



Yojna IAS

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OCTOBER 2023

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

YOJNA IAS WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS
16/10/2023 TO 22/10/2023

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CURRENT AFFAIRS

OCTOBER 2023

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE 2023

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Nobel Peace Prize 2023". This topic has relevance in the "Awards and Recognitions" section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

What is Nobel Peace Prize?

Winners of Nobel Peace Prizes

For Mains:

Essay: Women Centered Issues

Why in the news?

Iranian activist Narges Mohammadi was honored with the Nobel Peace Prize for her unwavering commitment to challenging the oppression of women in Iran and her relentless advocacy for human rights and freedom.

About Narges Mohammadi

- Early Life and Roots of Activism
 - Born in Iran in 1972, Narges Mohammadi hails from a family with a deep-rooted history of political activism.
 - Their involvement in the Iranian Revolution of 1979, which led to the establishing an Islamic republic, set the stage for her activism.
 - Two pivotal childhood experiences deeply influenced Mohammadi's journey: her mother's regular visits to her imprisoned brother and daily television reports of executed prisoners.
- Path to Activism
 - From an early age, Narges Mohammadi actively engaged in various causes, including advocating for women's rights in Iran and protesting against the death penalty and severe sentences for political demonstrators.
 - She worked as an engineer in Tehran but was eventually dismissed due to government directives.
- Champion of Human Rights
 - In the 2000s, she joined the Center for Human Rights Defenders in Iran, founded by the renowned Iranian lawyer Shirin Ebadi, with a mission to abolish the death penalty.
 - Shirin Ebadi received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003 for her human rights advocacy in Iran.
- Multiple Confrontations with the Law
 - Narges Mohammadi's path was fraught with arrests and imprisonments. She faced her first

arrest in 2011 and encountered the Iranian judiciary multiple times.

- She has been convicted five times, arrested 13 times, sentenced to 31 years in prison, and subjected to 154 lashes.
- In 2023, additional judicial cases were initiated against her, potentially resulting in more convictions.
- Even while incarcerated, she organised protests with fellow women prisoners, taking a bold stand against the Iranian government.
- In 2022, she authored a book, 'White Torture,' chronicling her experiences in solitary confinement and featuring interviews with other Iranian women who had endured similar ordeals.
- Recognition and Awards
 - Narges Mohammadi received notable accolades in the West for her activism, including the 2023 PEN/Barbey Freedom to Write Award and the 2023 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize.
 - In 2022, she was featured in the BBC's list of 100 inspiring and influential women worldwide.

About the Nobel Peace Prize 2023

- Established in the will of Alfred Nobel, the Nobel Peace Prize is one of five esteemed Nobel Prizes.
- Since its inception in 1901, it has been awarded annually (with occasional exceptions) to individuals or organisations that have made significant contributions to peace, international fraternity, and the reduction or elimination of standing armies.
- The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded by a five-member committee chosen by the Norwegian Parliament.

Recent Nobel Peace Prizes



Year	Laureate(s)	Country	Reason
2023	Narges Mohammadi	Iran	For her fight against the oppression of women in Iran and her fight to promote human rights and freedom for all.
2022	Ales Bialiatski, Memorial, and Center for Civil Liberties	Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine	For their promotion of the right to criticize power and protect the fundamental rights of citizens.
2021	Maria Ressa and Dmitry Muratov	Philippines and Russia	For their efforts to safeguard freedom of expression, which is a precondition for democracy and peace.
2020	World Food Programme	International	For its efforts to combat hunger and improve food security.
2019	Abiy Ahmed Ali	Ethiopia	For his efforts to achieve peace and international cooperation, particularly for his decisive initiative to resolve the border conflict with Eritrea.

Sources:

Nobel Prize for Peace: Who is Narges Mohammadi, the Iranian woman awarded this year?

Q1. With reference to the Nobel Peace Prize, consider the following statements:

1. The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded annually.
2. The Swedish Government awards it in memory of Alfred Nobel.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Q2. Consider the following with reference to Nobel Peace Prize:

1. Narges Mohammadi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her fight against the oppression of women in Iraq and her fight to promote human rights and freedom for all.
2. For its efforts to combat hunger and improve food security, the World Food Programme was awarded a Nobel Peace in 2020.
3. Abiy Ahmed Ali has been lauded for his initiative to resolve the border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

How many of the abovementioned statements are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

GREEN CREDIT PROGRAM

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Green Credit Program". This topic has relevance in the "Environment and Ecology" section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

What is the Green Credit Program?

For Mains:

GS3: Environment and Ecology

Initiatives for conservation of environment

Why in the news?

The government has launched a unique program that enables individuals or organisations to accumulate Green Credits and trade them on a specialised exchange.

Green Credit Program

- Green Credit represents a form of incentive for activities that positively impact the environment.
- The Environment, Forest, and Climate Change Ministry is initiating a national-level Green Credit program, which utilises a competitive, market-based approach to incentivise environmental actions by various stakeholders.
- This program is a voluntary initiative as a follow-up to the 'LiFE' (Lifestyle for Environment)

campaign.

- An inter-ministerial Steering Committee backs the GCP for its governance.
- It designates The Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) as the GCP Administrator entrusted with program implementation, management, monitoring, and operations.



Program Scope:

The Green Credit program encompasses eight activities:

- Tree Plantation: Aimed at expanding the green cover across the nation.
- Water Management: Focused on promoting water conservation, harvesting, and efficient water use, including wastewater treatment and reuse.
- Sustainable Agriculture: Encouraging natural and regenerative agricultural practices, along with land restoration, to enhance productivity, soil health, and nutritional value of food produced.
- Waste Management: Promoting sustainable and improved waste management practices, encompassing collection, segregation, and environmentally sound disposal.
- Air Pollution Reduction: Encouraging measures to reduce air pollution and other pollution abatement activities.
- Mangrove Conservation and Restoration: Aimed at the mangrove ecosystems conservation and restoration.

Green Credit Procedure:

- Registration: Individuals or entities register their environmental activities on the program's website.
- Verification: A designated agency verifies registered activities, with self-verification for small projects.
- Calculation: Green Credit calculation factors in resource needs, scale, scope, size, and relevant parameters for environmental impact.
- Certification: The Administrator issues Green Credit certificates after a positive verification.

Objectives of the Program:

- The Green Credit program operates on a market-based mechanism designed to stimulate positive environmental actions.
- It generates tradable Green Credits, which can be exchanged on a domestic market platform.
- The program encourages industries, companies, and various entities to fulfil their existing

obligations under current laws.

- It also motivates these stakeholders to undertake voluntary environmental measures by generating or purchasing their Green Credits.

Distinction from Carbon Credits:

- The Green Credit program operates separately from the **Carbon Credit Trading Scheme, 2023, established under the Energy Conservation Act, 2001.**
- An environmental activity that generates Green Credits may also receive carbon credits under the Carbon Credit Trading Scheme. However, **Green Credits obtained for fulfilling legal obligations under current laws are not tradable.**

Sources:

Govt launches Green Credit to incentivise eco-friendly actions

Q1. With reference to the Green Credit Program, consider the following statements:

1. It is a type of loan provided to businesses and individuals to support investments in green technologies and renewable energy projects.
2. The Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change is launching a nationwide Green Credit initiative.
3. The Forest Survey of India has been designated as the GCP Administrator.

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Q2. Consider the following:

1. Tree plantation
2. Water management
3. Monoculture type of agriculture
4. Waste management
5. Renewable energy plants
6. Mangrove conservation and restoration.

How many of the activities mentioned above are not part of the Green Credit Program?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All Four

Answer: (b)

Q3. Explain the concept of the Green Credit Program and its significance in promoting environmentally friendly actions.

SPECIAL LEAVE PETITION

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Special Leave Petition". This topic has relevance in the Polity and Governance section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 2: Polity and Governance

Why in the news?

The Supreme Court has granted early listing for a special leave petition that challenges the Delhi High Court's dismissal of petitions filed by NewsClick founder Prabir Purkayastha and the human resources head, Amir Chakraborty. These petitions pertained to their arrest by the Delhi Police under the stringent Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA).

Background:

The Supreme Court of India highlighted an issue regarding Special Leave Petitions (SLPs) in criminal cases, which frequently lack vital information, including information about the accused, charges, and the trial's progress. Recognizing the deficiency of essential details in these appeals, the Supreme Court underscored the necessity for the establishment of new regulations aimed at ensuring that all requisite information is included in SLPs. This measure would help avoid unwarranted delays and enhance the efficiency of the legal process.

Special Leave Petition of the Supreme Court:

Granting Special Leave: According to Article 136 of the Indian Constitution, the Supreme Court holds the discretionary power to grant special leave to appeal from any judgment, decree, determination, sentence, or order issued by any court or tribunal within the territory of India. This discretionary authority allows the Supreme Court to decide whether to accept or reject a requested Special Leave in any given case.

Exclusion of Armed Forces Matters: Notably, this provision does not apply to judgments, determinations, sentences, or orders issued by any court or tribunal established under laws related to the Armed Forces.

Inter-State Water Dispute (ISWD) Tribunal: When discussing Special Leave Petitions (SLPs), it's essential to consider their relationship with judgments from Inter-State Water Dispute (ISWD) Tribunals. The Inter-State Water Disputes Act of 1956, along with Article 262(2) of the Constitution, explicitly excludes the Supreme Court from hearing or deciding appeals against the decisions of ISWD Tribunals.

However, Article 136's reference to "any court or tribunal in the territory of India" raises questions about its applicability to ISWD Tribunals. The Supreme Court has argued that remedies provided under Article 136, which includes Special Leave Petitions, are constitutional rights. Therefore, there are potential avenues for circumventing this exclusion, primarily through Articles 32, 131, and 136 of the Constitution.

Constitutional Remedies: Article 32 of the Constitution provides constitutional remedies through writs like Habeas Corpus, Mandamus, Prohibition, Certiorari, and Quo Warranto to safeguard fundamental rights.

Original Jurisdiction: Article 131 grants the Supreme Court original jurisdiction in matters involving disputes between the Center and the States or inter-State disputes, addressing such issues in a comprehensive manner.

Source:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/cji-agrees-to-look-into-newsclick-founders-plea-for-early-listing-of-his-petition-against-arrest-remand/article67425863.ece>

Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding Special Leave Petitions (SLPs) in India:

1. SLPs are primarily filed in the High Courts of India.
2. SLPs can only be filed by government authorities and public servants.
3. The Supreme Court of India has the discretionary power to decide whether to grant or deny permission for an SLP.

How many of the above statement/s is/are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

Q.2 Consider the following statements regarding Special Leave Petitions (SLPs) in India:

1. SLPs are filed directly in the Supreme Court of India.
2. SLPs can be filed only on constitutional matters and not on any other legal issues.
3. The grant of permission for an SLP is a matter of right for the petitioner.

How many of the above statement/s is/are correct?

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

ANSWER: B

Q.3 Examine the discretionary powers of the Supreme Court of India in deciding Special Leave Petitions (SLPs) and the impact of such discretion on the Indian legal system.

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR POPULATION SCIENCES (IIPS)

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS)". This topic has relevance in the "International Relations" section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

What is International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) ?

What is United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)?

For Mains:

GS2: International Relations

GS2: Social Issues

Why in the news?

The Indian government recently lifted the suspension of K.S. James, the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) director, and accepted his resignation.

International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS)

- The International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) has a rich history dating to its establishment in July 1956 in Mumbai.
- Initially known as the **Demographic Training and Research Centre (DTRC)**, it was founded through collaborative efforts between the **Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, the Government of India, and the United Nations**.
- Its primary mission is to serve as a **regional Institute for Training and Research in Population Studies for the ESCAP region**, which encompasses a significant part of the world's population.
- In 1985, the institute underwent a significant transformation and was re-designated as the International Institute for Population Sciences, reflecting its expanding role and commitment to academic activities.
- It was granted the status of a '**Deemed to be University**' on August 14, 1985, under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956, by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.
- The administrative control of the IIPS falls under the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**, signifying its importance in public health and family planning.

IIPS as ESCAP Regional Centre

- IIPS holds a unique and pioneering position among all the regional population centres. It was the first such centre established and has continued to be a vital resource for addressing population-related challenges.
- Furthermore, it serves a much larger population than other regional centres, contributing significantly to demographic research, education, and policymaking.

Reports by IIPS

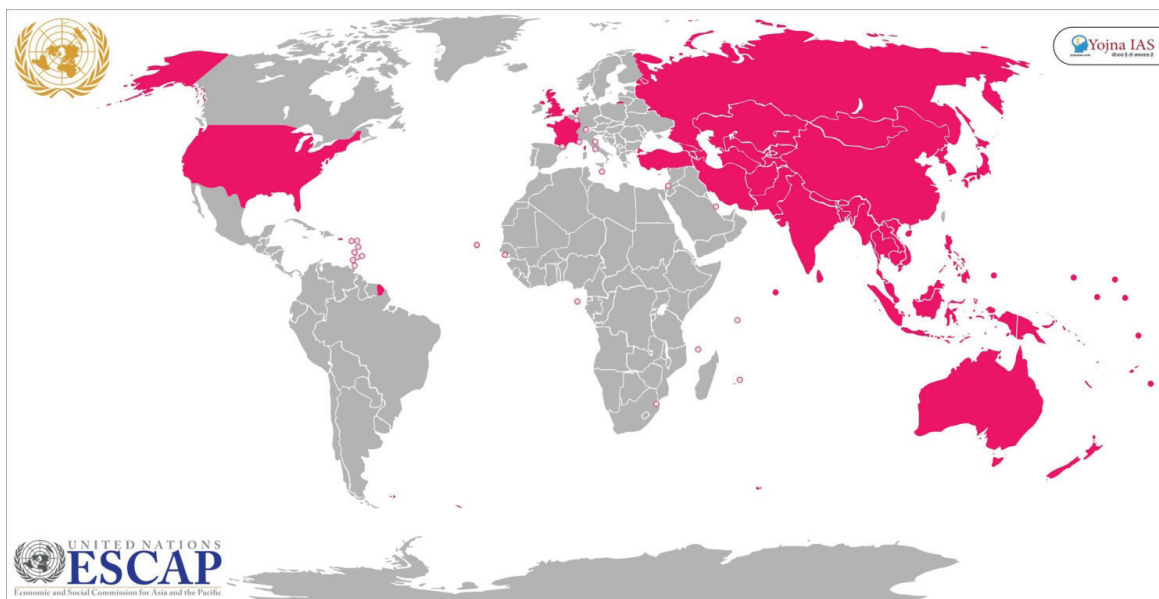
- Over the years, the institute has played a crucial role in conducting various national-level surveys, including the **National Family Health Survey (NFHS)**, **District Level Household Survey (DLHS)**, Assessment of National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), **YOUTH in India Project**, and many others.
- These surveys have been instrumental in gathering essential demographic and health data, enabling evidence-based decision-making and policy formulation in India.

About United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)

- The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), or ESCAP, is **one of the five regional commissions under the jurisdiction of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**.
- Established on 28 March 1947 as the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE), it was renamed to ESCAP on 1 August 1974.
- ESCAP is the largest regional intergovernmental platform with 53 Member States and 9 associate members, **covering a region with 4.1 billion people, or two-thirds of the world's population**.
- ESCAP's mission is to promote cooperation among countries in Asia and the Pacific for inclusive and sustainable development.
- It addresses various challenges through projects, technical assistance, and capacity building in areas like economic policy, trade, transport, social development, environment, technology,

disaster risk reduction, statistics, sub-regional development, and energy.

- Notably, **ESCAP's membership includes countries in Asia and the Pacific, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States.**



Sources:

Centre revokes IIPS Director's suspension two months after he resigned – The Hindu

Q1. Which of the following reports are published by/ in collaboration with the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS):

1. National Family Health Survey (NFHS)
2. District Level Household Survey (DLHS)
3. Periodic Labour Force Survey (PFLS)

Select the correct code from the options given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) All of the above

Answer: (a)

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP):

1. It is one of the regional bodies of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
2. ESCAP covers more than two-thirds of the global population.
3. It includes membership from countries such as France, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands.

How many of the abovementioned statements are correct ?

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

Answer: (b)

ANGEL TAX ON START-UPS

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Angel Tax on Start-ups". This topic has relevance in the Economy section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

*Updated Provisions for Angel Tax and Start-ups?
Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)?*

For Mains:

*GS 3: Economy
Provisions Related to Angel Tax Under Finance Act 2023?*

Why in the news?

In response to notices sent to start-ups, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has issued a directive instructing its officers not to conduct scrutiny of angel tax provisions for start-ups that have received recognition from the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).

Background

- Previously, angel tax only applied to investments made by "resident investors." The Finance Act of 2023 extended angel tax to non-resident investors, effective from April 1, 2023.
- In response to this change, the tax department issued a directive to its field officials. The directive instructed officials not to conduct verifications for recognized start-ups in cases related to Section 56(2)(viib) of the Income-tax Act.
- Section 56(2)(viib) of the Income-tax Act has been amended in the Finance Act of 2023 to include non-resident investors under the angel tax levy. This section is relevant to the taxation of unlisted companies, including start-ups, when they receive equity investments exceeding the face value.
- The primary goal of this amendment is to prevent the generation of undisclosed or unaccounted money.

Updated Provisions for Angel Tax and Start-ups:

- The directive from the CBDT states that start-up firms acknowledged by the DPIIT (Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade) will not be subject to scrutiny concerning the revised angel tax provisions.

DPIIT-Recognized Start-ups:

- DPIIT-Recognized Start-ups meet specific criteria set by the Department, including factors related to innovation, scalability, and employment generation.
- Recognition by DPIIT provides various benefits and exemptions, including relief from certain taxes and compliance requirements.

Procedure for Assessment of Start-ups Outlined:

- For start-up companies solely under scrutiny for section 56(2)(viib) of the Income-tax Act, Assessing Officers will not verify this issue during proceedings under section 143(2) or

147/143(2) of the Act.

- The contentions of recognized start-ups on this matter will be summarily accepted.

Exclusion of Section 56(2)(viib) During Multi-Issue Scrutiny:

- In cases where start-up companies are under scrutiny for multiple issues, including section 56(2)(viib), this specific section will not be pursued during the assessment proceedings for such start-up companies.

Provisions Related to Angel Tax Under Finance Act 2023:

- **Amendment of Section 56(2)(viib):** The Finance Act 2023 brought about an amendment to Section 56(2)(viib) to expand the scope of 'angel tax' provisions. This modification included foreign investors in the taxation of start-up funding.
- **Exemption for Recognized Start-ups:** Start-up companies recognized by DPIIT were granted an exemption from the angel tax. This exemption spared them from the tax liability associated with angel tax.
- **Final Valuation Rules for Investors:** The Finance Ministry introduced final valuation rules applicable to both resident and non-resident investors in unlisted companies. These rules involved valuation methods such as the Discounted Cash Flow (DCF) method.
- **Exemption for Investors from Certain Countries:** Angel tax exemptions were extended to investors from 21 countries. However, some countries like Singapore, Netherlands, and Mauritius were excluded from these exemptions.

Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT):

- CBDT operates as a statutory authority in accordance with the Central Board of Revenue Act, 1963.
- CBDT is a component of the Department of Revenue, situated within the Ministry of Finance.

Functions:

- **Formulation of Policies:** CBDT is responsible for the formulation of policies related to direct taxes.
- **Levy and Collection:** It deals with matters concerning the levy and collection of direct taxes.
- **Supervision:** CBDT supervises the overall functioning of the Income Tax Department.

Policy Proposals:

- CBDT has the authority to propose legislative changes in direct tax enactments.
- It also suggests modifications in tax rates and the structure of taxation, aligning them with the government's policies.

Structure:

- The CBDT is headed by a Chairman.
- **Members:** It comprises six members, all of whom serve as ex-officio Special Secretaries to the Government of India. These members include:
 - Member (Income Tax)
 - Member (Legislation and Computerization)
 - Member (Revenue)
 - Member (Personnel & Vigilance)
 - Member (Investigation)
 - Member (Audit & Judicial)

Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT):

1. CBDT operates as a statutory authority.
2. The Chairman of CBDT is also designated as the Special Secretary to the Government of India.

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: C

Q.2 Regarding the updated provisions for angel tax and start-ups, which of the following statements:

1. DPIIT-recognized start-ups are not subject to scrutiny related to the revised angel tax provisions.
2. DPIIT recognition primarily depends on a start-up's ability to generate high profits.

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: A

Q.3 Discuss the recent provisions introduced by the CBDT (Central Board of Direct Taxes) regarding angel tax and their impact on start-ups in India. How do these provisions aim to encourage innovation and ease the taxation burden on the start-up ecosystem?

GLOBAL MARITIME INDIA SUMMIT 2023

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Global Maritime India Summit 2023". This topic has relevance in the "Economy" section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

What is Global Maritime India Summit 2023 ?

What is Blue Economy?

For Mains:

GS3: Economy

Why in the news?

The Global Maritime India Summit 2023 was recently inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Global Maritime India Summit 2023

- During the event, he unveiled the '**Amrit Kaal Vision 2047**,' a blueprint for the **Indian maritime blue economy**.
- The Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone for projects worth over Rs 23,000 crores and dedicated several initiatives in the maritime sector.
- He emphasised India's growing role in the world economy and highlighted the importance of reliable global supply chains.
- He outlined the government's vision for ports and maritime infrastructure, bringing transformational changes, including improved logistics, increased employment opportunities, and sustainability.
- The Prime Minister emphasised India's commitment to "Make in India – Make for the world" and the importance of the Blue Economy for a greener planet.
- He also mentioned the growth of maritime tourism and India's aim to become a global cruise hub through state-of-the-art infrastructure.
- The summit is a prime opportunity to attract investments in India's maritime sector.
- In 2016, Mumbai hosted the inaugural Maritime India summit, followed by a virtual second summit in 2021.
- The 2023 summit is set to feature participation from Ministers representing various countries, spanning Europe, Africa, South America, and Asia (including Central Asia, the Middle East, and the BIMSTEC region).

Blue Economy

- The blue economy refers to **the sustainable use and management of ocean resources** for economic **growth**, improved **livelihoods**, and the preservation of the health of **marine ecosystems**.
- It encompasses various economic sectors and activities that utilise or contribute to the oceans, seas, and coasts.
- The concept of the blue economy recognises the importance of the oceans and their resources in supporting human well-being and economic development.
- It encompasses traditional sectors such as fisheries, aquaculture, and maritime transport, as well as emerging activities like coastal renewable energy, marine ecosystem services, seabed mining, and bioprospecting.



Significance of Blue Economy for India

- **Economic Opportunities:** India's blue economy contributes **4% to its GDP** and plays a pivotal role in transportation, providing vital economic prospects.
- **Employment Generation:** The blue economy offers jobs to millions, with **fisheries employing 16 million** and shipping witnessing a 35% increase in Indian seafarers.
- **Coastal States:** Coastal states like Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala heavily rely on the blue economy for livelihoods.
- **Marine Tourism:** Coastal tourism, especially in states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka, contributes significantly to local economies, with approximately **23% of total employment**.
- **Skill Development:** Evolving sectors like fisheries and shipping necessitate skill development, particularly in response to climate change and shifting environmental conditions.
- **Emerging Sectors:** New opportunities in offshore wind energy, marine biology, and biotechnology demand investments, technological support, and skill development for full realisation.
- **Sustainability:** Balancing economic growth and environmental conservation is paramount for the long-term success of India's blue economy.

Sources: Press Information Bureau (pib.gov.in)

Q1. With reference to the Global Maritime India Summit, consider the following statements:

1. The inaugural Global Maritime India Summit was held in October 2023 in Mumbai.
2. During the summit, the Indian government unveiled 'Amrit Kaal Vision 2047,' a blueprint for the Indian maritime blue economy.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Q2. Consider the following:

1. The blue economy is linked with the sustainable use and management of ocean resources for economic growth.
2. It also involves a focus on the livelihoods of the local community and the health of marine ecosystems.
3. Seabed mining, aquaculture and bioprospecting are some of the activities under blue economy.

How many of the abovementioned statements are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Q3. Discuss the concept of the blue economy and evaluate its significance for India in the context of becoming one of the top three economies in the world.

GAZA STRIP AND RAFAH BORDER

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Gaza Strip and Rafah Border”. This topic has relevance in the “Geography” section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

Where is Gaza Strip?

Where is Rafah Border?

For Mains:

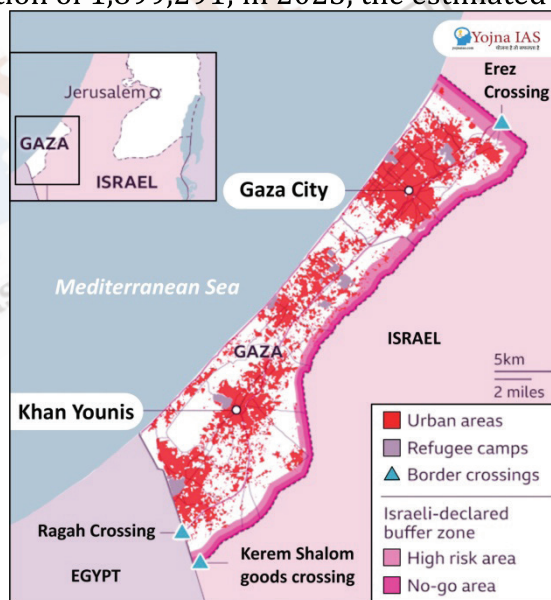
GS2: International Relations

Why in the news?

The Gaza Strip has witnessed intense airstrikes for over a week following Israel’s response to an unprecedented terror attack by the Palestinian militant group Hamas on October 7th.

Gaza Strip Overview

- The Gaza Strip is a 140-square-mile (363 square km) territory along the Mediterranean Sea, positioned northeast of the Sinai Peninsula.
- It’s densely populated but not officially recognised as part of any country.
- The region’s population growth is among the highest globally, with nearly half in refugee camps.
- In 2017, it had a population of 1,899,291; in 2023, the estimated population is 2,226,544.



Historical Context

- **1947 UN Partition Plan:** The Gaza Strip is one of two Palestinian territories, stemming from the UN’s 1947 “Partition Plan for Palestine.” It became a point of contention after Israel’s creation in 1948 and the Arab-Israeli war.
- **Israeli Occupation:** After the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel took control of Gaza and the West Bank. The United Nations classifies Israel as an occupying state in Palestinian territories.
- **Hamas Control:** In 2006, Hamas won elections in Gaza and has maintained political control.

Hamas, designated a terrorist organisation by the U.S., seeks an independent Islamic state but doesn't recognise Israel.

Blockade and Humanitarian Crisis

- **Longstanding Blockade:** Since 2007, Israel has maintained an air, land, and sea blockade on Gaza, often called the "world's largest open-air prison." Palestinian movement is heavily restricted.
- **Economic Hardship:** The Gaza Strip's economy has been severely impacted by restrictions on the movement of people, leading to an unemployment rate exceeding 40%. Over 60% of Gazans face food insecurity, and around 80% rely on international aid.
- **Worsening Conditions:** Following Hamas' terror attack on October 7, Israel imposed a total siege, further cutting off vital supplies such as food, water, and electricity, pushing Gaza to the brink. The UN warned of water shortages and a fragile healthcare system

Recent Developments

- **Escalating Conflict:** Ongoing conflict between Israel and Gaza, along with Israeli airstrikes, has killed thousands of Palestinians over the years, resulting in displacement and destruction.
- **Humanitarian Consequences:** Recent hostilities have caused mass evacuations, impacting the population's well-being. The UN described movement on this scale as impossible without severe humanitarian repercussions.
- **Criticism on Both Sides:** The UN has condemned both Hamas' terror attacks and Israel's attacks on Palestinian civilians, as well as the tightening of the blockade.

Rafah Border Crossing

- The Rafah Border Crossing is the only closing point between Egypt and the Gaza Strip.
- It gained significance due to Israel's complete blockade of Gaza.
- Egypt administers this crossing, providing a route that bypasses Israeli territory.
- This passage is vital for direct humanitarian aid access to Gaza from outside Israel.
- Recently, a deal between the US and Egypt was announced to reopen this border crossing, enabling aid to reach Palestine.

Sources:

Palestinians report heavy shelling in south Gaza towns where civilians are seeking refuge – The Hindu

Q1. With reference Gaza Strip, consider the following statements:

1. The Gaza Strip is a territory located south of the Sinai Peninsula along the Mediterranean Sea.
2. It is officially recognised as part of Israel but contested by the state of Palestine.
3. Hamas has political control over the Gaza.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Q2. Consider the following:

Border Crossings – Countries/ Regions

1. San Ysidro – US – Canada
2. Panmunjom – North Korea- South Korea
3. Rafah – Gaza- Israel
4. Allenby Bridge – West Bank – Jordan

How many of the abovementioned pairs are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All Four

Answer: (b)

DELHI-MEERUT REGIONAL RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM (RRTS)

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “ Delhi-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS)”. This topic has relevance in the Infrastructure section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Mains:

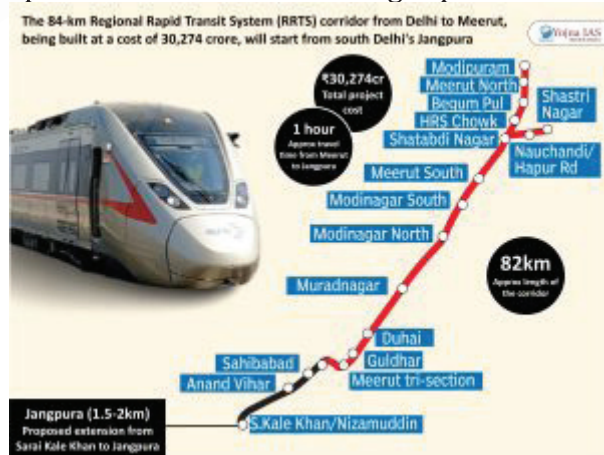
GS 2: Infrastructure

Why in the news?

In a recent development, the Prime Minister has officially launched the Delhi-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS), known as ‘RapidX,’ featuring contemporary conveniences and comprehensive infrastructure.

• Delhi-Meerut RRTS Stretch:

- The RapidX (Also Known as NaMo Bharat) Train is slated to operate on a 17-kilometer segment of the Delhi-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS).
- The overall length of the RRTS extends to 84 kilometers.
- The RapidX Train is anticipated to maintain an average speed of 100 kilometers per hour.



Stations and Route:

- The train will halt at five stations, each adorned with turquoise and beige colors: Sahibabad,

Ghaziabad, Guldhar, Duhai, and Duhai Depot.

- This stretch is part of the larger 82-kilometer Delhi-Meerut corridor.

Train Composition:

- The RapidX Train comprises five standard coaches, with one dedicated to women, along with a premium coach.
- Passengers can purchase QR code-based paper tickets using currency notes, bank cards, or the unified payments interface (UPI) at station ticket counters or ticket vending machines (TVMs).

Key Features of the RapidX Train

- **Platform Screen Doors (PSDs):** Each station is equipped with platform screen doors integrated with the train doors and signaling systems.
- **Safety Mechanism:** The train's departure from the station is contingent on ensuring that both the main doors and PSDs are securely closed.
- **Manual Door Locks:** Notably, all doors on the train incorporate unique manual locks that passengers can engage to open the doors at a station should they fail to open automatically.

Source:

PM flags off first train of Delhi-Meerut RRTS service – The Hindu

Q.1 Regarding the 'RapidX' train and the Delhi-Meerut RRTS, Consider the following statements:

1. The 'RapidX' train is expected to maintain an average speed of 200 kilometers per hour.
2. Passengers can purchase paper tickets using currency notes, bank cards, and UPI at station ticket counters, but QR codes are not yet accepted.

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: C

Q.2 Explain the pivotal role of modern rapid transit systems in promoting sustainable urban development, reducing congestion, and fostering economic growth in metropolitan regions.

SIR SAYYID AHMAD KHAN

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan". This topic has relevance in the "History and Culture" section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

About Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and his contributions

For Mains:

GS1: Modern History

Why in the news?

The enactment of the Women's Reservation Bill coincided with the 125th birth anniversary of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, renowned for his efforts in advocating social reforms within the Muslim community.

About Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (born October 17, 1817, — March 27, 1898) was a Muslim educator, jurist, and author, founder of the Anglo-Mohammedan Oriental College at Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, and the primary driving factor that sparked the resurgence of Indian Islam during the late 19th century.



His Political Contributions:

Vision for Progress:

- Sir Syed was known for his vision of advancing his community and modernising the nation.
- He was the first Indian Muslim to lay the intellectual and institutional groundwork for Muslim modernisation in South Asia.

Literary Endeavors:

- He commenced his literary journey at 23, authoring the notable work "Monuments of the Great" (Athar Assanadid) in 1847, which explored the antiquities of Delhi.
- Political Approach:
- Sir Syed, a prominent Muslim politician of his time, approached the Indian independence movement cautiously, urging Muslims to serve the British Raj faithfully.
- Simultaneously, he critiqued certain aspects of British policy and advocated for reforms.

Education for Muslims:

- Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was dedicated to improving the educational opportunities for his fellow Muslims.
- He recognised the need to dispel British rulers' misconceptions about Muslims.
- His essay "Essay on the Causes of the Indian Revolt" demonstrated that various factors, not solely Muslims, contributed to the 1857 rebellion.

His Educational Contribution

Educational Reformer:

- Syed Ahmad Khan fought against superstitions and ignorance in Indian Muslim society, recognising

their hindrance to progress.

- He advocated for modern scientific education.

Founding Modern Schools:

- In 1859, he established the Gulshan School, one of the first religious schools with scientific education.
- The Victoria School in Ghazipur followed in 1863, emphasising modern education.

Promoting Interfaith Relations:

- Syed Ahmad Khan worked on fostering strong interfaith relations between Islam and Christianity.

Translation Society and Scientific Society:

- His Translation Society (1862) translated scientific European works into Hindi and Urdu, evolving into the Scientific Society of Aligarh.
- It aimed to promote modern education and Western scientific knowledge among Indian Muslims.

Urdu Language Advocate:

- In the Hindi-Urdu language controversy in 1867, he championed Urdu as the lingua franca in the United Provinces, opposing Hindi as a second official language.
- He also promoted Urdu through his writings.

Educational Vision in England:

- Inspired by the Renaissance culture during his England trip 1869, he aspired to create a “Muslim Cambridge.”

Journal and University:

- In 1870, he launched “Tahzib-al-Akhlaq” (Social Reformer) to drive reforms and modern awareness.
- He founded the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College in 1875, later becoming the Aligarh Muslim University in 1920.

His views on Women Empowerment:

Initial Beliefs:

- Initially, he held conservative views, advocating for women’s education that focused on familial duties.
- He believed that educating women might hinder their primary purpose in life, which he saw as marriage.

Revised Perspective:

- However, after observing the freedom European women enjoyed, his perspective changed.
- He believed the rejection of women’s education within the Muslim community contributed to its decline.

Advocate for Women’s Education:

- Despite his initial conservatism, Sir Syed strongly supported women’s right to education.
- He took positions distinct from other Muslim scholars on divorce and women’s rights and vehemently opposed domestic violence against women.

Impact:

- His efforts significantly influenced India’s education system, emphasising democratising education and aligning it with European standards.

Sources:

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan’s 125th birth anniversary: His record on women’s rights

Q1. With reference to Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, consider the following statements:

1. He laid the intellectual groundwork for Muslim modernisation in South Asia.
2. He urged Muslims to serve the British Raj faithfully, avoiding the freedom movement.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Q2. Consider the following :

- 1. Tahzib-al-Akhlaq
- 2. Causes of the Indian Revolt
- 3. Athar Assanadid
- 4. Mirat-u- Akbar

How many of the abovementioned are literary works of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All Four

Answer: (c)

Q3. Analyse Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's contribution to the socio-religious reform movement in 19th-century India.

WHITE PHOSPHORUS

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "White phosphorus". This topic has relevance in the Science and technology section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

About White Phosphorus?

For Mains:

GS 3: Science and technology
Historical Use in Warfare?

Why in the news?

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, prominent global human rights organizations, have leveled allegations against the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) for the alleged utilization of white phosphorus munitions in the regions of Gaza and Lebanon.

About White Phosphorus

White phosphorus is an extremely reactive and waxy solid characterized by its translucent appearance and a distinctive, pungent odor reminiscent of garlic. It is an element denoted by the chemical symbol 'P' and holds the atomic number 15.

Chemical Properties:

- Allotropes: White phosphorus exists in different allotropes and is the most reactive and least stable among all the elemental forms of phosphorus.
- Solubility: It is insoluble in water but soluble in organic solvents.
- Pyrophoric Nature: White phosphorus readily catches fire when exposed to air.

Industrial Applications:

- White phosphorus is used in various industrial applications, such as in the manufacturing of phosphoric acid, phosphorus trichloride, and other organic phosphorus compounds.

Military Applications:

- In military contexts, white phosphorus has been used in various ways, including in incendiary weapons, smoke screens, and tracer ammunition, primarily due to its pyrophoric properties.

Risks and Hazards:

Exposure to white phosphorus can lead to severe health hazards, which can be summarized as follows:

- Skin Injuries: Contact with white phosphorus can result in burns, necrosis, and other serious skin injuries.
- Systemic Toxicity: Ingesting or inhaling white phosphorus can cause systemic toxicity.
- Respiratory Damage: The combustion of white phosphorus produces phosphorus pentoxide, which, when inhaled, can damage the respiratory system.

Regulations and Control:

- White phosphorus is subject to strict regulations due to its potential misuse as a weapon and associated health risks.
- International humanitarian law governs its use in warfare to prevent unnecessary harm to civilians and the environment.
- The United Nations in 1972 labeled incendiary weapons, including white phosphorus, as causing horrific and indiscriminate harm, leading to resolutions condemning their use.
- The 1980 international agreement established Protocol III, which restricts the use of incendiary weapons that cause excessive harm to civilians and their property.

Environmental Impact:

- The use of white phosphorus in warfare and industry can lead to environmental contamination and long-term ecological damage, impacting soil and water quality.
- Mitigation efforts focus on proper disposal, containment, and the development of alternative technologies to reduce its environmental impact.

Alternative Technologies and Substitutes:

- Ongoing research and development efforts are centered on finding safer and more environmentally friendly alternatives to white phosphorus in various applications.
- Exploration of alternative materials and technologies is underway to replace white phosphorus in military and industrial contexts, with a specific emphasis on enhancing safety and sustainability.

Historical Use in Warfare:

- White phosphorus has a historical usage in warfare, with instances dating back to the 1800s when it was utilized by Irish nationalists against British forces, referred to as "Fenian fire."

During both World Wars, the British army employed white phosphorus as a weapon.

- The United States used white phosphorus during the Iraq War, notably in the city of Fallujah.
- Allegations of the use of white phosphorus by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) in conflicts like the 2006 Lebanon War and the 2008-09 Gaza War have sparked international attention and condemnation.
- The Syrian government, led by Bashar Al-Assad, faced accusations of deploying white phosphorus during the Syrian crisis.
- More recently, the Russian Army was accused of using white phosphorus in the conflict with Ukraine.

Source:

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/defence-reports-of-concern-the-use-of-white-phosphorus-in-conflict-zones-3267531/>

Q.1 Consider the following statements about White Phosphorus:

1. White phosphorus is highly reactive and characterized by a pungent garlic-like odor.
2. White phosphorus is soluble in water but insoluble in organic solvents.

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: C

Q.2 Consider the following statements about White Phosphorus:

1. In military applications, white phosphorus is used primarily due to its non-pyrophoric properties.
2. Exposure to white phosphorus can lead to skin injuries but poses no risks of systemic toxicity or respiratory damage.

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 Explore the ethical and humanitarian concerns raised by the use of white phosphorus in modern conflicts, taking into consideration case studies from recent events.