

CURRENT AFFAIRS

National and International

The Complete Coverage of All
Important Events

SEP-OCT
2023



CLIMATE
AMBITION
SUMMIT
2023



**Prelims
&
Mains**

HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ NATARAJA
- ▶ CLIMATE ACTION SUMMIT
- ▶ CHAUSATH YOGINI TEMPLE
- ▶ WOMEN'S RESERVATION BILL
- ▶ GLOBAL TRENDS IN CHILD MONETARY POVERTY



Yojna IAS

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SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER
2023

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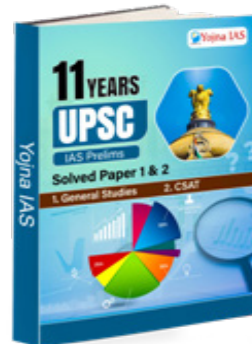
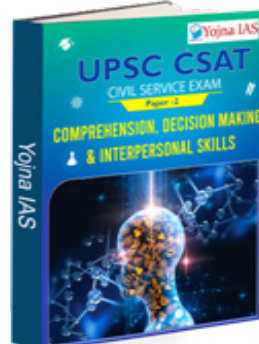
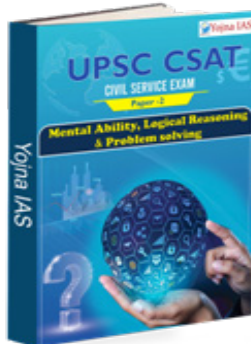
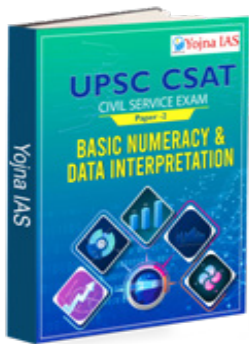
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Sources:

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

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

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FOREWORD

Dear Aspirants,

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

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

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

Yojna IAS- Our Dedicated and Committed team has prepared this informative Book just for your better understanding. We know that Conceptual Clarity is necessary to clear any Competitive Examination. With the help of this Book, you can remove your doubts quickly. This Book has some excellent Information.

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

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

**Team of
Yojna IAS**

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General Studies -1

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

SUPER BLUE MOON

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Super Blue Moon”. The topic “Super Blue Moon” has relevance in the “Geography” section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

What is the Super Blue Moon ?

What is apogee and perigee?

FOR MAINS:

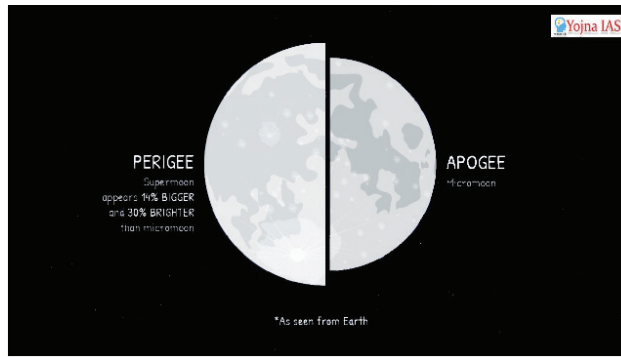
GS1: Geography

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The full moon during Raksha Bandhan on August 30-31 is attracting attention for its uniqueness as it will be both a “blue moon” and a “super moon.”

WHAT IS A SUPERMOON?

- The moon’s orbit around the Earth is not a perfect circle but an elongated or elliptical shape.
 - It takes the moon 27.3 days to complete one orbit around the Earth, but 29.5 days from one new moon to the next.
 - This slight difference arises because both the Earth and the moon are in motion around the sun.
 - Consequently, it takes extra time for the sun to illuminate the moon the same way it does at the start of every Earth orbit.
 - A full moon occurs when the moon is directly opposite the sun from Earth’s perspective, resulting in the entire illuminated side facing Earth.
- **A super moon happens when the moon is passing through or is close to its perigee, the point closest to Earth in its elliptical orbit, and it’s also a full moon.** While this also happens with new moons, they remain invisible.
- A full moon at perigee, or a super moon, appears approximately 14% larger and 30% brighter than a full moon at apogee, known as a “micro moon,” according to NASA.
- Additional Information:
- **Perigee** is used to describe the point in an object’s orbit around a celestial body, such as a planet or a moon, where it is closest to that body.
 - In simpler terms, it is the lowest point or the **closest distance** an object reaches in its orbit to the celestial body it is orbiting.
- **Apogee** is used to describe the point in an object’s orbit around a celestial body, such as a planet or a moon, where it is farthest from that body.
 - In simpler terms, it is the highest point or the **greatest distance** an object reaches in its orbit away from the celestial body it is circling.



WHAT IS A BLUE MOON?

- **A blue moon is a term used when two full moons occur in a single calendar month.**
 - Since the time between new moons is about 29.5 days, there are occasions when the first full moon of a month happens at the beginning, leaving days for another full cycle to be completed in the same month.
- Consequently, a month featuring a full moon on the 1st or 2nd day will also have a second full moon on the 30th or 31st. NASA notes that this phenomenon occurs every two or three years.
- Importantly, **the term “Blue Moon” has no relation to the moon’s actual colour**, as the moon can appear differently hued due to atmospheric conditions.

HOW RARE IS A BLUE SUPERMOON?

- According to NASA, blue supermoons are exceedingly rare events. They typically **occur only once every ten years** due to specific astronomical conditions.
- On occasion, the gap between blue supermoons can extend to as long as twenty years. The next pair of super blue moons is expected in 2037, appearing in January and March.

Sources:

In pictures | Rare blue supermoon dazzles stargazers around the globe – The Hindu

Q1. With reference to Supermoon, consider the following statements:

1. A super moon happens when the moon is passing through or is close to its apogee.
2. According to NASA, a full moon at perigee is known as a micro moon.
3. The term “Blue Moon” is related to the actual colour of the moon, as atmospheric conditions can cause the moon to exhibit a blue colour.

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: (d)

Q2. Consider the following:

1. Perigee is the point in an object's orbit where it is at its closest distance to the celestial body it is orbiting.
2. The apogee is the point where it reaches its greatest distance away from that celestial body.
3. A full moon at perigee appears approximately 14% larger and 30% brighter than a full moon at apogee.

How many of the abovementioned statements are correct ?

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

Answer: (c)

Q3. Discuss the scientific phenomena behind a Super Blue Moon and its occurrence. How does it differ from a regular full moon?

NATARAJA

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Nataraja". This topic has relevance in the Art and Culture section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

About the Nataraja statue at G20 Summit?

FOR MAINS:

GS 1: Art and Culture

About the Nataraja?

WHY IN THE NEWS:

The splendid Nataraja sculpture, displayed at Bharat Mandapam for the G20 Leaders' Summit, depicts Lord Shiva in a form that initially emerged in the 5th century AD but gained iconic status during the reign of the Great Cholas.

Craftsmanship and Materials: The Nataraja statue, towering at 27 feet in height, is meticulously fashioned from 'Ashtadhatu,' an eight-metal alloy, rendering it one of the world's tallest representations of Lord Shiva in his dancing form. The statue possesses an approximate weight of 18 tonnes.

Master Sculptor: Renowned sculptor Radhakrishnan Sthapaty, originating from Swami Malai in Tamil Nadu, is the creative genius behind this magnificent masterpiece.

INSPIRATION FROM SACRED TEMPLES

Thillai Nataraja Temple, Chidambaram The design of the Nataraja statue draws profound inspiration from three esteemed Nataraja idols housed in prominent South Indian temples. These temples include:

- Thillai Nataraja Temple in Chidambaram
- Uma Maheswarar Temple in Konerirajapuram
- Brihadeeswara (Big) Temple in Thanjavur, a UNESCO World Heritage Site

The Cholas and Nataraja: The Nataraja depiction of Lord Shiva carries rich historical associations with the Chola dynasty, which flourished during the 9th to the 11th centuries AD. The Cholas, renowned for their generous patronage of art and culture, left a lasting legacy through the construction of elaborate Shiva temples, with the iconic Brihadeeswara Temple being a notable example.

CHOLA ART AND CULTURE

- Prosperous Civilization: During the height of its power, the Chola empire thrived as a prosperous and culturally affluent civilization in Southern India.
- Flourishing Art and Architecture: The Cholas made significant contributions to the realm of art and architecture, marked by the creation of intricate sculptures and other artistic endeavors that experienced a flourishing period during this era.

EVOLUTION OF THE NATARAJA FORM

- Origins of the Nataraja Depiction: The portrayal of Lord Shiva as Nataraja, or the 'Lord of Dance,' began to emerge in sculptural art around the 5th century AD.
- Chola Era Iconography: It was during the Chola dynasty's rule that the Nataraja form of Shiva achieved iconic status, particularly through the creation of bronze sculptures.

SHIVA'S MULTIFACETED IDENTITY

- Diverse Attributes: Shiva, a central deity in Hinduism, embodies a multifaceted identity encompassing various attributes and roles.
- Destroyer and Ascetic: He is revered both as a destroyer, known as Mahakala, and as a great ascetic. Additionally, he serves as the patron of ascetics.
- Nataraja – The 'Lord of Dance': In the form of Nataraja, Shiva is celebrated as the 'Lord of Dance.' He is attributed with the creation of 108 distinct dances, each symbolizing various facets of existence.

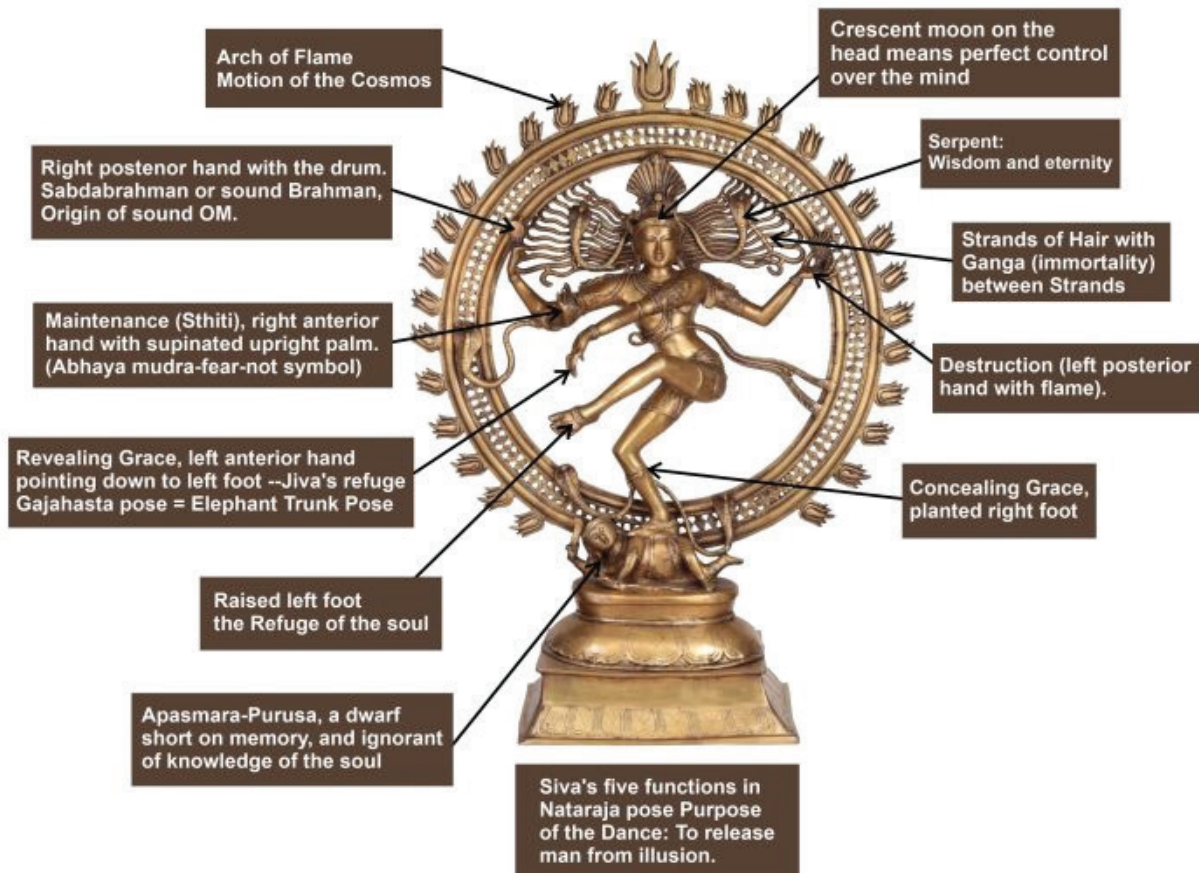
OVERVIEW OF SHIVA'S NATARAJA FORM

- Iconography: Nataraja is commonly represented as a four-armed deity, poised in a dance posture upon a circular platform symbolizing the universe.
 - His upper right hand holds the damaru (a small drum), signifying the rhythm of creation.
 - The upper left hand bears fire or a flame, symbolizing destruction and transformation.
 - The lower right hand is positioned in the abhaya mudra, symbolizing fearlessness.
 - The lower left hand points toward the raised left foot, symbolizing liberation.
- Cosmic Dance: Shiva's dance embodies the cosmic cycle of creation, preservation, and destruction

(Srishti, Sthiti, and Samhara). It also signifies the passage of time, from creation to dissolution, with the rhythm of the dance representing the heartbeat of the universe.

- **Apasmara:** Beneath Shiva's right foot, a demon-like figure called Apasmara Purusha or Muyalaka represents ignorance and illusion. Shiva's act of crushing this demon signifies the triumph of knowledge and wisdom over ignorance.
- **Tandava and Lasya:** Nataraja's dance can be categorized into two forms: Tandava, representing destruction and power, and Lasya, symbolizing creation and grace.
- **Cultural Significance:** The Nataraja form holds not only religious significance but also serves as a prominent motif in Indian art and culture. It has inspired numerous sculptures, paintings, and dance forms like Bharatanatyam. The Chidambaram Nataraja Temple in Tamil Nadu, India, is a renowned shrine dedicated to Lord Nataraja.
- **Philosophical Interpretation:** Nataraja's dance is often interpreted as a representation of the concept of Advaita (nondualism), where the apparent duality of the universe is considered an illusion, and everything is seen as a manifestation of the same divine essence.
- **Spiritual Significance:** Devotees of Shiva regard the Nataraja form as a source of inspiration for their spiritual journey, reminding them of the transient nature of the material world and the necessity to seek inner transformation and realization.
- **Symbolism of Nataraja:** Nataraja's dance symbolizes the equilibrium between opposing forces such as creation and destruction, chaos and order, birth and death. It represents the eternal cycle of life, death, and rebirth and signifies the ultimate goal of life – liberation (moksha) from the cycle of birth and death.
- **The Lost Wax Method:** The creation of the Nataraja statue adhered to the traditional 'lost-wax' casting method, an ancient technique that dates back over 6,000 years. This method involves creating a wax model, covering it with a special soil paste, drying it, heating it to melt away the wax, and then pouring molten metal into the mold to craft the sculpture.
- **Artistic Heritage:** The sculptors responsible for crafting the Nataraja statue can trace their lineage back 34 generations to the Chola period, preserving ancient artistic techniques. The project, entailing the creation of such a monumental statue, spanned seven months and incurred a cost of approximately Rs 10 crore.

NATARAJA



SOURCE: The Lord of Dance: History and symbolism of Shiva's Nataraja form | Explained News – The Indian Express

Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding Nataraja:

1. The Nataraja sculpture is predominantly associated with the Chola dynasty.
2. The Nataraja dance represents the eternal cycle of life, death, and rebirth.

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 Nataraja statue featured at the G20 venue, consider the following statements:

1. The Nataraja statue is made from Bronze.

2. Radhakrishnan Sthapaty is behind this remarkable creation.

Which of the statements 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 historical importance and religious symbolism embedded in Lord Shiva's Nataraja form. Analyze the pivotal role played by the Chola dynasty in advancing the evolution of the Nataraja sculpture

VINOBA BHAVE

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Vinoba Bhave". This topic has relevance in the History section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

About Vinoba Bhave?

FOR MAINS:

GS 1: History

Contributions of Vinoba Bhave?

WHY IN THE NEWS:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday paid tributes to Acharya Vinoba Bhave on his birth anniversary

ABOUT VINOBA BHAVE:

- Vinoba Bhave, originally named Vinayak Narahari Bhave, was born on September 11, 1895, in Gagoji (now known as Gagode Budruk), Maharashtra, India.
- His father, Narahari Shambhu Rao, was a skilled weaver employed in Baroda, while his mother, Rukmani Devi, was a deeply religious woman.
- Bhave's upbringing was characterised by a family that embraced modern rationalism, fostering a mindset of critical thinking and pragmatism.



SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

- At a young age, Vinoba Bhave was exposed to spiritual concepts and discussions, primarily influenced by his mother's religious beliefs.
- His profound spiritual awakening occurred when he read the Bhagavad Gita, a sacred Hindu scripture, which had a lasting and transformative effect on his life.

ASSOCIATION WITH MAHATMA GANDHI

- In 1916, Vinoba Bhave's life took a momentous turn when he came across Mahatma Gandhi's speech at Banaras Hindu University. Deeply moved, he decided to discontinue his studies and reached out to Gandhi through a letter, leading to their eventual meeting at the Kochrab Ashram in Ahmedabad.

ROLE IN INDIA'S FREEDOM STRUGGLE

- Vinoba Bhave actively participated in civil disobedience movements and endured imprisonment. During the 1940s, he was incarcerated for five years due to his nonviolent resistance against British colonial rule.
- In 1940, Mahatma Gandhi selected him as the first individual Satyagrahi, emphasising his growing national stature.

RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL WORK

- **Sarvodaya Movement:** He championed the Sarvodaya movement, aiming to uplift the lives of ordinary Indians in villages by integrating strong spiritual foundations.
- **Bhoodan Movement:** Initiated in 1951, the Bhoodan Movement focused on soliciting land donations from landowners to distribute to landless individuals, addressing land reform issues and rural poverty.
- **Advocate for Nonviolence and Compassion:** Vinoba Bhave actively campaigned against cow slaughter, promoting nonviolence and compassion as central societal principles.

LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS

- Vinoba Bhave was a prolific writer and translator known for his efforts to make Sanskrit texts accessible to the ordinary person.

- He translated the Bhagavad Gita into Marathi, making the revered scripture more understandable for a wider audience.
- His work “**Talks on the Gita**” has been translated into multiple languages and continues to serve as a source of inspiration for readers worldwide.

LATER LIFE

- In his later years, Vinoba Bhave resided at his **Brahma Vidya Mandir ashram in Paunar, Wardha district, Maharashtra**, where he continued his spiritual and social work.
- Vinoba Bhave passed away on November 15, 1982. His death came after he embraced “**Samadhi Maran**” or “**Santhara**,” a practice in Jainism where an individual voluntarily refrains from consuming food and medicine.

CRITICISM

- Vinoba Bhave faced criticism from certain quarters, including acclaimed author V.S. Naipaul, who questioned his rationality and noted what he considered an excessive imitation of Mahatma Gandhi’s ideals.
- Bhave’s support for Indira Gandhi’s government during the Indian Emergency (1975-1977) drew controversy. It earned him the nickname “**Sarkari Sant**” (Government Saint), as some saw his stance aligning with the government’s actions during that period.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- First Recipient of Ramon Magsaysay Award: In 1958, Vinoba Bhave became the inaugural recipient of the international Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership, recognizing his outstanding contributions to society.
- Posthumous Bharat Ratna: He was posthumously awarded the Bharat Ratna, India’s highest civilian honor, in 1983, acknowledging his significant and enduring impact on the nation’s social and spiritual landscape.

Source:<https://theprint.in/india/pm-modi-pays-tributes-to-vinoba-bhave/1756912/>

Q.1 Vinoba Bhave is related to which of the following:

1. Sarvodaya Movement
2. Bhoodan Movement
3. Tibhagha Movement

Choose the correct answer:

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

(c) 1, 2 and 3

(d) 1 and 3 only

ANSWER: B

Q.2 With reference to Vinoba Bhave, consider the following statements:

1. One of his famous literary work is “Talks on the Gita”.
2. He performed Santhara.

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.3 Discuss the life, contributions, and legacy of Vinoba Bhave in the context of India’s struggle for independence and social reform.

EARTHQUAKES

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

FOR PRELIMS:

What is Earthquake?

What are its causes?

FOR MAINS:

GS1: Geography

WHY IN THE NEWS?

On September 8th, Morocco was struck by the most devastating earthquake ever recorded, claiming the lives of over 2,400 individuals and reducing numerous residences and structures to debris.

UNDERSTANDING EARTHQUAKES:

- **Definition:** An earthquake is a powerful shaking of the Earth's surface triggered by movements beneath its crust.
- **Hypocentre:** The point beneath the Earth's surface where the earthquake originates is the hypocentre.
- **Epicentre:** The epicentre is the location directly above the hypocentre on the Earth's surface.
- **Cause:** Earthquakes occur when two tectonic plates abruptly slide past each other, releasing accumulated elastic strain energy. This energy transforms into seismic waves, resulting in ground shaking.
- **Measurement:** Earthquakes are assessed using various scales:
 - **Moment Magnitude Scale (M_w):** Measures the total moment release based on fault movement distance and force.
 - **Richter Scale (Magnitude Scale):** Gauges energy released, ranging from 0 to 10.
 - **Intensity Scale/Mercalli Scale:** Evaluates visible damage on a scale from 1 to 12.
- Earthquakes pose a significant challenge as they cannot be predicted accurately, and no early warning systems currently exist.

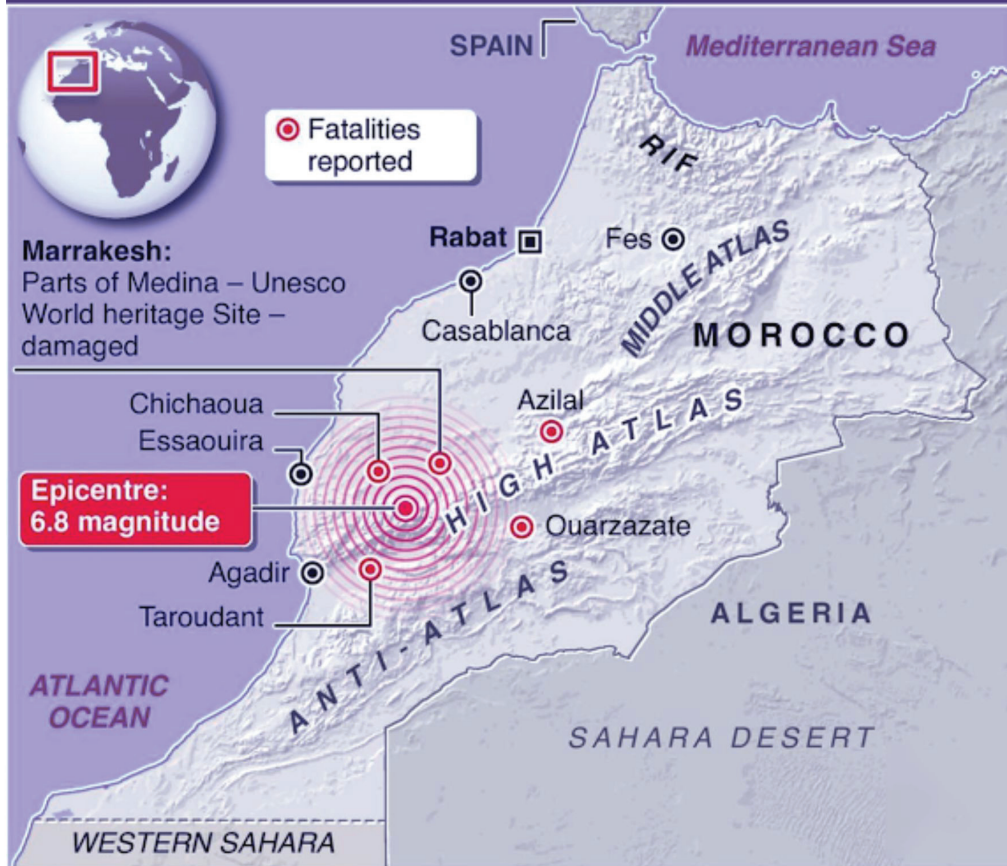
MORE ABOUT MOROCCO EARTHQUAKE:

- **Epicentre and Magnitude:** The earthquake's epicentre was situated in the High Atlas Mountain range, approximately 72 kilometres from Marrakech. It registered a magnitude of 6.8, categorising it as a "strong" earthquake.
- **Shallow Depth:** Notably, the quake occurred at a relatively shallow depth beneath the Earth's surface. According to the US Geological Survey (USGS), the focus was recorded at 18.5 km, while Morocco's seismic agency estimated it at 11 km. Shallow earthquakes are more destructive as they transfer greater energy to the surface than deeper quakes.
- While earthquakes of this size are infrequent in the region, they are not unprecedented. The US Geological Survey notes Morocco has experienced immense, damaging earthquakes in the western Mediterranean.

UNDERSTANDING THE MOROCCO EARTHQUAKE CAUSE:

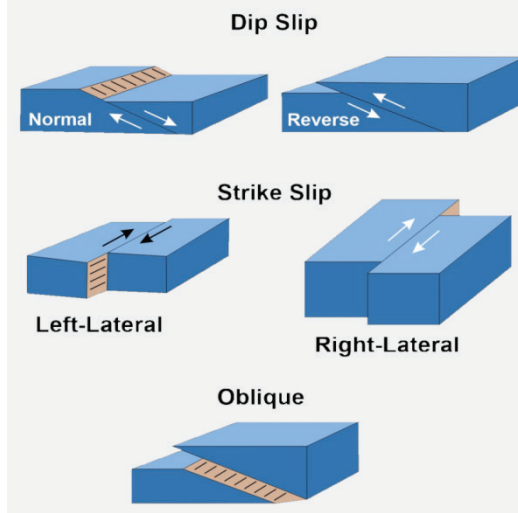
- **Tectonic Plate Convergence:** The seismic activity in Morocco can be attributed to the northward convergence of the African plate with respect to the Eurasian plate along a complex plate boundary.
- **Faulting Explanation:** The earthquake resulted from oblique-reverse faulting occurring at a shallow depth within the Moroccan High Atlas Mountain range.

Morocco earthquake



WHAT IS FAULTING?

Types of Slips



- **Fault Definition:** A fault represents a fracture or zone of fractures between rock blocks, enabling

their relative movement, and potentially causing earthquakes during rapid shifts.

- **Fault Types:** Faults are classified based on their dip (angle with respect to the surface) and slip direction:
 - **Dip-Slip Faults:** These move along the dip plane direction.
 - **Strike-Slip Faults:** They exhibit horizontal movement.
 - **Oblique-Slip Faults:** Combining characteristics of dip-slip and strike-slip faults.
 - **Reverse Faulting:** This term denotes a situation where the upper block, positioned above the fault plane, moves upward and over the lower block.
 - **Oblique-Reverse Faulting:** Also known as oblique-thrust faulting, this geological faulting type involves vertical and horizontal movement of rocks on one side of the fault plane due to compressional forces. It is frequently observed in areas where tectonic plates converge.

EARTHQUAKE VULNERABILITY IN INDIA:

- **Geographical Location:** India's landmass is penetrating into the Eurasian plate, making the country prone to earthquakes of moderate to very high intensity.
- **Seismic Zoning:** According to the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), more than 58.6 per cent of India's landmass is prone to earthquakes of moderate to very high intensity. The seismic zoning in India was revised after the Killari earthquake in 1993, with the low hazard zone or Seismic Zone I being merged with Seismic Zone II.
- **Population Density and Urbanization:** Densely populated areas, extensive unscientific constructions, and unplanned urbanisation have increased risks associated with earthquake hazards.
- **Specific Regions:** The Andaman & Nicobar Islands frequently experience damaging earthquakes due to being situated on an inter-plate boundary. Regions in the Himalayan foothills are vulnerable to liquefaction and landslides due to earthquakes.

CHALLENGES IN EARTHQUAKE PREDICTION:

- **Predictive Complexity:** Accurately forecasting earthquakes necessitates the detection of preliminary signals originating from within the Earth, signifying an impending significant seismic event. Additionally, these signals must exclusively manifest before major earthquakes, avoiding false alarms for minor surface movements.
- **Equipment Limitations:** Currently, the absence of appropriate equipment capable of identifying such precursory signals poses a significant hurdle in earthquake prediction, even if these signals indeed exist.

Sources:

Morocco earthquake kills more than 2,000 people, survivors sleep rough as homes destroyed | World News – The Indian Express

Q1. What geological faulting type involves vertical and horizontal movement of rocks on one side of the fault plane due to compressional forces and is frequently observed in areas where tectonic plates converge?

- (a) Dip-slip faulting
- (b) Strike-slip Faulting
- (c) Oblique- reverse Faulting
- (d) Normal Faulting

ANSWER: (c)

Q2. Consider the following statements about earthquakes:

1. The hypocentre is the point on the Earth's surface directly above the earthquake's origin.
2. The Richter Scale measures visible damage caused by an earthquake.
3. The Moment Magnitude Scale (Mw) measures the total moment release based on fault movement distance and force.

How many of the statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: (a)

Q3. In light of recent earthquakes in Morrocco, discuss the Geological and Geographical Factors Influencing Earthquake Vulnerability in India.

CHAUSATH YOGINI TEMPLE

This article covers “daily current affairs” and the topic details “chausath yogini temple”. This topic has relevance in the “art and culture” section of the upsc cse exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

About chausath yogini temple?

FOR MAINS:

Gs1: art and culture

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Starting september 19, the current special house session will move to the new parliament building. The old parliament building, which will be converted into a museum, is thought to be inspired by the chausath yogini temple.

CHAUSATH YOGINI TEMPLES

- The chausath yogini temple, also known as ekattarso mahadeva temple, is located in mitaoli village near padaoli in morena district, approximately 40 kilometres from gwalior in madhya pradesh.
- This temple was built by the kachchhapaghata king devapala during his reign around 1055-1075 ce, according to an inscription dated 1323 ce.
- The chausath yogini temples of india are ancient, roofless shrines built from the 9th to the 12th century as embodiments of yoginis, female masters of yoga in hindu tantra.
- These sacred spaces are deeply rooted in worshipping the divine feminine force, mainly embodied by goddesses like parvati.

TEMPLE STRUCTURE AND SIGNIFICANCE:

- The chausath yogini temple at mitaoli (m.p) is a characteristic example. Set atop a rocky hill, this open-air temple is circular in shape and houses niches for 64 yoginis, hence earning the name 'chausath', which means 64 in hindi.
- However, not all temples follow this number; some house 42 or 81 niches, suggesting different sets of goddesses.
- The temple's extant structures are scattered across central and northern indian states like uttar pradesh, madhya pradesh, and odisha.
- Lost temples have also been identified across the subcontinent, from north to south and east to west.

YOGINIS:

- Yoginis are goddesses or adept individuals in tantra. They come from different groups and are often shown as female figures with animal heads.
- Each yogini has unique abilities, like changing into female animals, changing others, and flying.
- They use symbolic objects like skulls and work in unique places, showing their intense and risky nature. They share secret tantric knowledge and have extraordinary powers known as 'siddhis'.

REDISCOVERY:

- Although the significant existing shrines of the 64 yoginis in odisha and madhya pradesh were described by alexander cunningham in the 19th century, they were primarily forgotten afterwards.
- In the late 20th century, these temples' cultural and spiritual significance was revived and gradually recognised by scholars and devotees.
- While there is no concrete evidence that the architects of the indian parliament visited the temple,

it is speculated that they may have drawn inspiration from its unusual shape.

- Historians suggest that lutyens and baker, the architects of the indian parliament, were sent on a tour to study indian architecture and may have seen photographs of ancient monuments collected by the archaeological survey of india.



OLD PARLIAMENT



CHAUSATH YOGINI TEMPLE, MP

Sources:

curtains for old parliament building: the madhya pradesh temple believed to have inspired it | explained news – the indian express

Q1. With reference to chausath yogini temples, consider the following statements:

1. The chausath yogini temple is in mitaoli village in uttar pradesh.
2. The temple was built by the kachchhapaghata king devapala during his reign around 1055-1075 ce.
3. The chausath yogini temples were designed as open-air circular structures to worship only parvati.

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 only

(c) 3 only

(d) none

Answer: (b)

Q2. Consider the following:

1. The architects of the Indian Parliament, Lutyens and Baker, visited the Chausath Yogini Temple and drew inspiration from its unique shape.
2. The Chausath Yogini Temples in India are age-old, Latina-style roofed temples constructed between the 9th and 12th centuries.
3. The temple's extant structures are scattered across central and northern Indian states like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha.

How many of the abovementioned statements are correct?

(a) only one

(b) only two

(c) all three

(d) none

Answer: (a)

Q3. There is speculation that the old Parliament building in India may have drawn inspiration from the Chausath Yogini Temple. Discuss the architecture and significance of the Chausath Yogini Temples in India.

SANTINIKETAN

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the Topic details "Santiniketan". This Topic has relevance in the Art and Culture section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 1: Art and Culture

WHY IN THE NEWS:

During the 45th Session of the World Heritage Committee in Saudi Arabia on a Sunday, Santiniketan, a town in West Bengal, was granted a place on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

OVERVIEW

- Santiniketan, situated in West Bengal's Birbhum district, is a renowned center of culture and

education, celebrated for its association with Rabindranath Tagore, a Nobel laureate poet, philosopher, and polymath.

- Its name, “Santiniketan,” translates to “Abode of Peace,” and it was founded by Tagore as an experimental hub for education and art, leaving an enduring impact on generations of artists, scholars, and thinkers.

HISTORICAL ROOTS

- Santiniketan’s origins date back to 1901 when Rabindranath Tagore relocated to this serene environment, disenchanted with the conventional educational system.
- His vision was to create an institution that offered holistic education, blending arts, culture, and nature. Under his guidance, Santiniketan evolved into a distinctive educational and cultural center.

VISVA-BHARATI UNIVERSITY

- In 1921, Rabindranath Tagore established Visva-Bharati University within Santiniketan, with the aim of promoting universal, non-sectarian, and holistic education.
- Today, Visva-Bharati is a prestigious institution renowned for its focus on arts, literature, and social sciences, comprising various schools and centers dedicated to diverse disciplines.

CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- Santiniketan has played a pivotal role in nurturing Indian art and culture. It was instrumental in the development of the Bengal School of Art, a significant movement that emphasized traditional Indian art forms, nature, and the essence of the land.
- The annual Poush Mela and Basanta Utsav (Holi festival) celebrations attract visitors from across India, showcasing the nation’s rich cultural heritage through music, dance, theater, and more.

LANDMARKS AND ATTRACTIONS

- **Upasana Griha (Prayer Hall):** Designed by Tagore, this red-brick structure serves as a space for meditation and prayer.
- **Kala Bhavana:** Visva-Bharati’s art college, carrying forward the legacy of the Bengal School of Art.
- **Patha Bhavana:** The institution where Rabindranath Tagore’s educational principles are actively implemented.
- **Sangeet Bhavana:** The music school, dedicated to the study and practice of Indian classical music.
- **Rabindra Bhavan:** A museum and archive housing Rabindranath Tagore’s personal belongings, manuscripts, and artistic works, offering insights into his life and creative process.
- **Khoai:** A nearby natural red soil ravine that provides picturesque beauty to the region.

Santiniketan is a testament to Tagore's vision of an integrated and harmonious approach to education and culture, continuing to inspire and enchant visitors worldwide.

SOURCE:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/tagores-abode-santiniketan-now-a-unesco-world-heritage-site/articleshow/103739674.cms?from=mdr>

Q.1 Visva-Bharati University is related to:

- (a) Rabindranath Tagore
- (b) Subhash Bose
- (c) Aurobindo Ghosh
- (d) Anand Mohan Bose

ANSWER: A

Q.2 Consider the following statements regarding Santiniketan:

1. It was instrumental in the development of the Bengal School of Art.
2. It was established to promote scientific and engineering education.

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 Shantiniketan was a centre of excellence in unconventional learning. Discuss the relevance of unconventional education systems in the present times

STATUE OF ONENESS

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

FOR PRELIMS:

What is Statue of Oneness?

Adi Guru Shankaracharya and his works?

Advaita Vedanta Philosophy

FOR MAINS:

GS1: Art and Culture

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Recently, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan revealed a monumental statue of Adi Guru Shankaracharya on the Mandhata Island in the Khandwa district.

ABOUT THE STATUE OF ONENESS

- This colossal statue, named the “Ekatmata ki Murti” (Statue of Oneness), stands at 108 feet.
- It magnificently depicts the 8th-century Indian philosopher and theologian who played a pivotal role in consolidating the doctrine of Advaita Vedanta.
- This unveiling ceremony marks a significant milestone within the ambitious “Ekatma Dham” project, spearheaded by the State government.
- This ceremony represents the commencement of its inaugural phase. The government envisions the development of this site along the lines of the renowned Mahakal Trek corridor, aiming to establish it as a prominent and revered destination.



ADI SHANKARACHARYA: THE ADVAITA VEDANTA PHILOSOPHER

- Adi Shankaracharya was an Indian philosopher and theologian who expounded the doctrine of Advaita Vedanta.
- He renounced worldly pleasures at a young age and advocated the unification of the soul with the Supreme Soul.
- Shankaracharya's important work was the **synthesis of the six sub-sects, known as 'Shanmata'**, which worships six supreme deities. He explained the existence of one Supreme Being (Brahman) and founded '**Dashanami Sampradaya**', emphasizing a monastic life.
- Shankaracharya traveled and debated with philosophers, fine-tuning his teachings of 'Advaita Vedanta' and 'Dashanami Sampradaya'.

THE FOUR DISCIPLES

- Shankaracharya's four main disciples were Padmapada, Totakacharya, Hasta Malaka, and Sureshvara.
- They founded monasteries (mathas) and carried forward his teachings in Thrissur, Kerala.

ADVAITA VEDANTA

- Advaita Vedanta is a school of Hindu philosophy known for its **radical nondualism**. This means that Advaitins believe **there is only one ultimate reality, Brahman, and everything else is an illusion**.
- The Upanishads are ancient Hindu scriptures considered the foundation of Advaita Vedanta. The Upanishads teach that Brahman is the ultimate reality and that the **atman (individual self) is identical to Brahman**.
- Advaitins believe that the **atman is pure non-intentional consciousness**. Any thoughts, emotions, or physical sensations do not limit it. It is simply awareness.
- The fundamental thrust of Advaita Vedanta is to help people realise their true identity as Brahman. This is done through various practices, such as meditation and inquiry.

WORKS

Brahmasutrabhasya	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Renowned commentary on the 'Brahma Sutra'.• The oldest surviving commentary on the 'Brahma Sutra'
Commentaries on Bhagavad Gita	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita, an essential Hindu scripture.
Commentaries on Ten Principal Upanishads	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commentaries on the ten principal Upanishads, pivotal texts in Vedanta philosophy
Upadesasahasri	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Philosophical work known as 'a thousand teachings'.• Holds great importance in his body of work.

LEGACY

- Adi Shankaracharya established four mathas at the four cardinal points in India.

Monastery (Matha)	Location	Basis of Formation
Sringeri Sharada Peetham	Sringeri, Karnataka	Yajur Veda
Dvaraka Pitha	Dwarka, Gujarat	Sama Veda
Jyotirmatha Peetham	Garhwal, Uttarakhand	Atharva Veda
Govardhana Matha	Puri, Odisha	Rig Veda

Sources:

CM Chouhan unveils 108-ft tall Adi Shankaracharya statue in MP's Omkareshwar

Q1. With reference to Statue of Oneness, consider the following statements:

1. It is a monumental statue of Adi Guru Shankaracharya in recently unveiled in Uttarakhand.
2. Advaita Vedanta is a school of Hindu philosophy known for its radical dualism.
3. Shankaracharya's significant contribution involved synthesizing the six sub-sects into what is known as 'Shanmata.'

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: (c)

Q2. Consider the following:

Monastery (Matha)	Location
1. Sringeri Sharada Peetham	Karnataka
2. Dvaraka Pitha	Gujarat
3. Jyotirmatha Peetham	Odisha

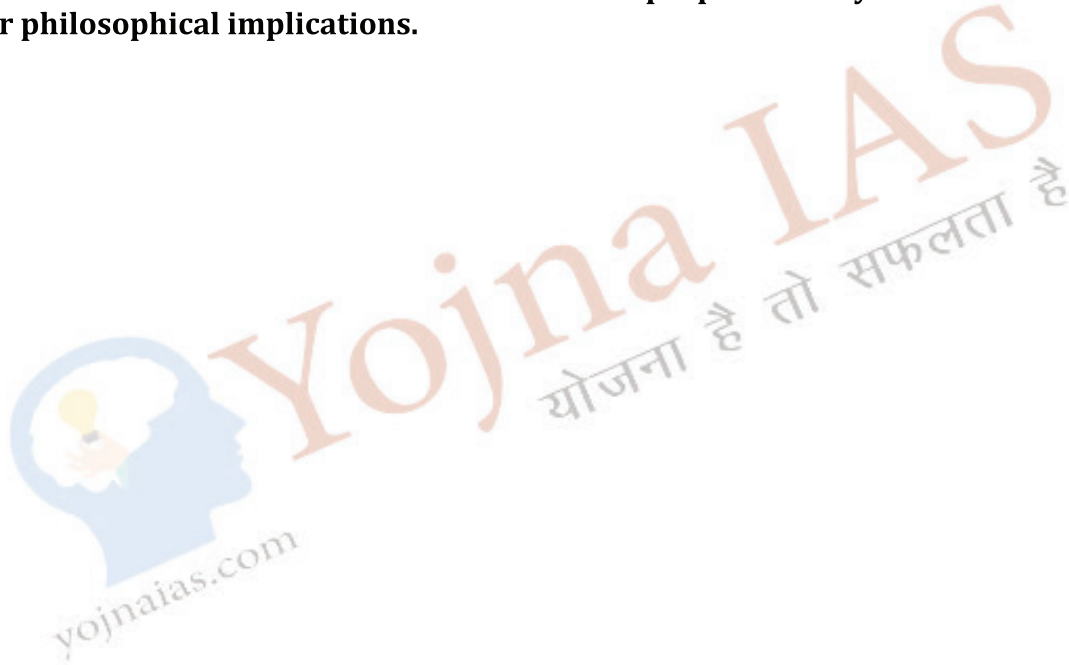
4. Govardhana Matha	Uttarakhand
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How many of the abovementioned pairs are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Q3. Discuss the central tenets of Advaita Vedanta as propounded by Adi Shankaracharya and their philosophical implications.



General Studies -2

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

OBC RESERVATION IN LOCAL BODIES

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

FOR PRELIMS:

key points regarding this decision?

FOR MAINS:

GS 2: Governance

What are the General Arguments in Favor of OBC Reservation in Local Body Elections?
Arguments Against?

WHY IN THE NEWS:

The state government of Gujarat has recently increased the reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) from the current 10% to 27% in panchayats and urban local bodies.

KEY POINTS REGARDING THIS DECISION:

- The decision was made based on recommendations from the **Justice K S Jhaveri Commission**, which was established following a 2022 Supreme Court directive aimed at suggesting measures for OBC (Other Backward Classes) reservation in local bodies in Gujarat.
- The expanded OBC reservation of 27% will be applicable **across all levels of local bodies**, including municipal corporations, municipalities, gram panchayats, taluka panchayats, and district panchayats.
 - However, this increased OBC reservation will **not be enforced in regions governed by the PESA Act of 1996, where the Scheduled Tribe (ST) population exceeds 50%**. In such areas, OBC candidates will receive a reservation of 10%.
 - It's important to note that the existing quotas for Scheduled Castes (SCs) at 14% and Scheduled Tribes (STs) at 7% remain unchanged, ensuring compliance with the 50% reservation cap mandated by the Supreme Court.

WHAT IS THE SUPREME COURT'S STANCE ON RESERVATION IN LOCAL BODIES?

- In a landmark decision by a five-judge Constitution Bench in the case of **K. Krishnamurthy (Dr.) v. Union of India (2010)**, the Supreme Court interpreted **Article 243D(6) and Article 243T(6)**, which allow for the reservation of seats for backward classes in panchayats and municipal bodies, respectively.
- The Supreme Court also emphasized that the obstacles to political participation differ from those hindering access to education and employment, as seen in Article 15(4) and Article 16(4), which pertain to reservation in education and employment.
- However, the Supreme Court clarified that while reservations in local bodies are permissible, they are contingent on empirical evidence of backwardness specific to these bodies. This determination is based on what is known as the “triple test,” comprising the following conditions:

1. The establishment of a dedicated Commission to conduct a thorough empirical inquiry into the nature of backwardness in local bodies.
2. The specification of the proportion of reservation required to be allocated on a local body-by-body basis.
3. The assurance that such reservation does not exceed an aggregate of 50% of the total seats reserved for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) combined.

WHAT ARE THE GENERAL ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF OBC RESERVATION IN LOCAL BODY ELECTIONS?

- **Empowerment, Inclusivity, and Participation:** Reservation offers OBC individuals a chance to actively engage in local governance, enabling them to voice their concerns, represent their communities, and play a role in shaping policies that affect their lives.
- **Relevance of Policies:** Elected representatives from OBC backgrounds are more likely to comprehend the unique challenges faced by their communities and work effectively to address them.
- **Skill and Leadership Development:** Reservation provides increased opportunities for individuals to acquire experience in leadership positions, public speaking, and decision-making.
- **Heightened Political Awareness:** It fosters political awareness and engagement among community members, motivating them to participate more actively in the political process.
- **Long-Term Positive Impact:** Advocates argue that over time, this approach may lead to a fairer distribution of resources, improved socio-economic indicators, and reduced disparities among various segments of society.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST:

- **Caste-Based Division:** Some critics argue that reservations based on caste perpetuate societal divisions, emphasizing differences instead of promoting unity.
- **Disadvantaged Groups Within OBCs:** Concerns exist regarding varying levels of privilege within the OBC category, with some groups considered more privileged (referred to as the “creamy layer”) than others. Implementing reservations for the entire OBC category might lead to relatively more privileged groups benefiting disproportionately, while the most marginalized OBCs continue to be underrepresented.
- **Reservation Efficacy:** Skeptics also raise doubts about the long-term effectiveness of reservations in genuinely addressing socio-economic disparities. They advocate for alternative approaches such as targeted welfare programs and skill development initiatives.
- **Impact on Local Governance:** There are concerns that political considerations may take precedence over governance priorities when candidates are elected through reservations. This could potentially hinder effective decision-making and the overall development of local governing bodies.

SOURCE:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/gujarat-government-hikes-reservations-for-obcs-to-27-in-panchayats-and-ulbs/article67248279.ece#:~:text=The%20Congress%20recently%20held%20a%20sit%2Din%20demanding%20reservations%20>

for%20the%20community&text=The%20Gujarat%20government%20on%20August,panchayats%20and%20urban%20local%20bodies.

Q.1 Local self-government is most accurately described as a manifestation of:

- (a) Federalism
- (b) Democratic decentralization
- (c) Administrative delegation
- (d) Direct democratic engagement

ANSWER: B

Q.2 Consider the following statements:

1. To become a member of a Panchayat, an individual must be at least 25 years old.
2. If a Panchayat is reconstituted due to premature dissolution, it will exist only for the remaining duration of its original term.

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 evolving dynamics of reservation policies in India, considering the recent decision by the Gujarat state government to raise OBC reservations in panchayats and urban local bodies. Analyze the constitutional and social implications of such changes, and evaluate their impact on social justice and governance.”

RASHTRIYA POSHAN MAH

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Rashtriya Poshan Mah”. The topic “Rashtriya Poshan Mah” has relevance in the Social Justice section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

What Are the Key Highlights of Poshan Mah 2023?

FOR MAINS:

GS 2: Social Justice

What Is Poshan Abhiyaan?

What Are Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0?

WHY IN THE NEWS:

The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) has observed the 6th Rashtriya Poshan Mah.

WHAT ARE THE KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF POSHAN MAH 2023?

Focus and Objective:

- The primary emphasis is on a comprehensive approach to combat malnutrition, a fundamental component of Mission Poshan 2.0.
- The primary goal is to increase awareness of critical life stages, including pregnancy, infancy, childhood, and adolescence, with the aim of promoting improved nutrition throughout India.

Theme:

- The theme for this year is 'Suposhit Bharat, Sakshar Bharat, Sashakt Bharat' (Nutrition-rich India, Educated India, Empowered India), underscoring the significance of nutrition, education, and empowerment in fostering a healthier and more robust nation.

This Year's Initiatives:

- Throughout this month-long initiative, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) will lead nationwide campaigns to enhance awareness of nutrition, with a particular focus on essential themes like Exclusive Breastfeeding and Complementary Feeding.

These efforts encompass activities such as:

- Swasth Balak Spardha (Healthy Child Competition) aimed at fostering healthy competition for enhanced nutrition and overall well-being.
- Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi (Nutrition and Education), which seeks to enhance nutrition through Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment), sensitize tribal communities regarding nutrition, and address anemia via a Test, Treat, Talk approach.

PROGRESS IN 2022:

- In the Poshan Maah of 2022, there were over 170 million sensitization activities carried out, with a particular emphasis on nutrition-related themes.
- As part of the Jan Andolan movement, more than 600 million activities were organized during both Poshan Pakhwadas (in March) and Poshan Maahs (in September) each year.

WHAT IS POSHAN ABHIYAAN?

Poshan Abhiyaan is a flagship initiative undertaken by the Government of India (GoI) with the aim of addressing malnutrition comprehensively.

Objective:

- This initiative seeks to establish an integrated nutrition support program that enhances the quality, delivery, reach, and overall outcomes of nutritional services.
- The primary emphasis is on promoting practices that enhance health, well-being, and immunity against diseases and malnutrition.

Target Audience: Poshan Abhiyaan is designed to benefit pregnant women, lactating mothers, adolescent girls, and children under the age of 6.

Poshan Tracker App: In 2021, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) introduced the Poshan Tracker application.

As of February 2022, the count of beneficiaries registered on the Poshan Tracker app:

Total Beneficiaries	Lactating Mothers	Pregnant Women	Children 0-6 M	Children 6M-3Y	Children 3-6Y
10,10,50,463	52,41,440	80,40,215	45,95,834	4,06,33,040	4,25,39,934

WHAT ARE SAKSHAM ANGANWADI AND POSHAN 2.0?

In the fiscal year 2021-22, the government undertook a restructuring of several schemes into Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0. This restructuring includes the following sub-schemes:

1. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)
2. POSHAN Abhiyaan
3. Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG)
4. National Creche Scheme

Funding: Poshan 2.0 is an ongoing Centrally-Sponsored Scheme that is executed through the state governments and union territory administrations. It operates based on a cost-sharing arrangement between the Central and State Governments.

VISION:

- The primary objective is to address the critical issue of malnutrition among children up to the age of 6 years, adolescent girls (aged 14-18 years), and pregnant and lactating women.
- The program design is aligned with the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 2 on Zero Hunger and SDG 4 on Quality Education).
- The focus is on recognizing the pivotal role of nutrition and early childhood care and education in ensuring the well-being, growth, and development of children into healthy and productive adults.

COMPONENTS:

1. Nutrition Support for POSHAN, including Supplementary Nutrition Program (SNP) for children

aged 6 months to 6 years, pregnant women, and lactating mothers (PWLM).

2. For Adolescent Girls aged 14 to 18 years, with a specific focus on Aspirational Districts and the North Eastern Region (NER).
3. Early Childhood Care and Education for children aged 3-6 years, and early stimulation for those aged 0-3 years.
4. Anganwadi Infrastructure, encompassing modern and upgraded Saksham Anganwadi centers, as well as Poshan Abhiyaan initiatives.

SOURCE:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1953756>

Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding the Poshan 2.0:

1. It is a program under the Ministry of Health.
2. Its primary focus is on Child nutrition only.

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: D

Q.2 Discuss the significance and impact of the Poshan 2.0 Mission in addressing malnutrition in India. Analyze the key components and strategies of these initiatives and their contribution to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

MITAKSHARA AND DAYABHAGA

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

GS 2: Governance

WHY IN THE NEWS:

The Supreme Court ruled that a child born from a marriage that is either void or voidable has the right

to inherit the parent's portion of a joint Hindu family property governed by the Mitakshara law.

ABOUT MITAKSHARA AND DAYABHAGA

In the area of Hindu family law in India, two prominent schools of thought govern the principles of succession within the Hindu Undivided Family (HUF) – the Dayabhaga School and the Mitakshara School. These legal systems have distinct regional and doctrinal variations that influence how inheritance and succession are handled.

KEY POINTS:

- **Regional Divide:** While the Dayabhaga School prevails in Bengal and Assam, the Mitakshara School is followed in all other regions of India. The Mitakshara School further subdivides into various schools such as the Benares, Mithila, Maharashtra, and Dravida schools.
- **Key Interpreters:** Vijnaneshwar and Jeenutavahan are renowned scholars associated with interpreting the Mitakshara and Dayabhaga Schools, respectively.
- **Mitakshara School:** In this school, property allocation is based on the principle of possession by birth. A person can bequeath their self-acquired property through a will. Joint family property is inherited by coparceners, typically extending to the next three generations. The partition can convert joint family property into separate property. Sons have a birthright in joint family property under this school.
- **Dayabhaga School:** In this school, property inheritance occurs upon the death of the possessor. Birthright and property devolution by survivorship have limited significance. Each coparcener has the right to separate their share in the joint family property.
- **Division in Dayabhaga:** In this school, property division is relatively straightforward. If a man dies intestate, his property is evenly divided among his sons. If he shares common property with brothers, a share equal to his portion is separated, and his share is divided among his sons.
- **Principle Basis:** The Dayabhaga School's law of succession is rooted in religious value or divine profit, whereas the Mitakshara School relies on the principle of blood-relationship.
- **Mitakshara School Restrictions:** The Mitakshara School imposes restrictions, such as excluding females from inheritance and prioritizing agnates (paternal relatives) over cognates (maternal relatives). For instance, if a Hindu man leaves behind a son and a daughter, the daughter is excluded entirely, and the son inherits the entire property.
- **Hindu Succession Act, 1956:** The Mitakshara School influenced the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, which governed succession and property inheritance. However, it primarily recognized males as legal heirs. The Act applied to individuals who were not Muslims, Christians, Parsis, or Jews by religion, including Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains, followers of Arya Samaj, and Brahmo Samaj, as Hindus for legal purposes.

Q.1 Consider the following statements about the Mitakshara School of Hindu law :

1. Mitakshara is primarily followed in Bengal and Assam regions of India.
1. In Mitakshara, property allocation is based on possession by birth.
1. Under Mitakshara law, a person can leave their self-acquired property through a will.

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

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two

(c) All three

(d) None

ANSWER: B

Q.2 Which of the following statements about the Dayabhaga School of Hindu law is/are correct?

1. Dayabhaga is predominantly followed in most regions of India except Bengal and Assam.
2. Birthright and property devolution by survivorship have limited significance in the Dayabhaga School.
3. Dayabhaga law divides property uniformly among a man's sons if he dies intestate.

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 and compare the principles and implications of the Dayabhaga and Mitakshara Schools of Hindu law with regard to property inheritance and succession. Furthermore, assess the impact of these schools on gender rights and the evolving landscape of property laws in modern India.

WHO TRADITIONAL MEDICINE GLOBAL SUMMIT 2023

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs", and the topic details "WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit 2023". The topic "WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit 2023" has relevance in the "Social Justice" section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

What is the WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit 2023?

What is the Gujrat Declaration?

FOR MAINS:

GS2: Social Justice

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The World Health Organization (WHO) recently issued the "Gujarat Declaration," the outcome document of the first WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit 2023.

WHO TRADITIONAL MEDICINE GLOBAL SUMMIT

Aim and Theme

- The summit aims to gather political commitment and evidence-based actions regarding traditional medicine.
- The WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit 2023 theme was “Towards health and well-being for all.”

HOSTS AND STAKEHOLDERS

- The event was co-hosted by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministry of Ayush, Government of India, which holds the G20 presidency in 2023.
- The summit served as a platform for stakeholders, including traditional medicine practitioners, users, communities, policymakers, international organisations, academics, private sector entities, and civil society organisations.
- These stakeholders shared best practices, evidence, data, and innovations related to traditional medicine’s contribution to health and sustainable development.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

Integral Resource:

- Traditional and complementary medicine has been crucial in household and community healthcare for centuries.
- It has contributed to the foundations of modern medicine and science, influencing conventional medical practices.

Pharmaceutical Impact:

- Approximately 40% of pharmaceutical products today are based on natural products.
- Several landmark drugs, such as aspirin, artemisinin, and childhood cancer treatments, originated from traditional medicine.

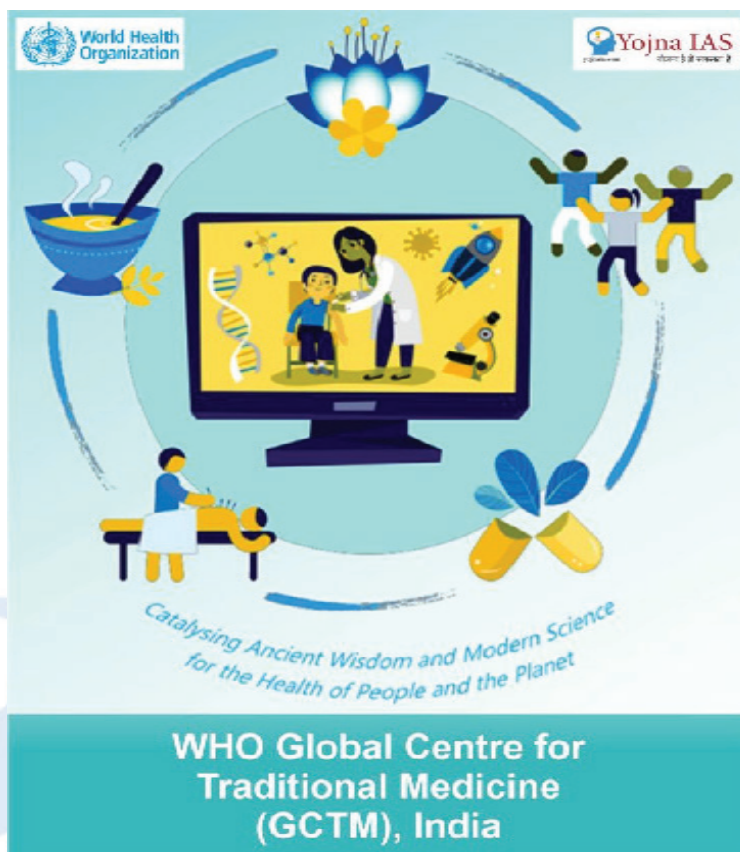
Evolving Research:

- Ongoing research, including genomics and artificial intelligence, is expanding the field of traditional medicine.
- Industries related to herbal medicines, natural products, health, wellness, and travel are experiencing growth.

WHO GLOBAL CENTRE FOR TRADITIONAL MEDICINE:

- In March 2022, WHO established the WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine in Jamnagar under the Ministry of AYUSH, GoI.
- The centre serves as a knowledge hub with a mission to blend ancient wisdom and modern science to benefit people and the planet.
- It enhances WHO’s existing capacity in traditional medicine, supplementing core functions across regional offices and headquarters.
- Focus Areas of WHO Traditional Medicine Centre
- Partnership and Collaboration: The centre emphasises partnerships to optimise the role of traditional medicine in global health and sustainable development.

- Evidence-Based Approach: A commitment to evidence and data guides the centre's activities.
- Biodiversity Conservation: The centre acknowledges the importance of biodiversity in traditional medicine.
- Innovation: It fosters innovation in traditional medicine practices.
- Respect for Local Heritages and Rights: The centre operates with respect for local heritages, resources, and rights.



GUJARAT DECLARATION

- The Gujarat Declaration reiterates global commitments to indigenous knowledge, biodiversity, and traditional, complementary, and integrative medicine (TCIM).
- WHO emphasizes the need for rigorous scientific methods to understand, assess, and apply holistic, context-specific, and personalized health and well-being approaches.

KEY POINTS OF THE GUJARAT DECLARATION

Supporting Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

- The declaration calls for efforts to implement evidence-based TCIM interventions and approaches to achieve UHC and health-related SDGs.
- It underscores the role of multi-regional, multi-disciplinary, and multi-stakeholder collaborations demonstrated at the summit, aligned with WHO's work.

Promoting Research and Regulation:

- Accelerating the production, regulation, and formal utilisation of scientifically proven TCIM products and practices is emphasised.

- Policies promoting standardised TCIM documentation are advocated, including using the WHO International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) for data integration.

Establishing a Global TCIM Network:

- The declaration proposes establishing a global network of TCIM reference clinical centres for standardised data collection and monitoring using WHO ICD-11 coding.

Harnessing Digital Health and AI:

- Special attention is given to developing and applying digital health technologies, focusing on artificial intelligence, to advance TCIM resources for health and well-being.

Biodiversity and Indigenous Rights:

- Actions are urged at all levels to safeguard, restore, and sustainably manage biodiversity.
- The declaration underscores the importance of fair and equitable benefit-sharing from biodiversity resources and indigenous knowledge.
- It emphasises the recognition, respect, and protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples as per the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Ethical Considerations:

- Ethical methods and processes are encouraged in TCIM research and practice.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Term	Description
Traditional Medicine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive historical background • Encompasses collective wisdom, expertise, and cultural customs • Used for maintaining overall health and addressing physical and mental ailments.
Complementary Medicine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverges from a specific country's established medical tradition • Not fully integrated into the dominant healthcare system of that region.
Integrative Medicine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves the deliberate integration of complementary and alternative medicine components <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporated into comprehensive treatment plans • Combined with conventional methods for diagnosis and treatment.

Sources:

'Gujarat Declaration' underlining outcome of the first WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit 2023 released

Q1. With reference to the Gujarat Declaration, consider the following statements:

1. It is the outcome document of the inaugural WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit.
2. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare co-hosted the Summit.
3. The declaration emphasises the significance of equitable and fair benefit-sharing from biodiversity

resources and indigenous knowledge.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Q2. Consider the following:

1. WHO has established the WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (WHO-GCTM) in New Delhi.
2. The Government of India supports WHO-GCTM through the Ministry of Ayush.
3. The centre is a knowledge hub combining ancient wisdom and modern science to benefit humanity.

How many of the abovementioned statements are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Q3. Explain the differences between traditional, complementary, and integrative medicine (TCIM). Analyse the role of the WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine in advancing TCIM practices.

BRICS EXPANSION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “BRICS Expansion and Its Implications”. The topic “BRICS Expansion and Its Implications” has relevance in the “International Relations” section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

What is BRICS?

Who are the new entrants?

FOR MAINS:

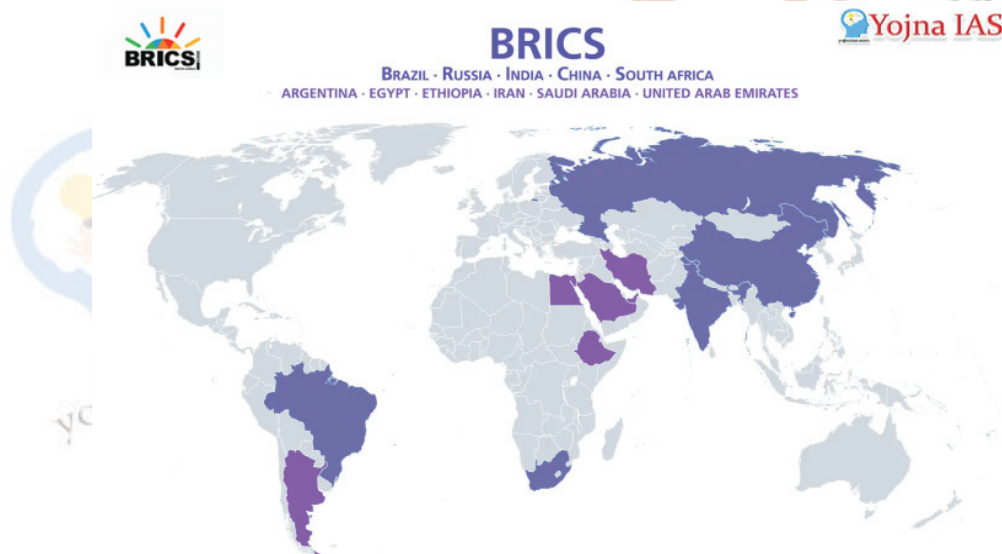
GS2: International Relations

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Recently, the BRICS Grouping of Nations expanded to include six more nations.

BRICS EXPANSION

- In a landmark decision at the **15th BRICS summit in Johannesburg**, current members of BRICS (**Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa**) announced the inclusion of **six new countries** into the fold:
 - **Argentina**
 - **Ethiopia**
 - **Egypt**
 - **Iran**
 - **Saudi Arabia**
 - **UAE**
- This expansion, 13 years after South Africa joined in 2010, signifies a significant development in the geopolitical landscape.
- Prime Minister Modi emphasised that adding these new members would bolster the grouping's strength and further endorse the Concept of a multipolar world order.
- This expansion carries profound implications, including economic clout, energy sector impact, geostrategic significance, and a commitment to reshaping international institutions and global politics.



IMPLICATIONS OF BRICS EXPANSION

- **Global Economic Influence:**
 - With the addition of new members, BRICS is projected to represent 46% of the world's population and contribute 37% of the global GDP in PPP terms.
 - This substantial economic power places BRICS ahead of the G-7, which accounts for 30.7% of global GDP. This shift signifies a redistribution of global economic influence and challenges the dominance of Western economies.
 - The combined GDP of BRICS members will increase in future, further challenging the dominance of Western economies. This could lead to a shift in economic power dynamics on the global stage.

- **Energy Sector:**

- The expansion will significantly impact the energy sector, as the new members are significant oil and gas industry players.
- The earlier five BRICS members accounted for 20% of global oil output, which will now rise to 42%.
- This could reshape global energy markets and alter the dynamics of energy supply and demand.

- **Geostrategic Importance:**

- Including countries from West Asia, such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Iran, adds considerable geostrategic value to BRICS.
- These countries are major players in the energy sector and have geopolitical significance. Their involvement could strengthen BRICS' influence in the Middle East and beyond.

- **Reform of International Institutions:**

- BRICS members have consistently advocated for reforms in international organisations like the UN, IMF, and World Bank.
- The expanded BRICS could exert more pressure for implementing these reforms, potentially leading to changes in these institutions' structure and decision-making processes.

- **Shared Political Goals:**

- BRICS members often share common positions on global political issues. They prioritise the centrality of the United Nations, address conflicts in West Asia and Ukraine, and cooperate on counterterrorism efforts.
- The expansion will likely align more countries with these positions, potentially increasing their impact on global affairs.

- **Multipolar World Order:**

- BRICS represents a challenge to the unipolar world order dominated by the West. With its diverse membership, the expanded grouping will assert its strategic autonomy in a multipolar world.
- This could lead to a more balanced power distribution and influence among global actors.

- **Economic Cooperation:**

- BRICS has been increasingly focused on intra-BRICS economic cooperation and outreach to other developing countries.
- This could lead to the developing of new trade and investment partnerships and initiatives among the member countries, potentially benefiting their respective economies.

CHALLENGES AND CRITICISMS:

- **Internal Differences and Competition: BRICS grapples with internal differences and competition among its members, stemming from divergent national interests and economic priorities.**

- **Lack of Clear Vision:** Critics often label BRICS a “talk shop” due to its perceived lack of a coherent and concrete vision beyond general calls for international institutional reform.
- **Coordination Challenges:** Coordinating policies among diverse member countries can hinder BRICS’ ability to respond effectively to global challenges and pursue joint initiatives.
- **Western Skepticism:** BRICS’ emergence as a counterbalance to Western dominance has raised scepticism from Western countries, potentially hindering support for its initiatives and reforms.
- **Need for Concrete Achievements:** Critics argue that BRICS fails to deliver concrete achievements that match its potential, often issuing joint declarations without substantial impact on global affairs.

GEOPOLITICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIA:

- India’s perspective on BRICS emphasizes it as a forum for cooperation and dialogue among emerging economies. It views BRICS as a means to foster economic collaboration and diplomatic engagement rather than positioning it as an explicitly anti-Western bloc.
- The recent expansion of BRICS challenges India’s stance within the organisation. India may be hesitant about welcoming new members who align closely with China’s vision for BRICS, potentially complicating its role and influence.

Despite these challenges, India recognises the importance of maintaining engagement with BRICS. It remains a valuable platform for advancing its global economic interests and ensuring its voice is heard on critical international issues. India’s approach to BRICS requires a delicate balance between asserting its vision for the group and navigating the evolving dynamics within the organisation.

Sources: The implications of the expansion of BRICS - The Hindu

Q1. With reference to BRICS, consider the following statements:

1. The expanded BRICS is expected to account for more than half of the world’s population.
2. The BRICS is projected to have a much larger share of the world’s GDP than the G-20.
3. BRICS now has representation from every continent except Antarctica.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Q2. Discuss the implications of the recent expansion of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) for the prevailing world order. Analyze the challenges and divergent goals faced within the BRICS grouping.

FLEX-FUEL TECHNOLOGY

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Flex-fuel Technology”. The topic “Flex-fuel Technology” has relevance in the “Science and Technology” section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

What is Flex-fuel Technology? Its benefits?

FOR MAINS:

GS2: Science and Technology

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Toyota recently introduced a prototype of the Innova Hycross featuring a hybrid powertrain that can operate on flex-fuel.

FLEX-FUEL TECHNOLOGY

- **Flex-fuel technology enables a vehicle to utilise multiple fuel types or even fuel mixtures**, distinguishing it from conventional gasoline-powered cars.
- Flexible fuel vehicles (FFVs) have an internal combustion engine and can operate on gasoline and any blend of gasoline and ethanol up to 83%.
- The current configuration involves a combination of gasoline and either ethanol or methanol.
- This capability is achieved by installing a fuel mixture sensor and utilising specialised engine control module (ECM) programming.
- These components detect and seamlessly adapt to varying ratios of specified fuels, ensuring the vehicle’s adaptability to different fuel sources.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND PREVALENCE

- The concept of flex-fuel technology originated in the early 1990s when the automotive industry sought innovative solutions for fuel diversification.
- Its initial application can be traced back to the 1994 Ford Taurus, which marked a significant milestone in adopting this technology.
- As of 2017, the adoption of flex-fuel technology had expanded significantly, with approximately 21 million flex-fuel vehicles in operation worldwide.

CHANGES IN CONVENTIONAL GASOLINE-POWERED CARS

- Flex-fuel vehicles share many components with traditional petrol-powered cars.
- Special ethanol-compatible components are essential to adapt to ethanol or methanol's unique chemical properties and energy content.
- **Fuel pump and fuel injection system:** Modifications to components like the fuel pump and fuel injection system are necessary for ethanol compatibility.
- **The engine control module (ECM)** undergoes calibration to accommodate the higher oxygen content of ethanol.
- **Exhaust systems** are equipped with modified catalysts to reduce hydrocarbon emissions.
- **Fuel filter and lines:** Adjustments are made to the vehicle's fuel filter and pipes to ensure optimal performance with flexible fuel options.

PROS OF FLEX-FUEL TECHNOLOGY

- **Environmental Benefits:** Ethanol blending in flex-fuel vehicles significantly reduces harmful pollutants, including carbon monoxide, sulphur, carbon, and nitrogen oxides.
- **Decreased Dependency on Imports:** Blending ethanol helps decrease the dependency on oil imports for fueling vehicles, enhancing energy security and reducing foreign oil dependence.
- **Improved Acceleration:** Many flex-fuel cars exhibit improved acceleration performance when operating on higher ethanol blends, enhancing driving dynamics.

CONS OF FLEX-FUEL TECHNOLOGY

- **Reduced Fuel Efficiency:** Flex-fuel vehicles typically experience a 4-8% reduction in fuel efficiency when using ethanol as a primary fuel source, as their engines are optimised for petrol.
- **Water-Intensive Crop Production:** Ethanol blending relies on source crops such as sugarcane, which are known to be water-intensive, potentially posing environmental and sustainability challenges.
- **Dependency on Specific Crops:** A significant portion of ethanol production, over 90% in India as of 2019-20, is derived from crops like sugarcane, which can have political implications due to their importance in certain states.

BENEFITS OF ETHANOL BLENDING IN INDIA

The National Biofuel Policy 2018 in India aims for a 2025 target of 20% blending of ethanol in petrol.

- **Reduction in Oil Imports**
 - Ethanol blending in India has significantly reduced the oil import bill, saving billions of rupees and enhancing energy security.
 - In 2020-21, ethanol blending reduced 26 million barrels of petrol and saved Rs 10,000 crore.
- **Future Savings**

- The expected implementation of E20 by April 2025 in India is estimated to result in annual savings of Rs 35,000 crore in oil import costs.
- **Electrified Flex-Fuel Vehicles**
- Electrified flex-fuel vehicles are being introduced to address fuel efficiency challenges, combining the benefits of a flex-fuel engine with an electric powertrain.

Sources:

Toyota's flex-fuel prototype: How it will work, what advantages it offers | Explained News – The Indian Express

Q1. With reference Flex Fuel Technology, consider the following statements:

1. Flex-fuel vehicles (FFVs) have an internal combustion engine and can operate on gasoline and any blend of gasoline and ethanol up to 83%.
2. Flex-fuel technology was developed recently when the automotive industry sought new ways to diversify fuel sources.
3. Modifications to components like the fuel pump and fuel injection system are unnecessary for ethanol compatibility in flex-fuel vehicles.

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: (b)

Q2. Consider the following :

1. Ethanol blending in India aims for a 2025 target of 20% blending of ethanol in petrol.
2. Ethanol blending in India has significantly reduced the oil import bill, resulting in billions of rupees in savings and enhanced energy security.
3. Reduced Fuel Efficiency and reduced acceleration are some of the drawbacks of Flex-Fuel Technology.

How many of the abovementioned statements are correct?

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

(d) None

Answer: (b)

Q3. Discuss the significance of flex-fuel technology and ethanol blending in India's automotive sector and energy policy.

ERG CHECH 002

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the Topic details "Erg Chech 002". The Topic "Erg Chech 002" has relevance in the Science and Technology section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

About Erg Chech 002?

FOR MAINS:

GS 2: Science and Technology

WHY IN THE NEWS:

In May 2020, researchers came across distinctive rocks in the Sahara Desert containing distinct greenish crystals. These rocks were identified as remnants from the early Solar System.

These particular rock fragments are part of the Erg Chech 002 meteorite, representing the oldest volcanic rock ever found, with an estimated age dating back approximately 4.56556 billion years.

ABOUT ERG CHECH 002

- Erg Chech 002 is categorized as an "ungrouped achondrite," and its origin is from melted planetesimals, with the specific parent body unknown.
- Analysis of Erg Chech 002 revealed a high concentration of lead-206 and lead-207, as well as the presence of undecayed uranium-238 and uranium-235.
- Comparisons with other achondrites, particularly volcanic angrites, showed that aluminum-26 dispersion in the early Solar System was irregular.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Aluminum-26 has a relatively short half-life of approximately 717,000 years, making it challenging to directly detect in significant quantities within a 4.6-million-year-old space rock like Erg Chech 002.
- However, when Aluminum-26 undergoes decay, it transforms into Magnesium-26, a stable and

non-radioactive isotope of Magnesium.

- This conversion process from Aluminum-26 to Magnesium-26 can be employed as a dating method, serving as a clock for space rocks like Erg Chech 002. It helps determine the initial amount of Aluminum-26 in these rocks.
- To effectively use the Aluminum-26-Magnesium-26 decay system as a dating tool, it's crucial to understand whether Aluminum-26 was uniformly distributed throughout the solar nebula responsible for the formation of the solar system's planets, asteroids, and comets.
- The researchers studied Erg Chech 002, an achondrite rock formed from melted planetesimals. They combined their findings with data on angrite meteorites, a rare subset of achondrites. Achondrites are meteorites that exhibit signs of having undergone melting and share similarities with volcanic rocks found on Earth.
- Detailed examination of rocks containing distinctive greenish crystals has confirmed their extra-terrestrial origin, signifying their connection to the early Solar System.
- These rocks are fragments of the Erg Chech 002 meteorite, which is the oldest volcanic rock ever identified.
- Chondrites represent the most common class of meteorites, accounting for more than 85% of all meteorite falls.

SOURCE:

<https://www.space.com/meteorite-4-billion-years-early-solar-system>

Q.1 Recently seen in the news, "Erg Chech 002" is :

- (a) A space mission of ESA.
- (b) A new Russian ICBM
- (c) A meteorite
- (d) USAs new station in Arctic

ANSWER: C

Q.2 With reference to Erg Chech 002, consider the following statements:

1. It represents the oldest volcanic rock ever identified.
2. Its age was identified by using the Aluminum-26-Magnesium-26 decay system as a dating tool.

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.3 Discuss the significance of the Erg Chech 002 meteorite in planetary science, focusing on its role in dating early Solar System events. How does its discovery contribute to our knowledge of celestial body formation and the challenges in studying such ancient space rocks?

INDIA-MIDDLE EAST-EUROPE ECONOMIC CORRIDOR

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor”. This topic has relevance in the “International Relations” section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

What is the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor?

Who are the participants?

FOR MAINS:

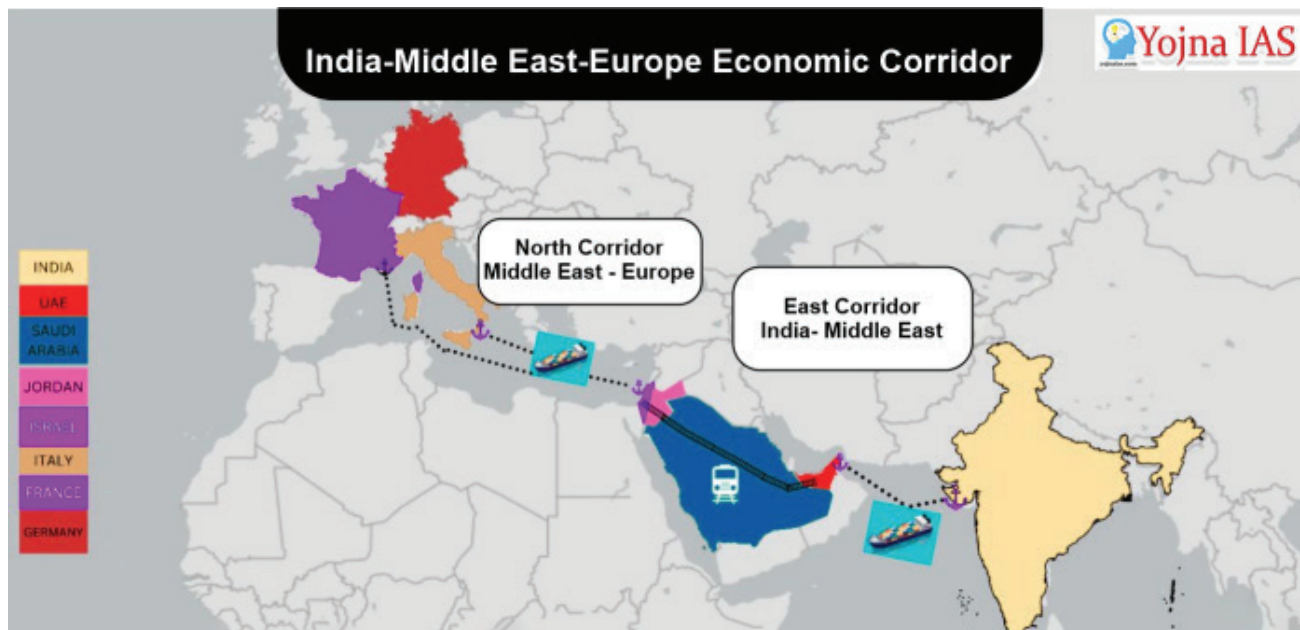
GS2: International Relations

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s recent announcement at the Group of 20 Leaders’ Summit in New Delhi has brought significant attention to the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor.

WHAT IS THE INDIA-MIDDLE EAST-EUROPE ECONOMIC CORRIDOR?

- This ambitious project aims to establish a connectivity corridor from India to Europe via West Asia, potentially revolutionising trade, transportation, and digital connectivity across a vast Eurasian expanse.
- The project also presents an alternative vision to China’s Belt and Road Initiative.
- The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor is a modern-day equivalent of the historic Spice Route.
- It envisions the construction of a railway link traversing the Arabian Peninsula, which would then connect with shipping routes linking India and Europe.
- This corridor aims to enhance connectivity, trade, and energy transmission, focusing on green hydrogen.



WHO ARE THE PARTICIPANTS?

- The initiative is jointly spearheaded by the United States and India, with key involvement from countries such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Israel, and the European Union.
- These nations have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish the corridor, emphasizing economic integration, connectivity, logistics, clean energy production, and energy transmission infrastructure.

SIGNIFICANCE

- It presents an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative and aims to provide sustainable connectivity between Asia, West Asia/Middle East, and Europe.
- The corridor could bypass the congested Suez Canal, offering a more efficient transportation route.
- Furthermore, it aligns with India's initiatives such as Make in India, Sagarmala, and Atmanirbhar Bharat, promoting self-reliance and infrastructure development.
- This project also emerged as part of the Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment (PGII), a US-led initiative.
- It signifies a significant response to global demand for high-quality infrastructure financing, potentially boosting economic development across multiple countries and sectors.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

THE ECONOMIC CORRIDOR CONSISTS OF TWO SEPARATE CORRIDORS:

- East Corridor connecting India to West Asia/Middle East
- Northern Corridor connecting West Asia/Middle East to Europe
- It includes a rail line to establish a reliable and cost-effective cross-border ship-to-rail transit network, enhancing the transshipment of goods and services from South East Asia through India to West Asia/Middle East and Europe.

- Professor Michael Tanchum proposed the idea of an India-Arab-Mediterranean multi-modal corridor in 2021, which partly aligns with the current project.
- This corridor could facilitate commercial transportation, integrate India's hydrocarbon value chain, and create an innovation corridor for green energy and technology manufacturing.
- The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor represents a transformative initiative that could reshape regional and global connectivity, trade, and economic development. With the support of key nations and organisations, it has the potential to offer a sustainable and efficient alternative to existing trade routes while strengthening India's position in the global economic landscape.

Source:

Data to oil, gas to goods: What is the announced sea-rail corridor from India to Europe? | Explained News - The Indian Express

Q1. With reference to India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, consider the following statements:

1. The Corridor was declared in the G20 New Delhi Summit.
2. The Corridor aims to integrate with the Belt and Road Initiative.
3. It is the modern-day equivalent of the historic Spice Route.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Q2. Consider the following:

1. United States
2. India
3. Saudi Arabia
4. Egypt
5. Jordan
6. Iran

How many of the abovementioned countries are part of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor?

- (a) Only two

- (b) Only three
- (c) Only four
- (d) Only five

Answer: (c)

Q3. Discuss the significance and potential implications of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor in the context of regional and global connectivity.

AFRICAN UNION

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “African Union”. This topic has relevance in the “International Relations” section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

What is the African Union?

FOR MAINS:

GS2: International Relations

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The African Union became a member of the G-20 on September 9th at the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Summit, just three months after India proposed it.

AFRICAN UNION (AU)

- The African Union (AU) is a regional organisation comprising 55 African member states.
- It was established on July 9, 2002, as the successor to the Organization of African Unity (OAU), founded in 1963.
- The AU aims to foster “*an Integrated, Prosperous, and Peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens.*”
- The African Union’s administrative body, the **African Union Commission**, is headquartered in **Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**.
- Collectively, the member states of the AU boast a gross domestic product (**GDP**) of **\$3 trillion** and a population of approximately **1.4 billion people**.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- In May 1963, 32 Heads of independent African States gathered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to sign the Charter establishing the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).
- **Pan-African Vision**
 - The OAU embodied the pan-African vision of a **united, liberated, and self-determined Africa**, as articulated in its Charter.
 - The founding fathers of OAU recognised **freedom, equality, justice, and dignity** as essential objectives for African aspirations.
 - There was an emphasis on **fostering cooperation** among African states and understanding among Africa's peoples.
- **Objectives of the OAU**
 - Eradicating the remnants of colonisation and apartheid.
 - Fostering unity and solidarity among African nations.
 - Coordinating development efforts.
 - Safeguarding sovereignty and territorial integrity.
 - Promoting international cooperation.
- **Effective Forum for African Unity**
 - The OAU served as a platform for African nations to unify their positions on global issues.
 - It enabled them to defend Africa's interests in international fora effectively.
- **Transition to the African Union (1999)**
 - On September 9, 1999, the OAU's Heads of State and Government issued the **Sirte Declaration**.
 - This called for establishing the African Union to accelerate integration, address multifaceted challenges, and enable Africa to assert its global role.

OBJECTIVES OF THE AFRICAN UNION (AU):

- **Promoting stronger unity and solidarity** among African nations and their populations.
- Accelerating **political and socio-economic integration** of the continent.
- **Addressing multifaceted social, economic, and political challenges** in African nations.
- Advocating for **peace, stability, and security** in the region.
- Protecting and advancing **human rights**.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE AFRICAN UNION (AU):

- **Successful Peacekeeping:**
 - The AU effectively deploys peacekeeping missions against terrorism in various regions, including the Sahel and northern Mozambique.
 - It has prevented violence in Burundi, the Central African Republic, Comoros, Darfur, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Mali.
- **Diplomatic Conflict Resolution:**
 - The AU's diplomatic efforts resolved conflicts, such as brokering a peace deal between the Ethiopian Government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in South Africa.
- **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA):**
 - The AU established the **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)** in 2021, the **world's largest new free trade area since the WTO's creation in 1994**.
 - AfCFTA aims to increase intra-African trade, potentially boosting Africa's income by \$450 billion by 2035 and raising intra-African exports by over 81%, per World Bank estimates.

SHORTCOMINGS OF THE AU:

- **Ineffective Response to Coups:**
 - The AU has struggled to prevent coups in Africa, with over 200 coups occurring on the continent since the 1960s.
 - The organisation typically relies on diplomatic pressure, such as suspending membership, rather than military intervention to address these situations.
- **Financial Dependency:**
 - The AU faces challenges getting member countries to pay their annual dues, leading to financial instability.
 - It often relies on external funding, impacting its autonomy and effectiveness.

POTENTIAL OUTCOMES OF AU'S G20 INCLUSION:

- **Global Trade and Finance Redesign:**
 - The AU's permanent seat in the G20 provides an opportunity to advocate for a global trade, fi-

nance, and investment architecture that benefits the world.

- This position allows the AU to demand a redesign of these systems, potentially leading to more equitable outcomes.
- **Voice and Visibility:**
 - Inclusion in the G20 gives African interests and perspectives a platform for voice and visibility on the global stage.
 - This can empower the AU to represent African concerns and contribute to global discussions effectively.

Sources:

G20 becomes G21 as India takes lead in bringing African Union to global table | India News - The Indian Express

Q1. With reference to African Union, consider the following statements:

1. The African Union (AU) is a regional organisation comprising 55 African member states.
2. India is an observer state in the African Union.
3. The African Union was established in 1963 to eliminate the colonialism and apartheid.

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: (b)

Q2. Consider the following:

1. The African Union Commission is headquartered in Pretoria, South Africa.
2. The Sirte Declaration called for establishing the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), a precursor to the African Union.
3. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is the world's largest free trade area since the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

How many of the abovementioned statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two

(c) All three

(d) None

Answer: (d)

Q3. Analyse the implications of the African Union's inclusion in the G20 for Africa's representation and influence on the global stage.

CANNABIS

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the Topic details "Cannabis". This Topic has relevance in the Public Health section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

About Cannabis?

FOR MAINS:

GS 2: Public Health

Benefits of Cannabis Cultivation?

Concerns Related to Cannabis Cultivation in India?

Way Forward?

WHY IN THE NEWS:

Himachal Pradesh Government is considering to legalise Cannabis cultivation

WHO'S DEFINITION OF CANNABIS

- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), cannabis is a term encompassing various psychoactive preparations derived from the Cannabis sativa plant.
- WHO identifies cannabis as the most extensively cultivated, trafficked, and misused illicit drug worldwide.
- Cannabis plant species are typically dioecious, with male and female plants. Unpollinated female plants yield a substance known as hashish.
- The primary psychoactive component in cannabis is Delta9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).

NDPS ACT, 1985 DEFINITION

- As per the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act of 1985, a "cannabis plant" encompasses all plants of the cannabis genus.

- 'Charas' is the separated resin extracted from the cannabis plant, covering separated resin forms, whether crude or purified. This definition also includes concentrated preparations and resin-like hashish oil or liquid hashish.
- 'Ganja' is defined as the flowering or fruiting tops of the cannabis plant but explicitly excludes seeds and leaves.
- The NDPS Act prohibits any mixture, with or without neutral materials, of charas and ganja or any beverage derived from them.
- The Act specifically excludes seeds and leaves from its provisions due to their minimal THC content.

BENEFITS OF CANNABIS CULTIVATION:

Expanding Hemp Cultivation

- Hemp, a variant of Cannabis sativa, has significant industrial and medicinal applications.
- In Himachal Pradesh, hemp cultivation currently occurs illegally under the NDPS Act of 1985.

Economic Advantages

- Legalizing and regulating hemp cultivation can provide substantial economic benefits.
- Revenue Generation: Cannabis cultivation can generate revenue for Himachal Pradesh, contributing to the state's finances.
- Alternative Income Source: It offers an alternative income source for local communities, potentially reducing dependence on traditional agriculture.

Diverse Applications

- Beyond recreational use, cannabis has various applications:
 - Phytoremediation: Cannabis can help in soil and environmental cleanup.
 - Fiber and Cloth: Hemp fibers are used in textile and cloth manufacturing.
 - Medicinal Uses: Cannabis has medicinal properties, including pain management and anti-inflammatory properties.
 - Pulp and Paper Industry: Hemp can be utilized in the pulp and paper industry.

Preserving Traditional Practices

- Hemp has a history of traditional uses in Himachal Pradesh, such as rope and textile making from hemp fibers, shoe manufacturing, and seed consumption.
- Legalization can help revive and preserve these traditional practices disrupted by the ban on cultivation.

Scientific Research

- Legalizing cannabis for medicinal, industrial, and scientific purposes allows for research into its potential benefits and applications.

- It can harness the plant's medicinal properties for the betterment of healthcare.



CONCERNS RELATED TO CANNABIS CULTIVATION IN INDIA

- **Drug Addiction:**

- Nearly 95% of drug addicts in Himachal Pradesh use cannabis and its derivatives.
- Critics argue that legalizing cultivation might encourage youth to experiment with cannabis, potentially leading to addiction issues, and hampering their socio-economic contributions.

- **Health Risks:**

- Cannabis use can have adverse health effects, such as impaired cognitive function, respiratory problems (when smoked), and an increased risk of mental health disorders.
- Widespread cannabis use raises concerns about public health, especially among vulnerable populations.

- **Psychiatric Issues:**

- Prolonged and excessive cannabis use can contribute to psychiatric problems like anxiety, depression, and psychosis.
- Legalizing cultivation may exacerbate these issues without adequate mental health support and education.

- **Illicit Market:**

- The illicit cannabis market may persist alongside legal cultivation.
- Continued illegal production and distribution could lead to increased criminal activities, perpetu-

ating the challenges faced by law enforcement.

- **Enforcement Challenges:**

- Regulating cannabis cultivation and use presents enforcement challenges.
- Establishing legal limits, enforcing age restrictions, and preventing diversion to the illicit market requires a robust and well-funded regulatory framework.

WAY FORWARD

- **Comprehensive Regulation:** Develop a balanced regulatory framework that enables medical access while preventing misuse.
- **In-Depth Research:** Conduct thorough research on cannabis, including its medicinal benefits, economic potential, and health risks.
- **Robust Framework:** Create a strong regulatory system addressing drug abuse, health concerns, and criminal activities, with clear guidelines for licensing, oversight, age restrictions, product labelling, and quality control.

SOURCE:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/himachal-pradesh-inches-closer-to-cannabis-cultivation/article67291491.ece>

Q.1 The term “Delta9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)”, recently seen in the news is:

- (a) A chemical used in Detergents
- (b) An Enzyme used in Gene Editing
- (c) A psychoactive component
- (d) An Enzyme used in SARS-COV-2 Vaccine

ANSWER: C

Q.2 Consider the following statements regarding cannabis:

1. All parts of Cannabis are prohibited under the NDPS Act 1985.
2. The primary psychoactive component in cannabis is cannabidiol (CBD).
3. Legalising cannabis cultivation can help in textile Production.

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 Cannabis legalization is a complex issue that involves economic, social, and health considerations. Discuss the potential benefits and challenges of legalizing cannabis cultivation in India

EASTERN ECONOMIC FORUM

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the Topic details “Eastern Economic Forum”. This Topic has relevance in the Economy section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

About Eastern Economic Forum?

FOR MAINS:

GS 2: Economy

Significance of Vladivostok-Chennai Maritime Corridor for India?

WHY IN THE NEWS:

The 8th Eastern Economic Forum for 2023 was held in Vladivostok from the 10th to the 13th of September.

ABOUT EASTERN ECONOMIC FORUM:

- The Eastern Economic Forum is an international event that takes place annually in Vladivostok, Russia. It serves as a crucial international platform for building and strengthening relationships within the Russian and global investment communities.
- The forum also provides a comprehensive expert evaluation of the economic potential of the Russian Far East, its investment opportunities, and the business conditions within its advanced special economic zones.

INDIA’S PARTICIPATION IN THE 8TH EASTERN ECONOMIC FORUM 2023:

- Shri Sarbananda Sonowal, the Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways and Ayush, represented India at the Eastern Economic Forum in Russia.
- Shri Sonowal spoke at the session on the Eastern Maritime Corridor, exploring possibilities of the Northern Sea Route and establishing a Trans-shipment Hub in the Bay of Bengal to further strengthen bilateral relations.

- The Vladivostok-Chennai Maritime Corridor is a proposed sea route covering approximately 5,600 nautical miles, or about 10,300 km. This corridor aims to increase bilateral trade between India and Russia. The new sea route connects the eastern port cities of India and Russia.
- **The corridor is expected to cover the Sea of Japan, East and the South China Sea through the Malacca Strait to reach the Bay of Bengal.** The areas of economic engagement with Russia include transport, energy, agriculture, industry, and space.

THE VLADIVOSTOK-CHENNAI MARITIME CORRIDOR HOLDS SIGNIFICANT IMPORTANCE FOR INDIA FOR SEVERAL REASONS:

- **Efficiency and Connectivity:** This sea route, spanning approximately 5,600 nautical miles, connects the eastern port city of Chennai in India to Vladivostok in Russia. It reduces transport time to just 24 days, compared to over 40 days currently taken to transport goods from India to Far East Russia via Europe.
- **Trade and Investment Opportunities:** The corridor opens doors to a world of trade and investment opportunities. It paves the way for a mutually beneficial exchange of goods, resources, and expertise between India and Russia.
- **Geostrategic Importance:** The corridor aims to counterbalance China's growing influence in Southeast Asia. It poses significant security and economic challenges to China's Maritime Silk Road.
- **Energy Security:** The corridor presents an opportunity for India to diversify its energy sources by importing natural resources from Russia's Far East region. This could reduce India's dependence on Middle Eastern countries and ensure a more secure, stable energy supply chain.
- **Infrastructure Development and Employment Opportunities:** The development of this corridor could lead to significant infrastructure development and create employment opportunities in the region.
- **Strengthening Bilateral Relations:** The corridor is expected to strengthen the bilateral relations between India and Russia. It ensures connectivity between the two major ports, which will give impetus to the cooperation between India and the Russian Far East.

SOURCE:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/india-russia-exploring-use-of-northern-sea-route-eastern-maritime-corridor/article67304566.ece>

Q.1 Consider the following statements:

1. Vladivostok lies in the western part of Russia.
2. Chennai Vladivostok maritime corridor is one of the prominent Ancient trading routes.

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: D

Q.2 Consider the following statements about the Chennai Vladivostok corridor:

1. It passes through the South China Sea.
2. It is a part of the Ancient silk route.

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 The Vladivostok-Chennai Maritime Corridor is a significant development in India's trade and foreign relations. Discuss the potential impact of this corridor on India's economic, strategic, and geopolitical standing.

NATIONAL JUDICIAL DATA GRID (NJDG)

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG)". This topic has relevance in the "Polity and Governance" section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

What is National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG)?

FOR MAINS:

GS2: Polity and Governance

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Recently, Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud publicly announced in the Supreme Court about integrating the Supreme Court with the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG).

NATIONAL JUDICIAL DATA GRID (NJDG)

- NJDG is an online database containing information about orders, judgments, and case details from 18,735 District and subordinate Courts, High Courts and now Supreme Court.
- It's an integral part of the eCourts Project and can be accessed at <https://njdg.ecourts.gov.in/>
- NJDG provides real-time updates and detailed data, including information from the Taluka (sub-district) level to the Supreme Court of India.
- NJDG is developed as part of Phase II of the e-Courts project, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
- The platform is a collaborative effort between the National Informatics Centre (NIC) and the in-house software development team of the Computer Cell, Registry of the Supreme Court.
- It integrates data from over 18,735 computerised courts across India.

BENEFITS OF NATIONAL JUDICIAL DATA GRID (NJDG)

- NJDG serves as a monitoring tool to track and reduce case backlogs. For example, in the Supreme Court in 2023, there are 64,854 pending cases, largely due to legacy cases.
- It identifies bottlenecks in the judicial process. For instance, a sudden increase in land disputes can prompt policymakers to strengthen relevant laws.
- NJDG generates insights into specific areas of law. It's linked with Land Records data from 26 States for land disputes, providing valuable information for decision-makers.

EASE OF DOING BUSINESS RECOGNITION:

- The World Bank acknowledged the effectiveness of the National Judicial Data Grid in its Ease of Doing Business report for 2018.
- It was praised for its role in generating case management reports, simplifying the enforcement of contracts.

DATA ACCESSIBILITY:

- In line with the National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP) announced by the Government of India, the NJDG provides an Open Application Programming Interface (API).
- Central and State Government agencies can access NJDG data using a departmental ID and access key, facilitating institutional litigants in evaluating and monitoring cases.
- There are plans to extend this accessibility to non-institutional litigants in the future.

RECENT ADDITION:

- NJDG has recently incorporated a feature to specify the reasons for case delays.
- This addition is valuable as it allows tracking the judiciary's challenges during case adjudication.
- It enables decision-makers to take targeted steps to address the growing backlog of cases.

THE E-COURTS INTEGRATED MISSION MODE PROJECT:

- The e-Courts Integrated Mission Mode Project is a Government of India initiative to enhance access to justice through technology.
- It falls under the national e-Governance project of the Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice.
- The project's inception is rooted in the 'The National Policy and Action Plan for Implementation of ICT in the Indian Judiciary – 2005,' established by the e-Committee of the Supreme Court of India.
- Its primary objective is computerising district and subordinate courts to offer improved services to litigants, lawyers, and the judiciary.
- The project has been executed through a three-phase approach:

Phase	Objectives
Phase I (2011-2015)	Computerise 14,249 district and subordinate courts Launch of the national e-courts portal (ecourts.gov.in).
Phase II (2015-2023)	Computerise 18,735 district and subordinate courts, create NJDG
Phase III (Commencing in 2023)	Establish a unified technological platform for the judiciary, digitise all court records, universalise e-filing and e-payments, create virtual courts and eSewa Kendras

SOURCES:

Supreme Court information a click away as it joins National Judicial Data Grid – The Hindu

Q1. With reference to the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG), consider the following statements:

1. NJDG provides real-time updates and detailed data, including information from the Taluka (sub-district) level to the Supreme Court of India.
2. NJDG is developed as part of Phase I of the e-Courts project, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
3. NJDG does not integrate data from computerised courts but relies on manual data entry.

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: (b)

Q2. Consider the following:

1. National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) is a monitoring tool to track and reduce case backlogs, particularly in legacy cases.
2. NJDG generates insights into specific areas of law, notably in cases related to land disputes.
3. NJDG provides an Open Application Programming Interface (API) facilitating data access for government agencies and institutional and non-institutional litigants.

How many of the abovementioned statements are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Q3. How do initiatives like the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) and the e-Courts Project contribute to making justice more accessible and efficient in India?

HINDI DIWAS

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

FOR PRELIMS:

When is Hindi Diwas celebrated?

What is the Munshi Ayyangar Formula?

FOR MAINS:

GS2: Polity and Governance

WHY IN THE NEWS?

On Thursday, September 14, 2023, the Prime Minister extended his greetings on ‘Hindi Diwas,’ an annual observance promoting the Hindi language.

HINDI DIWAS

- Each year on September 14, India observes Hindi Diwas, a day that marks the adoption of Hindi as the official language of the country.

- On this day in 1949, the **Constituent Assembly of India recognised and adopted Hindi**—an Indo-Aryan language written in the Devanagari script—as the official language.
- The celebration of Hindi Diwas aims to promote and create awareness about the importance of the Hindi language in India’s cultural identity. It serves as a reminder of the linguistic diversity and cultural richness of the country.
- Hindi is one of the 22 scheduled languages of India and plays a significant role as the Official language.

HINDI – THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF INDIA

- The Constituent Assembly of India, post-independence, chose Hindi as the country’s official language after extensive discussion spanning three days.
- The choice was influenced by several considerations, including script and numeral choice. The languages considered for official status included Hindustani (with Urdu elements) and Sanskrit.

THE MUNSHI-AYYANGAR FORMULA

- To find a middle ground, the Munshi-Ayyangar formula, named after members of the Drafting Committee, K M Munshi and N Gopalaswamy Ayyangar, was embraced as a compromise solution.
- As per **Article 343** of the Constitution, based on this formula, the **official language of India would be Hindi in Devanagari script**, while the **numerals used would follow an international form of Indian numerals**.

CONTINUATION OF ENGLISH AND THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

- Despite the above clause, the **Constitution allowed the use of English for all official union purposes for 15 years post-adoption**.
- After that, protests erupted due to fears of Hindi imposition. In light of this reaction, the Centre maintained English as an official language alongside Hindi under the Official Languages Act, of 1963.

DEBATES IN THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

Speaker	Language Proposal	Key Points
RV Dhulekar	Hindi as a National Language	Advocated for Hindi as national and official language.
		Disagreed with the 15-year transition delay.
		Urged supporters to face opposition from English and Hindustani advocates.
Frank Anthony	Retain English	Argued against Hindi as the sole official language.
		Called for resistance against British influence on the English language.
Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra	Sanskrit as National Language	Proposed Sanskrit as the national and official language due to its cultural and historical significance.
Qazi Syed Karim-uddin	Promotion of Hindustani	Advocated for Hindustani as it was accessible to both Hindi and Urdu speakers.

TA Ramalingam Chettiar	Hindi Can't be National Language	Highlighted that Hindi's selection was based on its population, not superiority.
		Stressed that India's regions have their own native languages, challenging Hindi's national status.

Committee of Parliament on Official Language

The Rajbhasha Committee, also known as the Committee of Parliament on Official Languages, was created under the Official Languages Act of 1963 to assess how Hindi is used for official purposes.

Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review progress in Hindi used for official Union purposes. Make recommendations to enhance Hindi usage in official communications Submit reports to the President, who presents them to Parliament and State Governments.
Establishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1976
Chairperson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Union Home Minister
Total Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 (20 Lok Sabha MPs, 10 Rajya Sabha MPs)

The Constituent Assembly's decision on the official language was a vital turning point in India's linguistic journey, representing diverse viewpoints. Despite the initial choice of Hindi and subsequent adjustments to include English, the debate continues on India's official and national languages, reflecting the rich diversity of the country.

Sources:

PM Modi greets people on Hindi Diwas - The Hindu

Q1. Examine the statements and answer the questions according to the instructions given below:

Statement 1: Hindi Diwas is celebrated on September 18.

Statement 2: On Hindi Diwas Day in 1949, the Constituent Assembly of India recognized and adopted Hindi as the official language.

- (a) Statement 1 is true, statement -2 is true; statement 2 is the correct explanation for statement 1.
 (b) Statement 1 is true, statement 2 is true; statement 2 is NOT the correct explanation for statement 1.
 (c) Statement 1 is true, and statement 2 is false.
 (d) Statement 1 is false, and Statement 2 is true.

Answer: (d)

Q2. Consider the following:

- As per Article 343 of the Constitution, based on the Rao- Manmohan formula.
- The constitution allowed the use of English for all official union purposes for 99 years post-adop-

tion.

3. Centre maintained English as an official language alongside Hindi under the Constitution of India.

How many of the abovementioned statements are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

- Q3. Discuss the historical significance of Hindi Diwas in India, highlighting the process and factors that led to the adopting of Hindi as the official language.**

GLOBAL TRENDS IN CHILD MONETARY POVERTY

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the Topic details “GLOBAL TRENDS IN CHILD MONETARY POVERTY”. This Topic has relevance in the Social Justice section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

About the report?

FOR MAINS:

GS 2: Social Justice

Solutions?

WHY IN THE NEWS:

According to a recent evaluation titled “Global Trends in Child Monetary Poverty,” carried out in collaboration between the World Bank Group and UNICEF, a shocking percentage of the global extreme poverty population consists of children.

ABOUT THE REPORT:

Child Poverty Worldwide

- In 2022, an alarming 52.5 per cent of the global extreme poor population were children, highlighting that every other person in extreme poverty is a child.

Increasing Child Share in Poverty

- The proportion of children among the extremely poor rose from 47.3 per cent in 2013 to 52.5 per cent in 2022.

Continuous Assessment

- This is the third joint assessment by the World Bank Group and UNICEF, with a new global poverty line of \$2.15 introduced in mid-September 2022, using updated data from the World Bank's Poverty and Inequality Platform.

Child Poverty Disparities

- Child poverty exhibits a stark disparity, with 9 per cent of children in extreme poverty compared to 6.6 per cent of adults. Children comprise over half of the extreme poor, constituting 31 per cent of the total population.

Child Poverty in India

- India struggles with child poverty, **with 11.5 per cent of children living in impoverished households, translating to a staggering 52 million Indian children.**

Age-Related Poverty Disparities

- Among children, those aged 0-5 have the highest poverty rate, with 18.3 per cent (99 million children) living in extreme poverty. Child poverty is more severe compared to adults.

Regional Concentration

- Child poverty is concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, accounting for 90 per cent of the world's impoverished children. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest child poverty rate globally at 40 per cent.

Pandemic Impact

- Child poverty decreased globally until the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted progress, causing a notable increase in 2020. Reductions resumed in 2021 but did not match pre-pandemic rates.

CHALLENGE:

- Persistent child poverty challenges the global commitment to eliminate extreme poverty by 2030 (Sustainable Development Goals).

SOLUTIONS:

- **Education:** Investing in quality education and vocational training to equip children with skills for better economic opportunities.
- **Nutrition and Healthcare:** Ensuring access to nutritious food, healthcare, and clean water to improve child well-being.
- **Social Protection:** Implementing social safety nets and financial assistance programs for vulnerable families.

- **Regional Development:** Focusing on economic development and infrastructure in regions with high child poverty rates.
- **Global Collaboration:** Encouraging international cooperation and funding to combat child poverty on a global scale.

Child poverty is a pressing global issue that requires immediate attention and collective action. The assessment underscores the importance of developing and implementing strategies to lift children out of poverty, contributing to the broader goal of eradicating extreme poverty worldwide.

SOURCE:

<https://www.unicef.org/documents/child-poverty-trends>

Q.1 Global Trends in Child Monetary Poverty assessment is published by:

- (a) IMF
- (b) WEF
- (c) UNDP
- (d) UNICEF

ANSWER: D

Q.2 Consider the following statements

1. Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia account for 90 per cent of the world's impoverished children.
2. Extreme poverty is more prevalent in children than in adults

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.3 Discuss the impact of child poverty on achieving global sustainable development goals and outline potential strategies that can be employed to alleviate child poverty on a global scale.

SHREYAS SCHEME FOR SC AND OBC STUDENTS

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs”, and the topic details “SHREYAS Scheme for SC and OBC Students”. This topic has relevance in the “Social Justice” section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

What is SHREYAS Scheme for SC and OBC Students?

What are its sub-schemes?

FOR MAINS:

GS2: Social Justice

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The **SHREYAS (Scheme for Higher Education and Research Yielding Accelerated Growth of Students)** scheme has been instrumental in empowering thousands of students belonging to Scheduled Castes (SC) and Other Backward Classes (OBC). Since its inception in 2014, the scheme has allocated over 2300 crore rupees to support the education of SC and OBC students.

SHREYAS SCHEME FOR SC AND OBC STUDENTS OVERVIEW

- The SHREYAS scheme is an umbrella scheme that comprises four central sector sub-schemes:
 - **Free Coaching Scheme for SCs and OBCs**
 - **Top-Class Education for SCs**
 - **National Overseas Scheme for SCs**
 - **National Fellowship for SCs**
- The **Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment** scheme aims to provide educational and financial support to economically disadvantaged SC and OBC students to pursue higher education and achieve their academic and career goals.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for the SHREYAS scheme, students must meet the following criteria:

- Be a member of the Scheduled Castes (SCs) or Other Backward Classes (OBCs)
- Have a total family income of less than Rs. 8 lakhs per annum
- Meet the specific eligibility criteria for each sub-scheme

BENEFITS

- The benefits provided by the SHREYAS scheme vary depending on the sub-scheme. However, all

sub-schemes provide financial assistance to cover the cost of tuition, living expenses, and other educational expenses.

SUB-SCHEME DETAILS

- **Free Coaching Scheme for SCs and OBCs**

- **Objective:** To provide free coaching to SC and OBC students for competitive and entrance examinations
- **Eligibility:** Students who have passed the 12th class examination are preparing for competitive and entrance examinations such as JEE, NEET, UPSC Civil Services Examination, etc.
- **Benefits:** Full tuition fee and non-refundable charges, as well as a monthly stipend to cover living expenses.

- **Top-Class Education for SCs**

- **Objective:** To provide full financial support to SC students to pursue higher education at top-ranked institutions in India
- **Eligibility:** SC students who have secured admission to a top-ranked institution in India, such as an IIT, NIT, IIM, or AIIMS
- **Benefits:** Full tuition fee and non-refundable charges, as well as an academic allowance to cover living expenses

- **National Overseas Scheme for SCs**

- **Objective:** To provide financial assistance to SC students to pursue master's and Ph.D. level courses abroad
- **Eligibility:** SC students who have secured admission to a top-500 QS-ranked foreign university/institution
- **Benefits:** Full tuition fee, maintenance and contingency allowance, visa fee, to and fro air passage, etc.

- **National Fellowship for SC Students**

- **Objective:** To provide fellowships to SC students to pursue M.Phil./Ph.D. degrees in Indian universities/institutions/colleges
- **Eligibility:** SC students who have qualified for the UGC-NET-JRF or UGC-CSIR Joint Test
- **Benefits:** Fellowship amount, contingency allowance, and HRA

The SHREYAS scheme is a valuable resource for SC and OBC students pursuing higher education. The scheme provides much-needed financial and educational support to help students achieve their academic and career goals.

Sources:

SHREYAS Scheme for SC and OBC Students

Q1. Which of the following options correctly describes the SHREYAS Scheme?

1. A scheme to provide quality residential education for meritorious Scheduled Castes (SC) students.
2. A scheme to provide quality residential education for meritorious Scheduled Tribes (ST) students.
3. A scheme to provide educational and financial support to economically disadvantaged SC and OBC.
4. A scheme to develop more than 14500 PM SHRI Schools managed by Central Government/State/UT Government/local bodies.

Answer: (c)

Q2. Consider the following:

- Free Coaching Scheme for SCs and OBCs
- National Overseas Scheme for SCs
- Residential Schools for SC and OBCs
- Scholarship Scheme for OBCs

How many of the above given are sub schemes of SHREYAS scheme?

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

Answer: (b)

Q3. Enumerate and evaluate the various government initiatives the Government of India took to improve education in SC, ST, OBC, and minority communities.

WOMEN'S RESERVATION BILL

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs", and the Topic details "Women's Reservation Bill". This Topic has relevance in the Polity and Governance section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

About Women's reservations?

FOR MAINS:

GS 2: Polity and Governance

Why is it Required?

Various aspects of the Women's Reservation Bill?

WHY IN THE NEWS:

The bill proposing reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies was presented in Parliament on Tuesday

BACKGROUND:

- In 1996, the Lok Sabha saw the introduction of the Constitution (81st Amendment) Bill, aiming to reserve one-third of seats for women in Parliament and state legislatures. A Joint Committee recommended changes to ensure clarity in the wording and suggested extending reservations to the Rajya Sabha and Legislative Councils, even considering the inclusion of reservations for Other Backward Classes (OBCs). The committee proposed a 15-year reservation period, Subject to review.
- Attempts by BJP-led NDA Government From 1998 to 2004, the BJP-led NDA government made multiple efforts to pass the Bill. However, these attempts faced opposition from coalition partners and other quarters.
- Push by UPA The UPA government took up the cause in 2008, introducing the Bill in the Rajya Sabha. It was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee, which recommended its passage without delay. In 2010, the Rajya Sabha passed the Bill with a two-thirds majority. Despite this, due to internal differences within the UPA and the Cabinet, the Bill never made it to the Lok Sabha and lapsed with the dissolution of the 15th Lower House.
- BJP reiterated its commitment to the cause in its manifestos for the 2014 and 2019 elections. The party recognized women as a significant constituency, benefiting from women-focused welfare schemes like the Ujjwala Yojna.

WHY IS IT REQUIRED?

- **Increasing Women Participation:** Over the years, there has been a gradual and consistent rise in the number of women candidates contesting Lok Sabha elections, from a mere 45 in 1957 to 726 in 2019. This trend signifies growing interest and engagement of women in the political process.
- **Rising Women's Turnout:** Women's participation in the electoral process has also shown a positive trajectory. In 1962, 46.6% of women electors exercised their voting rights, and this figure increased to 67.2% in 2019. This demonstrates an increasing awareness and involvement of women in shaping the nation's future.
- **Disparity in Representation:** Despite the increasing participation of women in elections, their representation in the Lok Sabha remains disproportionately low. In the inaugural Lok Sabha in 1952, there were 22 women MPs, constituting 4.41% of the total 489 members. While the 2019 elections saw a record high of 78 women elected, it still only accounted for 14.36% of the total.

This falls significantly short of the envisioned 33% reservation in the Women's Reservation Bill.

VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE WOMEN'S RESERVATION BILL

- **Empowerment of Women:** The Women's Reservation Bill would facilitate affirmative action, promoting the empowerment of women in the political sphere. Similar efforts at the grassroots level, such as the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, which reserves seats for women in panchayats, have led to gender-sensitive decision-making, increased responsiveness to women's issues, and greater participation of women in local governance.
- **Decriminalization of Politics:** Increasing the representation of women in legislatures could potentially contribute to the decriminalisation of politics. Research indicates that women legislators are less likely to face criminal charges than their male counterparts. This could lead to cleaner and more ethical politics.
- **Distraction from Electoral Reforms:** Critics argue that the focus on women's reservation may divert attention away from other crucial electoral reforms, such as improving intra-party democracy, reducing the influence of money in politics, and enhancing transparency. These broader reforms are seen as necessary for improving the overall quality of Indian democracy.
- **Limiting Voter Choice:** Another concern is that reserving seats for women could limit voters' choices. In constituencies reserved for women, voters may not have the opportunity to elect their preferred candidate based on merit, regardless of gender. This could lead to situations where less-qualified candidates are elected simply because of gender-based reservations.
- **Incentive to Work:** Critics also argue that the rotation of reserved constituencies may limit the incentive for women MPs to work effectively. Knowing that they will not be re-elected from the same constituency in the next term may reduce their motivation to invest in long-term development projects in their constituencies.

The Women's Reservation Bill is a complex issue with both advantages and disadvantages. The debate surrounding it involves considerations of gender equality, effective governance, and electoral reforms, and policymakers must weigh these factors carefully when making decisions about its implementation.

Source:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-politics/womens-reservation-history-rajiv-gandhi-narasimha-rao-8945826/>

Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding the Women's Reservation Bill:

1. The Women's Reservation Bill proposes to reserve 33% of seats in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies for women
2. Several Indian states have enacted legal provisions to ensure 50% reservation for women in local bodies.

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 regarding the Women's Reservation Bill:

1. The 73rd amendments to the Constitution mandated the reservation of one-third of seats for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions
2. The Bill proposes that reservation of seats for women will cease to exist 30 years after the commencement

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 contemporary status of women's representation in Indian politics. Analyze the significance of the Women's Reservation Bill in addressing gender disparities in legislative bodies.

SHREYAS SCHEME

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the Topic details "Shreyas Scheme". This Topic has relevance in the Social Justice section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 2: Social Justice

WHY IN THE NEWS:

Over 2300 crore rupees has been allocated for the education of SC and OBC students since 2014

About Shreyas Scheme The Shreyas scheme, launched in 2014, comprises four central sector sub-schemes with the goal of providing educational empowerment to students from Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

SUB-SCHEME 1: COSTFREE COACHING SCHEME FOR SCs AND OBCs

Objective:

- Provide free coaching to economically disadvantaged SC and OBC candidates.
- Prepare them for competitive and entrance exams for government and private sector jobs.
- Help them get into prestigious technical and professional higher education institutions.

Key Details:

- Family income ceiling: Maximum annual income of 8 lakhs.
- Annual allocation: 3500 slots.
- SC: OBC student ratio: 70:30.
- 30% slots reserved for females.
- Flexibility to ensure at least 50% SC students.

Impact:

- Funding Allocation (2014-15 to 2022-23): 77 crore rupees.
- Beneficiaries: 19,995 students.

SUB-SCHEME 2: TOP-CLASS EDUCATION FOR SCs

Objective:

- Promote quality education for SC students.
- Provide complete financial assistance for education beyond the 12th grade.
- Scholarships continue based on satisfactory performance.
- Includes prestigious institutions.

Key Details:

- Family income ceiling: Maximum annual income of 8 lakhs.
- Allocation (2021-22 to 2025-26): 21,500 scholarships.
- Financial support covers tuition fees, academic allowance, and living expenses.

Impact:

- Funding Allocation (2014-15 to 2022-23): 43 crore rupees.
- Beneficiaries: 21,988 students.

SUB-SCHEME 3: NATIONAL OVERSEAS SCHEME FOR SCs

Objective:

- Provide financial assistance for master's and Ph.D. level courses abroad.
- Available to SCs, De-notified, Nomadic, Semi-Nomadic Tribes, and other eligible groups.
- Offers admission to foreign Institutes/Universities ranked within the top 500 by QS.
- Includes coverage for tuition fees, living expenses, visa fees, and air travel.

Key Details:

- Family income ceiling: Less than Rs. 8 lakhs per annum.
- Criteria: More than 60% marks in the qualifying examination, below 35 years of age.

Impact:

- Funding Allocation (2014-15 to 2022-23): 14 crore rupees.
- Beneficiaries: 950 students.

SUB-SCHEME 4: NATIONAL FELLOWSHIP FOR SC STUDENTS

Objective:

- Assist SC students in pursuing advanced education towards Phil/Ph.D. degrees.
- Applicable to fields of study in Sciences, Humanities, and Social Sciences.
- Dependent on eligibility through qualifying exams such as NET-JRF and UGC-CSIR Joint Test.
- Generous fellowship rates and no financial ceiling.

Impact:

- Funding Allocation (2014-15 to 2022-23): 89 crore rupees.
- Beneficiaries: 21,326 students.
- These schemes aim to provide educational opportunities and support to SC and OBC students, including coaching, scholarships, overseas education assistance, and fellowships for higher studies.

Source:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1958644>

Q.1 Consider the following:

1. Scheduled Castes
2. Scheduled Tribes
3. Other Backward Castes

4. Economically weaker Sections

How many of the above are the beneficiaries of the Shreyas Scheme?

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

ANSWER: B

Q.2 “Discuss the objectives and impact of the SHREYAS scheme and its sub-schemes designed for the upliftment of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in India. Analyze the effectiveness of these initiatives in promoting inclusive education and socio-economic empowerment among disadvantaged students.

WHO RELEASES GLOBAL REPORT ON HYPERTENSION

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “WHO Releases Global Report on Hypertension”. This topic has relevance in the “Social Justice” section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

What is Hypertension?

Who releases the Global Report on Hypertension?

FOR MAINS:

GS2: Social Justice

WHY IN THE NEWS?

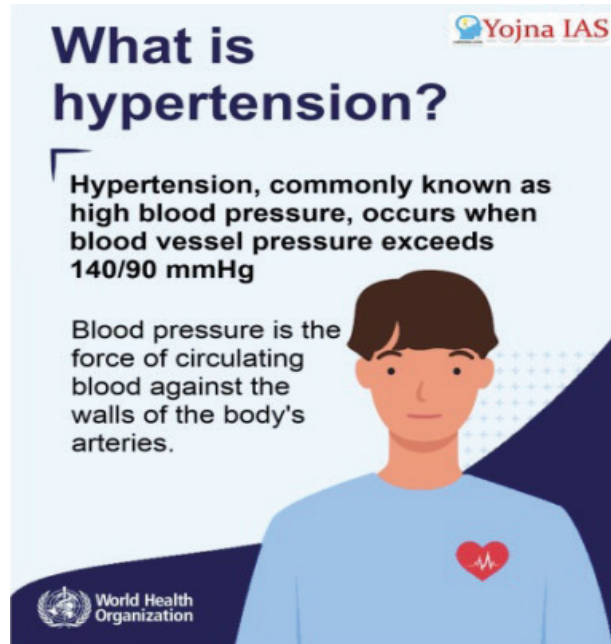
World Health Organization (WHO) released its first-ever report on the global impact of high blood pressure on 19 September.

GLOBAL REPORT ON HYPERTENSION: THE RACE AGAINST A SILENT KILLER

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has unveiled its latest report titled “Global Report on Hypertension: The Race Against a Silent Killer.”
- This report marks the first comprehensive compilation of data on the extensive consequences of uncontrolled hypertension, encompassing heart attacks, strokes, premature death, and substantial economic burdens on communities and nations.

UNDERSTANDING HYPERTENSION

- Hypertension, commonly known as high blood pressure, occurs when blood vessel pressure exceeds 140/90 mmHg. While prevalent, untreated hypertension can have serious health implications.



KEY FINDINGS FROM THE REPORT

- **Global Impact:**
 - High blood pressure now surpasses other leading risk factors, including tobacco use and high blood sugar, as a cause of mortality worldwide.
 - The report reveals a twofold increase in the global population affected by hypertension between 1990 and 2019, with over three-quarters of affected adults residing in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs).
 - High systolic blood pressure ranks as the leading global risk factor for mortality.
- **Indian Perspective:**
 - India records an estimated 188.3 million adults aged 30–79 with hypertension.
 - To attain a 50% control rate, an additional 67 million individuals in India require adequate treatment.
 - The nation's hypertension prevalence, at 31%, slightly lags behind the global average. Approximately 37% have received diagnoses, while 30% are undergoing treatment.
 - The India Hypertension Control Initiative, a part of the National Health Mission, has garnered recognition for its commendable work in primary healthcare.
- **The Silent Killer:**

- Hypertension affects one in three adults and often manifests without symptoms, earning its reputation as the “silent killer.”
- Nearly **half of those with hypertension are unaware** of their condition.
- **Global Prevalence:**
 - One-third of the world’s adult population faces hypertension, predisposing them to heart disease, stroke, and mortality.
 - Males exhibit a slightly higher prevalence (34%) than females (32%).
- **Hypertension Care:**
 - Among adults aged 30–79 with hypertension, only 54% have received diagnoses, 42% are undergoing treatment, and 21% have their hypertension under control.
 - Treatment coverage ranges from a high of 60% in the Region of the Americas to a low of 27% in the African Region.
- **Global Targets and Prevention:**
 - The world is not on track to meet the voluntary global target of a 25% reduction in raised blood pressure prevalence by 2025.
 - Increasing global hypertension control to 50% could prevent 76 million deaths between 2023 and 2050, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goal target 3.4 of reducing premature mortality from non-communicable diseases.
- **Key Recommendations**
 - **National Leadership and Accountability:** Establish national mechanisms to oversee and enhance the allocation of resources and implementation of integrated responses to noncommunicable diseases, specifically focusing on hypertension control.
 - **Comprehensive Programs:** Develop programs addressing hypertension risk factors, including promoting healthy diets, reducing tobacco and alcohol use, and integrating physical activity into daily life.
 - **Implement WHO HEARTS Package:** Adopt drug-specific treatment protocols, ensure a reliable drug supply, create team-based care, make healthcare patient-friendly, and establish an accurate information system for hypertension care data.
 - **Address Broader Factors:** Strengthen healthcare systems and expand hypertension services to reach everyone gradually.

Sources:

Silent killer: The Hindu editorial on hypertension and the first WHO report on the subject – The Hindu

Q1. With reference to the Global Report on Hypertension, consider the following statements:

1. The first report on Hypertension was published in 2020.
2. The Global Report on Hypertension was published by the World Health Organization (WHO).
3. The report is a comprehensive compilation of data on the wide-ranging impacts of uncontrolled hypertension, including heart attacks and strokes.

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: (b)

Q2. Consider the following:

1. According to the Global Report on Hypertension, nearly two-thirds of those with hypertension are unaware of their condition.
2. The India Hypertension Control Initiative is a part of the Ayushman Bharat.
3. One-third of the world's adult population faces hypertension, with females being more prevalent than males.

How many of the abovementioned statements are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

Q3. Examine the WHO's 'Global Report on Hypertension,' its significance for global public health, and challenges in tackling hypertension.

GOBARDHAN SCHEME

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

FOR PRELIMS:

What is Gobardhan Scheme?

FOR MAINS:

GS2: Economy

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Recently, the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS), Ministry of Jal Shakti, introduced a **Unified Registration Portal for GOBARDhan** to streamline the registration of CBG and biogas plants nationwide.

GOBARDHAN SCHEME

- GOBARDhan (Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan) is a significant initiative undertaken by the Government of India to **convert waste into wealth and promote a circular economy**.
- It aims to establish a robust **ecosystem for Biogas/ Compressed Biogas (CBG)/ Bio-Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) plants**, driving sustainable economic growth and addressing India’s climate action objectives.
- The GOBARDhan scheme is a sub-scheme of the Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin-Phase 2.
- The **Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS)**, Ministry of Jal Shakti, is the **nodal department** for GOBARDhan.

INITIATIVES ENABLING GOBARDHAN SCHEME:

- **Market Development Assistance (MDA):**
 - The **Department of Fertilisers** has implemented the Market Development Assistance (MDA) program to promote the production and adoption of organic fertilisers derived from GOBARDhan biogas plants.
 - A substantial Rs. 1451.82 Crore budget has been allocated for MDA over three years (FY 2023-24 to FY 2025-26).
 - MDA aims to reduce the excessive use of chemical fertilisers and promote Integrated Nutrient Management across agricultural practices.
 - The program focuses on two key objectives: efficient organic waste management and enhancing soil organic carbon in agricultural soils, creating fertile conditions for organic farming.



Objectives

- Efficient Organic Waste Management
- Soil Organic Carbon Enhancement
- Promotion of Organic Farming Practices

OTHER INITIATIVES ENABLING GOBARDHAN:

- **Standardising bio-slurry:**
 - Bio-slurry, a byproduct of the biogas production process, has significant potential to increase the use of organic farming practices and provide economic benefits to farmers.
 - Efforts are being made to standardise the production and utilisation of bio-slurry to enhance its effectiveness as an organic fertiliser.
- **Inclusion of CBG plants in the AIF and AHIDF:**
 - The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has included Compressed Biogas (CBG) plants in the Agri Infrastructure Fund (AIF) and Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF).
 - This recognition and support from RBI contribute to the development and financial backing of CBG plants, further enabling the success of the GOBARDhan scheme.
- **Revisions in categorisation and recalibration of CBG plant categories:**
 - The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has revised the categorisation and calibration of CBG plant categories.
 - This step ensures that CBG plants are assessed and regulated effectively, improving their efficiency and overall performance.
- **Revival of Waste to Energy Scheme:**
 - The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has revived the Waste to Energy Scheme, which complements the GOBARDhan scheme.
 - This initiative promotes converting various types of waste, including organic waste, into energy, further supporting the circular economy approach.

BENEFITS AND IMPACTS:

- **Clean Energy Transition:** The shift towards CBG/biogas contributes to India's clean energy transition, ensuring energy security, affordability, and reduced environmental impact.
- **Rural Employment Opportunities:** Establishing biogas plants creates job opportunities for semi-skilled and skilled labour, stimulating rural economies.
- **Women's Empowerment and Improved Health:** Access to clean fuel through CBG/biogas

improves hygiene in villages, reduces the incidence of diseases, and benefits rural communities, particularly women.

- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** GOBARdhan is in line with India's goals of achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and others.
- **Circular Economy:** GOBARdhan significantly contributes to the circular economy by converting waste into valuable resources and promoting a sustainable waste management system.

Sources:

Press Information Bureau (pib.gov.in)

Q1. With reference to GOBARdhan Scheme, consider the following statements:

1. The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS), Ministry of Jal Shakti, is the nodal department for GOBARdhan.
2. Compressed Biogas (CBG) plants are included in the Agri Infrastructure Fund (AIF) and Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF).
3. The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has revived the Waste to Energy Scheme, which complements the GOBARdhan scheme.

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: (d)

Q2. Consider the following:

1. Help in managing the major solid waste in villages.
2. Promotion of linear economy
3. Improved hygiene and health
4. Providing employment in rural areas

How many of the abovementioned are benefits of GOBARdhan?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two

(c) Only three

(d) All Four

Answer: (c)

Q3. Discuss the key initiatives and impacts of the GOBARdhan scheme in promoting a circular economy and achieving India's climate action objectives.



General Studies -3

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

CATTLE GENOMICS SCHEME

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

FOR PRELIMS:

What is the Cattle Genomics Scheme?

What is genomics?

FOR MAINS:

GS3: Economics of Animal Rearing

GS3: Science and Technology

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Cattle Genomics Scheme has garnered significant attention in the news due to its multifaceted approach and potential impact on farmers and the rural economy.

CATTLE GENOMICS SCHEME:

- The Cattle Genomics Scheme, launched by the **Department of Biotechnology (DBT)** in collaboration with the Union Ministry of Science and Technology and Earth Science, aims to empower farmers and bolster the rural economy.

AIM OF CATTLE GENOMICS SCHEME:

- Creating Farmer-Scientist Networks:
- Establishing direct connections between farmers and scientists to enhance productivity through scientific interventions and education.
- Selected research institutes will play a pivotal role in advancing cattle genomics.
- Selective Breeding for High-Yielding, Disease-Resistant Livestock:
 - The scheme’s core objective is to promote selective breeding of local livestock, ensuring the development of high-yielding, disease-resistant, and resilient cattle.

IMPORTANCE OF CATTLE GENOMICS SCHEME:

- Poverty Reduction and Rural Livelihoods: Livestock’s significant role in reducing poverty and supporting rural livelihoods.
- Meeting Growing Demand for Animal Products: Increasing demand for animal food products by 2020 highlights the need to enhance livestock productivity.
- Overcoming Limitations of Traditional Selection: Traditional selection methods for genetic improvement have inherent limitations. Genomic selection provides a more precise and sustainable alternative.
- Cost and Time Reduction with High-Density DNA Chips: Development of high-density DNA chips reduces the cost and time required for breeding programs.

BENEFITS OF CATTLE GENOMICS:

- **Improved Cattle Health:** Genomic tools contribute to enhancing cattle health, particularly in combating infectious diseases.
- **Reducing Economic Burden of Infectious Diseases:** Genomic selection minimises the economic burden associated with infectious diseases, reducing reliance on vaccines and antibiotics.
- **Development of Disease-Resistant Livestock:** Genomic tools facilitate the creation of breeding programs focused on developing less susceptible livestock.

FUTURE APPLICATION OF CATTLE GENOMICS SCHEME:

- **Enhancing Production Performance and Disease Resistance:** Research in cattle germplasm improvement is crucial for enhancing production performance and disease resistance.
- **Global Adoption of Genomic Selection:** Genomic selection has successfully been applied in various countries, predicting economically important traits and disease susceptibility.
- **Accelerating Genetic Gains in Developing Countries:** Developing nations like India are adopting genomic selection to expedite genetic improvements in large animals.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

What is Genomics?

- Genomics is the study of an organism's complete set of DNA, encompassing all genes and their interactions.
- Genomics involves DNA sequencing, bioinformatics, and genetic analysis to understand the structure and function of genomes.
- It aids in predicting future genetic potential and optimizing breeding programs for livestock.

Genomics is applied across various domains:

- **Human Health:** It aids in developing novel diagnostic tests and treatments for diseases like cancer, heart disease, and Alzheimer's disease.
- **Agriculture:** Genomics enhances crop yields and boosts resistance to pests and diseases in agriculture.
- **Environmental Science:** It contributes to the study of pollution and climate change impacts on organisms in environmental science.
- **Evolutionary Research:** Genomics helps comprehend the evolutionary relationships among diverse organisms.

IndiGau

- **IndiGau, India's first Cattle Genomic Chip** was launched by National Institute of Animal Biotechnology (NIAB), Hyderabad.
- This chip **aims to conserve pure varieties of indigenous cattle breeds**, including Gir, Kankrej, Sahiwal, Ongole, and more.
- **IndiGau is the world's largest purely indigenous cattle chip.**
- Its primary objective is to conserve indigenous cattle breeds with desirable traits, contributing to the goal of doubling farmers' income by 2022.
- The development of this chip aligns with the Rashtriya Gokul Mission and showcases India's self-reliance (Atmanirbhar Bharat).
- Moreover, the chip demonstrates the application of scientific knowledge and innovations for

enhancing the quality of life for all segments of society.

Sources:

Press Information Bureau (pib.gov.in)

Q1. With reference to Cattle Genomics Scheme, consider the following statements:

1. The Cattle Genomics Scheme aims to empower farmers and bolster the rural economy by establishing direct connections between farmers and scientists.
2. Cattle genomics can be used to breed high-yielding, disease-resistant cattle.
3. The Scheme is launched by the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairy.

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. Personalised Medicine
2. Crop Improvement
3. Disease Diagnosis
4. Forensic Analysis
5. Weather Forecasting
6. Evolutionary Biology

How many of the abovementioned are applications of Genomics?

- (a) Only two
- (b) Only three
- (c) Only five
- (d) All six

Answer: (c)

Q3. Discuss the significance of genomics in agriculture and livestock development, focusing on its potential impact on the Indian rural economy. Elaborate on the objectives and benefits of the Cattle Genomics Scheme.

NATIONAL MISSION FOR CLEAN GANGA (NMCG)

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)”. The topic “National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)” has relevance in the “Ecology and Environment” section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

*What is the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)?
Its Objectives and Institutional Framework?*

FOR MAINS:

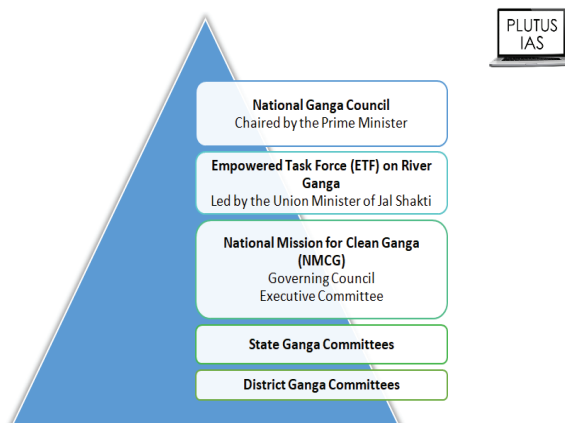
GS3: Ecology and Environment

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Under the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), the Government has implemented treatment plants.

NATIONAL MISSION FOR CLEAN GANGA (NMCG)

- Formation: NMCG was officially registered as a society on August 12, 2011, in accordance with the Societies Registration Act 1860.
- Role as the Implementation Arm of NGRBA: Initially, NMCG functioned as the implementation body of the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA), which was established under the Environment (Protection) Act (EPA) of 1986.
- Dissolution of NGRBA and Emergence of National Ganga Council: In 2016, NGRBA was dissolved, coinciding with the creation of the National Council for Rejuvenation, Protection, and Management of River Ganga, known as the National Ganga Council.
- Aim and Purpose:
 - The goal is to employ a **river basin approach** to effectively **reduce pollution and revitalise the Ganga River**.
 - The objective is to uphold a **minimum ecological flow in the Ganga River**, striving for water quality and environmentally sustainable development.
- Five-Tier Structural Framework



- **NMCG's Two-Tier Structure:** Under the Leadership of Director General, NMCG adopts a two-tier management structure comprising: **Governing Council** and **Executive Committee**.
 - The Director General (DG) of NMCG holds the position of Additional Secretary in the Government of India, ensuring effective project implementation and coordination at the national and state levels.
- State Program Management Groups (SPMGs): Implementing Arm at State Level
 - Parallel to the national structure, State Program Management Groups (SPMGs) serve as the implementing bodies for State Ganga Committees. These groups are headed by senior officers from the respective states.
- Holistic Approach to Ganga Cleaning and Rejuvenation
 - This newly established structure aims to
 - facilitate collaboration among all stakeholders involved in the mission,
 - fostering a holistic approach to the cleaning and rejuvenation of the Ganga river.

SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS IN GANGA CLEANING

- **Improved Water Quality:** Water quality in the Ganga River now conforms to the “prescribed limits of notified primary bathing water quality.”
- **Increase in Dolphin Population:** The Ganga River has witnessed a remarkable increase in the population of dolphins, both adult and juvenile, rising from 2,000 to approximately 4,000. This indicates a healthier aquatic ecosystem.
- **Resurgence of Indian Carp:** The presence of Indian carp, a fish species known to thrive in clean water, has been reported more frequently by fishermen. This is a strong indicator of improved water quality.
- **Development of Water Quality Index:** The NMCG is actively working on developing a comprehensive water quality index, akin to the air quality index, to enhance communication about river-water quality. This initiative will facilitate better monitoring and understanding of Ganga's water quality at various locations.
- **Increase in Sewage Treatment Capacity:** The mission has seen a substantial increase in sewage treatment capacity, with STPs capable of treating 2,665 MLD already commissioned and operational. In the last fiscal year (2022-23), 1,455 MLD of capacity was completed, marking significant progress in addressing sewage pollution.

WAY FORWARD:

- Continue strict monitoring and enforcement of water quality standards.
- Expedite sewage treatment projects and identify areas needing treatment plants.
- Promote sustainable agricultural practices to reduce runoff.
- Conserve biodiversity and protect aquatic species.
- Engage local communities in awareness and cleanup efforts.
- Encourage research and innovation in river rejuvenation.

Sources:

Seven years on, mission to clean the Ganga remains a work in progress – The Hindu

Q1. With reference to National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) , consider the following statements:

1. The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) was constituted under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act.
2. NMCG works as the implementation arm of the National Ganga Council.

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 statements:

1. The National Ganga Council is chaired by the Prime Minister of India.
2. The Empowered Task Force on River Ganga is headed by the Chief Ministers of Ganga River Basin on the basis of rotation.
3. Director General of NMCG holds the position of Additional Secretary in the Government of India

How many of the abovementioned statements are correct ?

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

Answer: (b)

Q3. What are the primary objectives and goals of NMCG in its mission to clean and revitalise the Ganga River? Analyse the significant achievements of NMCG in improving the water quality and ecological health of the Ganga River.

IPBES INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES ASSESSMENT

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “IPBES Invasive Alien Species Assessment”. The topic “IPBES Invasive Alien Species Assessment” has relevance in the “Ecology and Environment” section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

What are Invasive Alien Species?

What is IPBES?

FOR MAINS:

GS3: Ecology and Environment

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) recently released a report on Invasive Alien Species.

INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

- An invasive species is one that is **not indigenous to a specific area and has a negative impact on the environment, economy, or human health**. Invasive species can be intentionally or unintentionally introduced into a new area.
- Invasive species establish themselves in an environment by outcompeting native wildlife, causing infrastructure damage, and endangering human health and livelihoods.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PLATFORM ON BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES (IPBES)

- IPBES, also known as the “IPCC for biodiversity,” is an independent intergovernmental body with over 140 member governments.
- It was established by governments in 2012 to provide policymakers with objective scientific assessments of the state of knowledge regarding the planet’s biodiversity, ecosystems, and the contributions they make to people, as well as the tools and methods for protecting and using these vital natural assets in a sustainable manner.
- It is not a United Nations organisation. However, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) provides secretariat services to IPBES at the request of the IPBES Plenary and with the authorization of the UNEP Governing Council in 2013.

ASSESSMENT REPORT ON INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES AND THEIR CONTROL

- According to the report, human activities have introduced approximately 37,000 alien species, encompassing both plants and animals, to various regions and biomes worldwide.
- Among these, there are over 3,500 invasive alien species, which have played a significant role in causing 60% of documented global extinctions in both plant and animal species.
- The report also highlights that invasive alien species rank among the top five primary drivers of biodiversity loss on a global scale.
- The report underscores that the proliferation of alien species has been an ongoing trend for centuries across all regions. However, it is now accelerating at an unprecedented pace, primarily due to increased human mobility, trade, and the expansion of the global economy.
- Notably, roughly 6% of introduced plant species, 22% of introduced invertebrates, 14% of introduced vertebrates, and 11% of introduced microbes are recognized as invasive, posing substantial threats to both natural ecosystems and human well-being.
- This comprehensive study, conducted over a four-year period, involved the collaboration of 86 leading experts hailing from 49 countries. Their research drew upon a vast body of knowledge, encompassing more than 13,000 references.

MAJOR INVASIVE SPECIES

- The water hyacinth is the most common invasive alien species on land in the world.
- Lantana, a flowering shrub, and the black rat are the second and third most common species on the planet.



- The brown rat and house mouse are two other common invasive alien species.
- The Caribbean false mussel devastates Kerala's important fishery resources by eradicating native clams and oysters.
- Malaria, Zika, and West Nile Fever are spread by invasive species such as Aedes albopictus and Aedes aegyptii.



METHODS TO CONTROL INVASIVE SPECIES

- Physical removal: This involves physically removing the invasive species from the environment. This can be done by hand, using tools such as traps or nets, or by using herbicides or pesticides.
- Biological control: This includes using natural predators or parasites to control the invasive species. This can be a more sustainable approach than physical removal, but it can also be more difficult to implement.
- Genetic control: It involves introducing genes into the invasive species that will make them sterile or less competitive. This is a new and experimental approach, but it has the potential to be very effective.
- Cultural control: It includes changing the way that people interact with the environment to make it less hospitable to invasive species. This can include things like changing farming practices, cleaning up waste, and controlling the spread of invasive species through trade.

WAY FORWARD

- Minimising the risks and costs associated with their negative impacts while capturing the social and economic benefits possible through responsible management.
- Regulating the trade and movement of invasive alien species is the most effective way to prevent their introduction and spread.
- Once an invasive species arrives in a new area, it is possible to limit their negative impacts through early detection, monitoring, and rapid eradication

Sources:

Biodiversity loss: 37,000 'alien species' introduced by human activities, says report | India News – The Indian Express

Q1. With reference to Invasive species, consider the following statements:

1. Invasive species are only those who are unintentionally introduced into a new area.
2. Invasive species lead to infrastructure damage as well as endangering human health and livelihoods.
3. The invasive alien species are one of the primary drivers of biodiversity loss.

Which of the statements given above is/are NOT correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Q2. Consider the following :

1. Black Rat
2. Kondana Rat
3. Caribbean false mussel
4. Komodo dragon

How many of the abovementioned species are invasive species?

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

Answer: (b)

Q3. Discuss the significance of regulating the trade and movement of invasive alien species as a strategy for biodiversity conservation and ecosystem protection. Elaborate on the challenges associated in this regard.

ANTI-POLYGAMY LAW

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

FOR PRELIMS:

About Polygamy?

FOR MAINS:

GS 2: Governance

Is Polygamy Criminalized in India?

Problems associated with Polygamy?

WHY IN THE NEWS:

The government of Assam has formed a three-member committee tasked with drafting a law to abolish polygamy.

ABOUT POLYGAMY:

Polygamy is a marital practice characterized by the act or custom of maintaining multiple spouses simultaneously. It is observed in various regions and communities worldwide, with varying prevalence rates.



POLYGAMY IN INDIA:

- National Trends: Government data reveals that polygamy cases in India decreased from 1.9 percent in 2005-06 to 1.4 percent in 2019-20, indicating a declining trend over the years.
- Regional Disparities: Polygamy rates vary across different states and regions within India.
- North Eastern States: The northeastern states of Meghalaya exhibit a higher prevalence, with a rate of 6.1 percent, while Tripura follows closely with a rate of 2 percent.
- Other States: Polygamy continues to be practiced in states like Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Odisha, predominantly among specific caste groups.
- Religious Dimensions: In Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh, polygamy is more commonly observed among the Muslim community than among Hindus.
- Assam’s Scenario: Polygamy is prevalent in specific regions of Assam, primarily in the Barak Valley and areas like Hojai and Jamunamukh. Notably, its prevalence is relatively low among educated classes and is not as widespread among the local Muslim population in these areas.

IS POLYGAMY CRIMINALIZED IN INDIA:

- **IPC Provisions:** The Indian Penal Code (IPC) criminalizes polygamy, specifically under Sections 494 and 495. These sections make it illegal to marry someone while already being married to another person.

POLYGAMY UNDER HINDU LAW

- **Hindu Marriage Act:** The Hindu Marriage Act, enacted on May 18, 1955, explicitly abolished and criminalized polygamy among Hindus. It mandated monogamy as the only option for Hindus, declaring polygamous marriages as void. A Hindu spouse cannot remarry until the first marriage is terminated, either through divorce or the death of one spouse. This provision also extends to Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs, who are considered Hindus under this law.

POLYGAMY UNDER OTHER RELIGIOUS LAWS IN INDIA

- **Christian and Parsi Communities:** Polygamy was abolished among Christians through the Christian Marriage Act of 1872 and among Parsis through the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act of 1936.

POLYGAMY UNDER MUSLIM PERSONAL LAW

- **Muslim Personal Law:** Unlike Hindu personal law, Muslim personal law does not outlaw polygamy. Under the 'Muslim Personal Law Application Act (Shariat) of 1937, as interpreted by the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, Muslim men can marry and maintain up to four wives concurrently. Such relationships are legally recognized under Muslim personal law. However, this allowance does not extend to Muslim women, who are not permitted to marry more than one individual.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON POLYGAMY

- **Global Practice:** Polygamy is illegal and criminalized in many countries worldwide, including Europe and the US, as well as China, Australia, and others. However, it remains permissible and legal exclusively for Muslims in nations such as India, Singapore, and Malaysia. Additionally, polygamy continues to be recognized and practiced in countries like Algeria, Egypt, and Cameroon.

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH POLYGAMY:

Forced Marriages

- **Lack of Choice:** In regions where polygamy is prevalent, women may be coerced or forced into marriages they do not desire. This lack of agency in choosing a spouse can have severe consequences for their well-being and autonomy.
- **Gender Bias in Laws:** Legal frameworks that permit polygamy often favor men, as seen in some parts of West Africa where Sharia Law allows men to have multiple wives while restricting women from having multiple husbands.

NOT A RELIGIOUS DUTY

- **Misconception:** Contrary to some beliefs, polygamy is not universally considered a religious duty or religious conduct. Courts and religious authorities have frequently clarified that it is not inherently required by any faith.

POWER IMBALANCE & MENTAL HEALTH

- Psychological Effects: Research in psychology has shown that polygamous relationships, particularly polygynous setups where one man has multiple wives, can lead to power imbalances and detrimental effects on women.
- Mental Health Impact: Women in polygynous relationships are more likely to suffer from mental health issues, including higher levels of anxiety, depression, and reduced life and marital satisfaction.

PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, AND SEXUAL ABUSE

- Abuse Link: Studies indicate a connection between polygamy and various forms of abuse, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. This can lead to negative emotional experiences for mothers in polygamous families, such as loneliness, despair, anger, powerlessness, and sadness.

EFFECTS ON CHILDREN

- Adverse Impact on Children: The stressful nature of polygamous marriages, along with potential conflicts among family members, can create an environment that is less conducive to the well-being and healthy development of children.

WAY FORWARD

- The United Nations Human Rights Committee suggests that regions where polygamy persists should take steps to eliminate it. This is because polygamy is seen as a violation of women's dignity and a constraint on their freedom of choice.
- It is essential to address and reconsider the legal status of practices like polygamy, triple talaq, and nikah halala, as they are not only outdated but also detrimental to the well-being of Muslim women. These laws need to be questioned and eventually discarded.

SOURCE:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/assam-government-forms-three-member-panel-to-draft-anti-polygamy-law/article67266965.ece>

Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding polygamy in India:

1. The Hindu Marriage Act of 2005 prohibits Hindus to have multiple spouses.
2. Muslim personal law in India permits both men and women to have multiple spouses.

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: D

Q.2 Consider the following statements regarding polygamy in India:

1. There is a blanket ban on polygamy in India for all religions
2. There is no separate law for Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs for prohibition of Polygamy.
3. The Indian Penal Code (IPC) criminalizes polygamy.

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 Discuss the social, legal, and psychological implications of polygamy in contemporary society. Provide your insights on the need for reform and potential measures to address the associated issues.

STUMP-TAILED MACAQUE

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the Topic details “Stump-Tailed Macaque”. The Topic “Stump-Tailed Macaque” has relevance in the Ecology section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

- Geographical Range of Stump-Tailed Macaque?
- Dietary Habits of Stump-Tailed Macaque?
- Physical Characteristics of Stump-Tailed Macaque?
- Conservation Status of Stump-Tailed Macaque?

FOR MAINS:

GS 3: Ecology

WHY IN THE NEWS:

The stump-tailed macaque, also known as the bear macaque, is a remarkable primate species that calls South and Southeast Asia home. In this article, we will explore the various aspects of this intriguing species, from its geographical range to its dietary habits and unique physical characteristics.

GEOGRAPHICAL RANGE:

- Habitat: The stump-tailed macaque is native to the lush forests of South Asia and Southeast Asia.
- Indian Presence: In India, this species thrives in the evergreen forests of South Asia, including regions in Northeast India located south of the Brahmaputra River.
- Indian Range: Its range in India spans from Assam and Meghalaya to the eastern reaches of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, and Tripura.



STUMP-TAILED MACAQUE

Macaca arctoides

DIETARY HABITS:

- **Frugivorous Lifestyle:** The stump-tailed macaque is primarily a frugivore, with fruits comprising a significant portion of its diet.
- **Varied Vegetation:** Besides fruits, this macaque species consumes a wide array of vegetation, including seeds, leaves, and roots.
- **Hunting Behavior:** Interestingly, the stump-tailed macaque also exhibits omnivorous tendencies, preying on freshwater crabs, frogs, bird eggs, and insects to supplement its diet.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

- **Fur and Bald Features:** It has dense, dark brown fur covering its body. However, its face and its notably short tail are devoid of hair.
- **Age-Related Changes:** As infants, these macaques are born with a white coat that gradually darkens as they mature. Their bright pink or red faces evolve into shades of brown or nearly black as they age, accompanied by a loss of most of their hair.
- **Sexual Dimorphism:** Males of this species are larger in size compared to their female counterparts.

CONSERVATION STATUS:

Vulnerable Classification: The stump-tailed macaque is currently listed as “vulnerable” on the IUCN Red List of species, signifying the need for conservation efforts to protect this remarkable primate.

SOURCE:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/meet-delhi-zoos-new-residents-eight-stump-tailed-macaques-8924291/>

Q.1 With reference to stump-tailed macaque, consider the following statements:

1. The stump-tailed macaque is native to South and Southeast Asia.
2. In India, this species can be found in forests of South 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: A

Q.2 With reference to stump-tailed macaque, consider the following statements:

1. The stump-tailed macaque is listed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.
2. The stump-tailed macaque is exclusively nocturnal.

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

BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS (BESS)

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)”. The topic “Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)” has relevance in the “Science and Technology” section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

What is Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)?

What are its advantages and applications?

FOR MAINS:

GS3: Science and Technology

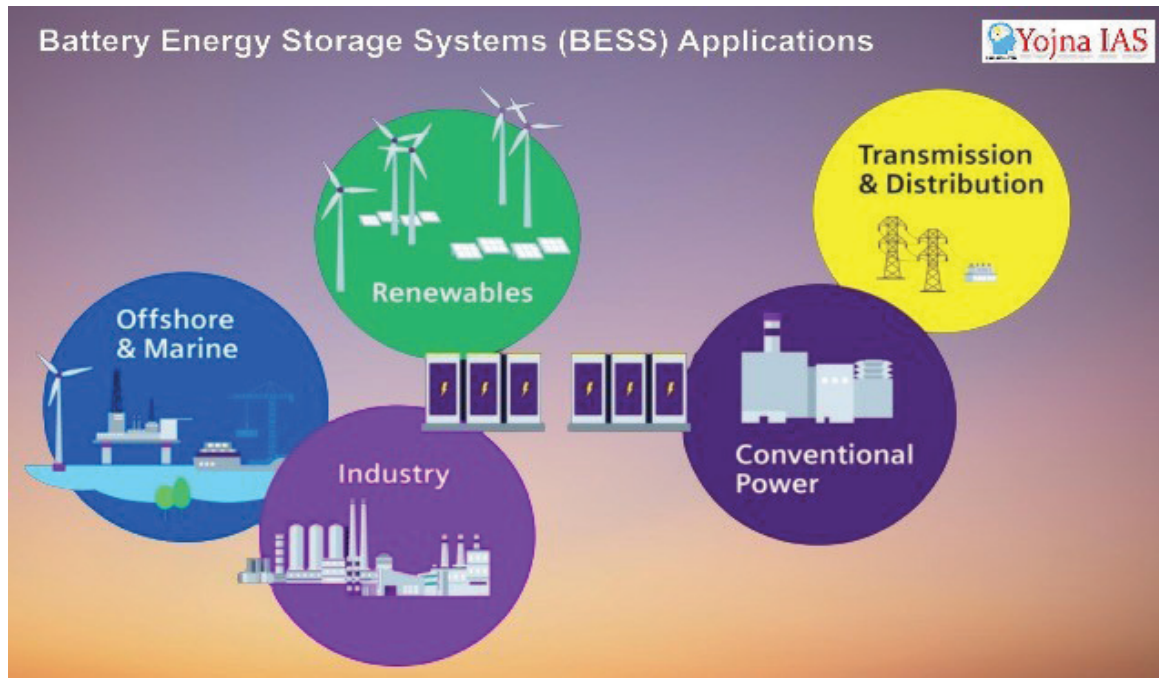
WHY IN THE NEWS?

In a significant development, the government has approved ₹3,760 crore in viability gap funding (VGF) to support establishing a 4,000 MWh battery energy storage system nationwide.

BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS (BESS)

- Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) are cutting-edge energy storage solutions that allow energy from renewable sources like solar and wind to be stored and released when it is most needed.
- These systems typically comprise one or more rechargeable batteries and serve multiple purposes, including grid stabilisation and backup power provision.

- Lithium-ion batteries used in mobile phones and electric vehicles are currently the prevailing storage technology for large-scale installations.



ADVANTAGES OF BESS

- **Enhanced Flexibility:** BESS offers increased flexibility in managing energy resources and distribution.
- **Improved Scalability:** BESS solutions can be easily scaled to meet varying energy demands.
- **Cost Efficiency:** BESS solutions are more cost-effective than conventional grid storage methods.
- **Superior Efficiency:** BESS systems are known for their high energy conversion efficiency.

APPLICATIONS OF BESS

- Renewable Energy Production
- Conventional Thermal Power Plants
- Grid Operations
- Industrial Electricity Consumers
- Offshore Drilling Platforms and Vessels

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS (BESS)

- **Compressed air energy storage:** These systems are typically situated within spacious chambers, where surplus power is employed to compress air for subsequent storage. When energy is required, the compressed air is released, driving an air turbine to generate electricity.
- **Mechanical gravity energy storage:** This approach uses energy to elevate a tower's concrete

blocks. When power is needed, the concrete blocks are lowered, harnessing the force of gravity to generate electricity.

- **Flow batteries:** In these batteries, which effectively function as rechargeable fuel cells, chemical energy is provided by two chemical components dissolved in liquids within the system, separated by a membrane.

MORE ABOUT THE NEWS:

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, approves the Scheme for Viability Gap Funding (VGF) to develop Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS). This scheme aims to develop 4,000 MWh of BESS projects by 2030-31 with up to 40% of the capital cost provided as VGF support.

- **Enhancing Viability of Battery Storage Systems:** The initiative is expected to reduce the cost of battery storage systems, making them more economically viable.
- **Levelized Cost of Storage (LCoS):** The scheme aims to achieve a Levelized Cost of Storage (LCoS) ranging from ₹5.50 to ₹6.60 per kilowatt-hour (kWh), making stored renewable energy an attractive option for managing peak power demand nationwide.
- **Benefits for Power Distribution Companies:** To ensure broad benefits, a minimum of 85% of BESS project capacity will be allocated to power distribution companies (DISCOMS).

By promoting renewable energy and battery storage adoption, the government aims to create a more sustainable and environmentally friendly future for all citizens.

Sources:

Govt okays ₹3,760 cr for up to 40% viability gap funding for 4,000 MWh battery energy storage system – The Hindu

Q1. With reference to Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), consider the following statements:

1. Lead-acid batteries are the most widely used storage technology for large-scale battery energy storage systems (BESS).
2. Traditional grid storage methods are more economical than battery energy storage systems (BESS).
3. Battery energy storage systems (BESS) are known for their high efficiency in converting energy.

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: (c)

Q2. Consider the following:

1. Conventional Thermal Power Plants
2. Industrial Electricity Consumers
3. Offshore Drilling Platforms and Vessels
4. Short-term backup power during outages.

How many of the abovementioned are possible applications for Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)?

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

Answer: (d)

Q3. Energy storage technologies, such as Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), are gaining prominence in the global energy landscape due to their potential to enhance grid stability and facilitate the integration of renewable energy sources. Discuss.

KUIPER BELT

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the Topic details “Kuiper Belt”. The Topic “Kuiper Belt” has relevance in the Science and Technology section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

About the Kuiper Belt:?

FOR MAINS:

GS 3: Science and Technology

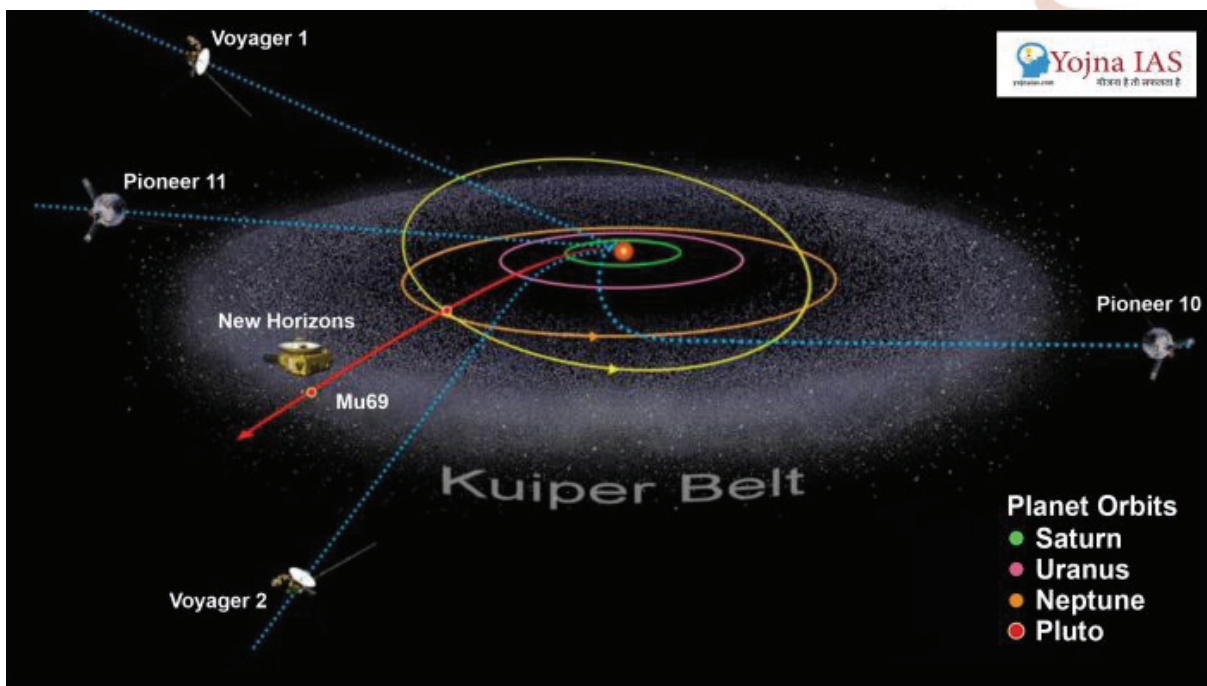
Significance of the Kuiper Belt?

WHY IN THE NEWS:

Astronomers have discovered compelling indications pointing to the presence of an Earth-like planet in the remote Kuiper Belt of our solar system. This discovery provides fresh perspectives on planetary formation and the potential for habitable conditions beyond our planet.

INTRODUCTION TO THE KUIPER BELT:

- The Kuiper Belt is a distinct region within our solar system, beginning just beyond the orbit of Neptune.
- It extends from approximately 30 to 50 astronomical units (AU) away from the Sun. One AU equals the average distance between the Earth and the Sun, about 93 million miles (150 million kilometres).
- This region is named after Gerard Kuiper, a Dutch-American astronomer who proposed its existence in 1951.



FORMATION OF THE KUIPER BELT:

- The Kuiper Belt is a relic from the early stages of our solar system's formation. It is believed to contain remnants dating back to the solar system's origin, making it of significant interest to astronomers and planetary scientists.
- After the Sun's formation, a rotating disk of gas and dust surrounded it. Within this disk, small particles collided and adhered to one another, forming planetesimals.
- Some planetesimals grew over time to become the planets in our solar system. Others remained as smaller objects, forming what we now know as the Kuiper Belt, populated with various celestial bodies.

COMPOSITION OF KUIPER BELT OBJECTS (KBOs):

- **Ices:** KBOs are predominantly composed of volatile ices, including water, ammonia, and methane. These icy components contribute to their distinctive appearance.
- **Rock and Metal:** Beneath the surface layers of ice, KBOs also contain significant amounts of rock and metal, adding to their structural composition.
- **Organic Compounds:** Some KBOs contain organic molecules, which hold great significance for scientists studying the origins of life and the chemical processes in our solar system.

NOTABLE KUIPER BELT OBJECTS:

- **Pluto:** Pluto, previously regarded as the ninth planet in our solar system, underwent a reclassification in 2006, categorising it as a dwarf planet. It remains one of the most well-known KBOs.
- **Eris:** Another dwarf planet within the Kuiper Belt, Eris is comparable in size to Pluto. Its discovery played a pivotal role in redefining the criteria for classifying celestial bodies.
- Haumea, Makemake, and Quaoar are additional dwarf planets residing within the Kuiper Belt, each contributing to our understanding of this distant region.
- **Ultima Thule:** In 2019, NASA's New Horizons spacecraft conducted a historic visit to Ultima Thule, officially designated as 486958 Arrokoth. This mission provided valuable data and insights into the Kuiper Belt, enhancing our knowledge of this remote part of our solar system.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE KUIPER BELT:

- **Planetary Formation Insights:** The Kuiper Belt provides valuable insights into the early stages of planetary formation and the composition of materials in the solar nebula. Studying objects in this region helps us understand how planets and other celestial bodies came into existence.
- **Dwarf Planet Classification:** The discovery of numerous dwarf planets within the Kuiper Belt has prompted reevaluating how we categorise celestial bodies in our solar system. This reclassification has enriched our understanding of the diversity of objects beyond traditional planets.
- **Origin of Comets:** Many short-period comets, which visit the inner solar system, originate in the Kuiper Belt. Exploring these comets helps us unravel the origins and composition of cometary bodies, shedding light on the early solar system's conditions.

FUTURE EXPLORATION MISSIONS:

- **New Horizons:** Launched in 2006, NASA's New Horizons spacecraft conducted a historic flyby of Pluto. It continued its mission to explore the Kuiper Belt, providing unprecedented data and insights about this region.
- **Lucy:** NASA's upcoming Lucy mission is poised to explore Jupiter's Trojan asteroids, which may have origins in the Kuiper Belt. This mission promises to reveal further connections between these distant celestial bodies.
- **OSIRIS-REx:** While primarily focused on studying the asteroid Bennu, NASA's OSIRIS-REx mission will return a sample to Earth, offering crucial information about the early solar system, potentially

including insights into Kuiper Belt materials.

SOURCE:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/science/japanese-scientists-find-earth-like-planet-in-our-solar-system/articleshow/103444324.cms?from=mdr>

Q.1 Which of the following statements regarding the Kuiper Belt is correct?

1. It is located between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter.
2. The Kuiper Belt is primarily composed of volatile gases like hydrogen and helium.

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 Which of the following statements regarding the Kuiper Belt is correct?

1. Pluto is considered the largest object in the Kuiper Belt.
2. The Kuiper Belt provides insights into the early stages of planetary formation.
3. Ultima Thule is an object within the Kuiper Belt.

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

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

ANSWER: C

Q.3 Discuss the Kuiper Belt's formation, composition, and its role in our understanding of the solar system's early history.

PROPOSED ADDITIONAL TAX ON DIESEL VEHICLES

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Proposed Additional Tax on Diesel Vehicles”. This topic has relevance in the “Indian Economy” section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

Diesel Vehicles

What are the advantages of Diesel Vehicles?

FOR MAINS:

GS3: Indian Economy

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Recently, Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari emphasised shifting away from petrol and diesel fuels. He mentioned that if the use of diesel vehicles and generators persists, he might suggest a 10% GST increase as a “pollution tax” to the Finance Minister. However, he later clarified that there is currently no such government proposal.

THE PUSHBACK AGAINST DIESEL IN INDIA

- **Government’s Green Goals:** The Indian government aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and generate 40% of its electricity from renewables to achieve net-zero emissions by 2070.
- **Taxation Strain:** The government currently levies a 28% tax on diesel cars, accompanied by additional cess based on engine capacity.
- **Emissions Dilemma:** Diesel engines produce elevated levels of nitrogen oxides (NOx), raising environmental apprehensions. The 2015 Volkswagen scandal further exacerbated diesel’s global reputation.
- **Fuel Efficiency Factor:** Although diesel engines provide superior fuel economy and torque, the price distinction between diesel and petrol has shrunk since fuel price deregulation in 2014.
- **Expensive upgrades:** The transition to BS-VI emission norms from April 1, 2020, and the expensive upgrades required for diesel engines to comply with these standards prompted carmakers to exit the diesel market. They argued that skipping from BS-IV to BS-VI made diesel models economically unviable.

STATUS OF DIESEL VEHICLES IN INDIA:

- **Diesel’s Significant Share:**
 - Diesel constitutes approximately 40% of India’s petroleum product consumption, as per estimates from the Petroleum Planning & Analysis Cell.
- **Transportation Dominance:**
 - Around 87% of total diesel sales serve the transport sector, with trucks and buses making up about 68% of diesel sales in India.
 - Three states, namely Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Haryana, collectively account for nearly 40% of diesel sales in the country.

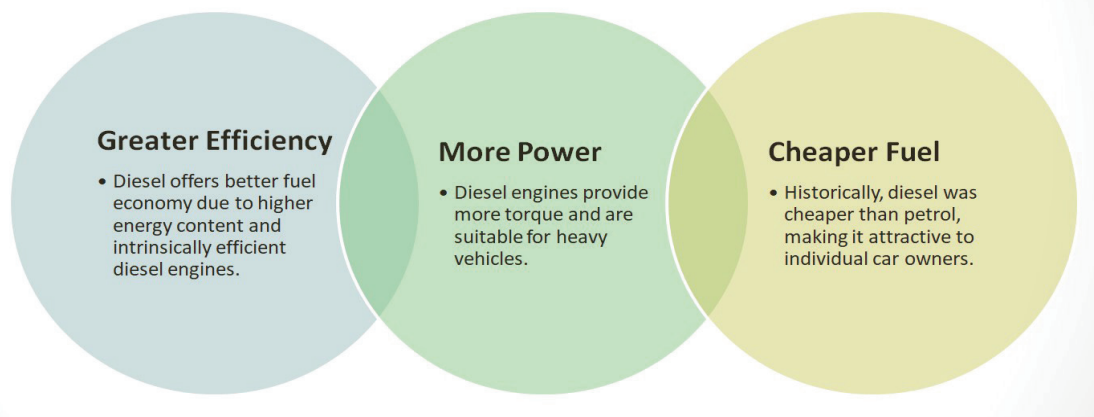
- **Impact on Diesel Cars**

- Maruti Suzuki, India's largest car manufacturer, ceased production of diesel vehicles on April 1, 2020, and does not plan to re-enter this market.
- Tata Motors, Mahindra, and Honda no longer produce 1.2-litre diesel engines; they now offer diesel options only for 1.5-litre or larger engines.
- While some diesel variants are still available from Hyundai, Kia, and Toyota, most automakers have significantly reduced their diesel offerings since 2020.
- This has led to a decrease in the contribution of passenger vehicles to overall diesel demand, dropping from 28.5% in 2013 to 16.5%.

ADVANTAGES OF DIESEL VEHICLES

- **Greater Efficiency:** Some individual users prefer diesel due to better fuel economy. Diesel has higher energy content per litre, and diesel engines are intrinsically efficient, utilizing higher compression ratios and no spark plugs.
- **More Power:** Diesel engines offer more torque, and are less prone to stalling, making them favoured for heavy vehicles and haulage.
- **Cheaper Fuel:** Historically, lower diesel prices than petrol were a significant attraction for individual car owners, with a substantial price difference of up to Rs 25 per litre at its peak.

Advantages of Diesel Vehicles



WAY FORWARD:

- **Promote electric vehicles (EVs):** EVs are a clean and efficient alternative to diesel vehicles. The government can offer incentives to encourage people to switch to EVs, such as subsidies, tax breaks, and preferential parking.
- **Improve public transportation:** Public transportation is a more sustainable way to travel than private vehicles. The government can invest in expanding and improving public transportation options, such as buses, trains, and metros.
- **Implement congestion pricing in cities:** Congestion pricing charges drivers a fee to enter certain areas during peak traffic times. This can help to reduce traffic congestion and encourage

people to use public transportation or other alternatives.

Sources:

'Say bye to diesel': Centre warns automakers of higher taxes in pollution fight – The Hindu

Q1. With reference to Diesel Vehicles, consider the following statements:

1. Diesel has a higher energy content per litre, making it intrinsically efficient.
2. Diesel engines offer more torque, making them better suited for towing and hauling heavy loads.
3. Diesel engines are generally less loud when compared to gasoline engines.

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. Taxing the use of fuels, such as biodiesel and ethanol
2. Implementing congestion pricing in cities
3. Encourage CNG and LPG
4. Enforce stringent emission standards

How many of the above measures can help reduce diesel consumption in India?

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

Answer: (c)

Q3. Discuss the factors that have led to the pushback against diesel in India and the way forward to reduce diesel consumption in the country.

DRAFT NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR ROBOTICS (NSR)

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the Topic details “Draft National Strategy for Robotics (NSR)”. This Topic has relevance in the Science and Technology section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

About National Strategy for Robotics (NSR)?

FOR MAINS:

GS 3: Science and Technology

Key Recommendations?

Main Challenges in India's Robotics Sector?

WHY IN THE NEWS

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has extended an invitation for public input and feedback from various stakeholders regarding the draft “National Strategy for Robotics (NSR).”

Aim: The Draft National Strategy for Robotics (NSR) aims to strengthen all aspects of the innovation cycle within robotic technology, accompanied by the establishment of a robust institutional framework to ensure effective implementation of these initiatives.

OBJECTIVES:

- Establish India as a Global Leader in Robotics by 2030
- Reinforce Make in India 2.0 Initiatives for Enhanced Integration in the Global Value Chain

Nodal Agency: Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to Lead the Effort through the ‘National Robotics Mission’ (NRM)

Core Sectors: Prioritizing Robotics Automation in Key Sectors

- Manufacturing
- Agriculture
- Healthcare
- National Security

Measures: Stimulating Innovation in Robotics by:

- Fiscal and Non-Fiscal Interventions by NRM
- Development of Funding Mechanisms for Robotics Start-ups
- Promotion of Robotic Exports

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Strong Regulatory Framework:** Establish a robust regulatory framework led by the Robotics Innovation Unit (RIU) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
- **Centers of Excellence (CoEs) in Robotics:** Create CoEs for foundational and applied robotics research. Encourage private sector participation in priority sectors for experimental prototyping and initial commercialization.
- **Support for Startups:** Provide support to startups, harness research potential in higher education institutions, and develop dedicated robotics industrial zones.
- **Public Procurement Policy:** Implement a Public Procurement Policy for Robotics, wherein the central government becomes a major buyer of Indian-made robotic systems, incentivizing domestic production with a minimum local content requirement.

MAIN CHALLENGES IN INDIA'S ROBOTICS SECTOR:

- **Import Dependence:** India heavily depends on importing robotics components, primarily from China and Japan, which raises concerns about self-reliance and supply chain vulnerabilities.
- **Expensive Hardware:** High costs associated with robotics hardware components pose a significant barrier to the widespread adoption of robotics technology, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
- **Limited Research and Development:** Insufficient investments in research and development (R&D) impede progress in robotics technology. The lack of a robust R&D ecosystem hampers innovation and indigenous development of advanced robotics solutions.

SOURCE:

<https://www.meity.gov.in/writereaddata/files/Draft-National-Strategy-Robotics>.

Q.1 With reference to the Draft National Strategy for Robotics (NSR), consider the following statements:

1. It aims to establish India as a Global Leader in Robotics by 2030
2. Ministry of Science and Technology to Lead the Effort through the 'National Robotics Mission' (NRM)

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.2 Discuss the key objectives and recommendations outlined in the Draft National Strategy for Robotics (NSR) in India. Analyze the significance of this strategy in promoting innovation.

BIMA SUGAM

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

FOR PRELIMS:

What is Bima Sugam?

FOR MAINS:

GS3: Indian Economy

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) recently organised a steering committee as the ultimate decision-making body for developing its ambitious Bima Sugam platform.

ABOUT BIMA SUGAM

Bima Sugam is the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDAI)’s groundbreaking proposition to establish **the world’s first comprehensive online marketplace for insurance products and services.**

- This strategy is intended to **eliminate insurance selection and paperwork complexities**, representing a transformative moment for the insurance industry.
- The platform is devised to take customers’ decision-making burden by **providing various insurance product options from different companies, including life, health, motor, and travel insurance.**
- It aims to be able to **streamline claim settlements and list policies paperlessly based on policy numbers.**

OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK:

- To lay the foundation for Bima Sugam, IRDAI has expanded the platform’s **budget to Rs 200 crore and formed a committee**, with the next step being the appointment of a service provider responsible for creating and running Bima Sugam.
- The platform is anticipated to function in real-time, granting insurance companies access to validated data and serving as an interface for intermediaries and agents to sell policies and provide services.

BENEFITS FOR CUSTOMERS:

- Bima Sugam provides an **end-to-end solution for customers**, significantly **reducing paperwork and lowering commission costs**.
- It offers a single platform to **identify suitable insurance schemes and seamlessly manage various aspects** like purchase, service, and settlement.
- **Claim settlements and renewal will be conducted online.**



TIMELINE:

- While initially planned to be functional by January 2023, the launch of Bima Sugam has been postponed to June 2024.
- When operational, life and general insurance companies will each own approximately 47.5% of the stakes, while brokers and agent bodies will own roughly 2.5% each.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)

- IRDAI, established under the **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India Act 1999**, is an autonomous and **statutory entity** responsible for overseeing and regulating India's insurance sector.
- Its primary objective is to **safeguard policyholders' interests, promote orderly growth, and regulate the insurance industry within the country.**
- The **Ministry of Finance** is its nodal ministry, and its headquarters are in Hyderabad.
- IRDAI carries out various functions, including:
 - Ensuring **fair regulation of the insurance industry** while upholding financial stability in compliance with relevant laws and regulations.
 - Periodically **formulating regulations** for the insurance sector.
 - **Registering and overseeing insurance companies**, safeguarding the interests of policyholders.

- **Licensing and establishing norms for insurance intermediaries.**
- Encouraging the **development of professional organisations** within the insurance sector.
- **Regulating and supervising premium rates and terms** for non-life insurance policies.
- Specifying **financial reporting norms** for insurance companies.
- Regulating the investment of policyholders' funds by insurance companies.
- Ensuring that insurance companies maintain the required solvency margin.
- **Extending insurance coverage to rural areas and vulnerable segments of society.**

Sources:

IRDAI plans committee to create Bima Sugam platform, to appoint project consultant

Q1. With reference to Bima Sugam, consider the following statements:

1. Bima Sugam is a platform developed by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) to serve as an online marketplace for various insurance policies.
2. The Bima Sugam platform will offer an end-to-end solution for customers' insurance needs, including purchase, service, and settlement.
3. The development of the Bima Sugam platform is expected to be completed by June 2024.

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. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India is a body under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Commerce.
2. Ensuring insurance coverage in rural areas and vulnerable sections of society is one of the objectives of IRDAI.
3. It is an autonomous and statutory body established under the IRDA Act 1999.

How many of the abovementioned statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two

(c) All three

(d) None

Answer: (b)

Q3. Discuss the role of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) in developing and regulating the insurance sector in India.

CLIMATE ACTION SUMMIT

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “CLIMATE ACTION SUMMIT”. This topic has relevance in the Environment section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

About the Summit?

FOR MAINS:

GS 3: Environment

Climate Ambition Summit Overview?

WHY IN THE NEWS:

China, United States and India, the top three emitters in that order were all absent from the recently held Climate Action Summit 2023

ABOUT THE SUMMIT

- **Significance of Global Emissions:** China, the United States, and India rank among the world’s top three greenhouse gas emitters, collectively contributing to around 42% of global emissions. Their actions and commitments are pivotal in the global fight against climate change.
- **Purpose of the Summit:** The Climate Action Summit (CAS) was convened by the United Nations to showcase leaders who have credible strategies, policies, and plans for addressing climate change. Its objective is to uphold the Paris Agreement’s target of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- **Limited Participation:** Despite the summit’s significance, only 34 countries and seven institutions were granted speaking slots during the event. Notably, neighboring countries of India, such as Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Pakistan, were among the speakers, along with other emerging economies.
- **Criteria for Participation:** Countries seeking speaking opportunities at the summit **had to present updated pre-2030 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), net-zero objectives, plans for transitioning to renewable energy, strategies for phasing out fossil fuels, renew-**

able energy targets, Green Climate Fund commitments, and plans for adaptation and resilience. This indicates a high threshold for participation.

- **Future Commitments:** The summit **urged all major emitters, including the G-20 nations, to commit to more ambitious NDCs that encompass absolute emissions reductions and cover all greenhouse gases by 2025.**
- **India's Climate Pledges:** In 2022, India revised its climate commitments, aiming to reduce emissions intensity by 45% compared to 2005 levels by 2030. Additionally, the government pledged to source 50% of its electricity from renewable, non-fossil fuel sources and increase carbon sequestration through afforestation efforts.

CLIMATE AMBITION SUMMIT OVERVIEW:

Urgency of Climate Action:

- IPCC's latest assessment underscores the need for immediate, substantial greenhouse gas emissions reductions.
- Despite significant damage, emissions remain at record levels.
- Urgent action required to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

Climate Justice and Equity:

- Acknowledgment that those least responsible for the crisis suffer its most severe impacts.
- Calls for immediate support from governments and international financial institutions for vulnerable communities.

Multisectoral Participation:

- Summit aimed to accelerate climate action by uniting governments, businesses, financial institutions, local authorities, and civil society.
- Recognized the necessity of collective global effort for a transition to a renewable-energy-based, climate-resilient global economy.

THREE ACCELERATION TRACKS:

Ambition Track:

- Government leaders, especially major emitters, expected to present updated pre-2030 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and net-zero targets.
- Encouraged to commit to energy transition plans excluding new coal, oil, and gas projects, with fossil fuel phase-out plans and ambitious renewable energy targets.
- Focus on Green Climate Fund pledges and adaptation/resilience plans.
- Urged all main emitters and G20 governments to commit to more ambitious economy-wide NDCs with absolute emissions cuts by 2025.

Credibility Track:

- Business, city, region, and financial leaders tasked with aligning transition plans with a UN-backed

credibility standard (“Integrity Matters” report).

- Standard includes net-zero pledges fully aligned with the 1.5°C target, specific requirements (2025 and 2030 targets, scope 3 emissions, fossil fuel phase-out, genuine emissions reductions without offsets, and science-based climate action advocacy).

Implementation Track:

- Leaders from various sectors to present existing/emerging implementation partnerships for decarbonizing high-emitting sectors (e.g., energy, shipping, aviation, steel, cement).
- Focus on partnerships addressing climate justice (international financial system reform, early warning systems for adaptation and loss and damage).

Source:

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/india-us-china-absent-at-uns-climate-summit/article67329914.ece>

Q.1 Consider the following statements:

1. China, United States and India are the top three emitters of Greenhouse Gases (GHG)
2. India is third highest emitter in Per Capita terms

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.2 Consider the following statements:

1. India is aiming to reduce emissions intensity by 70% compared to 2005 levels by 2030
2. India has committed to become a Net Zero emitter by 2070.

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 significance of international climate summits in the context of global efforts to combat climate change. How can countries, particularly major emitters, contribute effectively to achieving the goals set forth in these summits?

NON-PERFORMING ASSETS (NPAS)

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the Topic details “Non-Performing Assets (NPAs)”. This Topic has relevance in the Economy section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

About Non-Performing Assets (NPAs)?

FOR MAINS:

GS 3: Economy

Impact of Non-Performing Assets (NPAs)?

Current NPA Situation in India?

WHY IN THE NEWS:

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently proposed that lenders should classify a borrower as a “wilful defaulter” within six months of their account being declared a non-performing asset (NPA).

ABOUT NON-PERFORMING ASSETS (NPAS)

Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) are financial assets, typically loans or advances, that have not met their scheduled principal or interest payment obligations for a specified period, usually 90 days or more. Here’s a rephrased explanation:

- **Definition of NPAs:** NPAs are loans or advances for which the borrower has failed to make principal or interest payments for a period exceeding 90 days.
- **Asset Status for Banks:** For banks, loans are considered assets because the interest income generated from these loans is a significant source of revenue. When borrowers, whether retail or corporate, are unable to make interest payments, these assets become “non-performing” for the bank as they cease to generate income.
- **RBI’s Definition:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) defines NPAs as assets that no longer contribute to a bank’s income.
- **Disclosure Requirements:** Banks are obligated to publicly disclose their NPA figures and report them to the RBI regularly.
- **Classification of NPAs:** According to RBI guidelines, NPAs are categorized into three classes:

- Substandard Assets: Those that have been NPAs for up to 12 months.
- Doubtful Assets: Assets that have remained substandard for 12 months.
- Loss Assets: Assets with minimal recovery value, deemed uncollectible, and not considered bankable assets.
- **NPA Provisioning:** Provision for a loan involves setting aside a certain percentage of the loan amount by banks. The standard provisioning rate for loans in Indian banks ranges from 5% to 20%, depending on factors like the business sector and the borrower's repayment capacity. However, under Basel-III norms, 100% provisioning is required for NPAs.
- **GNPA and NNPA:** Two key metrics assess the NPA situation of a bank:
 - **Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA):** It represents the total value of NPAs for a bank within a specific quarter or financial year.
 - **Net Non-Performing Assets (NNPA):** NNPA is derived by subtracting the provisions made by the bank from the gross NPA. It provides the actual value of NPAs after accounting for specific provisions.
- NPA Ratios: NPAs can also be expressed as a percentage of total advances, providing insights into the unrecoverable portion of the loan portfolio. For instance:
 - **GNPA Ratio:** This is the ratio of total GNPA to total advances.
 - **NNPA Ratio:** It calculates the ratio of net NPA to total advances, offering a more accurate picture of the NPA situation after accounting for provisions.

IMPACT OF NON-PERFORMING ASSETS (NPAs):

- **Reduced Lending Capacity:** Banks face constraints in allocating funds for productive economic activities due to the presence of NPAs.
- **Interest Rate Hikes:** To maintain profitability, banks may be compelled to raise interest rates on loans.
- **Unemployment Concerns:** A decrease in investments stemming from NPA issues can potentially lead to an increase in unemployment rates.
- **Handling NPAs:** Banks have two primary options for dealing with NPAs: they can either retain them in their records with hopes of eventual recovery, make provisions for them, or completely write off the loans as bad debt.

CURRENT NPA SITUATION IN INDIA:

- As per the latest RBI Financial Stability Report, the gross NPA ratio for scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) in India reached a 10-year low of 3.9% in March 2023.
- Both gross and net NPA ratios have declined significantly from their peak levels in March 2018, standing at 3.9% and 1.0% in March 2023, respectively.
- A notable reason for the reduction in gross NPA levels in 2022-23 was the substantial write-offs undertaken by banks.

PREDICTION FOR INDIA:

- Stress test results suggest that the gross NPA ratio for all SCBs may improve to 3.6% by March 2024.
- However, in scenarios where the macroeconomic environment deteriorates to a medium or severe stress level, the gross NPA ratio could increase to 4.1% and 5.1%, respectively.

Source:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/business/declare-wilful-defaulters-within-6-months-npa-tag-rbi-proposal-8950548/>

Q.1 Which of the following statements regarding Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) in India are correct?

1. NPAs are loans or advances for which interest payment is overdue for a period exceeding 60 days.
2. Net Non-Performing Assets (NNPA) represent the total value of NPAs without accounting for provisions made by the bank.

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.2 Which of the following statements regarding Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) and their impact in India are true?

1. Lower NPAs generally result in banks decreasing interest rates on loans.
2. The NNPA Ratio offers a more accurate picture of the NPA situation.

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.3 The management of Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) has far-reaching implications for India's banking sector and the broader economy. Analyze

PLANETARY BOUNDARIES

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

FOR PRELIMS:

What are Planetary Boundaries?

Current Status?

FOR MAINS:

GS3: Environment and Ecology

WHY IN THE NEWS?

A recent study has revealed that humanity has exceeded six of the nine critical planetary boundaries essential for maintaining the stability and resilience of Earth's ecosystems.

PLANETARY BOUNDARIES

- Planetary boundaries serve as a critical framework that sets limits on how much human activity can impact Earth's natural systems. In simpler terms, it provides guidelines on how we can use Earth's resources without drastically altering the environmental conditions that support our way of life.
- This framework was developed in 2009 and defines nine specific planetary boundaries. Scientists believe these boundaries encompass all the crucial processes necessary to maintain Earth's stability.
- For each boundary, specific control variables are chosen to represent the most significant ways human activities impact that particular aspect of the planet.

ABOUT THE STUDY

- This study represents an update to the planetary boundaries framework, initially introduced in 2009 to establish safe boundaries within which humanity can operate environmentally. To achieve this, the researchers embarked on a comprehensive process:
 - They began by identifying the essential processes within Earth's ecosystem that have been pivotal in maintaining favourable conditions for human existence over the past 12,000 years.
 - Subsequently, they conducted an assessment of the extent to which human activities are altering

these crucial processes.

- They aimed to pinpoint the threshold at which human actions pose a significant risk of initiating potentially profound and irreversible changes in Earth’s overall conditions.
- It’s important to note that breaching individual boundaries does not immediately spell disaster.

However, such breaches elevate the risk of initiating processes that could dramatically and irreversibly alter the overall environmental conditions on Earth to a point where our current civilisation can no longer be sustained.

NINE PLANETARY BOUNDARIES

Planetary Boundaries

Biosphere Integrity	Health of ecosystems and species extinction rate; assesses overall biological diversity health.
Climate Change	Focuses on atmospheric CO2 levels (a major driver of global warming) and changes in radiative forcing (energy balance with the sun) critical for climate dynamics.
Novel Entities	Examines levels of human-made substances (e.g., plastics, synthetic chemicals) not naturally found on Earth without human intervention.
Stratospheric Ozone Depletion	Concerns human-induced chemical releases harming the ozone layer, crucial for shielding Earth from harmful solar radiation.
Freshwater Change	Assesses human impact on blue water (in lakes and rivers) and green water (in soil for plants and microorganisms) availability and quality.
Atmospheric Aerosol Loading	Tracks human-emitted particles influencing cloud formation and global/regional atmospheric circulation, affecting climate and air quality.
Ocean Acidification	Examines long-term ocean pH reduction due to increased atmospheric CO2, potentially harming marine ecosystems and biodiversity.
Land System Change	Focuses on land use changes, particularly converting tropical forests to agricultural land, affecting Earth's land cover and ecosystems.
Biogeochemical Flow	Assesses changes in natural cycles of vital elements (e.g., nitrogen, phosphorus) essential for plant growth and ecosystem health, which human activities can disrupt.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- **Planetary Boundary Breaches**
 - Human activities have breached six of the nine planetary boundaries: climate change, biosphere integrity, freshwater change, land system change, biogeochemical flows, and novel entities.
 - Atmospheric aerosol loading and ozone depletion remain within acceptable limits, but ocean acidification is nearing a breach.

- **Biogeochemical Flow Overflow**

- The overflow of nitrogen and phosphorus, related to the biogeochemical flow boundary, is particularly concerning.
- While these elements are essential for life, their widespread use as crop fertilisers has led to issues like algal blooms and oxygen-depleted ocean dead zones, harming ecosystems.

- **Rising Levels of Novel Entities**

- Human activities have led to a notable increase in novel entities in the environment.
- Unprecedented amounts of synthetic chemicals, such as pesticides and plastics, have been released without sufficient safety testing, destabilising Earth's systems.

- **Land System Change**

- Deforestation in the Amazon tropical forest has increased to the extent that it has breached the planetary boundary.

- **Climate Change**

- Both atmospheric CO₂ concentration and radiative forcing are steadily rising concerning climate change.
- CO₂ concentration stands at 417 ppm, well above the safe boundary limit of 350 ppm, which was breached in the 1980s during the Industrial Revolution.

WAY FORWARD: A RAY OF HOPE

- Notably, there's a positive example in the form of the stratospheric ozone depletion boundary, which is on the path to recovery. This progress resulted from international cooperation initiated by the Montreal Protocol in 1987.
- Researchers believe such coordinated efforts can serve as a model for addressing other breached boundaries and safeguarding our planet's health.

Sources:

Humans breach most of the planetary boundaries that keep Earth habitable

Q1. With reference to Planetary boundaries, consider the following statements:

1. Planetary boundaries limit human activity's impact on Earth's natural systems, preserving environmental conditions for our well-being.
2. The planetary boundaries framework was developed in 2009, defining twelve specific boundaries encompassing critical processes for Earth's stability.
3. As per recent studies, six planetary boundaries have been breached by human activities

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) None

Answer: (c)

Q2. Consider the following:

1. Renewable Energy Transition
2. Biogeochemical Flow
3. Stratospheric Ozone Depletion
4. Biosphere Integrity
5. Biodiversity Connectivity

How many of the above are planetary boundaries as delineated in the 2009 framework?

(a) Only one

(b) Only two

(c) Only three

(d) Only Four

Answer: (c)

Q3. What are planetary boundaries, and why are they essential for global sustainability? Discuss the significance of international cooperation in managing planetary boundaries and propose measures for effective implementation.

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FOR PRELIMS:

About Non-Performing Assets (NPAs)?

FOR MAINS:

GS 3: Economy

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ANSWER: C

Q.3 The management of Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) has far-reaching implications for India's banking sector and the broader economy. Analyze

ARTIFICIAL REEFS

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

FOR PRELIMS:

What is Artificial Reefs ?

What is its significance

FOR MAINS:

GS3: Environment and Ecology

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Department of Fisheries is implementing the installation of artificial reef units as part of the 'Integrated Modern Coastal Fishing Villages' initiative under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY). The objective is to educate and involve local fishermen in the potential benefits of artificial reefs for marine fishing.

CORAL REEFS:

- Coral reefs are underwater ecosystems composed of reef-building corals, colonies of tiny animals called polyps that secrete a calcium carbonate skeleton.
- They consist of diverse and interconnected ecosystems formed by the accumulation of coral skeletons over thousands of years.
- **Symbiotic Relationship with Zooxanthellae:**
 - Corals have a mutualistic relationship with photosynthetic algae called zooxanthellae that live inside their tissues.
 - The algae provide corals with essential nutrients and oxygen through photosynthesis, while corals offer the algae a protective environment and access to sunlight.

ARTIFICIAL REEFS

- Artificial reefs are human-made substitutes for natural reefs, designed to provide habitat and support marine life.
- These reefs aim to create new habitats, boost fish production, reduce wave damage, and support recreational activities.
- They are strategically located in relation to coral reefs to enhance their function and support ecological connectivity.
- The structure of artificial reefs resembles natural reefs, providing substrate for corals, algae, and other marine organisms.
- Materials such as inert ceramics are commonly used to construct artificial reefs.

SIGNIFICANCE OF ARTIFICIAL REEFS:

- **Marine Environment Restoration and Boost in Fish Production:**
 - Artificial reefs contribute to the restoration of the marine environment by creating new habitats and increasing biodiversity.
 - By serving as an artificial habitat, artificial reefs enhance coastal fish production.
- **Wave Damage Reduction and Carbon Sink:**
 - Artificial reefs play a significant role in protecting coastal areas from wave damage.
 - Additionally, artificial reefs can act as a carbon sink. They absorb and store carbon dioxide from the surrounding water, helping mitigate climate change's effects and promoting a healthier marine

ecosystem.

- **Support for Marine Life and Recreational Activities:**

- Artificial reefs create thriving ecosystems by attracting a wide range of marine life.
- Furthermore, artificial reefs enhance recreational fisheries by providing additional fishing grounds.
- This benefits local communities and tourism by offering opportunities for activities such as sport fishing and diving.

About Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)	
Ministry	Department of Fisheries under Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying
Aim	To achieve a Blue Revolution by promoting sustainable and responsible development in the fisheries sector.
Funding	Estimated investment of Rs. 20050 crores.
Term	5 years, from fiscal years 2020-21 to fiscal years 2024-25.
Objective	Bridge critical gaps in the fisheries value chain, including fish production, productivity, quality, technology, post-harvest infrastructure, and marketing.
Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modernise and strengthen the value chain, improve traceability, and establish a robust fisheries management framework.• Focus on the socio-economic welfare of fishers and fish farmers to ensure their prosperity alongside sector development.
Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The PMMSY comprises the<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Central Sector Scheme (CS)○ Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS).• The CSS has both non-beneficiary-oriented and beneficiary-oriented sub-components/ activities, categorised into three main areas:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ enhancement of production and productivity,○ infrastructure and post-harvest management,○ fisheries management and regulatory framework.

Sources:

Department of Fisheries is promoting Artificial Reef (AR) under PMMSY for rejuvenating coastal fisheries

Q1. With reference to Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) , consider the following statements:

1. PMMSY aims to achieve a Blue Revolution by promoting sustainable and responsible development in the fisheries sector.

2. PMMSY is funded 100% by the Union Government.
3. The term of the PMMSY is ten years, from fiscal years 2014-15 to fiscal years 2024-25.

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: (b)

Q2. Consider the following:

1. Acts as a carbon sink
2. Coastal protection from wave damage
3. Ability to predict tsunamis
4. Medicinal use

How many of the above mentioned are benefits of Artificial Reefs?

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

Answer: (c)

Q3. Discuss the significance of the Blue Revolution in India's fisheries sector, including its objectives and challenges. How do initiatives like introducing artificial reefs contribute to the Blue Revolution's goals?

SARFAESI ACT 2002

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “SARFAESI Act, 2002”. This topic has relevance in the “Economy” section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

What is the SARFAESI Act 2002?

FOR MAINS:

GS3: Economy

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently issued directions to Regulated Entities (REs) under the SARFAESI Act, 2002.

BACKGROUND OF SARFAESI ACT, 2002:

- Before introducing the SARFAESI (Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest) Act, banks and financial institutions faced a cumbersome process of recovering their delinquent debts.
- They had to navigate civil courts or designated tribunals to secure ‘security interests’ to recover defaulted loans.
- This prolonged procedure slowed the recovery process and contributed to the increasing number of non-performing assets held by lenders.

AIM OF THE ACT:

- The primary objective of the SARFAESI Act is **to protect financial institutions from loan defaulters and expedite the recovery of bad debts.**
- Under this law, banks can take control of assets pledged as security against a loan and manage or sell them to recover dues without court intervention.

COVERAGE:

- The SARFAESI Act applies nationwide and encompasses **all types of assets, whether movable or immovable, pledged as collateral to the lender.**
- A 2020 Supreme Court ruling extended the Act’s **applicability to cooperative banks**, and the Finance Ministry clarified that non-**banking financial companies (NBFCs)** can initiate recovery proceedings in cases involving loan defaults of up to Rs 20 lakhs.

PROCEDURE UNDER THE ACT:

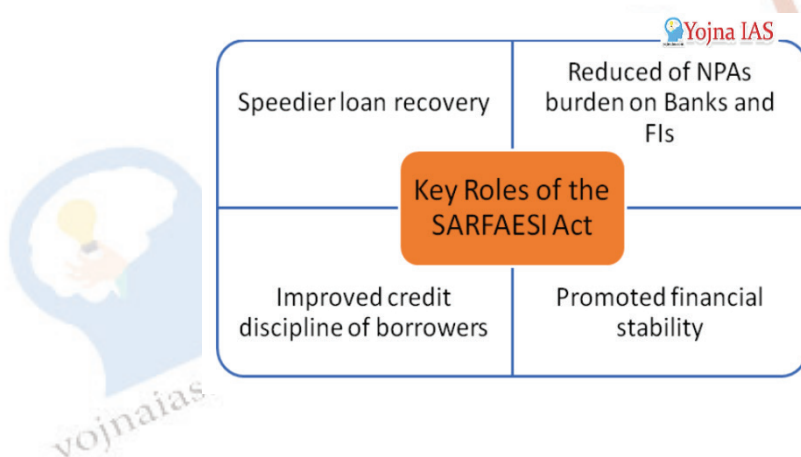
- The Act comes into play when a borrower defaults on payments exceeding six months. In such

cases, the lender can issue a notice to the borrower, giving them 60 days to clear the outstanding dues.

- The defaulting party can approach an appellate authority established under the law within 30 days of receiving the lender's notice.
- If this recourse is not pursued, the financial institution can take possession of the secured assets and sell, transfer, or manage them.

MODES OF RECOVERY:

- The SARFAESI Act provides three modes of recovery:
 - **Securitisation:** Converting loans into tradable securities to raise funds, often involving the sale of loan portfolios to investors.
 - **Asset reconstruction:** Professional management and restructuring of distressed assets to maximise recovery and value.
 - **Enforcement of security interests without court intervention:** The lender can take possession and sell or manage the secured assets to recover dues without court proceedings.



ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE ACT:

- **Applicability:** The Act does not apply to unsecured creditors. For unsecured loans, banks must move the court to file a civil case of defaulting.
- **Misuse by Banks:** There's criticism that the banks are misusing the SARFAESI Act, 2002 provisions, which are sometimes draconian.
- **Borrowers' Concerns:** Many borrowers feel they are being harassed by bank officials unreasonably and using the SARFAESI Act, 2002 provisions.
- **Interpretation of Provisions:** Initially, there was a lot of confusion about how certain provisions of the SARFAESI Act, 2002, are to be interpreted.
- **Protection of Borrowers' Interests:** The judiciary has made every effort to ensure that the object of the SARFAESI Act, 2002, is not diluted. At the same time, the interests of the borrowers are also protected.
- **Right to Property:** Though the property right is not a fundamental right, it is a Constitutional

Right, and there's a need to balance between a right of recovery and protection of a right.

MORE ABOUT THE NEWS:

- As per the RBI's directions, Regulated Entities (REs) now must display information in a specified format on their websites regarding borrowers whose secured assets have been taken into possession under the SARFAESI Act, 2002.
- These REs include commercial banks, non-banking finance companies (NBFCs), and other licensed entities under Section 22 of the Banking Regulation Act 1949.
- The first list of such borrowers must be displayed within six months from the circular date, with subsequent updates to be made monthly.
- This measure towards greater transparency aims to provide stakeholders and borrowers with visibility into the status of their assets and promote accountability in the financial system.

Sources:

RBI asks banks to display information on borrowers linked to SARFAESI Act

Q1. With reference to the SARFAESI Act, consider the following statements:

1. The SARFAESI Act aims to protect financial institutions from loan defaulters and expedite the recovery of bad debts.
2. The Act applies nationwide and encompasses all assets pledged as collateral to the lender.
3. The Act only applies to cooperative banks and does not include non-banking financial companies (NBFCs).

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 Act allows banks to take control of assets pledged as security against a loan and manage or sell them to recover dues without court intervention.
2. The Act allows for converting loans into tradable securities to raise funds.
3. The SARFAESI Act applies to unsecured creditors, and banks can initiate recovery proceedings against them.

How many of the abovementioned statements are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Q3. Discuss the significance and provisions of the SARFAESI (Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest) Act, 2002, in promoting financial institutions' recovery of bad debts.

VIBRIO VULNIFICUS

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the Topic details "Vibrio vulnificus". This Topic has relevance in the Science and Technology section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 3: Science and Technology

WHY IN THE NEWS:

Studies indicate that *Vibrio vulnificus* is likely to experience increased growth and proliferation as a consequence of the favorable environmental conditions created by rising ocean temperatures and increased precipitation.

ORIGIN AND TRANSMISSION OF VIBRIO VULNIFICUS:

Natural Habitat: *Vibrio vulnificus* is naturally found in marine environments, primarily thriving in warm coastal waters characterized by low salinity levels.

TRANSMISSION ROUTES:

- **Consumption of Contaminated Seafood:** People can contract *Vibrio vulnificus* by consuming raw or undercooked seafood that has been contaminated with the bacterium.
- **Contact with Open Wounds or Cuts:** Another mode of transmission occurs when open wounds or cuts come into contact with waters where *Vibrio vulnificus* is present. Such contact can result in a severe and potentially life-threatening flesh-eating disease, which carries a mortality rate ranging from 15% to 50%.

SYMPTOMS:

- **Consumption of Infected Raw Shellfish:** When *Vibrio vulnificus* is ingested, it can lead to symptoms including diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and fever. In individuals with compromised immune systems, these symptoms can be severe.
- **Exposure to Wounds:** If the bacterium enters the body through wounds, it can initially cause localized symptoms such as pain, swelling, and redness at the infection site. In severe cases, this can progress to necrotizing fasciitis, a life-threatening condition characterized by rapid skin and soft tissue deterioration. When the infection enters the bloodstream, it can result in septicemia, leading to more severe symptoms like high fever, confusion, and organ failure.

High-Risk Groups: Individuals who have underlying medical conditions such as chronic liver disease, cancer, chronic kidney disease, and diabetes, as well as those with weakened immune systems, are at an elevated risk of experiencing severe infections.

Treatment: Treatment typically involves antibiotics to combat the infection. However, the effectiveness of treatment decreases if the bacterium has already entered the bloodstream. In severe cases, especially when the infection has progressed to gangrene or septicemia, surgical procedures like amputation may be necessary.

Source:

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/climate-change/this-marine-bacterium-could-become-a-major-threat-to-coastal-populations-in-the-future-91396>

Q.1 What are the primary modes of transmission for *Vibrio vulnificus* infections?

- (a) Inhalation of airborne bacteria and direct skin contact
- (b) Consumption of contaminated water and mosquito bites
- (c) Consumption of infected raw or undercooked seafood and contact with open wounds
- (d) Contact with infected animals and swimming in chlorinated pools

ANSWER: C

Q.2 *Vibrio vulnificus* infection can potentially cause:

- (a) Pneumonia
- (b) Meningitis
- (c) Septicemia
- (d) Gastritis

ANSWER: C

Q.3 “Discuss the interplay between climate change and the emergence of super pathogens. How does global warming affect the evolution and spread of infectious diseases?”

SCHEME FOR REMISSION OF DUTIES AND TAXES ON EXPORTED PRODUCTS (RODTEP)

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Scheme for Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP)”. This topic has relevance in the Economy section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

About (RoDTEP)?

FOR MAINS:

GS 3: Economy

Need for the Scheme?

WHY IN THE NEWS:

The Scheme for Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) support, which was notified till 30th September 2023, is now being extended till 30th June 2024 at the same rates as the existing export items.

ABOUT (RODTEP):

- The RoDTEP Scheme, officially known as the Scheme for Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products, is a crucial initiative that supports India’s exporters.
- Under the RoDTEP Scheme, exporters receive rebates based on a certain percentage of the Freight On Board (FOB) value of their exports. These rebates are granted in the form of transferable duty credits or electronic scrips (e-scrips). The details of these e-scrips are digitally recorded and managed by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC).
- The RoDTEP Committee, which operates under the Department of Revenue, plays a pivotal role in this scheme. Its primary responsibility is to assess and recommend the maximum rates for various export sectors eligible for benefits under the RoDTEP Scheme. This committee’s work is vital in ensuring that the scheme effectively supports and promotes India’s export industry.

OBJECTIVE:

- The primary goal of the RoDTEP Scheme is to offer extensive assistance to exporters by reimbursing the duties and taxes incurred throughout the production and distribution processes of exported products. It’s worth noting that RoDTEP encompasses taxes, duties, and levies at the

central, state, and local levels, which are not reimbursed through any other existing mechanisms.

FINANCIAL ALLOCATION:

- In the financial year 2023-24, the Indian Government has allocated a substantial budget of Rs. 15,070 crores to bolster the RoDTEP Scheme. This allocation underscores the government's commitment to providing significant financial support to exporters through this initiative.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT:

- To kickstart its operations, the RoDTEP Committee has recently initiated engagement efforts with Export Promotion Councils (EPCs) and Chambers of Commerce. This proactive approach ensures that key stakeholders in the export industry are involved and informed, fostering cooperation and effective implementation of the scheme.

NEED FOR THE SCHEME:

- The need for the RoDTEP Scheme arose from a significant challenge India faced in 2018 when the United States raised objections to five of India's export subsidy programs in the World Trade Organization (WTO). These five schemes were:
 - Merchandise Export from India Scheme (MEIS)
 - Export Oriented Units (EOU)
 - Electronics Hardware Technology Parks (EHTP)
 - Special Economic Zone (SEZ)
 - Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG)
- In October 2019, the WTO ruled that these schemes violated WTO agreements by providing prohibited export subsidies. The WTO panel recommended that the Indian government should withdraw these schemes to align with international trade regulations.
- In response to this WTO ruling and the need to comply with international trade rules, the Indian government introduced the RoDTEP Scheme. The RoDTEP Scheme was designed to be WTO-compliant, addressing the concerns raised by the WTO while still providing support to Indian exporters. This move aimed to ensure that India's trade practices remained in line with international trade regulations and to avoid potential trade disputes with other countries, especially the United States.

Source:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1961010#:~:text=The%20Scheme%20for%20Remission%20of,to%20the%20existing%20export%20items.>

Q.1 The RoDTEP Scheme, a significant initiative to support India's exporters, primarily focuses on providing:

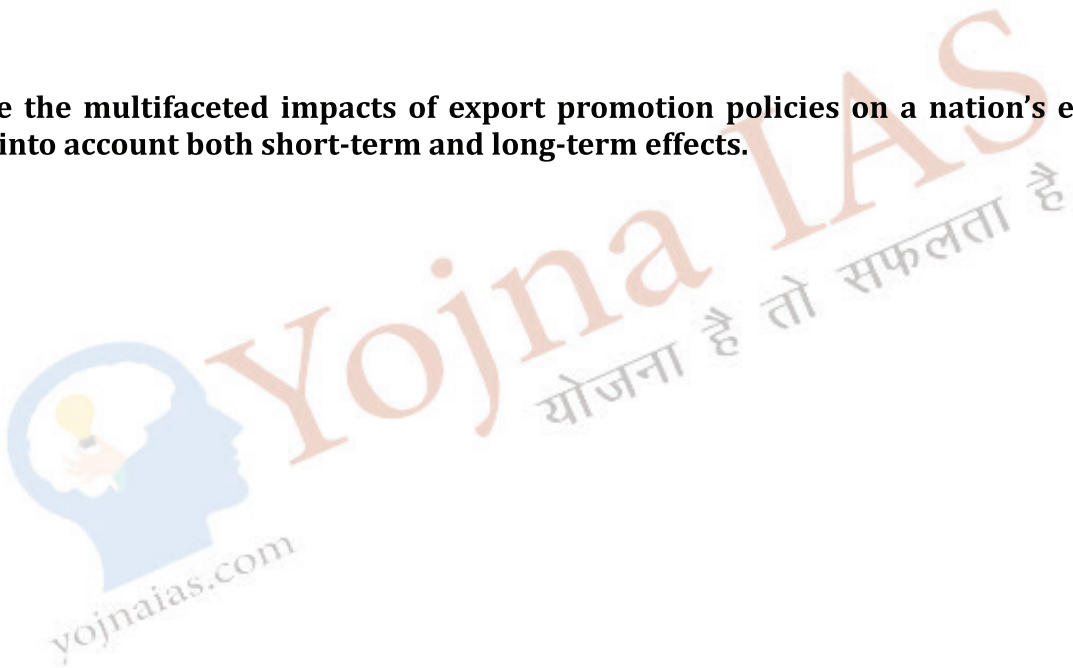
1. Direct financial incentives to exporters.
2. Infrastructure development for export industries.
3. Quality control measures for export products.

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 Analyze the multifaceted impacts of export promotion policies on a nation's economy, taking into account both short-term and long-term effects.





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