Yojna IAS

yojnaias.com

योजना है तो सफलता है

JULY-AUGUST 2023
WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

YOJNA IAS WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS
31/7/2023 TO 6/8/2023

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

CONTENTS

PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGES

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Parliamentary privileges". The topic "Parliamentary privileges" has relevance in the "Indian Polity" section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

What are Parliamentary Privileges?

For Mains:

GS2: Parliament and State Legislatures, Structure, Functioning, Conduct of Business, Powers & Privileges, Issues Arising out of these

Why in the news?

The Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha raised objections when his microphone was turned off during the session, considering it a breach of his Parliamentary privilege.

Parliamentary Privileges

Parliament and its members have certain rights and immunities, collectively known as parliamentary privilege, that allow them to perform their duties efficiently and effectively without any hindrance.
It is defined as follows in Erskine May's Treatise on The Law, Privileges, Proceedings and Usage of Parliament: "*Parliamentary privilege is the sum of the peculiar rights enjoyed by each House collectively and by Members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions, and which exceed those possessed by other bodies or individuals. Thus privilege, though part of the law of the land, is to a certain extent an exemption from the general law.*"

What are the main privileges?

Freedom of Speech
- Under **Article 105**, the Houses of Parliament, along with their members and committees, enjoy certain powers and privileges. These include:
  - **Freedom of speech in Parliament**, subject to constitutional provisions and procedural regulations.
  - **Members of Parliament are immune from legal proceedings** for anything said or voted in Parliament or its committees. The same immunity applies to the publication of authorised

reports, papers, votes, or proceedings.

o The specific powers, privileges, and immunities of each House, its members, and committees are defined by Parliament through legislation. Until such laws are enacted, the existing powers and privileges continue as before the Constitution (Forty-Fourth Amendment) Act, 1978.

o The provisions mentioned above **also apply to individuals who have the right to speak or participate in the proceedings of a House** of Parliament or its committees as per the constitution.

- If a member or minister makes a statement in the House that another member believes to be untrue or incorrect, it does not constitute a breach of privilege. But Rule 353 of the Lok Sabha mandates that an MP provide advance notice of an allegation before the relevant minister can investigate it.Similarly, **Article 194** outlines the powers, privileges, and immunities of State legislatures and their members and committees.

- **Article 121** of the Constitution restricts members from discussing the conduct of judges of the Supreme Court and High Court.

- According to **Article 122**, the validity of any parliamentary proceeding cannot be questioned in court based on alleged irregularities of procedure.

Protection from arrests

- MPs are protected from arrest in civil cases 40 days before and after a session or committee meeting under Section 135A of the Civil Procedure Code, 1908.

o This privilege applies only to civil cases, and MPs do not have immunity in criminal cases, whether during the session or otherwise.

- However, Parliament must be promptly informed about the arrest, detention, conviction, imprisonment, and release of a member.

- Furthermore, members have immunity from arrest and legal process within the precincts of the House without prior permission from the Chairman or Speaker.

These powers, privileges, and immunities are addressed in the Constitution through Articles 105 and 194.

Powers and Privileges	Description
Freedom of Speech	Members of Parliament have the right to freely express their opinions and ideas during parliamentary proceedings, subject to constitutional provisions.
Immunity from Legal Proceedings	MPs are protected from legal action for anything said or voted in Parliament or its committees. The same immunity applies to the publication of authorized reports, papers, votes, or proceedings.
Defined by Parliament	The specific powers, privileges, and immunities of each House, its members, and committees are determined by Parliament through legislation. Existing powers and privileges continue until such laws are enacted.
Applicable to Individuals	The aforementioned powers and privileges also extend to individuals who have the right to speak or participate in House proceedings or committees as per the constitution.
No Breach of Privilege	If a member or minister makes a statement in the House that another member believes to be untrue or incorrect, it does not constitute a breach of privilege. However, Rule 353 of the Lok Sabha requires an MP to give advance notice of an allegation for an inquiry by the respective minister.
State Legislature Privileges	Article 194 outlines the powers, privileges, and immunities of State legislatures and their members and committees.
Restriction on Discussing Judges' Conduct	Article 121 restricts members from discussing the conduct of judges of the Supreme Court and High Court.
Validity of Parliamentary Proceedings	Article 122 stipulates that the validity of any parliamentary proceeding cannot be questioned in court based on alleged

Codification of Privileges

As of now, there is **no specific legislation** passed by either Parliament or State legislatures defining the powers, privileges, and immunities of the Houses, their members, and committees. Instead, these immunities are currently governed by precedents based on British parliamentary conventions.

Breach of privilege

- A "breach of privilege" occurs when an individual or authority disregards or undermines the parliamentary privilege of a member or the House.
- This offence is punishable. Actions such as disobeying legitimate orders, making libellous statements about the House, its members, committees, or officers also qualify as breaches of privilege, according to the Rajya Sabha booklet on privileges.

Contempt of the House

- "Breach of privilege" should not be confused with "contempt of the House," which is defined as any act or omission that obstructs or hinders the functioning of either House of Parliament or obstructs any member or officer in carrying out their duties.
- Examples of contempt include speeches or writings that criticize the House or its members, question the impartiality of the Chair, or publish expunged proceedings.

Process to raise a question of privilege

- Parliament is the sole authority to determine if there has been a breach of privilege or contempt of the House; no court has this power.
- A member of the House can raise a question about a breach of privilege with the consent of the Chairman or Speaker. If consent is given, the matter can be considered by the House, or it may be referred to the Committee of Privileges.
- The Chairman also has the authority to refer, on his own, any question of privilege to the Committee for examination, investigation, and report.
- Alternatively, the Chairman can personally investigate a breach of privilege matter without involving the Committee and inform the House of the findings, thereby closing the matter, as per the Rajya Sabha rulebook.
- Only one question about a breach of privilege can be raised during a sitting, and the question must be limited to a specific recent occurrence.

Committee of Privileges

The committee's role is semi-judicial, and it deals with cases of breach of privileges of the House and its members. It recommends suitable actions in response to such breaches. The Lok Sabha committee comprises 15 members, and the Rajya Sabha committee has 10 members.

Punishment for a breach of privilege

- The House has the authority to decide punishments for those found guilty of breach of privileges or contempt. Punishments can range from reprimand, warning, to imprisonment.
- However, the period of imprisonment for contempt is limited to the duration of the House session. If a Member of Parliament (MP) is found guilty, they can either be suspended from the House or expelled.

Sources:
Parliamentary privilege breached, says Congress chief Kharge – The Hindu

Q1. With reference to Parliamentary privilege, consider the following statements:

1. Article 105 of the Constitution deals with the powers, privileges, and immunities of State legislatures and their members and committees.
2. Members of Parliament are immune from legal proceedings for anything said or voted in Parliament or its committees.
3. According to Article 121 of the Constitution, members of Parliament are allowed to discuss the conduct of judges of the Supreme Court and High Court.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 2 only
(d) None

Answer: (c)

Q2. Consider the following:

1. MPs have immunity from arrest in both civil and criminal cases during the session and otherwise.
2. Only the Supreme Court can question the validity of any parliamentary proceeding based on alleged irregularities of procedure.
3. Members have immunity from arrest and legal process within the precincts of the House without prior permission from the Chairman or Speaker.

How many of the abovementioned statement/s is/are **NOT** correct ?

(a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None

Answer: (a)

Q3. What are parliamentary privileges? Discuss the need for codification of such privileges.

SCHEMES FOR ELDERLY CARE

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "SCHEMES FOR ELDERLY CARE". The topic "SCHEMES FOR ELDERLY CARE" has relevance in the Social Justice section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

About SAGE Portal?
About the Silver Economy?
Objectives of Sacred Portal?

GS 2: Social Justice
About Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY)?
Outcomes of AVYAY?
Other Initiatives Related to Elderly in India?

Why in the news?

The Minister of State for the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment highlighted the achievements of SAGE Portal and SACRED Portal.

SAGE Portal

Purpose of SAGE Portal:
- Encouraging entrepreneurs and start-ups to invest in the burgeoning "silver economy" segment.
- Fostering innovation in elderly care solutions.

Stakeholders Served by SAGE Portal:
- Entrepreneurs and start-ups interested in elderly care solutions.
- Senior citizens and their families seeking products and services catering to their needs.

Government's Role:
- Facilitator in enabling the elderly to access products and services offered by identified start-ups through the SAGE Portal.
- Providing equity support of up to Rs. 1 crore per project for selected start-ups through the Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI).
- Government's equity in the start-up does not exceed 49%.

Silver Economy:
- The term "silver economy" refers to the system of producing, distributing, and consuming goods and services that specifically cater to the needs of older and aging individuals.
- This economic framework aims to utilize the purchasing potential of senior citizens and address their consumption, living, and health-related requirements.
- Gerontechnology plays a vital role in this paradigm, as it involves developing and implementing technologies that are beneficial and relevant to the elderly.

SACRED Portal: Empowering Senior Citizens for Re-employment

- Empowers senior citizens by providing opportunities for re-employment.
- **Matching System:**Utilizes a virtual matching system to align preferences and skills of senior citizens with private enterprises seeking experienced individuals.
- **Benefits for Senior Citizens:**Helps them find suitable job options matching their preferences and skills. Thus, Enables them to attain financial security and reduces dependence on external support.

Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY): Holistic Support for Senior Citizens

Components of AVYAY:
- **a. Integrated Programme for Senior Citizens (IPSrC):**Supports Senior Citizens Homes providing shelter, food, medical care, and entertainment for indigent senior citizens.
- **b. State Action Plan for Senior Citizens (SAPSrC):**Provides grant-in-aid to States and Union

Territories for activities like creating a pool of trained geriatric caregivers and conducting special cataract drives.

- **c. Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY):**Offers assisted living devices to eligible senior citizens with age-related disabilities to enhance their bodily functions.
- **d. Elderline – National Helpline for Senior Citizens (NHSC):**Toll-free helpline (14567) offering information, guidance, emotional support, and field intervention in cases of abuse.
- **e. Senior-care Ageing Growth Engine (SAGE):**Encourages youth to come up with innovative ideas for elderly care and promotes them into start-ups by providing equity support.

Outcomes of AVYAY:

- Approximately 1.5 lakh beneficiaries residing in Senior Citizen homes.
- Total grants in aid worth Rs. 288.08 crore released in the last three financial years, benefiting 3,63,570 individuals.
- Improved quality of life and social integration for indigent elderly individuals.
- Promotion of an inclusive society valuing and respecting senior citizens.
- Promotes "silver economy" and generates employment, fostering economic growth in elderly care innovation.

Other Initiatives Related to Elderly in India

- **National Policy on Older Persons (NPOP):**A policy framework to address the welfare and concerns of senior citizens.
- **National Social Assistance Programme:**Provides financial assistance to elderly individuals, among others, living below the poverty line.
- **Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY):**A pension scheme exclusively for senior citizens, providing them with a regular income.
- **SAMPANN Project:**No information available in the previous response. Please provide more context or check for the latest information on this project.

Q.1 Which of the following are the components of Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY)?
1. Integrated Programme for Senior Citizens (IPSrC)
2. Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY)
3. Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY)

Select the correct answer from the options given below:
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3
Answer: (a)

Q.2 Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding the initiatives related to elderly care and empowerment in India?
1. The SAGE Portal provides equity support of up to Rs. 1 crore per project to selected start-ups.
2. SACRED Portal empowers senior citizens by offering them suitable job opportunities through a virtual matching system
3. The Silver Economy is a system of production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services targeting older and aging people.

Select the correct answer from the options given below:
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3
Answer: (d)

Q.3 Discuss the initiatives taken by the Indian government to support senior citizens and promote the silver economy. Highlight the role of the SAGE Portal, SACRED Portal in addressing the needs and challenges of the elderly population.

GOVERNMENT E-MARKETPLACE (GEM)

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Government e-Marketplace (GeM)". The topic "Government e-Marketplace (GeM)" has relevance in the "Indian Economy" section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

What is Government e-Marketplace (GeM)?

For Mains:

GS3: Government Budgeting

Why in the news?

Scientists have expressed concern that the mandatory procurement through the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) is a major obstacle.

Government e-Marketplace (GeM)

GeM, which stands for Government e-Marketplace, is an online platform hosted by DGS&D (Directorate General of Supplies & Disposals) that serves as a one-stop solution for government entities to procure common user goods and services. Launched in 2016 by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoC&I), Government of India, GeM streamlines public procurement processes.

- It is a dynamic, self-sustaining, and user-friendly portal designed to facilitate procurement by Government officers.
- GeM serves as the Public Procurement Portal for Central Government and State Government Ministries, Departments, Public Sector Units (PSUs), and affiliated organisations. Its primary objective is to enhance transparency, efficiency, and inclusivity in the public procurement process.
- Functioning as a centralised and unified platform, GeM brings together government buyer organisations and suppliers of goods and services. It is accompanied by several initiatives,
  - including policy reforms to improve the current public procurement ecosystem,
  - promote inclusiveness and ease of doing business, particularly for smaller organisations like MSMEs.
  - standardisation of processes supported by a robust regulatory framework and operates as a fully automated system, leveraging advanced technologies.

Advantages of GeM:
For Buyers:
1. Extensive product listings for each category of Goods/Services.
2. Convenient search, comparison, selection, and purchase process.
3. Ability to buy Goods and Services online whenever needed.
4. Transparent and user-friendly purchasing experience.
5. Continuous vendor rating system for informed choices.
6. User-friendly dashboard for easy monitoring of supplies and payments.
7. Hassle-free return policy.

For Sellers:

1. Direct access to all Government departments.
2. Effortless marketing through a one-stop shop platform.
3. Easy participation in bids and reverse auctions for products/services.
4. Option to suggest new products to potential buyers.
5. Dynamic pricing flexibility based on market conditions.
6. Seller-friendly dashboard for efficient selling and supply monitoring.
7. Consistent and standardized purchase procedures.

GEM Features

- **Transparency:** GeM significantly reduces human involvement in vendor registration, order placement, and payment processing, making it more transparent. Its open platform allows genuine suppliers to conduct business with the Government without entry barriers.
- **Efficiency:** GeM enables quick direct purchases that can be completed within minutes. The entire process is online and integrated, with tools to assess price reasonability. For higher-value procurements, the bidding/Reverse Auction (RA) facility on GeM is highly transparent and efficient compared to other e-procurement systems used in the Government sector.
- **Security and Safety:** GeM is a completely secure platform where all documents are e-Signed at different stages by buyers and sellers. Supplier credentials are verified online and automatically through databases like MCA21, Aadhar, and PAN. Third-party assessment of suppliers is conducted through SEBI empaneled credit rating agencies, ensuring additional security.
- **Potential:** GeM's filters allow Government buyers to easily select goods that are Preferential Market Access (PMA) compliant and manufactured by Small Scale Industries (SSI). This feature promotes Make in India and SSI goods procurement.
- **Savings:** GeM's transparency, efficiency, and user-friendliness have resulted in significant price reductions compared to tender, Rate Contract, and direct purchase rates. On average, prices on GeM are lower by at least 15-20%, and in some cases, up to 56%. GeM also practices Demand Aggregation for items to be procured by various Central/State Government Departments, leading to further price reductions through standardisation and economies of scale. It is estimated that demand aggregation for common use goods and services will result in annual savings of around Rs 40,000 Crore.

Challenges Faced by the Scientific Community on GeM

- **Inadequate Sourcing of Specialized Products:**
  o GeM is not well-suited for procuring specialty chemicals, niche biological products, and custom hardware and software needed for research, leading to a lack of availability of these specialized products.
  o This hampers scientific research and innovation.

- **Low-Quality Components from Vendors:**
  - o GeM's focus on attracting vendors with the lowest prices can result in substandard equipment being supplied to scientists.
  - o This compromises research outcomes and undermines the quality of scientific investigations.
- **Lengthy Procurement Process:**
  - o The GeM procurement process is time-consuming and can take months, causing delays in acquiring essential equipment and materials.
  - o These delays disrupt research timelines and hinder scientific progress.
- **Limited Options for Foreign Procurement:**
  - o Scientific organizations are required to demonstrate unsuccessful attempts to procure products on GeM before approaching foreign vendors directly.
  - o This restriction leads to time-consuming efforts to justify foreign procurement and restricts access to specialized global suppliers.
- **Impediment to Research Progress and Publications:**
  - o Prolonged procurement procedures impede experimentation and data collection, resulting in delayed research progress.
  - o Slow publication of research papers due to delayed results negatively impacts the scientific community.
- **Burden on Scientists' Responsibilities:**
  - o Scientists are burdened with the task of ensuring equipment procurement at the lowest cost, diverting their focus from core research.
  - o Such restrictions stifle scientific innovation and lead to decreased research productivity.
- **Exemption Issues for Research Equipment:**
  - o Research equipment often falls within a price range that requires procurement from India-registered companies.
  - o Exemptions for research equipment have been requested, but GeM remains mandatory, limiting access to international sources.
- **Creation of Contractor and Vendor Ecosystem:**
  - o GeM's centralized procurement system can lead to the emergence of contractors and vendors, but it doesn't necessarily promote self-reliance as intended.
  - o Smaller universities dependent on government grants face challenges in obtaining adequate and high-quality equipment, hindering scientific progress.

Scientists' primary focus should be on conducting rigorous and impactful research, rather than getting entangled in the procurement process. Holding scientists accountable for their scientific work ensures quality and integrity in research outcomes. By relieving them from the responsibility of obtaining equipment at the lowest cost, researchers can dedicate their expertise and time to advancing knowledge and making significant contributions to their respective fields.

Sources:
Scientists hampered by dearth of quality research equipment in government's e-Marketplace – The Hindu

Q1. With reference Government e-Marketplace (GeM), consider the following statements:
1. GeM was launched by the Ministry of Finance, Government of India.
2. It is an online platform hosted by Directorate General of Supplies & Disposals.
3. GeM's primary objective is to enhance transparency, efficiency, and inclusivity in the public procurement process.

Which of the statements given above is/are **NOT** correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 3 only
(d) None
Answer: (d)

Q2. Consider the following:
1. Any Indian citizen can buy and sell on the Government e-Marketplace (GeM).
2. GeM's bidding/Reverse Auction (RA) facility is less efficient compared to other e-procurement systems used in the Government sector.
3. GeM is not associated with promoting ease of doing business for smaller organizations like MSMEs.

How many of the abovementioned statements are correct ?
(a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None
Answer: (d)

Q3. Explain the concept and purpose of Government e-Marketplace (GeM) in India. Assess its role in streamlining public procurement processes and improving transparency, efficiency, and inclusivity.

CHILD LABOUR

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Child Labour". The topic "Child Labour" has relevance in the Social Justice section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

About Child Labour?
Status of Child Labor in India?

For Mains:

GS 2: Social Justice
Government Initiatives to Curb Child Labor in India?
Way Forward?

Why in the news:

In a recent development, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has taken action by issuing a notice to 13 states, which includes Uttar Pradesh. The commission has urged the state governments to play a more proactive role in identifying and rescuing bonded child laborers.

Definition of Child Labor:

- Child labor refers to the exploitation of children by engaging them in work that deprives them of their childhood, potential, and dignity.
- Child labor can take various forms, including domestic work, agriculture, factories, mines, construction, and informal sectors.

Child Domestic Labour:

- Child domestic work pertains to the involvement of children in performing domestic tasks within the residence of a third party or employer.
- It involves children performing household chores, caregiving, cooking, cleaning, and other domestic tasks for remuneration or in exploitative conditions.

Hazards of Child Domestic Work:

- Long and tiring working days.
- Exposure to toxic chemicals.
- Carrying heavy loads.
- Handling dangerous items like knives and hot pans.
- Insufficient or inadequate food and accommodation.
- Vulnerability to physical and emotional abuse.
- Isolation and lack of social interaction.

Status of Child Labor in India:

- According to data from the National Crime Records Bureau Report in 2022, approximately 982 cases were registered under the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 1986 in India during the year 2021.Telangana and Assam reported the highest number of cases.
- The Covid-19 pandemic and closure of schools have led to a significant increase in the proportion of working children, particularly in states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra.
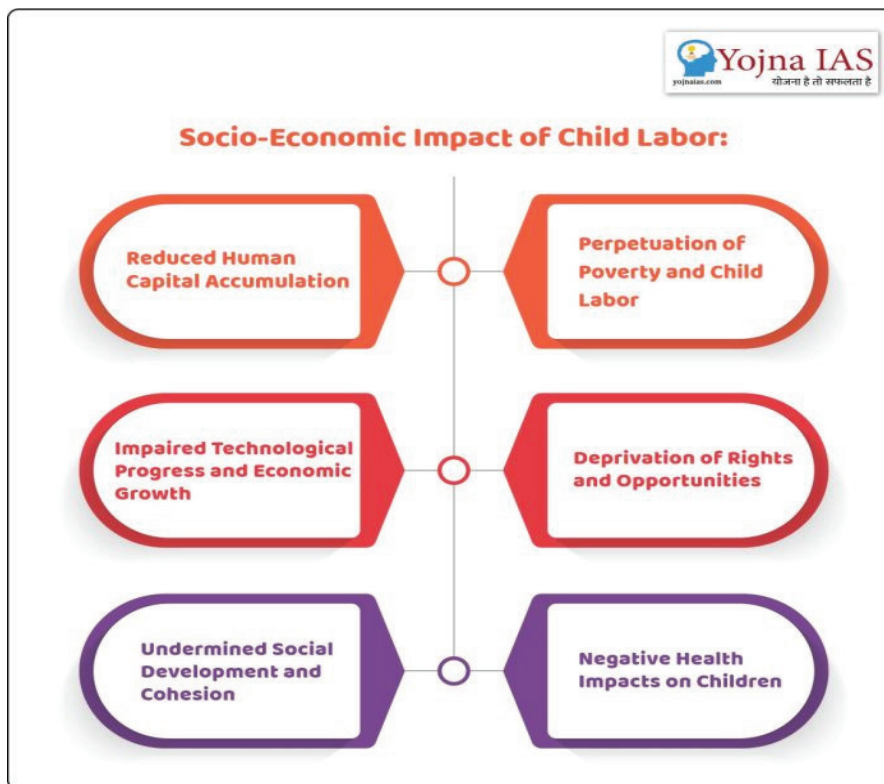
Causes of Child Labor in Domestic Work in India:

- Social and Economic Conditions: Impoverished families often rely on child labor to supplement their income due to inadequate wages for adult workers.
- Cultural Norms: In certain communities, child labor in domestic work is a traditional practice, and education may not be considered important, especially for girls.
- Migration: Vulnerable communities, like tribals and Dalits, migrating to urban areas face increased risks of child labor in domestic work due to limited opportunities.
- Lack of Access to Education: Poor school infrastructure and associated costs discourage parents from sending their children to school.

Way Forward:

- **Strengthening and Implementing Laws:** Enact and amend laws to prohibit and regulate child labor, in line with international standards and conventions.
- **Ensuring Access to Education:** Ensure free and compulsory education for all children up to 14 years of age to reduce the need for child labor as a coping mechanism.
- **Social Protection and Economic Support:** Provide comprehensive support to poor and vulnerable families to prevent them from resorting to child labor.

Awareness and Enforcement: Raise awareness about the harms of child labor and enforce laws effectively to deter employers from engaging children in exploitative work.

Socio-Economic Impact of Child Labor:

- Reduced Human Capital Accumulation
- Perpetuation of Poverty and Child Labor
- Impaired Technological Progress and Economic Growth
- Deprivation of Rights and Opportunities
- Undermined Social Development and Cohesion
- Negative Health Impacts on Children

Government Initiatives to Curb Child Labor in India:

Government Initiatives	Description
Right to Education Act (2009)	Ensures free and compulsory education for children up to the age of 14 years.
Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act (1986)	Completely prohibits the employment of children below 14 years in all occupations and processes.
The Factories Act (1948)	Forbids the employment of children under 14 years in dangerous jobs like factories and mines.
National Policy on Child Labour (1987)	Aims to protect children from economic exploitation and hazardous work.
PENCIL Portal	An online platform launched by the Ministry of Labour and Employment to monitor and track child labor, facilitating rescue, rehabilitation, and education of child laborers.
Ratifying Conventions of the International Labour Organization	
The Minimum Age Convention (1973) - No. 138	Requires member states to set a minimum age for admission to employment or work.
The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (1999) - No. 182	Calls for immediate action to eliminate the worst forms of child labor, including slavery, trafficking, hazardous work, and other exploitative practices.

Q.1

ACT	: Year of enactment
1. Right to Education Act	: 2009
2. Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act	: 1986
3. The Factories Act	: 1948
4. National Policy on Child Labour	: 1987

How many of the above pairs is/are correct?

(a) One only

(b) Two only

(c) Three only

(d) All Four

Answer: (d)

Q.2 Assertion (A) : Child labour is a prevelant problem in India.

Reason (R) : India Lacks a comprehensive law on prevention of Child Labour

Select the correct answer from the options below:

(a) if both A and R are true and R is the correct explanation of A

(b) if both A and R are true but R is not the correct explanation of A

(c) if A is true but R is false

(d) if A is false but R is true

Answer: (c)

Q.3 Examine the challenges faced in eradicating this problem and suggest comprehensive policy measures to ensure the effective elimination of child labor and protect the rights and well-being of children engaged in domestic work

SPACE DEBRIS

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

For Prelims:

What is Space Debris?

What is Kessler syndrome?

What is Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects

For Mains:

GS3: Awareness in the fields of Space

Why in the news?

The discovery of a substantial object along the shores of western Australia has been officially identified

as the remnants of a rocket belonging to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

Space Debris

- Space junk, also known as space debris, encompasses all man-made objects or debris present in space.
- This includes large items like defunct satellites that have either failed or been deliberately left in orbit after completing their missions.
- Additionally, it encompasses smaller fragments such as debris or paint particles that have separated from rockets.

Amount of Space Junk:

- Approximately 2,000 active satellites orbiting Earth.
- Around 3,000 defunct satellites present in space.
- About 34,000 pieces of space junk larger than 10 centimetres.
- Millions of smaller space debris pieces that could pose significant risks upon collision.
- Free space junk space debris earth orbits illustration
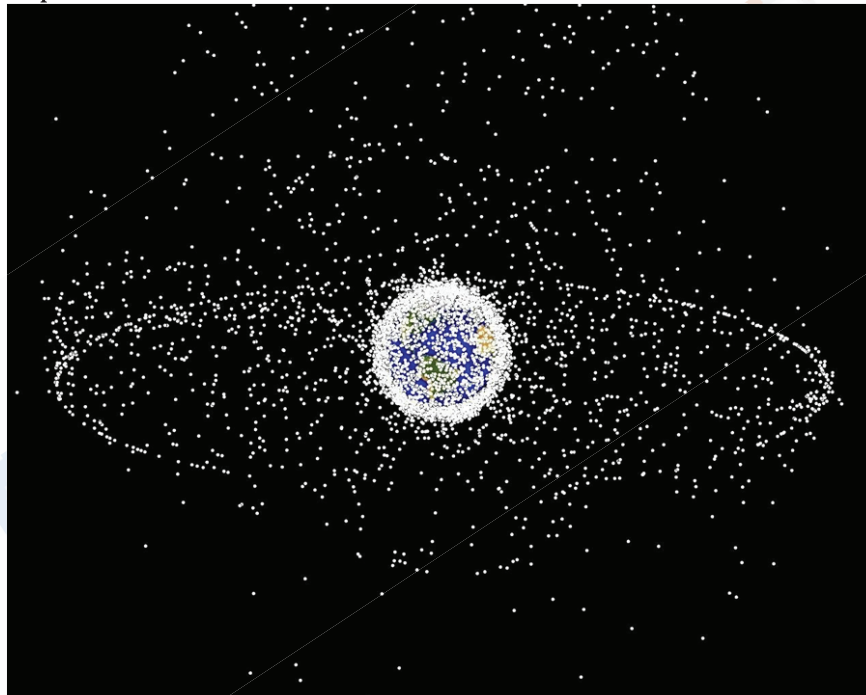
How Space Junk Enters Space:

- Space junk originates from objects launched from Earth, remaining in orbit until re-entering the atmosphere.
- Objects in lower orbits (a few hundred kilometres) can re-enter the atmosphere relatively quickly, usually burning up and not reaching the ground.
- Debris or satellites in higher orbits (36,000 kilometres), like those in geostationary orbits for communications and weather satellites, may circle Earth for extended periods, even thousands of years.
- Some space debris is created by collisions or anti-satellite tests in orbit.
- Satellite collisions can generate thousands of new pieces of debris.
- Certain countries, including the USA, China, and India, have performed anti-satellite missile tests, creating additional hazardous debris fragments.

Risks of Space Junk to Space Exploration:

- Currently, space junk does not impose significant risks to space exploration efforts.
- The primary danger is to other satellites in orbit, requiring them to avoid potential collisions to prevent damage or destruction.
- Collision avoidance maneuvers are regularly conducted across all satellites, including the International Space Station (ISS) with astronauts on board.
- Fortunately, collisions are infrequent; the last known satellite collision with space junk occurred in 2009, and a Chinese satellite broke up in March 2021 after a collision.
- For exploration beyond Earth's orbit, the existing limited amount of space junk does not present a problem.

Concerns about Falling Space Junk:

- The threat posed by falling space junk to human life and property is not insignificant.
- When large space debris re-enters Earth's atmosphere and falls into the oceans, it can still pose risks to marine life and ecosystems.
- Falling objects from space may cause harm to marine creatures and disrupt their habitats.
- Additionally, the impact of large objects in water bodies can result in pollution and ecological disturbances.

Cleaning up Space Junk:

- The United Nations urges companies to remove satellites from orbit within 25 years of mission to address space junk, but enforcement is challenging due to satellite failures and other factors.
- Various companies have proposed innovative solutions, such as using harpoons, nets, magnets, and lasers to retrieve dead satellites and direct them to burn up in Earth's atmosphere.
- The RemoveDEBRIS mission demonstrated successful satellite capture with a giant net.The University of Surrey's Surrey Space Centre led the mission, with Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd. (SSTL) manufacturing the satellite's platform. However, these methods are effective for larger satellites but not for smaller debris, which must naturally re-enter Earth's atmosphere.

The Kessler syndrome:

- The Kessler syndrome, proposed by NASA scientist Donald Kessler in 1978, warns that excessive space junk could lead to a chain reaction of collisions, generating more debris and endangering Earth's orbit.
- Experts are concerned about potential variations of this problem, emphasizing the need for precautionary measures to avoid catastrophic consequences.

Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects:

- The Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects complements the Outer Space Treaty, governing countries in space exploration.
- Enacted in 1972, it primarily addresses damage caused by space objects to other space assets and also covers damage caused by falling objects on Earth.
- According to the Convention, the launching country bears "absolute liability" and must provide compensation for any damage caused by its space object to Earth or air flights.
- Affected countries have the right to claim compensation based on the Convention's provisions.
- Compensation amounts are determined by international law and principles of justice and equity, ensuring fairness in resolutions.
- The Convention has been invoked only once when Canada sought compensation from the Soviet

Union for a satellite crash, resulting in a 3 million Canadian dollar payment.
- It serves as a crucial legal framework, holding countries accountable for damages caused by their space objects and promoting responsibility and fairness in space exploration.
- Amid impressive space exploration progress, space junk is a rising worry. Debris from rockets and old satellites reaching our shores brings risks to both orbital assets and Earth's ecosystems. While new ways to clean up debris are considered, the Kessler syndrome's threat emphasizes the need for global teamwork and following liability rules. As we explore space more, responsible debris control is vital for safe and sustainable cosmic ventures.

Sources:
ISRO rocket debris on Australian shore: rules governing space junk | Explained News – The Indian Express

Q1. With reference to Space Debris, consider the following statements:
1. Objects in lower orbits re-enter the atmosphere more quickly compared to higher orbits.
2. Collisions or anti-satellite tests can generate additional hazardous debris fragments.
3. Falling space junk doesn't pose risks to marine life or ecosystems when it enters the oceans.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3
Answer: (a)

Q2. Consider the following :
1. The Kessler syndrome warns that excessive space junk could lead to a chain reaction of collisions, generating more debris and endangering Earth's orbit.
2. The RemoveDEBRIS mission was led by the Surrey Space Centre.
3. The RemoveDEBRIS mission used a laser to blast smaller debris in space.
How many of the abovementioned statements are correct ?
(a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None
Answer: (b)

Q3. Explain the concept of "Space Junk" and its components. How does the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects address space debris issues?

MOB LYNCHING

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Mob lynching". The topic "Mob lynching" has relevance in the Security section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

About Mob lynching?

For Mains:

GS 3: Security
Causes of Mob Lynching?
Government Initiatives to Prevent Lynching?
Way Forward?

Why in the news:

The Supreme Court has ordered the automatic registration of FIRs under Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code, which deals with promoting enmity between different groups. Additionally, the Court instructed states to establish a compensation scheme for victims of lynching or mob violence.

Mob lynching

Mob lynching refers to acts of collective violence carried out by a large group of individuals, targeting a person or property, based on a belief that the victim has committed some perceived wrongdoing. The mob takes the law into their own hands, bypassing legal procedures and disregarding the principles of justice.

Statistics Related to Lynching in India:

Data from 2010 to 2017 compiled by India Spend on Cow-Linked Violence in India:

- During the specified period, there were 63 incidents of cow-linked violence resulting in the loss of 28 lives.
- About 97% of these attacks occurred after 2014, showing a significant increase in recent years.
- Around 86% of the victims were Muslims, indicating a specific religious community being targeted.
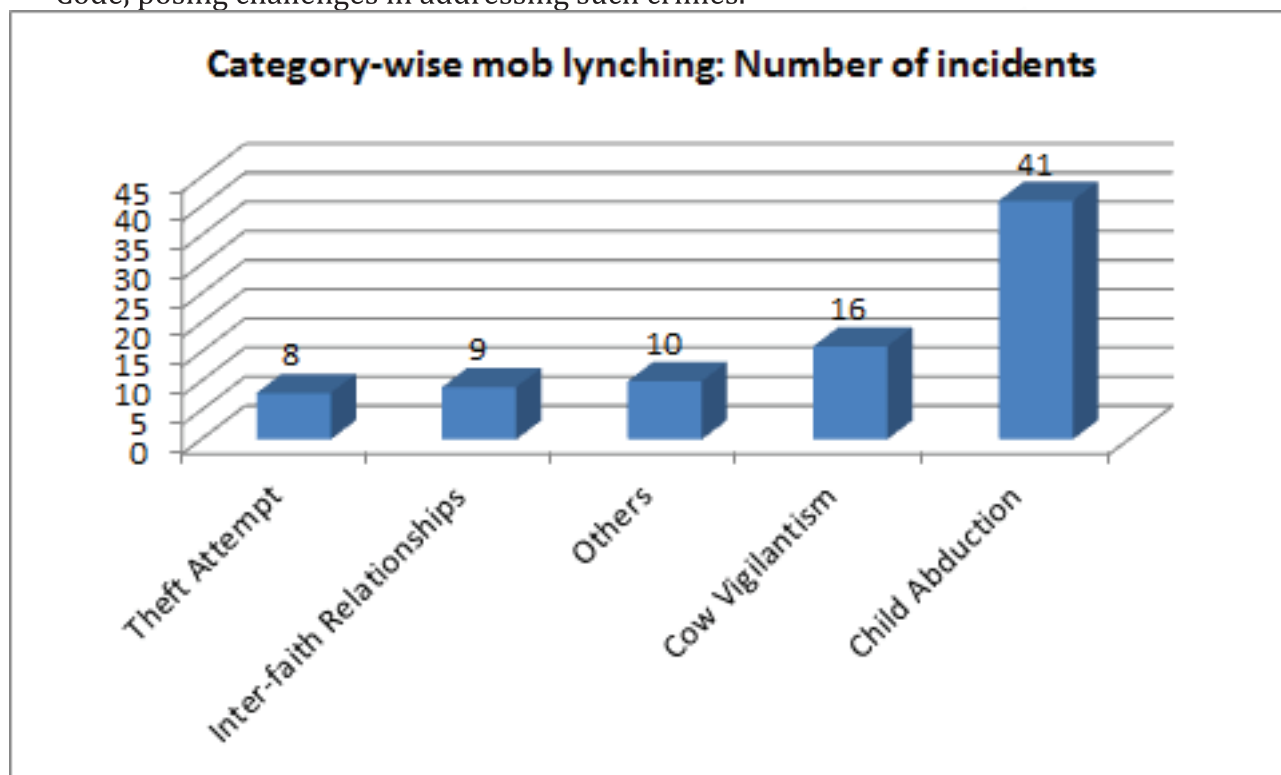
Causes of Mob Lynching:

Various factors contribute to mob lynching incidents:

- Perceived Threat to Culture or Identity: Actions or behaviors seen as challenging traditional norms can provoke mob violence.
- Rumors and Misinformation: Incidents are often triggered by baseless rumors or misinformation spread through social media and word of mouth.
- Economic and Social Tensions: Disputes over resources and economic opportunities may escalate into violent confrontations.
- Political Interests and Agendas: Political motivations and interests can incite and fuel mob lynching incidents. Some groups or individuals may use mob violence as a means to further their political agenda or gain support.
- Moral Vigilantism: Self-appointed moral vigilantes may enforce their interpretation of social

norms through violence.

Issues Related to Mob Lynching:

- Violation of Human Dignity and Rights: Mob lynching violates human dignity, infringing upon Article 21 of the Constitution and the principles outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Violation of Right to Equality: Lynching incidents often target specific religious or social groups, violating the right to equality (Articles 14 and 15).
- Lack of Legal Framework: Mob lynching is not explicitly classified as murder in the Indian Penal Code, posing challenges in addressing such crimes.

Category-wise mob lynching: Number of incidents

Supreme Court Observation in Tahseen Poonawala Case:

In the case of Tahseen s. Poonawala v. UOI, the Supreme Court characterized mob lynching as a 'horrendous act of mobocracy,' while emphasizing the state's responsibility to safeguard the lives of its citizens.

Supreme Court's Remedial Directions:

The Supreme Court issued seven remedial directions to address mob lynching incidents, including the appointment of a designated nodal officer, immediate lodging of FIRs, personal monitoring of investigations, victim compensation schemes, and disciplinary action against non-compliant officials.

Governments Initiatives:

Legislation:

- Manipur, West Bengal, and Rajasthan have enacted laws specifically targeting mob lynching to provide a legal framework for addressing such incidents.
- Jharkhand Assembly has passed the Prevention of Mob Violence and Mob Lynching Bill, 2021,

which is currently under review by the Governor.

Awareness Campaigns:

- Ranchi Police launched a mass awareness drive in the Ranchi district using poster campaigns to sensitize the public and prevent mob lynching.

Victim Compensation:

- The Goa government has introduced a victim compensation scheme, providing Rs. 2 lakh to families in case of a person's death due to mob violence.

Social Media Monitoring:

- The police in Hyderabad are actively using social media campaigns, like #HyderabadKillsRumors, to stop the spread of fake news and rumors that can trigger mob violence.

Way Forward:

- Victim Compensation: Providing financial support to victims of lynching can aid their families during challenging times.
- Eradicating Lynchings: As a democratic society, mob violence has no place, and concerted efforts are needed to eliminate such incidents.
- Comprehensive Legislation: States and the central government should work on comprehensive legislation to tackle mob lynching effectively.
- Combating Fake News: Measures should be taken to curb the spread of misinformation and hate speech, which often trigger such violence.
- Community Outreach Programs: Engaging with communities, especially in areas prone to mob violence, to promote tolerance, inclusivity, and respect for the rule of law.

SOURCE:
https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/sc-seeks-response-from-centre-6-states-on-compensation-for-mob-lynching-victims-101690613519013.html

Q.1 What are the causes of mob lynching incidents in India?
(a) Perceived threat to cultural identity
(b) Economic and social tensions
(c) Spread of misinformation and rumors
(d) All of the above
Answer: (d)

Q.2 What is the significance of the "Tahseen Poonawala Case" in the context of mob lynching in India?
(a) It established guidelines for compensation to victims of mob lynching.
(b) It highlighted the need for stricter laws against mob violence.
(c) It emphasized the duty of the state to protect citizens from mobocracy.
(d) It called for the establishment of a separate court for handling lynching cases.
Answer: (c)

Q.3 Analyze the causes of mob lynching and its implications on society and governance. Discuss the initiatives taken by the government to prevent lynching and propose effective strategies to address this issue and promote a safer and more inclusive society.

WHO REPORT ON THE GLOBAL TOBACCO EPIDEMIC 2023

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic 2023". The topic "WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic 2023" has relevance in the "Science and Technology" section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

What is the WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic 2023?
What is WHO and its structure, mandate?

For Mains:

GS2: International Agencies, their mandate and structure
GS3: Awareness in the field of Health

Why in the news?

- The WHO released a report titled- "WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic, 2023: protect people from tobacco smoke" highlighting global tobacco control efforts and their impact on reducing smoking rates.

MPOWER

- A decade and a half ago, the WHO formulated the MPOWER measures.
  - **Monitor tobacco use and prevention policies**
  - **Protect people from tobacco smoke**
  - **Offer help to quit tobacco**
  - **Warn about dangers of tobacco**
  - **Enforce bans on tobacco advertising**
  - **Raise taxes on tobacco products**
- The report evaluates how these measures have been put into practice.

Global Implementation of MPOWER Measures:

- **Global Smoking Decline:** Worldwide, smoking prevalence declined from 22.8% in 2007 to 17% in 2021, with 300 million fewer smokers.
- **Protection:** 71% of the world's population (5.6 billion people) are protected by at least one MPOWER measure, up from 5% in 2008.
- **Increase in Implementing Countries:** The number of countries implementing at least one MPOWER measure increased from 44 in 2008 to 151 in 2022.
- **Comprehensive Implementation:** Brazil, Turkiye, Netherlands, and Mauritius implemented all MPOWER measures.

Call for Comprehensive Measures:

- **WHO's Urgent Call:** WHO urges countries to adopt all MPOWER measures to combat the tobac-

co epidemic and counter tobacco and nicotine industries' influence.

Focus on Second-Hand Smoke:

- **Smoke-Free Spaces:** Nearly 40% of countries have smoke-free indoor public spaces to reduce second-hand smoke exposure.
- **Health Impact:** Second-hand smoke linked to 1.3 million non-smoker deaths annually, causing heart disease, respiratory diseases, strokes, and diabetes.

Challenges and Gaps:

- **Implementation Gaps:** At least 44 countries do not implement any MPOWER measures, and only half have smoke-free workplaces and restaurants.
- **Inadequate Smoking Bans:** 53 countries lack complete bans on smoking in healthcare facilities.
- **E-cigarette Dangers:** WHO highlights aggressive promotion of e-cigarettes as harmful, targeting youth and non-smokers.

India's Progress:

- **Health Warning Labels:** India excels with 85% of cigarette packs featuring prominent health warnings.
- **E-cigarette Ban:** India banned e-cigarette sales and smoking in healthcare and educational settings.
- **Room for Improvement:** Amendments needed in 20-year-old tobacco control legislation, including banning loose cigarette sales.
- **Bengaluru's Success**: Bengaluru achieved a 27% reduction in smoking in public places through enforcement drives, 'No Smoking' signs, and awareness campaigns.

Expert Insights and Recommendations:

- **Warning on OTT Content:** Proposed implementation of warnings on tobacco use in content on online platforms, especially important given increased OTT viewership.
- **Strengthening Existing Laws:** Calls for banning loose cigarette sales and ensuring warnings reach all segments, including students.

About World Health Organization (WHO)

Inception and Founding:

- In April 1945, a global gathering in San Francisco marked the establishment of the United Nations.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) was officially formed three years later, on April 7, 1948, upon the activation of its constitution.
- The constitution declares health as a fundamental human right, accessible to all regardless of background.

WHO's Mandate and Structure:

- WHO is a specialized agency of the United Nations, tasked with coordinating international health matters.
- Established in 1948, its headquarters are located in Geneva, Switzerland.
- It boasts 194 Member States, operating through six regional offices and 150 country offices.

- WHO collaborates primarily with member states via their Ministries of Health.

Other Reports by WHO:

- World Health Statistics
- World Tuberculosis Report
- Ambient Air pollution Report

Successes of WHO

- **Eradication of smallpox:**
  - In 1980, the WHO achieved a major success by officially eliminating a long-standing and deadly infectious disease that was common for centuries, contributing to global well-being.
- **Health as a human right:**
    - According to the COnstitution of WHO, "The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition".

Necessity for WHO Reforms

- **Enforcement Limitations:** The authority to enforce its recommendations is currently beyond the scope of WHO.
- **Deficient Information Exchange:** The protracted delay and China's hesitance to promptly and transparently share crucial information about the novel coronavirus, including the outbreak in Wuhan.
- **Absence of Consequences:** Member states currently do not bear consequences for non-adherence, a paradigm that must evolve to ensure meaningful safeguards against future disease outbreaks.
- **Insufficient Funding:** The essential foundation for bolstering the WHO necessitates an initial step towards augmented compulsory funding from member states.
- **Enhancing Authority:** It is imperative to empower the agency further, enabling it to enforce compliance with standards among member states and to promptly notify WHO in instances of disease outbreaks with potential global repercussions.

The World Health Organization (WHO) shall envision a forward trajectory marked by enhancing global solidarity to bolster health security, fostering comprehensive health advancement across all levels and partnering globally to fortify health systems for effective response, addressing persistent health inequities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It should focus on assuming a pivotal role in guiding science and data advancements to enhance worldwide health, reinvigorating endeavors to combat communicable diseases alongside partners, and embracing a transformative approach that addresses climate change, health, air pollution reduction, and improved air quality for a resilient future.

Sources:

WHO report on tobacco control: Key findings, how India fares | Explained News – The Indian Express

Q1. With reference to WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2023, consider the following statements:
1. The MPOWER measures were formulated by the WHO to address global tobacco control efforts.
2. The global smoking prevalence increased from 22.8% in 2007 to 17% in 2021.

3.   Brazil, Turkiye, Netherlands, India, and Mauritius have implemented all MPOWER measures.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a)   1 only
(b)   2 and 3 only
(c)   3 only
(d)   None

Answer: (a)

Q2.   Consider the following:

1.   New Health Index
2.   World Health Statistics
3.   Performance of Health Outcome Index
4.   World Tuberculosis Report
5.   Ambient Air pollution Report
6.   Universal Health Coverage Index

How many of the above mentioned reports/indices are published by WHO?

(a)   Only Two
(b)   Only Three
(c)   Only Five
(d)   All Six

Answer: (b)

Q3.   Discuss the Evolution, Achievements, and Reform Imperatives of the World Health Organization (WHO) in Promoting Global Health and Addressing Contemporary Public Health Challenges.

INDIAN INSTITUTES OF MANAGEMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2023

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Indian Institutes of Management (Amendment) Bill, 2023". The topic "Indian Institutes of Management (Amendment) Bill, 2023" has relevance in the Governance section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

Purpose of the Bill?

For Mains:

GS 2: Governance
Rationale for Amendments?
Indian Institutes of Management Act, 2017?

Why in the news:

The government has introduced a Bill in Parliament that grants itself considerable authority in the appointment and dismissal of Directors at the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs).

Purpose of the Bill:

The Bill aims to amend the Indian Institutes of Management Act, 2017, which declared 20 IIMs as "institutions of national importance" with the goal of achieving global excellence in management and allied areas.

Changes in Appointment of IIM Directors:

- The proposed amendments seek to give the government an expanded role in the appointment and removal of IIM Directors.
- The President of India will be the Visitor of every IIM, responsible for making appointments and conducting inquiries.
- The Board of Governors must obtain prior approval from the President before appointing or removing the Director.
- The Chairperson of the Board, instead of being appointed by the Board, will be nominated by the President.

Powers of the Visitor: The Visitor will have powers to audit and inquire into the affairs of any IIM, and the institute must comply with the Visitor's directions.

Implications on Autonomy: The Bill has raised concerns about the potential erosion of autonomy for IIMs as the government gains more say in Director appointments and other key decisions.

Government-IM Differences: The Bill reflects the government's efforts to assert greater control over IIM appointments and address past instances of disagreement between the government and IIMs over key appointments.

Rationale for Amendments:

- The government aims to have a stronger role in ensuring compliance with required academic credentials and other criteria during Director appointments.
- The proposed amendments have sparked debates on the balance between autonomy and government intervention in the administration of IIMs. Critics argue that excessive government involvement may undermine the academic and research independence of these premier management institutes. The Bill is currently under scrutiny in the Parliament and has implications for the future functioning of IIMs in India.

Salient Features of the Indian Institutes of Management Act, 2017:

- **Declaration of National Importance:** The Act designates the 20 existing Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) as "institutions of national importance." This recognition elevates the stature of IIMs and highlights their significant contributions to management education and research.
- **Greater Autonomy:** The Act grants the IIMs greater administrative, academic, and financial autonomy. The government will have no direct say in appointments or fee structures at these institutes. This move aims to empower the institutions to make decisions in their best interest without external interference.
- **Degree-Granting Authority:** Prior to the Act, IIMs could only award post-graduate diplomas to their graduates. The Act provides IIMs with the authority to award degrees to their students. This change aligns them with other prestigious universities and enhances the value of their academic programs.
- **Coordination Forum:** The Act establishes a coordination forum comprising representation from all 20 IIMs. This forum serves as a platform for discussing matters of common interest to all IIMs and acts as an advisory body to foster collaboration and synergy among the institutions.
- **Board of Governors:** Each IIM will have a Board of Governors, which will serve as the executive

body of the institution. The Board will consist of up to 19 members, including eminent individuals, faculty members, and alumni. Two additional members will represent the central and state governments.

- **Appointment of Chairperson:** The Board of Governors will appoint its own Chairperson, thereby providing the IIMs with the authority to choose a leader who aligns with their vision and goals.
- **Director Appointment:** The Act grants the Board of Governors the responsibility of appointing the Director of each IIM. This appointment process is crucial in ensuring effective leadership and management of the institution.

Institute of National Importance:

The term "Institute of National Importance" refers to premier higher educational institutions in India that hold a significant role in developing highly skilled individuals within a specified region of the country or state. The designation is conferred to these institutions by the Central Government through an act of Parliament.

Key points related to Institutes of National Importance (INIs):

- **Special Status:** INIs receive special funding and recognition from the Government of India due to their pivotal role in promoting excellence in education and research.
- **Degree-Granting Authority:** INIs established by an Act of Parliament are granted "Degree Granting Status" under Section 22 of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956. This allows them to confer or grant degrees to their students.
- **First Reference:** The term "Institute of National Importance" was first mentioned in the Constitution of India's Seventh Schedule. It included institutions like the Benares Hindu University, Aligarh Muslim University, Delhi University, and others declared as INIs by Parliament through legislation.
- **Criteria for Designation:** The specific criteria for awarding the status of an Institute of National Importance are not explicitly outlined in any document. However, institutions receiving this status are typically chosen based on their track record of academic excellence, research contributions, and overall impact on the education sector.
- **Advantages and Supervision:** INIs often operate outside the ambit of the University Grants Commission (UGC) and enjoy certain benefits related to taxes and financial support. They are closely supervised and funded by the Government of India, usually through the Ministry of Education (formerly the Ministry of Human Resources Development).

Q.1 What was the purpose of the Indian Institutes of Management Act, 2017?
(a) To grant greater autonomy to IIMs and declare them as "institutions of national importance."
(b) To establish new Indian Institutes of Management in various states.
(c) To regulate the functioning of Indian Institutes of Management and their fee structures.
(d) To appoint government representatives as Directors of Indian Institutes of Management.
ANSWER: B

**Q.2 Consider the following statements regarding Indian Institutes of Management (Amend-
ment) Bill, 2023:**
1. The President of India will be the Visitor of every IIM, responsible for making appointments
    and conducting inquiries.
2. The Board of Governors of IIMs must obtain prior approval from the President before appoint-
    ing or removing the Director.
3. The Chairperson of the Board will be nominated by the President of India.
How many of the statements above is/are correct?
(a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None of the above
ANSWER: C

**Q.3 Discuss the key features of the Indian Institutes of Management (Amendment) Bill, 2023
and its potential impact on the functioning of IIMs. Also, analyze the debate surrounding
the balance between autonomy and government intervention in the administration of IIMs.**

FINANCIAL ACTION TASK FORCE (FATF)

*This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Financial Action Task Force
(FATF)". The topic "Financial Action Task Force (FATF)" has relevance in the "International
Relations" section of the UPSC CSE exam.*

For Prelims:

What is the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)?

For Mains:

GS2: Important International Institutions, agencies, fora their structure and mandate

Why in the news?

The Delhi High Court has recently declared that PayPal, the US online gateway, falls under the category

of a "reporting entity" according to the anti-money laundering law. This decision could potentially aid India in its FATF review of the measures taken to combat illicit funds (black money).

Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

- The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is responsible for addressing money laundering, terrorist financing, and proliferation financing globally.
- The FATF was established in 1989 and is headquartered in Paris.
- It comprises 39 member countries and sets international standards to combat illicit funds related to serious crimes such as drug trafficking, illicit arms trade, and cyber fraud.
- The FATF conducts research on money laundering and terrorism financing methods and promotes global standards to mitigate these risks.
- Over 200 countries and jurisdictions have committed to implementing the FATF's Standards as part of a coordinated global effort against organized crime, corruption, and terrorism.
- Nine FATF Associate Member organizations and other global partners, including the IMF and World Bank, help assess countries and jurisdictions.

Processes of FATF

- The FATF Plenary, the policymaking body, meets three times a year to hold countries accountable for adhering to the Standards.
- Countries failing to implement FATF Standards repeatedly may be named as Jurisdictions under Increased Monitoring or High-Risk Jurisdictions, often referred to as "grey and blacklists."

Recommendations and Standards

The recommendations and standards mentioned are part of the framework established by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to combat money laundering and terrorist financing.

- **Recommendations:**
- These are a set of guidelines that member countries and jurisdictions are encouraged to implement to prevent money laundering and terrorist financing.
- Originally, there were 40 Recommendations, but they were later expanded to a total of 49 to cover a broader range of issues and evolving challenges in the financial sector.
- **9 Special Recommendations:**
- They specifically focus on countering terrorist financing and cover various aspects, such as freezing terrorist assets, preventing the provision of financial and other services to terrorists, and international cooperation in tackling terrorist financing.

Black List:

- The FATF maintains a blacklist of countries known as Non- Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs).
- These countries are identified for their support of terror funding and involvement in money laundering activities.
- The blacklist is subject to regular revisions by the FATF, with entries being added or removed accordingly.
- North Korea, Iran, and Myanmar are currently on the Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) blacklist.

Grey List:

- Countries that provide a safe haven for supporting terror funding and money laundering are placed on the FATF grey list.

- Such inclusion serves as a warning to the country, indicating that it is at risk of being moved to the blacklist.

Consequences of being on the FATF lists :

o **Increased scrutiny** from financial institutions and regulators in other countries:
▪ This can make it more difficult for banks and other financial institutions in the greylisted country to do business with their counterparts in other countries.
- **Increased reputational risk:**
▪ This can make it more difficult for the country to attract foreign investment and trade.
- **Increased compliance costs:**
o This can involve a significant investment of time and resources.

FATF in India:

- India began its association with FATF as an 'observer' in 2006 before becoming a full-fledged member in 2010.
- Additionally, India is actively engaged with its regional counterparts, being a member of both the Asia Pacific Group (APG) and the Eurasian Group (EAG).

Challenges in Adoption and implementation of FATF codes:

- Difficulty in domestic coordination among government agencies, financial institutions, and law enforcement bodies.
- Capacity constraints in smaller or less economically developed countries.
- Inadequate operational resources, hindering robust AML/CFT measures.
- Complexities in implementing FATF standards and conducting assessments.
- Poor understanding of ML/TF threats and risks.
- Inability to identify, assess, and mitigate ML/TF risks.
- Limitations of traditional risk assessment tools.
- Lack of coordination between international organisations.
- Weaknesses in national regulatory schemes.
- Informal transfer and movement of assets across borders.
- High costs of implementing risk-based approaches for non-state actors.
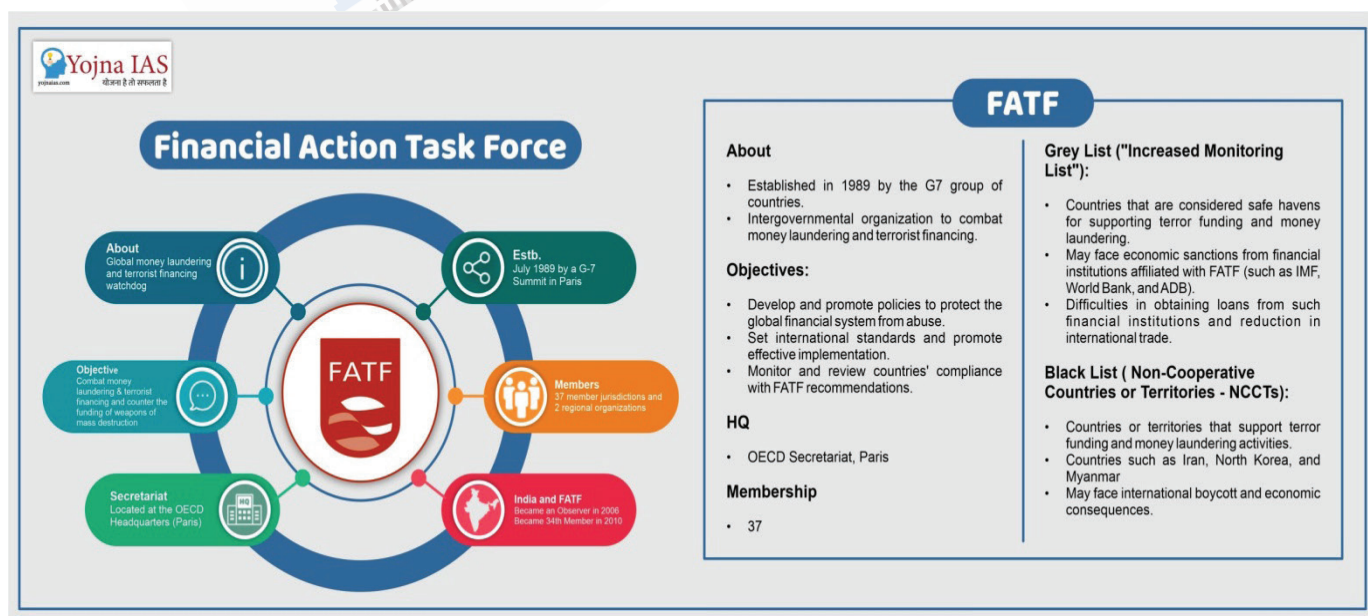
Way forward:

To strengthen FATF and the global fight against money laundering and terrorism financing, there is need to–

- Emphasise risk assessment and adoption of risk-based approaches.
- Improve data sharing among relevant stakeholders.
- Utilise modern technology like machine learning for real-time data analysis.
- Strengthen international cooperation between organisations and countries.
- Provide technical assistance and capacity-building support to resource-constrained countries.

Sources:
PayPal ruling will help India during FATF review of its anti-black money regime, claim insiders
Citing FATF, Centre urges Supreme Court to let S.K. Mishra continue as Enforcement Directorate chief – The Hindu

Q1.   With reference to Financial Action Task Force (FATF), consider the following statements:
1.   The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is responsible for addressing money laundering, terrorist financing in India.
2.   The FATF Plenary, the decision-making body, meets once in three years.
3.   India is currently on the FATF greylist.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 3 only
(d) None
Answer: (a)

Q2.   Consider the following:
1.   The FATF conducts research on cyber fraud and promotes global standards to mitigate this risk.
2.   The 9 Special Recommendations by FATF focus on combating drug trafficking and money laundering in the financial sector.
3.   India is not a member of any regional counterparts in the FATF framework.
How many of the abovementioed statements are correct ?
(a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) Only three
(d) None
Answer: (d)

Q3.   Discuss the role of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in addressing money laundering and terrorist financing globally. Also, highlight the challenges faced by countries in adopting and implementing FATF standards.

UDAN REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY SCHEME (RCS)

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "UDAN Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS)". The topic "UDAN Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS)" has relevance in the Development section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

Facts about Health Bills?

For Mains:

GS 3: Development
Features about Health Bills?

Why in the news:

225 out of 479 RCS routes have stopped operating, despite the collection of ₹2,038 crore from airlines and passengers on profitable routes to subsidize routes under the regional connectivity scheme.

UDAN Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS)

Key Points:

- **Objectives:** The UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagarik) scheme was launched by the Ministry of Civil Aviation to enhance regional airport development and connectivity in India. Its main objectives include improving air connectivity to remote areas, promoting trade, commerce, and tourism, providing affordable air travel for the common people, and generating employment in the aviation sector.
- **Fare Caps:** Under the scheme, airlines are required to cap airfares for 50% of the total seats at Rs. 2,500 per hour of flight. This is achieved through financial incentives, concessions from Central and State governments, and Viability Gap Funding (VGF) provided to airlines to bridge the gap between operational costs and expected revenue.
- **Regional Connectivity Fund:** The Regional Connectivity Fund (RCF) was established to meet the viability gap funding requirements under the scheme, with partner State Governments contributing a 20% share.

Phases of UDAN Scheme:

- **Phase 1:** Launched in 2017, aimed at connecting underserved and unserved airports in the country.
- **Phase 2:** Launched in 2018, focused on expanding air connectivity to more remote and inaccessible parts of the country.
- **Phase 3:** Launched in November 2018, with a focus on enhancing air connectivity to hilly and remote regions.
- **Phase 4:** Launched in December 2019, aimed at connecting islands and other remote areas.
- **Phase 5:** In April 2023, Phase 5 was initiated, concentrating on aircraft falling under Category-2 (20-80 seats) and Category-3 (>80 seats), with the added benefit of no distance restrictions for flights between the origin and destination.

Benefits of UDAN scheme

- Enhances regional connectivity by linking underserved and unserved airports.
- Promotes economic growth and tourism in remote areas.

- Subsidized airfares make air travel affordable for common people.
- Boosts local businesses and employment opportunities.
- Reduces travel time, increasing efficiency and productivity.
- Encourages investments in airport infrastructure development.
- Facilitates medical emergencies by enabling faster access to healthcare facilities.
- Helps in the development of a robust aviation ecosystem in smaller cities and towns.
- Promotes balanced regional development and reduces the urban-rural divide.

Challenges to the UDAN RCS Scheme:

- **Commercial Viability:** Many identified routes have been found to be commercially unviable, making it challenging for airlines to operate profitably despite subsidies.
- **Infrastructural Constraints:** Lack of adequate airport infrastructure in remote regions hampers air operations and requires upgradation to meet safety and traffic demands.
- **Subsidization Complexities:** Some routes faced challenges as they remained commercially unviable even with subsidies, leading to operational issues.
- **High Operating Costs:** Airlines operating in remote areas experience increased operating costs, affecting profitability due to higher fuel expenses, maintenance costs, and logistical challenges.
- **Airfare Caps:** The cap on airfares can impact airlines' revenue potential, particularly when operating costs are high, potentially discouraging airlines from certain routes.
- **Passenger Awareness:** The lack of awareness among potential passengers about regional air travel options under UDAN has a negative impact on both demand and utilization.
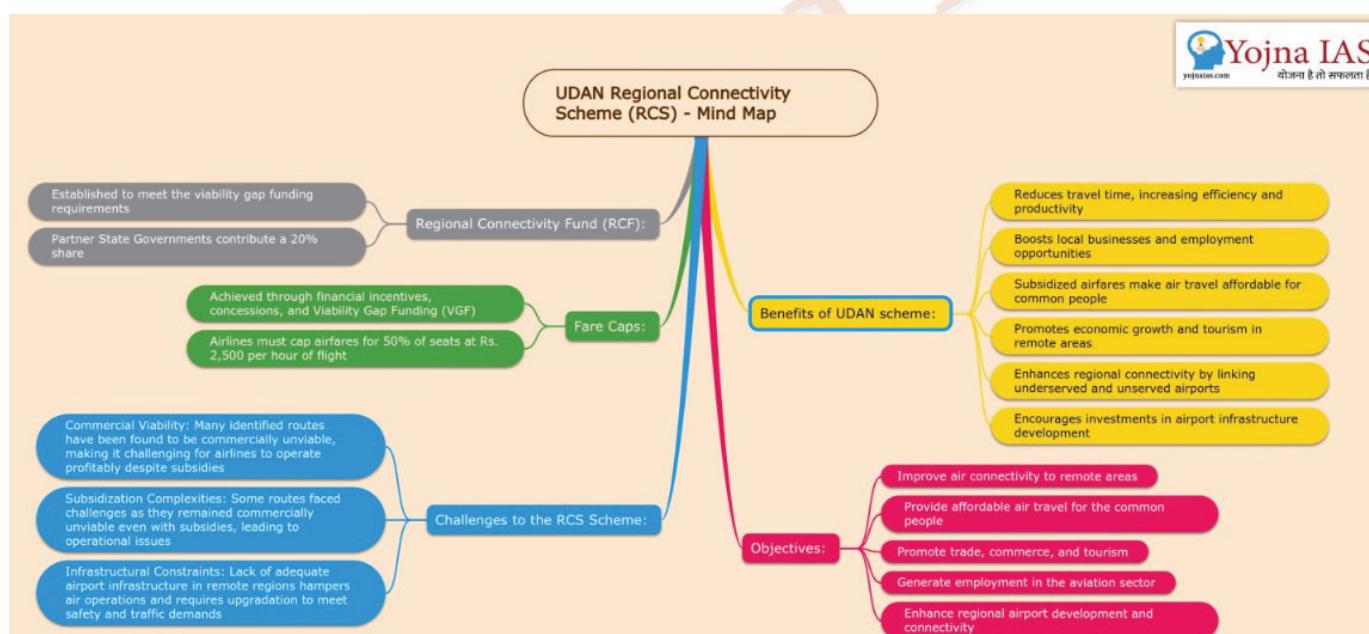
Way Forward:

- **Enhance Infrastructure:** Focus on developing and upgrading airport infrastructure in remote areas to support increased air traffic and safety.
- **Subsidy Rationalization:** Streamline subsidy disbursal to ensure it aligns with the commercial viability of routes and encourages airlines to operate on regional routes.
- **Operational Efficiency:** Address operational constraints and reduce operating costs for airlines operating in remote areas.

- **Public Awareness:** Promote regional air travel awareness among potential passengers through marketing and outreach campaigns.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Foster collaborations between the government and private sector to improve regional airport development and connectivity.
- **Continuous Evaluation:** Regularly assess the performance of the RCS scheme, make necessary adjustments, and learn from previous phases to enhance its effectiveness.

Addressing these challenges and adopting strategic measures will contribute to the success and sustainability of India's UDAN Regional Connectivity Scheme, promoting greater regional air connectivity and economic development across the country.

Q.1   Which of the following statements regarding the regional air connectivity scheme (UDAN) in India are correct?

1.   Under the scheme, airlines are required to cap airfares for 50% of the total seats at Rs. 2,500 per hour of flight.
2.   The partner State Governments have to contribute a 20% share.

Select the correct answer using the codes below:

(a)   1 only
(b)   2 only
(c)   Both 1 and 2
(d)   Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: C

Q.2   Which of the following statements regarding the UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) scheme is/are correct?

1.   UDAN is a regional connectivity scheme currently active in North Indian states only.
2.   UDAN routes are exclusively operated by government-owned airlines to ensure the accessibility of remote regions.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

1.   1 only
2.   2 only
3.   Both 1 and 2
4.   None of the above

ANSWER: D

Q.3   Discuss the significance and impact of the UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagarik) scheme on enhancing regional airport development and connectivity in India.

SUPERCONDUCTIVITY

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

For Prelims:
What is Superconductivity?

For Mains:
GS3: Science and Technology- advancements, their effects in everyday life

Why in the news?
South Korean researchers posted papers on the internet about lead-based compound's superconducting properties at room temperature. Discovery of a room temperature superconductor generates excitement and scepticism. Potential for Nobel Prize and revolutionising technology, but past claims have been elusive.

Superconductivity

Superconductivity is a state in which a material exhibits almost no resistance to the flow of electric current. Electric current involves the movement of charged particles, usually electrons, which interact with atoms in the material as they move.

Resistance:

- The property of a conductor by virtue of which it opposes the flow of electric current through it is called resistance.
- Resistance in electric current leads to energy loss, primarily in the form of heat. This phenomenon is why devices like electrical appliances become hot during operation.

Potential Benefits of Superconductivity:

- **Improved power transmission:** Superconducting wires can carry much higher currents than conventional wires without losing any energy due to resistance. This could lead to significant reductions in energy losses in the power grid, which could save billions of dollars per year.
- **More efficient motors and generators:** Superconducting motors and generators could be much more efficient than conventional motors and generators, leading to significant reductions in energy consumption.
- **Maglev transportation:** Superconducting magnets could be used to levitate trains, which would eliminate friction and allow for much faster and more efficient transportation.
- **MRI and NMR imaging:** Superconducting magnets are used in MRI and NMR imaging devices, which are essential for medical diagnosis.
- **Cryogenics:** Superconducting materials can be used to create and maintain cryogenic temperatures, which are essential for a variety of applications, such as research in quantum physics and the development of new medical treatments.
- Critical roles of superconductors extend to various fields beyond these examples.

Challenges in Achieving Superconductivity:

- **High temperatures:** Many superconducting materials require extremely low temperatures to exhibit their properties, which makes them difficult to use in everyday applications.
- **Material synthesis:** Some superconducting materials can be difficult to synthesise with the

necessary crystalline structure and purity.

- **Stability and sensitivity:** Superconductors can be sensitive to external factors such as magnetic fields, pressure, and mechanical stress, which can disrupt their superconducting properties.
- **Critical current density:** In practical applications, it's important for a superconducting material to carry a high current density while maintaining its superconducting state.
- **Anisotropy:** Many superconductors exhibit anisotropic behavior, meaning their superconducting properties vary with direction.
- **Losses at interfaces:** Interfaces between different materials, such as superconductors and normal conductors, can lead to energy losses and reduce the efficiency of superconducting devices.

Search for Room-Temperature Superconductors:

- **Current Limitations:** Even so-called "high-temperature" superconductors function well below -150 degrees Celsius. Claims of higher-temperature superconductivity often require extreme pressures or face skepticism.
- **Quest for Room Temperature:** Scientists aim to discover materials displaying superconductivity at or near room temperature (20-25 degrees Celsius) and under normal pressure. The term "room temperature" refers to conditions that are relatively easy to create, such as slightly above or below typical room temperatures.

Related Terms:
Critical Temperature (Tc)

- The critical temperature is the point at which a superconductor transitions between normal and superconducting behaviour.

The Meissner Effect

- The Meissner effect is the expulsion of a magnetic field from the interior of a superconductor during its transition to the superconducting state when it is cooled below the critical temperature. This expulsion will repel a nearby magnet.
- Above Tc, a superconductor doesn't react significantly to a magnetic field – the field passes through unhindered. However, below Tc, the applied magnetic field is pushed out from inside the superconductor and curved around it.
- This happens due to the development of surface currents within the superconductor when influenced by a magnetic field. These currents create magnetization that counters the magnetic field, effectively neutralising it inside the superconductor.
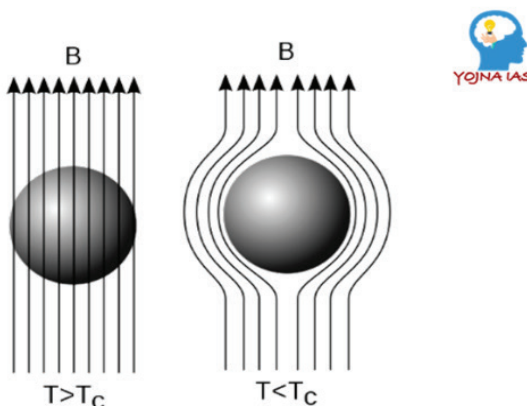- This results in strong diamagnetism, where the superconductor is repelled by the magnetic field.

Fig 1. Contrasting the behaviour of a superconductor above and below its critical temperature, Tc..

Levitation Phenomenon

- The repelling force between the superconductor and the magnetic field can be powerful enough to make a magnet levitate above the superconductor.
- This levitation isn't completely stable, allowing the magnet some rotational freedom as it orients its magnetic poles. If the superconductor warms above Tc or the magnetic field is removed, the magnet loses its levitation ability.

What is the news?

- South Korean researchers recently published two papers online, describing the development of a new material called LK-99. According to their findings, LK-99 can exhibit superconductivity at room temperatures.
- The researchers claim that LK-99 can be created by baking a combination of minerals, specifically lanarkite (Pb_2SO_4) and copper phosphide.
- Remarkably, this material shows key superconducting properties even under normal air pressure and at temperatures as high as 127 degrees Celsius.
- The researchers have proposed a possible explanation for how LK-99 achieves room-temperature superconductivity, but they haven't yet presented solid experimental proof to substantiate their assertions.

The search for materials exhibiting room-temperature superconductivity holds immense significance, offering potential for groundbreaking advancements in technology and energy efficiency. Despite challenges, the scientific community remains focused on realizing this elusive goal.
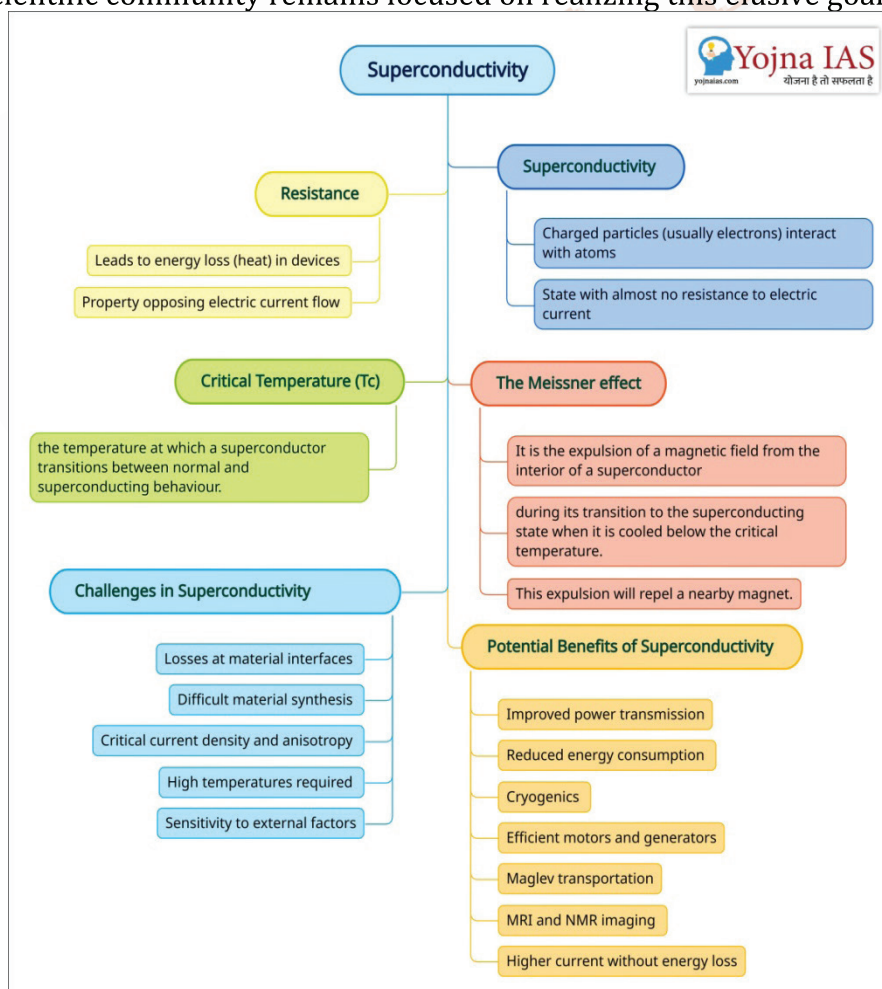
Q1. With reference Superconductors, consider the following statements:
1. Superconductivity is a state in which a material exhibits almost no resistance to the flow of electric current.
2. Many superconducting materials require extremely low temperatures to exhibit their properties, which makes them difficult to use in everyday applications.
3. Superconducting magnets are used in X-ray imaging devices, which are essential for medical diagnosis.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 3 only
(d) None

Answer: (a)

Q2. Consider the following statements:
Statement-I: High-temperature superconductors function above 150 degrees Celsius.
Statement-II: Claims of higher-temperature superconductivity often require extreme pressures or face skepticism.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?
(a) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
(b) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
(c) Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect
(d) Statement-I is incorrect but Statement-II is correct

Answer: (d)

Q3. What is superconductivity, and how does it relate to the meissner effect? Explain its potential benefits in terms of applications for human advancement.

PLASTIC POLLUTION

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Plastic Pollution". The topic "Plastic Pollution" has relevance in the Environment section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

Major Findings of Plastic Overshoot Day Report?

For Mains:

GS 3: Environment

Issues Associated with Plastic Waste in India?
Government Initiatives Related to Plastic Waste Management?
Way Forward?

Why in the news:

Swiss-based research consultancy Earth Action (EA) reported a significant tipping point on July 28, 2023 – the first-ever Plastic Overshoot Day for planet Earth. On this day, the amount of plastic waste surpassed the global waste management capacity, indicating a critical tipping point in the plastic pollution crisis.

Major Findings of Plastic Overshoot Day Report:

- **Plastic Pollution Crisis:** The report identifies an alarming plastic pollution crisis, with an estimated additional 68,642,999 tonnes of plastic waste entering nature in 2023.
- **12 Major Contributors:** The report highlights that 12 countries, including India, are responsible for 52% of the world's mismanaged plastic waste. These countries are China, Brazil, Indonesia, Thailand, Russia, Mexico, the United States, Saudi Arabia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iran, and Kazakhstan.
- **Africa's High Mismanagement:** Three African countries, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Kenya, have the highest mismanaged waste percentages, with Mozambique ranking first at 99.8%.
- **India's MWI Ranking:** India stands at the fourth position on the Mismanaged Waste Index (MWI), indicating that a significant 98.55% of its generated waste is not managed appropriately.
- **Short-Life Plastics:** Short-life plastics, such as plastic packaging and single-use plastics, constitute around 37% of the total plastic used annually, posing a higher risk of leakage into the environment.
- **Plastic Overshoot Day in India:** On January 6, 2023, India reached its Plastic Overshoot Day, signifying that the country's plastic waste generation exceeded its capacity for waste management.
- **Per-Person Consumption:** India's per-person plastic consumption is significantly lower than the global average, with 5.3 kg compared to the global average of 20.9 kg.

Issues Associated with Plastic Waste in India:

- **Poor Waste Management Infrastructure:** Inadequate waste management infrastructure in India leads to improper disposal and pollution.
- **Single-Use Plastic Products**: The widespread use of single-use plastic items exacerbates the plastic waste problem.
- **Marine Pollution:** India's coastal areas are affected by plastic waste, leading to marine pollution and its adverse impacts.
- **Health Impacts:** Improper disposal and burning of plastic can release harmful chemicals, affecting the health of communities living near waste disposal sites.

Government Initiatives Related to Plastic Waste Management:

1. National Dashboard on Elimination of Single Use Plastic and Plastic Waste Management:
The National Dashboard on Elimination of Single Use Plastic and Plastic Waste Management is an initiative by the Government of India to monitor and track the progress of efforts to eliminate single-use plastics and improve plastic waste management in the country. It serves as a centralized platform to collect and analyze data related to single-use plastic consumption, waste generation, recycling, and disposal.

2. Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2022:
The Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2022, are a revision to the existing Plastic Waste

Management Rules, 2016. The amendment aims to strengthen the regulatory framework and improve the management of plastic waste in India.

Key Amendments:

- **EPR Compliance:** The amendment mandates Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for various stakeholders involved in the manufacturing, import, and use of plastic products. Producers are required to take responsibility for the collection, recycling, and environmentally sound disposal of their products.
- **Phase-out of Some Plastics:** The amendment introduces a phased-out approach for certain single-use plastic items, targeting their eventual elimination.
- **Registration of Producers:** Manufacturers, importers, and brand owners of plastic products need to register with the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to ensure their compliance with EPR obligations.
- **Plastic Waste Collection System:** The amendment emphasizes the establishment of a robust plastic waste collection system and sets specific collection targets.
- **Recycling Targets:** The amendment sets recycling targets for various plastic products to promote a circular economy approach.
- **Plastic Waste Management Plan:** Producers need to submit a detailed Plastic Waste Management Plan outlining their strategies for plastic waste collection, recycling, and disposal.

3. Project REPLAN:

Project REPLAN (REducing Plastic in Nature) is an initiative launched by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) in India. The project aims to address the issue of plastic pollution by promoting responsible plastic waste management practices and reducing plastic leakage into nature.

Way Forward:

- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR):** Implementing EPR policies to hold producers accountable for plastic waste disposal and promote circular economy practices.
- **Waste-to-Energy Plants:** Investing in waste-to-energy plants to convert non-recyclable plastic waste into energy while reducing dependence on fossil fuels.
- **Designing Alternatives:** Identifying and promoting alternatives to single-use plastics and working with product designers to develop recyclable or biodegradable materials.
- **Supporting the UN Treaty to End Plastic Pollution:** India's role in addressing plastic pollution is crucial, and it should actively promote and support global initiatives to combat plastic pollution, such as the UN Treaty to End Plastic Pollution.

Overall, the report underscores the urgent need for comprehensive strategies and coordinated efforts to tackle the plastic pollution crisis in India and globally. Implementing sustainable waste management practices, promoting responsible consumption, and developing alternatives to plastic are essential steps to address this pressing environmental issue.

SOURCE:
https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/waste/india-among-the-12-countries-responsible-for-52-of-the-world-s-mismanaged-plastic-waste-report-90927

Plastic Pollution in India

Government Initiatives Related to Plastic Waste Management

- Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2022
  - Phase-out of Some Plastics
  - Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Compliance
  - Registration of Producers
  - Plastic Waste Collection System
  - Plastic Waste Management Plan
  - Recycling Targets
- Project REPLAN
  - UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and MoEFCC initiative
  - Promote responsible plastic waste management
  - Reduce plastic leakage into nature
- National Dashboard on Elimination of Single Use Plastic and Plastic Waste Management
  - Data collection and analysis
  - Monitor and track progress

Major Findings of Plastic Overshoot Day Report

- Per-Person Consumption in India
  - 5.3 kg (Global average: 20.9 kg)
- Plastic Overshoot Day in India
  - January 6, 2023
- India's MWI Ranking
  - Fourth position (98.55% waste mismanagement)
- Short-Life Plastics
  - Plastic packaging and single-use plastics (37% of total plastic)
- Plastic Pollution Crisis
  - 68,642,999 tonnes of plastic waste in 2023

Issues Associated with Plastic Waste in India

- Marine Pollution
- Poor Waste Management Infrastructure
- Single-Use Plastic Products
- Health Impacts

Way Forward

- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Policies
- Designing Alternatives to Single-Use Plastics
- Waste-to-Energy Plants
- Supporting the UN Treaty to End Plastic Pollution

Q.1 India introduced "extended producer responsibility" as a significant aspect in which of the following regulations?
(a) Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2022
(b) The Recycled Plastic (Manufacturing and Usage) Rules, 1999
(c) The e-Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2011
(d) Bio-medical Waste Management Rules, 2016
ANSWER: C

Q.2 Which of the following statements are true regarding the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2022, introduced in India?
1. Manufacturers and importers of plastic products are exempt from registering with the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).
2. It provides a framework to strengthen the circular economy of plastic packaging waste
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
ANSWER: B

Q.3 Discuss the major causes and consequences of plastic pollution, with a special focus on its impact on marine environments. Provide suggestions for effective mitigation strategies to combat this pressing issue and ensure a sustainable future.