

NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC

National Commission for Minorities (NCM)

- NCM has refused to entertain a plea to declare Hindus a “minority community” in those States where they do not form a majority of the population.
- NCM has no power/jurisdiction to declare new minority communities, such powers lie with the Central government.
- NCM instead works to ensure the progress and development of minorities and protect their religious, cultural and educational rights.
- Supreme Court in its judgement in the Bal Patil Vs Union of India case of 1999 had said that NCM’s role was to maintain the unity and integrity of India by eliminating the need for identifying communities as majority and minority

Minority Status

- According to 2011 Census, Hindus are in minority in eight states — Lakshadweep (2.5%), Mizoram (2.75%), Nagaland (8.75%), Meghalaya (11.53%), J&K (28.44%), Arunachal Pradesh (29%), Manipur (31.39%), and Punjab (38.40%).
- Constitution of India doesn’t define the word ‘Minority’ but has used the word minorities considering two attributes religion or language of a person
- The Union Government set up NCM under the NCM Act, 1992 (Statutory body)
- Six religious communities, viz; Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastrians (Parsis) and Jains(6) have been notified in Gazette of India as minority communities all over India.

Kan Sikul, Kan Huan

- Mizoram’s Lawngtlai district administration’s project Kan Sikul, Kan Huan (My School, My Farm) has been made the model for all schools and colleges in Mizoram.
- Kan Sikul, Kan Huan aims to curb the problem of shortage of fruits and vegetables in the region by setting up the kitchen/ nutrition gardens in every school.
- The project seeks to make Lawngtlai self-sufficient in the local variety of fruits and vegetables and fight malnutrition among children (by March 2020) by letting every school, Anganwadi, child care institutions and hostel in Lawngtlai to grow their own fruits and vegetables with the help of teachers, parents and community members.
- Project is in consonance with the objectives of central governments Poshan abhiyan.
- Lawngtlai, is Mizoram’s most backward and disaster-prone district with 35.3% stunted, 21.3% underweight and 5.9% severely wasted (low weight-for-height) children under 5 (highest on all counts in Mizoram).
- Kitchen /nutrition gardens have yielded in improving the nutritional content of the midday meal served in the schools.

INDIAN ECONOMY

Parliament passes law banning unregulated deposit schemes

Parliament has passed the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill 2019. The bill provides for a comprehensive mechanism to ban unregulated deposit schemes and to protect the interests of depositors.

Highlights of the Bill:

- The bill defines regulated deposits as all deposit-taking schemes which are overseen and regulated by regulators like (a) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) (b) Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) (c) Ministry of Corporate Affairs and (d) state and union territory governments.
- On the other hand, deposit-taking scheme is defined as unregulated if it is not registered with the regulators listed in the Bill.
- The Bill defines three types of offences: (a) running of Unregulated Deposit Schemes (b) fraudulent default in Regulated Deposit Schemes and (c) wrongful inducement in relation to Unregulated Deposit Schemes.
- The Bill provides for the appointment of government officers not below the rank of Secretary to the state or central government as the Competent Authority. The Authority will have powers similar to those vested in a civil court.
- The Authority may (a) provisionally attach the property of the deposit taker, as well as all deposits received (b) summon and examine any person it considers necessary for the purpose of obtaining evidence and (c) order the production of records and evidence.

- The Bill provides for the constitution of one or more Designated Courts in specified areas. The Court will seek to complete the process within 180 days of being approached by the Competent Authority.
- The bill also provides for the creation of an online central database for collection and sharing of information on deposit-taking activities in the country.

7th Economic Census

- The government started off the 7th Economic Census (EC) from Tripura. It will be launched in other states and UT in August and September
- EC is the complete count of all establishments/units located within the geographical boundaries of India
- MoSPI has partnered with Common Service Centres, CSC e-Governance Service India Ltd (SPV of Ministry of Electronics & IT) as the implementing agency for EC
- The data will be collected through door to door survey of each household and commercial establishment under the provisions of Collection of Statistics Act, 2008

Economic Census (EC)

- Six Economic Censuses have been conducted till date: 1977, 1980, 1990, 1998, 2005 and 2013
- The EC is the only source of information on the significantly large unorganized sector in the economy
- As per the last EC conducted in 2013, there were 58.5 million establishments employing around 131 million workers
- Agriculture is not covered in Economic Census
- It is being conducted by Ministry of Statistics and Program implementation (MoSPI)

Code of Conduct for Proxy Advisors

- Recently, the Securities and Exchange Board of India has proposed a code of conduct for proxy advisory firms. The code of conduct will involve a 'comply or explain' approach wherein listed companies aggrieved by the view of proxy advisors can approach the SEBI for redressal.
- According to SEBI, the proxy advisor should take appropriate steps to disclose any potential conflicts of interest resulting from ancillary business activities.
- Also, the board of proxy advisors should be independent of its shareholders, as such a position creates a serious conflict of interest.
- Besides this, SEBI has also suggested that institutional investors like foreign portfolio investors, portfolio managers, alternative investment funds and infrastructure investment trusts etc., should ensure that proxy advisory firms employed by them have appropriate capacity and capability to issue proxy advice.

Comply or Explain: It is a regulatory approach in which listed companies may either comply with or if they do not comply, explain publicly why they do not.

Proxy Advisor: It is a person/ firm who provides advice to institutional investors or shareholder of a company to exercise their rights in the company including recommendations on public offer or voting recommendation on agenda items.

Rajya Sabha clears changes to Insolvency Code

The Rajya Sabha has passed the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2019. The Bill amends the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016. The Code provides a time-bound process for resolving insolvency in companies and among individuals. Insolvency is a situation where individuals or companies are unable to repay their outstanding debt.

Highlights of the Bill:

- The bill provides that the resolution process has to be completed within 330 days including litigations and other judicial process. Presently, the resolution plan for an insolvent company has to be cleared within 270 days.
- The bill also mandates that the bankruptcy resolution or liquidation decided under the bankruptcy framework is binding on central, state and local governments to whom the insolvent company owes dues.
- The bill has also proposed to rework voting rights in the case of companies where there are a large number of creditors such as homebuyers and bondholders.
- According to the new formula, if more than half of these creditors who are present approve a plan, it will be considered that the entire class of creditors has approved it.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE ETC**Draft rules ready to make microdots must in vehicles**

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has issued a draft notification amending the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989. This amendment will allow motor vehicles and their parts, components, assemblies to be affixed with permanent and nearly invisible microdots that can be read physically with a microscope and identified with ultraviolet light. This move is aimed at making India free from vehicle thefts and spurious spare parts.

Microdots:

- Microdots are a globally proven technology to ensure originality in spare parts of machines and components including in the automobile sector.
- The government has envisaged that with microdots becoming a permanent feature in vehicles, identifying them would become easier in case they are stolen.
- The microdot technology involves spraying thousands of microscopic dots onto vehicles or other assets to form a unique identification.
- Each microdot carries this identification which is registered to the owner, but is not visible to the naked eye. Also, duplicate spare parts have been a pet peeve of the auto industry for decades.

DEFENCE**LCU L-56 Commissioned into Indian Navy**

Indian Navy has recently commissioned the ship LCU L-56, which is the 100th warship built by the Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE).

LCU 56:

- LCU 56 is an amphibious ship with its primary role being transportation and deployment of main battle tanks, armoured vehicles, troops and equipment from ship to shore.
- It is the sixth of eight indigenously built Landing Craft Utility (LCU) MK IV class ships.
- The LCU Mk-IV Class of ships are fitted with close to 90% indigenous content, in line with the Government of India's 'Make in India' initiative towards achieving self-reliance and indigenisation.
- The induction of LCU 56 will add to maritime and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) capability of Andaman Nicobar Command.
- The ship will be deployed for multi-role activities such as beaching operations, search and rescue missions, disaster relief operations, coastal patrol, and surveillance operations along the Andaman and Nicobar Group of Islands.

ODISHA DEVELOPMENT**Odisha's Five Major Rivers Polluted!**

- Amid concerns over rising pollution in water bodies, State Forest and Environment Minister said that five major rivers in Odisha- Mahanadi, Shankha, Koel, Brahmani and Baitarani, have become polluted as they are fed with discharges from industries and urban local bodies.
- As per the report tabled in the Assembly, Mahanadi river water was found polluted at two places, Brahmani at four places, Baitarani at three places, while Koel and Shankha have become polluted at one place each due to release of wastes into the rivers.
- Brahmani River, which is life line of over 50 lakh people, has been polluted due to discharge of domestic waste of Rourkela and in-flow of untreated water from various industries in the city. Similarly, wastewater discharge from Cuttack and Sambalpur has polluted Mahanadi in two different places.

After Mo School, Odisha set to introduce Mo College campaign

- In a bid to provide an impetus to the higher education, Odisha government has decided to launch 'Mo College' programme on the lines of 'Mo School' campaign, to allow alumni and other interested individuals to contribute to the development of their alma maters.
- The 'Mo School' campaign provides a platform where former students connect to their childhood memory and be a part of the change they want to see in their schools.
- Higher education minister Arun Kumar Sahoo said that under the proposed Mo College programme, steps will be taken for manifold development of colleges with the help of its alumnus.
- The model degree colleges were set up in Nayagarh, Boudh, Sonepur, Rayagada, Nuapada, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur and Deogarh and the admission process started from 2016-17.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Don't let the past blackmail your present to ruin a beautiful future.

Dr. Jehangir Khan

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns: Briefly discuss about the National Commission for Minorities. Should it be given constitutional status?

Ans:

The Union Government set up the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) under the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992. Six religious communities, viz; Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastrians (Parsis) and Jains have been notified in Gazette of India as minority communities by the Union Government all over India

- The NCM adheres to the United Nations Declaration of 18 December 1992 which states that “States shall protect the existence of the National or Ethnic, Cultural, Religious and Linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories and encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity”
- Constitution of India doesn't define the word 'Minority' but has used the word minorities considering two attributes religion or language of a person
- The Commission consist of a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and Five Members to be nominated by the Central Government from amongst persons of eminence, ability and integrity; provided that five members including the Chairperson shall be from amongst the minority communities
- The National Commission for Minorities (NCM) has approach the government for granting it Constitutional status which is being done in order to protect the rights of minority communities more effectively
- If granted such a status, the NCM will be able to act against errant officials who do not attend hearings, follow its order or are found guilty of dereliction of duty
- After getting constitutional status, the NCM can penalise or suspend an officer for two days or send him/her to jail
- In its present form, the NCM has powers to summon officials, including chief secretaries and director generals of police, but has to rely on departments concerned to take action against them
- Rising communal violence in the country has led the commission to demand for constitutional power to function effectively.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS BASED MCQS

1. With reference to the 'Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2019', which of the following statements is/are NOT correct?

1. It seeks to put in place a mechanism by which poor depositors will get back their hard-earned money.
2. The Bill defines a deposit as an amount of money received in the form of loans from relatives and contributions towards capital by partners in any partnership firm.
3. The bill defines a deposit-taking scheme as unregulated, if it is taken for a business purpose and is not registered with the regulators.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

2. The project 'Kan Sikul, Kan Huan', sometimes mentioned in the news is related to which of the following?

- (a) Fight malnutrition among children**
- (b) Pollution Control
- (c) Biodiversity Conservation
- (d) Rain Water Harvesting

3. Consider the following statements with respect to Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers LTD. (GRSE):

1. GRSE is a shipbuilding company in India under the administrative control of the Ministry of Defence, primarily catering to the shipbuilding requirements of the Indian Navy only
2. GRSE is also engaged in engine production and other engineering activities.

Which of the given statements is/ are correct?

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

4. Consider the following statements w.r.t to the Minorities in India.

1. National Commission for Minorities is a Constitutional Statutory Body.
2. Article 29 of the constitution defines the definition of the Minorities.
3. Article 350-B empowers the president to appoint a special officer for linguistic minorities

Which of the statements is/are incorrect?

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

5. Consider the following statements w.r.t the Economic Census

1. Now, it is conducted by Ministry of Finance
2. It is conducted every 7 years
3. Agriculture is not covered in it

Which of the statements is/are incorrect?

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

6. Microdot Technology, sometimes seen in the news is related to which of the following?

- (a) Space Sector
- (b) Information and Technology Sector
- (c) Automobile Sector**
- (d) Defence Sector

7. Consider the following statements w.r.t the LCU L-56 which was recently commissioned into Indian Navy.

1. It is built by the Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE).
2. Its sole purpose is for humanitarian assistance
3. It is developed with assistance from an Israeli Defence Production Company.

Which of the given statements is/are incorrect?

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