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2023



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&
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- ▶ E-NAM
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- ▶ INDIA-NEPAL RELATIONS
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JUNE-JULY 2023

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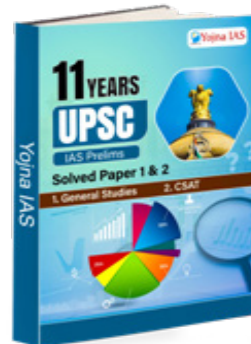
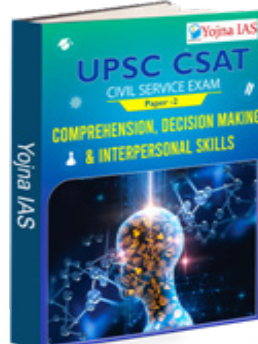
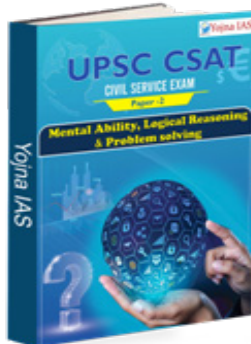
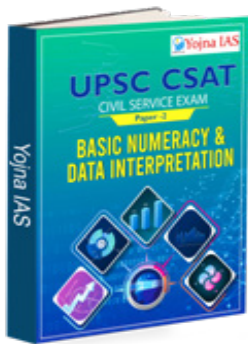
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The Hindu | The Indian Express | The Economic Times | Press Information Bureau PIB News | PRS (Recent Bills and their analysis) | CPCB | NDMA | IDSA: Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis (For in-depth IR and Internal Security articles) | UNESCO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

Yojna IAS Current Affairs Monthly Magazine covers a wide range of topics that overlaps with the CORE subjects.

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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.

This Exclusive Book has been prepared and compiled keeping in mind the needs of dedicated Aspirants looking for a Focused and Intensive Career.

Yojna IAS thrives on being the best step an Aspirant takes towards Their goal of becoming a Civil Servant.

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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 -1

(Indian Heritage and Culture, History and Geography of the World and Society)



GOLDEN TEMPLE

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Golden Temple” has relevance in the Art and Culture section of the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE:

FOR PRELIMS:

Facts about Golden Temple?

FOR MAINS:

GS 1: Art and Culture

Importance of Golden Temple?

What ethical inspiration can be taken from sikh philosophy?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

On Op Bluestar anniversary on June 6, Jathedar in Golden Temple warns of ‘trend of Sikhs converting to Christianity, especially in rural Punjab.

FACTS ABOUT GOLDEN TEMPLE?

- The Golden Temple, also known as Harmandir Sahib, is a revered Sikh Gurdwara located in Amritsar, Punjab, India.
- It was founded by Guru Ram Das, the fourth Sikh Guru, in the 16th century.
- The temple is constructed with gold-plated copper sheets, giving it its iconic appearance.
- The temple is surrounded by a sacred pool called Amrit Sarovar, which is believed to have healing properties.
- The Harmandir Sahib complex is open to people of all faiths and is a symbol of inclusivity.
- It is the holiest shrine in Sikhism and serves as the central place of worship for Sikhs around the world.
- The temple houses the Guru Granth Sahib, the central religious scripture of Sikhism.
- The Langar, a community kitchen, provides free meals to all visitors regardless of their religion or social status.
- The temple complex also includes several historical and architectural attractions, such as the Akal Takht and the Central Sikh Museum.

IMPORTANCE OF GOLDEN TEMPLE?

- **Spiritual Center:** The Golden Temple is the most sacred and revered site for Sikhs. It serves as the central place of worship and pilgrimage for Sikhs worldwide. It is believed to be the abode of God and a place where devotees can experience spiritual enlightenment and connect with their faith.
- **Historical Significance:** The Golden Temple has a rich historical background. It was founded by Guru Ram Das, the fourth Sikh Guru, in the 16th century. The temple complex witnessed significant events in Sikh history, including the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev, the compilation of the Guru Granth Sahib (the Sikh holy scripture), and the formation of the Khalsa Panth (the Sikh warrior community).
- **Symbol of Sikhism:** The Golden Temple is a powerful symbol of Sikhism’s core values and principles. It represents equality, inclusivity, service, and devotion. The concept of langar (free community kitchen) and the practice of serving free meals to all visitors, irrespective of their background, exemplifies the spirit of seva (selfless service) and equality in Sikhism.
- **Architectural Beauty:** The Golden Temple is renowned for its magnificent architectural design.

The gilded exterior, marble inlays, intricate carvings, and reflective pool (Amrit Sarovar) create a visually stunning and serene ambiance. The architectural blend of Sikh, Hindu, and Islamic styles reflects the inclusive nature of Sikhism and its respect for diverse cultural influences.

- **Humanitarian Services:** The Golden Temple complex is not only a place of worship but also a center for various humanitarian services. The langar, mentioned earlier, provides free meals to thousands of visitors every day, regardless of their socio-economic background. The temple also offers free accommodation (Sarai) for pilgrims, medical facilities, educational services, and support for those in need.
- **Cultural Heritage:** The Golden Temple is an integral part of Punjab's cultural heritage. It represents the cultural and religious identity of the Sikh community. The temple complex is a hub of Sikh arts, music, and literature, promoting the preservation and propagation of Sikh traditions and heritage.
- **Tourist Attraction:** The Golden Temple attracts millions of visitors, both Sikhs and non-Sikhs, from around the world. Its architectural beauty, spiritual ambiance, and cultural significance make it a popular tourist destination. The temple's serene atmosphere and the opportunity to witness Sikh traditions and rituals provide a unique cultural experience for visitors.

WHAT ETHICAL INSPIRATION CAN BE TAKEN FROM SIKH PHILOSOPHY?

- **Equality and Justice:** Sikhism strongly emphasizes the equality and dignity of all human beings. Sikh teachings reject discrimination based on caste, creed, gender, or social status. The concept of "Ik Onkar" (One God) underscores the belief in the inherent equality of all individuals. This ethical principle encourages treating everyone with respect, fairness, and justice.
- **Selfless Service (Seva):** Sikhism places great importance on selfless service to others. The practice of "seva" entails serving and helping those in need without any expectation of personal gain. This ethical principle promotes compassion, empathy, and a sense of responsibility towards the welfare of others. Seva is practiced through various means, such as volunteering, charity, and contributing to community well-being.
- **Truthfulness and Integrity:** Sikh philosophy emphasizes the importance of truthfulness and honesty. The concept of "Satnam" (True Name) reflects the belief in living a life of integrity and upholding truth in all aspects. Sikhs are encouraged to speak the truth, act honestly, and maintain ethical conduct. This principle inspires individuals to be trustworthy, transparent, and accountable in their interactions and relationships.
- **Humility and Humbleness:** Sikhism promotes the virtues of humility and humbleness. The concept of "Nimrata" encourages individuals to overcome ego, pride, and arrogance. Sikh teachings emphasize that true spirituality lies in being humble, modest, and respectful towards others. This ethical principle fosters a sense of humility, gratitude, and empathy, leading to harmonious relationships and a balanced outlook on life.
- **Compassion and Forgiveness:** Sikh philosophy encourages individuals to cultivate compassion and forgiveness. The teachings of "Daya" (Compassion) and "Kshama" (Forgiveness) emphasize the importance of showing kindness, empathy, and understanding towards others. This ethical principle promotes healing, reconciliation, and the resolution of conflicts through forgiveness rather than revenge or resentment.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** Sikhism emphasizes the responsibility of humans to care for and protect the environment. The concept of "Dharam" (Duty) includes the duty to preserve and respect nature. Sikh teachings advocate for sustainable practices, ecological balance, and living in harmony with nature. This ethical principle inspires individuals to be mindful of their impact on the environment and to strive for its conservation.

Source:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/39th-anniversary-of-opera->

Q.1 Which of the following statements about the Golden Temple (Harmandir Sahib) is/are correct?

1. It is the most revered Sikh Gurdwara located in Amritsar, Punjab.
2. The temple was founded by Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru.
3. The Golden Temple is surrounded by a sacred pool called Amrit Sarovar.

Select the correct answer using the codes below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 3
- (d) 2 and 3 only

Answer: (b)

Q.2 Which of the following statements regarding the Golden Temple (Harmandir Sahib) in Amritsar, Punjab, is/are correct?

1. The Golden Temple is the central place of worship for Sikhs worldwide.
2. The temple was constructed using gold-plated copper sheets.
3. The sacred pool surrounding the temple is known as Guru Sarovar.

Select the correct answer using the codes below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a)

Q.3 Discuss the historical and cultural significance of the Golden Temple (Harmandir Sahib) in Amritsar, Punjab. How has it shaped Sikh identity and contributed to religious harmony in India?

CYCLONES

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Cyclones". The topic "Cyclones" has relevance in the Geography and Disaster Management section of the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE:

FOR PRELIMS:

- What are Cyclones?
- Conditions for Formation and Dissipation of Cyclones?

FOR MAINS:

- GS 1&3 : Geography and Disaster Management.
- Major vulnerable areas?
- Cyclone Management in India?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Cyclone Biparjoy to intensify in next 36 hours, informed the IMD.

WHAT ARE CYCLONES?

A cyclone is a powerful and destructive weather phenomenon characterized by a low-pressure center and strong rotating winds. It typically forms over warm ocean surfaces, where the air rises and creates an area of low pressure. As the air spirals inward towards the center, it begins to rotate, generating a cyclonic circulation. Cyclones are known for their intense thunderstorms, heavy rainfall, and high wind speeds. They can cause significant damage to infrastructure, homes, and landscapes, as well as pose threats to human lives. Proper monitoring, early warning systems, and preparedness measures are crucial in managing and mitigating the impacts of cyclones.

CONDITIONS FOR FORMATION AND DISSIPATION OF CYCLONES?

FORMATION OF A CYCLONE:

- **Warm Ocean Surface:** Cyclones form over warm ocean surfaces where the sea surface temperature exceeds 26.5 degrees Celsius (79.7 degrees Fahrenheit). The warm ocean provides the necessary energy for the cyclone's development.
- **Low-Pressure System:** A disturbance, such as a tropical wave or an area of low pressure, initiates the cyclone formation. As the warm and moist air rises, it creates an area of low pressure at the surface.
- **Coriolis Effect:** The Coriolis effect, caused by the Earth's rotation, deflects the moving air to the right in the Northern Hemisphere and to the left in the Southern Hemisphere. This effect is essential for the cyclone's rotation.
- **Cyclonic Circulation:** The rotating winds around the low-pressure center start to organize, forming a cyclonic circulation. Air spirals inward toward the center in a counterclockwise direction in the Northern Hemisphere and in a clockwise direction in the Southern Hemisphere.
- **Eyewall and Eyewall Replacement Cycle:** The cyclone develops an eyewall, which is a ring of intense thunderstorms surrounding the center. This eyewall is where the strongest winds and heaviest rainfall occur. In mature cyclones, an eyewall replacement cycle may occur, where a new eyewall forms outside the original eyewall. This process temporarily weakens the cyclone but may lead to a larger and stronger storm later.

DISSIPATION OF A CYCLONE:

- **Land Interaction:** When a cyclone moves over land, it loses its primary energy source, the warm ocean surface. Land interaction disrupts the cyclone's circulation and leads to gradual weakening.
- **Cooler Sea Surface:** If a cyclone moves over cooler ocean waters with temperatures below 26.5 degrees Celsius (79.7 degrees Fahrenheit), it lacks the necessary warmth and energy to sustain itself. The cooler sea surface causes the cyclone to weaken and eventually dissipate.
- **Wind Shear:** Strong wind shear, the change in wind direction and speed with height, can disrupt the vertical structure of a cyclone. High wind shear causes the storm to tilt and separates the upper-level and lower-level circulation, inhibiting further intensification or leading to weakening and dissipation.
- **Loss of Moisture:** As a cyclone moves away from its moisture source, such as an ocean or a tropical region, it gradually loses its moisture supply. The absence of moisture reduces the storm's ability to maintain convective activity and sustain itself.

MAJOR VULNERABLE AREAS?

In India, cyclone-prone areas are classified into different categories based on their vulnerability to cyclonic disturbances. The classification is primarily based on historical data and the frequency of cyclone occurrences in specific regions. The cyclone-prone areas in India are classified as follows:

- **Very High-Risk Zone:** This zone includes the coastal areas along the Bay of Bengal, primarily the states of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. These regions are highly vulnerable to cyclones, with a

higher frequency of severe cyclonic storms and intense impacts.

- **High-Risk Zone:** The high-risk zone comprises the coastal regions of West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Puducherry. These areas experience a relatively high frequency of cyclonic disturbances, with a potential for severe impacts.
- **Moderate-Risk Zone:** This zone covers the coastal areas of Gujarat and Maharashtra, including Mumbai. While these regions have a lower frequency of cyclonic disturbances compared to the very high and high-risk zones, they still experience moderate cyclonic activity and associated impacts.
- **Low-Risk Zone:** The low-risk zone includes the remaining coastal areas of India, such as Kerala, Karnataka, Goa, and parts of Gujarat. These regions have a relatively lower vulnerability to cyclones, with a lesser frequency of cyclonic disturbances and milder impacts.

CYCLONE MANAGEMENT IN INDIA?

The management of cyclones in India involves a comprehensive approach that includes preparedness, early warning systems, evacuation plans, disaster response, and post-disaster recovery. Here are the key components of cyclone management in India:

- **Early Warning Systems:** The India Meteorological Department (IMD) plays a crucial role in monitoring and forecasting cyclones. It uses sophisticated weather prediction models, satellite imagery, and data from weather stations to issue timely cyclone alerts, warnings, and forecasts. These warnings are disseminated through various communication channels to authorities, media, and the general public.
- **Cyclone Preparedness:** Cyclone-prone states and coastal communities have developed cyclone preparedness plans that include identifying vulnerable areas, establishing cyclone shelters, pre-positioning relief materials, and training emergency response teams. Preparedness measures also involve creating awareness among the public about cyclone safety protocols and evacuation procedures.
- **Evacuation and Shelter Management:** Timely evacuation of coastal communities from high-risk areas is a critical aspect of cyclone management. State authorities, along with the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and local administrations, coordinate evacuation efforts, mobilize transportation, and designate cyclone shelters for people to seek refuge during cyclone events.
- **Coordination and Response:** Various agencies, including state governments, disaster management authorities, defense forces, and relief organizations, work together to coordinate response efforts during cyclones. They ensure the availability of essential supplies, medical aid, and search and rescue operations. The NDRF plays a significant role in deploying specialized teams for rescue and relief operations.
- **Post-Disaster Recovery:** After a cyclone strikes, the focus shifts to post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation. It involves assessing damages, restoring infrastructure, providing relief to affected communities, and facilitating the return of evacuated populations. Efforts are made to restore electricity, communication networks, and essential services to cyclone-affected areas.
- **Research and Development:** Continuous research and development in meteorology, disaster management, and infrastructure resilience are essential for improving cyclone management strategies. This includes enhancing forecasting models, studying climate change impacts on cyclone patterns, and implementing measures to strengthen infrastructure against cyclonic forces.
- **International Cooperation:** India actively participates in international collaborations and shares best practices in cyclone management. It collaborates with regional and international organizations such as the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) to enhance cyclone forecasting, data sharing, and capacity-building initiatives.

Q.1 Which of the following factors are essential for the formation of a cyclone?

1. Low-pressure system
2. High-pressure system
3. Warm ocean surface
4. Cold ocean surface

Select the correct option:

- (a) 1 and 3
- (b) 2 and 4
- (c) 1, 2, and 3
- (d) 1, 3, and 4

Answer: (a)

Q.2 Which of the following factors can contribute to the dissipation of a cyclone?

1. Landfall on a coastal area
2. Interaction with cooler sea surface temperatures
3. Intensification of convective activity
4. Presence of low wind shear

Select the correct option:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 4 only
- (d) 2 and 4 only

Answer: (a)

Q.3 “Discuss the impact of cyclones on coastal regions and the measures taken by India for cyclone management. Examine the challenges faced in effective cyclone management and suggest strategies for enhancing preparedness and resilience.”

MAYON VOLCANO

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Mayon Volcano”. The topic “Mayon Volcano” has relevance in the Geomorphology section of the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE:

FOR PRELIMS:

Where is Mayon Volcano?

Facts about Mayon Volcano?

FOR MAINS:

GS 1: Geomorphology

Types of Volcanoes?

Major Volcano Areas around the world?

Volcanoes in India?

WHY IN THE NEWS

A gentle eruption of the Philippines' most active volcano, Mayon Volcano, has forced nearly 18,000 people to flee to emergency shelters, could last for months and create a protracted crisis

WHERE IS MAYON VOLCANO?

Mayon Volcano is an active stratovolcano located in the province of Albay in the Philippines.

FACTS ABOUT MAYON VOLCANO?

Mayon Volcano is renowned for its near-perfect cone shape, making it one of the most iconic and picturesque volcanoes in the world. It is situated in the southeastern part of Luzon Island, approximately 330 kilometers southeast of Manila, the capital city of the Philippines.

- **Height and shape:** Mayon Volcano stands at an elevation of 2,462 meters (8,077 feet) above sea level. Its symmetrical cone shape is a result of the accumulation of layers of hardened lava flows, pyroclastic deposits, and volcanic ash.
- **Volcanic activity:** Mayon Volcano is highly active and is known for its frequent eruptions. It has erupted more than 50 times in the past 400 years, with the previous most recent eruption occurring in January 2018. These eruptions range from minor steam-driven explosions to more significant explosive events that produce pyroclastic flows and ash plumes.
- **Volcanic hazards:** The eruptions of Mayon Volcano pose various volcanic hazards, including pyroclastic flows, ashfall, lava flows, and volcanic gases. These hazards can endanger the local communities living in close proximity to the volcano

TYPES OF VOLCANOES?

- **Stratovolcanoes (Composite Volcanoes):** Stratovolcanoes are large, steep-sided volcanoes composed of alternating layers of solidified lava, volcanic ash, and other volcanic materials. These volcanoes are typically cone-shaped and can reach great heights. They are characterized by explosive eruptions that produce pyroclastic flows, ash clouds, and lava flows. Examples of stratovolcanoes include Mount Fuji in Japan, Mount Vesuvius in Italy, and Mount Rainier in the United States.
- **Shield Volcanoes:** Shield volcanoes are broad, gently sloping volcanoes formed by the accumulation of fluid basaltic lava flows. These lava flows spread out in thin layers, creating a shield-like shape. Shield volcanoes have a low viscosity lava that allows it to flow easily and cover long distances. They are known for their relatively quiet eruptions, with lava flows being the primary volcanic activity. Examples of shield volcanoes include Mauna Loa and Kilauea in Hawaii, and Piton de la Fournaise in Reunion Island.
- **Cinder Cone Volcanoes:** Cinder cone volcanoes are small, steep-sided volcanoes characterized by loose, fragmental material called cinders or scoria. These volcanoes typically form as a result of explosive eruptions of gas-rich magma. Cinder cone volcanoes are often found in clusters or along the flanks of larger volcanoes. They have short eruption durations and tend to be relatively short-lived. Examples of cinder cone volcanoes include Paricutin in Mexico and Sunset Crater in the United States.
- **Calderas:** Large, basin-shaped volcanic depressions that form when a volcano collapses after a massive eruption or magma withdrawal.
- **Complex Volcanoes:** Volcanoes with a combination of different volcanic features, such as stratovolcano-like and shield-like characteristics.
- **Fissure Volcanoes:** Linear volcanic vents that erupt from long cracks or fissures in the Earth's surface, often producing extensive lava flows.

MAJOR VOLCANO AREAS AROUND THE WORLD?

- **Ring of Fire:** The Pacific Ring of Fire is the most volcanically active region in the world, stretch-

ing along the coasts of the Pacific Ocean. This area is characterized by intense tectonic activity, including subduction zones where one tectonic plate sinks beneath another. It includes countries such as Japan, Indonesia, the Philippines, Chile, and the western coast of the United States, including Alaska and California.

- **Mid-Atlantic Ridge:** The Mid-Atlantic Ridge is an underwater mountain range that runs down the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. It marks the boundary between two tectonic plates and is associated with volcanic activity. Notable volcanic features in this region include Iceland, the Azores, and parts of the Caribbean.
- **Mediterranean and Aegean:** The Mediterranean and Aegean regions are also tectonically active, with several volcanoes present. Examples include Mount Etna and Stromboli in Italy, Santorini in Greece, and Mount Vesuvius near Naples, Italy.
- **East African Rift System:** The East African Rift System is a series of rift valleys extending from the Red Sea down to Mozambique in southeastern Africa. This region is associated with volcanic activity, with notable volcanoes including Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Nyiragongo.
- **Central America:** Central America is located along the Pacific Ring of Fire and is home to several active volcanoes. Countries such as Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua have notable volcanic features, including Arenal, Poas, and Masaya volcanoes.
- **Indonesia:** Indonesia is the world's largest archipelago and has a high concentration of active volcanoes. It is located on the Pacific Ring of Fire and experiences frequent volcanic activity. Mount Merapi, Krakatoa, and Mount Bromo are some well-known volcanoes in Indonesia.
- **Kamchatka Peninsula and Kuril Islands:** The Kamchatka Peninsula in far eastern Russia and the Kuril Islands form part of the Pacific Ring of Fire. This region has a significant number of active volcanoes, including Klyuchevskaya Sopka, Bezymianny, and Shiveluch.
- **Hawaii:** The Hawaiian Islands are a volcanic archipelago located in the central Pacific Ocean. They are the result of a hotspot in the Earth's mantle, with the most active volcano being Kilauea. Other notable volcanoes include Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea.

VOLCANOES IN INDIA?

India is primarily located on the Indian Plate, which is relatively distant from the tectonic boundaries associated with volcanic activity. As a result, there are no active volcanoes in mainland India. However, there are some volcanic features and past volcanic activity in certain regions of India. Here are a few notable examples:

- **Barren Island:** Located in the Andaman Sea, Barren Island is the only active volcano in India. It is a stratovolcano that has experienced intermittent eruptions over the years. The most recent eruption occurred in 2017. Access to Barren Island is restricted due to its active nature.
- **Narcondam Island:** Also situated in the Andaman Sea, Narcondam Island is a volcanic island with an extinct volcano at its center. The volcano is believed to be around 6,000 years old and is no longer active.
- **Western Ghats:** The Western Ghats mountain range, which stretches along the western coast of India, contains several volcanic remnants. These remnants are the result of ancient volcanic activity that occurred millions of years ago. Examples include the Malabar Hill in Mumbai, the Yercaud Hills in Tamil Nadu, and the Gilbert Hill in Mumbai.
- **Deccan Traps:** The Deccan Traps, a large igneous province, are a significant geological feature in India. They were formed by extensive volcanic activity around 65 million years ago. The Deccan Traps cover a vast area, including parts of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, and Gujarat. The volcanic eruptions associated with the Deccan Traps are believed to have played a role in the mass extinction event that occurred around the same time, including the extinction of dinosaurs.

Q.1 Which of the following statements about Mayon Volcano is correct?

- (a) Mayon Volcano is an extinct volcano located in the Philippines.
- (b) Mayon Volcano is the tallest volcano in the world.
- (c) Mayon Volcano is a stratovolcano known for its near-perfect cone shape.
- (d) Mayon Volcano is situated in the southeastern part of Japan.

Answer: (c)

Q.2 Which of the following types of volcanoes is characterized by broad, gently sloping sides and fluid basaltic lava flows?

- (a) Shield Volcanoes
- (b) Stratovolcanoes
- (c) Cinder Cone Volcanoes
- (d) Calderas

Answer: (a)

Q.3 Discuss the global distribution of volcanoes and the factors influencing their occurrence. Explain the different types of volcanoes and their characteristics, citing examples from different regions of the world.

INDIAN OCEAN DIPOLE (IOD)

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)". The topic "Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)" has relevance in the Geography section of the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE:

FOR PRELIMS:

What is IOD?

FOR MAINS:

GS 1: Geography

Impact of IOD on Indian Monsoon?

IOD and ENSO relation?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

With the El Nino phenomenon almost certain to affect the Indian monsoon this year, high hopes are pinned on the development of a positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) and its ability to counterbalance

the El Nino effect.

WHAT IS IOD?

The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) refers to a climate phenomenon that occurs in the Indian Ocean, specifically in the equatorial region. It is characterized by the difference in sea surface temperatures (SST) between the western and eastern parts of the Indian Ocean.

The IOD is similar in nature to the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) phenomenon in the Pacific Ocean, but it occurs in the Indian Ocean. It is driven by changes in wind patterns and ocean currents, leading to variations in SST and atmospheric pressure.

IMPACT OF IOD ON INDIAN MONSOON?

- **Positive IOD and Indian Monsoon:**

During a positive IOD phase, the western Indian Ocean experiences cooler sea surface temperatures (SST) compared to the eastern Indian Ocean. This leads to the following effects on the Indian monsoon:

1. Above-average rainfall: Positive IOD events are associated with increased monsoon rainfall over the Indian subcontinent. The cooler SSTs in the western Indian Ocean enhance convection and moisture transport, leading to higher rainfall amounts.
2. Enhanced agricultural productivity: The surplus rainfall brought by the positive IOD can contribute to favorable conditions for agriculture, promoting crop growth and higher agricultural yields.
3. Potential for floods: In extreme cases, excessive rainfall associated with a positive IOD can result in flooding in certain regions, causing disruptions and damage to infrastructure and livelihoods.

- **Negative IOD and Indian Monsoon:**

During a negative IOD phase, warmer SSTs prevail in the western Indian Ocean, while cooler SSTs are observed in the eastern Indian Ocean. This has the following effects on the Indian monsoon:

1. Below-average rainfall: Negative IOD events are generally associated with reduced monsoon rainfall over the Indian subcontinent. The warmer SSTs in the western Indian Ocean cause sinking air, inhibiting the uplift of moist air and resulting in suppressed rainfall over the region.
2. Drier conditions: The deficiency in rainfall caused by the negative IOD can lead to drier conditions, affecting agricultural activities and water availability in affected regions.
3. Shift in rainfall patterns: Negative IOD events can cause a shift in the spatial distribution of rainfall, with some regions experiencing more significant deficits than others.

IOD AND ENSO RELATION?

The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) and the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) are two distinct climate phenomena, but they can interact and influence each other. The relationship between the IOD and ENSO is complex and can have important implications for regional and global climate patterns. Here are some key aspects of their relationship:

- **Influence on Each Other:** ENSO events in the Pacific Ocean can influence the IOD, and vice versa.

During El Niño events, the warmer waters in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean can alter atmospheric circulation patterns and affect the development of the IOD in the Indian Ocean. Similarly, positive IOD events can enhance the development of El Niño events or hinder the development of La Niña events in the Pacific.

- **Combined Impact on Regional Rainfall:** The simultaneous occurrence of a positive IOD and El Niño can have a compounding effect on regional rainfall patterns. This combination often leads to below-average rainfall over the Indian subcontinent and other affected regions. Conversely, the simultaneous occurrence of a negative IOD and La Niña can result in enhanced monsoon rainfall and above-average precipitation.
- **Modulation of Monsoon Variability:** IOD and ENSO can modulate the variability of the Indian monsoon. During El Niño years, the influence of ENSO tends to dominate, and the impact of IOD on the monsoon is relatively weaker. In contrast, during La Niña years, the IOD can play a more significant role in shaping the monsoon rainfall patterns.
- **Mutual Weakening or Reinforcement:** In some cases, the IOD and ENSO can weaken or reinforce each other's effects. For instance, a positive IOD event can weaken the impact of a developing El Niño event, resulting in reduced chances of an intense El Niño. Conversely, a negative IOD can reinforce the effects of La Niña, leading to a more pronounced cooling of the Pacific Ocean and stronger monsoon conditions.
- **Variability and Nonlinear Relationship:** The relationship between the IOD and ENSO is not consistently linear or predictable. The strength, timing, and spatial patterns of the IOD and ENSO events can vary, resulting in different outcomes for regional climate patterns. The interaction between the two phenomena is influenced by numerous factors, including ocean-atmosphere feedback processes, teleconnections, and internal climate variability.

Understanding the relationship between the IOD and ENSO is essential for improving climate forecasting, particularly for regions impacted by these phenomena, such as the Indian subcontinent and parts of Southeast Asia. Monitoring and studying the IOD and ENSO concurrently help enhance the accuracy of climate predictions and provide valuable insights into the drivers of climate variability on a global scale.

Source:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-climate/indian-ocean-dipole-what-is-it-how-it-can-limit-el-nino-effects-8689360/>

Q.1 Which of the following statements best describes the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)?

- (A) It is a climate phenomenon in the Pacific Ocean that affects the Indian monsoon.
- (B) It refers to the variations in sea surface temperatures (SST) in the Indian Ocean that impact the Indian monsoon.
- (C) It is a type of ocean current found in the Indian Ocean that influences global climate patterns.
- (D) It is a weather system characterized by cyclonic storms in the Indian Ocean region.

Answer: (B)

Q.2 Which of the following describes the positive phase of the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)?

- (A) Warmer sea surface temperatures in the eastern Indian Ocean compared to the western Indian Ocean.
- (B) Cooler sea surface temperatures in the eastern Indian Ocean compared to the western Indian Ocean.
- (C) Above-average monsoon rainfall over the Indian subcontinent.
- (D) Below-average monsoon rainfall over the Indian subcontinent.

Answer: (A)

Q.3 Discuss the impact of the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) on regional climate patterns and its significance for the Indian subcontinent.



General Studies -2

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



INDO GERMAN RELATIONS

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Indo German Relations”. The topic “Indo German Relations” has relevance in the International relations section of the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE:

FOR PRELIMS:

Facts about Indo German Relations

FOR MAINS:

GS 2: International relations

State of Indo German Relations?

Challenges in Indo German Relations?

Measures to be taken to address the challenges?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh to hold bilateral talks with his German counterpart in New Delhi on 5th & 6th June 2023

FACTS ABOUT INDO GERMAN RELATIONS:

- **Historical Ties:** India and Germany have a history of diplomatic relations dating back to 1951.
- **Economic Cooperation:** Germany is India's largest trading partner in the European Union (EU), and India is one of Germany's most important economic partners in Asia.
- **Strategic Partnership:** In 2000, India and Germany established a strategic partnership to deepen collaboration in various areas, including political dialogue, defense, education, and scientific research.
- **Scientific Collaboration:** Germany and India engage in robust scientific and technological cooperation such as, Indo-German Science and Technology Center (IGSTC), The German Research Foundation (DFG) and the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) of India have jointly funded several research projects, Max Planck-India Mobility Initiative etc.
- **Multilateral Cooperation:** India and Germany cooperate closely in multilateral forums such as the United Nations, G20, and World Trade Organization (WTO) to address global challenges and promote international peace and security.

STATE OF INDO GERMAN RELATIONS?

- The two countries have established a strategic partnership and have been working together in various fields, including trade and investment, technology collaboration, scientific research, and cultural exchanges.
- Germany is an important economic partner for India, and bilateral trade and investment have been steadily increasing. Both countries have recognized the potential for collaboration in sectors such as manufacturing, automotive, renewable energy, and information technology. Efforts have been made to address trade imbalances and non-tariff barriers to further enhance economic cooperation.
- Scientific collaboration and research exchanges between India and Germany have been active, with joint projects and academic partnerships in fields like biotechnology, renewable energy, space technology, and others. The Indo-German Science and Technology Center and other initiatives have facilitated research collaboration and knowledge sharing.
- Cultural exchanges and people-to-people ties have also been fostered, contributing to a deeper

understanding and appreciation of each other's cultures. The presence of a large Indian diaspora in Germany further strengthens the interpersonal and cultural connections between the two nations.

CHALLENGES IN INDO GERMAN RELATIONS?

- **Trade Imbalance:** India has been facing a trade imbalance with Germany, with the trade deficit in favor of Germany. India's exports to Germany, particularly in manufactured goods, have not been able to match the level of imports from Germany. Addressing this trade imbalance and enhancing market access for Indian goods in the German market remains a challenge.
- **Non-Tariff Barriers:** Non-tariff barriers, such as technical standards, regulations, and certification requirements, pose challenges for Indian exporters seeking to access the German market. Meeting these requirements can be costly and time-consuming for Indian businesses, creating barriers to trade.
- **Market Access and Investment Protection:** India seeks greater market access for its products and services in Germany, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and information technology. Additionally, ensuring a conducive and transparent investment environment, along with protection for Indian investments in Germany, is crucial for fostering bilateral economic ties.
- **Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Protection:** India and Germany have had differences regarding intellectual property rights protection, particularly in the pharmaceutical and technology sectors. The issues surrounding patent laws, compulsory licensing, and data exclusivity have been points of contention and require ongoing dialogue and resolution.
- **Skilled Workforce:** India faces challenges in meeting the skilled workforce requirements of German companies operating in India or seeking collaborations. Bridging the skill gap and aligning vocational training and educational programs with German industry requirements can enhance the bilateral relationship.
- **Visa and Immigration Policies:** Simplifying visa procedures and promoting easier movement of professionals, students, and researchers between India and Germany can facilitate greater academic and research collaborations, as well as foster people-to-people exchanges.
- **Cultural Understanding and Language Barrier:** Cultural differences and language barriers can sometimes impede effective communication and understanding between Indian and German stakeholders. Promoting cultural exchanges, language training programs, and intercultural dialogues can help overcome these challenges and foster a deeper understanding between the two nations.
- **Global and Regional Priorities:** As India and Germany have their own distinct global and regional priorities, finding common ground and aligning positions on various international issues, such as climate change, security, and trade policies, can be challenging. Consistent dialogue, mutual understanding, and coordination are essential to navigate these differences effectively.

MEASURES TO BE TAKEN TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES?

- **Enhancing Trade Facilitation:** Both countries can work towards simplifying customs procedures, reducing non-tariff barriers, and harmonizing technical standards and regulations. Regular dialogues and consultations between trade officials can help identify and address specific trade-related challenges.
- **Market Diversification:** India can explore opportunities to diversify its exports to Germany by promoting value-added products and services. This can involve identifying niche markets, conducting market research, and leveraging India's strengths in sectors like IT, pharmaceuticals, textiles, and agriculture.
- **Investment Promotion and Protection:** Both countries should continue to promote and protect

bilateral investments through transparent and stable investment frameworks. India can work on improving ease of doing business, providing attractive incentives, and creating a favorable business environment to attract more German investments.

- **Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Cooperation:** India and Germany can strengthen their cooperation in the field of intellectual property rights by sharing best practices, exchanging information, and engaging in collaborative research and development projects. Resolving differences and addressing concerns related to IPR protection can contribute to a more conducive environment for innovation and technology transfer.
- **Skill Development and Education Collaboration:** India and Germany can foster collaboration in vocational training and skill development programs to meet the requirements of German industries operating in India. Promoting student exchanges, joint research projects, and academic collaborations can further strengthen educational ties and bridge the skill gap.
- **People-to-People Exchanges:** Encouraging cultural exchanges, promoting tourism, and facilitating easier visa procedures can foster greater understanding and closer ties between the people of India and Germany. Language training programs and intercultural dialogues can help overcome language barriers and promote effective communication.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** India and Germany can explore opportunities to collaborate on global and regional issues of mutual interest, such as climate change, sustainable development, counterterrorism, and multilateralism. Regular high-level dialogues and joint initiatives can help align positions and enhance cooperation on these shared priorities.
- **Sector-specific Cooperation:** Both countries can identify specific sectors where collaboration can yield mutual benefits, such as renewable energy, automotive, biotechnology, and space research. Joint research projects, technology transfers, and knowledge sharing can be encouraged in these sectors.

Source:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1929565>

Q.1 Which of the following statements regarding Indo-German relations is/are correct?

1. Germany is India's largest trading partner in the European Union.
2. Indo-German Science and Technology Center (IGSTC) promotes bilateral research collaboration between India and Germany.
3. India has a trade surplus with Germany due to its strong manufacturing sector.
4. The Max Planck-India Mobility Initiative aims to facilitate research collaborations between Indian and German universities.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1, 2, and 3 only
- (c) 1, 2, and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3, and 4

Answer: (a)

Q.2 Which of the following areas have witnessed significant collaboration between India and Germany?

1. Renewable Energy
2. Defense and Security
3. Cultural Exchanges
4. Agriculture and Food Processing

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only

- (b) 1, 2, and 3 only
- (c) 1, 3, and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3, and 4

Answer: (a)

Q.3 India and Germany share a multifaceted relationship encompassing various domains. Discuss the key areas of cooperation and challenges in Indo-German relations. Also, analyze the significance of this relationship for both countries and its implications on the global stage.

INDIA-NEPAL RELATIONS

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "India-Nepal Relations". The topic "India-Nepal Relations" has relevance in the International Relations section of the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE:

FOR PRELIMS:

Facts about Nepal?

FOR MAINS:

GS 2: International Relations

Importance of Nepal for India?

Challenges in India-Nepal Relations?

Measures to be Taken?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his visiting Nepalese counterpart Pushpakamal Dahal 'Prachanda', held wide-ranging talks focusing on boosting India-Nepal cooperation in several areas including energy, connectivity and trade.

FACTS ABOUT NEPAL:

- **Location:** Nepal is a landlocked country located in South Asia. It shares borders with India to the east, south, and west, and with China (Tibet Autonomous Region) to the north.
- **Capital:** The capital city of Nepal is Kathmandu, which is also the largest city in the country.
- **Geography:** Nepal is known for its diverse geography, ranging from the lowland Terai plains in the south to the rugged Himalayan mountain ranges in the north. It is home to several of the world's highest peaks, including Mount Everest, the highest peak on Earth.
- **Religion:** Nepal is a predominantly Hindu country, with Hinduism being the major religion practiced by the majority of the population. Buddhism is also widely followed, particularly in areas with significant Buddhist heritage.
- **UNESCO World Heritage Sites:** Nepal is home to several UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including the Kathmandu Valley with its ancient cities of Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Patan, as well as Lumbini, the birthplace of Gautam Buddha.

IMPORTANCE OF NEPAL FOR INDIA?

- **Geopolitical Relations:** Nepal shares a long and porous border with India, spanning over 1,850 kilometers. This geographical proximity makes Nepal strategically important for India's security and regional stability. Both countries have historically maintained close ties, fostering cultural,

economic, and political exchanges.

- **Cultural and Historical Ties:** India and Nepal have deep-rooted cultural and historical connections. The people of Nepal and India share common traditions, religious beliefs (particularly Hinduism and Buddhism), and social customs. This cultural affinity has created strong social and people-to-people bonds between the two nations.
- **Economic Cooperation:** Nepal's geographical location makes it a natural trade partner for India. The open border between the two countries facilitates bilateral trade, investment, and economic cooperation. India is one of Nepal's largest trading partners, providing essential goods, petroleum products, and transit facilities for Nepal's international trade.
- **Security Collaboration:** India and Nepal have a history of collaborating on security issues, including intelligence sharing and counter-terrorism efforts. The open border allows for joint efforts in managing cross-border crimes, controlling illegal activities, and maintaining regional security.
- **Energy and Water Resources:** Nepal is blessed with abundant water resources, including numerous rivers and potential hydropower projects. India has supported Nepal in developing its hydropower sector and the utilization of these resources. India also imports electricity from Nepal during peak demand periods, contributing to its own energy needs.
- **Strategic Connectivity:** Nepal serves as a transit country between India and other nations in the region, such as China and Bangladesh. This connectivity provides India with access to these countries, allowing for trade, transportation, and regional integration.
- **Cultural Diplomacy and Tourism:** Nepal's rich cultural heritage and natural beauty attract a significant number of Indian tourists. This tourism inflow strengthens people-to-people contacts, fosters cultural exchange, and promotes mutual understanding between the two nations.
- **Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance:** India has played a vital role in providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief during natural calamities in Nepal. Proximity and historical ties enable India to respond swiftly and effectively to such crises, contributing to Nepal's post-disaster recovery.

CHALLENGES IN INDIA-NEPAL RELATIONS?

- **Border Disputes:** The border between India and Nepal has witnessed occasional disputes and disagreements. Issues related to the delineation of the boundary, demarcation of border pillars, and encroachments have strained relations between the two countries. **Example Kalapani-Limpiyadhura Region:** This region, located in the western part of Nepal, has been a longstanding area of dispute between India and Nepal. The disagreement stems from differences in interpreting historical treaties and maps regarding the exact location of the border. India has maintained a military presence in the Kalapani area, which Nepal claims as its own territory. **Susta Region:** The Susta region, located in the southern part of Nepal, has also been a subject of boundary dispute. Nepal claims that the Kali River, which forms the border between the two countries in that area, has changed its course over time, resulting in encroachment by India. This issue remains unresolved, and both countries have differing perceptions of the boundary alignment in the Susta region.
- **Political Instability:** Nepal has experienced political instability and frequent changes in government over the years. These transitions have sometimes led to policy shifts, making it challenging for India to maintain consistent engagement and cooperation with Nepal.
- **Nepalese Perception of Indian Interference:** At times, Nepal has accused India of interfering in its internal affairs. There have been concerns raised by Nepal about India's influence on its politics, including issues related to constitutional amendments, federalism, and other domestic matters.
- **Cross-border Security Challenges:** The open border between India and Nepal poses challenges in managing cross-border crimes, illegal activities, and smuggling. Both countries need to enhance cooperation in border security and law enforcement to address these challenges effectively.
- **Hydropower Projects and Water Sharing:** India and Nepal have had discussions and occasional

disagreements over hydropower projects and the sharing of water resources. Nepal's potential for hydropower generation raises concerns about the impact on downstream areas in India, leading to occasional tensions.

- **Trade Imbalance:** There has been a significant trade imbalance between India and Nepal, with India being the major trading partner. Nepal has expressed concerns about the trade deficit and seeks to promote its exports to India. Addressing this imbalance is crucial to ensure equitable economic relations between the two countries.

MEASURES TO BE TAKEN?

- **Dialogue and Diplomacy:** Consistent and open communication through diplomatic channels is crucial. Regular high-level meetings, diplomatic talks, and mechanisms such as Joint Commission Meetings can help address concerns, clarify positions, and find mutually acceptable solutions.
- **Boundary Dispute Resolution:** Establishing joint survey teams with technical experts from both countries can help resolve boundary disputes. Accurate mapping, historical research, and adherence to international norms and principles can guide the resolution process.
- **Mutual Respect and Non-Interference:** Both countries should emphasize mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and refrain from interference in each other's internal affairs. Strengthening bilateral ties based on principles of equality, non-interference, and shared interests is essential.
- **Economic Cooperation and Trade:** Promoting balanced and fair trade relations can help address the trade imbalance between India and Nepal. Encouraging investment, enhancing connectivity, and facilitating trade facilitation measures can boost economic cooperation and benefit both nations.
- **Development Projects and Assistance:** Collaborative efforts on development projects, particularly in areas such as infrastructure, energy, and connectivity, can foster mutual cooperation and contribute to the economic development of both countries. Ensuring transparent and inclusive development processes can address concerns and enhance cooperation.
- **Cultural and Educational Exchanges:** Strengthening people-to-people contacts through cultural and educational exchanges can promote understanding, appreciation, and harmony between the people of India and Nepal. Encouraging tourism, student exchanges, and cultural programs can build strong social bonds.
- **Security Cooperation:** Strengthening security cooperation and intelligence sharing can address common security challenges, such as cross-border crimes, terrorism, and illegal activities. Joint exercises, capacity building, and coordinated efforts can enhance border security and ensure regional stability.
- **Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance:** Strengthening collaboration in disaster management, sharing best practices, and providing timely humanitarian assistance during natural calamities can build trust and goodwill between the two nations.
- **Track II Diplomacy:** Encouraging Track II diplomacy, involving academics, experts, and civil society representatives, can contribute to generating innovative ideas, fostering dialogue, and building consensus on challenging issues.

Source:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/pm-modi-nepalese-counterpart-pushpaka-mal-dahal-prachanda-hold-talks/article66918897.ece>

Q.1 Which region has been a subject of border dispute between India and Nepal?

1. Kalapani-Limpiyadhura
2. Susta
3. Pashupatinath
4. Kailash Mansarovar

Which of the option given above is correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 2 and 3 only

Answer: (a)

Q.2 Consider the following statements regarding India-Nepal relations:

1. Nepal shares its borders with India in the east, south, and west, but not in the north.
2. The Kalapani-Limpiyadhura region has been a subject of boundary dispute between India and Nepal.
3. Nepal is a predominantly Buddhist country, with Buddhism being the major religion practiced by the majority of the population.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 2 and 3 only

Answer: (a)

Q.3 Analyzing the key dimensions of India-Nepal relations, discuss the challenges and opportunities for fostering a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship. Suggest measures that can be taken to address the challenges and enhance bilateral ties between the two countries.

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE (AMR)

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Antimicrobial Resistance". The topic "Antimicrobial Resistance" has relevance in the Public Health of the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE:

FOR PRELIMS:

What is AMR?

FOR MAINS:

GS 2: Public Health

Challenges for India in dealing with AMR?

Measures to be taken to address the challenges?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Since the beginning of negotiations on the Pandemic Treaty, there have been calls from civil society and leading experts to include antimicrobial resistance.

WHAT IS AMR?

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) refers to the ability of microorganisms, such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites, to evolve and develop resistance to the drugs that are designed to kill or inhibit their growth, known as antimicrobial agents. This resistance reduces the effectiveness of these drugs and makes infections harder to treat.

- **Mechanisms of Resistance:** Microorganisms can develop resistance to antimicrobial agents

through various mechanisms. These include genetic mutations, the transfer of resistance genes between microorganisms, and the selection pressure exerted by the misuse or overuse of antimicrobials.

- **Causes of AMR:** Several factors contribute to the emergence and spread of antimicrobial resistance. These include the inappropriate use of antibiotics in human healthcare, such as overprescribing, improper dosing, and failure to complete the full course of treatment. Inadequate infection prevention and control measures in healthcare settings also play a role. In addition, the use of antimicrobials in agriculture, animal husbandry, and aquaculture contributes to AMR, as does the improper disposal of pharmaceutical waste.
- **Consequences of AMR:** Antimicrobial resistance poses significant consequences for public health, patient outcomes, and healthcare systems. AMR leads to increased morbidity and mortality rates as infections become more difficult to treat. It can result in longer hospital stays, higher treatment costs, and increased rates of treatment failure. Moreover, AMR limits the effectiveness of critical medical procedures, such as surgeries, chemotherapy, and organ transplantation.
- **Global Impact:** AMR is a global health concern with broad implications. It affects all countries, regardless of their level of development. AMR undermines progress in achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, including those related to health, poverty reduction, and food security. The spread of resistant infections across borders highlights the interconnectedness of the issue and the need for international collaboration.

CHALLENGES FOR INDIA IN DEALING WITH AMR?

- **High Burden of Infectious Diseases:** India has a high burden of infectious diseases, and the inappropriate use of antibiotics is prevalent. Overuse, misuse, and self-medication contribute to the development of AMR. Addressing these practices and promoting responsible antibiotic use across diverse healthcare settings, including public and private sectors, poses a significant challenge.
- **Limited Surveillance and Data:** Adequate surveillance systems are crucial for monitoring AMR patterns and trends. However, India faces challenges in establishing comprehensive and robust surveillance systems for AMR due to resource constraints, fragmented healthcare systems, and variations in data collection and reporting. Improved data collection, harmonization, and sharing across regions and healthcare facilities are needed.
- **Lack of Awareness and Education:** There is a need to enhance awareness and knowledge about AMR among healthcare professionals, patients, and the general public. This includes promoting understanding about the appropriate use of antibiotics, the consequences of AMR, and the importance of infection prevention and control measures. Educating healthcare providers and patients about the importance of completing full antibiotic courses and avoiding self-medication is crucial.
- **Limited Access to Quality Healthcare:** India's healthcare system faces challenges of accessibility, affordability, and quality of care. Limited access to quality healthcare, especially in rural and remote areas, can contribute to inappropriate use of antibiotics, inadequate diagnosis, and ineffective treatment practices. Ensuring equitable access to quality healthcare, diagnostic facilities, and trained healthcare professionals is essential to address AMR effectively.
- **Agricultural and Veterinary Practices:** Antibiotic use in agriculture, animal husbandry, and aquaculture can contribute to the development of AMR. The challenge lies in regulating and monitoring the use of antibiotics in these sectors to promote responsible use and minimize the spread of resistance. Strengthening regulations, promoting good agricultural and veterinary practices, and raising awareness among stakeholders are necessary steps.
- **Coordination and Implementation:** Addressing AMR requires collaboration among multiple sectors, including health, agriculture, animal husbandry, and environment. Coordinating efforts and implementing policies and guidelines across sectors can be challenging due to diverse stakeholder

involvement, governance issues, and the need for sustained commitment and resources.

MEASURES TO BE TAKEN TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES?

1. Strengthening Awareness and Education:

- Conduct public awareness campaigns to educate the general public about AMR, responsible antibiotic use, and the importance of completing full treatment courses.
- Develop targeted educational programs for healthcare professionals, emphasizing appropriate prescribing practices, adherence to treatment guidelines, and infection prevention and control measures.

2. Enhancing Surveillance and Data Collection:

- Establish and strengthen comprehensive surveillance systems for AMR, including the collection, analysis, and reporting of data on resistance patterns, antibiotic consumption, and treatment outcomes.
- Encourage standardized reporting of AMR data across healthcare facilities and regions to improve data harmonization and sharing.

3. Promoting Antimicrobial Stewardship:

- Implement antimicrobial stewardship programs in healthcare facilities to promote responsible antibiotic use, including antibiotic prescribing guidelines, antimicrobial use monitoring, and regular feedback to healthcare professionals.
- Develop and implement guidelines for infection prevention and control, emphasizing the importance of hand hygiene, appropriate sterilization, and prevention of healthcare-associated infections.

4. Improving Access to Quality Healthcare:

- Strengthen healthcare infrastructure, especially in rural and remote areas, to ensure equitable access to quality healthcare services, diagnostic facilities, and trained healthcare professionals.
- Promote rational use of antibiotics through regular training programs for healthcare providers, emphasizing appropriate diagnosis, prescription practices, and treatment guidelines.

5. Regulating Antibiotic Use in Agriculture and Animal Husbandry:

- Implement and enforce regulations on the use of antibiotics in agriculture, animal husbandry, and aquaculture to minimize the development and spread of AMR.
- Promote alternatives to antibiotic use in animal health management, such as vaccines, probiotics, and improved animal husbandry practices.

6. Fostering Multi-Sectoral Collaboration:

- Establish inter-sectoral collaborations and coordination mechanisms involving healthcare, agriculture, animal husbandry, environment, and other relevant sectors to address AMR comprehensively.
- Promote research collaborations and knowledge sharing between stakeholders to develop innovative solutions, including new antimicrobial agents and diagnostics.

7. International Cooperation:

- Engage in international collaborations and partnerships to share best practices, knowledge, and resources in addressing AMR.
- Participate in global initiatives and forums to contribute to the development of international guidelines, standards, and policies on AMR.

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/amr-pandemic-instrument-vulnerable-future-pandemics/article66936850.ece>

Q.1 Which of the following statements about antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is correct?

1. AMR refers to the ability of microorganisms to develop resistance against antibiotics and other antimicrobial agents.
2. AMR is solely caused by genetic mutations in microorganisms.
3. AMR is a problem limited to human healthcare settings and does not affect veterinary or agricultural practices.

Select the correct option:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1,2 and 3 only
- (d) None of the above

Answer: (a)

Q.2 Which of the following factors contribute to the development of antimicrobial resistance (AMR)?

1. Misuse and overuse of antibiotics in human healthcare.
2. Inadequate infection prevention and control practices.
3. Limited access to healthcare facilities in rural areas.

Select the correct option:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1,2 and 3 only
- (d) None of the above

Answer: (a)

Q.3 Discuss the issue of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), its causes, consequences, and global implications. Discuss the strategies required to combat this growing threat.

SHANGRI LA DIALOGUE

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Shangri La Dialogue". The topic "Shangri La Dialogue" has relevance in the International Relations section of the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE:

FOR PRELIMS:

What is Shangri La Dialogue?

FOR MAINS:

GS 2: International relations?

Importance of Shangri La Dialogue?

India at Shangri La Dialogue?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Shangri-La Dialogue, concluded its 20th edition in Singapore recently, to capture the shifting strategic trends in Asia.

WHAT IS SHANGRI LA DIALOGUE?

The Shangri-La Dialogue is an annual security forum hosted by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in Singapore. It brings together global leaders, defense officials, and experts to discuss and address security challenges in the Asia-Pacific region, with a focus on regional cooperation, maritime security, and geopolitical dynamics.

- **Purpose:** The Shangri-La Dialogue serves as a platform for regional and global leaders, policymakers, defense officials, and experts to discuss and address security challenges in the Asia-Pacific region.
- **Host:** The forum is hosted by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), a leading global think tank that specializes in defense and security issues.
- **Venue:** The dialogue takes place at the Shangri-La Hotel in Singapore, giving it its name.
- **Participants:** The Shangri-La Dialogue attracts a wide range of participants, including defense ministers, military chiefs, academics, journalists, and representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs). It provides an opportunity for both government and non-government stakeholders to engage in dialogue and exchange views on security-related matters.
- **Focus Areas:** The discussions at the Shangri-La Dialogue cover a broad range of security issues, including regional security architecture, military modernization, defense policies, terrorism, maritime security, cyber security, and emerging challenges in the Asia-Pacific region.

IMPORTANCE OF SHANGRI LA DIALOGUE?

- **Security Cooperation:** The forum provides a platform for regional and global stakeholders to engage in dialogue and cooperation on security issues in the Asia-Pacific region. It facilitates discussions on regional challenges, builds mutual understanding, and promotes cooperation to address common security threats.
- **Policy Articulation:** The keynote addresses delivered by leaders and defense officials at the Shangri-La Dialogue offer an opportunity to articulate their country's strategic vision, policies, and perspectives on regional security. It helps in shaping the regional security discourse and fostering better understanding among participants.
- **Track II Diplomacy:** The informal and unofficial diplomatic discussions held during the dialogue, known as Track II diplomacy, allow participants to engage in open and frank exchanges. It provides a more flexible and constructive platform for building trust, resolving differences, and exploring cooperative measures.
- **Networking and Bilateral Engagements:** The Shangri-La Dialogue facilitates networking and bilateral engagements among participants. It enables defense officials, policymakers, and experts to interact, build relationships, and explore potential avenues for cooperation outside formal diplomatic channels.
- **Regional Stability and Peace:** By addressing security challenges and fostering cooperation, the Shangri-La Dialogue contributes to regional stability and peace. It provides a space for dialogue, understanding diverse perspectives, and finding common ground on issues related to regional security, thus reducing the risk of conflicts.
- **Insights and Analysis:** The forum serves as a platform for exchanging insights, research findings, and analysis on security-related topics. It provides a rich source of information for policymakers, academics, and analysts to deepen their understanding of regional security dynamics and formulate evidence-based policies.

INDIA AT SHANGRI LA DIALOGUE?

- **Keynote Address by Indian Prime Minister:** In 2018, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered the keynote address at the Shangri-La Dialogue. His speech focused on India's vision for the Indo-Pacific region, highlighting the importance of inclusive security, respect for international law, freedom of navigation, and connectivity.

- **India's Maritime Security Engagement:** India has consistently emphasized the significance of maritime security in the Indian Ocean and the broader Indo-Pacific region. Indian defense officials and experts have participated in discussions and panel sessions on topics related to maritime security, including freedom of navigation, maritime domain awareness, and cooperation in the maritime domain.
- **Focus on Regional Cooperation:** India has highlighted the importance of regional cooperation in addressing security challenges in the Asia-Pacific region. Indian officials have stressed the need for inclusive dialogue, cooperation, and respect for the principles of international law to maintain peace, stability, and prosperity in the region.
- **Strategic Partnerships and Engagements:** The Shangri-La Dialogue serves as a platform for India to engage with other major powers and regional stakeholders. Indian defense ministers and officials have held bilateral meetings and engaged in sideline discussions with counterparts from other countries to discuss regional security issues, enhance defense cooperation, and build partnerships.
- **Perspectives on Indo-Pacific Construct:** India has used the Shangri-La Dialogue as an opportunity to articulate its perspectives on the Indo-Pacific construct. Indian officials have highlighted the importance of a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region that promotes regional connectivity, economic development, and rule-based order.
- **Addressing Terrorism and Non-Traditional Security Challenges:** India has raised concerns about terrorism, non-traditional security threats, and the need for collective efforts to combat these challenges. Indian officials have emphasized the importance of international cooperation, intelligence-sharing, and capacity-building to address terrorism and other non-traditional security threats effectively.

Source:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/india-us-defence-deal-pm-modi-joe-biden-china-8649345/>

Q.1 Which of the following statements regarding the Shangri-La Dialogue is correct?

- (a) It is an annual security forum hosted by the United Nations.
- (b) The dialogue primarily focuses on security challenges in Africa.
- (c) The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) organizes the forum in Singapore.
- (d) The Shangri-La Dialogue exclusively involves defense officials from Asian countries.

Answer: (c)

Q.2 Which of the following topics is a primary focus of discussions at the Shangri-La Dialogue?

- (a) Climate change and environmental sustainability
- (b) Economic cooperation and trade agreements
- (c) Regional security challenges in the Asia-Pacific
- (d) Cultural exchange and tourism promotion

Answer: (c)

Q.3 Discuss the significance of the Shangri la dialogue in promoting cooperative security, addressing geopolitical challenges, and fostering regional stability. Illustrate your answer with relevant examples.

QUAD

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "QUAD". The topic "QUAD" has relevance in the International Relations section of the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE:

FOR PRELIMS:

What is QUAD?

FOR MAINS:

GS 2: International Relations

Importance of QUAD for India?

Challenges presented to India by QUAD?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

There is no plan to add new members to the Quad now, the White House has said, emphasizing that the relatively young grouping welcomes opportunities to work with a wide range of Indo-Pacific partner countries on issues like maritime security, infrastructure and climate change.

WHAT IS QUAD?

The Quad, also known as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, is a strategic forum consisting of four countries: the United States, Japan, Australia, and India. The Quad was formed with the objective of promoting a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region. The Quad was originally formed in 2007, but it gained renewed momentum in recent years. In 2017, officials from the United States, Japan, Australia, and India held their first ministerial-level meeting in over a decade, signaling the revival of the Quad and fostering cooperation on various issues of common interest.

Objectives: The Quad aims to strengthen regional security and stability, uphold the rules-based international order, promote maritime security, counter terrorism, enhance economic cooperation, and support sustainable development in the Indo-Pacific region.

MEMBER COUNTRIES:

- **United States:** As a leading global power, the United States plays a significant role in the Quad. It seeks to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific, promote democratic values, and ensure a rules-based international order.
- **Japan:** Japan brings its economic prowess and technological advancements to the Quad. It is committed to regional stability, economic cooperation, and upholding international law.
- **Australia:** Australia's participation in the Quad strengthens its engagement in the Indo-Pacific region. It focuses on promoting security, trade, and people-to-people ties.
- **India:** India's involvement in the Quad reflects its increasing role as a major regional power. India aims to contribute to regional security, economic growth, and development while safeguarding its strategic interests.

IMPORTANCE OF QUAD FOR INDIA?

- **Security and Defense Cooperation:** The Quad provides India with a valuable platform to enhance security and defense cooperation with like-minded countries. It enables India to strengthen its strategic partnerships and build collective security capabilities in the Indo-Pacific region, which is crucial considering the evolving security challenges.
- **Regional Stability:** The Quad plays a vital role in promoting regional stability, particularly in light of the geopolitical dynamics in the Indo-Pacific. Through the Quad, India can engage in construc-

tive dialogues, contribute to maintaining a rules-based order, and prevent any unilateral attempts to alter the status quo, ensuring a stable and peaceful region.

- **Counterbalance to China's Influence:** As China's influence expands in the region, the Quad provides India with an opportunity to align with other countries to counterbalance China's growing assertiveness. It helps India address concerns related to territorial disputes, maritime security, and economic coercion, ensuring that no single country dominates the region.
- **Economic Opportunities:** The Quad presents economic opportunities for India. Through increased economic cooperation, trade, and investment, India can benefit from the collective economic potential of Quad member countries. It allows India to diversify its economic partnerships and tap into emerging markets in the Indo-Pacific.
- **Technological Collaboration:** The Quad offers avenues for technological collaboration and knowledge sharing. As India strives to enhance its technological capabilities and achieve self-reliance, collaboration with Quad partners can facilitate technology transfer, research and development, and innovation in critical sectors.
- **Infrastructure Development:** The Quad's initiatives, such as the Quad Infrastructure Working Group, promote sustainable and transparent infrastructure development in the Indo-Pacific. India can leverage this platform to address its infrastructure needs, enhance connectivity, and contribute to regional development.
- **Access to Vaccines and Healthcare:** The Quad Vaccine Partnership has played a significant role in addressing the global COVID-19 pandemic. For India, it has facilitated access to vaccines, technology transfer, and capacity-building support, contributing to its vaccination drive and public health efforts.
- **Regional Diplomacy:** The Quad enhances India's regional diplomacy by providing a platform to engage with other countries in the Indo-Pacific. It enables India to contribute to shaping regional norms, promoting its interests, and participating in discussions on important regional issues, including maritime security, connectivity, and economic integration.

CHALLENGES PRESENTED TO INDIA BY QUAD?

- **Maintaining Strategic Autonomy:** As a non-aligned country, India values its strategic autonomy and independent foreign policy. While engaging in the Quad, India must ensure that its decisions and actions align with its national interests and do not compromise its sovereignty or independence.
- **Managing Relations with China:** China's perception of the Quad as a potential containment strategy poses challenges for India. India shares a complex relationship with China, involving territorial disputes and economic competition. Balancing its engagement with the Quad while managing its bilateral relations with China requires careful diplomacy and strategic maneuvering.
- **Addressing Domestic Concerns:** India has a diverse domestic landscape with varying socio-economic challenges. Balancing the country's domestic priorities, such as poverty alleviation, infrastructure development, and social welfare, with its international engagements can be a challenge. Ensuring that the benefits of Quad participation trickle down to all sections of society is essential.
- **Enhancing Capabilities and Resources:** To effectively contribute to the Quad's objectives, India needs to enhance its military capabilities, technological prowess, and economic resources. Investing in research and development, modernizing infrastructure, and improving human capital are crucial challenges that require sustained efforts and resource allocation.
- **Coordinating Regional Engagement:** India has its own regional engagement initiatives, such as the Act East Policy, which aim to strengthen its ties with Southeast Asian countries. Coordinating these regional engagements with its participation in the Quad can be a challenge, requiring efficient diplomacy and strategic alignment.
- **Managing Diverse Interests within the Quad:** The Quad comprises countries with diverse stra-

tegic interests and priorities. India must effectively articulate and safeguard its interests within the Quad, ensuring that its concerns and perspectives are adequately addressed.

- **Balancing Economic Cooperation and Security Interests:** The Quad's focus extends beyond security cooperation to economic partnerships and infrastructure development. Balancing economic cooperation with security interests can be a challenge, particularly when navigating economic dependencies and maintaining a robust security posture.

Source:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/no-plans-to-add-new-members-to-quad-grouping-now-us-white-house/article66802526.ece>

Q.1 Which of the following statements regarding the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) is/are correct?

1. The Quad comprises India, Japan, Australia, and the USA.
2. The primary objective of the Quad is to counterbalance China's influence in the Indo-Pacific region.
3. The Quad was first initiated in 2017 with a meeting of senior officials from member countries.
4. The Quad has primarily focused on military cooperation and joint military exercises.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1,2 and 3 only
- (c) 1,2 and 4 only
- (d) 2,3 and 4 only

Answer: (a)

Q.2 Which of the following statements regarding the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) is/are correct?

1. The Quad was initially formed in response to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami to enhance disaster management cooperation.
2. The Quad countries have a shared commitment to upholding a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.
4. The Quad aims to promote economic integration through initiatives such as the Quadrilateral Infrastructure Investment Plan (QIIP).

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1,2 and 3

Answer: (b)

Q.3 Discuss the significance of the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) in shaping the geopolitical landscape of the Indo-Pacific region. Examine its potential implications for regional security, economic cooperation, and strategic partnerships. Also, critically analyze India's role and interests within the Quad framework, highlighting the opportunities and challenges it presents for India's foreign policy objectives.

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR BACKWARD CLASSES (NCBC)

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)". The topic "National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)" has relevance in the Social Justice section of the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE:

FOR PRELIMS:

Facts about NCBC?

FOR MAINS:

GS 2: Social Justice

Powers and Functions of NCBC?

Procedure for Adding Castes to OBC List?

Limitations of NCBC?

Measures to Make NCBC more potent?

WHY IN THE NEWS

Approximately 80 more castes in six States are now likely to be added to the Central List of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the coming months, with the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) already processing the approval for most of them, says the panel chairperson Hansraj Gangaram Ahir.

FACTS ABOUT NCBC?

- **Establishment:** The NCBC was established on 14th August 1993 under the National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993. The Constitution (102nd Amendment) Act, 2018 granted constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Castes
- **Constitutional Status:** The NCBC is a constitutional body and operates under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India.
- **Composition:** The commission consists of a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, and three other members. The chairperson and members are appointed by the President of India.

POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF NCBC?

- **Identifying socially and educationally backward classes:** The commission identifies and classifies communities or castes as socially and educationally backward classes based on various factors such as social, economic, and educational indicators.
- **Inquiry and investigation:** The NCBC conducts inquiries and investigations into specific complaints regarding the non-implementation or violation of reservation policies, discrimination, and deprivation of rights and privileges of backward classes.
- **Recommending inclusion or exclusion:** The commission recommends to the central government the inclusion or exclusion of communities in the list of socially and educationally backward classes.
- **Safeguarding the rights of backward classes:** NCBC safeguards the rights and interests of backward classes and works towards eliminating discrimination and ensuring their equitable representation in various sectors, including education and employment.
- **Advise on policy matters:** The commission advises the central government on policy matters related to the welfare and development of backward classes, including the formulation and implementation of reservation policies and other affirmative actions.
- **Power of Civil Court:** The NCBC has the powers of a civil court while investigating and inquiring

into complaints. It can summon witnesses, issue summonses, receive evidence, and enforce attendance.

- **Annual Reports:** The commission submits annual reports to the President and the Parliament on the implementation of reservation policies, the welfare of backward classes, and the progress made in achieving social justice.
- **Limited Jurisdiction:** It's important to note that the NCBC's jurisdiction is limited to matters related to backward classes. It does not cover issues related to Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), or other minority communities.

PROCEDURE FOR ADDING CASTES TO OBC LIST?

- **Demand for Inclusion:** The first step is for a community or caste to make a formal demand for inclusion in the OBC list.
- **State Government Recommendation:** The demand for inclusion is initially evaluated by the concerned state government.
- **State Backward Classes Commission:** The state government forwards the recommendation to the State Backward Classes Commission or a similar authority.
- **NCBC Evaluation:** The NCBC examines the report submitted by the State Backward Classes Commission and conducts its own investigation. It may visit the concerned community, conduct surveys, gather data, and analyze various socio-economic indicators to assess the backwardness of the community.
- **Public Notice and Feedback:** After the NCBC's evaluation, a public notice is issued to seek opinions and objections from the general public, other castes, and stakeholders.
- **NCBC Recommendation to Central Government:** Based on the evaluation, public feedback, and its own findings, the NCBC formulates a recommendation on whether the community should be included in the OBC list. The recommendation is then submitted to the central government.
- **Central Government Decision:** The central government reviews the recommendation made by the NCBC and takes a final decision on the inclusion of the caste in the OBC list. The government can accept or reject the recommendation, and its decision is communicated to the concerned state government.
- **Amendment of OBC List:** If the central government approves the inclusion of a caste in the OBC list, it amends the existing list and includes the newly added caste. The caste is then eligible for availing the benefits and reservations available to OBC communities.

LIMITATIONS OF NCBC?

- **Advisory Nature:** The recommendations and suggestions made by the NCBC are advisory in nature. The government is not bound to implement them, and their implementation depends on the discretion of the authorities.
- **Lack of Binding Power:** The NCBC does not have the power to enforce its decisions or recommendations. It can investigate complaints and make recommendations, but it does not possess the authority to take legal action or ensure the implementation of its recommendations.
- **Limited Coverage:** The NCBC's jurisdiction is limited to matters related to backward classes. It does not have the mandate to address issues concerning Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), or other minority communities. These groups have separate commissions to address their specific concerns.
- **Dependence on Government Support:** The functioning of the NCBC is dependent on the support and cooperation of the government. Its effectiveness and impact can be influenced by the government's willingness to implement its recommendations and allocate resources accordingly.
- **Inadequate Representation:** The representation of backward classes within the commission itself has been a subject of debate. Critics argue that there may be a lack of diverse representation, which could impact the commission's understanding and assessment of the issues faced by various

backward communities.

- **Challenges in Identification:** Determining the backwardness of communities can be a complex and contentious process. There can be challenges in accurately identifying and classifying socially and educationally backward classes, leading to disagreements and controversies.
- **Delayed Resolutions:** The resolution of complaints and grievances can often be time-consuming, leading to delays in justice and redressal. This can be frustrating for individuals and communities seeking prompt action on their concerns.

Source:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/around-80-more-communities-likely-to-be-added-to-central-obc-list/article66972886.ece>

Q.1 Which of the following statements regarding the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) is/are correct?

1. The NCBC is a constitutional body established under the National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993.
2. The NCBC has the authority to enforce its recommendations and decisions.
3. The NCBC is responsible for identifying and classifying socially and educationally backward classes.
4. The NCBC has jurisdiction over matters related to Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in addition to backward classes.

Select the correct option using the codes given below:

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2 and 4 only
- (c) 1, 3, and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3, and 4

Answer: (a)

Q.2 The National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) was given constitutional status by which of the following constitutional amendments?

- (a) 100th Constitutional Amendment
- (b) 101st Constitutional Amendment
- (c) 102nd Constitutional Amendment
- (d) 103rd Constitutional Amendment

Answer: (c)

Q.3 Discuss the role and significance of the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) in addressing the issues of socially and educationally backward classes in India. Also, critically analyze the effectiveness of the NCBC in promoting social justice and empowerment of backward classes.

BANGKOK VISION 2030

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Bangkok Vision 2030”. The topic “Bangkok Vision 2030” has relevance in the International Relations section of the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE:

FOR PRELIMS:

What is Bangkok Vision 2030?

Facts about BIMSTEC?

FOR MAINS:

GS 2: International Relations

Mechanism of working of BIMSTEC?

Significance of BIMSTEC?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) summit end of this year will adopt a Bangkok vision 2030 which would be overarching kind of document and give direction to the organisation

WHAT IS BANGKOK VISION 2030?

- Thailand has introduced the Bangkok Vision 2030, which aims to advance BIMSTEC towards a prosperous, resilient, and open region, fostering sustainable and balanced growth. The vision sets a clear direction and priorities for BIMSTEC collaboration to address challenges and seize opportunities in the coming decade.
- To monitor progress in all seven sectors, an eminent group of individuals has been established. This group will oversee the implementation and advancement of the vision, ensuring its successful realization.
- Thailand hosted the 5th BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC) Meeting in September 2022. This meeting provided a platform for member states to discuss and coordinate efforts towards achieving the goals outlined in the Bangkok Vision 2030.
- The Bangkok Vision 2030 serves as a roadmap for BIMSTEC, guiding its activities and initiatives towards building a prosperous, resilient, and open region by the year 2030. The vision emphasizes the importance of sustainable development, balanced growth, and collaboration among member states to realize the shared goals of the organization.

FACTS ABOUT BIMSTEC?

- **Establishment:** BIMSTEC was established on June 6, 1997, through the Bangkok Declaration.
- **Member States:** BIMSTEC consists of seven member states, namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.
- **Geographical Coverage:** The BIMSTEC region spans across South Asia and Southeast Asia, covering 1.5 million square miles and a population of over 1.6 billion people.
- **Objectives:** The main objectives of BIMSTEC are to promote economic cooperation, trade, investment, technological collaboration, cultural exchange, and people-to-people connectivity among member states.
- **Areas of Cooperation:** BIMSTEC focuses on various areas of cooperation, including trade and investment, transport and communication, energy, tourism, agriculture, fisheries, poverty alleviation, counter-terrorism, climate change, and disaster management.
- **Summits and Meetings:** BIMSTEC holds summits at the head of state or government level every

two years. Ministerial meetings and senior officials' meetings are also conducted regularly to discuss and coordinate cooperation efforts.

- **Secretariat:** BIMSTEC operates through a Secretariat, which is located in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The Secretariat facilitates communication, coordination, and implementation of BIMSTEC activities.

MECHANISM OF WORKING OF BIMSTEC?

- **Leadership:** The organization operates under the leadership of member states, with each country having equal representation.
- **Summit Meetings:** BIMSTEC holds summits at the head of state or government level every two years. The summits provide a platform for member states to discuss strategic issues, review progress, and set priorities for cooperation. The host country of the summit assumes the role of the Chair of BIMSTEC for the next two years.
- **Ministerial Meetings:** Ministerial meetings are held regularly to discuss specific sectors and areas of cooperation. The meetings are attended by relevant ministers from member states, such as foreign affairs, trade, transport, energy, and tourism. These meetings aim to strengthen cooperation and provide policy guidance.
- **Senior Officials' Meetings:** Senior officials' meetings take place to prepare and follow up on the decisions made at the summits and ministerial meetings. These meetings are attended by senior government officials responsible for coordinating BIMSTEC-related activities within member states.
- **Secretariat:** BIMSTEC operates through a Secretariat, which serves as the focal point for communication, coordination, and implementation of BIMSTEC activities. The Secretariat is located in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and is headed by the Secretary-General, who is appointed by member states on a rotational basis.
- **Working Groups and Task Forces:** BIMSTEC has established several working groups and task forces focusing on specific sectors and areas of cooperation. These groups are composed of relevant experts and officials from member states and work to identify areas of collaboration, develop action plans, and implement specific projects.
- **Sectoral Cooperation:** BIMSTEC covers various sectors of cooperation, including trade and investment, transport and communication, energy, tourism, agriculture, fisheries, poverty alleviation, counter-terrorism, climate change, and disaster management. Sector-specific meetings and initiatives are organized to facilitate cooperation and progress in these areas.
- **Project-based Approach:** BIMSTEC follows a project-based approach to implement cooperative activities. Member states propose projects and initiatives for consideration and funding under BIMSTEC. The Secretariat and relevant working groups facilitate project evaluation, resource mobilization, and monitoring of project implementation.

SIGNIFICANCE OF BIMSTEC?

- **Regional Cooperation:** BIMSTEC fosters regional cooperation among member states in South Asia and Southeast Asia. It provides a platform for dialogue, collaboration, and coordination on various issues of mutual interest and concern.
- **Economic Integration:** BIMSTEC aims to enhance economic integration among member states through initiatives such as trade facilitation, investment promotion, and the development of transport and connectivity networks. This can lead to increased cross-border trade, investment opportunities, and economic growth in the region.
- **Geopolitical Significance:** BIMSTEC's geographical location, spanning both South Asia and Southeast Asia, makes it a strategically important organization. It connects the fast-growing economies of India and Thailand, and the countries of BIMSTEC collectively represent a significant portion of the global population and GDP.
- **Trade and Investment Opportunities:** BIMSTEC provides a platform to explore and expand

trade and investment opportunities among member states. By reducing trade barriers, harmonizing trade rules, and promoting business linkages, BIMSTEC aims to enhance intra-regional trade and economic cooperation.

- **People-to-People Connectivity:** BIMSTEC emphasizes people-to-people connectivity, cultural exchanges, and tourism cooperation. These efforts help foster mutual understanding, promote tourism, and strengthen social and cultural ties among member states.
- **Addressing Common Challenges:** BIMSTEC facilitates collaboration in addressing common challenges faced by member states, such as climate change, natural disasters, terrorism, transnational crime, and poverty. By sharing knowledge, best practices, and resources, BIMSTEC supports joint efforts in tackling these issues.
- **Complementing Other Regional Initiatives:** BIMSTEC complements and reinforces other regional initiatives like ASEAN, as it brings together countries that have shared interests and geographical proximity. Collaboration between BIMSTEC and ASEAN can contribute to greater regional integration and connectivity.
- **Sub-regional Development Initiatives:** BIMSTEC supports sub-regional development initiatives, such as the BBIN Initiative and the IMT Trilateral Highway project. These projects focus on enhancing connectivity and cooperation among specific subsets of member states, promoting economic development and regional integration.

Source:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/bimstec-to-focus-on-connectivity-to-adopt-bangkok-vision-2030-at-next-summit/article66972961.ece>

Q.1 Which regional vision aims to propel BIMSTEC towards a prosperous, resilient, and open region by 2030, with a focus on sustainable and balanced growth?

- (a) ASEAN Vision 2030
- (b) Bay of Bengal Vision 2030
- (c) Bangkok Vision 2030
- (d) South Asia Vision 2030

Answer: (c)

Q.2 Which of the following sectors of cooperation are emphasized within the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)?

- A. Climate change
- B. Cultural exchange
- C. Defense cooperation
- D. Poverty alleviation
- E. Tourism
- F. Water resource management

Select the correct options:

- (a) A, C, F
- (b) B, D, E
- (c) A, D, E, F
- (d) B, C, D, F

Answer: (c)

Q.3 “Discuss the significance of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) in promoting regional integration and cooperation in South Asia and Southeast Asia. Examine its potential for fostering economic growth, addressing common challenges, and enhancing connectivity among member states.”

NATIONAL CONSUMER DISPUTES REDRESSAL COMMISSION (NCDRC)

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “NCDRC”. The topic “NCDRC” has relevance in the Governance section of the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE:

FOR PRELIMS:

What is NCDRC?

FOR MAINS:

GS 2:Governance

Mandate of NCDRC?

Consumer Protection Act of 1986?

Consumer Protection Act of 2019?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) has dismissed a complaint filed by the family of former Chief Justice Of India J S Verma claiming damages from doctors and medical institutions for the alleged negligence during his treatment.

WHAT IS NCDRC?

The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) is a quasi-judicial body in India that handles consumer disputes at the national level. It was established under the Consumer Protection Act of 1986, which aims to protect the rights and interests of consumers in India.

MANDATE OF NCDRC?

- **Adjudication of Consumer Disputes:** The NCDRC has the authority to adjudicate consumer disputes at the national level. It hears and decides cases involving claims worth 1 crore rupees (10 million rupees) or more. The commission ensures fair and efficient resolution of consumer complaints and disputes.
- **Appellate Authority:** The NCDRC serves as an appellate authority for appeals against the decisions of State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions and District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions. Consumers who are dissatisfied with the rulings of lower consumer courts can approach the NCDRC for further redressal.
- **Remedies and Relief:** The commission has the power to provide remedies and relief to consumers who have suffered due to unfair practices, deficiency in services, or defective products. It can order compensation, refund of money, replacement of goods, or other appropriate relief as deemed necessary in each case.
- **Consumer Protection Jurisprudence:** The NCDRC plays a crucial role in shaping consumer protection jurisprudence in India. Its decisions and judgments set precedents and provide guidance to lower consumer courts. The commission's rulings contribute to the development of legal principles and interpretation of consumer rights.
- **Consumer Awareness and Education:** In addition to its adjudicatory functions, the NCDRC also promotes consumer awareness and education. It endeavors to educate consumers about their rights, responsibilities, and available legal remedies. The commission may undertake initiatives to raise awareness about consumer protection laws and ensure that consumers are empowered

to make informed choices.

- **Enforcement of Consumer Protection Laws:** The NCDRC is responsible for enforcing the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act of 1986. It ensures that businesses and service providers comply with consumer protection laws and regulations. The commission may impose penalties on errant businesses found to be in violation of consumer rights.

CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT OF 1986:

The Consumer Protection Act (CPA) of 1986 is a legislation enacted in India with the objective of safeguarding consumer rights and promoting consumer welfare. It aimed to provide a legal framework for the protection of consumer interests and the resolution of consumer disputes. Here are some key features and provisions of the Consumer Protection Act of 1986:

- **Definition of Consumer:** The act defines a consumer as any person who buys goods or avails services for personal use, including those who use goods or services with the consent of the buyer.
- **Consumer Rights:** The CPA of 1986 recognizes several fundamental rights of consumers, including the right to be protected against unfair trade practices, the right to information about the quality, quantity, and price of goods or services, the right to choose, and the right to seek redressal.
- **Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions:** The act establishes a three-tiered consumer dispute redressal mechanism, comprising the District Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum (at the district level), the State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (at the state level), and the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (at the national level). Consumers can file complaints with these commissions based on the value of the goods or services involved.
- **Jurisdiction and Remedies:** The CPA of 1986 grants the consumer commissions the authority to hear and decide consumer complaints, provide appropriate remedies, and award compensation to aggrieved consumers. The commissions have the power to summon witnesses, receive evidence, and pass orders to protect consumer rights.
- **Unfair Trade Practices:** The act prohibits unfair trade practices, such as making false or misleading representations, misleading advertisements, and offering goods or services that are hazardous to life and safety.
- **Consumer Protection Councils:** The CPA of 1986 establishes Consumer Protection Councils at the district, state, and national levels to promote consumer rights, create awareness, and facilitate consumer education.

CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT OF 2019:

The Consumer Protection Act (CPA) of 2019 is a comprehensive legislation enacted in India to strengthen consumer protection, address emerging challenges in the marketplace, and promote fair and transparent practices. Here are some key features and provisions of the Consumer Protection Act of 2019:

- **Definition of Consumer:** The act expands the definition of a consumer to include individuals who purchase goods or services online, through tele-shopping, direct selling, and more. It recognizes consumers engaging in e-commerce transactions and those who buy products or services through electronic means.
- **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA):** The CPA of 2019 establishes the CCPA as a regulatory body with powers to protect, promote, and enforce consumer rights. The CCPA has the authority to investigate violations, order recalls, initiate class-action suits, and take action against unfair trade practices, false advertising, and misleading claims.
- **Consumer Rights:** The act enshrines certain rights for consumers, including the right to be protected against marketing of goods and services that are hazardous, the right to information, the

right to seek redressal, the right to consumer education, and the right to a healthy and sustainable environment.

- **Product Liability:** The CPA of 2019 introduces the concept of product liability, holding manufacturers, product sellers, and service providers accountable for any harm caused by defective products or deficient services. It provides consumers with the right to seek compensation for injury or damage caused by such products or services.
- **Mediation and Simplified Dispute Resolution:** The act emphasizes the importance of mediation and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to expedite the resolution of consumer disputes. It encourages settlement through mediation before approaching consumer courts and establishes mediation cells to facilitate the resolution process.
- **Consumer Dispute Redressal Commissions:** The CPA of 2019 retains the existing structure of consumer dispute redressal commissions at the district, state, and national levels. It introduces provisions for e-filing of complaints, videoconferencing for hearings, and stricter timelines for disposal of cases.
- **Enhanced Penalties:** The act increases the penalties for various offenses, such as manufacturing or selling adulterated or spurious goods, engaging in unfair trade practices, and providing false information. It provides for stricter penalties and imprisonment for repeat offenses.
- **Consumer Protection Councils:** The CPA of 2019 strengthens the role of Consumer Protection Councils at the district, state, and national levels in promoting consumer rights and creating awareness. These councils work towards consumer education, research, and advocacy.
- **E-Commerce and Consumer Protection:** The act specifically addresses e-commerce transactions and introduces provisions to safeguard consumer interests in online transactions. It covers issues like misleading advertisements, unfair contract terms, protection of personal data, and liability of e-commerce platforms.
- **Product Recall:** The CPA of 2019 empowers the government to order the recall of unsafe goods from the market if they pose a risk to consumer health or safety.

Source:

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/ncdrc-dismisses-claim-medical-negligence-as-cause-of-death-of-former-cji-101686748864097.html>

Q.1 Which of the following statements regarding the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) is correct?

1. The NCDRC is a constitutional body established under the Consumer Protection Act of 1986.
2. The NCDRC has jurisdiction over consumer disputes involving claims worth less than 1 crore rupees.

Select the correct option:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) None of the above

Answer: (d)

Q.2 Which of the following is a key feature introduced by the Consumer Protection Act (CPA) of 2019 in India?

- (a) Establishment of Consumer Protection Councils
- (b) Definition of a consumer limited to physical purchases only
- (c) Provision for e-filing of complaints
- (d) Three-tiered consumer dispute redressal mechanism

Answer: (c)

Q.3 The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) plays a vital role in protecting consumer rights and resolving consumer disputes in India. Discuss the significance of NCDRC in the consumer protection framework and its contributions to the development of consumer jurisprudence.

INDIA-EGYPT

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “India-Egypt”. The topic “India-Egypt” has relevance in the International Relations section of the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE:

FOR PRELIMS:

Location of Egypt?

Facts about India Egypt Relations?

FOR MAINS:

GS 2: International Relations?

Significance of Egypt For India?

Challenges for india?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Egypt’s President El-Sisi who was India’s Republic Day chief guest this year, conferred Egypt’s highest State Honour, “The Order of The Nile”, on Mr. Modi; it is given to world leaders and those “who offer Egypt or humanity invaluable services”

LOCATION OF EGYPT?

Egypt is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea to the north, Sudan to the south, Libya to the west, and Israel and the Gaza Strip to the northeast. It also shares maritime borders with Cyprus and Saudi Arabia.

The Sinai Peninsula, located in the northeastern part of Egypt, connects the African mainland with the Asian continent. It is bordered by the Gulf of Suez to the west and the Gulf of Aqaba to the east. The Suez Canal, a vital waterway connecting the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea, also runs through Egypt.

FACTS ABOUT INDIA EGYPT RELATIONS?

- **Upgrade to Strategic Partnership:** India and Egypt have decided to upgrade their ties to a Strategic Partnership, a significant move that strengthens their relationship in the West Asia-North Africa (WANA) region.
- **Historical Ties:** India and Egypt have a long history of ties, including signing a Friendship Treaty in 1955 and being founding members of the Non-Aligned Movement and the G-77 grouping.
- **Non-Alignment:** During the Cold War, both countries shared a common stance of not aligning with either the U.S. or the Soviet Union, promoting an independent foreign policy.
- **Similar Positions on Ukraine Crisis:** India and Egypt have taken similar positions on the Ukraine war, not condemning Russia’s actions but calling for a diplomatic resolution.

- **Wheat Supply and Goodwill:** India's decision to supply wheat to Egypt when it faced import disruptions due to the blockade on exports from Russia and Ukraine earned India goodwill in Cairo.
- **Cooperation in Various Sectors:** India and Egypt are pursuing closer cooperation in green energy, pharmaceuticals, defence, agriculture, archaeology, antiquities, and competition law.
- **Engagement with the Muslim World:** Prime Minister Modi's visit to the Al-Hakim Mosque and meeting with Egypt's Grand Mufti aimed to dispel misgivings about India's policies towards the Muslim world.

SIGNIFICANCE OF EGYPT FOR INDIA?

- **Trade and Economic Cooperation:** India and Egypt have substantial bilateral trade, which contributes to their economic growth. Enhanced economic cooperation benefits both countries by promoting investments, expanding market access, and facilitating technology transfers.
- **Energy Security:** Egypt is a significant player in the energy sector, particularly in natural gas production. India, being one of the world's largest energy consumers, seeks to ensure a stable and diversified energy supply. Cooperation with Egypt helps India in meeting its energy needs.
- **Counterterrorism and Security:** Both India and Egypt face challenges related to terrorism and extremism. Cooperation in intelligence sharing, capacity building, and joint operations strengthens their collective efforts in combating terrorism and maintaining regional security.
- **Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges:** Cultural ties between India and Egypt promote mutual understanding, fostering cultural exchanges, tourism, and educational collaborations. People-to-people contacts contribute to building stronger bonds and enhancing the overall bilateral relationship.
- **Strategic Importance:** Egypt's geographical location at the crossroads of Africa, the Middle East, and Europe gives it strategic significance. Strengthening ties with Egypt enables India to enhance its engagement in the broader region, including the Arab world and Africa.
- **International Diplomacy:** India and Egypt often share common positions on global issues and have collaborated in multilateral forums like the United Nations. Closer ties with Egypt provide India with a valuable partner in advancing shared interests and priorities on the international stage.

CHALLENGES FOR INDIA?

- **Geographical Distance:** The geographical distance between India and Egypt poses a logistical challenge for regular and effective coordination.
- **Language Barrier:** Language differences, with Arabic being the primary language in Egypt and Hindi/English in India, can pose communication challenges and hinder seamless interactions.
- **Trade Imbalance:** There is a trade imbalance between India and Egypt, with India's imports from Egypt outweighing its exports. Addressing this trade gap and diversifying the trade basket are ongoing challenges.
- **Political Instability:** Egypt has experienced political instability in recent years, including periods of unrest and regime changes. This instability can impact the consistency and continuity of bilateral engagements.
- **Regional Dynamics:** The complex and evolving regional dynamics in the Middle East, including conflicts and geopolitical rivalries, can influence India-Egypt relations and present challenges for cooperation on regional issues.
- **Connectivity:** Limited air connectivity and direct flight options between India and Egypt can pose challenges for enhanced people-to-people contacts and increased tourism.
- **Cultural Differences:** While cultural exchanges are vital for bilateral relations, differing cultural practices and perceptions can sometimes create challenges in understanding and fostering stronger cultural ties.

Q.1 Which of the following statements accurately describes the location of Egypt?

1. Egypt is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea to the north and the Red Sea to the east.
2. Egypt shares its borders with Libya to the west and Sudan to the south.
3. The Sinai Peninsula, a part of Egyptian territory, lies to the northeast of the country.

Select the correct option(s):

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1, 2, and 3
- (d) None of the above

Answer: (a)**Q.2 Consider the following statement:**

1. India and Egypt upgraded their ties to a Strategic Partnership, strengthening their relationship in the WANA region.
2. India and Egypt have a long history of ties, including signing a Friendship Treaty in 1955 and being founding members of the Non-Aligned Movement and the G-77 grouping.
3. India and Egypt have taken a similar position on the Ukraine crisis, calling for a diplomatic resolution without condemning Russia's actions.

Select the correct option(s):

- (a) 1, 2 and 3
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 2 and 3 only

Answer: (a)**Q.3 Explain the significance of the India-Egypt relationship, highlighting the key aspects of co-operation and its impact on regional dynamics.**

CHENNAI-VLADIVOSTOK MARITIME ROUTE

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Chennai-Vladivostok maritime route". The topic "Chennai-Vladivostok maritime route" has relevance in the International Relations section of the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE:**FOR PRELIMS:**

Facts about Chennai-Vladivostok maritime route?

FOR MAINS:

GS 2 and 3: International Relations and Infrastructure.

Significance of Chennai-Vladivostok maritime route?

Challenges for India?

Way forward?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

India and Russia are keen to make the Chennai – Vladivostok maritime route operational, and a stakeholder meeting to work out details have been scheduled in September, says Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal

FACTS ABOUT CHENNAI-VLADIVOSTOK MARITIME ROUTE?

The Chennai-Vladivostok maritime route is a proposed shipping route connecting the Indian port of Chennai (formerly known as Madras) with the Russian port of Vladivostok. Here are some key facts about the Chennai-Vladivostok maritime route:

- **Geographical Significance:** The Chennai-Vladivostok route aims to establish a direct maritime link between the eastern coast of India and the Far East region of Russia. This route passes through the Bay of Bengal, the Andaman Sea, the Strait of Malacca, and the South China Sea, offering a shorter and more efficient trade route between the two countries.
- The aim is to access natural resources from Northeast Asia and the Western Pacific region.
- The Chennai-Vladivostok sea route will reduce transportation time from over 40 days to 24 days for cargo between India and Far East Russia.
- The route can serve as a corridor to counter China's Maritime Silk Route and its presence in Southeast Asia.
- Russia is concerned about increasing the Chinese population in its Far-eastern region, which could alter demographics.
- The initiative aims to strengthen economic ties, enhance regional connectivity, and address geopolitical concerns.

SIGNIFICANCE OF CHENNAI-VLADIVOSTOK MARITIME ROUTE?

- **Strengthening Economic Ties:** The maritime route can enhance bilateral trade between India and Russia by providing a direct and more efficient transportation corridor. It would reduce transit times, costs, and logistical complexities, thereby boosting the volume of trade and fostering economic cooperation between the two countries.
- **Diversifying Trade Routes:** Currently, India relies heavily on the traditional land and sea routes for trade with Russia, which pass through Europe and the Middle East. The Chennai-Vladivostok route would offer an alternative and shorter route, diversifying India's trade routes and reducing dependence on congested and politically volatile regions.

- **Access to the Far East Region:** The maritime route would provide India direct access to the resource-rich Far East region of Russia. This region offers opportunities for collaboration in sectors such as energy, mining, fisheries, and infrastructure development. Access to these resources can contribute to India's energy security and support its economic growth.
- **Strengthening Geopolitical Influence:** The establishment of the Chennai-Vladivostok route aligns with India's broader Indo-Pacific strategy. It enhances India's presence and influence in the region, particularly in the context of geopolitical developments and China's increasing influence. It enables India to deepen its engagement with Russia, a key player in the Asia-Pacific region.
- **Connectivity Initiatives:** The Chennai-Vladivostok route is part of India's efforts to enhance connectivity with Eurasian countries and strengthen the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). The route can connect with other multimodal transportation networks, such as roads, railways, and inland waterways, facilitating greater regional integration and trade flows.
- **Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges:** Improved connectivity through the maritime route can foster cultural and people-to-people exchanges between India and Russia. It can facilitate tourism, educational collaborations, and cultural exchanges, strengthening the bilateral relationship at the societal level.
- **Regional Stability and Security:** Enhanced economic ties and collaboration between India and Russia through the maritime route can contribute to regional stability and security. Increased trade and economic cooperation often serve as a stabilizing factor in international relations, promoting peaceful coexistence and reducing conflicts.

CHALLENGES FOR INDIA?

- **Infrastructure Development:** The successful operation of the maritime route requires the development of robust infrastructure, including ports, terminals, and transportation networks. India would need to invest in expanding and upgrading its existing port facilities to handle the increased trade volume and accommodate larger vessels. This entails significant financial investment and coordination among various stakeholders.
- **Logistical Challenges:** The route passes through multiple international waters and straits, including the Bay of Bengal, the Andaman Sea, the Strait of Malacca, and the South China Sea. Navigating these waters can pose logistical challenges, including piracy, maritime security concerns, congestion, and adverse weather conditions.
- **Connectivity with Hinterland:** Establishing a seamless connectivity network from the ports to the hinterland is crucial for the success of the maritime route. Efficient road and rail networks need to be developed to ensure smooth transportation of goods to and from the ports.
- **Regulatory and Customs Procedures:** Streamlining regulatory and customs procedures is essential to facilitate smooth trade operations along the Chennai-Vladivostok route. Harmonizing customs regulations, reducing paperwork, and implementing efficient clearance processes would help minimize delays and improve the ease of doing business.
- **Market Access and Trade Barriers:** India would need to address trade barriers, tariffs, and non-tariff barriers to ensure favorable market access for its goods in Russia and other countries along the route. Negotiating trade agreements and resolving trade disputes would be crucial to promote trade and remove impediments to the flow of goods.

- **Competition from Existing Routes:** The Chennai-Vladivostok route would face competition from established trade routes connecting India and Russia through Europe and the Middle East. Convincing stakeholders to shift their existing trade patterns to the new route would require demonstrating its advantages in terms of cost, time, and reliability.
- **Political and Geostrategic Considerations:** The successful operation of the maritime route may be influenced by geopolitical dynamics and political considerations. It would require maintaining cordial relations with neighboring countries and managing potential sensitivities related to territorial disputes or competing strategic interests.

WAY FORWARD?

- **Infrastructure Development:** The Indian government should prioritize infrastructure development, including the expansion and modernization of ports along the route. Investments should be made to enhance port capacities, improve connectivity with hinterland regions, and develop efficient multimodal transportation networks.
- **Stakeholder Collaboration:** Close collaboration among various stakeholders is crucial. The government should engage with port authorities, private sector players, logistics providers, and international partners to foster cooperation and address the specific needs and challenges of the maritime route.
- **Streamlining Regulatory Procedures:** Efforts should be made to simplify customs procedures, reduce paperwork, and harmonize regulations. This can be achieved through the digitization of trade documentation, implementing single-window clearance mechanisms, and promoting mutual recognition agreements to streamline customs processes.
- **Enhancing Maritime Security:** Collaboration with regional navies and maritime security agencies is essential to address piracy, ensure safe passage, and enhance security along the maritime route. Sharing intelligence, conducting joint patrols, and investing in surveillance systems can help mitigate security risks and instill confidence among traders and shipping companies.
- **Trade Facilitation and Market Access:** The Indian government should actively engage in trade negotiations and dialogues to address trade barriers and promote favorable market access for Indian goods in Russia and other countries along the route. Bilateral and regional trade agreements can be explored to simplify customs procedures and reduce trade barriers.
- **Diplomatic Engagement:** Diplomatic efforts should be focused on building strong relationships with countries along the route. Regular dialogues, high-level visits, and strategic partnerships can create a conducive environment for trade and cooperation, while addressing any political or geopolitical sensitivities that may arise.
- **Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establishing a monitoring and evaluation mechanism is crucial to assess the progress, identify challenges, and make necessary adjustments. Regular reviews can help track the performance of the maritime route, address emerging issues, and ensure that the route operates efficiently and effectively.

Source:

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/logistics/india-and-russia-aim-to-establish-chennai-vladivostok-maritime-route-promising-time-and-cost-sav->

Q.1 Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding the Chennai-Vladivostok maritime route?

1. The maritime route is intended to enhance trade connectivity between India and Far East Russia.
2. The initiative to establish the maritime route is part of India's Indo-Pacific strategy to counter China's Belt and Road Initiative.
3. The Chennai-Vladivostok maritime route primarily focuses on strengthening cultural and people-to-people exchanges between India and Russia.

Select the correct option using the codes below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3

Answer: (a)

Q.2 Which of the following statements regarding the new trade route (Chennai-Vladivostok) between India and Russia is/are correct?

1. The route is expected to significantly reduce the transportation time between India and Russia.
2. It is a land-based corridor primarily focusing on road and rail connectivity.
3. The trade route is a part of India's strategic initiatives in the Arctic region.

Select the correct answer using the codes below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3

Answer: (a)

Q.3 Analyze the significance and potential challenges of the Chennai-Vladivostok maritime route for India's regional connectivity and geopolitical interests.

General Studies -3

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



WORLD'S LARGEST GRAIN STORAGE PLAN IN COOPERATIVE SECTOR

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "World's Largest Grain Storage Plan in the Cooperative Sector". The topic "World's Largest Grain Storage Plan in the Cooperative Sector" has relevance in the Food Management section of the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE:

FOR PRELIMS:

What is the Plan?

FOR MAINS:

GS 3: Food Management

Benefits of the Plan

Challenges in Food Storage for India?

Solutions for the challenges?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi approved the constitution and empowerment of an Inter Ministerial Committee (IMC) for facilitation of the "World's Largest Grain Storage Plan in Cooperative Sector" by convergence of various schemes of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Ministry of Food Processing Industries.

The Plan would be implemented by utilizing the available outlays provided under the identified schemes of the respective Ministries. Following schemes have been identified for convergence under the Plan:

1. Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare:
 - Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF),
 - Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure Scheme (AMI),
 - Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH),
 - Sub Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM)
2. Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution:
 - Allocation of food grains under the National Food Security Act,
 - Procurement operations at Minimum Support Price

BENEFITS OF THE PLAN:

1. The plan is multi-pronged – it aims to address not just the shortage of agricultural storage infrastructure in the country by facilitating establishment of godowns at the level of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies(PACS), but would also enable PACS to undertake various other activities, viz:
 - Functioning as Procurement centres for State Agencies/ Food Corporation of India (FCI);
 - Serving as Fair Price Shops (FPS);
 - Setting up custom hiring centers;
 - Setting up common processing units, including assaying, sorting, grading units for agricultural produce, etc.
2. Further, creation of decentralized storage capacity at the local level would reduce food grain

- wastage and strengthen food security of the country.
3. By providing various options to the farmers, it would prevent distress sale of crops, thus enabling the farmers to realize better prices for their produce.
 4. It would hugely reduce the cost incurred in transportation of food grains to procurement centers and again transporting the stocks back from warehouses to FPS.
 5. Through 'whole-of-Government' approach, the Plan would strengthen PACS by enabling them to diversify their business activities, thus enhancing the incomes of the farmer members as well.

IMPORTANCE OF FOOD STORAGE IN INDIA:

- **Food security:** India has a large population that heavily relies on agriculture for its food supply. Food storage helps bridge the gap between food production and consumption by storing surplus produce during peak seasons for distribution during lean periods. It ensures a consistent food supply throughout the year, reducing the risk of food shortages and addressing the issue of food insecurity.
- **Minimizing food waste:** Efficient food storage practices help minimize post-harvest losses and food waste. This reduces the amount of food that goes to waste, which is not only ethically responsible but also has environmental and economic benefits.
- **Price stabilization:** Adequate food storage facilities enable the government and market participants to manage the supply and demand dynamics of food commodities. During times of surplus, food can be stored to prevent prices from plummeting, and during periods of scarcity, stored food can be released to stabilize prices. This contributes to a more stable and predictable market, benefiting both producers and consumers.
- **Market access and value addition:** Food storage facilities facilitate better market access for farmers, particularly small-scale producers. With access to storage, farmers can store their produce and sell it at more favorable prices during off-seasons or when market conditions are more favorable. Additionally, proper storage enables value addition activities such as processing and packaging, leading to better market opportunities and increased income for farmers.
- **Supporting agricultural value chains:** Effective food storage is critical for maintaining the quality and shelf life of perishable agricultural commodities, such as fruits, vegetables, and dairy products. By preserving the quality and freshness of these products, storage facilities support the development of robust agricultural value chains. This, in turn, encourages investments in agri-businesses, processing industries, and export opportunities, driving economic growth and rural development.
- **Mitigating the impact of natural disasters:** India is prone to natural disasters like floods, cyclones, and droughts, which can severely affect food production and availability. Adequate food storage infrastructure acts as a buffer during such crises by ensuring that essential food supplies are available for distribution to affected areas, minimizing the impact of these disasters on food security.

CHALLENGES IN FOOD STORAGE FOR INDIA?

- **Inadequate infrastructure:** The lack of proper storage facilities, such as warehouses, cold storage, and refrigeration, is a significant challenge. Many regions in India suffer from a shortage of storage infrastructure, especially in rural areas.
- **Post-harvest losses:** India experiences high post-harvest losses due to inefficient storage practices. Improper handling, lack of modern technologies, and limited access to storage facilities lead to spoilage, pest infestation, and deterioration of food quality.
- **Insufficient cold chain facilities:** The absence of a well-developed cold chain infrastructure is a significant challenge for perishable commodities like fruits, vegetables, and dairy products. A robust cold chain system is necessary to maintain the quality and extend the shelf life of these items.

- **Seasonal variations:** India has distinct seasonal variations in food production, resulting in a surplus of certain crops during harvest seasons. However, the lack of proper storage and distribution channels leads to wastage and price fluctuations.
- **Poor transportation and logistics:** Inadequate transportation infrastructure, including inadequate road networks and inefficient logistics systems, pose challenges in moving food efficiently from farms to storage facilities and distribution centers. This often leads to delays, increased costs, and spoilage.
- **Pests and rodents:** Insects, rodents, and pests pose a constant threat to stored food. Without effective pest control measures and proper storage conditions, food can be damaged, leading to losses and quality degradation.
- **Limited financial resources:** Many farmers and small-scale food businesses in India lack the financial resources to invest in modern storage technologies and facilities. This limits their ability to store food properly and efficiently.
- **Lack of awareness and training:** There is a need for improved awareness and training among farmers, food producers, and stakeholders regarding proper storage techniques, pest management, and post-harvest handling practices.

SOLUTIONS FOR THE CHALLENGES?

- **Improve storage infrastructure:** The government and private sector can invest in building and upgrading storage infrastructure, including warehouses, cold storage facilities, and refrigeration units. This will enhance the capacity to store perishable and non-perishable food items.
- **Promote cold chain development:** Developing a robust cold chain infrastructure is crucial for preserving the quality and extending the shelf life of perishable commodities. Investments should be made in establishing cold storage facilities, refrigerated transport, and other components of the cold chain to ensure proper temperature control from farm to fork.
- **Enhance post-harvest handling practices:** Educating farmers and food producers on proper post-harvest handling techniques is essential. This includes training on grading, sorting, packaging, and storage practices to minimize losses and maintain food quality.
- **Strengthen transportation networks:** Improving transportation infrastructure, including roads, rail networks, and logistics systems, will enable efficient movement of food from farms to storage facilities and distribution centers. This will reduce delays, minimize spoilage, and ensure timely delivery of food to the market.
- **Implement integrated pest management:** Effective pest control measures should be adopted throughout the food storage chain. This includes regular monitoring, use of appropriate pesticides and repellents, maintaining cleanliness and hygiene, and employing pest management techniques to prevent infestation and damage to stored food.
- **Encourage private sector participation:** The involvement of the private sector in food storage infrastructure development and management can bring in expertise, technology, and investments. Public-private partnerships can help bridge the gap between demand and supply of storage facilities.
- **Facilitate access to finance:** Providing financial support, subsidies, and credit facilities to farmers, small-scale food businesses, and storage facility operators can help them invest in modern storage technologies and facilities. This will enable them to store food properly and efficiently.
- **Promote research and innovation:** Continued research and innovation in food storage technologies, packaging materials, and preservation methods are essential. This can lead to the development of cost-effective and sustainable solutions tailored to Indian conditions.

Source:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1928599>

Q.1 Which of the following statements regarding food storage in India is/are correct?

1. Inadequate infrastructure, including a shortage of storage facilities, is a significant challenge for food storage in India.
2. India has a well-developed cold chain infrastructure that ensures the proper preservation of perishable food items.
3. The lack of awareness and training among farmers and stakeholders is not a significant challenge in food storage practices.

Select the correct option:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 1,2 and 3 only
- (d) None of the above

Answer: (a)

Q.2 Which of the following statements regarding the Public Distribution System (PDS) in India:

1. A) The PDS aims to provide subsidized food grains to eligible beneficiaries.
2. B) The distribution of food grains through the PDS is managed by the Central Government in collaboration with the State Governments.
3. C) The PDS covers only rice and wheat, and does not include other essential commodities.
4. D) The identification of eligible beneficiaries under the PDS is done through the Aadhaar-based biometric authentication system.

Select the option that represents the incorrect statement:

- (a) A
- (b) B
- (c) C
- (d) D

Answer: (c)

Q.3 “Discuss the challenges faced by India in ensuring efficient food storage and its impact on food security and agricultural development. Suggest measures to address these challenges and enhance food storage infrastructure in the country.”

FISCAL DEFICIT

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

RELEVANCE:

FOR PRELIMS:

What is Fiscal Deficit?

FOR MAINS:

GS 3: Economy

Causes of Fiscal Deficit?

Impact of High Fiscal Deficit?

Measures to reel in a high Fiscal Deficit?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

India's Financial Year 23 fiscal deficit narrows to 6.4% of the GDP, meets budgeted target

WHAT IS FISCAL DEFICIT?

Fiscal deficit refers to the difference between a government's total expenditures and its total revenue (excluding borrowing) during a particular fiscal year. It represents the amount of money the government needs to borrow to meet its expenditure requirements when its expenses exceed its revenue.

$$\text{Fiscal Deficit} = \text{Total Expenditure (Revenue Expenditure + Capital Expenditure)} - (\text{Revenue Receipts} + \text{Recoveries of Loans} + \text{Other Capital Receipts (all Revenue and Capital Receipts except loans taken)})$$

In simpler terms, the fiscal deficit indicates the extent to which a government needs to rely on borrowing to fund its spending commitments. It is an essential measure of a government's fiscal health and indicates the extent to which a government is spending more than it is earning through tax revenues and other sources

Fiscal deficit is typically expressed as a percentage of a country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It is an important indicator of a government's fiscal prudence and can have significant implications for the overall economy.

CAUSES OF FISCAL DEFICIT?

- **Insufficient revenue generation:** One of the primary causes of fiscal deficits is when a government fails to generate enough revenue to cover its expenditure commitments. This can occur due to factors such as low tax compliance, tax evasion, inefficient tax administration, narrow tax base, or an economic slowdown leading to reduced tax collections.
- **High expenditure commitments:** Governments may face fiscal deficits if their expenditure commitments are high relative to their revenue. This can result from various factors, including high spending on social welfare programs, subsidies, defense, infrastructure development, public sector salaries, and pensions. Unplanned or uncontrolled spending can contribute to a widening fiscal deficit.
- **Economic downturns and recessions:** During periods of economic downturns or recessions, governments may experience decreased tax revenues due to reduced economic activity. At the same time, they may face increased spending pressures due to countercyclical measures, such as stimulus packages, unemployment benefits, and support to struggling sectors. These factors can contribute to fiscal deficits.
- **Interest payments on past borrowings:** Governments that have accumulated significant debt in the past may have to allocate a substantial portion of their budget to service the interest payments on that debt. High interest payments can put strain on government finances and contribute to fiscal deficits, particularly if revenue generation is insufficient to cover these expenses.
- **Structural issues and inefficiencies:** Structural issues within the economy, such as a large informal sector, tax leakages, or inefficiencies in public spending, can contribute to fiscal deficits. Inefficient use of resources, misallocation of funds, corruption, and poor governance can result in wasteful expenditures and inadequate revenue generation, leading to fiscal imbalances.
- **Demographic factors and social obligations:** Demographic factors, such as an aging population or a high dependency ratio, can put pressure on government finances. Increased healthcare and pension expenditures can strain the budget, especially if revenue generation does not keep pace with these obligations. Social obligations, such as education, healthcare, and poverty alleviation, can also contribute to fiscal deficits if funding is inadequate.

- **External shocks and emergencies:** External shocks, such as natural disasters, global economic crises, or geopolitical events, can have significant fiscal implications. Governments may need to increase spending for disaster relief, rehabilitation, or economic stabilization, which can lead to fiscal deficits if additional revenue sources are not available.

IMPACT OF HIGH FISCAL DEFICIT?

- **Increased Government Borrowing:** A high fiscal deficit indicates that the government needs to borrow more money to finance its expenditures. This can lead to an increase in government debt and interest payments, putting upward pressure on interest rates.
- **Economic Instability:** A persistent and high fiscal deficit can create macroeconomic instability. It can lead to inflationary pressures as the government injects more money into the economy through borrowing, increasing the money supply. This can erode purchasing power and reduce the value of the domestic currency. Inflation can have adverse effects on investment, savings, and overall economic growth.
- **Reduced Private Investment:** A high fiscal deficit can lead to higher interest rates and reduced availability of credit in the economy. This can discourage private investment as businesses face higher borrowing costs. Reduced private investment can hinder economic growth, limit job creation, and hamper productivity improvements.
- **Crowding Out Effect:** When the government needs to borrow extensively to cover the fiscal deficit, it competes with the private sector for available funds in the financial market. This can lead to a crowding out effect, where private businesses and individuals find it more difficult to access credit or face higher borrowing costs. Crowding out can hinder private investment and economic growth.
- **Pressure on Exchange Rates:** A high fiscal deficit can put pressure on the exchange rate of a country's currency. If the deficit is financed through borrowing from external sources, it can increase external debt and raise concerns among foreign investors. This can lead to a depreciation of the domestic currency, making imports more expensive and potentially increasing inflationary pressures.
- **Rating Downgrades and Investor Confidence:** Persistently high fiscal deficits can erode investor confidence and lead to rating downgrades by credit rating agencies. Lower credit ratings can increase borrowing costs for the government and limit access to international capital markets. It can also deter foreign direct investment (FDI) and other forms of foreign investment, impacting overall economic growth.

MEASURES TO REEL IN A HIGH FISCAL DEFICIT?

- **Expenditure Rationalization:** Review and prioritize government expenditure to identify areas where spending can be reduced or optimized without compromising essential services. This can involve cutting down on non-essential expenditures, subsidies, and wasteful expenses.
- **Public Sector Reforms:** Undertake reforms to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public sector organizations. This can include measures such as reducing bureaucracy, streamlining government agencies, and improving public procurement practices to reduce inefficiencies and control expenditure.
- **Subsidy Reforms:** Assess and reform existing subsidy programs to ensure that they are targeted to those who truly need them. Consider reducing subsidies for sectors that are not economically viable or have minimal social impact. Implement mechanisms to provide direct benefits to the intended beneficiaries instead of generalized subsidies.
- **Tax Reforms:** Evaluate the tax structure to identify areas for improvement and revenue enhancement. This can involve measures such as broadening the tax base, reducing tax evasion and avoidance, simplifying tax procedures, and exploring the possibility of introducing new taxes or adjusting tax rates to generate additional revenue.

- **Fiscal Discipline:** Implement strict fiscal discipline measures to control expenditure and enforce budgetary discipline. This can include introducing expenditure ceilings, improving financial management practices, and enhancing monitoring and control mechanisms to ensure adherence to budgetary targets.
- **Public Asset Management:** Optimize the utilization of public assets and explore avenues for monetization or divestment of non-strategic assets. This can help generate revenue and reduce the need for excessive borrowing to finance the fiscal deficit.
- **Debt Management:** Develop effective debt management strategies to optimize borrowing costs and minimize the burden of interest payments. This can involve refinancing high-cost debts, negotiating favorable borrowing terms, and exploring options for debt restructuring or rescheduling.
- **Economic Growth and Revenue Enhancement:** Focus on policies and measures that promote economic growth and increase revenue generation. This can include initiatives to attract investments, support entrepreneurship, boost exports, and stimulate economic activity, which can lead to higher tax revenues and reduce the fiscal deficit.

Source:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/indias-fy23-fiscal-deficit-narrows-to-6-4-meets-budgeted-target/articleshow/100647258.cms>

Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding fiscal deficit in India:

- 1: Fiscal deficit represents the excess of government expenditure over its total revenue and is equal to borrowing.
- 2: A low fiscal deficit can lead to inflationary pressures in the economy.
- 3: The Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003 aims to bring down the fiscal deficit to a sustainable level.

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

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1,2 and 3

Answer:(c)

Q.2 What is the potential impact of a high fiscal deficit on an economy?

- (a) It can lead to inflationary pressures and erode the purchasing power of the currency.
- (b) It encourages private investment and stimulates economic growth.
- (c) It reduces the burden of public debt and improves credit ratings.
- (d) It has no significant impact on the overall economy.

Answer: (a)

Q.3 Examine the concept of fiscal deficit and its implications on the economy of a country. Discuss the factors contributing to the fiscal deficit and suggest measures to effectively manage it.

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB)

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Asian Development bank”. The topic “Asian development bank” has relevance in the Economy section of the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE:

FOR PRELIMS:

Facts about ADB?

FOR MAINS:

GS 3: Economy

Objectives of ADB?

Relevance of ADB for India?

Challenges for ADB?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

ADB launches India strategy for 2023-27; focus on employment creation, green growth

FACTS ABOUT ADB?

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is an international financial institution headquartered in Manila, Philippines.

- **Location:** The ADB's headquarters is located in Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila, Philippines.
- **Formation:** The ADB was established on December 19, 1966. It was formed as a regional development bank to promote economic growth and cooperation in Asia and the Pacific.
- **Membership:** The ADB has 68 member countries, including both developing and developed economies. Its members include countries from Asia, the Pacific region, as well as non-regional countries.
- **Governance Structure:** The ADB has a governance structure consisting of the Board of Governors and the Board of Directors.

OBJECTIVES OF ADB?

- **Operational Focus:** The ADB focuses on a wide range of development areas, including infrastructure development, energy, water supply and sanitation, education, healthcare, agriculture and rural development, finance, and private sector development. It provides financial assistance, technical expertise, and policy advice to support the development efforts of its member countries.
- **Partnerships and Collaboration:** The ADB collaborates with other international organizations, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector to promote sustainable development. It works closely with regional institutions, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), to support regional integration and cooperation.
- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** The ADB aligns its work with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It aims to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs by supporting its member countries in areas such as poverty reduction, gender equality, climate action, sustainable infrastructure, and inclusive economic growth.
- **Financial Resources:** The ADB raises funds through various channels, including capital contributions from member countries, borrowing from international capital markets, and partnerships with other development institutions. It provides loans, grants, and technical assistance to

support projects and programs in its member countries.

RELEVANCE OF ADB FOR INDIA?

- **Financial Assistance:** ADB provides financial support to India for various development projects, including infrastructure development, energy, water supply, sanitation, education, and healthcare. This assistance helps address India's developmental challenges and contributes to its economic growth and social progress.
- **Technical Expertise and Knowledge Sharing:** ADB offers technical expertise and knowledge sharing through research, capacity building, and policy advice. This helps India in improving project design, implementation, and monitoring, as well as adopting best practices and innovative solutions.
- **Regional Cooperation and Connectivity:** ADB promotes regional cooperation and connectivity in Asia. It supports regional infrastructure projects, such as transport networks and cross-border initiatives, which can enhance trade, economic integration, and cooperation among countries in the region. India benefits from these initiatives by improving connectivity with neighboring countries and enhancing its regional trade relations.

CHALLENGES FOR ADB?

- **Financing Constraints:** A challenge for ADB is ensuring sufficient financial resources to meet the growing demands for development projects in member countries. To address this, ADB can explore innovative financing mechanisms, attract private sector investments, and mobilize resources through partnerships with other development institutions.
- **Balancing Priorities and Sustainability:** ADB needs to balance the priorities of economic development and poverty reduction with the imperative of environmental sustainability. This can be achieved by promoting green and sustainable infrastructure projects, integrating climate change considerations, and encouraging sustainable practices in project implementation.
- **Project Implementation and Governance:** Efficient project implementation and effective governance are crucial for successful outcomes. ADB can work closely with member countries, including India, to strengthen institutional capacity, enhance project management capabilities, and improve governance frameworks. Capacity building initiatives and knowledge sharing platforms can help address these challenges.
- **Regional Cooperation and Geopolitical Dynamics:** ADB operates in a region with diverse geopolitical dynamics. It needs to navigate political sensitivities, facilitate dialogue, and promote regional cooperation among member countries. This requires maintaining neutrality, fostering trust, and facilitating dialogue to address regional issues and conflicts.

Source:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/adb-launches-india-strategy-for-2023-27-focus-on-employment-creation-green-growth/articleshow/100631433.cms?from=mdr>

Q.1 Which of the following statements regarding the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is correct?

- A) ADB was established to promote economic growth and cooperation in Asia and the Pacific.
- B) ADB has 58 member countries, including only developing economies.
- C) ADB's headquarters is located in Tokyo, Japan.

Select the correct option:

- (a) A
- (b) B

- (c) C
(d) None of the above

Answer: (a)

Q.2 Which of the following is NOT a primary focus area of the Asian Development Bank (ADB)?

- A) Infrastructure development
B) Education and healthcare
C) Poverty reduction
D) Defense and military expenditure

Select the correct option:

- (a) A
(b) B
(c) C
(d) D

Answer: (d)

Q.3 Discuss the role and significance of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in India's development trajectory. Examine the key areas of collaboration between ADB and India, highlighting major projects and initiatives.

JAL JEEVAN MISSION

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Jal Jeevan Mission". The topic "Jal Jeevan Mission" has relevance in the water management section of the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE:

FOR PRELIMS:

What is the Jal Jeevan Mission?
Objectives of Jal Jeevan Mission?

FOR MAINS:

GS 3: Water management.
Importance of Jal Jeevan Mission?
Challenges in providing Clean Water?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has reiterated the commitment to strengthen Jal Jeevan Mission and has underlined the role of access to clean water in public health.

WHAT IS THE JAL JEEVAN MISSION?

Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) is a flagship program launched by the Government of India in 2019 with the goal of providing piped water supply to every rural household in the country by 2024. The mission aims to ensure safe and adequate drinking water for all, with a focus on improving the quality of life and reducing water-borne diseases in rural areas. The implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mis-

sion involves a decentralized approach. Gram Panchayats (village-level local self-governance institutions) play a crucial role in planning, implementing, and managing the water supply infrastructure at the village level. They are responsible for the formation of Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSCs) and the preparation of village-level plans.

OBJECTIVES OF JAL JEEVAN MISSION?

- **Providing Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs):** The mission aims to provide tap water connections to every rural household.
- **Sustainable Water Supply:** The mission focuses on ensuring a long-term, sustainable water supply to rural areas.
- **Convergence:** The program emphasizes convergence with other government schemes to maximize the efficiency and utilization of resources.
- **Information, Education, and Communication (IEC):** JJM promotes awareness and behavioral change among the rural population through extensive IEC campaigns.
- **Capacity Building:** It focuses on capacity building at the village level by training and empowering local communities to own, operate, and maintain the water supply systems.
- **Water Quality Monitoring:** The mission aims to ensure the supply of potable water by adopting appropriate water quality testing methods and monitoring mechanisms.

IMPORTANCE OF JAL JEEVAN MISSION?

- **Access to Safe Drinking Water:** One of the primary objectives of the mission is to provide safe and clean drinking water to every rural household in India. Access to clean water is essential for human health, as contaminated water can lead to waterborne diseases such as diarrhea, cholera, and typhoid. By ensuring access to safe drinking water, the mission contributes to the overall well-being and improved health of rural communities.
- **Reduction of Waterborne Diseases:** In rural areas where access to clean water is limited, waterborne diseases are prevalent. By providing piped water connections and promoting proper sanitation and hygiene practices, the mission helps reduce the incidence of waterborne diseases. This, in turn, reduces the burden on the healthcare system and improves the quality of life for rural populations.
- **Gender Empowerment:** In many rural areas, women and girls bear the responsibility of fetching water for their households. This often involves long and arduous journeys, which not only takes up their time but also puts them at risk of physical harm and limits their access to education and economic opportunities. By providing piped water connections directly to households, the Jal Jeevan Mission reduces the burden on women and enables them to participate in other productive activities, promoting gender empowerment.
- **Economic Development:** Access to clean water is crucial for agricultural activities, livestock rearing, and various rural industries. By ensuring a sustainable water supply, the mission contributes to agricultural productivity, promotes livelihood opportunities, and stimulates economic development in rural areas. It also helps in addressing water scarcity and promoting efficient water use, leading to improved agricultural practices and increased income for farmers.
- **Environmental Conservation:** The Jal Jeevan Mission emphasizes source sustainability and water conservation measures, such as rainwater harvesting and groundwater recharge. By promoting these practices, the mission contributes to environmental conservation and the preservation of water resources. It also encourages communities to adopt sustainable water management practices, which are crucial for long-term water security.
- **Social Inclusion and Equity:** The mission focuses on providing water connections to every rural household, irrespective of social or economic status. It aims to bridge the gaps in water access and reduce disparities, ensuring social inclusion and equity in the provision of basic services. This

promotes a sense of equality and contributes to social harmony within rural communities.

CHALLENGES IN PROVIDING CLEAN WATER?

- **Water Scarcity:** Water scarcity is a significant challenge in many regions, particularly in arid and semi-arid areas. Population growth, urbanization, and climate change exacerbate the issue by increasing water demand and putting pressure on limited water resources. Water scarcity affects both rural and urban areas, making it difficult to meet the needs of growing populations.
- **Poor Water Quality:** Contamination of water sources is a critical challenge, especially in rural and peri-urban areas. Industrial pollution, inadequate sanitation systems, agricultural runoff, and improper waste disposal contribute to water pollution. Addressing poor water quality is essential to ensure access to safe and clean drinking water, as well as to protect ecosystems and public health.
- **Infrastructure and Service Delivery:** Developing and maintaining water infrastructure, such as pipelines, treatment plants, and distribution networks, poses significant challenges, particularly in remote and rural areas. Inadequate infrastructure leads to water supply interruptions, leakages, and inefficiencies. Ensuring proper service delivery and regular maintenance of infrastructure are essential for sustained access to clean water.
- **Financial and Institutional Constraints:** Implementing water-related projects and programs requires significant financial resources. Limited funding, especially in low-income countries, hampers the development and maintenance of water infrastructure. Additionally, institutional capacities and coordination among various stakeholders, including government agencies, community organizations, and private entities, can pose challenges to effective water management and service delivery.
- **Climate Change Impacts:** Climate change exacerbates water-related challenges. Changing rainfall patterns, increased frequency of droughts and floods, and rising temperatures affect water availability and quality. Adapting to these climate change impacts requires innovative strategies for water management, conservation, and resilience building.
- **Behavioral Change and Awareness:** Promoting behavioral change and creating awareness about the importance of water conservation and hygiene practices are critical challenges. Education and outreach programs are necessary to encourage communities to adopt sustainable water use practices, improve sanitation and hygiene behaviors, and reduce water wastage.
- **Equity and Access:** Ensuring equitable access to clean water remains a challenge, particularly for marginalized communities, remote areas, and informal settlements. Addressing disparities in access requires targeted interventions, such as prioritizing underserved areas, promoting community participation, and involving marginalized groups in decision-making processes.
- **Conflicts over Water Resources:** Water scarcity and competition for water resources can lead to conflicts, both at the local and international levels. Disputes over water allocation, transboundary water management, and competing interests among various stakeholders can hinder effective water governance and collaboration.

Source:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1931175>

Q.1 Which of the following objectives is associated with the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) ?

- (a) Providing clean water to urban households
- (b) Ensuring sustainable water supply to rural areas
- (c) Promoting rainwater harvesting in industrial sectors
- (d) Improving irrigation facilities in agricultural regions

Answer: (b)

Q.2 Which of the following statements regarding the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) is/are correct?

1. The JJM aims to provide functional household tap connections (FHTCs) to every rural household in India.
 2. The mission focuses on source sustainability measures such as groundwater recharge and rain-water harvesting.
 3. The implementation of the mission is primarily centralized, with the central government overseeing all aspects of planning and execution.
- (a) 1 only
(b) 1 and 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) All of the above

Answer: (b)

Q.3 Discuss the significance and challenges associated with the implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in ensuring universal access to clean water in rural areas of India. Highlight the strategies adopted by the mission to address these challenges and evaluate their effectiveness.

UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME (UBI)

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “UBI”. The topic “UBI” has relevance in the Poverty Alleviation section of the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE:

FOR PRELIMS:

What is UBI?

FOR MAINS?

GS 3: Poverty

Benefits of UBI?

Challenges of UBI?

India on UBI?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran said the concept of Universal Basic Income (UBI) was not necessary for India since natural economic growth would take care of the country's many aspirations.

WHAT IS UBI?

Definition: Universal Basic Income refers to an unconditional cash transfer provided to all members of a society, with no conditions attached. It is typically paid on a regular basis, such as monthly or quarterly.

Goal: The primary objective of Universal Basic Income is to alleviate poverty, provide financial security, and ensure a minimum standard of living for all citizens. It is intended to address income inequality and mitigate the potential job displacement caused by technological advancements and

automation.

BENEFITS OF UBI?

- **Poverty Alleviation:** UBI has the potential to significantly reduce poverty rates by providing a guaranteed income floor to all individuals.
- **Financial Security:** UBI provides a stable and predictable source of income, which can help individuals and families achieve financial security. It acts as a safety net during periods of unemployment, economic downturns, or unexpected life events, reducing financial stress and promoting overall well-being.
- **Reduced Income Inequality:** UBI addresses income inequality by providing a basic income to all individuals, regardless of their wealth or income level.
- **Improved Health and Well-being:** UBI has the potential to improve health outcomes by reducing stress, financial insecurity, and the negative impacts of poverty.
- **Enhanced Social Mobility:** With a guaranteed income, individuals have more freedom to pursue education, training, and entrepreneurship opportunities. **Empowerment and Autonomy:** UBI gives individuals greater control and autonomy over their lives. It allows them to make choices based on their own priorities and needs, rather than being constrained by financial circumstances.
- **Stimulus to Local Economies:** UBI can serve as an economic stimulus by increasing consumer spending.
- **Simplified and Efficient Welfare System:** UBI has the potential to streamline and simplify the existing welfare system, reducing administrative complexity and costs. By replacing or consolidating multiple means-tested programs, UBI can eliminate bureaucracy, reduce stigmatization, and ensure that support reaches all individuals in need.
- **Adaptability to Technological Changes:** As automation and technological advancements continue to reshape the labor market, UBI provides a safety net for individuals who may face job displacement or struggle to find traditional employment opportunities. It allows people to transition, retrain, or explore new avenues of work without the fear of financial destitution.
- **Social Cohesion and Reduced Crime:** UBI can contribute to social cohesion by reducing income disparities and addressing systemic poverty. It has the potential to alleviate social tensions and decrease crime rates associated with poverty and desperation.

CHALLENGES OF UBI?

- **Funding:** One of the primary challenges of UBI is determining a sustainable and viable funding mechanism. Providing a regular cash payment to all individuals requires significant financial resources. Funding options, such as higher taxes or redistribution of existing welfare programs, can face resistance from those who may bear a heavier tax burden or rely on current benefits.
- **Inflationary Pressures:** Critics argue that UBI may contribute to inflationary pressures if it leads to increased consumer spending without corresponding productivity gains. If prices rise in response to the increased purchasing power of individuals, it could reduce the real value of the cash payment and potentially erode its intended benefits.
- **Work Incentives:** One concern with UBI is that it may discourage workforce participation if individuals have a guaranteed income regardless of employment.
- **Implementation and Administration:** Implementing a large-scale UBI program requires robust administrative infrastructure to ensure accurate and efficient distribution of payments. Designing an effective system that minimizes errors, prevents fraud, and reaches all eligible individuals can be challenging and may involve significant bureaucratic hurdles.
- **Redistributive Implications:** UBI's redistributive nature raises questions about its impact on income distribution and its potential to exacerbate wealth inequalities. Critics argue that providing cash payments to all individuals, regardless of their income or wealth, may benefit higher-income

individuals more than those in genuine need, thus perpetuating inequality.

- **Political Will and Public Perception:** UBI faces varying levels of political support and public perception. Skepticism and resistance can arise from concerns about its cost, the potential for abuse, the impact on work ethic, and the redistribution of resources.
- **Regional and Contextual Factors:** The feasibility and effectiveness of UBI can be influenced by regional and contextual factors such as the size of the population, economic conditions, and cultural attitudes towards work and welfare. Implementing UBI requires tailoring the policy to fit the specific circumstances of each country or region.
- **Long-term Sustainability:** Assessing the long-term sustainability of UBI is essential. Changes in demographics, technological advancements, and economic conditions can affect the financial viability and effectiveness of UBI over time. Regular evaluation and adaptation may be necessary to ensure its continued relevance and success.

INDIA ON UBI?

- **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA):** India has an existing social welfare program called MGNREGA, which guarantees 100 days of employment per year to rural households. Although not a UBI, it shares some similarities in terms of providing income support to individuals.
- **SEWA's UBI Pilot Project:** The Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), an Indian trade union, conducted a pilot project on UBI in the state of Madhya Pradesh. From 2011 to 2013, approximately 6,000 participants received a small monthly cash transfer. The project aimed to study the impact of UBI on poverty, women's empowerment, and overall well-being.
- **Economic Survey 2016-17:** The Indian government's Economic Survey for the fiscal year 2016-17 included a chapter on UBI. It outlined the potential benefits and challenges of implementing UBI in India, sparking a national conversation on the topic.
- **State-Level Experiments:** Some Indian states, such as Sikkim and Telangana, have expressed interest in implementing UBI at the state level. In 2019, Sikkim conducted a pilot project, named the Sikkim Universal Basic Income Experiment (SUBE), providing a monthly cash transfer to selected households. However, it should be noted that these state-level initiatives are not implemented nationwide.
- **NITI Aayog's Report:** NITI Aayog, a policy think tank of the Indian government, released a report in 2017 titled "Funding UBI." The report explored the financial implications and potential funding mechanisms for implementing UBI in India, but it did not lead to immediate policy action.
- **Political Discourse:** UBI has gained attention in Indian political discourse, with various political parties and leaders discussing its potential as a poverty alleviation measure.

Source:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/no-need-for-universal-basic-income-it-brings-perverse-incentives-cea-8655174/>

Q.1 Which of the following statements is true regarding Universal Basic Income (UBI)?

1. UBI is a means-tested program that provides financial assistance to only the poorest individuals.
2. UBI has been implemented nationwide in many Countries as a poverty alleviation measure.
3. UBI is primarily funded through a dedicated tax on corporations and high-income individuals.

Select the correct answer using the code below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1,2 and 3

(d) None of the above

Answer: (d)

Q.2 Which of the following is not a potential benefit of implementing Universal Basic Income (UBI)?

- (a) Reduction of income inequality
- (b) Enhancement of social mobility
- (c) Increase in workforce productivity
- (d) Improvement in overall health and well-being

Answer: (c)

Q.3 Critically analyze the potential of Universal Basic Income (UBI) as a social welfare policy in addressing poverty and inequality in India. Discuss its merits and demerits, and examine the feasibility of implementing UBI in the Indian context. (250 words)

HYPERSONIC WEAPONS TECHNOLOGY

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "HYPERSONIC WEAPONS TECHNOLOGY". The topic "HYPERSONIC WEAPONS TECHNOLOGY" has relevance in the Science and Technology section of the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE:

FOR PRELIMS:

What is Hypersonic Weapons Technology?

FOR MAINS:

GS 3: Science and Technology.

Benefits for India in developing Hypersonic Weapons Technology?

Challenges for India in developing Hypersonic Weapons Technology?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Iran claimed that it had created a hypersonic missile capable of travelling at 15 times the speed of sound. The announcement comes as tensions remain high with the United States over Tehran's nuclear program.

WHAT IS HYPERSONIC WEAPONS TECHNOLOGY?

Hypersonic technology refers to the field of study and development of systems capable of achieving speeds greater than Mach 5, revolutionizing aerospace, defense, and transportation sectors with their exceptional speed, maneuverability, and potential for precise strikes.

- **Speed:** Hypersonic weapons travel at speeds exceeding Mach 5, which is more than five times the speed of sound. This equates to approximately 6,174 kilometers per hour or 3,836 miles per hour.
- **Maneuverability:** Hypersonic weapons possess the ability to perform high-speed, evasive maneuvers during their flight trajectory. This maneuverability makes them challenging to track and intercept, increasing their effectiveness and survivability.

- **Boost-Glide System:** Many hypersonic weapons employ a boost-glide system. They are launched into space using traditional rocket boosters and then glide through the atmosphere at hypersonic speeds. This combination of propulsion and gliding allows for extended range and flexibility in targeting.
- **Advanced Materials:** Hypersonic weapons require advanced materials capable of withstanding extreme temperatures and pressures generated during hypersonic flight. These materials must maintain structural integrity and thermal protection to ensure the weapon's effectiveness.
- **Dual-Use Applications:** Hypersonic technology has both military and civilian applications. While the focus here is on hypersonic weapons, the technology also has potential applications in areas such as space exploration, transportation, and rapid response for disaster relief.
- **Arms Race Concerns:** The development of hypersonic weapons has raised concerns about an arms race, as countries strive to maintain a competitive edge in military capabilities. The rapid advancement of this technology has prompted discussions on arms control measures and the need for international cooperation.
- **Precision Strikes:** Hypersonic weapons have the potential to deliver highly precise and rapid strikes against time-sensitive targets. Their speed and maneuverability enable them to reach targets quickly and with increased accuracy, reducing the time available for detection and response.
- **US, Russia and China** are in advanced stages of hypersonic missile programmes, India, France, Germany, Japan and Australia too are developing hypersonic weapons.

BENEFITS FOR INDIA IN DEVELOPING HYPERSONIC WEAPONS TECHNOLOGY?

- **Defense Modernization:** Developing hypersonic weapons allows India to modernize its defense capabilities and maintain a technological edge. It provides an opportunity to enhance India's deterrence capabilities and ensure national security in an evolving strategic environment.
- **Strategic Autonomy:** Investing in hypersonic weapons technology offers India greater strategic autonomy. By developing indigenous capabilities, India can reduce its reliance on imports and strengthen its defense industry. This promotes self-sufficiency and enhances the country's defense resilience.
- **Regional Power Projection:** Hypersonic weapons can provide India with enhanced power projection capabilities in the region. The ability to rapidly deploy and deliver precise strikes with hypersonic speed can bolster India's deterrence posture and increase its influence in the region.
- **Enhanced Border Security:** India shares borders with countries facing geopolitical challenges. Hypersonic weapons can offer India an advantage in defending its borders and responding effectively to potential threats. The speed and maneuverability of these weapons can help deter aggression and protect national interests.
- **Technological Advancements:** Developing hypersonic weapons necessitates advancements in various domains, including materials science, propulsion systems, guidance systems, and hypersonic aerodynamics. The research and development efforts in these areas can lead to spin-off technologies that benefit other sectors, such as aerospace, energy, and transportation.
- **International Collaboration:** India has the opportunity to engage in international collaborations and partnerships in the field of hypersonic weapons technology. Collaborative projects can help share knowledge, expertise, and resources, fostering innovation and accelerating development timelines.
- **Export Potential:** As India progresses in hypersonic weapons technology, there may be potential for export of these systems to friendly nations. This can not only strengthen India's defense industry but also contribute to strategic partnerships and diplomatic relations.
- **Technological Catch-Up:** Hypersonic weapons technology is advancing rapidly, and several countries have made significant strides in this field. By investing in this technology, India has

the opportunity to catch up and bridge the gap with other technologically advanced nations.

- **Dual-Use Applications:** The research and development in hypersonic technology have dual-use applications beyond defense. The advancements can be leveraged for civilian purposes, such as space exploration, transportation, and scientific research, contributing to India's overall technological progress.
- **National Pride:** Achieving success in developing hypersonic weapons will boost India's national pride and showcase its scientific and technological capabilities on a global stage. It will demonstrate India's commitment to innovation, self-reliance, and defense modernization.

CHALLENGES FOR INDIA IN DEVELOPING HYPERSONIC WEAPONS TECHNOLOGY?

- **Technological Complexity:** Hypersonic weapons technology is highly complex and requires expertise in various disciplines, including aerodynamics, materials science, propulsion systems, and guidance technologies. Developing indigenous capabilities in these areas and mastering the necessary technologies pose significant challenges.
- **Research and Development:** Developing hypersonic weapons requires substantial investment in research and development (R&D) efforts. India needs to allocate sufficient resources and establish dedicated R&D facilities, laboratories, and test ranges to advance its hypersonic capabilities.
- **Advanced Materials:** Hypersonic flight exposes the weapon to extreme temperatures, pressures, and aerodynamic forces. Developing materials capable of withstanding these conditions while maintaining structural integrity is a significant challenge.
- **Propulsion Systems:** Hypersonic weapons require advanced propulsion systems capable of achieving and sustaining hypersonic speeds. Developing efficient and reliable propulsion systems that can handle the extreme conditions of hypersonic flight is a technical challenge that needs to be overcome.
- **Guidance and Control Systems:** Achieving precise guidance and control of hypersonic weapons at such high speeds presents a significant challenge. Developing advanced sensors, navigation systems, and control algorithms that can operate effectively under hypersonic conditions is crucial.
- **Test and Evaluation:** Testing hypersonic weapons is challenging due to the high speeds and extreme conditions involved. India needs to establish suitable test ranges and facilities for testing hypersonic technologies, including ground testing, wind tunnel testing, and flight testing.
- **Export Control and Non-Proliferation:** Hypersonic weapons fall under the purview of export control regimes and non-proliferation agreements. India needs to navigate these international frameworks to ensure responsible technology transfer, comply with non-proliferation norms, and engage in transparent discussions regarding the development and deployment of hypersonic weapons.
- **Operational Challenges:** Integrating hypersonic weapons into existing military infrastructure and operational doctrines poses challenges. Coordinating with other military assets, developing appropriate command and control systems, and training personnel to effectively utilize and integrate hypersonic weapons require careful planning and coordination.
- **Safety and Security:** The high speeds and potential destructive capabilities of hypersonic weapons raise concerns regarding safety during testing, deployment, and storage. Strict safety protocols and secure storage facilities need to be established to mitigate risks and ensure the safe handling and operation of hypersonic weapons.

Source:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/world/iran-unveils-hypersonic-missile-8648361/>

Q.1 Which of the following statements regarding hypersonic weapons technology is correct?

1. Hypersonic weapons travel at speeds exceeding Mach 2.
2. Hypersonic weapons are primarily designed for long-range reconnaissance.
3. Hypersonic weapons utilize traditional ballistic missile technology.
4. Hypersonic weapons possess low maneuverability and rapid response capabilities.

Select the correct answer from the options given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1,2,3 and 4
- (d) None of the above

Answer: (d)

Q.2 Which of the following is a key challenge associated with hypersonic weapons technology?

- (a) Limited range compared to traditional ballistic missiles.
- (b) Inability to withstand extreme temperatures during flight.
- (c) Difficulty in tracking and intercepting due to high maneuverability.
- (d) Lack of precision in targeting time-sensitive objectives.

Answer: (d)

Q.3 Discuss the strategic implications and challenges of hypersonic weapons technology in the global security landscape.

INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY (IEA)

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "International Energy Agency (IEA)". The topic "International Energy Agency (IEA)" has relevance in the Energy Security section of the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE:

FOR PRELIMS:

What is the International Energy Agency (IEA)?

FOR MAINS:

GS 3: Energy Security

Functions of the International Energy Agency (IEA)?

India and International Energy Agency (IEA)?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Executive Director of the International Energy Agency (IEA) Fatih Birol said that India is at the Centre of global energy affairs

WHAT IS THE INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY (IEA)?

IEA stands for the International Energy Agency. It is an autonomous agency that operates within the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The IEA was established in 1974, in Paris, in response to the oil crisis and its mission is to promote energy security, economic growth, and environmental sustainability worldwide.

FUNCTIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY (IEA)?

- **Energy Security:** The IEA works to enhance energy security through various programs and tasks, such as:
 1. Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR): The agency coordinates the establishment and management of emergency oil stocks among its member countries to address potential disruptions in oil supplies.
 2. Oil Market Analysis: The IEA closely monitors global oil markets, analyzing supply-demand dynamics, production levels, and geopolitical factors to provide timely market assessments and early warnings of potential supply disruptions.
- **Energy Technology Collaboration Programmes (TCPs):** The IEA facilitates collaboration among member countries through TCPs. These programs focus on specific energy technologies or sectors, such as renewable energy, energy storage, bioenergy, hydrogen, and more. They aim to accelerate technology development, deployment, and knowledge sharing.
- **Energy Efficiency:** The IEA places significant emphasis on promoting energy efficiency as a key component of sustainable energy policies. It undertakes programs and tasks including:
 1. Energy Efficiency Policies and Measures: The agency provides guidance and policy recommendations to member countries on improving energy efficiency across various sectors, including buildings, industry, transportation, and appliances.
 2. Energy Efficiency Data and Analysis: The IEA collects and analyzes energy efficiency data, develops indicators, and produces reports to track progress, identify best practices, and inform policy decisions.
- **Clean Energy Transitions:** The IEA supports member countries in transitioning towards cleaner and more sustainable energy systems. This includes:
 1. Renewable Energy Integration: The agency provides technical expertise and policy guidance on integrating renewable energy sources into the grid, addressing intermittency challenges, and promoting renewable energy deployment.
 2. Energy Technology Roadmaps: The IEA develops technology roadmaps for different energy sectors, outlining pathways and policy recommendations to achieve decarbonization goals and promote clean energy transitions.
- **Energy Access:** The IEA works towards expanding access to modern, reliable, and affordable energy services in developing countries. It carries out tasks such as:
 1. Providing Policy Support: The agency offers policy advice and technical assistance to developing countries to improve energy access, particularly in rural and remote areas.
 2. Energy Access Data and Analysis: The IEA collects data on energy access indicators and analyzes progress to track achievements and identify areas for targeted interventions.
- **Energy Policy Analysis and Recommendations:** The IEA conducts in-depth analysis of energy policies, trends, and scenarios to provide member countries with policy recommendations and insights for informed decision-making. This includes publications like the World Energy Outlook, which provides long-term energy projections and policy scenarios.

INDIA AND INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY (IEA)?

- India's engagement with the IEA predates its official association as an Associate member in March 2017. The country has maintained a longstanding relationship with the organization, actively participating in energy-related discussions and benefiting from the IEA's expertise.
- In a significant development in 2021, India and the IEA signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement. This agreement aims to strengthen cooperation between the two entities in the areas of global energy security, stability, and sustainability. The agreement sets the stage for enhanced collaboration on key energy issues.
- Building on the India-IEA strategic partnership, the IEA extended an invitation to India to deepen its cooperation further by becoming a full Member. This invitation reflects the recognition

of India's growing importance in the global energy landscape and highlights the potential for increased collaboration in addressing energy challenges.

- **Reason for Offering Membership to India:**

- India's growing prominence in global energy dynamics is evident. A comprehensive assessment of India's energy policies, published in January 2020, indicates a significant surge in the country's energy demand, especially in terms of electricity consumption.
- Given India's considerable dependence on fuel imports, enhancing energy security has emerged as a crucial agenda for the nation's economy.

Source:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/videos/news/india-is-at-the-centre-of-global-energy-affairs-iaea-chief-fatih-birol/videoshow/101001429.cms?from=mdr>

Q.1 Which of the following statements regarding the International Energy Agency (IEA) is/are correct?

1. The IEA is an autonomous agency operating within the framework of the United Nations.
2. It primarily focuses on promoting energy security, economic growth, and environmental sustainability worldwide.
3. India is a member country of the IEA.
4. The IEA facilitates international collaboration in energy research and development through its Technology Collaboration Programs (TCPs).

Select the correct answer using the codes below:

- (a) 2 and 4 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1, 2, and 4 only
- (d) 2, 3, and 4 only

Answer: (a)

Q.2 Which of the following statements about the International Energy Agency (IEA) is correct?

- (a) The IEA was established in response to the oil crisis of 1974.
- (b) The IEA primarily focuses on promoting coal-based energy production.
- (c) The IEA consists of member countries from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).
- (d) The IEA's main objective is to regulate global energy prices.

Answer: (a)

Q.3 "The International Energy Agency (IEA) plays a crucial role in shaping global energy policies and addressing key energy challenges. Discuss the significance of the IEA in promoting energy security, clean energy transitions, and sustainable development. Evaluate India's engagement with the IEA and its potential implications for India's energy sector and national energy goals. Provide recommendations on how India can further enhance its collaboration with the IEA to address emerging energy challenges."

MIYAWAKI FOREST

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Miyawaki Forest”. The topic “Miyawaki Forest” has relevance in the Environment section of the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE:

FOR PRELIMS:

What is Miyawaki Forest?

FOR MAINS:

GS 3: Environment

Benefits of Miyawaki Forest?

Miyawaki Forest vis-a-vis India?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his latest ‘Mann ki baat’ episode spoke about Miyawaki plantation, the Japanese method of creating dense urban forests in a small area.

WHAT IS MIYAWAKI FOREST?

The Miyawaki Forest Method, also known as the Miyawaki Technique or Miyawaki Afforestation Method, is a reforestation and afforestation technique developed by Japanese botanist Dr. Akira Miyawaki. It involves planting a dense and diverse mixture of native tree species in a small area to create a self-sustaining forest ecosystem.

THE KEY FEATURES OF THE MIYAWAKI FOREST METHOD INCLUDE:

- **Origin:** The Miyawaki Forest Method was developed in the 1970s by Japanese botanist Dr. Akira Miyawaki. He aimed to create dense, native forests in urban areas to combat deforestation and promote biodiversity.
- **Native Species Selection:** The technique emphasizes using native tree species that are well-suited to the local climate and soil conditions. This promotes biodiversity and helps restore the natural ecosystem.
- **Dense Planting:** Trees are planted close together in a dense pattern, typically with a spacing of around 30-50 cm between saplings. This creates a competitive environment for the trees, encouraging vertical growth and enabling the forest to establish quickly.
- **Multi-Layered Structure:** The Miyawaki Forests are designed to have multiple layers of vegetation, including tall trees, shrubs, and ground cover plants. This mimics the structure of natural forests and supports a diverse range of plant and animal species.
- **Soil Preparation:** Before planting, the soil is carefully prepared by removing invasive species and improving its fertility. Organic matter, compost, and natural fertilizers are often added to enhance the soil quality and provide nutrients for the saplings.
- **Maintenance and Monitoring:** Miyawaki Forests require regular maintenance, including watering, weeding, and monitoring for pests and diseases. This ensures the healthy growth of the trees and increases the chances of long-term forest survival.

BENEFITS OF MIYAWAKI FOREST?

- **Rapid Growth and Dense Vegetation:** Miyawaki forests exhibit rapid growth and result in

densely packed vegetation. The close proximity of trees allows for efficient space utilization, leading to quicker canopy formation and an overall lush appearance.

- **Biodiversity Enhancement:** The technique promotes the planting of a wide variety of native plant species. This diversity attracts different types of insects, birds, and other wildlife, leading to an increase in biodiversity within the forest ecosystem.
- **Carbon Sequestration and Climate Change Mitigation:** Miyawaki forests are effective carbon sinks. The dense vegetation and active growth contribute to the sequestration of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, helping mitigate climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Soil Improvement and Erosion Control:** The deep root systems of the trees in Miyawaki forests help improve soil structure and fertility. They prevent soil erosion by anchoring the soil with their roots, thereby protecting against landslides and soil degradation.
- **Improved Air Quality:** Miyawaki forests act as natural air purifiers. The trees absorb air pollutants and release oxygen through the process of photosynthesis, leading to improved air quality and a reduction in harmful airborne particles.
- **Microclimate Regulation:** The dense foliage of Miyawaki forests provides shade and helps regulate temperature, especially in urban areas affected by the urban heat island effect. They create cooler microclimates and reduce heat stress in nearby surroundings.
- **Water Conservation:** The dense canopy of Miyawaki forests helps in conserving water. It reduces evaporation and slows down rainfall runoff, allowing more water to infiltrate into the ground, replenishing groundwater resources, and reducing the risk of flooding.
- **Habitat Creation:** Miyawaki forests create valuable habitats for various species of plants and animals. The diverse plant species and the resulting ecosystem provide food, shelter, and nesting sites, supporting a wide range of wildlife and contributing to the overall ecological balance.
- **Aesthetic Appeal and Recreational Value:** Miyawaki forests offer visually appealing landscapes that enhance the beauty of the surroundings. They provide peaceful and rejuvenating spaces for recreation, nature walks, and educational activities, benefiting the well-being and mental health of individuals.
- **Community Engagement and Environmental Awareness:** Miyawaki forests foster community participation and environmental awareness. Involving local communities in the planting and maintenance of these forests promotes a sense of ownership and responsibility, leading to increased environmental consciousness and sustainable practices.

MIYAWAKI FOREST VIS-A-VIS INDIA?

- **Adoption in India:** The Miyawaki Forest Method has gained significant popularity and adoption in India, particularly in urban areas. Many cities, including Chennai, Bengaluru, Delhi, and Mumbai, have implemented Miyawaki forest projects to address deforestation, improve air quality, and enhance urban green spaces.
- **Urban Greening:** Miyawaki forests in India play a crucial role in urban greening initiatives. They help combat the loss of green spaces in cities, counteract the heat island effect, and provide natural habitats for urban flora and fauna.
- **Chennai's Success Story:** Chennai, a city in southern India, has been at the forefront of Miyawaki forest implementation. The city's efforts in establishing Miyawaki forests have received international recognition. The projects have transformed barren land into lush green patches, contributing to enhanced biodiversity and improved microclimate.
- **Reforestation of Public Spaces:** Miyawaki forests have been established in various public spaces across India, including parks, school campuses, roadside medians, and government-owned lands. These initiatives engage local communities and raise awareness about the importance of environmental conservation.
- **Ecological Restoration:** Miyawaki forests in India have been instrumental in the restoration of

degraded lands, such as mining sites and abandoned quarries. These projects help rehabilitate the soil, prevent erosion, and restore native vegetation, thus promoting ecological balance.

- **Community Participation:** Miyawaki forest projects in India often involve active participation from local communities, resident welfare associations, and environmental organizations. This community involvement fosters a sense of ownership, encourages sustainable maintenance, and builds environmental consciousness.
- **Afforestation Initiatives:** The Miyawaki Forest Method has been utilized as part of large-scale afforestation initiatives in India, such as the “Green India Mission” and “Hariyali Mahotsav.” These initiatives aim to increase forest cover, restore degraded lands, and promote sustainable land management practices.

Source:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-climate/pm-modi-miyawaki-forests-mann-ki-baat-what-is-this-method-8671133/>

Q.1 Which afforestation technique emphasizes the dense planting of native tree species to create self-sustaining forest ecosystems?

- (a) Agroforestry
- (b) Miyawaki Forest Method
- (c) Silviculture
- (d) Monoculture

Answer: (b)

Q.2 Which of the following statements regarding Miyawaki forests is/are correct?

- 1: Miyawaki forests promote rapid growth and dense vegetation, resulting in efficient space utilization and quicker canopy formation.
- 2: Miyawaki forests contribute to climate change mitigation by acting as carbon sinks and sequestering carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- 3: The Miyawaki forest method involves planting non-native tree species to create diverse ecosystems.
- 4: Miyawaki forests have minimal impact on air quality improvement due to their limited tree density.

Choose the correct option:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1, 2, and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2, and 4 only

Answer: (a)

Q.3 Discuss the potential of Miyawaki forest method in addressing environmental challenges and promoting sustainable development in India.

HINDU KUSH HIMALAYA (HKH)

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH)”. The topic “Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH)” has relevance in the Geography and Environment section of the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE:

FOR PRELIMS:

Facts about Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH)?

What is “Peak Water” ?

FOR MAINS:

GS 3: Environment

HI-WISE Report?

Findings of the report?

Concerns mentioned in the report?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) released the Water, Ice, Society, and Ecosystems in the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HI-WISE) report.

FACTS ABOUT HINDU KUSH HIMALAYA (HKH)?

- **Location:** The Hindu Kush is a mountain range in Central Asia, extending primarily across north-eastern Afghanistan and northern Pakistan. It forms the western extension of the Himalayas.
- **Geography:** The range spans approximately 800 kilometers (500 miles) in length and reaches heights of over 7,000 meters (23,000 feet). It is characterized by rugged peaks, deep valleys, and steep slopes.
- **Name Origin:** The term “Hindu Kush” is derived from Persian and means “Killer of Hindus” or “Hindu Killer” in reference to the challenges and dangers faced by travelers crossing the treacherous mountain passes.
- **Historical Importance:** The Hindu Kush has served as a historical crossroads and trade route, linking Central Asia with South Asia and the Middle East. It has been a part of ancient trading routes, including the Silk Road.
- **Biodiversity:** The range exhibits diverse ecosystems, including alpine meadows, coniferous forests, and high-altitude deserts. It supports a variety of plant and animal species, including snow leopards, Marco Polo sheep, and numerous bird species.
- **Mountaineering:** The Hindu Kush offers challenging opportunities for mountaineers and has attracted adventurers and climbers from around the world. Notable peaks in the range include Tirich Mir, Noshag, and Saraghrar.

WHAT IS “PEAK WATER” ?

- “Peak water” refers to the concept of reaching the maximum sustainable supply of freshwater resources in a particular region or globally. It represents the point at which water availability starts declining due to various factors such as overexploitation, depletion of aquifers, climate change impacts, and population growth.

HI-WISE REPORT?

ICIMOD, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, recently published a significant report titled “Water, Ice, Society, and Ecosystems in the Hindu Kush Himalaya” (HI-WISE). This report sheds light on the intricate relationships between water, ice, societies, and ecosystems in the HKH region. The research conducted for the HI-WISE report provides valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with water resources, glaciers, communities, and the environment in the Hindu Kush Himalayas.

FINDINGS:

- Many areas worldwide have already passed “peak water,” experiencing reduced glacier meltwater.
- The Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region has not reached peak water yet, but it is approaching soon.
- Due to climate change, Himalayan glaciers are melting, resulting in increased water availability in the Indus, Ganges, and Brahmaputra rivers in the short term (until 2050).
- However, water availability is projected to decrease significantly in the long term, with estimates suggesting up to an 80% decline by 2100.
- The Eastern or lesser Himalayas have fewer glaciers compared to the western counterparts, leading to lesser glacier contribution to rivers in the region and lower overall impact.
- Climate change is adversely affecting biodiversity in the HKH, resulting in habitat reduction for species such as the Himalayan ibex (estimated 33 to 64% reduction).

CONCERNS:

- Glaciers in the HKH region are losing mass 65% faster, posing risks of more floods, landslides, and diminished water reserves during dry years.
- Decreasing snow cover could dry up springs, impacting agriculture and jeopardizing the livelihoods of 129 million farmers in the Indus, Ganges, and Brahmaputra basins.
- Adaptation becomes harder as communities need to cope with both decreasing snow cover and reduced meltwater.
- Institutions lack preparedness to handle these new dangers and often fail to consider climate change threats.
- Governments have played a limited role in assisting mountain communities in the HKH region in adapting to climate change.

ICIMOD

ICIMOD (International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development) is a regional intergovernmental organization focused on learning and knowledge-sharing in the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region. It serves the eight regional member countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan. Established in 1983, ICIMOD is headquartered in Lalitpur, located in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal.

The main objective of ICIMOD is to promote and foster partnerships among the regional member countries to ensure a sustainable and prosperous future for both the people and the environment of the HKH region. It acts as a platform for collaboration, research, and capacity building to address the various challenges and opportunities faced by the HKH region, including climate change, natural resource management, water resources, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable livelihoods.

Source:

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/climate-change/melting-hindu-kush-himalayas-will-decrease-water-in-river-basins-by-2100-warns-icimod-90129>

Q.1 Which of the following statements about ICIMOD (International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development) is correct?

- (a) It is a global intergovernmental organization dedicated to water resource management.
- (b) ICIMOD primarily focuses on the Arctic region and its environmental challenges.
- (c) It serves as a platform for collaboration and knowledge-sharing among eight regional member countries.
- (d) ICIMOD was established in 1970 and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

Answer: (c)

Q.2 Which of the following statements regarding the Hindu Kush Himalayas (HKH) is correct?

- (a) The HKH region is known as the “Water Tower of Asia” as it is the source of several major rivers in the region.
- (b) The HKH region consists of seven countries, namely India, China, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal.
- (c) The HKH region is characterized by low levels of biodiversity due to harsh climatic conditions.
- (d) The HKH region is not significantly affected by climate change, as the glaciers in the region are stable.

Answer: (a)

Q.3 The Hindu Kush Himalayas (HKH) region plays a crucial role in the socio-economic and ecological dynamics of South Asia. Discuss the significance of the HKH region and the challenges it faces in terms of environmental sustainability and sustainable development. Also, examine the role of regional cooperation in addressing these challenges.

E-NAM

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “e-NAM”. The topic “e-NAM” has relevance in the Agriculture section of the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE:

FOR PRELIMS:

What is e-NAM?

FOR MAINS:

GS 3: Agriculture

Key Features and Components of e-NAM?

Benefits of e-NAM?

Challenges and the Way Forward?

WHAT IS E-NAM:

- e-NAM, which stands for Electronic National Agricultural Market, is an online trading platform developed by the Government of India to facilitate transparent and efficient agricultural trade across the country. It was launched in April 2016 as part of the government’s efforts to modernize agricultural marketing and ensure better price realization for farmers.
- e-NAM aims to create a unified national market for agricultural commodities by integrating existing physical wholesale markets (known as Agricultural Produce Market Committees or APMCs)

through an online platform. It enables farmers to sell their produce directly to buyers, including traders, processors, exporters, and retailers, without the need for intermediaries. This helps in eliminating multiple layers of intermediaries, reducing transaction costs, and ensuring fair prices for farmers.

KEY FEATURES AND COMPONENTS OF E-NAM:

- **Online Trading Platform:** e-NAM provides a digital marketplace where farmers can list their produce for sale, and buyers can bid for the commodities. The platform offers transparent price discovery and efficient trading mechanisms.
- **Single License Across States:** Under e-NAM, farmers are issued a single trading license that is valid across all the e-NAM mandis (markets) in the country. This reduces the administrative burden on farmers and promotes ease of doing business.
- **Warehouse-based Trading:** e-NAM allows farmers to sell their produce from their own farm premises or designated warehouses. This flexibility enables farmers to choose the most convenient location for trading and reduces transportation costs.
- **Quality Testing and Grading:** The e-NAM platform provides facilities for quality testing and grading of agricultural commodities. This ensures that buyers have access to standardized and quality produce.
- **Payment and Settlement:** e-NAM facilitates seamless online payment and settlement between buyers and farmers, ensuring timely and secure transactions.

BENEFITS OF E-NAM:

- **Transparent and Competitive Prices:** e-NAM promotes price discovery through a competitive bidding process, ensuring that farmers receive fair prices for their produce. The transparent trading platform reduces information asymmetry and empowers farmers to make informed decisions.
- **Direct Farmer-Buyer Interaction:** e-NAM enables direct communication and negotiation between farmers and buyers, eliminating the need for intermediaries. This allows farmers to establish direct market linkages and negotiate better terms.
- **Access to Wider Markets:** Through e-NAM, farmers gain access to a broader customer base beyond their local mandis. This opens up opportunities for selling their produce to buyers from different states and regions, thereby expanding market reach.
- **Reduced Transaction Costs:** By eliminating intermediaries and streamlining the trading process, e-NAM reduces transaction costs associated with agricultural marketing. This benefits both farmers and buyers by improving cost efficiencies.
- **Technology-enabled Services:** e-NAM leverages technology to provide services such as real-time price information, weather updates, and market trends to farmers. This empowers farmers with valuable information for making informed decisions regarding crop selection, pricing, and marketing strategies.

CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD:

Despite its potential, the adoption and effectiveness of e-NAM have faced certain challenges. These include limited awareness and participation among farmers, inadequate infrastructure in some mandis, resistance from intermediaries, and connectivity issues in remote areas. To address these challenges, the government needs to focus on:

- **Awareness and Training:** Conducting awareness campaigns and providing training to farmers about the benefits and usage of e-NAM can encourage wider participation and enhance adoption.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Upgrading physical infrastructure, including mandis and warehouses, and ensuring reliable internet connectivity in all mandis are essential for the smooth func-

tioning of e-NAM.

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engaging with stakeholders, including farmers, traders, and APMC officials, to address their concerns and ensure their active participation in the e-NAM platform is crucial.
- **Integration with Ancillary Services:** Integrating e-NAM with other agricultural services such as warehousing, logistics, and financing can further enhance the efficiency and value proposition of the platform.

In conclusion, e-NAM is a transformative initiative that aims to revolutionize agricultural marketing in India. By leveraging technology and providing a transparent trading platform, it has the potential to empower farmers, enhance price realization, and create a more efficient and inclusive agricultural market system. However, concerted efforts are needed to overcome the challenges and ensure the widespread adoption and success of e-NAM in benefiting farmers and the agricultural sector as a whole.

Source:

<https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/farm-trade-begins-to-shift-away-from-apmc-mandis-thriving-trade-on-e-nam-does-what-farm-laws-couldnt/3134670/>

Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding e-NAM (Electronic National Agricultural Market):

1. e-NAM is an online trading platform developed by the Government of India to facilitate agricultural trade across the country.
2. It aims to integrate physical wholesale markets (APMCs) through an online platform to create a unified national market for agricultural commodities.
3. Under e-NAM, farmers are issued separate trading licenses for each e-NAM mandi they wish to trade in.
4. e-NAM provides facilities for quality testing and grading of agricultural commodities to ensure standardized and quality produce.
5. The primary objective of e-NAM is to increase the number of intermediaries in agricultural trade and improve their profitability.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (A) 1 and 2 only
- (B) 2, 3, and 4 only
- (C) 1, 3, and 5 only
- (D) 1, 2, 4, and 5 only

Answer: (A)

Q.2 Which of the following is an initiative of the Government of India to modernize agricultural marketing and ensure better price realization for farmers?

- (a) e-NAM
- (b) FCI
- (c) PM-KISAN
- (d) MGNREGA

Answer: (a)

Q.3 Discuss the significance and challenges of the Electronic National Agricultural Market (e-NAM) in transforming agricultural marketing in India. How can the government address the

challenges to ensure the widespread adoption and success of e-NAM for the benefit of farmers and the agricultural sector?

PM-KISAN (PRADHAN MANTRI KISAN SAMMAN NIDHI)

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "PM-KISAN". The topic "PM-KISAN" has relevance in the Agriculture section of the UPSC CSE exam.

RELEVANCE:

FOR PRELIMS:

What is PM-KISAN?

FOR MAINS:

GS 3: Agriculture

Benefits of PM-KISAN?

Challenges for PM-KISAN?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

IN A first for any central welfare scheme, the government Thursday rolled out a face authentication feature in the PM-Kisan app, which will enable beneficiary farmers to complete their e-KYC process by just scanning their face on mobile phones instead of using one-time password or fingerprints.

WHAT IS PM-KISAN?

- **Objective:** The main objective of PM-KISAN is to provide income support to farmers and ensure a steady income flow to support their agricultural activities and livelihood.
- **Financial Assistance:** Under the scheme, eligible farmers receive direct income support of Rs. 6,000 per year. This amount is provided in three equal installments of Rs. 2,000 each, credited directly to the bank accounts of the farmers.
- **Eligibility Criteria:** Small and marginal farmers with cultivable land holding up to 2 hectares are eligible for the PM-KISAN scheme. The scheme aims to benefit around 12 crore farmers across the country.
- **Implementation:** The scheme is implemented by the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare under the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Government of India. The funds are directly transferred to the beneficiaries' bank accounts through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mechanism.
- **Registration and Enrollment:** Farmers can apply for PM-KISAN through an online portal or by visiting the nearest Common Service Centre (CSC). The application requires details such as Aadhaar card, bank account number, and landholding documents.
- **Exclusion Criteria:** The scheme excludes certain categories of individuals such as institutional landholders, higher-income farmers, serving or retired government employees, and those who pay income tax.
- **Expansion and Updates:** Since its launch in February 2019, the PM-KISAN scheme has been expanded to cover more farmers. In addition to the income support, various states have also initiated complementary measures such as crop insurance, soil health cards, and agricultural

extension services.

BENEFITS OF PM-KISAN:

- **Income Support:** The primary benefit of PM-KISAN is the direct income support provided to farmers. The financial assistance of Rs. 6,000 per year helps in stabilizing farmers' income and provides a safety net during times of agricultural distress.
- **Enhanced Purchasing Power:** The scheme aims to increase the purchasing power of farmers, enabling them to meet their household expenses, invest in agricultural inputs, and improve their standard of living.
- **Agricultural Investment:** PM-KISAN encourages farmers to invest in agricultural activities by providing them with a regular source of income. This can contribute to improving agricultural productivity, adopting modern farming techniques, and increasing crop yields.
- **Reduction of Indebtedness:** The income support from PM-KISAN can help reduce the dependence of farmers on informal credit sources and prevent them from falling into the cycle of debt. It provides a cushion to meet immediate financial needs and reduces the burden of high-interest loans.
- **Empowerment of Small and Marginal Farmers:** PM-KISAN focuses on supporting small and marginal farmers, who often face greater challenges in accessing credit and resources. The scheme empowers these farmers by providing them with financial assistance and recognizing their vital role in the agricultural sector.

CHALLENGES OF PM-KISAN:

- **Limited Coverage:** While PM-KISAN aims to benefit a large number of farmers, there may still be some farmers who do not meet the eligibility criteria or face challenges in enrolling for the scheme. Ensuring comprehensive coverage and reaching all deserving beneficiaries remains a challenge.
- **Exclusion of Certain Categories:** The exclusion criteria of PM-KISAN may leave out some farmers who may also be in need of financial support. The exclusion of certain categories such as institutional landholders and income tax payers can create disparities and leave out specific groups.
- **Delayed Payments:** There have been instances of delays in disbursing the income support to farmers under the PM-KISAN scheme. Delays can affect farmers' financial planning and impact their agricultural activities, especially during critical stages of farming.
- **Limited Impact on Structural Issues:** While PM-KISAN provides short-term income support, it does not address the broader structural issues faced by the agricultural sector, such as lack of irrigation facilities, market access, and climate change resilience. These issues require comprehensive policy interventions for long-term sustainable development.
- **Verification and Database Management:** Maintaining an accurate and updated database of eligible farmers and verifying their landholding can be a logistical challenge. Ensuring transparency and preventing fraudulent claims is crucial to maintain the integrity of the scheme.

Overall, PM-KISAN has brought significant benefits to farmers by providing them with a direct source of income support. However, addressing the challenges and continually improving the implementation process is necessary to maximize the scheme's impact and reach all deserving farmers in the country.

Source:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/face-authentication-now-in-pm-kisan-mobile-app-a-first-for-govt-schemes-8680980/>

Q.1 Which of the following statements about the PM-KISAN (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi) scheme is correct?

1. PM-KISAN provides direct income support to small and marginal farmers.
2. The financial assistance under PM-KISAN is provided on a monthly basis.
3. PM-KISAN is implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development.

Options:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) None of the above

Answer: (b)

Q.2 Which of the following statements about the PM-KISAN (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi) scheme is correct?

1. PM-KISAN provides financial assistance to farmers in the form of interest-free loans.
2. PM-KISAN beneficiaries receive the financial assistance directly into their bank accounts.
3. The scheme covers all farmers in India, including both rural and urban areas.

Options:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) None of the above

Answer: (b)

Q.3 Discuss the impact and significance of the PM-KISAN (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi) scheme on the agricultural sector in India. What are the key benefits and challenges associated with its implementation? Illustrate your answer with suitable examples and suggest measures to enhance the effectiveness of the scheme.



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