors that restrict the mobility of women and their access to work.
- **Limited impact on poverty reduction:** While MGNREGS has provided employment opportunities to the rural poor, its impact on poverty reduction has been limited. The scheme needs to be complemented with other initiatives that focus on improving the access of the rural poor to education, health, and other basic services.

HOW HAS BEEN THE PERFORMANCE OF MGNREGS OVER THE YEARS?



- **97 Crore** – ACTIVE WORKERS (2022-23)
- **2 Crore** – Assets created to date
- **37 Crore** – Debt transactions
- **13 Crore** – Household benefitted (2022-23)
- **34 Crore** – Individual Category workers (2022-23)

WHAT IS THE PERFORMANCE OF MGNREGS?

WAY FORWARD

To ensure the continued success of MGNREGS, there are several ways forward that the government can consider. Some of the key strategies are

- **Addressing issues related to the timely payment of wages:** The government needs to ensure the timely payment of wages to the beneficiaries to ensure the sustainability of the scheme
- **Strengthening the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms:** This can be achieved by establishing effective feedback mechanisms and by involving beneficiaries and civil society organizations in monitoring the implementation of the scheme.
- **Promoting the participation of women and marginalized communities:** The government can promote the participation of women and marginalized communities in MGNREGA by addressing the social and cultural barriers that restrict their access to work.
- **Enhancing the skill development of beneficiaries:** This can be achieved by providing them with training opportunities in areas such as entrepreneurship, financial management, and digital literacy.
- **Integrating MGNREGS with other rural development initiatives:** The government can integrate MGNREGS with other rural development initiatives to create a comprehensive approach to rural development. This can include initiatives related to rural infrastructure, agriculture, health, and education.

Sources:
Downtoearth

PADMA AWARDS

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Padma Awards”. The Topic “Padma Awards” have relevance in the “Polity” section for the UPSC CSE exam.



Padma Awards

ABOUT PADMA AWARDS

FOR PRELIMS:

What are Padma Awards?

What are the types of Padma Awards?

For Mains:

GS 3: Polity and Governance

Significance of Padma Awards

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Recently the President of India distributed the Padma Awards.

WHAT ARE PADMA AWARDS?

The Padma Awards are one of the highest civilian honors in India, awarded annually by the Government of India on the occasion of Republic Day (26th January) to recognize exceptional contributions made by individuals in various fields. The award was instituted in 1954 and has three categories: Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Shri.

‘Padma Vibhushan’ is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service; ‘Padma Bhushan’ for distinguished service of high order and ‘Padma Shri’ for distinguished service in any field.

WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF PADMA AWARDS?



TYPES OF PADMA AWARDS

10 Padma Vibhushan is the second-highest civilian award in India, after the Bharat Ratna.

- It is awarded for **exceptional and distinguished service** in any field, including service rendered by government servants.
- The award was instituted on 2 January 1954, and since then, it has been conferred on many eminent personalities from various fields.
- Some of the notable recipients of the Padma Vibhushan include former President of India Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, industrialist Ratan Tata, former Prime Minister of India Atal Bihari Vajpayee, scientist CNR Rao, musician Pandit Ravi Shankar, actor Dilip Kumar, and many more.
- The award consists of a medal and a citation, and the President of India presents it at a ceremony held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.
- The nomination process for the award is open to the public, and a committee of experts evaluates the nominations before making their recommendations to the President of India.

PADMA BHUSHAN

- Padma Bhushan is the third-highest civilian award in India, after the Bharat Ratna and Padma Vibhushan. It is awarded for **distinguished service of high order in any field**, including service rendered by government servants.
- The award was instituted on 2 January 1954, and since then, it has been conferred

on many eminent personalities from various fields.

- Some of the notable recipients of the Padma Bhushan include cricketer Sachin Tendulkar, former Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh, industrialist Ratan Tata, actor Amitabh Bachchan, singer Lata Mangeshkar, and many more.
- The award consists of a medal and a citation, and the President of India presents it at a ceremony held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.
- The nomination process for the award is open to the public, and a committee of experts evaluates the nominations before making their recommendations to the President of India.

PADMA SHRI

- Padma Shri is the fourth-highest civilian award in India, after the Bharat Ratna, Padma Vibhushan, and Padma Bhushan. It is awarded for **distinguished service in any field**, including service rendered by government servants.
- The award was instituted on 2 January 1954, and since then, it has been conferred on many eminent personalities from various fields.
- Some of the notable recipients of the Padma Shri include sportspersons Mary Kom and Saina Nehwal, classical dancer Birju Maharaj, filmmaker Adoor Gopalakrishnan, social activist Arvind Kejriwal, and many more.
- The award consists of a medal and a citation, and the President of India presents it at a ceremony held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.
- The nomination process for the award is open to the public, and a committee of experts evaluates the nominations before making their recommendations to the President of India.

LIST OF AWARDEES IN 2023

Padma Vibhushan (6)

- Shri Balkrishna Doshi (Posthumous) (Others – Architecture)
- Shri Zakir Hussain (Art)
- Shri S M Krishna (Public Affairs)
- Shri Dilip Mahalanabis (Posthumous) (Medicine)
- Shri Srinivas Varadhan (Science & Engineering)
- Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav (Posthumous) (Public Affairs)

Padma Bhushan(9)

- Shri S L Bhyrappa (Literature & Education)
- Shri Kumar Mangalam Birla (Trade & Industry)
- Shri Deepak Dhar (Science & Engineering)
- Vani Jairam (Art)
- Swami Chinna Jeeyar (Others – Spiritualism)
- Suman Kalyanpur (Art)
- Shri Kapil Kapoor (Literature & Education)

- Sudha Murty (Social Work)
- Shri Kamlesh D Patel (Others – Spiritualism)

Source:
PIB

FAKE NEWS

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Fake News”. The topic “Fake News” has relevance in the “Polity and Governance” section for the UPSC CSE exam.



Fake News

FOR PRELIMS:

- What is Fake News?
- What are the provisions in Indian law to prevent the spread of Fake News?

FOR MAINS:

GS 3: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

- *Causes for the Spread of Fake News*
- *Challenges in Dealing with Fake News*
- *Measures to Stop the Spread of Fake News*

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Recently the government has declared that fake news will be tagged by PIB and the platform hosting it must pull it down. The government has changed the IT laws and has made it clear that the hosting platforms will no longer enjoy legal immunity on content posted by their users; platforms can now be called a party in court proceedings.

WHAT IS FAKE NEWS?

Fake news refers to intentionally false or misleading information presented as if it were legitimate news. The rapid proliferation of social media has propelled the spread of

fake news in India. The concept of Fake news is not new but what is worrying is the speed at which it can spread and create misinformation.



What is fake news

WHAT ARE THE PROVISIONS IN INDIAN LAW TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF FAKE NEWS?

In India, there are various provisions in the law to prevent the spread of fake news. Some of the key provisions are as follows:

- **Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC):** This provision makes it a criminal offense to promote enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc. by making or spreading false statements.
- **Section 295A of the IPC:** This provision criminalizes deliberate and malicious acts that are intended to outrage religious feelings.
- **Section 66D of the Information Technology Act (IT Act):** This provision makes it an offense to cheat someone through fraudulent or dishonest representation using a computer resource or communication device.
- **The Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995:** This Act empowers the government to regulate cable television networks and take action against them for broadcasting objectionable content.
- **The Press Council Act, 1978:** This Act establishes the Press Council of India, which has the power to censure or admonish newspapers or news agencies for publishing fake news.

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF THE SPREAD OF FAKE NEWS?

The spread of fake news is a complex phenomenon with multiple causes. The issue is the damage it can cause and the speed with which it can create a misinformation campaign. Here are some of the key factors that contribute to the spread of fake news:

- **Exponential growth in the use of Social media:** It is a double-edged sword. Social media platforms have made it easier than ever before to create and share content. However, this also means that fake news can spread rapidly and widely, often without being fact-checked.
- **Confirmation bias:** People tend to believe information that confirms their pre-existing beliefs, and this bias can make them more susceptible to fake news. For example, majoritarian ideas without any scientific validation are easily absorbed by people.
- **Lack of media literacy:** Many people lack the skills and knowledge to critically evaluate news sources and identify fake news. For example, any kind of information available on the internet is considered gospel truth.
- **Political polarisation:** In highly polarised societies, fake news can be used as a tool to manipulate public opinion and reinforce existing biases. For example, a lot of fake narratives are spread during the time of the election. By the time the information is verified the damage is already done.
- **Malicious intent:** Some individuals or groups intentionally spread fake news to sow discord, create chaos, or promote their own agenda.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES IN DEALING WITH FAKE NEWS?

In order to deal with fake news it is important to take cognizance of certain of the challenges associated with it. They are as follows:

- **Fast-paced dissemination:** Fake news can spread rapidly through social media platforms and other online channels, making it difficult to contain and control its spread.
- **Limited resources:** Fact-checking and verifying fake news sources requires time, effort, and resources, which can be a challenge for many news organizations and individuals.
- **Technological advancements:** The use of deep fakes and other advanced technologies makes it increasingly difficult to distinguish between real and fake news. For example, the fake speeches of political leaders can manipulate election outcomes.
- **Jurisdictional challenges:** In some cases, it can be difficult to take legal action against those who spread fake news, particularly if they are located in another jurisdiction. Social media sites claim that they have no control over the content. They are only a medium and not the producer of information.
- **Free speech concerns:** There are concerns that efforts to combat fake news may infringe upon free speech rights, which can make it challenging to find effective

solutions. The Minister of Information has clarified that this move should not be considered an attack on free speech but an attack on misinformation.

WHAT ARE THE MEASURES TO STOP THE SPREAD OF FAKE NEWS?

There are several measures that can be taken to stop the spread of fake news. Here are some of the key steps that individuals, organizations, and governments can take:

- **Promote media literacy:** Education and awareness campaigns can help individuals learn how to identify fake news, fact-check sources, and evaluate information critically. There is a need to educate people to be mindful of any kind of news they encounter
- **Encourage fact-checking:** News organizations and social media platforms can promote fact-checking of fake news by providing tools and resources that make it easier for people to verify the information. There is a need to fund organizations and individuals who are regularly engaged in fact-checking.
- **Strengthen the quality and ethical journalism:** High-quality journalism that adheres to ethical standards and fact-checking protocols can help to counter the spread of fake news. It has been seen at times that media houses run news without any verification. The apology and corrections are late.
- **Develop technological solutions:** AI-powered tools that can identify and flag fake news can help to limit its spread.
- **Enforce existing laws:** Governments can use existing legal provisions to take action against those who spread fake news, such as by imposing fines or penalties. There is a need to uphold the law objectively without conjuring political affiliations.

WAY FORWARD

Overall, stopping the spread of fake news will require a collaborative effort that involves individuals, organizations, and governments. By taking proactive steps as mentioned above we can work together to combat the spread of fake news and ensure that accurate information is widely available.

Sources:
The Hindu

PM KISAN (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi)

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details the PM KISAN scheme. The topic is important about how government support is needed because farmers are facing an agrarian crisis. Erroneous monsoons, non-remunerative incomes, and fragmented land holdings are some causes of agrarian distress.



Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi

FOR PRELIMS:

About PM KISAN – Features, and comparison with similar schemes

For Mains: GS 3, Agriculture.

- Scheme Features: Past Performance and future possibilities
- Role of income support measures in Indian agriculture.
- Role of Government Initiatives to augment farmers' Incomes.

Content of the Article:

1. Why in news
2. Status of Scheme:
3. Objectives of the Scheme
4. Origin of the Scheme
5. Features of the scheme
6. Issues related to the scheme
7. Way Forward

WHY IN NEWS:

Recently, PM released the 13th installment amount amounting to Rs. 16,800 crores to more than 8 crore beneficiary farmers.

STATUS OF PM KISAN SCHEME

More than 11 crore farmer families, primarily the small and marginal, have received over 2.25 lakh crores of funds through the PM-KISAN initiative. During the Covid lockdown, multiple installments of Rs. 1.75 lakh crores were distributed to support these needy farmers. The Scheme has been beneficial for more than three crore women beneficiaries who have collectively received over Rs. 53,600 crores.

The funds provided through the initiative have spurred rural economic growth, eased credit constraints for farmers, and boosted agricultural investments. It has also led to an increase in farmers' risk-taking capacity, resulting in more investments. IFPRI has reported that the PM-KISAN funds are helping recipients meet their agricultural needs and other expenses such as education, medical care, and marriage.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PM KISAN SCHEME

PM-Kisan is a scheme launched by the Government of India to provide income assistance to farmers across the country. The primary objective of PM-Kisan is to supplement the income of small and marginal farmers and to ensure that they have enough money to meet their agricultural needs and household expenses.



Some of the specific objectives of PM-Kisan are:

- Providing direct income support to farmers: PM-Kisan provides direct support of Rs. 6,000 per year to eligible farmers, which is paid in three equal installments of Rs. 2,000 each.
- Ensuring timely availability of inputs: The scheme aims to ensure the timely availability of agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides, by providing additional funds to farmers.
- Increasing agricultural productivity: By providing financial assistance to farmers, PM-Kisan aims to increase agricultural productivity and improve the overall economic condition of farmers.
- Reducing farm distress: The scheme seeks to reduce farm distress and alleviate the financial burden on farmers, thereby reducing the incidence of farmer suicides.
- Promoting inclusive growth: PM-Kisan aims to promote inclusive growth by ensuring that the benefits of the scheme reach all farmers, especially those who are financially weaker and do not have access to formal credit.

ORIGIN OF THE PM KISAN

The Rythu Bandhu Scheme is a precursor to the PM KISAN scheme. The Government of Telangana started the Rythu Bandhu scheme under which it disbursed a certain sum twice a year to augment farmers' investments in agriculture. The scheme was widely recognized and appreciated for its direct support to farmers.

Building on Rythu Bandhu's success, the Indian Government launched Pradhan Mantri

Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana (PM KISAN) a similar farmer's investment support scheme to offer financial assistance to farmers nationwide.

While the Rythu Bandhu scheme of Telangana and the PM-Kisan scheme share similarities in their objective of providing direct income support to farmers, they differ in their implementation and scope.

- **Eligibility criteria:** The eligibility criteria for the two schemes are different. Rythu Bandhu is a state-level scheme that is available to all farmers in Telangana, regardless of their landholding size, while PM-KISAN is a central scheme that provides income support to small and marginal farmers all across the country.
- **Mode of assistance:** Under the Rythu Bandhu scheme, farmers receive a fixed amount of money per acre of land that they own, while under PM-KISAN, eligible farmers receive direct cash transfers of Rs. 6000 per annum, payable in three installments.
- **Timing of disbursement:** The Rythu Bandhu scheme provides assistance to farmers before the sowing season, while PM-KISAN provides assistance throughout the year in three installments.
- **Funding:** While Rythu Bandhu is entirely funded by the Telangana state government, PM-KISAN is funded by the central government.

FEATURES OF PM-KISAN

Some of the key features of this scheme have been discussed below:

- **Income Support:** The primary feature of this scheme is the income support it provides to eligible farmers.
- **Eligibility Criteria:** All landholding farmer households in the country are eligible under PM KISAN but they are subject to certain exclusion criteria.
- **Direct Transfer:** The scheme provides direct benefit transfer (DBT) to the farmers' bank accounts. The funds are transferred in three installments of Rs. 2000 each, every four months.
- **Central Sector Scheme:** The funds for the scheme are allocated to the states and Union Territories by the Central Government.
- **Role of States:** The state governments are responsible for identifying the eligible beneficiaries and transferring the funds to their bank accounts.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The scheme is monitored and evaluated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare. A Grievance Redressal Mechanism has also been established to address any issues faced by the farmers.

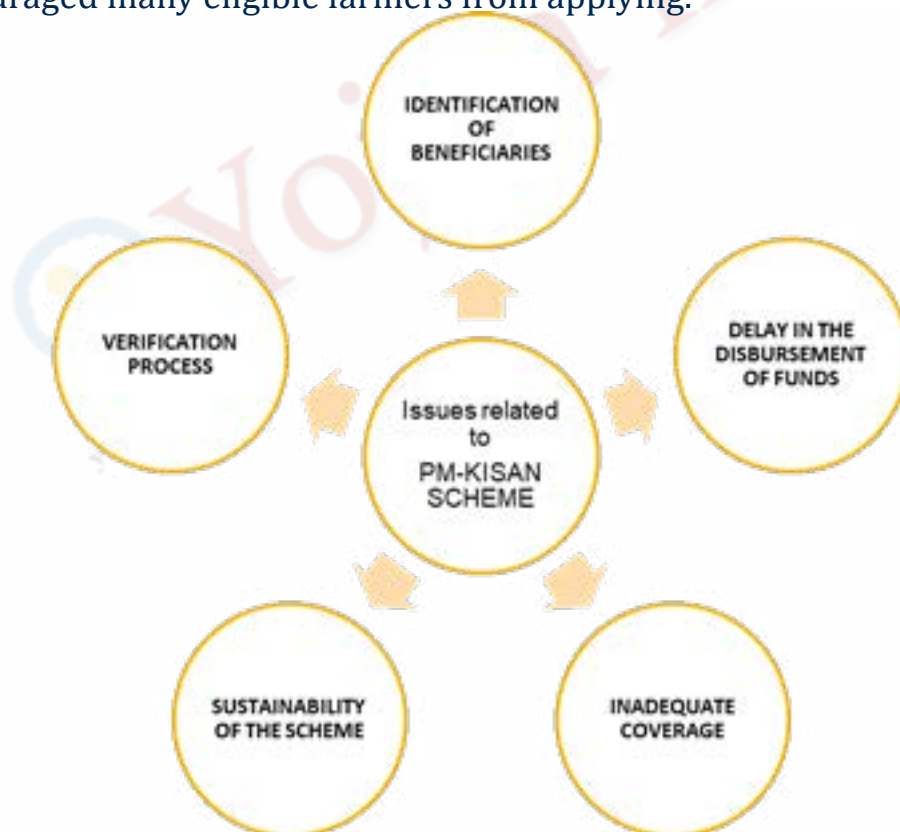
ISSUES RELATED TO THE PM KISAN

Undoubtedly, the PM-KISAN scheme has been successful in providing financial support to farmers and their families, but there are some issues related to the scheme that has been identified.

- **Identification of beneficiaries:** There have been reports of errors in the beneficiary

list, with some eligible farmers being excluded, while others who do not meet the eligibility criteria have received the benefits. This has resulted in a lack of transparency and accountability in the selection process.

- Delay in the disbursement of funds: Some farmers have reported that they have not received the funds on time, which has affected their ability to invest in their crops and purchase necessary inputs. This delay can be attributed to various factors such as inadequate infrastructure, technical glitches, and bureaucratic procedures.
- Inadequate coverage: The scheme's coverage is limited to small and marginal farmers, and the support provided may not be sufficient to address the challenges faced by larger farmers. This has resulted in some farmers being left out of the scheme's ambit.
- Sustainability of the scheme: The PM-KISAN scheme provides income support to farmers, but it does not address the structural issues that affect agriculture, such as low productivity, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of access to credit.
- Verification process: Some farmers have reported that the verification process to avail of the benefits under the scheme is cumbersome and time-consuming, which has discouraged many eligible farmers from applying.



WAY FORWARD

PM KISAN has been a great initiative to provide timely income support to farmers, This enables them to purchase inputs through the money disbursal thrice a year. To ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the PM-KISAN scheme, the following steps can

be taken:



Details on the PM-KISAN scheme

- **Strengthening the identification process:** The government should take steps to strengthen the identification process to ensure that all eligible farmers are included in the scheme. This can be done through the use of technology such as satellite imagery and Aadhaar-based verification.
- **Timely disbursement of funds:** The government should ensure that the funds are disbursed on time to avoid delays that affect farmers' ability to invest in their crops and purchase necessary inputs.
- **Increasing the coverage:** The scheme's coverage can be expanded to include more farmers and provide them with sufficient support to meet their needs.
- **Addressing sustainability concerns:** The government should take steps to address the structural issues that affect agriculture, such as low productivity, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of access to credit. This can be done through measures such as investing in agriculture research, improving irrigation facilities, and providing credit to farmers.
- **Creating awareness:** The government should create awareness about the scheme among farmers to ensure that all eligible farmers apply for and receive the benefits.
- **Regular monitoring and evaluation:** Regular monitoring and evaluation of the scheme can help identify gaps and areas for improvement, leading to better implementation of the scheme.

In conclusion, the PM-KISAN scheme has the potential to provide much-needed support

to farmers and their families. By addressing the concerns and taking the necessary steps, the government can ensure the scheme's effectiveness and sustainability in the long run.

Source:
Pmkisan
Rythubandhu
PIB
Groww
Grainmart.in

Namami Gange Programme

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Namami Gange Programme". Namami Gange is the flagship scheme of the government to reduce pollution and rejuvenate the River Ganga. The topic "Namami Gange" has relevance in the "Environment" section for the UPSC CSE exam.



Namami Gange Programme

FOR PRELIMS:

- What is Namami Gange?
- What are the features of the Namami Gange programme?

Which ministry is involved in the implementation of the Namami Gange programme?

FOR MAINS

GS 3:Environment

- *What is the status of the Namami Gange programme?*
- *What are the issues and challenges in the implementation of the Namami Gange programme?*
- *What are the measures required for the success of the Namami Gange programme?*

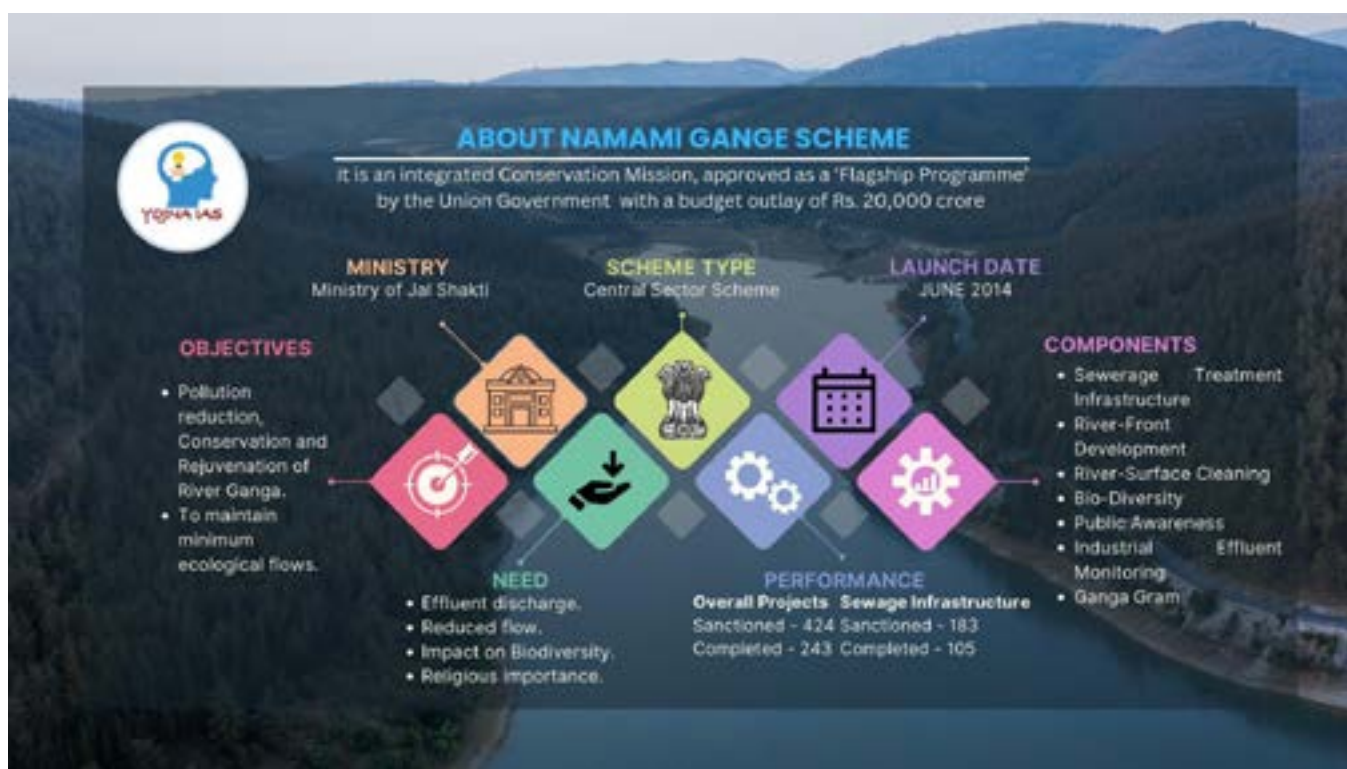
- *Way forward*

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Namami Gange Signs Agreement With 49 Universities To Inspire Youth Towards Water Conservation & River Rejuvenation.

WHAT IS THE NAMAMI GANGE PROGRAMME?

'Namami Gange Programme', is an integrated Conservation Mission, approved as a 'Flagship Programme' by the Union Government in June 2014 with a budget outlay of Rs. 20,000 crores.



Namami Gange Programme

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE NAMAMI GANGE PROGRAMME?

The schema aims to achieve the objectives of effective pollution reduction, conservation, and rejuvenation of the National River Ganga.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN PILLARS OF THE NAMAMI GANGE PROGRAMME?

Namami Gange is built on an integrated approach that focuses on other areas linked to the conservation of the river. The main pillars associated with Namami Gange are as follows:

- **Sewerage Treatment Infrastructure:** This involves the development of infrastructure intended for the proper disposal and treatment of sewage waste.
- **River-Front Development:** This involves the development of the riverfront for

conservation and recreational purposes.

- **River-Surface Cleaning:** This involves the cleaning of the river surface of the various contaminants which are of polluting nature.
- **Biodiversity:** This aims to preserve the flora and fauna attached to the river, Afforestation
- **Public Awareness:** This aims to make the people in the adjoining areas to cooperate and participate in the cleaning of the river.
- **Industrial Effluent Monitoring:** This involves checking the sources of pollution. This may involve factories and industries which are producing toxic wastes.
- **Ganga Gram:** The villages situated on the bank of River Ganga will be developed in a holistic way.

WHICH MINISTRY IS INVOLVED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAMAMI GANGE PROGRAMME?

- Namami Gange is being operated under the Department of Water Resources, River Development, and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti.

WHAT IS THE GOVERNING STRUCTURE OF THE NAMAMI GANGE PROGRAMME?

- The Namami Gange programme envisages a five-tier structure at the national, state, and district levels to take measures for prevention, control, and abatement of environmental pollution in river Ganga and to ensure continuous adequate flow of water so as to rejuvenate the river Ganga as below:

WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE NAMAMI GANGE PROGRAMME?

Overall Projects

Sanctioned – 424

Completed – 243

SEWAGE INFRASTRUCTURE

Sanctioned – 183

Completed – 105

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAMAMI GANGE PROGRAMME?

While the programme has made some progress toward achieving its objectives, it still faces several issues and challenges that affect its implementation. Some of these issues and challenges are:

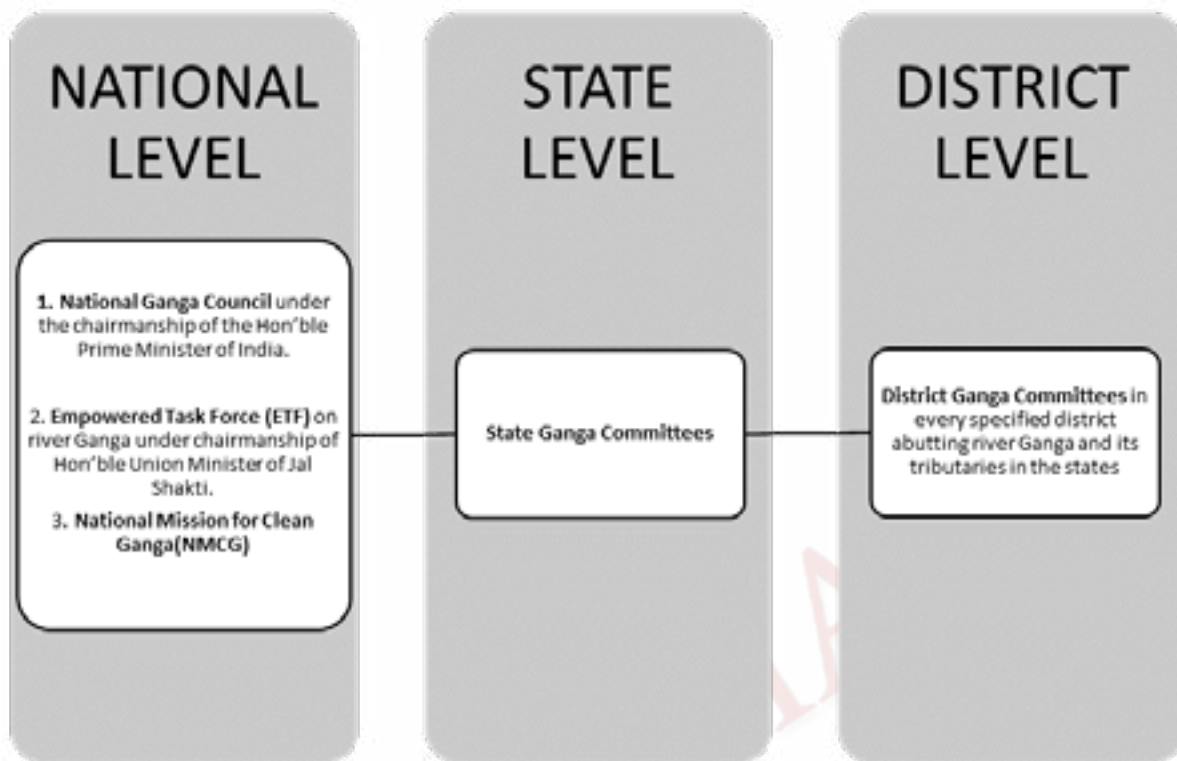
- **Coordination:** The Namami Gange programme involves multiple stakeholders, including various government departments, state governments, NGOs, and private entities. The coordination between these stakeholders has been a challenge, and

effective collaboration is essential to achieve the programme's objectives.

- **Disposal of waste:** One of the significant challenges is the disposal of waste generated from various sources. The waste management infrastructure is inadequate, and waste disposal into the river continues to be a problem.
- **Lack of Awareness:** Despite various campaigns to create awareness, the general public's lack of awareness of the importance of the river and the need for its conservation remains a challenge.
- **Industrial Pollution:** Industries located along the river banks are a major source of pollution. These industries continue to release toxic effluents into the river, affecting the water quality and aquatic life.
- **Limited Focus:** The programme has mainly focused on surface cleaning and building infrastructure. Long-term sustainable measures are yet to be put in place, and it is essential to shift the focus towards river ecology and conservation.



Namami Gange Organizational Chart



Structure of Namami Gange Programme

WHAT ARE THE MEASURES REQUIRED FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE NAMAMI GANGE?

Several measures are required for the success of the Namami Gange programme, some of which are:

- **Effective coordination:** The programme involves multiple stakeholders, and effective coordination is critical to its success. The government should establish a mechanism to facilitate coordination between the various stakeholders, including state governments, NGOs, and private entities.
- **Improved waste management:** The programme should focus on improving waste management infrastructure to prevent the disposal of waste into the river. The government should establish waste treatment plants and enforce strict regulations on the disposal of waste.
- **Public awareness:** Creating awareness among the general public about the importance of the river and the need for its conservation is essential. The government should launch awareness campaigns to educate the public about the benefits of a clean river and encourage their participation in conservation efforts.
- **Industrial pollution control:** The government should enforce strict regulations on industries located along the river banks to prevent the release of toxic effluents into the river. Industries should be encouraged to adopt sustainable practices and technologies to reduce their environmental impact.

- **Focus on river ecology and conservation:** Namami Gange programme should shift its focus towards long-term sustainable measures such as the restoration of the river ecology and conservation of the river's biodiversity. The government should explore scientific and technological solutions to achieve this objective.

WAY FORWARD

There is a need for a sustained focus on the cleaning of the river Ganga as it has a deep impact on the environment and biodiversity. Adequate funding, improved coordination, plugging sources of pollution, checking the discharge of effluents, and raising public awareness is the key. Thus, a multi-stakeholder and integrated approach is needed for the successful implementation of the Namami Gange Programme.

Sources:
nmcg

Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA)

This article covers "Daily current events" and the topic is about 'Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA)' which is in news, it covers "Economics" In GS-3; the following content has relevance for UPSC.

For Prelims: Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA)

For Mains: GS-3, Economics

WHY IN NEWS:

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has registered a case against the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) India under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) for alleged foreign exchange violation.

ABOUT FOREIGN EXCHANGE MANAGEMENT ACT (FEMA):

- The Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) is a law enacted by the Government of India in 1999 to consolidate and amend the laws relating to foreign exchange transactions, external trade, and payments in India. FEMA replaced the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA) that was enacted in 1973.
- FEMA aims to regulate and manage foreign exchange transactions in India and facilitate external trade and payments. It provides guidelines and regulations for various types of foreign exchange transactions, such as those related to current account transactions (such as trade in goods and services, remittances, etc.) and capital account transactions (such as foreign investments, borrowing, lending, etc.). FEMA also governs the acquisition, holding, transfer, and disposal of immovable properties by non-residents in India.

- Under FEMA, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is the primary regulatory authority responsible for administering and enforcing the foreign exchange regulations in India. FEMA empowers the RBI to issue regulations, notifications, and guidelines to regulate foreign exchange transactions, and violators can face penalties, fines, and even imprisonment for non-compliance.
- FEMA has been periodically amended to reflect changing economic and financial conditions in India, and it plays a crucial role in regulating and managing India's foreign exchange transactions and external trade. It is essential for individuals, businesses, and entities involved in foreign exchange transactions in India to be aware of and comply with the provisions of FEMA to avoid any legal or financial repercussions.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE FOREIGN EXCHANGE MANAGEMENT ACT (FEMA) ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- **Regulation of Foreign Exchange Transactions:** FEMA aims to regulate and manage foreign exchange transactions in India. It provides a legal framework for the conduct of various types of foreign exchange transactions, including current account transactions (such as trade in goods and services, remittances, etc.) and capital account transactions (such as foreign investments, borrowing, lending, etc.).
- **Facilitation of External Trade and Payments:** FEMA aims to facilitate external trade and payments by providing guidelines and regulations for smooth conduct of cross-border transactions. It promotes and regulates the flow of foreign exchange in and out of India, ensuring that trade and payments with foreign countries are carried out efficiently and in compliance with the regulations.
- **Preservation and Management of Foreign Exchange Reserves:** FEMA aims to safeguard and manage India's foreign exchange reserves, which are critical for maintaining stability in the external value of the Indian rupee and for meeting the country's international payment obligations. FEMA empowers the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to manage and regulate foreign exchange transactions to ensure the efficient utilization of foreign exchange reserves.
- **Promotion of Foreign Investments:** FEMA aims to promote and regulate foreign investments in India, including foreign direct investments (FDI) and portfolio investments. It provides guidelines and regulations for foreign investors to invest in India and repatriate their investments, subject to certain conditions and restrictions as specified under FEMA.
- **Enforcement of Foreign Exchange Regulations:** FEMA empowers the RBI and other authorized entities to enforce the foreign exchange regulations in India. It provides legal provisions for penalties, fines, and even imprisonment for non-compliance with the regulations, with the objective of ensuring compliance and maintaining discipline in foreign exchange transactions.
- **Simplification and Rationalization of Foreign Exchange Regulations:** FEMA

aims to simplify and rationalize the foreign exchange regulations in India to make them more transparent, efficient, and conducive to economic growth. It provides a modern legal framework for foreign exchange transactions that is aligned with the changing economic and financial landscape and promotes ease of doing business in India.

THE FOREIGN EXCHANGE MANAGEMENT ACT (FEMA) APPLIES TO THE FOLLOWING ENTITIES AND TRANSACTIONS IN INDIA:

- **Residents and Non-Residents:** FEMA applies to both residents and non-residents of India. Residents are individuals, companies, partnerships, or any other entities that are either incorporated or registered in India, or whose control and management are situated entirely in India. Non-residents are individuals, companies, partnerships, or any other entities that are not residents of India.
- **Foreign Exchange Transactions:** FEMA applies to all transactions involving foreign exchange, which includes currency, drafts, travelers' cheques, letters of credit, bills of exchange, promissory notes, and other similar instruments. It covers a wide range of transactions, including those related to current account transactions (such as trade in goods and services, remittances, etc.) and capital account transactions (such as foreign investments, borrowing, lending, etc.).
- **Authorized Persons:** FEMA applies to authorized persons, who are individuals, banks, financial institutions, or other entities authorized by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to deal in foreign exchange or carry out transactions under FEMA. Authorized persons are responsible for ensuring compliance with the provisions of FEMA while conducting foreign exchange transactions.
- **Indian Entities with Foreign Investments:** FEMA applies to Indian entities that have received foreign investments, either in the form of foreign direct investment (FDI) or portfolio investment. It governs the reporting, repatriation, and compliance requirements for such investments, and imposes certain conditions and restrictions on their utilization.
- **Non-Residents Holding Immovable Properties:** FEMA applies to non-residents of India who acquire, hold, transfer, or dispose of immovable properties in India. It governs the regulations related to acquisition, holding, and transfer of immovable properties by non-residents, and imposes certain conditions and restrictions on such transactions.
- **Exporters and Importers:** FEMA applies to exporters and importers in India who engage in international trade and transactions involving foreign exchange. It governs the regulations related to export and import of goods and services, remittances, and other international trade transactions.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FERA AND FEMA:

S.No	Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA)	Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA)
1.	The Indian Parliament established the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act in 1973.	The Indian Parliament established the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), which superseded FERA, in 1999.
2.	FERA was designed with the idea that foreign exchange is a limited resource.	When FEMA was established, the concept of foreign exchange as an asset was already in place.
3.	The primary purpose of FERA was to save foreign exchange.	FEMA's main goal is to manage foreign exchange.
4.	The phrase "authorised person" had a narrow meaning.	The phrase "authorised person" was broadened.
5.	The concept of "authorised persons" excluded banking units.	Banking units were eliminated under the definition of "authorised person."
6.	FERA rules had to be respected at all times, and any infractions were subject to legal consequences.	If FEMA regulations are violated, a civil offence is committed.
7.	A FERA violation suspect was not represented by counsel.	Anyone accused of violating a FEMA rule will be offered legal representation.
8.	As there was no provision for a Tribunal, the appeals were presented to the High Courts.	There is a Special Director (Appeals) and a Special Tribunal.
9.	Individuals who violated the FERA criteria faced direct punishment.	Those found guilty of violating FEMA regulations must pay a fee that begins on the day they are convicted. If the fine is not paid within 90 days, the offender will be imprisoned.
10.	Before any funds may be moved for overseas operations, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) must first give its approval.	There is no need for prior Reserve Bank of India (RBI) approval for overseas business and remittances.
11.	The budget did not include IT.	IT support is provided.

CONCLUSION:

The FERA was drafted to regulate and restrict forex trading in order to avoid abuse and safeguard foreign reserves. FEMA was established to manage currency trade and to undertake economic liberalisation measures. The adoption of FEMA signified a significant shift in Indian government policy from the rigidity of FERA to the flexibility of FEMA.

Source:

The Indian Express

PM KISAN (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi)

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details about the PM KISAN scheme.

The topic is important about how government support is needed because farmers are facing an agrarian crisis. Erroneous monsoons, non-remunerative incomes, and fragmented land holdings are some causes of agrarian distress.

FOR PRELIMS:

About PM KISAN – Features, and comparison with similar schemes

FOR MAINS: GS 3, AGRICULTURE.

1. Scheme Features: Past Performance and future possibilities
2. Role of income support measures in Indian agriculture.
3. Role of Government initiatives to augment farmers' incomes.

CONTENT OF THE ARTICLE:

- Why in news
- Status of Scheme:
- Objectives of the Scheme
- Origin of the Scheme
- Features of the scheme
- Issues related to the scheme
- Way Forward

WHY IN NEWS:

Recently, PM released the 13th installment amount amounting Rs. 16,800 crores to more than 8 crore beneficiary farmers.

STATUS OF SCHEME:

More than 11 crore farmer families, primarily the small and marginal, have received

over 2.25 lakh crores of funds through the PM-KISAN initiative. During the Covid lockdown, multiple installments of Rs. 1.75 lakh crores were distributed to support these needy farmers. The Scheme has been beneficial for more than three crore women beneficiaries who have collectively received over Rs. 53,600 crores.

The funds provided through the initiative have spurred rural economic growth, eased credit constraints for farmers, and boosted agricultural investments. It has also led to an increase in farmers' risk-taking capacity, resulting in more investments. IFPRI has reported that the PM-KISAN funds are helping recipients meet their agricultural needs and other expenses such as education, medical care, and marriage.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHEME:

PM-Kisan is a scheme launched by the Government of India to provide income assistance to farmers across the country. The primary objective of PM-Kisan is to supplement the income of small and marginal farmers and to ensure that they have enough money to meet their agricultural needs and household expenses.

Some of the specific objectives of PM-Kisan are:

- 1. Providing direct income support to farmers:** PM-Kisan provides direct support of Rs. 6,000 per year to eligible farmers, which is paid in three equal installments of Rs. 2,000 each.
- 2. Ensuring timely availability of inputs:** The scheme aims to ensure the timely availability of agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides, by providing additional funds to farmers.
- 3. Increasing agricultural productivity:** By providing financial assistance to farmers, PM-Kisan aims to increase agricultural productivity and improve the overall economic condition of farmers.
- 4. Reducing farm distress:** The scheme seeks to reduce farm distress and alleviate the financial burden on farmers, thereby reducing the incidence of farmer suicides.
- 5. Promoting inclusive growth:** PM-Kisan aims to promote inclusive growth by ensuring that the benefits of the scheme reach all farmers, especially those who are financially weaker and do not have access to formal credit.

ORIGIN OF THE SCHEME

The Rythu Bandhu Scheme is a precursor to the PM KISAN scheme. The Government of Telangana started the Rythu Bandhu scheme under which it disbursed a certain sum twice a year to augment farmers' investments in agriculture. The scheme was widely recognized and appreciated for its direct support to farmers.

Building on Rythu Bandhu's success, the Indian Government launched Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana (PM KISAN) a similar farmer's investment support scheme to offer financial assistance to farmers nationwide.

While the Rythu Bandhu scheme of Telangana and the PM-Kisan scheme share similarities in their objective of providing direct income support to farmers, they differ

in their implementation and scope.

- **Eligibility criteria:** The eligibility criteria for the two schemes are different. Rythu Bandhu is a state-level scheme that is available to all farmers in Telangana, regardless of their landholding size, while PM-KISAN is a central scheme that provides income support to small and marginal farmers all across the country.
- **Mode of assistance:** Under the Rythu Bandhu scheme, farmers receive a fixed amount of money per acre of land that they own, while under PM-KISAN, eligible farmers receive direct cash transfers of Rs. 6000 per annum, payable in three installments.
- **Timing of disbursement:** The Rythu Bandhu scheme provides assistance to farmers before the sowing season, while PM-KISAN provides assistance throughout the year in three installments.
- **Funding:** While Rythu Bandhu is entirely funded by the Telangana state government, PM-KISAN is funded by the central government.

FEATURES OF PM-KISAN

Some of the key features of this scheme have been discussed below:

- **Income Support:** The primary feature of this scheme is the income support it provides to the eligible farmers.
- **Eligibility Criteria:** All landholding farmer households in the country are eligible under PM KISAN but they are subject to certain exclusion criteria.
- **Direct Transfer:** The scheme provides direct benefit transfer (DBT) to the farmers' bank accounts. The funds are transferred in three installments of Rs. 2000 each, every four months.
- **Central Sector Scheme:** The funds for the scheme are allocated to the states and Union Territories by the Central Government.
- **Role of States:** The state governments are responsible for identifying the eligible beneficiaries and transferring the funds to their bank accounts.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The scheme is monitored and evaluated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare. A Grievance Redressal Mechanism has also been established to address any issues faced by the farmers.

ISSUES RELATED TO THE SCHEME

Undoubtedly, the PM-KISAN scheme has been successful in providing financial support to farmers and their families, there are some issues related to the scheme that has been identified.

- **Identification of beneficiaries:** There have been reports of errors in the beneficiary list, with some eligible farmers being excluded, while others who do not meet the eligibility criteria have received the benefits. This has resulted in a lack of transparency and accountability in the selection process.
- **Delay in the disbursement of funds:** Some farmers have reported that they have

not received the funds on time, which has affected their ability to invest in their crops and purchase necessary inputs. This delay can be attributed to various factors such as inadequate infrastructure, technical glitches, and bureaucratic procedures.

- **Inadequate coverage:** The scheme's coverage is limited to small and marginal farmers, and the support provided may not be sufficient to address the challenges faced by larger farmers. This has resulted in some farmers being left out of the scheme's ambit.
- **Sustainability of the scheme:** The PM-KISAN scheme provides income support to farmers, but it does not address the structural issues that affect agriculture, such as low productivity, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of access to credit.
- **Verification process:** Some farmers have reported that the verification process to avail of the benefits under the scheme is cumbersome and time-consuming, which has discouraged many eligible farmers from applying.

WAY FORWARD:

PM KISAN has been a great initiative to provide timely income support to farmers. This enables them to purchase inputs through the money disbursement thrice a year. To ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the PM-KISAN scheme, the following steps can be taken:

- **Strengthening the identification process:** The government should take steps to strengthen the identification process to ensure that all eligible farmers are included in the scheme. This can be done through the use of technology such as satellite imagery and Aadhaar-based verification.
- **Timely disbursement of funds:** The government should ensure that the funds are disbursed on time to avoid delays that affect farmers' ability to invest in their crops and purchase necessary inputs.
- **Increasing the coverage:** The scheme's coverage can be expanded to include more farmers and provide them with sufficient support to meet their needs.
- **Addressing sustainability concerns:** The government should take steps to address the structural issues that affect agriculture, such as low productivity, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of access to credit. This can be done through measures such as investing in agriculture research, improving irrigation facilities, and providing credit to farmers.
- **Creating awareness:** The government should create awareness about the scheme among farmers to ensure that all eligible farmers apply for and receive the benefits.
- **Regular monitoring and evaluation:** Regular monitoring and evaluation of the scheme can help identify gaps and areas for improvement, leading to better implementation of the scheme.

In conclusion, the PM-KISAN scheme has the potential to provide much-needed support to farmers and their families. By addressing the concerns and taking the necessary

steps, the government can ensure the scheme's effectiveness and sustainability in the long run.

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RAJASTHAN PLATFORM-BASED GIG WORKERS (REGISTRATION AND WELFARE) BILL, 2023

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Rajasthan Platform-based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Bill, 2023". The topic "Rajasthan Platform-based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Bill, 2023" has relevance in the Governance section for the UPSC CSE exam.

Relevance of the Rajasthan Platform-based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Bill, 2023

FOR PRELIMS:

What is the Rajasthan Platform-based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Bill, 2023?
What are the provisions of the Rajasthan Platform-based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Bill, 2023?

FOR MAINS:

GS 3: ECONOMY

What are the key drivers of the Gig Economy?
What are the issues related to the Gig economy?
What are the relevant solutions?

WHAT IS THE RAJASTHAN PLATFORM-BASED GIG WORKERS (REGISTRATION AND WELFARE) BILL, 2023?

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot announced in the state budget that he plans to

introduce a groundbreaking 'Gig Workers Welfare Act', making it the first of its kind in India. Gehlot cited companies like Ola, Uber, Swiggy, and Zomato that hire gig workers for short-term transactions but do not employ them full-time, depriving them of benefits.

WHAT ARE THE PROVISIONS OF THE RAJASTHAN PLATFORM-BASED GIG WORKERS (REGISTRATION AND WELFARE) BILL, 2023?

Under this, a Gig Workers' Welfare Board will be established, and a Gig Workers' Welfare and Development Fund will be set up with a fund of Rs 200 crore.

WHAT IS THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR GIG ECONOMY WORKERS?

- **Existing Legislation:** The Code on Wages, 2019, establishes a universal minimum wage and floor wage across organised and unorganised sectors, including gig workers. Additionally, the Code on Social Security, 2020, recognizes gig workers as a new occupational category.

Associated Issues with the Security Code:

- **Lack of Guaranteed Benefits:** The Code on Social Security Bill, 2020, provides that platform workers are eligible for benefits such as maternity benefits, life and disability cover, old-age protection, provident fund, employment injury benefits, and more. However, eligibility does not guarantee that these benefits will be received. The Central government can create welfare schemes that cover these aspects of personal and work security from time to time, but they are not guaranteed.
- **Unclear Responsibility:** The Code stipulates that the provision of basic welfare measures is a joint responsibility of the Central government, platform aggregators, and workers. However, it does not specify which stakeholder is responsible for delivering what quantum of welfare.

WHAT ARE THE KEY DRIVERS OF THE GIG ECONOMY?

There are several key drivers of the Gig economy, including:

- **Technological Advancements:** Advances in digital technology, particularly the rise of mobile devices and cloud computing, have enabled workers to connect with potential clients and customers from anywhere and at any time. This has created new opportunities for freelance workers to find work and for businesses to access a wider pool of talent.
- **Changing Attitudes Towards Work:** Many people today value flexibility and autonomy in their work, and are willing to trade the stability of a traditional job for the freedom of self-employment.
- **Economic Pressures:** The uncertain economic conditions and increasing competition have made many organisations seek ways to remain agile and cost-effective. The gig economy offers organisations an opportunity to tap into a flexible and cost-efficient workforce, which allows them to scale up or down quickly to meet their needs.
- **Demographic Shifts:** The emergence of younger generations, who are more

comfortable with technology and prioritise flexibility and work-life balance, is also driving the growth of the Gig economy. Additionally, older workers who are looking to supplement their retirement income are also turning to gig work.

- **A Start-up Culture Emerges:** Start-ups, being cautious of high fixed costs, have turned to hire contractual freelancers for non-core activities. Moreover, start-ups are increasingly seeking out skilled technology freelancers for specific projects in areas such as engineering, product development, data science, and Machine Learning (ML) to enhance their tech platforms.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES RELATED TO THE GIG ECONOMY?

While the Gig economy offers several benefits, it also presents various issues, including:

- **Lack of Job Security:** Gig workers do not enjoy the same level of job security as traditional employees. They often work on a project-by-project basis and may not have a steady stream of income or benefits such as health insurance or retirement plans.
- **Unequal Treatment:** Gig workers are often treated differently from traditional employees, with limited access to legal protections and benefits. For instance, they are not entitled to minimum wage, overtime pay, or unemployment benefits.
- **Income Inequality:** The Gig economy has led to income inequality, with some workers earning significantly more than others. This is often due to the availability of higher-paying gigs in specific industries or geographic locations.
- **Lack of Regulation:** The Gig economy is largely unregulated, and there is little oversight of the relationship between gig workers and their employers. This can lead to exploitation and abuse, such as non-payment for services rendered or unsafe working conditions.
- **Lack of Social Interaction:** Gig work is often solitary, and workers may miss out on the social interaction and collaboration of traditional employment.

WHAT ARE THE RELEVANT SOLUTIONS?

There are several potential solutions to address the issues related to the Gig economy:

- **Legal Protections:** Governments can introduce new legal protections for gig workers, such as minimum wage laws, health insurance, and unemployment benefits. This would help to ensure that gig workers are treated fairly and have access to essential benefits and protections.
- **Collective Bargaining:** Gig workers can form unions or other forms of collective bargaining groups to advocate for their rights and interests. This would give them more bargaining power in negotiations with employers and help to level the playing field.
- **Platforms for Benefits:** Some companies have started to offer platforms for gig workers to access benefits, such as health insurance, retirement plans, and other services. These platforms could help to fill the gap in benefits for gig workers who

may not have access to traditional employer-provided benefits.

- **Skill Development:** Governments and private organisations can invest in training programs and skill development initiatives to help gig workers develop new skills and increase their earning potential.
- **Technology-Based Solutions:** Technology-based solutions such as blockchain, smart contracts, and reputation systems could be used to provide gig workers with greater security and more transparent relationships with their employers.

Overall, these solutions aim to create a more equitable and sustainable Gig economy, where gig workers are treated fairly and have access to essential benefits and protections.

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WATERBODY CENSUS

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Water body Census”. The topic “Water body Census” has relevance in the Environment section for the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE OF WATER BODY CENSUS

FOR PRELIMS:

What is the Water Body Census?

FOR MAINS:

GS 3: Environment

What are the findings of the Water Body Census?

What is the significance of the Water Body Census?

Way Forward

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Ministry of Jal Shakti recently released the report of its first-ever census of water bodies.

WHAT IS THE WATER BODY CENSUS?

The Ministry of Jal Shakti has initiated the first-ever Census of Water Bodies in conjunction with the 6th Minor Irrigation (MI) Census through the centrally sponsored “Irrigation Census” program.

The primary aim of the Water Bodies Census is to establish a comprehensive national database of all water bodies by gathering data on critical factors such as their size, condition, encroachment status, usage, storage capacity, and level of storage.

WHAT IS THE NEED FOR WATER BODY CENSUS?

The use of water bodies data is also envisaged in the following fields:

- Authentic dataset for **estimation of recharge of groundwater**.
- Information obtained from MI Census and water body census will be highly useful in the **implementation of other water-related schemes** like Atal Bhujal Yojana.

Under Atal Bhujal Yojana, these data can be used for the assessment of Gram Panchayat-wise water budgets, preparation of realistic water security Plans, and planning various supply/ demand side measures through the convergence of ongoing schemes.

- The information will be relevant to State Governments involved in **farm-level irrigation and water management**.

WHAT ARE THE FINDINGS OF THE WATER BODY CENSUS?

- **Total number of water bodies:** 24,24,540 water bodies have been enumerated in the country, out of which,
 - 97.1% (23,55,055) are in rural areas and only
 - 2.9% (69,485) are in urban areas.
- **States:**
 - West Bengal has the highest number of ponds & reservoirs.
 - Andhra Pradesh has the highest number of tanks.
 - Tamil Nadu has the highest number of lakes.
 - Maharashtra is the leading state for water conservation schemes.
- **Encroachment of water bodies:** 1.6% water bodies out of all the enumerated water bodies are reported to be encroached out of which 95.4% are in rural areas and the remaining 4.6% in urban areas.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WATER BODY CENSUS?

The Census of Water Bodies launched by the Ministry of Jal Shakti has significant importance in several ways:

- **Better management of water resources:** This will help in better planning and management of water resources, leading to more efficient utilization of water and sustainable development.
- **Identification of encroachments:** This will help in identifying the areas where illegal encroachments have taken place and taking necessary action to remove them,

thus protecting the water bodies.

- **Conservation of water bodies:** This information will help in taking necessary steps to conserve the water bodies and prevent them from drying up.
- **Improved irrigation infrastructure:** The data collected will help in identifying areas where minor irrigation infrastructure can be developed, leading to improved agricultural productivity.
- **Better disaster management:** The census will also help in identifying water bodies that are prone to flooding, which will enable the government to take necessary measures to prevent floods and manage them better in case they occur.

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PREDICTOR DISCOVERY ALGORITHM (PDA)

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Predictor Discovery algorithm (PDA)”. The topic “Predictor Discovery algorithm (PDA)” has relevance in the Science and Technology section for the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE OF PREDICTOR DISCOVERY ALGORITHM (PDA)

FOR PRELIMS:

Details of the newly developed technology that uses Artificial Intelligence in Weather Prediction

FOR MAINS:

GS 3: Environment

What is the significance of the Predictor Discovery algorithm (PDA)?

What is the significance of Artificial intelligence in Weather Prediction?

Way Forward

WHY IN THE NEWS?

A newly devised algorithm powered by Artificial Intelligence can help increase the predictability of the Indian Summer Monsoons (ISM) 18 months ahead of the season.

WHAT IS THE PREDICTOR DISCOVERY ALGORITHM (PDA)?

The Predictor Discovery algorithm (PDA) is an algorithm made using a single ocean-

related variable that could facilitate a skillful forecast of the Indian Summer Monsoons (ISMR) in time for making effective agricultural and other economic plans for the country.

HOW THE NEW SYSTEM IS AN IMPROVED VERSION OF THE EXISTING WEATHER PREDICTION MODELS?

- **Less time lead of 1 month compared to other time-taking models:** While researchers have well established the scientific basis for ISMR predictability and made significant advances over the past century in understanding the variability and predictability of ISMR, the skillful prediction of ISMR even one month in advance has remained a major challenge.
 - Neither the potential (theoretically possible) skill (correlation between the predicted and observed ISMR) nor the actual skill of ISMR forecast are available at longer lead times–6, 12, 18, and 24- months ahead of the season.
- **Larger area coverage:** Traditionally, researchers select a predictor of ISMR based on the maximum correlation of an atmospheric or oceanic variable with ISMR over a region of the globe. Such a technique restricts in the realization of the true potential predictability of ISMR as it accounts for one predictor over a particular region at a time.
- PDA can work at any lead month over the entire tropical belt.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN WEATHER PREDICTION?

Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a powerful tool in weather prediction:

1. Potential to **improve forecast accuracy and lead times.**
2. **Process large amounts of complex data** from various sources, such as satellite imagery, weather balloons, and atmospheric sensors
3. **Learn and identify patterns** and make predictions based on historical data.
4. Real-time data can be analyzed to make accurate and timely predictions.
 - For example, AI can be used to identify and track severe weather events, such as hurricanes and tornadoes, and to provide more accurate information on their path, intensity, and potential impact.

WAY FORWARD

Overall, the use of AI in weather prediction holds great promise for improving the accuracy and lead times of weather forecasts, ultimately helping to better prepare communities for severe weather events and mitigate their potential impact.

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STATE OF THE GLOBAL CLIMATE 2022

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “State of the Global Climate 2022”. The topic “State of the Global Climate 2022” has relevance in the Environment section for the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE OF THE TOPIC “STATE OF THE GLOBAL CLIMATE 2022”

FOR PRELIMS:

What is the State of the Global Climate 2022 report?

FOR MAINS:

GS 3: Environment

What are the finding of the State of the Global Climate 2022?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) has released the report What are the finding of the State of the Global Climate 2022?

WHAT IS THE STATE OF THE GLOBAL CLIMATE 2022 REPORT?

The WMO’s State of the Global Climate Report 2022 presents a comprehensive overview of key climate indicators such as:

- Greenhouse gases
- Temperatures
- Sea level rise
- Ocean heat and acidification
- Sea ice and glaciers

WHAT ARE THE FINDING OF THE STATE OF THE GLOBAL CLIMATE 2022?

- The report notes that droughts, floods, and heatwaves continue to affect large parts of the world, and the costs of such events are increasing.
- The report highlights that global mean temperatures for the past eight years have been the highest on record.
- Sea levels and ocean heat are at unprecedented levels, with the trend projected to continue for centuries.
- Antarctic sea ice has reached its lowest extent on record, and Europe has experienced record-breaking glacier melt.

WHAT ARE THE SOCIOECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF CLIMATIC CHANGES AS HIGHLIGHTED IN THE REPORT?

- **Drought:** Climate change can exacerbate drought conditions by altering precipitation

patterns, increasing evaporation rates, and drying out soils.

- For example, the drought gripped East Africa, as of January 2023, it was estimated that over 20 million people faced acute food insecurity across the region, under the effects of the drought and other shocks.
- **Excessive Rain:** Climate change can also cause an increase in excessive rain or heavy precipitation events in some regions. Warmer air can hold more moisture, leading to more intense rainfall events when precipitation does occur.
- For example, Record-breaking rain in July and August led to extensive flooding in Pakistan. There were over 1 700 deaths, and 33 million people were affected, while almost 8 million people were displaced.
- Total damage and economic losses were assessed at US\$ 30 billion. July (181% above normal) and August (243% above normal) were each the wettest on record nationally.
- **Heatwaves:** High temperatures during heatwaves can cause heat stress and heatstroke, particularly among vulnerable populations such as the elderly, young children, and those with pre-existing health conditions. Heatwaves can also increase the risk of wildfires, damage to infrastructure such as roads and buildings, and power outages.
- For example, Record-breaking heatwaves affected Europe during the summer. In some areas, extreme heat was coupled with exceptionally dry conditions. Excess deaths associated with the heat in Europe exceeded 15 000 in total across Spain, Germany, the UK, France, and Portugal.
- Heatwaves in the 2022 pre-monsoon season in India and Pakistan caused a decline in crop yields. This, combined with the banning of wheat exports and restrictions on rice exports in India after the start of the conflict in Ukraine, threatened the availability, access, and stability of staple foods within international food markets and posed high risks to countries already affected by shortages of staple foods.
- China had its most extensive and long-lasting heatwave since national records began, extending from mid-June to the end of August and resulting in the hottest summer on record by a margin of more than 0.5 °C. It was also the second-driest summer on record.
- **Food insecurity:** Climate change can also have significant impacts on food security by altering agricultural productivity, water availability, and food systems.
- For example, as of 2021, 2.3 billion people faced food insecurity, of which 924 million people faced severe food insecurity. Projections estimated 767.9 million people facing undernourishment in 2021, 9.8% of the global population. Half of these are in Asia and one third in Africa.
- **Displacement:** As extreme weather events such as floods, hurricanes, and droughts become more frequent and severe, they can lead to the destruction of homes and infrastructure
- For example, in Somalia, almost 1.2 million people became internally displaced by

the catastrophic impacts of drought on pastoral and farming livelihoods and hunger during the year.

- Environment: Climate change has important consequences for ecosystems and the environment.
 - For example, a recent assessment focusing on the unique high-elevation area around the Tibetan Plateau, the largest storehouse of snow and ice outside the Arctic and Antarctic, found that global warming is causing the temperate zone to expand.

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“Current affairs play a very potent role in the preparation for the UPSC Civil Service Examination. There is no specific mention of the current events in the syllabus. However, it is an important pillar of the syllabus. Every Year UPSC is increasingly asking dynamic questions embedded in current events in both two tiers of the UPSC CSE.

Current Affairs plays a very important role in the Interview also. But current events are vast and to understand what is important and what is not, aspirants need specialized mentorship. This book has been prepared keeping all such challenges in mind to provide you with a comprehensive but relevant understanding of current affairs.

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