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CURRENT AFFAIRS
National and International

The Complete Coverage of All
Important Events

DEC-JAN
2023

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Prelims
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HIGHLIGHTS

- SATPURA TIGER RESERVE (STR)
- INDIA/UNEMPLOYMENT PREVALENT IN INDIA
- AD-HOC COMMITTEE TO MANAGE WFI AFFAIRS
- EMERGING ISSUES IN INDIA- RUSSIA RELATIONS
- CHINESE BAN ON EXPORT OF RARE EARTH
  TECHNOLOGIES

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DECEMBER-JANUARY
2023

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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

MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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General Studies -1

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

GOLAN HEIGHTS

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details " Golan Heights". This topic has relevance in the Geography section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 1: Geography

Why in the news?

India has cast its vote in support of a United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution expressing profound concern about Israel's failure to withdraw from the Syrian Golan Heights.

Geography:

- Located in southwestern Syria, Golan Heights is a rocky plateau about 60km southwest of Damascus.
- Bounded by the Jordan River, the Sea of Galilee, Mount Hermon, Wadi Al-Ruqqād River, and the Yarmūk River.
- Boat-shaped, covering approximately 1,150 square kilometers with dimensions of 44 miles north to south and 27 miles east to west.

History:

- Seized by Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War from Syria.
- Majority of Syrian Arab inhabitants displaced during the conflict.
- Establishment of an armistice line and Israeli military control.
- Settlement activities initiated by Israel, leading to a contested demographic landscape.
- Unsuccessful Syrian attempt to reclaim the region in the 1973 Middle East conflict.
- 1974 armistice signed with the

deployment of a UN observer force along the ceasefire line.

- Unilateral Israeli annexation in 1981 solidified geopolitical tensions.

Current Situation:

- Over 30 Israeli settlements in the Golan, considered illegal under international law.
- Population includes approximately 20,000 Syrians and 20,000 Israelis, fostering a complex social fabric.
- Ongoing tension between Israel and the international community regarding settlements.

Strategic Significance:

- Elevated vantage points provide a clear view of the Syrian capital, Damascus, enhancing military and surveillance capabilities.
- Golan serves as a watershed, contributing to the Jordan River's water supply.
- One-third of Israel's water supply is believed to come from the Golan.
- Fertile land in the region supports agriculture, adding to its strategic importance.

Source:

India votes in favour of UNGA resolution that expresses deep concern over Israel not withdrawing from Syrian Golan (msn.com)

Q.1 Regarding the Golan Heights recently seen in the news, consider the following statements:

1. It lies on the Syria-Jordan border.
2. It lies west of the Sea of Galilee.

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 In the context of evolving global dynamics, discuss the changing perspectives of India on the Israel-Palestine conflict

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.

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.

BAHMANI SULTANATE

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

GS 1: Art and Culture

Why in the news?

The Karnataka High Court has instructed the authorities in the Kalaburagi district to eliminate encroachments from the historic fort of the Bahmani Sultans situated in the city.

Foundation and Territorial Expansion

- **Establishment by Hasan Bahman Shah:** The Bahmani Sultanate, or Bahmanid Empire, was established in 1347 by Ala-ud-Din Hasan Bahman Shah, a governor who declared independence from the Delhi Sultanate and made Gulbarga the capital.

- **Territorial Expansion:** The empire, under rulers like Muhammad Shah I and Firuz Shah, expanded its territories, including Gulbarga, Bidar, Bijapur, and Golconda (modern-day Hyderabad), solidifying its influence in the Deccan region.

Administration and Governance

- **Feudal System:** Administrative divisions included Daulatabad, Bidar, Berar, and Gulbarga, each governed by tarafdars or subedars. A decentralized feudal system empowered provincial rulers known as walis or nayaks.

- **Central Administration:** Centralized administrative structures managed revenue, justice, and military affairs, ensuring effective governance.

Cultural and Socio-Economic Development

- **Patronage of Arts and Culture:** The Bahmani rulers fostered art, literature, and architecture, contributing to the development of the distinctive Deccani culture. Notable structures included Gulbarga's Jama Masjid, Bidar's Rangeen Mahal, and Bijapur's Gol Gumbaz.

- **Promotion of Regional Languages:** The Bahmani court supported local languages such as Dakhni and Kannada, contributing to the growth of regional literature.

- **Economic Prosperity:** The strategic location of the sultanate facilitated flourishing trade in horses, textiles, and spices, contributing to economic prosperity.

Religious Policies

- **Religious Tolerance:** The sultans pursued a policy of religious tolerance, fostering peaceful coexistence among Hindus, Muslims, Jains, and Christians.

- **Promotion of Syncretic Culture:** The Bahmani Sultanate's cultural landscape reflected the syncretic blending of diverse religious traditions and practices.

Decline and Fragmentation

- **Internal Strife and Dynastic Conflicts:** Internal conflicts and power struggles among the nobility weakened the unity of the Bahmani Sultanate.

- **Rise of Five Successor States:** In 1527, the sultanate fragmented into five independent states known as the Deccan Sultanates—Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, Golconda, Berar, and Bidar—marking the end of the Bahmani Sultanate.

Ala-ud-Din Hasan Bahman Shah	1347-1358	• Founder of the Bahmani Sultanate • Declared independence from the Delhi Sultanate • Established Gulbarga as the capital • Initiated the Sultanate's expansion in the Deccan
Early Rulers:		
Muhammad Shah I	1358-1375	• Consolidated power and expanded Bahmani territories • Shifted the capital to Bidar
Firuz Shah	1397-1422	• Extended Bahmani rule further into the Deccan • Introduced administrative reforms • Encouraged trade and commerce, contributing to
Golden Age Rulers:		
Ahmad Shah I	1422-1436	• Notable patronage of art and culture • Fostering a thriving cultural scene • Facilitated the development of the Dakhni language
Alauddin Ahmad Shah II	1436-1458	• Continued cultural and literary advancements • Faced internal revolts and external threats
Mahmud Gawan	1466-1481	• Witnessed the Sultanate's zenith • Military campaigns expanded the Sultanate's territory • Reconquest of Goa from Vijayanagar
Later Rulers:		
Mahmud Shah I	1482-1518	• Ruled during a period of internal turmoil and external invasions
Kalim Allah	1518-1527	• Last ruler of the unified Bahmani Sultanate • Witnessed escalating conflicts and a fragmented

Fragmentation and Emergence of Deccan Sultanates:

After the military campaigns led by Krishnadeva Raya of the Vijayanagar Empire, the once-unified Bahmani Sultanate splintered into five distinct states, collectively known as the Deccan Sultanates. Each of these successor states operated independently, contributing significantly to the cultural, artistic, and political landscape of the Deccan region.

- **Ahmadnagar Sultanate:** Established under the rule of Ahmad Nizam Shah I.

- **Bijapur Sultanate:** Established by Yusuf Adil Shah.

- **Golconda Sultanate**: Founded by Quli Qutb Shah.

- **Berar Sultanate:** Ruled by Fathullah Imad-ul-Mulk.

- **Bidar Sultanate:** Established by Amir Barid.

Battle of Talikota (1565):

The culmination of tensions between the Deccan Sultanates and the Vijayanagar Empire resulted in the catastrophic Battle of Talikota in 1565. This pivotal conflict led to the downfall of the Vijayanagar Empire, reshaping the political dynamics of the Deccan.

Mughal Annexation:

Subsequently, the Mughal Empire, particularly under the reigns of Akbar and later Aurangzeb, extended its dominion over the Deccan Sultanates. This marked the final chapter in the Bahmani legacy, as the Mughals integrated the once-independent Deccan Sultanates into their vast empire, bringing an end to their distinct political identity.

Q.1 Consider the following pairs:

1. Ahmadnagar Sultanate : Ahmad Nizam Shah I

2. Bijapur Sultanate : Quli Qutb Shah

3. Golconda Sultanate : Yusuf Adil Shah

4. Berar Sultanate : Amir Barid

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

(a) Only one

(b) Only two

(c) Only three

(d) All four

ANSWER: A

Q.2 Discuss the significant contributions of the Deccan Sultanate to the mosaic of Indian art and architecture during the medieval period.

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB)

Why in the news?

The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have entered into an agreement for a $250 million policy-based loan.

About Asian Development Bank (ADB)

- **Establishment:**
- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) was established on December 19, 1966, as a regional development bank.
- **Headquarters and Field Offices:**
- ADB is headquartered at 6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong, Metro Manila 1550, Philippines.
- It maintains 42 field offices in Asia and the Pacific, with representative offices in Washington,

Frankfurt, Tokyo, and Sydney.

- **Aim and Mandate:**
- ADB positions itself as a social development organization committed to poverty reduction in Asia and the Pacific.
- Its objectives include fostering inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable development, and regional integration.
- These goals are pursued through investments in various sectors, such as infrastructure, healthcare services, financial and public administration systems, climate change preparedness, and natural resource management.
- **Membership:**
- ADB started with 31 members and has now expanded to include 68 members.
- Membership is open to members of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and non-regional developed countries.
- **Decision-Making and Votes:**
- ADB's decision-making process mirrors that of the World Bank.
- The number of votes held by a member corresponds to the number of shares it owns, distributed in proportion to capital subscriptions.
- Japan currently controls the highest number of shares, constituting approximately 15.5% of the bank's ownership.

Board of Governors:

- **Highest Policy-Making Body:**
- The Board of Governors, consisting of one representative from each member state, serves as the highest policy-making body of the ADB.
- This board elects the twelve members of the Board of Directors, including their deputies.
- **Composition:**
- Eight of the twelve directors represent regional (Asia-Pacific) members, while the others represent non-regional members.
- **Election of President:**
- The Board of Governors is responsible for electing the president, who also serves as the chairperson of the Board of Directors and manages the overall functioning of ADB.

President:

- **Term and Re-election:**
- The president holds a five-year term and is eligible for re-election.
- Traditionally, the president has been Japanese, reflecting Japan's significant shareholding in the bank.

Areas of Focus:
- **Aligned with SDGs:**
- ADB's development initiatives align with the World Bank's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- **Key Areas:**
  - The bank prioritizes key areas, including Education, Health, Transport, Energy, Finance Sector, and Climate Change.
- **Sustainable and Inclusive Growth:**
  - ADB aims to foster sustainable and inclusive economic growth by financing projects in education and health.
  - It also contributes to improving capital markets and business infrastructure in target countries.
- **Specialized Areas:**
  - ADB engages in specialized areas such as Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), Information Technology, Regional Cooperation and Integration, etc.
  - These serve as secondary capacity-building programs to complement primary focus areas.

Source:

https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/asian-development-bank-injects-250-million-to-boost-indias-industrial-corridors/articleshow/105860657.cms?from=mdr

THERE IS NO PLACE FOR HIJAB RIGHT NOW: HIJAB BAN ISSUE AND FREEDOM OF RELIGION IN KARNATAKA

(This article can be found in 'Official website of Supreme Court', 'Official website of Kerala High Court', 'Official judgment of Fathima Tasneem vs. State of Kerala (2018) case', 'Indian Express', 'The Hindu', 'Government of Karnataka Home The official website of the Ministry, 'Jansatta', 'Sansad TV's program Sarokar' is related to the brief summary of the combined editorial of the monthly magazine 'World Focus' and 'PIB'. It also includes the suggestions of the YOJNA IAS team. This article is related to UPSC This article specifically deals with the 'Indian Polity and Governance, Social Justice, Issues related to Women, Fundamental Rights, Issues related to Freedom of Religion, Judiciary, Government Policies and Interventions, Supreme Court, Hijab' section of the Civil Services Examination. 'No place for Hijab now: Hijab ban issue and freedom of religion in Karnataka' under 'Daily Current Affairs)'.

General Studies – Indian Polity and Governance, Social Justice, Issues related to women, Fundamental Rights, Issues related to freedom of religion, Judiciary, Government policies and interventions, Supreme Court, Hijab.

WHY IN DISCUSSION / NEWS?

Recently the Supreme Court gave a divided judgment in the Karnataka hijab ban case.

- In the event of a split decision as described in the Constitution of India, the case is heard by a larger bench.
- The bench to which the case of a split decision is transferred may be a three-judge bench of the High Court, or an appeal may be made to the Supreme Court.
- Petitions by a section of Muslim students in Karnataka seeking permission to wear hijab in

classrooms were rejected by the High Court in March 2022 on the grounds that it is not a part of essential religious practice in the Islamic faith and it was unnecessarily construed on grounds of religious freedom. But an appeal has been made for hearing.

There is no longer any restriction on Muslim girl students wearing hijab in educational institutions of Karnataka. The Congress government made this announcement on 23 December 2023. Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had made this announcement on December 22, 2023, at the inauguration of three police stations in Nanjanguda in Mysuru district. Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah argued behind this that in India it is the personal right/matter of any person to choose to wear any kind of dress and eat any kind of food. In India, behind such controversial matters is vote bank politics and appeasement.

Recently, six students at a college in Karnataka's Udupi district were banned from entering the college for wearing hijab (a garment worn by some Muslim women in public). This issue raises legal questions on freedom of religion and whether the right to wear the hijab is constitutionally protected. Or it also has some different implications. This matter had reached the Supreme Court via Karnataka High Court. Ultimately it was decided that there will be a ban on sitting in the classroom wearing hijab in educational institutions. Will be allowed to come to class only wearing Uniform. Female students could come to school in hijab, but would have to take off their hijab before entering the classroom.
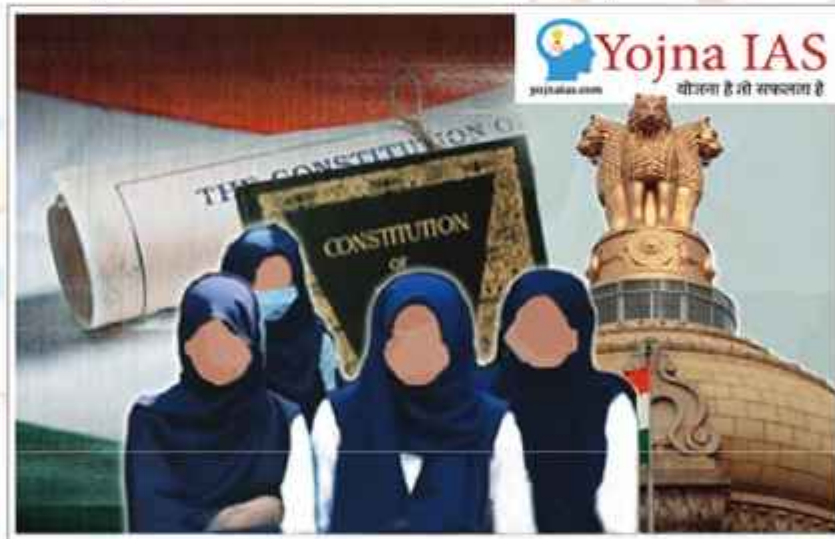
WHAT ARE ITS IMPLICATIONS?

According to the fundamental rights granted to Indian citizens by the Indian Constitution, Indian citizens have the following fundamental rights –

- Freedom of conscience: Freedom of conscience and to freely profess, practice and propagate religion.
- Right to practice religion: The right to declare one's religious belief and faith publicly and without fear.
- Right to practice: The right to practice religious worship, rituals, ceremonies and to demonstrate beliefs and ideas.
- Right to propagate: To communicate or disseminate one's religious beliefs to others or to explain the principles of one's religion.

TEST OF ESSENTIAL RELIGIOUS CONDUCT

- Over the years the Supreme Court has developed a practical test process for determining which religious practices can be constitutionally protected and which can be ignored.
- The Supreme Court in the year 1954 in the Shirur Math case said that the word 'religion' would include all the rituals and practices 'integral' under a religion. The test to determine what is 'integral' is called the 'essential religious practice' test.
- This test is often criticized by legal experts in relation to judicial determination of religious practices, as it leads the court to interfere in religious matters.
- Constitutional experts are of the opinion that the work of the court should be limited to restricting religious practices for the sake of public order and the court should not determine the practices necessary for any particular religion. In many cases the Court has applied this test to certain practices.
- The Supreme Court, in a judgment given in the year 2004, held that the 'Anand Marg sect' had no fundamental right to perform 'Tandav dance' on public roads, as it is not an essential religious practice of the sect.
- There are many instances in which the Court has also applied this test to individual liberty as these issues are considered to be largely community-based.
- In 2016, the Supreme Court had upheld the decision of the Indian Air Force to discharge a Muslim airman for having a beard.
- The Armed Forces Regulations, 1964 prohibit hair growth for armed forces personnel, except 'those personnel whose religion prohibits cutting or shaving of hair.'
- In one of its decisions, the Court essentially held that 'keeping a beard is not an essential part of Islamic practices'.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COURT'S DECISION:

JUDGMENTS OF THE COURTS SO FAR ON THE ISSUE OF HIJAB:

- Two such petitions were filed before the Kerala High Court in 2015, challenging the dress code for all India pre-medical admissions, which permitted wearing of slippers with "salwar/pajama" and light, half-sleeved shorts. There was a provision to wear only clothes which did not have big buttons, badges, flowers etc.
- Accepting the contention of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) that the rule was only to ensure that the candidates do not use unfair means by hiding objects inside the clothes, the Kerala High Court has asked the CBSE to impose additional scrutiny on those students. Instructed to take measures who intend to dress in accordance with their religious custom, but which is contrary to the dress code.
- The Kerala High Court examined this issue more closely in the case Amna Bint Bashir v. Central Board of Secondary Education (2016). In this case, the Court held that the practice of wearing hijab is an essential religious practice, but did not strike down the CBSE rule.
- The Court once again allowed "additional measures" and safeguards in 2015. However, on the issue of school-prescribed dress, another bench ruled differently in the case Fathima Tasneem v. State of Kerala (2018).
- **The single bench of the Kerala High Court said that- 'The collective rights of an organization will be given priority over the individual rights of the petitioner. ,**

PROTECTION OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM UNDER THE CONSTITUTION:

- Articles 25 to 28 of Part-3 (Fundamental Rights) of the Constitution provide the right to freedom of religion.
- Article 25 (1) of the Constitution guarantees 'freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practice and propagate religion'.
- It is a right that guarantees negative freedom, which means that the state will ensure that there is no interference or obstruction in exercising this freedom.
- The Constitution, like all fundamental rights, can restrict the right to public order, decency, morality, health and other state interests.
- Article 26 explains the freedom to manage religious affairs subject to public order, morality and health.
- According to Article 27, no person shall be compelled to pay any tax for the propagation or practice of any particular religion.
- Article 28 explains the freedom to attend religious instruction or religious worship in educational institutions.

SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM/WAY FORWARD:

- In the current political climate, the decision by the Government of Karnataka to mandate either a prescribed uniform or any dress in the "interest of unity, equality and public order" has been viewed as a majoritarian attempt in the guise of enforcing secular norms, equality and discipline in educational institutions. Also seen as a claim.
- A single decision that legitimizes this non-inclusive approach to education for people of any community, religion or caste and a single policy that can deny equal opportunities to Muslim women is not in the interest of the country and it will also be unconstitutional.
- In schools, colleges or other educational institutions, hijab or any dress, religious or otherwise, should not be different from the uniform prescribed by the school, colleges or other educational institutions. Therefore, there should be reasonable scope for wearing any attire other than the uniform as long as it does not detract from the uniform, such as hijab or any other religious attire. Therefore, the uniforms prescribed by schools, colleges or other educational institutions cannot be rejected on the basis of individual freedom of dress.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM:

Q. 1. Consider the following statements regarding the issue of wearing hijab on the basis of freedom of religion.

1. Articles 25 to 28 of Part-3 (Fundamental Rights) of the Constitution provide the right to freedom of religion.

2. The Constitution of India grants citizens the right to freedom of conscience and religion to freely profess, practice and propagate religion.

3. The Constitution, like all fundamental rights, can restrict the right to public order, decency, morality, health and other state interests.

4. According to Article 27 of the Indian Constitution, no person shall be compelled to pay any tax for the propagation or practice of any particular religion.

Which of the above statement/statements is correct?

- **1 and 4 only**

- **1, 3 and 4 only**

- **All of these.**

- **None of these.**

Answer – C

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM:

Q. 1. "On the basis of freedom of religion, any religious identity should be free from any public display in any public places/ places or institutions." In the light of this statement, what is the situation by the government of karnataka regarding school uniforms? Critically evaluate the orders/decisions given in the same.
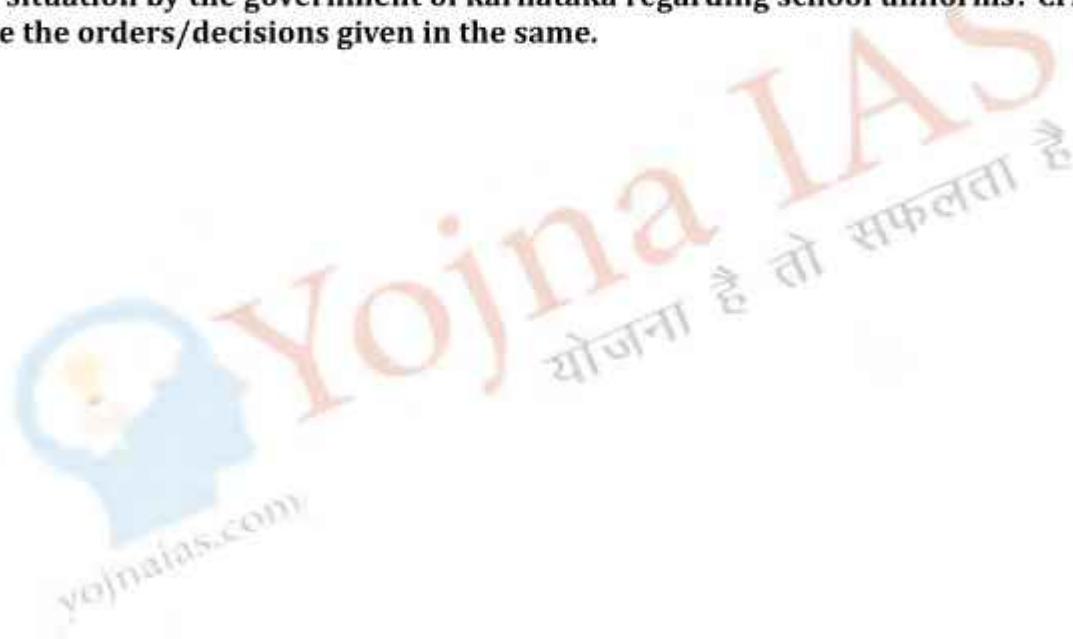
General Studies -2

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

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 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.

- o 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:**

- o Coordinates economic and social fields within the UN, overseeing 15 specialized agencies, five regional commissions, and eight functional commissions.

- o Central forum for discussions on international social and economic issues, formulating policy recommendations for member states and the UN system.

- **Decision-Making:**

- o Decisions made by a simple majority vote.

- o 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.

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR)

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details " Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)". This topic has relevance in the Social Justice section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 2: Social Justice

Why in the news?

The 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was observed on December 10, 2023. The UDHR stands as a seminal document that safeguards human rights and fundamental freedoms for every individual.

Background:

In a historic moment on December 10, 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) gained approval from the UN General Assembly during a pivotal meeting in Paris. This landmark document served as a foundational element in shaping the post-World War II international order, responding to the atrocities of the war and seeking to establish a shared understanding of the fundamental rights and freedoms inherent to all individuals.

About:

The UDHR, a concise document comprising a preamble and 30 articles, delineates a comprehensive array of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. These rights, deemed universal, extend to all people, irrespective of nationality, ethnicity, gender, religion, or any other status. While not a legally binding treaty, the declaration has profoundly influenced the development of international human rights law, acting as a wellspring of inspiration.

Features:

- **Preamble:**

- Sets forth the rationale behind the declaration, emphasizing the inherent dignity and equal, in-alienable rights of all members of the human family.

- **Articles:**

- Encompasses 30 articles articulating a broad spectrum of rights, including the right to life, liberty, and security, freedom of religion, expression, and assembly, the right to work and education, and the right to an adequate standard of living.

- Asserts equality before the law and the right to seek asylum from persecution in other countries.

Achievements of UDHR:

- Acknowledged for inspiring over 70 global and regional human rights treaties.

- Catalyst for the decolonization movement, anti-apartheid movement, and various freedom struggles worldwide, addressing issues such as gender, LGBTIQ+ rights, and racism.

Current Situation:

- Amidst challenges to human rights in conflicts such as Israel-Hamas, Russia's war in Ukraine, and internal conflicts in Myanmar and Sudan.

- UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres notes instances of misuse and abuse of the declaration for political gain but emphasizes its continued relevance.

- Amnesty International asserts that despite being ignored or exploited, the UDHR remains a testament to the possibility and realization of a global vision for human rights.

Conclusion:

The 75th anniversary of the UDHR underscores its enduring significance, with the document continuing to shape discussions on human rights globally. While challenges persist, its successes and failures serve as lessons for the world to honor its principles and strive for a more just and equitable future.

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948, the Universal Declaration states fundamental rights and freedoms to which all human beings are entitled.

- We are all born free and equal.
- Everyone is entitled to these rights no matter your race, religion, sex, language, or nationality.
- Everyone has the right to life, freedom, and safety.

You have the responsibility to respect the rights of others.

No one can take away any of your rights.

No one has the right to hold you in slavery.

No one has the right to torture you.

You have a right to be recognized everywhere as a person before the law.

We are all equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the law.

You have the right to seek legal help if your rights are violated.

No one has the right to wrongly imprison you or force you to leave your country.

You have a right to a fair, public trial.

Everyone is innocent until proven guilty.

You have the right to privacy. No one can interfere with your reputation, family, home, or correspondence.

You have the right to travel.

You have the right to seek asylum in another country if you are persecuted in your own.

Everyone has the right to a nationality.

All consenting adults have the right to marry and to raise a family.

You have the right to own property.

Everyone has the right to belong to a religion.

You have the right to think and voice your opinions freely.

Everyone has the right to gather as a peaceful assembly.

You have the right to participate in the governance of your country, either directly or by helping to choose representatives in free and genuine elections.

You have the right to social security and are entitled to economic, social, and cultural help from your government.

Every adult has the right to a job, a fair wage, and membership in a trade union.

You have the right to leisure and rest from work.

Everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their family.

Everyone has the right to an education.

Everyone has the right to freely participate in the culture and scientific advancement of their community, and their intellectual property as artist or scientist should be protected.

We are all entitled to a social order in which we may enjoy these rights.

Everyone's rights and freedoms should be protected unless they obstruct the rights and freedoms of others.

No State, group, or person can use this Declaration to deny the rights and freedoms of others.

Yojna IAS

SOURCE:

Human Rights Day 2023 Theme and Overview | Viral News, Times Now (timesnownews.com)

Q.1 With reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), consider the following statements:

1. It was signed in the preceding year of world war II.

2. Right to seek asylum is one of the rights under UDHR.

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 Discuss the enduring significance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 75 years since its adoption. Analyze its impact on shaping the global discourse on human rights, addressing challenges, and influencing international relations.

ADVOCATES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2023

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

GS 2: Polity and Governance

Why in the news?

The Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2023, underwent significant legislative progress, securing approval in both the Rajya Sabha in August 2023 and the Lok Sabha during the recent winter session. The primary focus of this bill is to streamline the legal system by eliminating touts, leading to the repeal of the archaic Legal Practitioners Act, 1879, and amendments to the Advocates Act, 1961.

The bill aligns with the government's commitment to declutter the legal framework by repealing outdated laws, such as the Legal Practitioners Act, 1879, that have lost their relevance over time.

Background

The legal landscape governing practitioners in India has witnessed significant changes over the years, transitioning from the Legal Practitioners Act of 1879 to the more comprehensive Advocates Act of 1961.

Legal Practitioners Act of 1879:

- The primary objective of the 1879 Act was to consolidate and amend the law concerning Legal Practitioners in specific provinces.

- Section 2 of the Act defined a legal practitioner to encompass advocates, vakils, or attorneys of any High Court.

- The Act introduced a novel definition of the term "tout," characterizing them as individuals who, in consideration of remuneration from a legal practitioner, secure the employment of that practitioner in legal business.

Advocates Act of 1961:

- Enacted in 1961, the Advocates Act aimed to amend and consolidate laws related to legal practitioners. It also provided acfor the establishment of Bar Councils and an All-India Bar.

- Replaced three previous Acts governing legal practitioners: the Legal Practitioners Act of 1879, the Bombay Pleaders Act of 1920, and the Indian Bar Councils Act of 1926.

Repeal of the Legal Practitioners Act of 1879:

○ The Law Commission, in its 249th Report titled 'Obsolete Laws: Warranting Immediate Repeal,' recommended the repeal of the 1879 Act.

○ Acknowledging these recommendations and those of the All-India Bar Committee in 1953, the Advocates Act of 1961 was enacted.

Key Features of Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2023

Yojna IAS

☐ The Bill empowers High Courts, district judges, sessions judges, district magistrates, and revenue officers to create and publish lists of touts.

☐ Authorities can exclude individuals named in the tout lists from court premises.

☐ Empowered authorities can direct subordinate courts to conduct inquiries into the conduct of individuals suspected to be touts.

☐ Inclusion in the tout list requires due process, ensuring individuals have an opportunity to contest their inclusion.

☐ Individuals acting as touts while listed may face penalties, including imprisonment for up to three months, a fine of up to Rs 500, or both.

Source: The Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2023 (prsindia.org)

Q.1 Regarding the The Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2023 recently seen in the news, consider the following statements:

1. The Bill empowers only the High Courts and Supreme Court to create and publish lists of touts.

2. The Act introduced a novel definition of the term "tout".

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 Critically Examine the Implications of the Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2023, on Legal Practice in India. Analyze the Bill's Impact on Streamlining the Legal System.

ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION (OIC)

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details " Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)". This topic has relevance in the International Relations section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 2: International Relations

Why in the news?

India has dismissed a statement from the OIC regarding the Supreme Court's verdict affirming the revocation of Article 370, which granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir.

Background:

India strongly rejected remarks by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) expressing concern over the Supreme Court's verdict on Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir.

The External Affairs Ministry spokesperson termed the OIC's statement "ill-informed and ill-intended," questioning its alignment with a human rights violator and promoter of cross-border terrorism. It was emphasized that such statements undermine the credibility of the OIC.

The OIC had expressed concern over the Supreme Court's verdict and reaffirmed solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The Supreme Court's decision to uphold the revocation of Article 370 includes ordering the restoration of statehood by September 30, 2024.

Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC): An Overview

- **Establishment:** Founded in September 1969 after a summit in Rabat, Morocco, prompted by the criminal arson of Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem.

- **Size and Population:** Second-largest organization globally after the United Nations.It represents over 1.8 billion people.

- **Collective Voice:** Acts as the collective voice of the Muslim world, advocating for their interests in economic, social, and political domains.

Objectives:

- o Aims to preserve Islamic values.

- o Safeguards and defends national sovereignty and independence of member states.

- o Contributes to international peace and security.

- **Membership:** Comprises 57 member states spanning four continents.

- **Headquarters:** Located in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

- **Official Languages:** Recognizes Arabic, English, and French as its official languages.
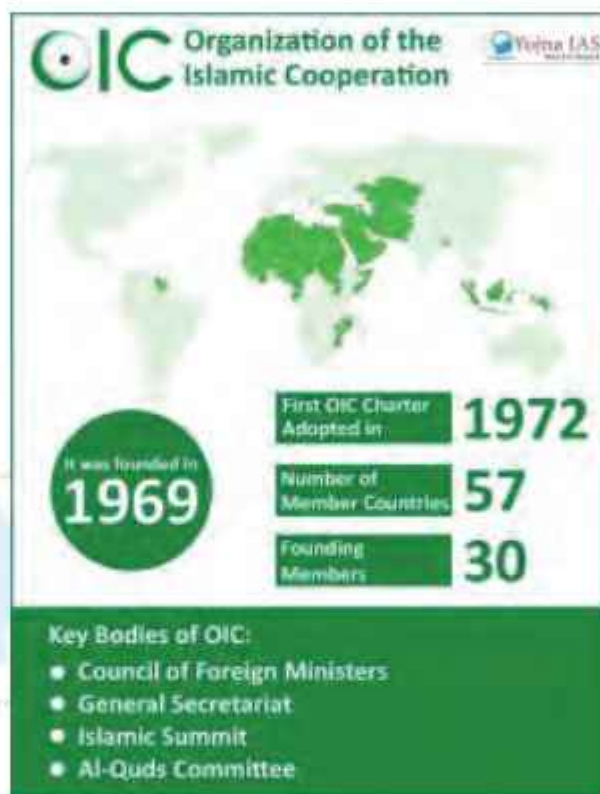
Historical Background:

- In 1969, India, with the world's second-largest Muslim community, was invited to the founding conference of the OIC but was ejected at Pakistan's insistence.

- India stayed away due to concerns about joining a religiously founded organization and potential strain on bilateral relations, particularly on issues like Kashmir.

Observer Status and Ongoing Relations:

- In 2018, Bangladesh proposed India for Observer status at the 45th session of the Foreign Ministers' Summit, but Pakistan opposed it.

- India advocates for a more inclusive approach within the OIC, expressing reluctance to join an organization built on religious foundations.

- Despite reservations, India, with strengthened ties to influential OIC members like UAE and Saudi Arabia, remains confident in managing statements from the grouping.

Kashmir Issue and OIC Statements:

- The OIC has, at times, expressed concerns and called for resolutions aligning with the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

- In 2018, the OIC General Secretariat condemned the killing of Kashmiris by Indian forces, a stance consistently rejected by India.

- India maintains that J&K is an integral part of the country, and the OIC has no standing on the issue.

Diplomatic Milestones:

- In 2019, India made its first appearance at the OIC Foreign Ministers' meeting as a "guest of honour," marking a diplomatic victory.

- This move was significant during heightened tensions with Pakistan post the Pulwama attack.

Recent Developments and Criticisms:

- In 2022, the OIC called on the UN Human Rights Council regarding the hijab issue in Karnataka schools.

- The OIC urged India to ensure the safety and well-being of the Muslim community, criticizing the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, and the Babri Masjid verdict.

Source:

'Ill-informed, ill-intended': India rejects statement by Organization of Islamic Cooperation on Supreme Court verdict on Article 370 (msn.com)

Q.1 Regarding the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) recently seen in the news, consider the following statements:

1. India is one of its founding members

2. Recently OIC has intervened in Kashmir issue on India's behalf

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 Examine the evolving relationship between India and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Assess the impact of India's rejection of OIC statements recently and its efforts to navigate the organization, highlighting key diplomatic challenges and achievements.

LARGEST SUSPENSION OF MPS FROM LOK SABHA AND RAJYA SABHA

This article covers 'Daily Current Affairs' and the topic details 'Suspension of MPs from Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha' This topic has relevance in the Polity and Governance section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 2: Polity and Governance

Why in the News?

Recently, 143 MPs from both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha belonging to the Opposition have been suspended from Parliamentary sessions due to their role in causing disruptions.

What are the rules on the suspension of MPs?

- The fundamental rule dictates that the responsibility and duty to uphold order and ensure the smooth functioning of the House lie with the Presiding Officers i.e the **Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha**.

- The Presiding Officers — the Speaker of Lok Sabha and Chairman of Rajya Sabha plays the major role in suspensions of Members of Parliament (MPs).

- In the **Lok Sabha**, the Speaker's actions are guided by Rules 373, 374, and 374A of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business, while in the **Rajya Sabha**, the Chairman acts as per Rules 255 and 256.

- **Rule 373 and Rule 255**: These rules authorize the presiding officers to instruct an MP to leave the House in the event of any disruptive behavior.

- **Rule 374 and Rule 256**: Should an MP persistently disrupt the proceedings, the presiding officer has the authority to "name" the legislator. Subsequently, the House can propose a motion to suspend the MP for the remainder of the session.

- **Rule 374A**: It was introduced in the Lok Sabha's Rule Book in 2001, this rule grants the Speaker the ability to address severe and disorderly behavior. Under this provision, an MP identified by the Speaker is automatically suspended for either five days or the duration of the session's remaining part. This rule removes the need for the House to pass a motion for suspension. This provision has not been incorporated by Rajya Sabha in its procedures.

How long can MPs be suspended for and the implications of suspension?

MPs can be suspended for the remaining part of the session only.

Implications

1. Suspended members cannot enter the chamber or attend the meetings of the committees.

2. Suspended members are not eligible to give notice for discussion or submission.

3. Members lose the right to get a reply to his questions.

4. They will not be eligible to give notice for discussion or submission.

However, the House at any point of time can reinstate a suspended member by passing a motion.
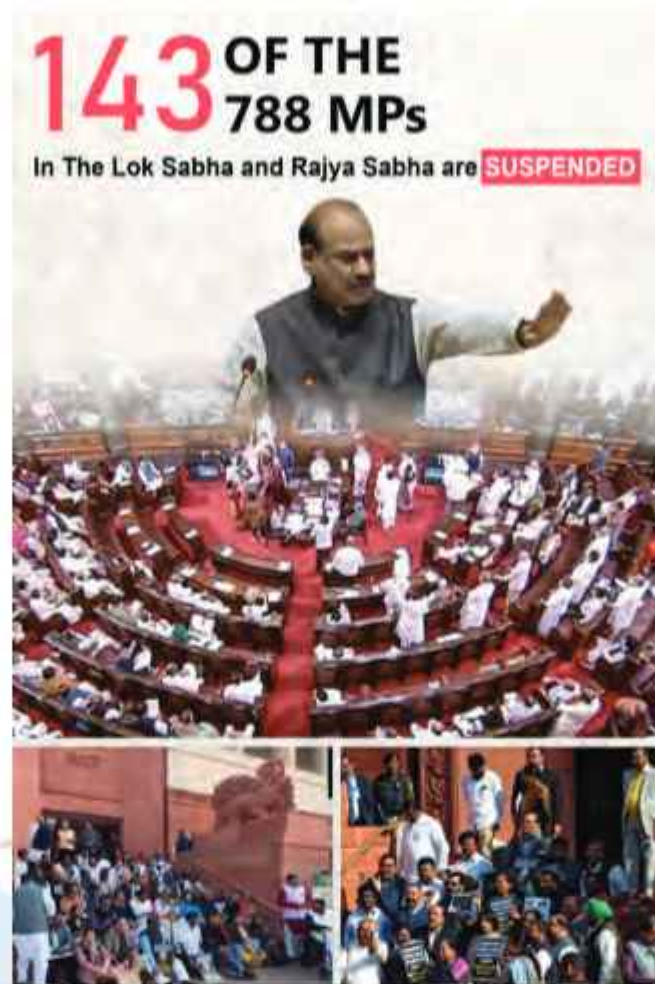
Can courts intervene in a matter of suspension of MPs?

Article 122 of the Constitution indicates that parliamentary proceedings cannot be questioned before a court. However, in some cases, courts have intervened in the procedural functioning of legislatures like Maharashtra Legislative Assembly passed a resolution in its 2021 Monsoon Session suspending 12 BJP MLAs for a year. Thereafter, the matter came before the Supreme Court, which held that the resolution was ineffective in law beyond the remainder of the Monsoon Session.

Motivation behind Suspension of MPs

1. **Disorderly Conduct**: Suspensions may be imposed in response to disorderly conduct, disruptions, or unruly behavior during parliamentary sessions. Such actions can impede the smooth functioning of the legislature and compromise the decorum essential for productive debates.

2. **Breach of Parliamentary Rules**: MPs may face suspension if they violate specific parliamentary rules, procedures, or ethical guidelines. This could include actions that contravene the established code of conduct for parliamentarians.

3. **Unparliamentary Language**: The use of offensive or unparliamentary language is a common reason for suspension. Utterances that are disrespectful, derogatory, or inflammatory may lead to disciplinary measures, including suspension, to maintain the dignity of parliamentary proceedings.

4. **Physical Altercations:** Instances of physical altercations or aggressive behavior within the parliamentary premises may result in the suspension of involved MPs. Such incidents are considered serious breaches of conduct and can lead to immediate disciplinary actions.

5. **Defiance of Speaker's Authority:** Refusing to comply with the Speaker's directives, challenging the authority of the presiding officer, or engaging in acts of disobedience can be grounds for suspension. This is crucial for maintaining order and ensuring the smooth functioning of parliamentary sessions.

6. **Ethical Violations:** Actions that are ethically questionable, such as conflicts of interest, corruption, or other ethical violations, may prompt disciplinary action, including suspension, to uphold the integrity of parliamentary proceedings.

7. **Repetitive Offenses:** MPs who repeatedly engage in disruptive behavior or violate parliamentary norms may face suspension as a means of deterring such actions and maintaining discipline within the legislative body.

Possible Implication of the Suspension:

The suspension of Members of Parliament (MPs) in Parliament carries several implications, affecting both the individuals involved and the functioning of the parliamentary system. Here are some key implications:

1. **Denial of Participation:** Suspended MPs lose their right to participate in the proceedings of the house during the period of suspension. This includes attending sessions, voting on bills, and engaging in debates. The denial of participation is a significant consequence, as it hinders the suspended members from fulfilling their legislative responsibilities.

2. **Impact on Representation:** The suspension of MPs may impact the effective representation of the constituencies they represent. Constituents may be deprived of their elected representatives' contributions and voice in parliamentary activities during the period of suspension.

3. **Disciplinary Measure:** Suspension is often a disciplinary measure taken by the parliamentary authorities in response to actions deemed inappropriate or a breach of parliamentary rules. It serves as a means of maintaining order, decorum, and the integrity of parliamentary proceedings.

4. **Political Ramifications:** Suspensions can have political ramifications, affecting party dynamics and inter-party relationships. The suspension of MPs may lead to debates on the fairness of the disciplinary action and influence public perceptions of the political parties involved.

5. **Legal Challenges:** Suspended MPs may choose to challenge their suspension through legal means, arguing that the disciplinary action is unjust or violates parliamentary norms. Legal challenges can lead to further scrutiny of the grounds for suspension and the procedures followed.

6. **Preservation of Parliamentary Decorum:** The suspension of MPs is intended to uphold the dignity and decorum of parliamentary proceedings. It serves as a deterrent against disruptive behavior and actions that could undermine the functioning of the legislature.

7. **Duration and Review:** Suspensions are typically of a specific duration, and the parliamentary rules may allow for a review of the suspension. This review process provides an opportunity for suspended MPs to appeal and seek a reconsideration of the disciplinary action.

Challenges and Criticisms

The suspension of MPs in India has been met with criticism and scrutiny which are as follows:

1. **Potential for Abuse:** Critics argue that the power to suspend MPs could be misused for political expediency, stifling dissent and opposition within the legislative framework.

2. **Need for Transparency:** There is a perceived lack of transparency in the criteria and process for suspending MPs, leading to allegations of arbitrary and unfair disciplinary actions.

3. **Legal Ambiguities:** The legal framework governing MP suspensions lacks clarity in certain aspects, necessitating reforms to ensure consistency, fairness, and adherence to constitutional principles.

The Way Forward

Addressing the challenges associated with the suspension of MPs in India requires a multi-faceted approach:

1. **Reform of Parliamentary Rules:** There is a need to revisit and reform the rules governing MP suspensions to ensure transparency, accountability, and adherence to democratic norms.

2. **Enhanced Dialogue:** Promoting constructive dialogue among parliamentary members to foster mutual respect and understanding, thereby reducing the need for disciplinary actions.

3. **Public Awareness and Engagement:** Raising public awareness about the importance of parliamentary decorum and the role of MPs in upholding democratic values, fostering a culture of responsible governance.

Conclusion

The suspension of MPs in India is a complex issue that intersects with various aspects of parliamentary democracy, including representation, accountability, and governance. While it serves as a mechanism for maintaining order and discipline within the legislative framework, it also raises significant questions and challenges that warrant critical examination. As India continues to strengthen its democratic institutions, addressing the complexities surrounding MP suspensions becomes essential to ensure the effective and equitable functioning of parliamentary democracy.

Source:

https://epaper.thehindu.com/ccidist-ws/th/th_delhi/issues/64293/OPS/ GLCC60OJ4.1.png?rev=2023-12-21T01:07:39+05:30&cropFromPage=true | The Hindu

Q1. Which of the following have provisions for the disqualification of a Member of Parliaments?

1. Rule of Procedure of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha

2. Constitution of India

3. RPA, 1951

4. Schedule 1 of constitution

How many statements are correct:

A) Only 1

B) Only 2

C) Only 3

D) Only 4

Answer: C

Q.2   What are the tools to ensure accountability of the Executive. To what extent, the Parliament is able to ensure accountability of the executive in India. Critically Analyze?

ALL INDIA JUDICIAL SERVICE: CURRENT RELEVANCE AND CHALLENGES

(This article is related to the brief summary of the combined editorials of 'Indian Express', 'The Hindu', 'Jansatta', 'Sansad TV's program Sarokar', monthly magazine 'World Focus' and 'PIB '. In this, the suggestions of the Yojana IAS team This article is specifically related to the 'Indian Polity and Governance' section of the UPSC Civil Services Examination . This article is related to 'All India Judicial Services: Current Relevance and Challenges ' under 'Daily Current Affairs' .)
General Studies – Indian Polity and Governance.

Why in discussion?

The first citizen of India and the 15th President of the country, Shrimati Draupadi Murmu, on the occasion of Constitution Day on 26 November 2023, established an All India Judicial Service (AIJS) to ensure equal representation of India's diversity in the judiciary. He also emphasized that the aim of justice is to make it accessible and equitable to all, which is yet to happen in India.

The President said – **"A more diverse representation of India's unique diversity on the Constitutional Bench and Bar Councils certainly helps in better serving the ends of justice. "One way to accelerate this diversification process could be to create a system in which judges can be recruited from diverse backgrounds through a merit-based, competitive and transparent process."** In such a situation, there could possibly be an All India Judicial Service, which would be able to **"select talented youth from across the country and nurture and promote their talent from lower to higher levels"** to create a larger pool of talent. **"Such a system can also provide opportunities to under-represented social groups,"** She said.

The Government of India has recently proposed to pass a Bill to set up the All India Judicial Service (AIJS) for recruitment of officers for subordinate courts through an entrance examination.

Immediately after independence, provision was made for an All India Judicial Service (AIJS) on the lines of the Indian Administrative Service and the Indian Police Service, but due to certain reasons, the All India Judicial Service has not been created yet.

The idea of AIJS is currently being proposed in the backdrop of judicial reforms, particularly related to checking of vacancies and pending cases in the judiciary. The establishment of AIJS is a positive step, but it faces several constitutional and legal hurdles.

What is All India Judicial Service (AIJS)?

Introduction:

- It is a proposed centralized recruitment system **for judges at the level of** Additional District Judges and District Judges in all states .

- Its aim is to centralize the recruitment of judges, similar to **the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) model, and hand over charge of states to successful candidates.**

- As per the recommendations of the Law Commission reports of the years **1958 and 1978** , the AIJS aims to address structural issues such as differential pay, recruitment against vacancies and standardized nationwide training.

- The Parliamentary Standing Committee reconsidered the support for the All India Judicial Service in the year 2006.

Constitutional basis:

- **Article 312 of the Constitution** provides for the establishment of the AIJS on a proposal **supported by not less than two-thirds of the members of the Rajya Sabha,** similar to the Central Civil Services .

- However **Article 312(2)** states that the AIJS cannot include any post below the level of **District Judge (defined in Article 236) .**

- **According to Article 236** , a District Judge includes Municipal Civil Court Judge, Additional District Judge, Joint District Judge, Assistant District Judge, Chief Justice of Small Causes Court, Chief Presidency Magistrate, Additional Chief Presidency Magistrate, Session Judge, Additional Session Judge and Assistant Sessions Judge.

Need:

- **AIJS will ensure uniform and high standards** of selection and training of judges , thereby enhancing the quality and efficiency of the judiciary.

- **AIJS will fill the vacancies of judges** in lower courts , currently **around 5,400 posts are vacant in the lower judiciary across the country and 2.78 crore cases** are pending in the lower judiciary mainly due to inordinate delay in conducting regular examinations by the states.

- AIJS will increase the representation and diversity of judges from different regions, genders, castes and communities reflecting the **social structure of the country** .

- **AIJS will reduce the scope for judicial or executive interference** in judicial appointments , thereby ensuring **the independence and accountability of judges** .

- AIJS will create a pool of talented and experienced judges who can be appointed to the higher judiciary, thereby improving the future prospects of judges and their mobility.

Present situation:

- Due to different opinions in this regard among all the major stakeholders in India, no **consensus** has been reached on AIJS till the year 2023.

- This highlights the challenges in achieving consensus on the proposal to establish AIJS.

How are district judges currently recruited?

- The current system consists of **Articles 233 and 234** which empower the states to appoint district judges, which is managed through the State Public Service Commissions and the High Courts, as the High Court exercises jurisdiction over the subordinate judiciary in the state. Is.

- A panel of High Court judges interviews the candidates after the examination and selects them for appointment.

- All judges up to the level of District Judge of the lower judiciary are selected through the Provincial Civil Services (Judicial) Examination. PCS (J) is commonly known as Judicial Services Examination.

- Article 233 deals with **the appointment of District Judges** . The appointment, posting and promotion of District Judges in any State shall be made by **the Governor of the State** in consultation with the High Court exercising jurisdiction over such State.

- **Article 234** deals with **the recruitment of persons other than District Judges** to the judicial service .

What are the concerns regarding AIJS?

- This would be a violation of **the federal structure** and the autonomy of the States and High Courts, which have the constitutional power and responsibility to administer the subordinate judiciary.

- This would lead to conflict of interest and dual control over judges, who would be **answerable to both the Central and State governments** .

- This will disregard the local laws, languages and customs of different states, which are essential for the effective functioning of the judiciary.

- This will impact the morale and motivation of **existing judicial officers** , who will be deprived of opportunities and incentives for career advancement.

The way forward to move towards solving the problem:

- Dialogue and consultation should be facilitated with states, high courts and legal experts to address concerns and garner support for AIJS.

- Consideration should be given to implementing AIJS on a pilot basis in select states to assess its impact and gradually address the concerns.

- Designing AIJS with flexible mechanisms that allow adaptation to local methods, languages and customs should also ensure effective functioning without neglecting regional nuances.

- Proposing a clearly defined transition period during which existing judicial officers can smoothly adapt to the new system while minimizing disruptions.

- There is a need to put in place a periodic review mechanism to assess the impact of the AIJS on the federal structure, autonomy and effective functioning of the judiciary and make necessary adjustments as required.

- Develop an incentive structure within the AIJS that motivates and recognizes the contributions of existing judicial officers while addressing concerns related to career advancement.

CONSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE FOR AIJS:

- **AIJS was first proposed by the 14th Report of the Law Commission in the year 1958** .

- By the 42nd Constitutional Amendment in the year 1976, Article 312(1) was amended to empower the Parliament to make laws for the creation of one or more All India Services, including AIJS, with equal powers for both the Union and the States. Is.

- Under Article 312 , the Rajya Sabha is required to pass a resolution supported by at least two-thirds of its members present and voting. After this, Parliament will have to make a law to create AIJS.

- This means that no constitutional amendment will be required for the establishment of AIJS.

- The Supreme Court of India also supported this in the case 'All India Judges Association vs Union of India' (1993) and said that AIJS should be established.

BENEFITS OF AIJS:

- **Number of judges as per population ratio**: A Law Commission report (year 1987) recommended that India should have 50 judges per million population as compared to (then) 10.50 judges.

- This figure exceeds 20 judges in terms of the current sanctioned strength, but is much lower than the US or the UK (107 and 51 judges per million people, respectively).

- AIJS thus envisages bridging the inherent gap in the judicial sector.

- **Higher representation of marginalized sections of the society** : According to the government, AIJS is an ideal solution for equal representation of marginalized and deprived sections of the society.

- **Attracting talent:** The government believes that if such a service comes up, it will help in creating a pool of talented people who can later become part of the higher judiciary.

- **'Bottom-up' approach:** 'Bottom-up' approach in recruitment will also be helpful in dealing with issues like corruption and nepotism in the lower judiciary. This will improve the quality of the justice system in the lower levels of the society.

RELATED CHALLENGES:

- **Dichotomy between Articles 233 and 312:** According to Article 233, recruitment to the subordinate judiciary is the prerogative of the State.

- This has led many states and high courts to oppose the idea as being against federalism.

- If the fundamental power of the states to make such rules and control the appointment of district judges is taken away, it may go against the principle of federalism and the basic structure principle.

NOTE:

- **Article 233 (1) of the Constitution** states that "The appointment of persons to be District Judges in any State and the posting and promotion of District Judges shall be made by the Governor of that State after consultation with the High Court exercising jurisdiction in relation to such State." Will do."

- **Linguistic barrier:** Since cases are argued in lower courts in local languages, there are apprehensions as to how a person from North India can get a hearing in a southern state. Thus another fundamental concern regarding AIJS is the language barrier.

- **Constitutional Limit:** Clause 3 of Article 312 imposes a restriction that the AIJS shall not include a post not lower than the post of District Judge. Thus the appointment of subordinate judiciary through AIJS may face constitutional hurdles.

- **Weakening the administrative control of the High Court:** The creation of AIJS will lead to erosion of control of the High Courts over the subordinate judiciary, which may affect the independence of the judiciary.

CONCLUSION:

The number of pending cases and crores of prisoners lodged in the jails in the name of 'undertrial' in Indian jails certainly demands the establishment of a clean, transparent, competitive and merit based recruitment system which ensures speedy disposal of cases. To recruit a large number of skilled and qualified judges. However, before AIJS comes into the legislative framework, there is a need to build consensus and take a decisive step towards AIJS. At the same time, governments also need to create mutual coordination between Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha so that in future All India Judicial Service posts are created. In the direction of creation, the mutual deadlock between the judges appointed by the Collegium and the government should be ended and the way can be paved for positive initiatives towards the creation of posts like All India Judicial Service.

Practice Questions for Preliminary Exam:

Q.1. Consider the following statements with reference to All India Judicial Service in India .

1. The authority for appointment and management of District Judges and Subordinate Courts in India is exercised through the State Public Service Commissions and the High Courts of the respective States.

2. The All India Judicial Service aims to centralize the recruitment of judges, similar to the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) model, and assign charge of states to successful candidates.

3. Article 312 of the Constitution provides for the establishment of the AIJS on a proposal supported by not less than two-thirds of the members of the Rajya Sabha, similar to the Central Civil Services.

4. AIJS was first proposed by the 14th Report of the Law Commission in the year 1958.

Which of the above statement/statements is correct?

(a) Only 1, 2 and 3.

(b) 1, 3 and 4 only.

(c) None of these .

(d) all of which.

Answer – (d)

Practice Questions for Mains Exam:

Q.1. Discuss how the establishment of All India Judicial Service in India is a positive step in the field of judiciary in the context of recruitment of judges from diverse backgrounds through merit-based, competitive and transparent process for speedy and accessible justice system in India. ? Describe its current relevance by discussing the constitutional and legal obstacles to its creation.

'TELECOM BILL 2023' AND DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY IN INDIA: FUTURE AND CHALLENGES.

(This article is from 'Indian Express', 'The Hindu', 'Jansatta', 'Official websites of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited', 'Sansad TV's program Sarokar', monthly magazine 'World Focus' and ' PIB . The included editorial is a brief summary of the same. It also includes the suggestions of the Yojana IAS team. This article is about the UPSC Civil Services Examination especially 'Polity and Governance of India, Achievements of Indians in Science and Technology, Information Technology and Computers, Growth and Development. This article is related to ' Telecom Bill 2023' and 'Digital Sovereignty in India: Future and Challenges' under 'Daily Current Affairs').

General Studies: Polity and Governance of India, Achievements of Indians in Science and Technology, Information Technology and Computers, Growth and Development, Development Related Issues and Industrial Development.

Why in discussion?

Union Telecommunications Minister of the Government of India, Ashwini Vaishnav recently introduced the ' **Telecommunications Bill 2023'** in the Rajya Sabha . This bill was passed in the Lok Sabha only on 20 December 2023. After Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha has also passed this bill by giving its approval by voice vote. **It also amends the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) Act, 1997.** Under this bill itself, non-auction process will be adopted for allocation of satellite spectrum. The Bill allows the Central Government to take over the telecommunication network in case of any public emergency or in the interest of public safety. This new bill will replace **the Indian Telegraph Act 1885, the Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act 1933 and the Telegraph Telegraph (Unlawful Possession) Act 1950.** With this, the Indian Telecom Bill 2023 has now been approved by the Parliament.

MAJOR PROVISIONS OF THE INDIAN TELECOM BILL 2023:

- **Authorization for telecommunication related activities:** Service provider companies will now require prior authorization from the Central Government for providing **telecommunication services , establishing, operating, maintaining or expanding telecommunication networks or possessing radio equipment.** Existing licenses shall remain valid for the period of their grant or for five years where the period is not specified.

- **Allocation of Spectrum:** Spectrum will be allocated by auction, except for specified uses, where it will be allocated on administrative basis. These include purposes like **national security and defence, disaster management, weather forecasting**, transport, satellite services like DTH and satellite telephony and purposes like BSNL, MTNL and public broadcasting services.

- **The Central Government can re-purpose or reallocate** any frequency range . The central government can also allow sharing, trading, leasing and surrender of spectrum.

- **Satellite Internet allocation:** The bill introduces provisions to allocate **spectrum to satellite internet providers like OneWeb (backed by Bharti) and US-based companies like SpaceX's Starlink.**

- Currently, active authorizations have been granted to OneWeb and Jio , paving the way for satellite-based Internet services.

- **Powers of interception and search:** Messages or a class of messages between two or more persons **can be intercepted, monitored or blocked on certain grounds** .

- Such actions must be necessary or expedient in the interest of public safety or public emergency and must also be in the interest of specified grounds, including the security of the State, prevention of incitement to crimes, incitement or threat of incitement of communal riots or ethnic violence by false news, etc. Involves arrangements to control crime or public law and order.

- **Telecom services can be suspended on this basis:** The Government may take temporary possession of any telecommunications infrastructure, networks or services in case of any public emergency or public safety.

- Any officer authorized by the Government may search premises or vehicles containing unauthorized telecommunications networks or equipment.

- **Powers to prescribe standards:** The Central Government can prescribe standards and

evaluation for **telecommunication equipment, infrastructure, networks** and **services** .

- **Telecom Providers Easement Right of Way:** The Bill allows utility providers to seek **right-of-way/right-of-way on public or private property** for setting up telecommunication infrastructure .

- This should, as far as possible, provide access to information on a non-discriminatory and non-exclusive basis.

- **Priority transmission of messages during disaster:** During any public emergency, the Central or State Government may temporarily suspend any telecommunication service.

- The government may establish a system to guarantee that messages sent by authorized users are transmitted first for response and recovery.

- **New provision for media:** According to the new bill, messages of correspondents accredited by the Central or State Governments will not be stopped unless their broadcast is prohibited under the rules applicable to public emergency and public order.

- **3 years jail and fine of Rs 50 lakh for SIM card fraud: There** are strict provisions in the bill to stop issuing fake SIM cards. Any kind of SIM card fraud will attract a jail term of three years and a fine. Under the bill, there is a provision of up to three years in jail or a fine of up to Rs 50 lakh for selling, buying and using SIM cards. Biometric data will be taken to sell the SIM only after that the SIM will be issued.

- **Protection of privacy of consumers or users:** The Central Government may provide measures to protect the privacy of consumers or users including: **prior consent to receive specified messages such as advertising messages** , **creation of 'Do Not Disturb' registers and providing information to consumers about the privacy of** consumers or users. or establishing a mechanism to allow users to report malware or specified messages.

- **Biometric authentication** should be mandatory for telecom customers to deal with spam calls and messages .

- Entities/companies providing telecom services will have to set up an online mechanism for registration and redressal of complaints.

- **Authority to Waive fees:** The Bill gives the government the power to waive entry fees, license fees, fines etc. in the interest of consumers.

- **Appointments to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI):** This Bill **amends the TRAI Act** to allow persons with at least **30 years** of professional experience to serve as Chairman/Chairperson and to serve as members. Minimum of **25 years** of professional experience is allowed.

- **Digital India Fund:** The Universal Service Obligation Fund has been established under **the 1885 Act to** provide telecommunication services in deprived areas.

- This provision has been retained in this Bill, but **the name of the fund** has been changed to Digital India Fund and it also allows its use for research and development.

- **Regulation of OTT apps:** The Bill has **removed over-the-top (OTT) services and apps from the definition of telecommunication services** , **giving major relief to communication service providers like WhatsApp and Telegram** .

- **The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology** will handle regulation of OTT apps under a potential Digital India Act, which is not included in the Telecom Bill.

- **Provision of Offenses and Punishments under it:** The Bill specifies various criminal and civil offences. Providing telecommunication services without authorization or gaining unauthorized access to telecommunication networks or data is **punishable with imprisonment of up to three years, fine up to two crore rupees, or both.**

- Violation of the terms and conditions of the authority may impose a civil penalty of up to **Rs 5 crore.**

- Possession of unauthorized equipment or use of unauthorized network or service may **attract a fine of up to Rs 10 lakh .**

- **Procedure for appointment of officer to inquire into and adjudicate against civil offences:** The Central Government shall **appoint an adjudication officer to inquire into and pass orders** against civil offenses under this Bill .

- The officer should be of the rank of Joint Secretary and above.

- Appeals against the orders of the Adjudicating Officer can be made **before** the designated Appeal Committee within 30 days .

- Appeals against the orders of the Committee regarding violation of terms and conditions can be filed within 30 days in the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT).

- **Integrating the Trusted Source Mechanism:** A measure initially established following the India-China border conflict in 2020 to prevent import of telecommunications equipment from potentially adversarial countries has **now been integrated into this law .**

Issues:

- **Decline in Average Revenue Per User (ARPU):** The decline in ARPU has been steadily accelerating, with declining profits and in some cases serious losses, leading the Indian telecom industry to seek consolidation as the only way to increase revenues.

- **Lack of telecom infrastructure in semi-rural and rural areas:** Service providers have to bear huge upfront fixed costs to enter semi-rural and rural areas.

- **Margin pressure due to competition:** With competition intensifying after the entry of Reliance Jio, other telcos are experiencing a sharp decline in tariff rates for both voice calls and data (more important for data customers).

STATUS OF TELECOM SECTOR IN INDIA:

Present situation:

- The telecom industry sector in India **is the second largest in the world with a user base of 1.179 billion (wireless + wireline users) by August 2023.**

- **The telecom industry sector is the fourth largest in terms of FDI inflows to India, contributing 6% to India's total FDI inflows in terms of FDI sector.**

- The total tele-density in India is **84.69%** . Tele-density refers to the number of telephones per

100 population and is a key indicator of access to telecommunications.

- The average monthly data consumption per wireless data user has also increased from 61.66 MB in March 2014 to 17.36 GB in March 2023.

Government Initiatives Launched by Government of India:

- The Department of Information Technology aims to set up more than 1 million internet-enabled Common Service Centers across India, as per the National e-Governance Plan .

- The FDI limit in the telecom sector has been increased from 74 per cent to 100 per cent of which 49 per cent will be through the automatic route, while the remaining will be through the Foreign Investment Facilitation Portal (FIPB) approval route.

- FDI up to 100 per cent is permitted for infrastructure providers offering dark fibre, electronic mail and voice-mail.

- Prime Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM-WANI)

- BharatNet Project.

- Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for manufacturing of telecom and networking products.

- India 6G Alliance.

Concerns about the bill:

- Privacy Concerns: To curb fraud, it is mandatory for organizations to perform biometric authentication of their users. This increases users' privacy concerns.

- Ambiguity in definition: The new definition of 'telecommunication services' has been kept general and is open to wide interpretation.

- Specific reference to OTT communication services has been removed from the definition of 'telecommunication services'.

- Network capture: The bill empowers the government to take "temporary control/occupy" the network.

- According to experts, the government needs to define 'possession' and specify how long the ' temporary' tenure will last.

- Potential misuse of power: The Bill empowers the Central and State governments to suspend communications during any public emergency or 'in the interest of public safety'. However, this power can also be misused by the government to prevent dissent .

- Restrictive powers of TRAI: The draft also has a provision to allow the appointment of private sector corporate executives to the role of TRAI Chairman.

- This change may limit the role of TRAI as no industry watchdog will have a neutral and independent perspective to promote progressive and positive developments in the telecom sector.

- Spectrum Allocation: There is difference of opinion among private telecom companies on this matter.

- During TRAI's consultation process in June this year, Elon Musk's Starlink, Amazon's Project Kuiper and India's Tata Group opposed the allocation of satellite spectrum through auction. While Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio supported the spectrum auction .

THE WAY FORWARD TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF THE TELECOM SECTOR:

- Given the vast opportunities in this sector, there is a need for an active and facilitative government role in the telecom sector.

- The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), an independent and statutory body, should play an important role as a watchdog of this sector.

- A more proactive and timely dispute resolution by TDSAT (Telecom Dispute Settlement and Appellate Tribunal) is the need of the hour.

- The new regulatory act should contain relevant provisions on measures to ensure emergency situations, public safety and national security.

- Also the punishment should be proportionate to the violation, keeping this in mind there is a need to update the new law, bringing together the various provisions on penalties and offences.

Practice Questions for Preliminary Exam:

Q. 1. **Consider the following statements in the context of ' Telecom Bill 2023' .**

1. It relates to amendments to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) Act, 1997.
2. The telecommunications industry in India is the second largest industry in the world in terms of users.
3. Now under this bill itself, non-auction process will be adopted for allocation of satellite spectrum.
4. The Bill allows the Central Government to take over the telecommunication network in case of any public emergency or in the interest of public safety.

Which of the above statement/statements is correct?

1. Only 1, 3 and 4
2. only 2 and 4
3. All of these.
4. None of these.

Answer – (c)

Practice Questions for Main Exam:

Q.1. **Highlight the major provisions of the Telecom Bill 2023 and discuss whether it violates the 'Right to privacy of the Individual'? How does it promote digital inclusion and digital literacy in India? Give a logical explanation.**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN INDIA

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details " Human Trafficking in India".
This topic has relevance in the Social Issues section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 2: Social Issues

Why in the news?

A flight transporting 303 passengers, predominantly of Indian nationality, is anticipated to arrive at Mumbai airport at approximately 2:20 pm from France, following a three-day delay prompted by suspicions of human trafficking. Originally destined for Nicaragua, the A340 aircraft was immobilized near Paris following an anonymous tip.

Understanding Human Trafficking:

Human trafficking, an illicit trade involving humans, encompasses activities such as sexual slavery, commercial sexual exploitation, organ extraction, forced marriage, forced labor, and domestic servitude. It ranks as the third-largest organized crime globally, following drugs and arms trade.

Prevalence in India:

In 2022, India's National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reported identifying over 6,500 human trafficking victims, with 60% being women and girls. Experts posit that actual figures may be significantly higher due to underreporting.

Constitutional and Legislative Provisions:

- **Constitutional Prohibition:** Article 23(1) of the Indian Constitution prohibits trafficking in human beings or persons.

- **The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956 (ITPA):** This legislation is pivotal for preventing trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.

- **Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013:** Amended Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code to address various forms of human trafficking, including child exploitation and forced organ removal.

- **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act 2012:** Specifically protects children from sexual abuse and exploitation.

- **Other Relevant Legislation:** Acts such as the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, and Transplantation of Human Organs Act address specific aspects of trafficking.

Government Measures:

The Government of India, through the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), has implemented several measures to combat human trafficking:

- **Anti-Trafficking Cell (ATC):** MHA established an Anti-Trafficking Nodal Cell to coordinate efforts and monitor actions taken by state governments.

- **Comprehensive Scheme for Strengthening Law Enforcement:** MHA released funds to

establish Anti-Human Trafficking Units in 270 districts across India.

- **Capacity Building:** Training of Trainers (TOT) workshops on combating human trafficking for police officers was conducted nationwide to enhance their skills.

- **Judicial Colloquium/Seminar:** High-level Judicial Colloquiums on human trafficking aim to train and sensitize trial court judicial officers.

Way Forward:

- **Strengthen Enforcement:**

  - Enhance collaboration among law enforcement agencies for more effective and coordinated efforts.

  - Ensure strict implementation of existing legislation, with a focus on proactive measures.

- **Public Awareness and Education:**

  - Conduct nationwide campaigns to raise awareness about the various forms of human trafficking.

  - Integrate anti-trafficking education into school curricula to empower the younger generation.

- **Victim Support and Rehabilitation:**

  - Establish and strengthen rehabilitation programs for survivors, addressing physical, psychological, and economic needs.

  - Encourage public-private partnerships to create job opportunities for survivors.

- **International Cooperation:**

  o Strengthen collaboration with international organizations and neighboring countries to curb cross-border trafficking.

  o Share best practices and intelligence to enhance the global fight against human trafficking.

Source:

Plane with more than 300 passengers, mostly Indians, to land at Mumbai airport today from France after human trafficking suspicions (msn.com)

Q.1 Discuss the socio-economic factors that make individuals susceptible to human trafficking. How can targeted social and economic interventions help prevent the trafficking of vulnerable populations?

EMERGING ISSUES IN INDIA- RUSSIA RELATIONS

MAINS RELEVANCE: GS2 SYLLABUS- Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/ or affecting India's interests:

WHY IN NEWS:

- **External Affairs Minister** S. Jaishankar on Monday began his 5 day visit to Moscow and St. Petersburg, during which he will hold talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Trade Minister Denis Mantu.
- The visit is also significant as it comes in lieu of the annual summit due to be held between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin, an **unbroken tradition from the year 2000 until 2021** due to the Russia-Ukraine war.
- The visit is expected to see discussions on a number of thorny bilateral issues, including continuing problems over the **rupee-rouble payment mechanism** amid a surge in the import of Russian oil and bilateral trade and **delays in supplies of defense equipment.**
- Russia's supply of the fourth and fifth regiment of the **S400 Triumf Air Defence Systems**, also under U.S. sanctions, have been delayed and are now expected in 2024.

INDIA-RUSSIA RELATIONS: CONVERGENCE:

1. GEO-POLITICAL:

- The India and Russia ties have been a longstanding relation since 1971 when Russia supported India in Liberation war of Bangladesh against pressure of Nuclear warfare by USA

- India-Russia signed the Indo-Soviet **Treaty of Friendship & Cooperation on 9th August 1971:** It was the **first political treaty** India made with another nation.

- It acted as a turning point in India's traditional **Non-aligned policy** so vigorously enunciated at Bandung in 1955.

- India further signed the **"Declaration on the India-Russia Strategic Partnership" in 2000.**

- Political engagement has seen further highs with the current Government. For example: In 2019, President Putin signed the Executive Order on awarding PM Narendra Modi Russia's highest state decoration – The **order of St Andrew the Apostle**.

- India's decision to not join the U.S.led naval **operation against Houthi attacks** on shipping in the Red Sea, named **"Operation Prosperity Guardian"** so far is also likely to find favor in Moscow.

2. GEO-STRATEGIC:

- Russia has also provided "unwavering support" to India's demand for **Permanent Seat at UNSC**

- Russia can significantly contribute to **defusing tensions with China:** For example Russia organized a trilateral meeting among the foreign ministers of Russia, India, and China following deadly clashes in the Galwan Valley in the disputed territory of Ladakh in 2020.

- There is a long standing mutual cooperation against Terrorism through Groupings such as

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation **(SCO) & BRICS** etc

- Two Inter-Governmental Commissions – one on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation **(IRIGC-TEC)**, and another on Military-Technical Cooperation **(IRIGC-MTC),** meet annually.

- Both countries regularly conduct the Tri-Services exercise **'INDRA'.**

- Russia is India's **topmost weapon supplier**:

    o Though as per **SIPRI Report 2021**: Russia's share in India's weapon import has fallen from 69% to **49%**

    o Examples of India's Import: MIG-21, Sukhoi-30, T-72 tanks, Russian S-400 air defense missile system and a joint venture to manufacture AK-203 assault rifles.

    o Indian Navy's first submarine, **'Foxtrot Class'** came from Russia

    o **INS Vikramaditya,** the sole aircraft carrier operated by India, is also Russian in origin.

    o The **joint military programmes** between India and Russia include: **BrahMos cruise missile** programme, 5th generation fighter jet programme, **Sukhoi Su-30MKI** programme, Ilyushin/HAL Tactical Transport Aircraft & KA-226T twin-engine utility helicopters.

    o Russia is an important partner for India in the area of peaceful use of **nuclear energy**:

1. **Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant** (KKNPP) is being built in India .

2. Both India and Russia are implementing **Rooppur Nuclear Power Project in Bangladesh**

3. TRADE RELATIONS:

- The two countries intend to increase bilateral investment to **US$50 billion** and bilateral trade to **US$30 billion by 2025.**

- A Phenomenal Growth in Bilateral Trade has been observed as it has increased by around **2.1 times** in January- September in 2023, up to almost 50 billion USD owing to strong **demand for hydrocarbons in India.**

- Exceeding Expectations: India and Russia have already **achieved the bilateral trade target** of $30 billion before the target year of 2025.

- Resilient **Engineering Exports**: According to Engineering Exports Promotion Council (EEPC) India, amid declining demand for engineering goods from major markets such as the US and China, shipments to Russia continued their **uptrend and more than doubled** to around US$ 123 million in July 2023 from around US$ 55 million in July 2022.

- India has also shown active engagement in the **Eastern Economic Forum (EEF)** to develop Russia's far east (eg-Vladivostok). It will help India to Explore **Critical Minerals** such as Hydrocarbon,diamonds, gold and tungsten from Far-East.

- India and Russia are discussing a free trade agreement (FTA) involving the **Eurasian Economic Union (EEU)**, against the backdrop of bilateral economic ties seeing a sharp expansion since the start of the Ukraine conflict.

- Member countries of EEU: Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan.

- Diversifying Trade: India has diversified its export basket to Russia to include pharmaceuticals, fertilizers, coal, diamonds, chemicals, and ceramics, among other goods.

- **Rupee-Rouble Mechanism: De-Dollarization of Economy:** The payment mechanism between India and Russia was devised to circumvent the **U.S. and EU sanctions** against Russia over the Ukraine war.

4. CULTURAL RELATIONS:

- Cultural contact through Yoga, Vaishnavism, Ayurveda and Dance etc

- About 20 Russian Institutions, including leading universities and schools, regularly **teach Hindi** to about 1500 Russian students

    - EXAMPLE: creation of a **Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL).**

- Apart from Hindi, languages such as **Tamil, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Urdu, Sanskrit and Pali** are taught in Russian Institutions

EMERGING ISSUES BETWEEN RUSSIA & INDIA:

1. **High trade deficit incurred by India:** The skewed trade balance has been an area of concern between the two countries:

    - For example, during FY23, India had around a **$43 billion trade deficit** with Russia, which left their exporters with **large surpluses in their Vostro accounts** in India.

    - This has meant delayed payments, as well as the need for India to use third country currencies including the **UAE Dirham and Chinese Yuan** to pay for Indian imports from Russia that have grown a massive 368% year on year from 2022 to 2023, mainly due to an **increase in import of Russian oil**, leading to a major trade deficit.

    - This has created **Challenges in Rupee- Ruble Trade**: Indian refiners are using a mix of currencies to settle most of their Russian oil purchases.

1. Both countries previously discussed trading in their local currencies but this is yet to take off because of **currency volatility and the high trade deficit.**

2. **Russia's Over Dependence on China:** China enjoys direct connectivity, advanced logistics supply, a high level of trade, and profitability with Russia.

    - Since the beginning of Russia- Russia-Ukraine conflict, Russia-China cooperation has grown in all directions.

    - The trade turnover between the two countries reached a record $190 billion last year, increased by another 39% in the first quarter of this year compared with the same period in 2022.

2. **Infrastructure and Connectivity Issues:** Inadequate transportation infrastructure and connectivity can impede the smooth flow of goods between India and Russia.

- The absence of a direct trade route and high shipping costs make exports to Russia a costly affair for India, as it doesn't share a land border with Russia, unlike China

3. **Divergence on International Relations**: While Russia has been openly critical of Israel's actions, and in particular, the U.S.'s support to Israel over the bombing of civilians, India's stand has been less strident.

4. **Challenging India's role as Balancing Power**: Russia along with China has been highly critical of India as **Member of QUAD** including US, Australia and Japan, grouping formed to ensure security of trade and transit in Indo-Pacific region

5. While India has been wary of **SCO's emerging outlook as "Anti-Western" grouping**: Eg- Recent inclusion of Iran and Belarus as member & Myanmar as Observer making practically every member facing sanctions by Europe & USA.

STEPS TO TAKE BY INDIAN DIPLOMACY:

1. **Addressing Trade Imbalance:** A huge imbalance in trade heavily towards Russia is an issue in the Rupee-Ruble trade. To solve this problem, Russia is keen to **import manufacturing equipment** including machinery from India.

2. **Increasing Asia's Importance for Russia**: To compensate for the decline in trade with the West, Russia is looking much more toward Asia.

   - For India, this could mean broadening our engagement that was overly reliant on the triad of military, nuclear, and space cooperation.

3. Providing Solutions to Short- and Medium-Term Challenges in Business: **Payments, logistics, and certification** were some of the key areas of issues and it is possible to find solutions to them.

   - Attracting Russian's investors towards India's key infrastructure shall be emphasized upon

4. **Improving Rupee-Ruble Trade:** To tackle the accumulation of Indian currency in Russia, **increasing Rupee trade with third countries common to both India and Russia**, where India has a trade surplus can help in ensuring seamless money flow while solving the problem.

   - For this, India has taken steps to de-dollarize trade while pushing for the internationalization of the Indian Rupee.

5. **New Trade Routes:** The development of new trade routes like the **Eastern Maritime Corridor** and the **Northern Sea Route** will also be of interest in deepening trade ties.

- **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** is another effective connectivity initiative to increase Indo-Russian trade.

- The two countries are also discussing the possibility of launching a **trans-Arctic container shipping line** and processing facilities along the Northern Sea Route.

6. Defense deals and nuclear energy cooperation can further float relations

CONCLUSION:

Thus in words of International Policy Expert **Suhasini Hiader**: India's adequate response to the crisis posed by Russia-Ukraine War has displayed its **"Diplomatic Deftness"** as India not only secured its National interest but reinforced its commitment for Rule based order. However, **addressing trade**

imbalances, enhancing connectivity, and exploring diversified partnerships will be crucial for sustaining and strengthening their economic ties in the evolving global landscape.

Prelims Question (2019)

Q: Recently, India signed a deal known as 'Action Plan for Prioritization and Implementation of Co-operation Areas in the Nuclear Field' with which of the following countries?

(a) Japan

(b) Russia

(c) The United Kingdom

(d) The United States of America

Ans: (b)

POTENTIAL PRELIMS 2024 QUESTIONS:

Q1: "Operation Prosperity Guardian" recently seen in the news is associated with which of the following:

1. Operation by India to curb Narco-Terrorism in Golden Crescent region

2. Operation by USA to provide Maritime security in Red Sea region

3. An initiative launched by BRICS countries to provide loans to Lower Middle income countries

4. A joint military exercise between all members of QUAD grouping

ANSWER: B

EXPLANATION:

"Operation Prosperity Guardian":

1. It is an initiative **launched by USA to protect Red Sea commerce**.

- This follows missile and drone attacks by **Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis:**

1. The Houthis are a large clan belonging to the Zaidi Shia sect, with roots in **Yemen's northwestern Saada province.**

2. The Houthi movement, officially called Ansar Allah (Supporters of God), began in the 1990s against the dictatorship of Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

3. Today, the Houthis are one faction in a bloody civil war that has raged in Yemen since 2014.

4. The Houthis, backed by Iran, are a part of what Iran calls, **"The Axis of Resistance"** : an informal **anti-Israel and anti-West** political and military coalition that it leads.

5. Other notable groups in the Axis include **Hezbollah and Hamas.**

6. In Yemen, the Houthis are fighting against the Sunni-led internationally recognized Yemeni government, backed by **Saudi Arabia and the UAE.**

- Countries Involved: The U.K., Bahrain, Canada, France, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Seychelles, and Spain are participating.

- Joint Patrols: These nations will conduct joint patrols in the southern **Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden**

- **NOTE: India is NOT a member of alliance**

- Recently Japanese owned & Liberia flagged merchant Vessel **Chem Pluto** with 21 crew members (20 Indians & 1 Vietnamese national) sailing from UAE to New Mangalore port (India) faced drone attack by Iran backed **Houthi militants** in the Red Sea region, just outside Indian **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).**

Q2: India & Russia have recently accomplished 50 years of Strategic ties through Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship & Cooperation 1971. Which of the following initiatives are being developed under joint cooperation by India & Russia:

1. INS Vikramaditya

2. BrahMos cruise missile programme

3. Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant in Tamil Nadu

4. Rooppur Nuclear Power Project in Bangladesh

Choose the correct code from options below:

1. Only one pair

2. Only two pair

3. Only three pair

4. All of the above pair

ANSWER: B

EXPLANATION:

1. The India and Russia ties have been a longstanding relation since 1971 when Russia supported India in Liberation war of Bangladesh against pressure of Nuclear warfare by USA:

- India-Russia signed the Indo-Soviet **Treaty of Friendship & Cooperation on 9th August 1971:** It was the **first political treaty** India made with another nation.

- It acted as a turning point in India's traditional **Non-aligned policy** so vigorously enunciated at Bandung in 1955.

2. India further signed the "**Declaration on the India-Russia Strategic Partnership**" in 2000.

3. Political engagement has seen further highs with the current Government. For example: In 2019, President Putin signed the Executive Order on awarding PM Narendra Modi Russia's highest state decoration – The **order of St Andrew the Apostle.**

4. JOINT PROJECTS BY INDIA & RUSSIA:

- Indian Navy's first submarine, **'Foxtrot Class'** came from Russia

- **INS Vikramaditya**, the sole aircraft carrier operated by India, is also Russian in origin.

- The **joint military programmes** between India and Russia include: **BrahMos cruise missile** programme, 5th generation fighter jet programme, **Sukhoi Su-30MKI** programme, Ilyushin/ HAL Tactical Transport Aircraft & KA-226T twin-engine utility helicopters.

- Russia is an important partner for India in the area of peaceful use of **nuclear energy**:

- **Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant** (KKNPP) is being built in India .

- Both India and Russia are implementing **Rooppur Nuclear Power Project in Bangladesh**

Practice Mains Question:

Discuss the importance of India-Russia relationship in the current global context. In light of recent developments, highlight the scope for strengthening economic and strategic cooperation between the two countries especially with regards to India's Act Far East policy.

(15 marks, 250 words)

AD-HOC COMMITTEE TO MANAGE WFI AFFAIRS

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details " Ad-hoc committee to manage WFI affairs". This topic has relevance in the Social Justice section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 2: Social Justice

Why in the news?

The Sports Ministry has urged the Indian Olympic Association to form an ad-hoc committee responsible for overseeing and regulating the operations of the federation. Previously, the ministry had taken the step of suspending the recently elected governing body of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI).

Background:

- **Allegations and Protests:**

o Wrestlers, led by Vinesh Phogat, have accused WFI President Brij Bhushan of engaging in the sexual exploitation of women wrestlers, along with alleging financial mismanagement and arbitrary practices within the WFI.

o The wrestlers are demanding the registration of an FIR against Brij Bhushan, his arrest under the POCSO Act, his removal as the WFI president, and the dissolution of the federation.

- **Oversight Committee Intervention:**

o In response to the allegations, the government formed a six-member Oversight Committee,

headed by MC Mary Kom, tasked with investigating the claims.

o The Oversight Committee faced delays in submitting its report, finally doing so in April before being disbanded.

- **Disrupted Election Process:**

o The government nullified the ongoing WFI election process scheduled for May 7th due to the persistent protests.

o The United World Wrestling (UWW) suspended WFI for its failure to meet election deadlines, and despite repeated postponements, the WFI rescheduled elections for December 21, resulting in the election of Sanjay Singh as the new WFI chief.

- **Fresh Protests and Governance Crisis:**

o Sanjay Singh's appointment as the new WFI chief faced strong opposition from notable wrestlers, including Vinesh Phogat, Sakshi Malik, and Bajrang Punia.

o In response to the appointment, Sakshi Malik announced her retirement, and Bajrang Punia returned his Padma Shri award as a form of protest.

o The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports reacted by suspending the newly elected WFI governing council, citing violations of the National Sports Code, which included the untimely announcement of Under-15 and Under-20 National Championships and the absence of the WFI Secretary-General during crucial meetings.

- **National Sports Code Violation:**

o The Ministry of Sports suspended the recognition of WFI under the National Sports Code, citing violations.

o Specific breaches included the improper announcement of competitions and the absence of the Secretary-General during key meetings.

- **Ongoing Tension:**

o The Indian wrestling community finds itself grappling with internal strife and external sanctions.

o Uncertainty prevails concerning the resolution of the serious allegations, the conduct of fair elections, and the future governance of the WFI.

Wrestling Federation of India (WFI): Overview

- **Foundation and Location:**

o The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) was established in 1958 and is headquartered in New Delhi.

o It serves as the governing body for wrestling in the country.

- **Mission and Promotion:**

- o WFI focuses on promoting wrestling athletes for prestigious competitions, including the Olympics, Asian Games, National Wrestling Championships, and World Wrestling Championships.

- o Its primary objective is to nurture and advance the sport of wrestling on both national and international platforms.

- **Affiliation and Compliance:**

- o WFI is affiliated with the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), aligning itself with the larger Olympic movement in India.

- o It adheres to the rules and regulations stipulated by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the United World Wrestling (UWW).

- **Role of UWW:**

- o UWW, as the international governing body for wrestling, plays a pivotal role in overseeing the sport at prestigious events such as the World Championships and the Olympics.

- o WFI collaborates with UWW to ensure the implementation of standardized rules and practices in the sport globally.

- **Contract System for Wrestlers (2018):**

- o In a significant development in 2018, WFI introduced a groundbreaking contracts system for wrestlers.

- o Wrestlers are categorized into four grades:

- ▪ Grade A: Provides monetary support of 30 lakh rupees.

- ▪ Grade B: Provides financial support amounting to 20 lakh rupees.

- ▪ Grade C: Extends support of 10 lakh rupees.

- ▪ Grade D: Offers financial assistance of 5 lakh rupees.

- o Contracts undergo review on an annual basis, reflecting WFI's commitment to supporting and recognizing the contributions of wrestlers.

Source:

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/sports/ioa-debars-outgoing-wfi-officials-from-undertaking-federations-administrative-work/articleshow/100205481.cms

Q.1 **Examine the recent controversies surrounding the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) and the protests initiated by top Indian wrestlers. Critically analyze the impact of these controversies on the sport of wrestling in India**

THE ISSUE OF ARTICLE 370 IS OVER IN THE LIGHT OF THE SUPREME COURT'S DECISION: BUT IT IS NECESSARY TO END THE ISSUE OF TERRORISM VICTIMS

(This article is a summary of the combined editorials of 'Indian Express', 'The Hindu', 'Official website of the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of India', 'Jansatta', 'Sansad TV's program Sarokar', monthly magazine 'World Focus' and 'PIB'. It is related to the summary. It also includes the suggestions of the YOJNA IAS team. This article is specifically related to the 'Indian Polity and Governance' section of the UPSC Civil Services Examination . This article is related to ' Daily Current Affairs' under 'In the light of the Supreme Court decision. The issue of Article 370 is over: But the issue of terrorism victims needs to be over. ')

GENERAL STUDIES – INDIAN POLITY AND GOVERNANCE.

Why in Discussion / News?

On 11 December 2023, the Honorable Supreme Court of India delivered its historic judgment on the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A . Through this decision, the Supreme Court confirmed the sovereignty and integrity of India, which every Indian cherishes in his mind. The Supreme Court held that the government's decision to abrogate Article 370 on August 5, 2019—which ended the special status of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir—was taken to promote constitutional integration and not disintegration. The Court also accepted the fact that Article 370 was 'temporary' in nature.

Process of abrogation of article 370 by parliament/central government :

By presidential order :

In the Presidential Order of the year 2019, the Parliament introduced a provision and gave a new meaning to the 'Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir' as 'Legislative Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir' and then used the President's rule to abrogate Article 370. Through this, the powers of the Legislative Assembly were assumed.

By resolution in parliament:

Concurrent resolutions were passed by both Houses of Parliament, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, on 5 and 6 August 2019 respectively. These resolutions also repealed the remaining provisions of Article 370 and replaced them with new provisions.

Jammu and kashmir reorganization act:

The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act 2019 was passed by the Parliament on 5 August 2019. This Act divided the State of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories – 'Jammu and Kashmir' and 'Ladakh'.

Reason for abrogation of article 370 –

Reasons for unification and development of the nation:

Article 370 hindered the full integration of Jammu and Kashmir into the Indian Union and at the same time it also created a feeling of separatism, which hindered the development of Jammu and Kashmir . It was also believed behind its integration that complete integration of Jammu and Kashmir into India would create better access to resources, infrastructure and opportunities for the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

From a strong national security perspective :

Article 370 was being misused by Pakistan to support terrorism and separatism in Jammu and Kashmir region. Repealing it would strengthen national security as the Government of India would have greater control over this area and crack down on terrorist activities .

With a view to end discrimination :

Article 370 discriminated against women, Dalits and other marginalized groups in Jammu and Kashmir. By repealing it, these groups will come under the ambit of Indian laws and they will get equal rights and opportunities.

With a view to ensure transparency and accountability in governance :

Article 370 had created a lack of transparency in the governance of Jammu and Kashmir and in determining accountability. With its repeal, the state of Jammu and Kashmir will come under the ambit of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) and the Right to Information Act (RTI) , thereby ensuring better governance and accountability .

From the perspective of economic prosperity and development:

Article 370 hindered economic development in Jammu and Kashmir. Repealing it would allow for more investment, tourism and job creation in the area.

Highlights of the decision given by the supreme court:

Article 370 is a temporary provision:

The Supreme Court held that Article 370 was a temporary provision and the state of Jammu and Kashmir had no internal sovereignty. The Supreme Court also held that Article 370 was a 'temporary provision' for two primary reasons.

1. It **served a transitional purpose** , which was to make an interim arrangement for the establishment of the Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir, which was to draft the state constitution.

2. Its objective was to **facilitate the integration of Jammu and Kashmir into the Union of India in view of the war-like situation prevailing in the state in the year 1947.**

The governor can assume the 'all or any' role of the state legislature:

The Supreme Court, citing the landmark decision of *SR Bommai vs Union of India* (1994) (which deals with the powers and limitations of the Governor under President's rule), held that the Governor is an 'all or any' **member of the state legislature.)** can assume the role.

- The Chief Justice of India (CJI) said that the Governor (President in the case of Jammu and Kashmir) can act 'all or none' of the state legislature and such action should be judicially tested only in exceptional cases.

- It is not necessary to take the consent of the state government to remove Article 370 : The Court said in its decision that the President, exercising the powers under Article 370 (3) of the Constitution, can unilaterally notify that Article 370 has ceased to exist. Is.

- The Supreme Court further held that there was no need for the President to obtain the concurrence of the State Government in this regard, as specified by the proviso to Article 370(1)(d).

Ratification of jammu and kashmir reorganization act 2019 :

The Supreme Court **confirmed the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act 2019 to the extent** that **the Union Territory of Ladakh** was separated from the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

The views of the state legislature are recommendatory in nature and are not binding on the parliament:

The Supreme Court also said that **the views of the state legislature regarding the proposed reorganization** are recommendatory in nature and not binding on the Parliament.

During president's rule, parliament is not the only law making body:

The Chief Justice said that **the power of Parliament in a state under/during President's rule is not limited to mere law making.** This also extends to executive action.

- The Court also said that when a proclamation under Article 356 is in force, there are a number of decisions which are taken by the Central Government on behalf of the State Government for the purpose of day-to-day administration.

- Every decision and action taken by the Central Executive on behalf of the State is not subject to challenge.

- Openly challenging every decision would lead to chaos and uncertainty.

Along with holding elections, restoration of statehood: the supreme court said that the statehood of jammu and kashmir should be restored as soon as possible. He ordered that the elections to the legislative assembly of jammu and kashmir should be completed by 30 september 2024.

Establishment of 'truth and reconciliation commission:

Justice Kaul, **in his concurring opinion, has** ordered a proposal to set up a 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission' on the lines of the commission established after apartheid in South Africa to resolve the issues that have arisen since the 1980s. To address human rights violations by both state and non-state actors in Jammu and Kashmir.

Article 370: historical background.

- Article 370 in the Indian Constitution provided **special status to Jammu and Kashmir, which is a disputed area between India, Pakistan and China.**

- Its **draft was written by Indian Constituent Assembly member N. Gopalaswami Iyengar** and it **was added to the Indian Constitution as a 'temporary provision' in the year 1949** .

- This provision allowed the state of Jammu and Kashmir **to have its own constitution and flag, as well as autonomy in most matters except defence, foreign affairs and communications.**

- It **was based on the terms of the Instrument of Accession,** which was signed by Hari Singh, the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, to join India after the invasion of Pakistan in 1947.

Effect of abrogation of article 370:

Decline in terrorist incidents and incidents of violence:

There has been **a significant decline in the incidents of violence in Jammu and Kashmir** since the revocation of Article 370 .

- According to official figures, **the number of terrorist incidents** has declined by more than 50% in the last four years and security forces have killed more than 300 terrorists.

- The decline in terrorist incidents and violence can be attributed to a combination of factors, including increased security measures, better intelligence gathering and declining public support

for extremism.

Initiatives of the central government to promote economic development:

The government has implemented several initiatives to promote economic development in Jammu and Kashmir. For example – **Prime Minister's Development Package (PMDP) and Industrial Development Scheme (IDS)** .

- These initiatives of the Central Government have led to an increase in investment, employment creation and economic growth in the region.

- Jammu and Kashmir as a union territory saw **a 31% increase in tax revenue** .

- **Jammu and Kashmir's GSDP at constant prices grew at the rate of 8%** during 2022-23 , while at the national level it stood at 7%.

Huge investment also in the development of advanced infrastructure sector in jammu and kashmir:

The government has also invested heavily in the development of infrastructure sector in jammu and kashmir. This includes projects such as the construction of new roads, bridges, tunnels and power lines. These reforms have made it easier for people to travel and do business in the region.

Huge growth in tourism sector :

There has been a massive increase in the number of tourists visiting Jammu and Kashmir since the abrogation of Article 370 . This has been made possible by a combination of various factors including better security, better marketing and the introduction of new tourism initiatives.

- According to a report, Jammu and Kashmir **received 1.62 crore tourists in the year 2022, which is the highest in 75 years of India's independence.**

Path to solution/conclusion:

The recent judgment of the Supreme Court has not only reinforced the principles of **'One India, Best India'** but has also proved the importance of **unity, mutual trust, development of nationalism and collective dedication for good governance.** The judgment also reveals the Court's commitment to strengthening the fabric of our nation and reinforcing the values that define us as a society. Which can also be seen as an effort towards defining India as a strong democratic country and making it grow as a democratic country.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM:

Q.1 Consider the following statements in the context of Article 370.

1. Article 370 was 'temporary' in its nature.

2. The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act 2019 was passed by the Parliament on 5 August 2019.

Which of the above statement/statements is correct?

1. Only 1

2. Only 2

3. Both statement 1 and 2.

4. None of these.

Answer – (c)

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAINS EXAM:

Q.1. Discussing the main arguments behind the abrogation of Article 370, in the light of the Supreme Court's decision to abrogate Article 370, discuss how it affects the economic and infrastructural development and development of the tourism sector along with the violence in the Jammu and Kashmir region. Will the type affect?

INDIA – ASEAN: CHANGING DYNAMICS IN CONTEXT OF FTA

UPSC MAINS SYLLABUS GS2: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

WHY IN NEWS?

1. Recently, the Prime Minister (PM) of India attended the 20th Association of Southeast Asian Nations **(ASEAN)**-India Summit and the 18th East Asia Summit **(EAS)** in **Jakarta, Indonesia.**

2. The two summits were an opportunity for India to strengthen its relationships with ASEAN countries and reaffirm its commitment to a *free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific.*

WHAT IS ASEAN?

1. ASEAN was established on **8 August 1967** in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of **Bangkok Declaration** by the 5 Founding Fathers of ASEAN: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand (IMPST).

2. ASEAN currently comprise of **10 countries:** Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

3. It aims to promote **stability and economic growth** across these nations.

4. Chairmanship rotates annually, based on the alphabetical order of the English names of Member States.

5. The region has one of the largest economies in the world, and it is believed that by 2050, it will have the 4th-largest economy in the world.

IMPORTANCE OF ASEAN FOR INDIA:

1. ASEAN forms an integral part of India's **Act East policy** which focusses on the extended neighborhood in the Asia-Pacific region.

1. Policy originally conceived as an economic initiative, has gained **political, strategic and cultural dimensions** including establishment of institutional mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation.

2. By aligning India's Act East Policy with the **U.S. Pivot to Asia**, India seeks to expand its geo-strategic space to contend with China's growing assertiveness and foster balanced relations.

2. ASEAN engulfing regions of **Indo-Pacific** is integral for India for various important aspects:

1. Indo-Pacific Region makes up **65%** of the global population & generates **62% of global GDP.** For India, **50% of its total trade volume** is concentrated in the Indo-Pacific region.

2. In addition to being a wealthy market, the region also manages **international supply networks** through important straits such as Strait of

3. The immense quantities of **marine resources** found in the Indo-Pacific Oceans include offshore hydrocarbons, methane hydrates, seabed minerals, Rare earth metals, fisheries, etc.

4. A **competitive environment** for the exploitation of these resources has been established by the extensive coastlines and **Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs)** of littoral countries. For example: China claiming vast lands in South China Sea under its **"9-dash" line strategy.**

5. Thus, India seeks to guarantee freedom of navigation, protect choke points, end conflicts amicably, and confront unconventional security concerns in the Indian Ocean region (IOR).

INDIA – ASEAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (FTA):

WHAT IS AN FTA?

1. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is a pact between two or more nations to **reduce barriers to imports and exports** among them.

2. Under a free trade policy, goods and services can be bought and sold across international borders with **little or no government tariffs**, quotas, subsidies, or prohibitions to inhibit their exchange.

3. The concept of free trade is the opposite of trade protectionism or economic isolationism.

FTA WITH ASEAN:

1. India signed an FTA with ASEAN (its **4th largest trading partner**), known as the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement **(AITIGA)**, on 13th August, **2009** followed by an FTA in Services and investments in 2014.

2. Apart from this, India has a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement **(CECA)** with various countries of the ASEAN region which has resulted in concessional trade and a rise in investments.

3. However, it did not bore significant results as envisaged by India as there were various **Shortcomings:**

1. ASEAN-India trade took over a decade to double in value.

2. India has been particularly concerned with the rising **trade deficit** with ASEAN, which increased to **US$ 43.57 billion** in the 2022 from just US$ 5 billion in 2010-11.

3. India's net exports to countries without a trade agreement were only marginally lower

than its net exports to countries with FTAs while imports from countries with trade agreements were substantially higher, pushing India into a trade deficit.

REASON FOR FAILURE OF FTA WITH ASEAN:

1. **Lack of market access and connectivity:** Some Indian products do not have market access in ASEAN countries due to a number of factors such as **high tariffs and non-tariff barriers.**

   - Despite efforts in this direction, physical and digital connectivity between India and ASEAN countries remains limited, which affects trade, investment, and people-to-people ties.

2. **ASEAN strict rules of origin:** This makes it difficult for Indian exporters **to export products to ASEAN** countries and benefit from the tariff reductions under the FTA.

   - On the other hand there are a number of alleged instances where merchandise is being **re-routed from China**, via ASEAN countries with minimum value addition, thereby misusing the India-ASEAN FTA.

3. **Nature of engagement:** India still engages with ASEAN countries **more on a bilateral basis** rather than through a multilateral approach leading to problems of coordination and consensus-building.

4. **Competing regional agreements:** Engagement of ASEAN countries with other regional agreements like the **RCEP** and the **Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)** diverts attention and resources away from the ASEAN-India relationship.

Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP):

1. RCEP is the world's **largest trading bloc** comprising 33% of Global Population & **30% of World's GDP.**

2. The RCEP negotiations began in 2012. It was officially signed in November 2020, marking a major milestone in regional trade.

3. **15 member** countries include ASEAN countries & 5 Associate states: China, Japan, South Korea, Australia & New Zealand.

4. The RCEP negotiation includes trade in goods, services, investment, economic and technical cooperation, intellectual property, competition, **dispute settlement, e-commerce, small and medium enterprises (SMEs)** and other issues.

5. It majorly aims to reduce or eliminate **tariffs and non-tariff barriers** to trade.

India was a founding member of the RCEP, However In 2019, **India decided to withdraw from the RCEP negotiations** due to following concerns:

1. Flooded by Cheap goods from Manufactuing hubs like **China & Vietnam.**

   - **Poor Manufacturing Sector**: In the recent period, manufacturing holds a share of **14%** in India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

   - Share of Manufactimng as % of GDP for other countries: **China: 27 %**, Indonesia: 20 % & Germany:19 %

   - India already has a massive **trade deficit with China,** amounting to $53 billion (€48 billion)

2. India was also concerned about the RCEP's potential impact on sectors like **agriculture,** which would affect the country's vast rural population.
   - Indian agriculture is largely **subsistence-based** and beset by alarmingly low levels of modern technology, packaging, processing and storage facilities.
   - Opening it up to competition from much more advanced agriculture producers in places like **Australia, New Zealand and Japan** would have led to an economic and social crisis. For example: Concerns raised by **dairy and food processing sectors.**
3. Even bigger industrial sectors, like **Steel, iron and rubber** manufacturing, were not in favor of the trade pact. These industries in India are dominated by big family-controlled firms, which are protectionist in nature.
4. Protectionism: Th**e Atmanirbhar Bharat campaign** has also exacerbated the view that India is increasingly becoming a **protectionist closed market economy.**

WAY FORWARD:

1. **Building Resilient Supply Chain:** Current engagement in value chains between ASEAN and India is not substantial. Thus, ASEAN and India must upgrade their logistics services and strengthen the transportation infrastructure. India has focused on promoting connectivity with other ASEAN states through Myanmar and Thailand. For example:
   - India-Myanmar-Thailand (IMT) highway,
   - Bhutan-Bangladesh-India-Nepal (BBIN) road-**rail network**
   - Kaladan Multimodal Project
   - Mekong-Ganga Economic Corridor.
2. **Maritime Security in Indo-Pacific** region is crucial for the protection of India's interests as well as those of ASEAN:
- To ensure it's role as Net Security Provider (NSP) in region, India participates in Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), ASEAN-led frameworks like the East Asia Summit, the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus, ASEAN Regional Forum as well as the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).
3. Also, ASEAN should emphasize the principles of the **UN Convention for the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)** to solve the disputes in the South China Sea region.
4. **Regional Tourism:** India and ASEAN should also enhance regional tourism and people-to-people connectivity as they already have civilizational and cultural influences on each other.
5. **Unfolding Act-East Policy**: Reciprocity and mutual understanding on common concerns will help both ASEAN and India to overcome some of the challenges.
   - Thus, Coordination in the fields of Digitalization, Pharmaceuticals, Agriculture Education and Green Growth is imperative.

PREVIOUS YEARS PRELIMS QUESTIONS:

Q1. India is a member of which among the following? (2015)

1. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
2. Association of South-East Asian Nations
3. East Asia Summit

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 3 only

(c) 1, 2 and 3

(d) India is a member of none of them

Answer: (b)

Q2. Consider the following countries: (2018)

1.   Australia

2.   Canada

3.   China

4.   India

5.   Japan

6.   USA

Which of the above are among the 'free-trade partners' of ASEAN?

(a) 1, 2, 4 and 5

(b) 3, 4, 5 and 6

(c) 1, 3, 4 and 5

(d) 2, 3, 4 and 6

Ans: (c)

Q3.   The term 'Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership' often appears in the news in the context of the affairs of a group of countries known as (2016)

(a) G20

(b) ASEAN

(c) SCO

(d) SAARC

Ans: (b)

ISSUE OF CHILD LABOUR IN INDIA

UPSC MAINS SYLLABUS GS2: Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections of the population by the Centre and States and the Performance of these Schemes; Mechanisms, Laws, Institutions and Bodies constituted for the Protection and Betterment of these Vulnerable Sections

WHY IN NEWS?

1.   Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour, Textiles and Skill development in its 52nd report on 'National Policy on Child Laborer's has said that it is "practically not possible" to meet the international commitment to eliminating child labour by 2025.

2. The report, titled 'National Policy on Child Labour – An Assessment', states the country has a long way to go in eliminating child labour, and requires changes to the policies and laws that govern the issue.

ISSUE OF CHILD LABOUR IN INDIA:

As per the Standing Committee, with increased economic insecurity, lack of social protection and reduced household income, the children from poor households are being pushed to contribute to the family income with the risk of exposure to exploitative work:

1. As per International Labour Organization (ILO) definition, Child labour is a form of modern slavery that includes any work which deprives children of their childhood, their potential and that harms their physical or mental development.

2. The practice includes trafficking, sexual exploitation, debt bondage, and even exploitation in armed conflicts.

3. The Constitution of India under Article 24 prohibits the employment of children below the age of 14 years in any factory or mine or employed in any hazardous employment.

4. Even then, as per Census of India 2011: There were 10.1 million working children in the age group of 5-14 years out of whom 8.1 million were working in rural areas mainly engaged as cultivators (26%) and agricultural labourers (32.9%).

5. According to the latest NSO data available in 2023, Uttar Pradesh has the greatest number of Child Labour accounting to 2.1 million child labourers.

6. Child labour seems to be more prevalent among boys than girls at every age.

Child labour not only takes away the "Right to Education" & "Dignified life" of children but working in Hazardous factories also exposes them to various health risks. It acts as hindrance for the child to develop essential skills for better opportunities in future and thus catches them in "Poverty trap".

CAUSES OF CHILD LABOUR:

1. As per the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour, they majorly come from traditionally deprived section of society (SC/ST, Tribals, lower income group etc.)

• Thus, they lack access to quality and age-appropriate education, health facilities, employment, and developmental initiatives such as those for poverty alleviation.

• The low levels of skills and unemployment of adults, combined with the discrimination that children may face in schools, pushes many of these children to work.

2. As per Vandana Kandhari of UNICEF: "Urban children are more vulnerable due to economic uncertainty caused by Pandemic & increasing work opportunities in Informal sector".

• The informal economy often employs them because it is difficult to enforce child Labour laws in the informal sector.

3. While Orphans get involved to meet their daily needs in absence of Social security cover, Debt trap by moneylenders and Trafficking Mafia further dents children's future.

4. Legal and bureaucratic malfunctions and loopholes further worsen the situation: "There are no

systems to help reintegrate or rehabilitate the children," says Soha Moitra, Regional director of Child Rights and You (CRY) foundation.

5. Lack of Awareness among parents of the physical, mental, and psychological ill consequences on children further worsens the situation.

STEPS TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT TO CURB PRACTISE OF CHILD LABOUR:

As Child labour acts as major hindrance to the Socio-economic welfare of the country, the Government has taken various steps such as:

1. The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976: prohibits systems of labour where people, including children, work under conditions of servitude to pay off debt, and also provides a framework for rehabilitating released labourers.

2. The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 1986: It bans the employment of children up to the age of 14 in hazardous occupations.

3. Further the National Policy on Child Labour 1987 contains an action plan to tackle the problem of child labour.

4. In 1992, India became the first country to join The International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPECL), a global programme launched by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

5. The Supreme Court Judgement of 1996 has directed that authorities shall conduct a survey to identify working children, withdrawal of children working in hazardous industries, and ensure they are educated in appropriate institutions.

6. Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act 2012: seeks to prevent commercial sexual exploitation of children.

7. The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015: governs laws relating to children alleged and found to be in conflict with the law

8. The Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Care and Rehabilitation) Bill 2021 provides detailed measures to prevent, protect and rehabilitate victims of trafficking.

9. Under National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme: the Union Ministry of Labour & Employment has been implementing the scheme for the rehabilitation of child labourers (9-14 years of age) through District Project Societies under the chairmanship of the District Magistrate.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee noted that Government's efforts have bore significant results as number of working children has decreased from 2011 Census.

SUGGESTIVE MEASURES TO CURB CHILD LABOUR BY 2025:

The Parliamentary Standing Committee has given following suggestions to curb the practice of Child Labour in India to achieve Sustainable Development Targets (SDGs):

1. Discrepancies in the criteria for determination of the age of the child in various Acts shall be removed and a uniform age shall be set.

2. The prevailing differences in provisions of offence being cognizable & non-cognizable under the Child and Adolescent Labour Act, 1986 & Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act,

2015 shall be examined to ensure they do not lead to any delay in securing justice for aggrieved children.

3. The amount of fine shall be increased by 3-4 times as well as stricter punishment in the form of cancellation of license, attachment of property, etc., shall be incorporated to protect the interests of children.

4. Further, ensuring universal access to free and quality education for all children under Right to Education Act 2009 shall be given impetus.

5. In this regard, collaboration with international organizations, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNICEF, to access expertise, technical assistance, and financial resources is necessary.

6. Developing and implementing comprehensive rehabilitation programs for rescued child laborers, including access to education, vocational training, healthcare, and psychological support is also must.

7. The panel notes that as nearly 80% of child labour in India emanates from rural areas, the Panchayat can play a dominant role in mitigating child labour by generating awareness about the ill-effects of child labour, encouraging parents to send their children to school & informing industry owners about the laws prohibiting child labour and the penalties for violating these laws.

WAY FORWARD:

As action taken today will determine the future of children of tomorrow, the Committee impress upon the Labour Ministry to take up the issue in a mission mode and devise a systematic action plan-based policy to meet international commitments, which are not only relevant for economic development of the country but will also brighten the image of the country in international forum.

MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION:

Q. Examine the issue of Child Labour prevalent in India in context of recent Parliamentary report. Suggest any five measures that India shall take to eliminate Child Labour by 2025.

(10 marks, 150 words)

PM JANMAN scheme

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "PM JANMAN scheme". This topic has relevance in the Social Justice section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 2: Social Justice

Why in the news?

The Scheme is designed to cater to the needs of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) households and habitations by ensuring:

Basic Facilities:

• Provision of safe housing, clean drinking water, and sanitation to enhance living conditions.

Improved Access to Education, Health, and Nutrition:

- Focus on enhancing access to quality education, healthcare, and nutrition for PVTG communities.

Road and Telecom Connectivity:

- Initiatives to improve road and telecom connectivity to overcome geographical isolation and enhance communication.

Sustainable Livelihood Opportunities:

- Implementation of measures to promote sustainable livelihoods, including skills training, resources, and support for economic activities.

Saturation for Key Schemes:

- Ensuring saturation for key government schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY), Sickle Cell Disease Elimination, TB Elimination, 100% immunization, Pradhan Mantri Poshan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, etc.

This initiative is part of the Pradhan Mantri-PVTG Development Mission, as announced in India's 2022-23 Union Budget. The government has allocated Rs 15,000 crore over three years for the comprehensive development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs):

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) are subsets of tribal communities in India that are identified as more vulnerable due to their isolation, distinct socio-economic and cultural traits, and low population. The concept of PVTGs evolved from the Primitive Tribal Groups (PTG) category established by the Dhebar Commission in 1960-61, which aimed to address disparities among Scheduled Tribes. In 2006, this category was renamed Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.

Numbers and Spread:

- In 1975, the Indian government identified 52 tribal groups as PVTGs based on the Dhebar Commission's recommendations.
- Currently, there are 75 PVTGs in 22,544 villages across 18 states and one Union Territory, with a total population of about 28 lakh individuals.
- Odisha has the highest number, with more than 2.5 lakh PVTG individuals.

Characteristics:

- PVTGs are characterized by stagnant or declining populations, pre-agricultural technology, extremely low literacy levels, and subsistence-level economies.
- Population sizes vary significantly, ranging from under 1,000 to over 1 lakh in different groups.

Challenges:

- PVTGs face severe marginalization due to isolation, low population, and unique socio-economic and cultural traits.
- Challenges include limited access to basic services, social discrimination, vulnerability to displacement from development and natural disasters, and lack of political representation.

Government Schemes:

- The PVTG Development Plan focuses on providing education, healthcare, and livelihood

opportunities while preserving traditional knowledge.

- The Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission (PMJVM) emphasizes market linkages and procurement of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) at Minimum Support Prices.

- Other schemes include the Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana, Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP), Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP), Eklavya Model Residential Schools, Forest Rights Act 2006 for land titles, Support to Tribal Research Institute (STRI) scheme, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989, and the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996.

- Direct recruitment through reservations aids in education, self-governance, and protection against discrimination.

How PM-JANMAN scheme different:

PM-JANMAN, or Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission, distinguishes itself through several key features aimed at addressing the unique challenges faced by Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs):

Proper Identification and Recognition:

- Critique of Existing Criteria: The criteria for identifying PVTGs have been criticized as outdated, leading to confusion and exclusion. Some PVTGs are not recognized as Scheduled Tribes in certain states.

- Government's Response: The initiative includes creating a Human Development Index for PVTGs, addressing concerns raised in reports by Dr. Hrusikesh Panda and Virginius Xaxa. Baseline surveys have been conducted for about 40 PVTG groups for targeted development planning.

Participatory Bottom-Up Approach:

- Customized Strategies: PM-JANMAN rejects a 'one-size-fits-all' approach, instead adopting customized strategies that respect the unique needs and priorities of PVTGs.

- Inclusive Decision-Making: The scheme actively involves PVTGs in decision-making processes, specifically addressing issues like land rights, social inclusion, and cultural preservation.

Livelihood Promotion:

- Skills Training and Resources: The scheme focuses on providing skills training and resources, including land and credit, to promote sustainable livelihoods.

- Forest Rights Act Implementation: Granting land titles under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) secures access to forest resources, with Section 3(1)(e) of the FRA specifically supporting the rights of primitive tribal groups and pre-agricultural communities.

- Cultural Heritage Preservation: Encouraging traditional technologies and skill enhancement through industry partnerships helps maintain cultural heritage while promoting sustainable development.

Health, Nutrition, and Education:

- Mobile Medical Health Units: Outreach strategies, such as Mobile Medical Health Units, are crucial for providing healthcare in remote areas.

- Cultural Integration in Education: Incorporating the culture and language of PVTGs into the curriculum, providing transportation, and training teachers about PVTG cultural contexts enhance education accessibility.

Infrastructure Development:

- Relaxed Guidelines: Habitations of PVTGs often do not meet the criteria for mainstream schemes due to factors like population requirements or lack of surveys.

- Guidelines Adjustment: Guidelines for infrastructure schemes, including Pradhan Mantri Grameen Sadak Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, and Jal Jeevan Mission, have been relaxed to improve access to housing, water, sanitation, electricity, and connectivity for PVTGs.

SOURCE:

Experts Explain: How the PM JANMAN scheme can help Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups | Explained News – The Indian Express

QATAR COURT PUTS INTERIM STAY ON DEATH SENTENCE OF EIGHT INDIANS

(This article is from 'Indian Express', 'The Hindu', 'Official website of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India', 'Official website of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India', 'Jansatta', monthly magazine 'World Focus' and 'PIB'. The included editorial is related to a brief summary. It also includes the suggestions of the Yojana IAS team. This article is related to UPSC Civil Services Examination especially 'International Relations, International Organization, Indian Polity and Governance, Indian Navy, India-Qatar Relations, International Court. (ICJ), United Nations (UN)' section. This article is related to 'Qatar court's interim stay on death sentence of eight Indians' under 'Daily Current Affairs'.)

General Studies: International Relations, Indian Politics and Governance, Indian Navy, India-Qatar Relations, International Court of Justice (ICJ), United Nations (UN).

WHY IN DISCUSSION / NEWS?

- In a major relief to 8 former Indian marines sentenced to death in Qatar, on 28 December 2023, on the appeal of the Government of India, an interim stay has been put on the death sentence of all eight people. India's Ministry of External Affairs had approached the court in Qatar regarding this case, during the hearing of which the Qatari court reduced the death sentence.

- Official sources of the Ministry of External Affairs of India have said that – "We (India) are waiting for the copy of the detailed decision." Our legal team is in touch with the families of the eight Indians regarding next steps. During the hearing, India's ambassador and officials based in Qatar were present in the court. ,

- India's Ministry of External Affairs further said that – "We have stood with the families of the eight Indian people from the beginning. Considering the sensitivity of this matter, it would not be right for us to speak too much about it. We have been and will continue to raise this matter with the Qatari authorities."

WHO ARE THESE EIGHT FORMER INDIAN NAVY PERSONNEL?

The eight former Indian Navy personnel have been identified as Captain Navtej Singh Gill, Captain Birendra Kumar Verma, Captain Saurabh Vashishtha, Commander Amit Nagpal, Commander Purnendu Tiwari, Commander Sugunakar Pakala, Commander Sanjeev Gupta and Sailor Ragesh Gopakumar.

WHAT IS THE ALLEGATION AGAINST THEM?

Eight Indians working in Qatar-based Al Dahra Company (Qatar's private security company) are accused of allegedly spying, for which recently a court in Qatar has issued a sentence to eight former officers of the Indian Navy. He has been sentenced to death on charges of espionage. The officials involved were arrested in August 2022 and charged with sharing confidential information.

BACKGROUND OF THE PRESENT CASE:

PETITION:

- The accused officers, who were working with Al Dahra (Qatar's private security company) in Doha, were accused of allegedly sharing classified information at the time of their arrest in Qatar in the year 2022.
- The Qatar-based company 'Dahra Global Technologies and Consultant Services', for which the eight former Indian Navy officers worked, was also involved in the production of advanced submarines of Italian origin, which are also known for their stealth warfare capabilities.
- The main thing to note is that the charges against the eight Indian officials have not been made public by the Qatari authorities.
- Earlier investigation process regarding the present case:
- Presently, the investigation process regarding this matter has been completed twice in March and June of the year 2023 and more have also been done. While these accused detainees were granted

consular access on several occasions, the authorities of both the Indian and Qatari countries maintained the confidentiality of the case citing the sensitivity of the matter.

RESPONSE GIVEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA IN THE PRESENT CASE:

- The Government of India is exploring all possible legal options to secure the release of the eight accused former Indian Navy officers, while also expressing concern over the death penalty imposed by India on its citizens.
- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has reiterated its commitment to provide consular and legal assistance to the eight Indian former naval officers detained in Qatar, and has also coordinated with all major authorities related to the case. Made aware of its importance.

DIPLOMATIC IMPLICATIONS:

- While the large Indian diaspora contributes to boosting economic and diplomatic ties, this decision could potentially strain relations between India and Qatar. More than seven lakh Indian expatriates reside in Qatar. This increases the pressure on the Government of India to take the highest level of action to save the lives of the prisoners lodged in the jails there.
- Those NRIs in Qatar are known and highly respected for their honesty, hard work, technical expertise and law-abiding nature as they contribute in different areas of employment in NRI Qatar. Are giving.
- Remittances from Qatar to India by the Indian expatriate community are estimated to be around $750 million per year.
- The current affair represents the first major crisis in India-Qatar relations, which have been generally stable until now.
- In the year 2016, along with the visit of the Indian Prime Minister to Doha, high-level meetings were also held between the two countries, after which meetings were also held between the two countries with the Emir of Qatar.
- An important supplier of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to India is Qatar, which supplies a major portion of India's LNG imports.

THE EXISTING OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO INDIA TO STOP THE PUNISHMENT OF NAVAL PERSONNEL ARE:

DIPLOMATIC OPTION:

- In the present case, India can hold direct diplomatic talks with the Qatar government to find a solution to the matter. Given the strategic and economic importance of relations between the two countries, India's diplomatic leverage can play an important role.
- The Indian government can also use diplomatic pressure to stop the death penalty.
- The idea is to use the agreement signed by India and Qatar in 2015 for the transfer of convicted prisoners so that they can serve their sentence in their home country. Such possibilities are also being considered by India.
- Filing an appeal against the decision by the Qatari court or NGOs and civil society can also raise this issue at the global level and pressure can also be put on Qatar by the United Nations.

LEGAL OPTIONS:

- According to Qatar's judicial system, persons sentenced to death can file an appeal within the Qatari legal system. Therefore, India's first step is to appeal within the judicial system in Qatar.

- India can ensure that detainees' right to appeal is properly followed by providing them with legal representation.

- If proper procedures are not followed or the appeal process is disorganized, India can invoke International Court of Justice (ICJ) jurisdiction.

- The International Court of Justice (ICJ) acts as a world court with two types of jurisdiction. That is, it is also to give advisory opinions in case of legal disputes between two states submitted by them (controversial matters) and on legal questions referred to it by the organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations (consultative proceedings).

IN WHICH CASES WAS INDIA INVOLVED IN THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE (ICJ) JURISDICTION TILL NOW?

- Kulbhushan Jadhav case (India vs Pakistan)
- Right of passage over Indian territory (Portugal vs. India, ended in 1960).
- Appeals relating to the jurisdiction of the ICAO Council (India v Pakistan, abolished in 1972).
- Pakistani Prisoners of War Trial (Pakistan vs. India, ended in 1973).
- Air incident of August 10, 1999 (Pakistan vs India, ended in 2000).
- Obligations related to preventing the nuclear arms race and negotiating nuclear disarmament (Marshall Islands v. India, ended in 2016).

WAY TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM/WAY FORWARD:

- India needs to remain committed to the welfare and legal rights of its citizens while dealing with the complexities of international diplomacy and legal processes in Qatar. The way forward in this direction is likely to be challenging and may take time and require India to show determination.

- In this present case, as well as in the future, India may desperately need a combination of its

diplomatic efforts, systematic legal actions and international cooperation for a successful and appropriate resolution of such problem/case. For which India needs to build very cordial and unbreakable diplomatic relations with other countries.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM:

Q.1. Consider the following statements with reference to the death sentences of eight former Indian sailors who have been granted interim stay by the Qatar court.

1. The eight Indians working in Al Dahra Company based in Qatar are accused of allegedly spying.

2. Consular access was also provided to these accused prisoners on several occasions.

3. India can use International Court of Justice (ICJ) jurisdiction in this case.

4. 'Dahra Global Technologies and Consultant Services' was also involved in the production of advanced submarines of Italian origin, which are also known for their stealth warfare capabilities.

Which of the above statement/statements is correct?

A. Only 1, 2 and 3

B. Only 2, 3 and 4

C. All of these.

D. None of these.

Answer – C

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM:

Q.1.In the context of the interim stay on death sentence of Indian former naval personnel in Qatar, discuss the legal options before India and its impact on India-Qatar relations.

General Studies -3

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

LOSS AND DAMAGE FUND

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details " Loss and Damage Fund". This topic has relevance in the Environment section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 3: Environment

Why in the news?

- The COP28 climate conference in Dubai marked the official launch of a loss and damage fund aimed at assisting vulnerable nations in managing the effects of climate change.

Background:

- The announcement of the loss and damage fund initially took place at COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, the preceding year.

- The fund's initial financial support is anticipated to total $475 million.

o The UAE, serving as the host, committed $100 million to the fund.

o The European Union demonstrated significant support with a pledge of $275 million.

o The United States contributed $17.5 million to the fund.

o Japan, in a show of commitment, allocated $10 million to support the initiative.

Loss and Damage Fund Overview:

- **Global Financial Package:** The Loss and Damage Fund is a global financial package designed to support the rescue and rehabilitation of countries experiencing the cascading impacts of climate change.

- **Responsibility and Compensation:** Rich nations, deemed responsible for the climate crisis due to their industrial growth, are obligated to pay compensation to poorer nations facing the adverse effects.

- **Impact on Vulnerable Countries:** Despite having a low carbon footprint, some nations are disproportionately affected by rising sea levels, floods, droughts, cyclones, impacting lives, livelihoods, biodiversity, cultural traditions, and identities.

Complexity of Loss and Damage:

- **Lack of UNFCCC Agreement:** There is no universally agreed-upon definition of loss and damage within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

- **Categorization:** Loss and damage are often classified as economic or non-economic. Economic losses involve quantifiable monetary impacts, while non-economic losses are challenging to assign a monetary value to.

Industrialization's Role in Climate Change:

- **Historical Responsibility:** The Industrial Era since 1850 has disrupted Earth's natural mechanisms for greenhouse gas production and absorption.

- **Emission Responsibility:** The US, the UK, and the EU contribute to 50% of all emissions, while India's historical emissions account for only 3%. China, the largest emitter in recent years, is responsible for 30% of global emissions annually.

Extent of Climate Crisis-Induced Loss and Damage:

- **Financial Impact:** Over the past two decades, 55 vulnerable countries have collectively suffered $525 billion in losses due to climate crisis-induced events.

- **Future Projections:** Estimated losses are expected to reach $580 billion annually by 2030, with projections indicating a continued increase as global warming persists.

COP28 Summit's Climate Disaster Fund:

- **Positive Development:** The COP28 climate conference in Dubai saw a positive start with member countries agreeing to establish a climate disaster fund.

- **Fund Source:** Rich nations like the US, the UK, and the EU, along with some developing countries, contribute to the fund.

- **Interim Host:** The World Bank will serve as the interim host for four years, although some developing nations initially expressed concerns about potential financial control by richer nations.

- **Fund Scale and Operation:** The scale and replenishment cycle remain unclear, but the urgency necessitates a fund in the trillions. Key aspects, such as contributors and fund size, are yet to be determined.

- **Voluntary Payments:** Contributions to the fund are voluntary, and all developing countries are eligible to directly access the resources.

United Nations Climate Change
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES DUBAI
30 Nov - 12 Dec 2023

UAE

COP28

Loss and Damage Fund Launched at COP28 to Help Developing Countries Battle Climate Change

The fund's initial financial support is anticipated to total $475 million.

- UAE-$275 million.
- European Union-$100 million.
- United States-$17.5 million.
- Japan-$10 million.

Source:

Loss and damage fund approved at COP28 summit: All you need to know |

Q.1 **With reference to the Loss and Damage Fund established during the COP28 climate conference, consider the following statements:**

1. The World Bank will serve as the interim host for the Loss and Damage Fund.

2. Contributions to the fund are mandatory for all member countries.

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 critical role of financial mechanisms in addressing the challenges posed by climate change. Examine the necessity for a robust financial framework to support climate adaptation and mitigation efforts globally, considering the recent developments at the COP28 conference in Dubai.**

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-north-

westwards 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.

Cyclone - Michaung

90-100 km/h which expected at the time

Chennai

Dec 5 Depression

Dec 4 Severe Cydronic storm

Dec 3 Cydronic storm

Dec 2 Deep Depression

Dec 1 Cydronic storm

Dec 1 Depression

- Over 61,600 people were moved to relief camps.
- The airport was closed for several hours, with nearly 300 flights canceled.
- Southern Railway also canceled many long-distance trains.

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, Kakinada, 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 re-

duce 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.

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

2. Strong Coriolis force

3. Large variations in the vertical wind speed

4. 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.**

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 Tapti 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**

EU REACHES HISTORIC DEAL ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE REGULATION

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details " EU Reaches Historic Deal on Artificial Intelligence Regulation". This topic has relevance in the Science and Technology section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 3: Science and Technology

Why in the news?

Policymakers in the European Union have reached a preliminary agreement on groundbreaking regulations that will govern the utilization of artificial intelligence (AI).

Background:

On December 8, EU member states and lawmakers reached a landmark agreement on the formulation of rules governing artificial intelligence (AI), including models like ChatGPT. Despite the prolonged negotiations, these regulations are slated to come into effect no earlier than 2025, allowing for considerable technological advancements in the interim.

Key Highlights of the Artificial Intelligence Act:

- **Origins and Objectives:** Initially drafted in 2021, the Artificial Intelligence Act aims to introduce transparency, trust, and accountability to the realm of AI. It seeks to establish a comprehensive framework to address risks posed to safety, health, fundamental rights, and democratic values within the EU.

- **Two-Tier Approach:** The Act adopts a two-tier approach, featuring transparency requirements applicable to all general-purpose AI models, with more stringent provisions for high-powered models.

- **Database of High-Risk AI Systems:** The legislation proposes the creation of an EU-wide database cataloging high-risk AI systems. It also outlines parameters for the inclusion of future technologies in this database, provided they meet the defined high-risk criteria.

- **Balancing Act:** Striking a balance between promoting the adoption of AI and preventing potential harms associated with certain applications, the legislation reflects a nuanced approach.

Establishment of the EU AI Office:

- **Monitoring and Sanctions:** The Act empowers the EU to monitor and penalize violators through a newly established body, the EU AI Office, affiliated with the commission.

- **Enforcement Measures:** The EU AI Office holds the authority to impose fines amounting to seven percent of a company's turnover or 35 million euros—whichever is greater.

Approval Process:

While a deal has been reached, formal approval from member states and the EU Parliament is still required to enforce the AI regulations.

THE EU ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ACT

Yojna IAS

On April 21 , 2021 the EU Commission published its proposal for an Artificial Intelligence Act.

Here is what you need to know

Limited prohibited uses

1

2 Regulation of high-risk A1 systems

3 Ex-ante/ex-post requirements

4 GDPR-trained?

5 What comes next?

Global Perspectives on Artificial Intelligence Regulation:

- **European Union's Progressive Approach:**

o In May 2023, the European Parliament made strides toward a comprehensive regulatory framework with a preliminary agreement on the Artificial Intelligence Act. This ambitious legislation seeks to establish an EU-wide database for high-risk AI systems, with provisions allowing for the inclusion of future technologies meeting defined criteria.

United States: A Hands-Off Stance:

o The U.S., in contrast, currently lacks a comprehensive regulatory framework for AI and has adopted a relatively hands-off approach to governance in this rapidly evolving technological landscape.

- **China's Stringent Regulations:**

o China, in a departure from the U.S., has implemented some of the world's first nationally binding regulations for AI. Over the past year, it introduced laws specifically targeting certain types of algorithms, notably focusing on the regulation of recommendation algorithms and their impact on information dissemination.

- **India's Evolving Position:**

o Initially adopting a stance of not considering specific laws for AI regulation, India has signaled a potential shift in perspective. Leading up to the G20 summit in September 2023, government officials hinted at the prospect of regulating AI. The upcoming Digital Personal Data Protection Bill 2022 is expected to extend its reach to AI developers, treating them as data fiduciaries responsible for the use of personal data.

- **India's Role on the Global Stage:**

o Prime Minister Modi expressed India's commitment to a significant advancement in AI, emphasizing its potential to empower citizens. India, as a co-founder of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI), will host the GPAI Summit 2023 in New Delhi from December 12-14. With 28 member countries and the EU, GPAI aims to guide the responsible development and usage of AI on the international stage. India's active involvement signals its dedication to contributing to the evolution of AI governance and technology.

SOURCE:

EU agrees landmark deal on regulation of AI (msn.com)

Q.1 With reference to the Artificial Intelligence Act of EU, consider the following statements:

1. The legislative proposal suggests establishing a pan-European database that compiles information on high-risk AI systems.

2. The Act features a two-tier approach, applying transparency requirements to all general-purpose AI models, with more stringent provisions for high-powered models.

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 **Discuss the ethical dimensions and implications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in contemporary society. Analyze the challenges posed by AI in areas such as privacy, bias, accountability, and job displacement. Examine the strategies and frameworks that can be implemented to address these ethical concerns and ensure responsible development and deployment of AI technologies.**

GLOBAL RIVER CITIES ALLIANCE (GRCA)

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details " Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA)". This topic has relevance in the Environment section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 3: Environment

Why in the news?

The Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA) has been initiated by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), the implementing body for the government's flagship Namami Gange program.

The Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA) is a collaborative initiative modeled after India's River Cities Alliance, established by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) under the Ministry of Jal Shakti and the National Institute of Urban Affairs under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs in November 2021.

Participating Nations and Support:

- Nine nations are part of the GRCA, including India, Denmark, Cambodia, Japan, Bhutan, Australia, Netherlands, Egypt, and Ghana.

- Multilateral funding agencies such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank have pledged their support for the initiative.
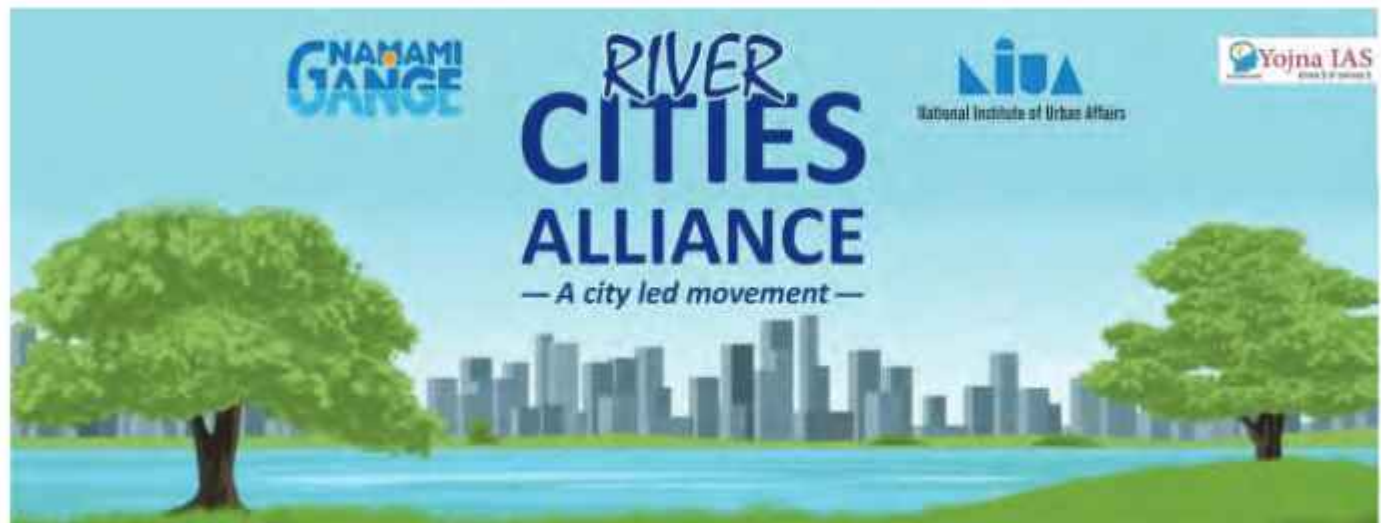
Focus Area of Work:

- The GRCA focuses on capacity building and knowledge exchange in integrated river management to address climate change impacts on ecosystems.

- The collaboration includes a comprehensive water monitoring program, sharing best practices for renaturing urban areas, and restoring aquatic ecosystems for sustainable urban development.

- Initiatives extend to restoring urban forests and lakes connected to rivers, emphasizing the importance of green spaces.

River Cities Alliance in India:

- The River Cities Alliance in India serves as a platform for river cities to ideate, discuss, and exchange information for the sustainable management of urban rivers.

- It is a collaborative effort between the Jal Shakti Ministry and the Housing & Urban Affairs Ministry. The National Institute for Urban Affairs (NIUA) and the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) have joined forces for launching the River Cities Alliance.

Objectives:

The primary objective is to provide participating cities with a platform for discussing and exchanging vital information on sustainable urban river management. This includes reducing impacts on rivers and water bodies, minimizing water footprints, preserving architectural heritage, and developing self-sufficient water resources through reuse and recycle strategies.

What is the River Cities Alliance?

- **Nodal Ministry:** The alliance is a partnership of two Ministries i.e., Ministry of Jal Shakti and Ministry Of Housing and Urban Affairs.

- **Objective:** It is a dedicated platform for river cities in India to ideate, discuss and exchange information for sustainable management of urban rivers,

- **Participating Cities:** There are 30 member cities in the alliance

- **Themes:** The alliance Will focus on three broad themes- Networking, Capacity Building and Technical Support.

- **Secretariat:** National Institute for Urban Affairs (NIUA) with National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) support.

Current Developments:

- The River Cities Alliance in India currently comprises 142 river cities, serving as a dedicated platform for members to enhance the state of urban rivers within their administrative boundaries.

- Recently, the NMCG signed a Memorandum of Common Purpose with the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative (MRCTI), representing 124 cities/towns along the Mississippi River, USA, on the sidelines of COP28.

- The collaboration will discuss comprehensive water monitoring, best practices for urban area renaturation, and initiatives for sustainable urban development.

- This collaborative effort showcases a commitment to proactive environmental stewardship and innovative solutions for sustainable river management on a global scale.

Q.1 Regarding the Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA) recently seen in the news, consider the following statements:

1. It is a United Nations Led Initiative.

2. It is to be supported by the World Bank

3. All SAARC nations are part of the initiative.

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 Examine the objectives, composition, and focus areas of the Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA) in the context of sustainable urban river management.

ANTHRAX

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Anthrax". This topic has relevance in the Science and technology section of the UPSC CSE exam.
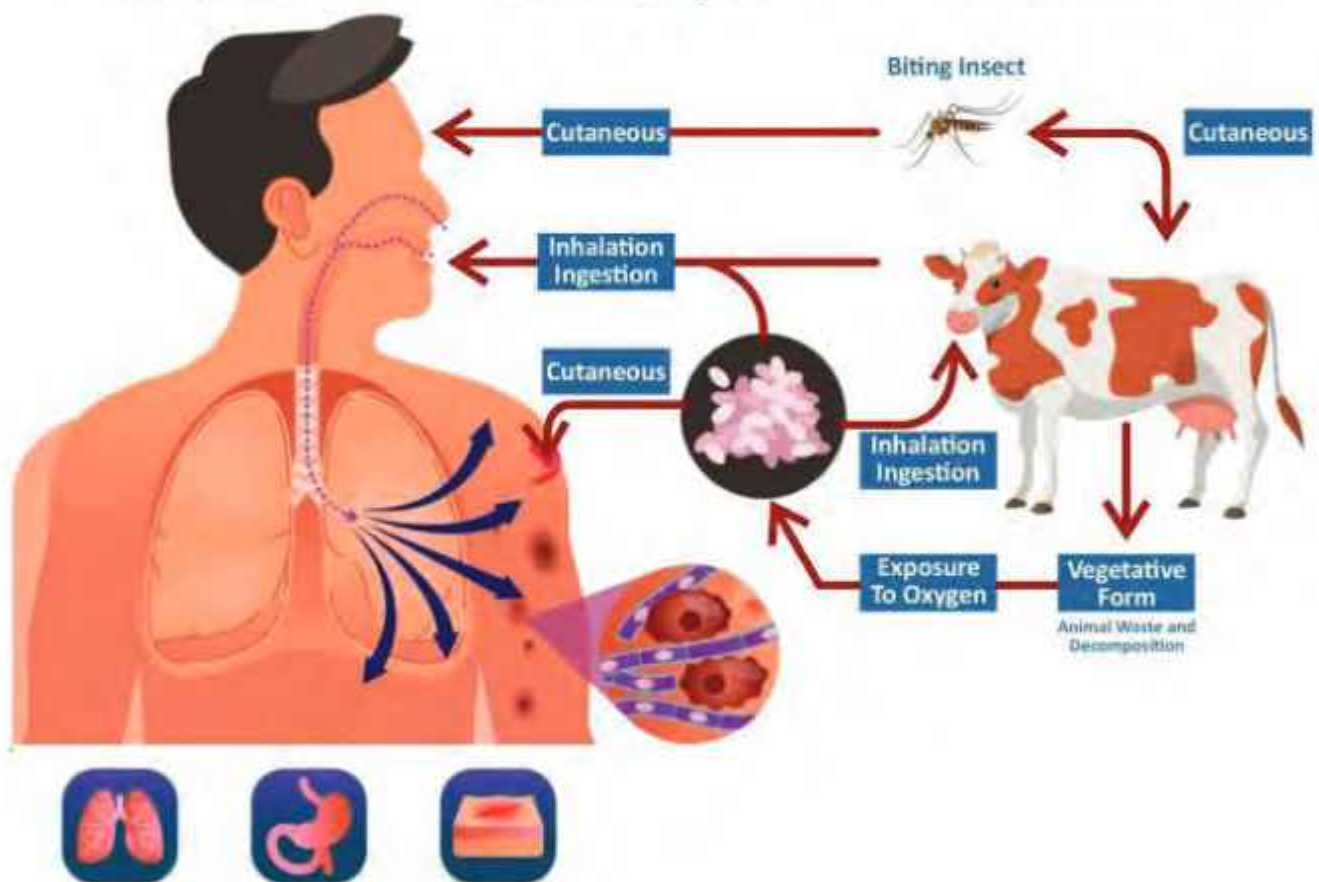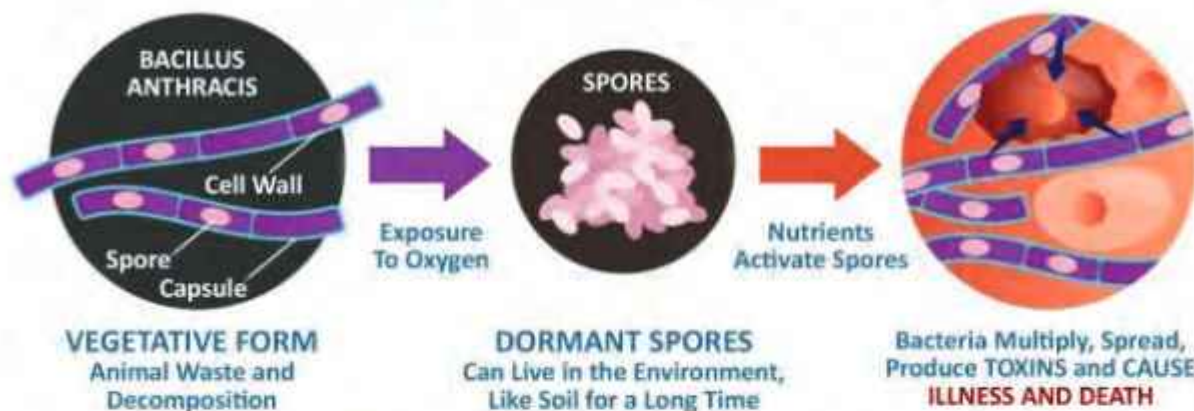*GS 3: Science and technology*

Why in the news?

Recently, there has been an outbreak of Anthrax disease in Zambia.

About Anthrax

Anthrax, an infectious disease caused by the bacterium Bacillus anthracis, presents a considerable threat due to the resilience of its spores in the environment. This article delves into the various modes of transmission in humans, diagnostic approaches, available treatments, and preventive strategies against anthrax.

ANTHRAX

BACILLUS ANTHRACIS
Cell Wall
Spore
Capsule

VEGETATIVE FORM
Animal Waste and Decomposition

Exposure To Oxygen

SPORES

DORMANT SPORES
Can Live in the Environment, Like Soil for a Long Time

Nutrients Activate Spores

Bacteria Multiply, Spread, Produce TOXINS and CAUSE **ILLNESS AND DEATH**

Biting Insect

Cutaneous

Cutaneous

Inhalation Ingestion

Cutaneous

Inhalation Ingestion

Exposure To Oxygen

Vegetative Form
Animal Waste and Decomposition

Modes of Transmission in Humans

- **Cutaneous Anthrax:** The most prevalent form occurs when spores make contact with compromised skin, resulting in distinctive skin lesions.

- **Gastrointestinal Anthrax:** Arising from the consumption of contaminated meat, this form initially manifests symptoms akin to food poisoning before progressing to severe abdominal issues.

- **Inhalational Anthrax:** Recognized as the deadliest form, it initiates with flu-like symptoms and swiftly advances to severe respiratory distress and shock, primarily caused by inhaling anthrax spores.

Diagnosis

- The identification of Bacillus anthracis in blood, skin lesions, or respiratory secretions relies on laboratory tests such as cultures, PCR, or ELISA. Anthrax exposure is not confirmed by a single test, necessitating a comprehensive approach integrating clinical findings and specialized tests.

Treatment

- Antibiotics such as ciprofloxacin, doxycycline, or levofloxacin demonstrate efficacy in treating anthrax infections. Severe cases may warrant hospitalization for supportive care, encompassing fluid drainage and mechanical ventilation.

Prevention

- Vaccines, tailored for both animals and humans, particularly target high-risk groups. Mitigating contact with potentially infected animals or their products is essential, emphasizing proper hygiene and handling procedures for animal products to avert transmission.

Conclusion

Comprehending the modes of transmission, facilitating prompt diagnosis, and ensuring timely treatment are pivotal in managing and preventing the spread of anthrax. Vaccination and meticulous adherence to safety protocols play indispensable roles in safeguarding both human and animal populations from this infectious disease.

About Zambia

Geographical Overview:

Zambia, situated in south-central Africa, is a landlocked country surrounded by eight neighboring nations—Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. Its strategic location makes it a hub in the heart of the continent.

Economic Significance:

Renowned as one of the world's major producers of copper and cobalt, Zambia plays a pivotal role in the global electronics industry. In addition to these minerals, the country exports a diverse range of agricultural products, including maize, tobacco, sugar, cotton, and flowers. This economic diversity contributes significantly to Zambia's position in the international market.

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity:

English serves as the official language, fostering communication and administrative processes. However, Zambia's cultural landscape is rich and varied, with over 70 local languages spoken across the nation. Prominent among these are Bemba, Nyanja, Tonga, and Lozi, reflecting the country's linguistic tapestry.

Tribal Identity:

Zambia is characterized by a tapestry of tribes, each contributing to the nation's cultural mosaic. Key tribes include the Lozi, Bemba, Ngoni, Tonga, Luvale, and Kaonde.

Q.1 Anthrax disease is caused by:

(a) Bacteria

(b) Virus

(c) Protozoa

(d) Fungi

ANSWER: A

Q.2 Evaluate the Efficacy of Pandemic Management Strategies in India. Discuss Lessons Learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic and Propose Recommendations for Enhancing Future Pandemic Resilience in the Country.

AMRIT TECHNOLOGY

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details " AMRIT Technology". This topic has relevance in the Science and Technology section of the UPSC CSE exam.
GS 3: Science and Technology

Why in the news?

Recently, AMRIT Technology for water purification was showcased by Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) – Madras

About AMRIT Technology:

AMRIT Technology, developed by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) – Madras, is a cutting-edge solution designed to address water quality issues by efficiently removing arsenic and metal ions from water.

Key Features:

- **Nano-Scale Iron Oxy-Hydroxide:** The technology incorporates nano-scale iron oxy-hydroxide, which exhibits selective removal of arsenic as water passes through it.
- **Versatility:** AMRIT is versatile, catering to both domestic and community-level water purification needs.
- **Alignment with Jal Jeevan Mission:** The technology aligns with the overarching objectives of the Jal Jeevan Mission, contributing to the mission's goal of providing safe and potable tap water to rural households across India.

Recognition and Recommendation:

- The 'Standing Committee' of the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation has recommended

AMRIT Technology for consideration in addressing water and sanitation challenges, highlighting its efficacy and potential impact.

Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM): Transforming Rural Water Supply

The Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), launched in August 2019 by the Government of India, aims to ensure the provision of safe and sufficient tap water to rural households. The mission is implemented collaboratively with states, where they assume responsibilities for planning, execution, and maintenance of water supply schemes.

Progress Highlights:

- Baseline Status (August 2019):
  - At the initiation of JJM, only 16.8% (approximately 3.23 Crore) of rural households had tap water connections.
- **Current Status (As of 07.12.2023):**
  - A significant development is evident, with approximately 10.53 Crore additional rural households now equipped with tap water connections.
  - Presently, out of the total 19.24 Crore rural households in India, around 71.51% (approximately 13.76 Crore households) have access to tap water supply within their homes.

State Responsibilities:

- State Control:
  - Drinking water falls under state jurisdiction, granting states the autonomy to select water technology for piped supply schemes, particularly in addressing water quality issues.
- **Government Support:**
  - The central government provides crucial support to states by offering technical and financial assistance for the successful implementation of JJM.
  - Collaborates with esteemed institutions such as Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) to provide guidance on suitable technologies, especially those addressing water quality concerns.

Understanding Arsenic: Properties, Uses, and Concerns

Arsenic, a naturally occurring chemical element denoted by the symbol 'As' and atomic number 33, is commonly found in the Earth's crust in various forms, both inorganic and organic compounds.

Properties and Occurrence:

- Physical Properties:
  - Arsenic appears as a gray, metallic-looking solid at room temperature with a metallic luster.
  - It can manifest in different forms, including yellow, black, and gray, with the yellow form being the most unstable.
- Chemical Properties:
  - Reacts with oxygen and water but does not dissolve in non-oxidizing acids.
  - Forms diverse compounds, both organic and inorganic, exhibiting various chemical behaviors.
- **Occurrence:**
  - Naturally found in soil, rocks, water, air, and living organisms.
  - Commonly coexists with other elements such as sulfur, oxygen, and metals, especially in minerals.

Uses and Applications:

- Historical and Industrial Uses:
  - Historically employed in medicine, agriculture, and cosmetics.
  - Once widely utilized in manufacturing processes, including wood preservatives, pesticides, herbicides, and certain metal alloys.
- **Current Applications:**
  - Semiconductor Industry: Arsenic plays a crucial role in the production of semiconductors, gallium arsenide-based electronics, and solar cells.
  - Pharmaceuticals: Arsenic compounds have been explored for medical treatments, particularly in some cancer treatments.
  - Agriculture: Formerly used in pesticides and herbicides, but its application has been restricted due to its toxicity.

Health and Environmental Concerns:

- Toxicity:
  - Highly toxic, elevated exposure can lead to severe health issues.
  - Inorganic arsenic compounds are particularly dangerous, associated with various health problems such as cancers (skin, lung, bladder), skin lesions, cardiovascular diseases, and developmental issues.
- **Environmental Impact:**
  - The contamination of water sources by arsenic poses a notable environmental threat.
  - Groundwater contamination with arsenic is a global issue, representing a major public health risk in specific regions.

Sources of Arsenic:

Arsenic, occurring naturally in the Earth's crust, can infiltrate groundwater, particularly in regions with specific geological formations. Anthropogenic sources, including industrial activities like mining, smelting, and pesticide use, contribute to arsenic contamination.

Health Risks:

Chronic exposure to arsenic in drinking water poses significant health risks, leading to skin lesions, and cancers of the skin, bladder, and lungs. Long-term ingestion can result in cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and developmental issues in children.

Detection and Measurement:

- Testing Methods:
  - Analytical techniques like atomic absorption spectroscopy (AAS) and inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry (ICP-MS) are employed for measuring arsenic levels.
  - On-site screening of water for arsenic contamination can be conducted using field test kits.
- **Regulations:**
  - International standards, with the World Health Organization (WHO) guideline set at 10 μg/L, define safe arsenic levels in drinking water.
  - Regular monitoring and adherence to these standards are crucial for safeguarding public health.

Mitigation Strategies:

- Treatment Technologies:
  - **Coagulation-Filtration:** Chemical addition to bind arsenic, followed by filtration to remove arsenic precipitates.
  - **Adsorption Methods:** Use of activated alumina, iron oxide, or activated carbon to absorb arsenic.
  - **Ion Exchange and Reverse Osmosis:** Techniques for arsenic removal through ion exchange or selective filtration.
- **Community Interventions:**
  - Implementation of community-level water treatment systems with cost-effective technologies is crucial for affected regions.
  - Public awareness campaigns about arsenic dangers and the significance of safe water sources are essential.

Challenges:

- High-Cost Barriers:
  - Advanced treatment technologies come with high costs, presenting barriers, particularly in low-resource regions.
- Sustainable Access:
  - Ensuring sustainable access to safe water sources and regular monitoring in arsenic-affected areas remains challenging.
- Ongoing Research:
  - Ongoing research focuses on developing low-cost, efficient arsenic removal technologies suitable for diverse settings.
- **Collaboration:**
  - Collaborative efforts involving scientific institutions, governments, and NGOs are crucial for implementing effective arsenic mitigation strategies.

Q.1 Regarding the AMRIT Technology for water purification recently seen in the news, consider the following statements:

1. It is especially designed to be used for filtering out non metal impurities

2. The technology incorporates nano-scale iron oxy-hydroxide to remove toxic material

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 Assess the prospects of ensuring universal access to clean water in India. Discuss the impact of water quality on public health and the environment, and propose comprehensive strategies for sustainable water management in the country.

Telecommunications Bill

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Telecommunications Bill, 2023". This topic has relevance in the Economy section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 3: Economy

Why in the news?

Recently, the new telecom bill was introduced in Lok Sabha

Background:

The Telecommunications Bill, 2023, is introduced as a strategic response to the evolving landscape of the telecommunications sector, recognizing its pivotal role as a key driver of economic and social development and the gateway to digital services. The legislation is formulated to address the dual imperatives of ensuring the security of the nation's telecommunications networks and fostering a regulatory environment conducive to digitally inclusive growth.

Key Highlights of the Telecommunications Bill, 2023:

- **Repeal of Existing Laws:**

- The bill repeals three foundational legislations: the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885; the Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1933; and the Telegraph Wires (Unlawful Possession) Act, 1950.

- Concurrent amendments to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) Act, 1997.

- **Authorization for Telecom-related Activities:**

- Central government authorization mandated for various activities, including providing telecommunication services, establishing, operating, maintaining, or expanding telecommunications networks, and possessing radio equipment.

- Existing licenses retain validity, either for the period of their grant or five years, if the period is unspecified.

- **Assignment of Spectrum:**

- Spectrum allocation through auction, with exceptions for specified purposes such as national security, disaster management, weather forecasting, transport, satellite services, and public broadcasting.

- Empowerment of the central government to re-purpose or re-assign any frequency range.

- **Powers of Interception and Search:**

- Authorization for the interception, monitoring, or blocking of messages on specified grounds, including public safety, public emergency, security of the state, prevention of incitement of offenses, or maintaining public order.

- **Extraordinary Government Powers:**

- Provision for temporary possession of telecom infrastructure, network, or services during public emergencies.

- Suspension of telecom services under similar circumstances.

- Authorized searches by government-appointed officers for unauthorised telecom network or equipment possession.

- **Powers to Specify Standards:**

- Central government empowered to prescribe standards and assessments for telecom equipment, infrastructure, networks, and services.

- **Right of Way:**

- Facility providers entitled to seek a right of way over public or private property for the establishment of telecom infrastructure.

WHAT'S IN THE BILL

Yojna IAS

- **It seeks to allow the central government** to take over any telecom service or network in case of public emergency

- **Defines telecommunications services as** "any service for telecommunications", doesn't specify internet— based calling or messaging

- **Seeks to allow the central govenment to intercept** any message between individuals

- **Bats for allowing a senior private sector executive** as TRAI chairperson

- **Calls for three—year jail or ₹2 crore fine** or both for illegal phone

- **Stays silent on taking back spectrum** from insolvent telcos

- Right of way to be provided on a non-discriminatory and non-exclusive basis to the extent possible.

- **Protection of Users:**

- Central government's authority to implement measures protecting users, including obtaining prior consent for specified messages, creation of "Do Not Disturb" registers, and mechanisms for reporting malware or specified messages.

- **Appointments to TRAI:**

- Amendments to the TRAI Act, allowing individuals with at least 30 years of professional experience to serve as the chairperson and those with at least 25 years of professional experience to serve as members.

- **Digital Bharat Nidhi:**

- Retention of the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) under the 1885 Act, renamed as Digital Bharat Nidhi.

- Expanded scope to allow fund utilization for research and development (R&D).

- **Adjudication Process:**

- Appointment of an adjudicating officer by the central government for inquiries and orders against civil offenses.

- Adjudicating officer must hold a rank of joint secretary or above.

- Appeals against orders to be made before the Designated Appeals Committee within 30 days.

- Committee members to be officers of the rank of at least Additional Secretary.

- Further appeals to TDSAT (Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal) within 30 days for breaches of terms and conditions.

- **Offences and Penalties:**

- Specification of various criminal and civil offenses with corresponding penalties.

- Providing telecom services without authorization, unauthorized access to telecom network or data, and breach of terms and conditions are subject to imprisonment, fines, or both.

  The Telecommunications Bill, 2023, aims to establish a contemporary legal framework, ensuring the security and regulation of telecommunications networks while propelling the nation towards a digital future.

Q.1 **With reference to the Telecommunications Bill, 2023, consider the following powers of the Government:**

1. Authorization for interception, monitoring, or blocking of messages solely on grounds including public safety.

2. Grants extraordinary powers for temporary possession of telecom infrastructure and authorized searches for unauthorized network or equipment possession.

Which of the following is/are correct?

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

 ANSWER: B

Q.2 Examine the constitutional and democratic implications of the provisions in the Telecommunications Bill, 2023.

ETHANOL BLENDING IN PETROL

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details " Ethanol Blending in Petrol". This topic has relevance in the Environment section of the UPSC CSE exam.
GS 3: Environment

Why in the news?

As more than 100 countries committed to tripling global renewable energy capacity by 2030 at COP28 in Dubai, India finds itself delicately navigating its ethanol blending target.

Background:

The ethanol-blended petrol (EBP) in India witnessed a significant rise from 1.6% in 2013-14 to 11.8% in 2022-23. However, the ambitious goal of achieving a 20% ethanol blending target by 2025 is facing challenges. Issues such as low sugar stocks in 2022-23 and the anticipated shortfall in sugarcane production this year have added complexity to India's ethanol blending trajectory.

About Ethanol Blending:

Ethanol blending in petrol is a sustainable practice involving the mixing of ethanol, a biofuel derived from sugars, with petrol to create blended fuels. India, in its pursuit of energy security and environmental sustainability, has been actively implementing an Ethanol Blending Programme (EBP).

Common Blends:

- E10 Blend: Comprising 10% ethanol and 90% petrol, E10 is the standard blend used in ethanol blending.

- E20 Blend: A higher ethanol blend with 20% ethanol and 80% petrol, offering increased biofuel

content.

Ethanol Production:

- Ethanol is produced through the fermentation of sugars by yeasts or via petrochemical processes like ethylene hydration.

Ethanol Blending Targets:

- India initiated its Ethanol Blending Programme in 2003 to reduce crude oil imports, cut carbon emissions, and enhance farmers' incomes.

- The National Policy of Biofuels 2018 set targets of 20% ethanol blending in petrol and 5% biodiesel blending in diesel by 2030.

- Reflecting commendable progress, the government advanced the ethanol blending target to 20% by the Ethanol Supply Year 2025-26, showcasing the success of the program.

Recent Achievements:

- In 2022, India's ethanol blending program achieved a notable milestone, reaching 10% ethanol blending in petrol.

- The advancements underscore India's commitment to sustainable energy practices and reducing dependence on conventional fuels.

Biofuel Association:

- In India, biofuels are predominantly linked to first-generation (1G) ethanol, derived from food crops such as sugarcane and food grains.

Benefits:

- **Reduced Dependence on Non-Renewable Fossil Fuels:**

  o Ethanol, derived from renewable sources like corn, sugarcane, or biomass, helps diminish reliance on non-renewable fossil fuels.

  o India's substantial petroleum imports (185 million tonnes in 2020-21, costing USD 551 billion) underscore the significance of reducing dependence on conventional fuels.

- **Reduced Greenhouse Gas Emissions:**

  o Ethanol's oxygen content enhances fuel combustion, leading to more complete burning and reduced emissions of pollutants like carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide.

- **Improved Efficiency:**

  o Higher octane rating in ethanol improves the octane level of blended fuel, contributing to better engine performance and efficiency.

- **Boost to Farmer's Income:**

  o Ethanol production from farm residue offers a dual benefit by increasing farmers' income and reducing air pollution associated with stubble burning.

Challenges:

- **Food Security Concerns:**

  o Lower sugar production projections (9% fall at 337 lakh tonnes for the 2023-24 marketing year) raise concerns about diverting sugar for ethanol production.

  o Adverse weather conditions, such as weak monsoons in cane-growing districts, may further impact sugar production, potentially turning India into a net sugar importer.

- **Grain-Based Ethanol Transition:**

  o The shift towards grain-based ethanol, particularly through organized maize-feed supply chains, raises concerns about food security.

  o There is a risk of diverting food grain cultivation areas for ethanol production, impacting the availability of essential food resources.

- **Environmental Concerns:**

  o Water-Intensive Agriculture: Cultivating water-intensive crops like sugarcane for ethanol production contributes to significant groundwater depletion, raising environmental concerns.

  o Agriculture's GHG Emissions: Diverting crops from food production to fuel production increases greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the agriculture sector, countering efforts to reduce emissions in the transport sector.

  o No Reduction in NOX Emissions: While ethanol reduces emissions like carbon monoxide, it does not address nitrous oxide emissions, a major environmental pollutant with detrimental effects.

- **Challenge of Scaling Up:**

  o Balancing economies of scale with the energy needs and costs associated with biomass collection and transport poses a challenge in scaling up ethanol production.

  o The significant increase in ethanol production capacity (from 423 crore litres in 2019-20 to 947 crore litres in 2022-23) indicates a need for additional capacity (8-10 billion litres) to achieve the 20% petrol-ethanol blending requirement in 2023.

  o The non-implementation of amended provisions of the Industries (Development & Regulation) Act, 1951, by all states poses a significant hurdle to ethanol blending in India. Restrictions on the inter-state movement of ethanol hinder the smooth operation of the blending program.

Way Forward

- **Exploring Ethanol from Wastes:**

  o India has a unique opportunity to position itself as a global leader in sustainable biofuels by redirecting its focus towards producing ethanol from wastes.

  o This shift not only promises significant climate benefits but also addresses air quality issues, as these wastes are often burned, contributing to smog.

- **Addressing Water Crisis Concerns:**

- o The evolving ethanol policy must be crafted with careful consideration to avoid driving farmers towards water-intensive crops, preventing the exacerbation of the existing water crisis in a country already grappling with acute shortages.

- o Given that rice, sugarcane, and wheat account for about 80% of India's irrigation water, policy adjustments are crucial.

- **Prioritizing Crop Production:**

- o In the face of depleting groundwater, limited arable land, unpredictable monsoons, and declining crop yields due to climate change, there is a pressing need to prioritize food production over crops intended for fuel.

- **Exploring Alternative Mechanisms:**

- o To meet the primary goal of emissions reduction, it is imperative to assess alternative mechanisms such as increased adoption of electric vehicles and the installation of additional renewable generation capacity to facilitate zero-emission recharging.

- o Evaluating and incorporating diverse strategies will contribute to a comprehensive and sustainable approach to emissions reduction.

SOURCE:

Explainer: How existing curbs may impact India's 20% ethanol blending goals | Mint (livemint.com)

Q.1 Consider the following statements:

1. Ethanol is mixed in diesel to produce Gasoline.

2. In 2022, India's ethanol blending program reached 30% ethanol blending in fuel.

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 Evaluate the significance of ethanol blending in petrol as a sustainable approach for India's energy security.

MACROECONOMIC CAUSES/ REASONS OF EMPLOYMENT CRISIS IN INDIA/UNEMPLOYMENT PREVALENT IN INDIA

This article pertains to a brief summary of the combined Editorials of 'The Economy Times of India', 'Oxfom India', 'Indian Express', 'The Hindu', 'Jansatta', the monthly magazine 'World Focus' and 'PIB' . The scheme also includes suggestions from the YOJNA IAS team . This article is specifically from the section 'Indian Economy, Employment, Growth and Development, Poverty, Education, Skill Development, Human Resources, Employment and Unemployment in India, Types of Unemployment' section of UPSC Civil Services Examination. This article is related to 'Macroeconomic causes of employment crisis in India/Unemployment prevalent in India' under 'Daily Current Affairs').

General Studies-III – Indian Economy, Employment, Growth and Development, Poverty, Education, Skill Development, Human Resources Employment and Unemployment in India, Types of Unemployment.

Why in discussion/ news?

According to a recent study, fewer people are currently employed in agriculture and agriculture-related sectors, yet the change in the unemployment rate has also been weak.

- People leaving agriculture are working in greater numbers in construction sites and unorganized sectors of the economy than in factories.

Unemployment Rate In India: Historical Data

The following is the unemployment rate data for the last 10 or 15 years in India, which can be understood from this chart/graph –

Year	Unemployment rate (percentage)
2023	10.05 (in October)*
2022	7.33
2021	5.98
2020	8.00
2019	5.27
2018	5.33

2017	5.36
2016	5.42
2015	5.44
2014	5.44
2013	5.42
2012	5.41
2011	5.43
2010	5.55
2009	5.54
2008	5.41

Source: CMIE

Method of measuring current unemployment rate in india:

Currently the following is the way to measure the current unemployment rate in India –

- The past and present unemployment rate in India is an important economic indicator expressed as a percentage which varies depending on the prevailing economic conditions.

- When job opportunities reduce during economic recession, unemployment starts increasing. Conversely, during periods of economic growth and prosperity, the unemployment rate is expected to decline, with many job opportunities available to the public.

- The formula to calculate the current unemployment rate in India is as follows:

- Unemployment rate = number of unemployed persons/citizen labor force come on Unemployment rate = Number of unemployed persons / (Number of employed persons + Number of unemployed persons)

To be classified as unemployed, a person must meet specific criteria:

- They must be at least 16 years of age and available for full-time work in the last four weeks.

- They should actively seek employment during this period.

- Some exceptions include individuals who have been temporarily laid off and are actively seeking to rejoin their previous jobs.

TYPES OF UNEMPLOYMENT:

Disguised unemployment:

- This is a situation in which more people are employed than are actually required.

- It is mainly found in agricultural and unorganized sectors of India.

Seasonal unemployment:

- This unemployment is observed during certain seasons of the year.

- Agricultural laborers in India have very little work throughout the year.

Structural unemployment:

- It is a category of unemployment resulting from an imbalance between the jobs available in the market and the skills of workers.

Cyclical unemployment:

- This is a result of the business cycle, where unemployment increases during recessions and decreases with economic growth.

Technical unemployment:

- This is the reduction in employment due to changes in technology.

Frictional unemployment:

- Frictional unemployment refers to the time gap between jobs when a person is looking for a new job or changing jobs.

Vulnerable employment:

- This means that people are working informally without proper job contracts and thus have no legal protection.

- These individuals are considered 'unemployed' because their work is never recorded.

Employment in agriculture sectors:

- In the year 1993-94, agriculture constituted about 62% of the country's employed labor force.

- The labor percentage in agriculture (based on data from the National Statistical Office's Periodic Labor Force Survey) had fallen by about 6% points by 2004–05 and by 9% points over the next seven years.

- This declining trend in labor percentage continued at a slow pace in the subsequent seven years.

- The share of agriculture in India's workforce declined from 61.9% to 41.4% between 1993-94 and 2018-19.

- It is estimated that as per the per capita GDP level in the year 2018, India's agriculture sector should employ 33-34% of the total workforce.

Thus, this 41.4% does not represent a substantial deviation from the average workforce.

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS IN INDIA:

Agriculture:

Trends reversal:

- There has been a continuous change in this trend in the last two years, due to which the share of people employed in agriculture has increased to 44-45% in the year 2020-21.

- This is primarily related to Covid-induced economic disruptions.

Structural Changes:

- The migration of labor out of agriculture that India has seen over the past three decades or more does not qualify as what economists call "structural change."

- Structural change involves the shift of labor from agriculture to sectors, particularly manufacturing and modern services, where productivity, value added and average incomes are higher.

- Along with agriculture, their share in total employment in sectors like manufacturing (and mining) has also declined.

- Surplus labor from agriculture is being absorbed into manufacturing and services on a large scale.

- The process of structural change in India has been weak and flawed.

- Despite the temporary halt due to Covid, labor movement into non-agricultural sectors continues, but that surplus labor is not moving towards higher value-added non-agricultural activities, especially manufacturing and modern services.

- Labor transfer is taking place within the low-productivity informal economy.

Service area:

- The service sector includes relatively well-paying industries such as information technology, business process, outsourcing, telecommunications, finance, health care, education and public administration.

- Most of the jobs are related to service sector employment like small retailing, small eateries, domestic help, sanitation, security staff, transportation and other similar informal economic activities.

- The low share of employment in organized enterprises, defined as those employing 10 or more workers, also shows that the employment situation in India is pathetic.

Growing Employment Opportunities In Information Technology Sector:

- The combined headcount of India's top five IT companies (Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, Wipro, HCL Technologies and Tech Mahindra) has increased from 55 lakh to 15.69 lakh between 2020-22.

- This is an increase of 4.14 lakh or about 36% over the post-Covid pandemic period, when most other sectors except agriculture were losing jobs and wages.

- The number of combined employment in these five companies is higher than the combined employment of Indian Railways and the three defense services.

- Much of the recent success in the IT sector has been a result of exports, which have led to job creation.

- India's net exports in software services have increased from $84.64 billion in 2019-20 to $109.54 billion in 2021-22. Which is also related to the issue of employment generation in many ways.

POSSIBLE MEASURES TO CURB UNEMPLOYMENT:

To provide skill training to workers engaged in agriculture:

- The government should give priority to schemes that enhance the skills of the workforce engaged in the agricultural sector.

- This will provide a dual benefit by promoting skills and knowledge in the agriculture sector and at the same time it will help the workers to look for other better areas of employment.

Promotion of labours – intensive industries:

- There are many labour-intensive manufacturing sectors in India such as food processing, leather and footwear, wood products and furniture, apparel, textiles and clothing etc.

- Every industry requires a special package to generate employment.

Decentralization Of Industries:

- To provide employment to people in every region, it is necessary to decentralize industrial activities.

- Development of rural areas will help in reducing migration of rural people to urban areas thereby reducing pressure on employment in urban areas.

Government Initiatives To Reduce Unemployment Rate:

To reduce India's huge population and the current unemployment rate, the following initiatives or schemes are also being run by the government to solve the problem of unemployment and to provide employment to maximum people –

- 'Support for Marginalized Persons for Livelihood and Enterprise (SMILE) Scheme .

- PM Daksh Yojana .

- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) .

- Prime Minister Skill Development Scheme .

- Startup India Scheme .

The way forward to solve the problem of unemployment:

- According to the National Sample Survey Survey (NSSO) , the unemployment rate for persons aged 15 years and above in urban areas declined to 6.8 per cent during January-March 2023 from 8.2 per cent a year ago . This positive development suggests a possible turnaround in the job market amid the current economic complexities. However, continued vigilance and effective policy measures are critical to promote sustainable job growth and secure the country's future prosperity.

- Unemployment remains a serious concern in India, with fluctuations being seen across various sectors of employment in India. According to a recent report by Bloomberg, which references Center for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) data for July, the overall unemployment rate in India stands at 7.95 percent by July 2023.

Questions for preliminary exam:

Q.1. The unemployment found in the agricultural sector in India in which more people are employed than required is called?

(a) Seasonal unemployment.

(b) Disguised unemployment.

(c) Structural unemployment.

(d) Marginal unemployment.

Answer – (b)

Practice questions for main exam:

Q.1. What do you understand by unemployment and unemployment rate? Explaining the current situation of unemployment in India, discuss the major initiatives and programs being run to solve the problem of unemployment.

CHINESE BAN ON EXPORT OF RARE EARTH TECHNOLOGIES

GS3 – Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

WHY IN NEWS?

1. China, the world's **top processor of Rare earths minerals**, on Thursday **banned the export** of technology to extract and separate the strategic metals, as it overhauled a list of technologies deemed key to **national security.**

2. In October 2023, USA had put restrictions on exporting advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) to China to prevent it from acquiring **cutting edge chips** to develop AI technologies such as large language models that power applications such as **ChatGPT.**

- For example, the Biden Administration had banned two Chinese chip startups, Biren and Moore Threads.

3. In retaliation, Beijing exercised its lever as the **largest supplier** of Rare earth metals needed for chip production:

- In July 2023, China placed restrictions on some **Gallium and germanium** products. In December, restrictions were placed on several types of **Graphites** and a ban imposed on the export of technology for making rare earth magnets and technologies for extracting and separating rare earths.

4. This can become a major energy security issue as China is the world's top processor of rare earths, accounting for 70% of the world's **production.**

WHAT ARE RARE EARTH MINERALS (REE)?

1. They are set of **17 metallic elements**: Including **15 lanthanides** on the periodic table in addition to **scandium and yttrium** that show similar physical and chemical properties to the lanthanides.

- The 17 Rare Earths are: Cerium (Ce), dysprosium (Dy), erbium (Er), europium (Eu), gadolinium (Gd), holmium (Ho), lanthanum (La), lutetium (Lu), neodymium (Nd), praseodymium (Pr), promethium (Pm), samarium (Sm), scandium (Sc), terbium (Tb), thulium (Tm), ytterbium (Yb), and yttrium (Y).

- **NOTE: Gallium and germanium banned by China are NOT Rare Earth minerals.**

2. REEs are crucial in **manufacturing of Batteries**: Minerals like Cobalt, Nickel, and Lithium are required for batteries used in Electric vehicles.

- As per **NITI Ayog**: 80% of the country's two- and three-wheeler fleet, 40% of buses, and 30 to 70% of cars will be **EVs by 2030.**

3. REEs are an essential component of more than 200 consumer products which includes mobile phones, computer hard drives, electric and hybrid vehicles, semiconductors, flat screen TVs and monitors, and high-end electronics.

4. **Industrial use**: Traditional uses like Cerium for glass polishing and lanthanum for car catalysts or optical lenses.

5. **Manufacturing of magnets:** neodymium, praseodymium and dysprosium, are crucial to the manufacture of magnets which are used in industries and also in wind turbines and Drones.

6. Even futuristic technologies need these REEs. For example, **high-temperature superconductivity, safe storage and transport of hydrogen for a post-hydrocarbon economy**, environmental global warming and energy efficiency issues.

7. They are called 'rare earth' because earlier it was **difficult to extract** them from their oxides forms technologically.

8. They occur in **many minerals but typically in low concentrations** to be refined in an economical manner.

DOMINANCE BY CHINA:

1. China has mastered the **solvent extraction process** to refine the strategic minerals, which Western rare earth companies have struggled to deploy due to technical complexities and pollution concerns.

2. China has over time acquired global domination of rare earths, even at one point, it produced 90% of the rare earths the world needs.

3. Today, however, it has **come down to 60%** and the remaining is produced by other countries, including the QUAD countries: Australia, India, Japan and United States.

4. China under Wolf warrior Diplomacy is using supply of Critical Earth minerals as tool of **Economic warfare:**

- Eg- China's ownership of Democratic Republic of Congo's **Cobalt mines** which produces 70% of

world's Cobalt output.

ADVERSE IMPACT ON INDIA:

1. Along with REEs, Critical minerals such as Lithium (White gold), cobalt & graphite etc. are crucial to country's **manufacturing & infrastructure development.**

2. Green Energy based upon Semiconductors used to run batteries such as Lithium-Ion battery is imperative to meet India's **Net Zero target by 2070.**

3. India has only **6% of the world's rare earth reserves**. It **only produces 1% of global output** and meets most of its requirements of such minerals from China.

4. **High Import dependency** due to concentration of extraction & processing of REEs in few regions:

- For Example: India is **100% Import dependent** for supply of critical minerals such as **lithium, cobalt, nickel, beryllium etc.**

- REEs such as **Dysprosium, Terbium, and Europium** are not available in Indian deposits in extractable quantities.

- In India, **monazite and thorium** is the principal source of rare earths.

5. Thus, in case of **Supply chain vulnerability** caused by export ban by China or Semiconductor chip war between USA & China can be detrimental to India's **energy security** concern and its target to become **3rd largest economy by 2027.**

6. High import dependency also leads to High **Current Account Deficit (CAD)**: Eg- India Imported worth ₹**27,000 crore Copper** in 2022.

ISSUES FACED BY INDIA:

1. **Expensive exploration** & mining of deep-seated minerals such as gold, silver, copper, platinum etc

2. **Limited investment in Research & Development** of Technologies: India spend only **1.7 % of its GDP** while China spends 17 times more than India.

- For Example: India's share in Global mineral exploration budget stands **only at 1%**

3. As per Geological Survey of India (GSI): India has done only **10% exploration** of its Geological potential while out of potential sites discovered; only 2% sites **have** been mined. (Source: Hindu Report, July 2023)

- Due to this poor exploration & production, India has been denied membership in **Minerals Security Partnership (MSP)** launched by USA: which aims at catalyzing investment from governments and the private sector to develop supply chains of Critical minerals & challenge China's monopoly.

4. In Mining & Exploration sector, there is **huge dependency on PSUs & Govt's** Organizations such as MECL, GSI etc.

- Example: **Indian Rare Earths Ltd (IREL)** which is a Government of India Undertaking, and **KMML**, a Kerala State Government Undertaking are actively engaged in mining and processing of beach

sand minerals from placer deposits.

5. **Low Private Sector Involvement:** Mining & Exploration is **h**ighly capital intensive & long gestation period which deter Private investment.

6. Also, there is requirement of **Advance Technology** such as Aerial surveys, geochemical analysis, geological mapping etc. which are not available at remote locations and at ground level.

7. **Environmental Impact:** The chief concern is that the REEs are bound up in mineral deposits with the low-level **radioactive element like thorium**, exposure to which has been linked to an increased risk of developing **lung, pancreatic, and other cancers.**

STEPS TAKEN BY INDIA:

1. **MINES & MINERALS ACT 2023:**

• To **attract private investment** in exploration of critical minerals: 6 minerals including **Lithium** has been **removed from "critical & strategic" minerals category** thus allowing private exploration.

• To encourage prospective stage exploration: Drilling & subsurface excavation has been allowed.

• National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET) has been setup to Fund G4-G1 explorations.

WAY FORWARD:

1. India should amend **Atomic Mineral Concession Act (2016)** which has reserved all beach Sand Mines deposits containing more than 0.75 per cent Monazite (source of REE) for government owned companies.

2. Department for rare earths (DRE) could secure access to REEs of strategic importance by offering **viability gap funding** to companies to set up facilities in the upstream sector.

3. **Australia Model:** "Junior explorer" private firms which have expertise to map commercially viable mines shall be incorporated who can further sell the research to bigger private companies which will eventually develop & operate mines.

4. **Building up domestic capability**: There is a need to build domestic capability and broad-base supply sources for such an important and strategic raw material.

5. Making it part of **Make in India campaign**: There is a need to make rare earth minerals a part of the 'Make In India' campaign, citing China's **'Made in China 2025' initiative** that focuses on new materials, including permanent magnets that are made using rare earth minerals.

6. **Supply chain resilience:** The focus should be back on building cooperation on supply chain resilience which is a trade partnership for critical and emerging technology to deal with issues of climate, economy and pandemic impact.

7. QUAD Critical and Emerging Technology Working group: It aims to develop supply resilience among Quad members which includes India, US, Japan, and Australia.

8. **Green goals:** the critical minerals and emerging technology are the major need of the hour for achievement of green future goals.

9. **Minerals Security Partnership (MSP):** India should try through diplomatic channels to enter this partnership.

POTENTIAL PRELIMS 2024 QUESTION:

Q1: Consider the following statements regarding Rare Earth Elements (REE) often seen in the news:

1. China accounts for more than half of the World's Rare Earth metals production

2. REEs are set of 17 metallic elements including Gallium & Germanium

3. REEs are used from manufacturing of Semiconductors to Cerium used for Glass polishing

4. They are called as "Rare" metals because of their low availability in the world

Which of the above given statements is correct?

a. 1, 2 and 4

b. 2 and 3 only

c. 1,3 and 4

d. 1, and 3 only

ANSWER: D

Explanation: RARE EARTH MINERALS:

1. They are set of **17 metallic elements:** Including **15 lanthanides** on the periodic table in addition to **scandium and yttrium** that show similar physical and chemical properties to the lanthanides.

• The 17 Rare Earths are: Cerium (Ce), dysprosium (Dy), erbium (Er), europium (Eu), gadolinium (Gd), holmium (Ho), lanthanum (La), lutetium (Lu), neodymium (Nd), praseodymium (Pr), promethium (Pm), samarium (Sm), scandium (Sc), terbium (Tb), thulium (Tm), ytterbium (Yb), and yttrium (Y).

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3. REEs are an essential component of more than 200 consumer products which includes mobile phones, computer hard drives, electric and hybrid vehicles, semiconductors, flat screen TVs and monitors, and high-end electronics.

4. **Industrial use:** Traditional uses like Cerium for glass polishing and lanthanum for car catalysts or optical lenses.

5. **Manufacturing of magnets:** neodymium, praseodymium and dysprosium, are crucial to the manufacture of magnets which are used in industries and also in wind turbines and Drones.

6. Even futuristic technologies need these REEs. For example, **high-temperature superconductivity, safe storage and transport of hydrogen for a post-hydrocarbon economy**, environmental global warming and energy efficiency issues.

7. They are called 'rare earth' because earlier it was **difficult to extract** them from their oxides forms technologically.

8. They occur in **many minerals but typically in low concentrations** to be refined in an economical manner.

9. China is the world's top processor of rare earths, accounting for 70% of the world's **production.**

10. India has only **6% of the world's rare earth reserves.** It **only produces 1% of global output** and meets most of its requirements of such minerals from China.

MAINS QUESTION 2024:

Q .The world is in search of alternative supply chains. India with its reserves in rare earth elements must leverage this, in this context discuss the importance of Rare Earth Material. What should be the steps for boosting Rare Earth Material industry in India? Illustrate.

CURRENT RELEVANCE OF A NEW ECONOMY FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

*(This article is from 'Institute of New-Economy Thinking', 'Official website of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India', 'United States Agency for International Development', 'The Hindu', 'Indian Express', 'Sansad TV program Sarokar', Brief summary of the accompanying editorials of ' Energy and Environment , an interdisciplinary journal that invites energy policy analysts, natural scientists and engineers, as well as lawyers and economists to contribute to mutual understanding and learning' and 'PIB ' This plan also includes suggestions from the YOJNA IAS team . This article is specifically related to the ' Indian Economy and Development, Growth and Employment, Sustainable and Inclusive Development and Environment and Ecology' section of the UPSC Civil Services Examination . This article is related to the 'Daily Current Affairs' section. Relates to ' Relevance of a New Economy for Inclusive Development ') .
General Studies: Indian Economy and Development, Growth and Employment, Sustainable and Inclusive Development and Environment and Ecology.*

WHY IN DISCUSSION / NEWS ?

"May everyone be happy and may everyone be healthy. Let all look for the good, and let no one suffer." That is, "May all human beings in this entire world be happy, may all be free from disease, may all witness the good of each other and may no one suffer in this world." This proverb , written in ancient Indian scriptures, wishes the welfare and happiness of the entire creature. The concept of 'inclusive development' is not new in the Indian context . If you observe the ancient scriptures, they also contain the sense of taking all people together and since the time of development of Indian civilization (ancient times) who believed in the concept of ' Vasudevam Kutumbkam' and he called the

entire world 'Vasudevam Kutumbkam' That is, it has been a country that believes in 'one family' namely India has always considered this entire world human civilization as a family or mutually related / allies and this is also affirmed in Indian theologies.of sustainable and inclusive development at the recently concluded G20 meeting hosted by India India has drawn the attention of developed and developing countries all over the world towards the need for the development of a new economy. During the hosting and meetings of the G20, the Prime Minister of India used the motto 'Vasudevam Kutumbkam' for the G20, which meant 'One Earth, One Family, One Future . " This aptly reflects our vision for the G20 Presidency. The whole earth is like a family to us. In any family, the future of each member is closely linked to that of every other member. So, when we work together, we move forward together, leaving no one behind . "

KEY OBJECTIVES/PRIORITIES OF A NEW ECONOMY FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH:

The priorities of the G20 meetings were also the following –

- **Inclusive, equitable and sustainable development.**
- **Life (lifestyle for the environment).**
- **Women Empowerment.**
- **Digital public infrastructure and technology – enabling growth in sectors ranging from health, agriculture and education to commerce.**
- **Skills-Mapping, Culture and Tourism, Climate Finance, Circular Economy, Global Food Security, Energy Security, Green Hydrogen, Disaster Risk Reduction and Adaptation.**
- **Development cooperation, the fight against economic crime, and multilateral reform.**

This concept of development emerged in a new form after 'globalization' arising from liberalization in the nineties because during liberalization, global economies got an opportunity to join together and this concept went out of the scope of countries and states and gained its importance in the global context. Was successful in maintaining. In India too, under liberalization, privatization and globalization in the nineties, India also moved towards a new economy under inclusive development and maintained its importance in the global context. At present, India is the fifth largest economy in the world, which is moving towards becoming the third largest economy in the world in the coming few years.

MEANING OF INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT:

The meaning of inclusive development can be understood on the basis of the following criteria –

- Inclusive development is taken to mean such development which creates employment

opportunities and which proves helpful in reducing poverty.

- It includes providing equality of opportunity and empowering people for education and skills, that is, it includes promoting development with equality of opportunities.

- A form of development that not only creates new economic opportunities, but also ensures equitable access to such opportunities for all sections of society.

- Objectively, inclusive development refers to a situation where high growth rates of GDP per capita are reflected in high growth rates of GDP, accompanied by reduction in inequality between the distribution of income and wealth.

- Inclusive development focuses on providing basic amenities to all sections of the population, i.e. housing, food, drinking water, education, health as well as generating means of livelihood to live a dignified life. Along with all this, it is necessary to take care of environmental protection for inclusive development because development done at the expense of the environment can neither be called sustainable nor inclusive.

INITIATIVES TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR NEW ECONOMY AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT:

- The concept of inclusive development was first introduced in the 11th Five Year Plan. The 11th Five Year Plan continued from the year 2007 to 2012 and was the second last Five Year Plan of India . The theme of which was – "Rapid and more inclusive development". In this plan, the concept of inclusive development was introduced. It was said to improve the quality of life of all sections of people and provide them equality of opportunities.

- The 12th Five Year Plan (2012-17) completely focused on inclusive growth and its theme was – " Rapid, Inclusive and Sustainable Development" . In this plan, special emphasis was given on poverty, health, education and providing livelihood opportunities. So that the growth rate of 8 percent prescribed in the plan can be achieved.

- Many schemes have been launched by the government to achieve inclusive development. These include- ' Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana', 'Integrated Child Development Programme', 'Mid-Day Meal Scheme', 'MNREGA', 'Sarva- Education campaign' etc.

- Keeping women in mind, schemes like ' Start-up India', 'Support to Training and Employment Program for Women ' have been started by the government. Apart from this, schemes like ' Women Entrepreneurship Forum' and 'Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana' have been started by the government. Efforts also include financial inclusion efforts for women.

- Many initiatives/schemes have also been started by the government for financial inclusion. These include important schemes like ' Mobile Banking', 'Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana', 'Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana', 'Senior Pension Insurance Scheme' etc. Has been done

- Steps like Disability Act 1995, National Trust for Welfare Act 1999, SIPDA, Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan, Swavalamban Yojana and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2017 have been taken by the government to include the persons with disabilities in inclusive development.

- 'Soil-Health-Card', 'Neem-Coated-Urea', 'Pradhan Mantri Krishi-Irrigation Yojana', 'Pradhan Mantri Fasal-Bima-Yojana ' have been launched by the government to promote financial inclusion in agriculture sector and for farmers . And important schemes like 'National Food Security Mission' are being implemented.

METHODS OF MEASUREMENT OF INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT:

Measuring a nation's progress based on the progress of its poorest segment, i.e. measuring per capita income based on the progress of the bottom 20 percent of the population, is the best way to measure inclusive growth.

- An indicator of healthy inclusive development is that if there is an increase in per capita income then it is an indicator of healthy inclusive development.
- If a country or state has to achieve high growth rate, then the weakest sections of the society will also have to be included in the mainstream pace of development. The concept of inclusive development depends on this.

NEED FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT: RELEVANT IN THE PRESENT TIMES.

No country can develop in the absence of inclusive development. Inclusive development is not only economic development but it is also a social and moral imperative of economic development. The importance of inclusive development in the context of the development of the new economy can be understood on the basis of the following context –

- Inclusive growth is essential for sustainable development. Therefore, if development is not sustainable then a situation of decline will arise in the economy.
- Due to imbalance in income distribution, wealth will be concentrated in a few people, as a result demand for goods will decrease and GDP growth rate will also decrease. If there is no inclusive development, there will be imbalance in income distribution.
- Due to lack of uniform inclusive development, inequality increases in different parts of the country due to which the deprived sections are not able to join the main stream of development.
- Disruptive tendencies like communalism, regionalism, racial and ethnic violence within the geographical boundaries of any country are born due to lack of inclusive development, which sometimes creates a situation of dissatisfaction in the country, as a result of which the geographical boundaries of the country deteriorate. Disruptive tendencies like communalism and regionalism are born .

CHALLENGES BEFORE INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT:

- Migration towards urban areas is having a negative impact on the agricultural economy due to which agricultural productivity is decreasing.
- Due to lack of basic facilities in villages, people migrate from villages to cities. Due to this,

- population pressure increases in cities.
- There is still a need to create permanent and long-term employment sources in rural areas because MNREGA and many other such employment related schemes are being implemented in rural areas but these cannot be included as permanent sources of employment.
- Corruption also has a negative impact on the country's economy by hindering the pace of inclusive development.

PATH TO SOLUTION/WAY FORWARD/ CONCLUSION:

At present, if the goal of rapid inclusive growth is to be achieved in India, then there will be a need to pay special attention to the agriculture sector, because the United Nations has set a target of eliminating all forms of poverty (unemployment, low income, poverty etc.) by the year 2030. The target is specified in Goal 1 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Since the agricultural sector in India provides employment to half of the total labor force. Apart from this, the government had also set a target of doubling the income of farmers by the year 2022, but the per capita productivity in this area is very low due to which it is associated with the highest area of poverty. However, in a country with a large population like India, the biggest challenge is how to spread the benefits of development to all sections and all sections of the society and this is where the role of appropriate use of technology comes into play. The recently launched 'Digital India Programme' is a good initiative to face this challenge. Therefore, India is poised to become the leader of the G20 group of countries in developing a new economy for inclusive growth and the third largest economy in the world, growing at a very fast pace . Which is a sign of the bright future of India's strong and new economy among the countries with developed economies globally .

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM:

Q.1. Consider the following statements in the context of development of a new economy for inclusive growth.

1. The global agenda of sustainable development is possible only when all countries fulfill their share of responsibilities .
2. India is one of the few countries in the world where forest and tree covered areas are continuously increasing despite the development process. The extent of tree covered area in India has reached 80.73 million hectares which is 24.6 percent of the total geographical area of the country.
3. The agenda of the Rural Development Program revolves around its development mantra – "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas" (inclusive development), which aims to ensure that the benefits of development reach the poor and deprived sections.
4. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jyoti Yojana aims to provide electricity at affordable rates and focus on green energy, clean energy to increase the power supply.

1. Only 1, 3 and 4
2. Only 2 and 4
3. Only 1, 2 and 4
4. All of these.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

Answer – (d)

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM:

Q.1. In a New economy for inclusive growth, can technological change create an inclusive future of work and promote inclusive growth? How can pollution be addressed while considering inequalities and injustices in the vision of inclusive development?

JAPAN'S SLIM MISSION

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details " Japan's SLIM Mission". This topic has relevance in the Science and Technology section of the UPSC CSE exam.

GS 3: Science and Technology

Why in the news?

Having achieved lunar orbit on Christmas Day, SLIM is set to undertake a soft-landing attempt on the moon on January 19.

Background:

On December 25, 2023, Japan's Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM) spacecraft successfully entered lunar orbit, marking a crucial step in its mission. The planned moon-landing attempt is scheduled for January 19, 2024, positioning Japan to potentially become the fifth country to achieve a soft landing on the moon. This development follows India's success with the Chandrayaan-3 mission in August 2023. The outcome of SLIM's mission holds significance for future lunar exploration endeavors, including the upcoming Chandrayaan-4 mission.

About SLIM:

- SLIM, crafted and launched by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) on September 7, 2023, is a compact spacecraft weighing merely 590 kg at launch.

- In contrast, Chandrayaan-3, launched by India, had a launch weight of 3,900 kg, highlighting SLIM's streamlined design.

- Launched alongside the XRISM X-ray space telescope aboard an H-2A rocket, SLIM entered an elliptical lunar orbit with a farthest point (apogee) of 4,000 km and a closest point (perigee) of 600 km above the lunar surface.

- SLIM's moon-landing attempt in January 2024 represents Japan's second endeavor this year, following the HAKUTO-R M1 lander's unfortunate crash in April.

Japan's 'Moon Sniper' mission

Mission: To investigate the Moon's formation by examining exposed pieces of the lunar mantle

Landing accuracy: Aims to land within 100 m of a specific target on the Moon

Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM)

Launch vehicle:
H2-A

- S-band antenna
- Thin film solar cell
- Navigation camera
- Palm-sized mini rover
- Landing radar
- Main engine

Weight: **700 kg**
Height: **2.4 m**
Width: **2.7 m**
Length: **1.7 m**

Launch: September 7, 2023 from Tanegashima, Japan

Source: JAXA

AFP

Comparing SLIM and Chandrayaan-3

- **Trajectory Comparison:** Compared to Chandrayaan-3, the Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM) exhibits a lighter design due to carrying less fuel. Chandrayaan-3, with a total weight of 3.9 tonnes, had a propulsion module weighing 2.1 tonnes. While Chandrayaan-3 followed the Hohmann transfer orbit, allowing it to reach the moon in less than a month, SLIM took four months for its journey. SLIM's elongated trajectory, based on the weak-stability boundary theory, focused on fuel efficiency.

- **Approach to Lunar Capture:** Chandrayaan-3, upon nearing the moon, applied brakes, consuming fuel to slow down and be captured by the moon's gravity. In contrast, SLIM, upon proximity to the moon, allowed itself to be deflected towards the lunar direction, bypassing lunar orbit and delving deeper into space. This deflection resulted from combined forces exerted by the earth and the moon.

- **SLIM's Lunar Objectives:** On January 19th, SLIM aims to achieve a remarkably precise landing within 100 meters of its designated site, setting a record for the smallest area tolerance in moon-

landing missions. For context, Chandrayaan-3's 'Vikram' lander targeted a descent within a 4 km long downrange and 2.5 km wide cross-range elliptical area.

- **Deployment of Rovers:** Just before landing, SLIM will deploy two small rovers named Lunar Excursion Vehicle (LEV) 1 and 2. Together with SLIM, these rovers will conduct studies on the lunar surface near the landing point, gather temperature and radiation data, and endeavor to explore the moon's mantle. The SLIM mission, with its precise landing and rover deployment, represents a significant step in advancing lunar exploration capabilities.

Impact of SLIM on Chandrayaan-4 and Lunar Polar Exploration

Exploring the Lunar South Pole:

- Scientists are particularly intrigued by the moon's south pole region, where certain craters are perpetually in shadow, harboring water-ice.
- These shadowed areas present an opportunity for lunar surface missions to explore and potentially extract water.

Conclusion of Chandrayaan-3 and the Lunar Polar Exploration Mission:

- ISRO's successful execution of Chandrayaan-3 marked the conclusion of the second phase of its lunar exploration program.
- The next mission, Lunar Polar Exploration (LUPEX), also known as Chandrayaan-4, is a collaborative effort between India and Japan, with a tentative launch date in 2026.

Crucial Role of SLIM Technologies:

- SLIM's technologies, especially a feature-matching algorithm and navigation systems, tested by JAXA, will be instrumental for LUPEX/Chandrayaan-4's success.
- JAXA's approval of LUPEX has been granted, although India is yet to confirm.
- The Japanese space agency is expected to provide the launch vehicle and lunar rover, while India will contribute the lander module.

Advancements in Lunar Exploration:

- LUPEX/Chandrayaan-4 aims to explore an area closer to the moon's south pole than Chandrayaan-3, unlocking new insights into lunar geology and resources.
- SLIM's findings and testing of technologies will significantly contribute to the success of LUPEX.
- The specific landing site for LUPEX/Chandrayaan-4 is yet to be determined, with the 'Vikram' lander of Chandrayaan-3 landing approximately 600 km from the south pole.

Source:

How Japan's moon-landing attempt in January will affect Chandrayaan 4 – The Hindu

Q.1 SLIM Lunar Mission, recently seen in the news is a mission associated with:

(a) JAXA

(b) ESA
(c) NASA
(d) ISRO
ANSWER: A

Q.2 Assess the evolution of India's lunar exploration program . Discuss the significance of India's pursuit of lunar exploration in the context of global space exploration initiatives.

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