



Yojna IAS

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DECEMBER 2023

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

YOJNA IAS WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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CURRENT AFFAIRS

DECEMBER 2023

8TH WONDER OF THE WORLD

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "8th Wonder of the World". This topic has relevance in the History and culture section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 1: History and culture

Why in the news:

Angkor Wat, in the heart of Cambodia, has beaten Pompeii in Italy to become the eighth Wonder of the World.

Location:

- Situated in Siem Reap, Cambodia.
- Largest religious monument globally, covering 1,200 sq meters with intricately carved bas-reliefs.

Historical Significance:

- Constructed in the 12th century by Khmer Emperor Suryavarman II.
- Initially a Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu, later converted to a Buddhist temple.
- Transition depicted in carvings showcasing scenes from Hindu and Buddhist mythology.
- Part of an extensive complex including the Bayon Temple in Angkor Thom.

Key Features:

- Architectural brilliance with sandstone block construction.
- 15-foot-high wall, wide moat for protection.
- Bas-reliefs depicting deities and narratives from Hindu and Buddhist traditions.
- Symbolic five lotus-shaped towers representing Mount Meru.

Interesting Facts:

- Also known as Yasodharapura, derived from the Khmer word "nokor" meaning "kingdom."
- UNESCO protection for its archaeological and cultural significance.
- Breathtaking sunrise spectacle attracting tourists.

Pompeii: Ancient Roman City

Location:

Near Naples, Italy, by the Bay of Naples.

History:

- Founded around the 6th century BC, influenced by Greek and Etruscan cultures.
- Became a Roman colony around the 1st century BC.
- Catastrophically buried by Mount Vesuvius eruption in 79 AD.

Key Features:

- Excavated ruins reveal streets, buildings, houses, public spaces, temples, and artifacts.
- Showcase of Roman architecture, including villas, temples, theaters, and an amphitheater.
- Renowned for exquisite frescoes, mosaics, and artifacts.

Cultural Significance:

- Provides invaluable insights into ancient Roman life, architecture, art, and urban planning.
- UNESCO World Heritage Site, major tourist destination, and educational resource.

Conclusion:

- Angkor Wat and Pompeii, both wonders with unique historical and cultural significance.
- Angkor Wat's architectural magnificence and UNESCO's efforts make it a compelling destination.
- Source: Angkor Wat becomes the 8th wonder of the world | Times of India Travel (indiatimes.com)

Q.1 consider the following statements:

1. Angkor Wat Temple is situated in Ho chi Minh province of Cambodia.
2. It is Purely a Buddhist temple.

Select the correct answer using the codes below:

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

ANSWER: D

Q.2 Discuss the cultural expanse of Indian civilization in Asia, highlighting key influences, interactions, and exchanges that have contributed to shaping the diverse cultural landscape of the region.

CYCLONE – MICHAUNG

*This article covers 'Daily Current Affairs' and the topic details 'Cyclone Michaung.' This topic has relevance in the **Disaster Management** section of the UPSC CSE exam.*

Why in the news?

Recently, rain began to pummel several districts in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh as Cyclone Michaung intensified into a super cyclonic storm, causing a large amount of loss to lives and properties.

Current status of cyclone Michaung:

- On December 3, rains began to pummel Chennai as Cyclone Michaung, soon to intensify into a super cyclonic storm, parked itself roughly 100 km east of the city. By the next morning, most areas had recorded more than 120 mm of rain, with a few recording more than 250 mm. The storm, centered around 80 km southeast of Nellore and 120 km north-northeast of Chennai at 5.30 pm on December 4, moved northward along the Andhra Pradesh coast, bringing heavy rain to most of Tamil Nadu, parts of Andhra Pradesh, and southern Odisha.
- According to the statement of the India Meteorological Department (IMD), cyclonic storm Michaung developed over the Bay of Bengal off south Andhra Pradesh. It intensified into a 'severe cyclonic storm' with a maximum sustained wind speed of 90 to 100 kmph and gusting to 110 kmph on December 4 afternoon. The storm was centered about 80 km southeast of Nellore, 120 km north-northeast of Chennai, and 250 km south-southwest of Machilipatnam. It moved north-northwestwards parallel and close to the south Andhra Pradesh coast with a speed of 10 kmph.
- The A.P. State Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA) stated that the cyclone is moving towards the north, and it is likely to weaken in the next few hours. However, heavy rain will continue for a few more hours.

What is a Cyclone?

Cyclone is a region of low atmospheric pressure surrounded by high atmospheric pressure resulting in swirling atmospheric disturbance accompanied by powerful winds.

Preparedness:

- Over 61,600 people were moved to relief camps.
- Suspension and cutoff of power supply were taken as a precautionary measure.
- The airport was closed for several hours, with nearly 300 flights canceled.
- Southern Railway also canceled many long-distance trains.
- The IMD has issued a red alert for a few districts that will receive extremely heavy rainfall on 5 December and marked red are West Godavari, Konaseema, Eluru, Prakasam, Krishna, NTR, Bapatla and Guntur.
- The districts that are likely to receive very heavy rainfall and marked orange are: East Godavari, Kakina, YSR Kadapa, Nellore and Alluri Sitaramaraju.

- The north coastal Andhra Pradesh region, as well as Tirupati, Annamayya and Nandyal, is marked yellow, as it is expected to receive heavy rainfall.
- Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy told officials to treat the cyclone as a challenge and take the necessary steps to prevent loss of life and keep the property loss to the bare minimum.
- The government declared a holiday for educational institutions on 5 December and advised private companies to permit employees to work from home.



Consequences of Cyclone Hazard

- Loss of life: Seven people in Chennai and five people in Andhra Pradesh were killed.
- Destruction of infrastructure: Parked vehicles were either marooned or floating, and there was uprooting of electric poles, along with a few instances of walls and roofs of houses collapsing.
- Inundation of seawater: Occurred in low-lying areas of coastal regions, resulting in the brimming of water bodies and the release of surplus water from reservoirs.
- Landfall: Between Nellore and Machilipatnam in Andhra Pradesh.
- Loss of vegetation, crops, and food supplies: Uprooting of a large number of trees.
- Severe disruption in communication and transportation: Included the shutdown of Chennai airfield and the cancellation of around 300 flights.

Post Disaster Relief:

- The Army and the NDRF rescued residents on boats in some areas.
- Additional workforce is being sourced from neighbouring districts to undertake relief operations in Chennai and three neighbouring districts of Chengalpattu, Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur.
- Additional workforce and necessary additional equipment are being sourced from neighbouring districts to undertake relief operations in Chennai and Andhra Pradesh.
- The Army and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) aided State agencies, including the Fire and Rescue Services and police personnel, in the relief and rescue operations.
- Deployment of additional NDRF personnel to deal with the calamity.
- Around deputed 13 Ministers to oversee relief and rescue operations, besides deploying more senior IAS officers on the field.

Favorable Conditions: Listed below are some of the identified favorable conditions:

1. A warm sea surface (temperature in excess of 26–27°C) and associated warming extending up to a depth of 60m with abundant water vapor in the overlying air (by evaporation).
2. High relative humidity in the atmosphere up to a height of about 5,000 meters.
3. Atmospheric instability that encourages the formation of massive vertical cumulus clouds due to the condensation of rising moist air.
4. Low vertical wind shear between the lower and higher levels of the atmosphere does not allow the heat generated and released by the clouds to be transported from the area (vertical wind shear is the rate of change of wind between the higher and lower levels of the atmosphere).
5. The presence of cyclonic vorticity (rate of rotation of air) that initiates and favors the rotation of the air cyclonically.
6. Location over the ocean, around 5–25° latitude away from the equator.

Cyclone Risks in India

- In India, 8 percent of the total landmass is prone to cyclones. India has a coastline of about 7,516 km, with 5,400 km along the mainland, 132 km in Lakshadweep, and 1,900 km in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- Four states (Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, and West Bengal) and one Union Territory (Puducherry) on the east coast, and one state (Gujarat) on the west coast, are highly vulnerable to cyclone disasters.
- There are 13 coastal states and Union Territories (UTs) in the country, encompassing 84 coastal districts affected by tropical cyclones.
- More cyclones occur in the Bay of Bengal than the Arabian Sea, with the ratio approximately 4:1.

Cyclone Warning System in India

- Low pressure and the development of cyclones can be detected hours or days before they cause damage. Satellites track the movement of these cyclones, based on which people are evacuated from areas likely to be affected. However, predicting accuracy is challenging, and accurate landfall predictions can only provide a few hours' notice to threatened populations.
- India has one of the best cyclone warning systems in the world. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is the nodal department for wind detection, tracking, and forecasting cyclones. Cyclone tracking is done through INSAT (Indian National Satellite) satellites. Cyclone warnings are disseminated through various means, such as satellite-based disaster warning systems, radio, television, telephone, fax, high-priority telegram, public announcements, and bulletins in the press. These warnings are communicated to the general public, the fishing community, especially those at sea, port authorities, and commercials.

Cyclone Hazard Mitigation

- **Cyclone Shelters:** Use public buildings in densely populated coastal areas as cyclone shelters, designed with a blank façade and minimal apertures facing prevailing winds. The shorter side of buildings should face the storm for less wind resistance, with earth berms and green belts to reduce impact.
- **Rapid dissemination of warnings,** especially to government agencies and marine entities;
- **Coastal Belt Plantation:** Establish green belts to act as a buffer against strong winds and floods, sustaining less damage. Forests provide a wide buffer zone, hindering cyclones from freely traveling inland.
- **Hazard Mapping:** Utilize meteorological records to create hazard maps, illustrating areas vulnerable to cyclones, estimating severity, and predicting damage intensities in a region.
- **Land Use Control:** Designate vulnerable areas for least critical activities, regulate land use through policies, and enforce building codes. Avoid settling in floodplains and mark key facilities in land use plans.
- **Flood Management:** Incorporate flood mitigation measures to address torrential rains, strong winds, storm surges, and potential landslides in cyclone-affected areas.
- **Improving Vegetation Cover:** Plant trees and maintain vegetation to secure soil, prevent erosion, slow runoff, and act as windbreaks.
- **Coastal Shelterbelt Plantations:** Develop shelterbelt plantations along the coast to break severe wind speeds and minimize devastating effects.

Q1. Which of the following can be considered as some initial conditions for the emergence of a tropical cyclone?

1. Strong Coriolis force
2. Large variations in the vertical wind speed
3. A pre-existing weak low-pressure area

Select the correct answer using the codes below:

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

ANSWER: A

1. **How can Disaster Resilient Infrastructure be comprehended as a means to minimize the loss of life and property during cyclone-associated events? Additionally, explore the challenges associated with securing essential infrastructure in the aftermath of a cyclone.**

UN COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (CSOCD)

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details " UN Commission for Social Development (CSocD)". This topic has relevance in the Social Justice section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 2: Social Justice

Why in the news?

The Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations recently led an informative member-state briefing in anticipation of the 62nd session of the UN Commission for Social Development.

- **Background:**

- Established since the inception of the United Nations, CSocD is a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
- Originally known as the Social Commission, it advises ECOSOC and governments on a broad spectrum of social policy issues.

- **Purpose:**

- Primary goal: Advance social development and formulate policies to address global social issues.
- Focus areas: Poverty eradication, social inclusion, and promotion of equitable and sustainable development.
- Key responsibility since 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen: Follow-up and implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.

- **Membership:**

- Started with 18 members, now has 46.
- Members elected by ECOSOC for four-year terms based on equitable geographical distribution.

- **Meetings:**

- Annual meetings at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, usually held in February.
- Forums for member states, international organizations, and civil society representatives to dis-

Discuss and address social development issues.

Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC):

- **Background:**

- One of the six principal organs of the UN, established by the UN Charter in 1945.
- Responsible for directing and coordinating economic, social, humanitarian, and cultural activities of the UN.

- **Membership:**

- Consists of 54 members elected for three-year terms by the General Assembly.
- Continuous re-election of four of the five permanent Security Council members due to significant funding contributions to ECOSOC's budget, the largest among UN subsidiary bodies.

- **Functions:**

- Coordinates economic and social fields within the UN, overseeing 15 specialized agencies, five regional commissions, and eight functional commissions.
- Central forum for discussions on international social and economic issues, formulating policy recommendations for member states and the UN system.

- **Decision-Making:**

- Decisions made by a simple majority vote.
- Annual presidency rotation.

Q.1 With reference to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), consider the following statements:

1. ECOSOC is one of the six principal organs of the UN, established by the UN Charter in 1945.
2. The decision-making process in ECOSOC involves annual presidency rotation.

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 Analyze the significance of India's engagement with the UN in promoting its national interests and advancing a multipolar world order.

CENTRAL UNIVERSITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2023

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2023". This topic has relevance in the History and Culture section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 1: History and Culture

Why in the news?

The Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2023 was brought before the Lok Sabha for deliberation and approval. The primary objective of the bill is to institute a Central Tribal University in Telangana, to be designated as the 'Sammakka Sarakka Central Tribal University'.

Background:

- The bill stems from commitments outlined in the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014.
- The 2014 Reorganisation Act resulted in the division of Andhra Pradesh into Telangana and the residuary Andhra Pradesh state.
- Both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana were promised support for establishing a tribal university each.

Key Amendments:

- Amendments are made to the Central Universities Act, 2009.
- The Central Universities Act, 2009 was originally enacted to establish universities for teaching and research in different states.

Central Tribal University Name:

- The university is named after the renowned mother-daughter duo, Sammakka and Sarakka.

Regional Aspirations:

- The establishment of Sammakka Sarakka Central Tribal University addresses regional aspirations.
- It serves as a long-term solution, providing higher education and research opportunities primarily for India's tribal population.

The Legend of Sammakka and Sarakka:

- Sammakka, married to feudal chief Pagididda Raju of the Kakatiyas (a Deccan dynasty), ruled the Warangal area.
- She had three children: Sarakka/Saralamma, Nagulamma, and Jampanna.
- In the 13th century, Saralamma died in a battle against local rulers protesting tax imposition, while Sammakka disappeared into the hills.

- Local (Koya) tribals believed Sammakka transformed into a vermillion casket.

The Sammakka Saralamma Jatara:

- Held biennially in the Mulugu district of Telangana, it's known as the Kumbh Mela of tribals.
- Commemorates the mother-daughter duo's battle against tax imposition on the Koya people.
- Considered Asia's largest tribal fair, celebrated over four days in Medaram village.
- Gained significance comparable to Kumbh Mela.

Political and Cultural Significance:

- Declared a state festival in 1996.
- Regular participation by the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs and the Telangana state government.
- Ministry of Tourism allocated Rs. 75.88 crore for tribal circuit development under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme.
- Circuit includes Mulugu – Laknavaram – Medavaram – Tadvai – Damaravi – Mallur – Bogatha Waterfalls, where Sammakka-Sarakka temple is situated.
- Mulugu, a reserved Scheduled Tribes (ST) assembly seat, has a population of around 2.6 lakhs, with 75% ST population.
- The UNESCO World Heritage Site of Ramappa Temple lies approximately 15 km from Mulugu.

Source:

<https://prsindia.org/billtrack/the-central-universities-amendment-bill-2023>

Q.1 Sammakka Saralamma Jatara is related to which of the following states:

- (a) Telangana
- (b) Odisha
- (c) Jharkhand
- (d) Chhattisgarh

ANSWER: A

Q.2 Analyze the link between education, empowerment, and social justice for tribal groups, considering cultural sensitivity and community participation in policy formulation.

SATPURA TIGER RESERVE (STR)

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Satpura Tiger Reserve (STR)". This topic has relevance in the Environment section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 3: Environment

Why in the news?

In a significant archaeological discovery, the Satpura Tiger Reserve's forest department has recently unearthed a rock painting in Narmadapuram, Madhya Pradesh, dating back 10,000 years.

Location:

- Situated in the Narmadapuram district of Madhya Pradesh, the Satpura Tiger Reserve (STR) occupies a prime position within the expansive Satpura ranges of the Central Indian Landscape.
- Geographically, it lies to the south of the Narmada River, creating a distinctive triangular watershed between the Narmada and Tapti Rivers.
- Integral to the Deccan bio-geographic zone, the reserve is also a vital component of the Pachmarhi Biosphere Reserve.

Extent and Connectivity:

- Extending over an impressive 10,000 sq. km, the Satpura Tiger Reserve stands as a critical segment of one of the world's largest tiger habitats.
- Encompassing the forest areas of Betul, Harda, Khandwa, and Melghat forest divisions, it forms an extensive and interconnected ecosystem.
- Remarkably, the reserve boasts corridor connectivity with Pench National Park, further enhancing its ecological significance.

Human Evolution and Geological Significance:

- Beyond its ecological richness, the STR holds cultural and historical value with more than 50 rock shelters, providing a window into human evolution spanning from 1500 to 10,000 years ago.
- The reserve's geological features include the Deccan trap series, Gondwanas, and Metamorphic rocks, adding to its scientific importance.

Flora:

- Characterized by diverse mixed forests, the STR is predominantly composed of Sal and Teak, contributing to its unique ecosystem.
- Noteworthy tree species within these mixed forests include jamun, baheda, palash, mahua, saja, bija, tendu, arjun, semal, salai, kusum, achar, and more.
- Furthermore, the reserve serves as the northern extremity of the Western Ghats, hosting 26 species from the Himalayan region and 42 species from the Nilgiri area.

Fauna:

- The Satpura Tiger Reserve boasts a rich tapestry of wildlife, including iconic species such as tigers, leopards, spotted deer, sambar, barking deer, chousingha, Indian gaur, blue bull, and jungle cats.
- In addition to charismatic megafauna, the reserve is home to a diverse array of co-predators, birds, reptiles, and fish, contributing to its status as a biodiversity hotspot.

Key Facts	Narmada River	Tapi River
Geographical Location	Serves as a boundary between North and South India.	Situated in central India.
Origin	Amarkantak peak of Maikal mountain, 1,312 km west of source.	Betul district of Madhya Pradesh.
Flow Direction	Flows westward, empties into the Gulf of Khambhat.	Flows westward, empties into the Gulf of Khambhat.
Geographical Features	West-flowing river in a rift valley between Vindhya and Satpura Ranges.	West-flowing river through the central Indian peninsula.
Drainage Area	Drains Madhya Pradesh, parts of Maharashtra, and Gujarat.	Drains Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Gujarat.
Tributaries (Right)	Hiran, Tendori, Barna, Kolar, Man, Uri, Hatni, Orsang.	Purna, Girna, Panzara, Waghur.
Tributaries (Left)	Burner, Banjar, Sher, Shakkar, Dudhi, Tawa, Ganjal, Chhota Tawa, Kundi, Goi, Karjan.	Tawa, Bori, Aner.
Major Dams	Omkareshwar and Maheshwar dams.	Ukai Dam in Gujarat, Ghatghar Dam in Maharashtra.



Q.1 With reference to the Satpura Tiger Reserve (STR), consider the following statements:

1. STR is situated in the Narmadapuram district of Madhya Pradesh.
2. Geographically, it lies to the south of the Tapi River.

3. The reserve boasts corridor connectivity with Pench National Park.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1, 2 and 3

(d) 1 and 3 only

ANSWER: D

Q.2 Examine the critical role of wildlife corridors in mitigating human-animal conflicts, with a specific focus on their importance in ecological conservation. Assess the challenges and benefits associated with establishing and maintaining these corridors

