

**NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC****Why power costs vary across states**

Recently an MP from Rajya Sabha suggested that power tariffs should be uniform across the country so that affordable power is available to all. He complained that consumers in Punjab paid Rs 8 per unit of electricity, much more than consumers in neighbouring Himachal Pradesh and J&K.

**Power tariffs across state**

- The electricity tariff paid by consumers in each state is directly reflective of the cost of power procurement by the power distribution companies (discoms) in the state.
- There are state-specific factors for this.
- So, states such as Jharkhand or Odisha or Chhattisgarh, which have had coal-fired thermal capacity, would typically have lower tariffs because of the base-load capacities that they possess.
- Or, states such as Himachal or Uttarakhand would have low tariffs because of hydropower capacities .
- On the other hand, a state like Gujarat, which has capacities based on imported coal, will have comparatively higher tariffs.

**So is the idea of having a flat countrywide rate feasible?**

- The State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERCs) decide on the power tariff after utilities file their cost of power with the regulators.
- Because power tariffs entail a number of state-specific factors a uniform nationwide tariff is a proposition that would be difficult to implement.
- Electricity was a state subject and there has to be consensus for uniform power tariffs among state players.

**INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE, HISTORY****Swadesh Darshan Scheme**

The Ministry of Tourism, under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme, has identified tribal circuit as one of the fifteen thematic circuits for development of tourism infrastructure in the country with the objective of showcasing tribal culture, art, handicrafts and providing livelihood and enhance employment opportunities for tribal populations in the country.

**About Swadesh Darshan Scheme:**

- Tourism Ministry launched the scheme.
- Objective: to develop theme-based tourist circuits in the country. These tourist circuits will be developed on the principles of high tourist value, competitiveness and sustainability in an integrated manner.

**Features**

- The scheme is 100% centrally funded for the project components undertaken for public funding.
- To leverage the voluntary funding available for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives of Central Public Sector Undertakings and corporate sector.
- Funding of individual project will vary from state to state and will be finalised on the basis of detailed project reports prepared by PMC (Programme Management Consultant).
- A National Steering Committee (NSC) will be constituted with Minister in charge of M/O Tourism as Chairman, to steer the mission objectives and vision of the scheme.
- A Mission Directorate headed by the Member Secretary, NSC as a nodal officer will help in identification of projects in consultation with the States/ UTs governments and other stake holders.
- PMC will be a national level consultant to be appointed by the Mission Directorate.

**Markandeshwar temple in Maharashtra:**

Restoration work of Markandeshwar temple in Maharashtra by Archaeological Survey of India is in full swing.

**About the temple:**

- Known as the “Khajuraho of Vidarbha”, the temple of Markandadeo is situated on the bank of River Wainganga in district Gadchiroli of Maharashtra.
- The temples belong to the Nagara group of temples of North India.
- On stylistic grounds, their date ranges in between 9-12th centuries CE.
- The temples belong to saiva, vaishnava and sakta faith. Most of the temples have a simple plan, with ardhmandapa, mandapa, antarala and garbhagriha forming the component of the entire set up.

**INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS****“State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World” Report**

The “State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World” was recently released.

**About the report**

- It is published by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other UN agencies including the WHO.

- The report estimated that 820 million people worldwide did not have enough to eat in 2018, up from 811 million in the previous year.
- At the same time, the number of overweight individuals and obesity continue to increase in all regions.

#### Highlights of the report

- The number of people going hungry has risen for the third year running to more than 820 million. After decades of decline, food insecurity began to increase in 2015.
- Africa and Asia account for more than nine out of ten of the world's stunted children, at 39.5% and 54.9% respectively.
- However at the same time, obesity and excess weight are both on the rise in all regions, with school-age children and adults affected particularly.

#### India scenario

- The number of obese adults in India has risen by a fourth in four years, from 24.1 million in 2012 to 32.8 million in 2016.
- While India's undernourished population has dropped by roughly the same fraction in 12 years, from 253.9 million in 2004-06 to 194.4 million in 2016-18.

#### Compared with China

- The report has a section on economic growth in China and India, and its effect on poverty.
- Between 1990 and 2017, the two countries had an average GDP per capita growth rate of 8.6 per cent and 4.5 per cent respectively, the report said, citing World Bank.
- In both countries, the increase in GDP per capita has been accompanied by poverty reduction.

### **ISSUES RELATED TO INTERNAL SECURITY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

#### **Crime and Criminal Tracking Network System (CCTNS)**

Against a target of covering 14306 police stations, a total of 14874 police stations (excluding police stations in Bihar) have been covered under the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS), which includes new police stations.

CCTNS project: Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) is a project initiated in June 2009 which aims at creating a comprehensive and integrated system for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of policing at the Police Station level. This will be done through adoption of principles of e-Governance, and creation of a nationwide networked infrastructure for evolution of IT-enabled state-of-the-art tracking system around "investigation of crime and detection of criminals". CCTNS is a Mission Mode Project (MMP) under the National e-Governance Plan of Govt. of India.

#### Functions:

- The Project will interconnect about 15000 Police Stations and additional 5000 offices of supervisory police officers across the country and digitize data related to FIR registration, investigation and charge sheets in all Police Stations.
- It will not only automate Police functions at Police station and higher levels but will also create facilities and mechanism to provide public services like registration of online complaints, ascertaining the status of case registered at the police station, verification of persons etc.
- In 2015, an additional objective of establishing a basic platform for an Inter-operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) was added to the Project.

#### Benefits:

- The Full implementation of the Project with all the new components would lead to a Central citizen portal having linkages with State level citizen portals that will provide a number of citizen friendly services like Police Verification for various purposes including passport verification, reporting a crime including cyber-crime and online tracking of the case progress etc.
- The project will enable National level crime analytics to be published at increased frequency, which will help the policy makers as well as lawmakers in taking appropriate and timely action, it will also enable Pan-India criminal/accused name search in the regional language for improved inter-state tracking of criminal movement. This would lead to development of a national database of crimes and criminals.

### **ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES**

#### **The wheels to a low-carbon transport system**

Studies show that India's road transport emissions are small in global comparison but increasing exponentially. In fact, the Global Carbon Project reports that India's carbon emissions are rising more than two times as fast as the global rise in 2018.

Background: Globally, the transport sector accounts for a quarter of total emissions, out of which three quarters are from road transport.

**Why reduce CO2 emissions from road transport?**

Reducing CO2 emissions of road transport leverages multiple co-benefits, for example, improving air quality and increasing physical activity, which are critical for well-being, particularly in urban areas.

**What needs to be done?**

- The action requires an understanding of how emissions vary with spatial context. In India, income and urbanisation are the key determinants of travel distance and travel mode choice and, therefore, commuting emissions.
- Mayors and town planners should organise cities around public transport and cycling, thereby improving mobility for many, while limiting car use.
- India should double down in its strategy to transition to electric two and three-wheelers. India is the third-largest market for automobiles; about 25 million internal combustion engines were sold in 2017, including about 20 million two-wheelers.
- Compact cities improve accessibility and reduce emissions from transport and even the building sector. City managers should ensure that existing urban areas provide short routes and fast access to schools, hospitals and jobs, otherwise, residents would be required to travel long distances.

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE ETC****Russia Launches Spektr-RG**

Spektr-RG is a Russian-German high-energy astrophysics space observatory launched recently. It follows on from the Spektr-R satellite telescope launched in 2011.

**About Spektr- RG:**

- The Spektrum-Röntgen-Gamma mission, also known as Spektr-RG, is a joint project between the Russian space agency, Roscosmos, and the German space agency, DLR.
- Position: Spektr-RG will be placed in a stable orbit in space called a Lagrange point (specifically, L2), where the gravitational forces of two large objects — in this case, the sun and the Earth — balance each other out.
- This location will allow Spektr-RG to perform its observations while using a minimal amount of fuel.
- Objectives: The spacecraft is expected to detect 100,000 galaxy clusters, 3 million supermassive black holes, tens of thousands of star-forming galaxies, the presence of plasma (superheated gas) and many more types of objects.
- The observatory includes two X-ray mirror telescopes, called ART-XC and eROSITA.
- A key goal of Spektr-RG will be to investigate the mysterious cosmic components referred to as “dark matter” and “dark energy”.

**ODISHA DEVELOPMENT****51 lakh farmers have received financial assistance under Kalia scheme**

Over 51 lakh farmers have received financial assistance under the Kishak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme of the Odisha government, as per a govt report. Replying to an unstarred question, the govt told the Assembly that 36.34 lakh small and marginal farmers and 14.70 lakh landless farmers have received financial assistance under the KALIA scheme so far.

The state government has set a target to include 75 lakh beneficiaries including 50 lakh small and marginal farmers and 25 lakh landless farmers under the scheme.

**Provisions of KALIA Scheme**

- For Cultivators: All farmers will be provided Rs 10,000 per family as assistance for \cultivation. Each family will get Rs 5,000 separately in the Kharif and Rabi, seasons, for five cropping seasons between 2018-19 and 2021-22. Crop loans up to Rs 50,000 are interest-free.
- For Landless Agricultural Households: Financial Assistance of Rs.12500 will be provided to each landless Agricultural Household for Agricultural allied activities like for small goat rearing unit, mini-layer unit, duckery units, fishery kits for fisherman, mushroom cultivation and bee-keeping, etc.
- For Elderly: The elderly, sick and differently-abled population who are unable to take up cultivation, will be provided Rs 10,000 per household per year.
- Insurance for cultivators and landless agricultural household: The KALIA scheme also includes a life insurance cover of Rs 2 lakh and additional personal accident coverage of the same amount for 57 lakh households.

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**

**Do it now. Sometimes later becomes never.**

**DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE**

**Qns: How important is Power generation for India? Discuss the problems in the Indian Power Sector and the initiatives taken by the Govt to address the problems.**

Ans: Power is one of the most critical components of infrastructure crucial for the economic growth and welfare of nations. The existence and development of adequate infrastructure is essential for sustained growth of the Indian economy. India has a high rank in Renewable Energy Country Attractiveness Index, on back of strong focus by the government on promoting renewable energy and implementation of projects in a time bound manner.

Major problems with India's power sector:

- Inadequate last mile connectivity is the main problem to supply electricity for all users. Due to lack of last-mile link-up with all electricity consumers and reliable power supply (to exceed 99%), many consumers depend on Diesel Generator sets using costly diesel oil for meeting unavoidable power requirements.
- Government giveaways such as free electricity for farmers, partly to curry political favor, have depleted the cash reserves of state-run electricity-distribution system. This has financially crippled the distribution network, and its ability to pay for power to meet the demand.
- The residential building sector is one of the largest consumers of electricity in India. Continuous urbanization and the growth of population result in increasing power consumption in buildings.
- New project management and execution, ensuring availability of fuel quantities and qualities, lack of initiative to develop large coal and natural gas resources available in India are major problems.
- Land acquisition, environmental clearances at state and central government level, and training of skilled manpower to prevent talent shortages for operating latest technology plants adds to it.
- Shortages of fuel: despite abundant reserves of coal, India is facing a severe shortage of coal. The country isn't producing enough to feed its power plants.
- India's monopoly coal producer, state-controlled Coal India, is constrained by primitive mining techniques and is rife with theft and corruption; Coal India has consistently missed production targets and growth targets.
- Poor pipeline connectivity and infrastructure to harness India's abundant coal bed methane and shale gas potential.
- The giant new offshore natural gas field has delivered less fuel than projected. India faces a shortage of natural gas.
- Hydroelectric power projects in India's mountainous north and north east regions have been slowed down by ecological, environmental and rehabilitation controversies, coupled with public interest litigations.

Govt Initiatives:

The Ministry of Power has taken various measures to achieve its aim of providing 24X7 affordable and environment friendly 'Power for All' by 2019, which includes preparation of state specific action plans, and implementation of Green Energy Corridor for transmission of renewable energy, among other measures.

- India has become an associate member of the International Energy Agency (IEA), which makes the Paris-based body more significant, indicating India's growing status in playing an important role in the global energy dialogue.
- The Government of India plans to auction coal blocks for commercial mining by the end of December 2017, which would end the monopoly of state-run firms in coal mining and help in achieving the country's target of producing 1 billion tonnes of coal by 2020.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved a new coal linkage policy, aimed at providing necessary supply of fuel to power plants through reverse auction
- The Government of India has announced plans to implement a US\$ 238 million National Mission on advanced ultra-supercritical technologies for cleaner coal utilization.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the enhancement of capacity of the Scheme for Development of Solar Parks and Ultra Mega Solar Power Projects from 20,000 megawatt (MW) to 40,000 MW, which will ensure setting up of at least 50 solar parks each with a capacity of 500 MW and above in various parts of the country.
- The Union Cabinet, Government of India has given its ex-post facto approval for signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Renewable Energy between India and Portugal, which will help strengthen the bilateral cooperation between the two countries.
- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy plans to introduce a fixed-cost component to the tariff for electricity generated from renewable energy sources like solar or wind, in a bid to promote a green economy.
- The Union Cabinet has approved the ratification of International Solar Alliance's (ISA) framework agreement by India, which will provide India a platform to showcase its solar programmes, and put it in a leadership role in climate and renewable energy issues globally.

**DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS BASED MCQS**

1. Which of the following can be used as a source for thermal power generation?
  1. Liquid Fuel
  2. Waste Material
  3. Bio-MassSelect the correct answer from the codes given below  
(a) 1 and 2  
(b) 1 and 3  
(c) 2 and 3  
**(d) 1, 2 and 3**
2. Consider the following statements w.r.t Bio-energy
  1. It refers to energy derived from biological products which includes agricultural residues, municipal, industrial and other wastes.
  2. It can be converted into electrical energy.Which of the statements is/are incorrect?  
(a) 1 only  
(b) 2 only  
(c) Both 1 and 2  
**(d) Neither 1 nor 2**
3. Consider the following statements w.r.t Swadesh Darshan Scheme and tourism in India.
  1. The scheme is 100% centrally funded.
  2. It accepts voluntary funding available in Corporate Social Responsibility.
  3. Recently the Tribal Circuit has been added as one of the thematic circuits for showcasing tribal culture.Which of the statements is/are incorrect?  
(a) 2 only  
(b) 2 and 3  
(c) 1 and 3  
**(d) None of the above**
4. Consider the following statements w.r.t the Markandeshwar group of temples which was in news recently.
  1. It is known as the “Khajuraho of Vidarbha”
  2. It belongs to the Nagara group of temples of North India.
  3. The temples belong to Saiva, Vaishnava and Sakta faith.Which of the statements is/are correct?  
(a) 1 and 2  
(b) 2 and 3  
(c) 1 and 3  
**(d) 1, 2 and 3**
5. Consider the following statements w.r.t “State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World”.
  1. It is published by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).
  2. The report has a separate section on economic growth in China and India.Which of the statements is/are correct?  
(a) 1 only  
(b) 2 only  
**(c) Both 1 and 2**  
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. Which of the following state’s police stations have been kept out of the ambit of the and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) project?  
(a) Odisha  
**(b) Bihar**  
(c) Mizoram  
(d) Tripura
7. Which of the following pair of countries have developed the high-energy astrophysics space observatory, Spektr-RG?  
(a) USA and Canada  
**(b) Germany and Russia**  
(c) Germany and France  
(d) Russia and Greece