

NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC**Triple Talaq Act**

- President has given his assent to the Triple Talaq Bill that makes giving instant oral triple talaq a criminal offense with provisions of jail term up to three years.
- The triple talaq law or the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights On Marriage) Act, 2019, has come into effect retrospectively from September 19, 2018.
- The law now gives a police officer the power to arrest the offender without requiring a warrant
- However, to check misuse, the police takes cognisance only if the complaint is filed by the aggrieved woman or any of her relation by blood or marriage.
- The Bill also provides for bail by a magistrate but only after hearing the aggrieved woman
- The aggrieved woman is entitled to demand a maintenance for her and her dependent children under the Act

Related Info:

- In August 2017 the Supreme Court, by a majority of 3:2, set aside the practice of triple talaq in Shah Bano Case.
- The judgment held triple talaq to be unconstitutional under Article 14 read with Article 13(1) and concluded that the practice is not essential to the practice of Islam (Article 25)
- The practice of “triple talaq” was abolished in 38 countries including Muslim-majority countries of Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Afghanistan and Pakistan

National Medical Commission(NMC)bill 2019

The National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill, 2019 has been passed by Rajya Sabha on August 1, 2019 even as hundreds of doctors are protesting across India. The Bill is replacing Medical Council of India (MCI) with National Medical Commission.

National Medical commission bill 2019

- Lok Sabha, the central government has made a fresh bid to replace the controversial Indian Medical Council (IMC) with a National Medical Commission (NMC) to regulate medical education and practices in India.
- While the Medical Council of India (MCI) was an autonomous body with two-third of its members (160 plus) being directly elected by the medical fraternity, the new one would have 25 members with no directly elected member.

What the Bill provides?

- The National Medical Commission Bill of 2019 proposes to have four autonomous boards to take care of its different functions:
 - Under-Graduate Medical Education Board to set standards and regulate medical education at undergraduate level
 - Post-Graduate Medical Education Board to set standards and regulate medical education at postgraduate level
 - Medical Assessment and Rating Board for inspections and rating of medical institutions and
 - Ethics and Medical Registration Board to regulate and promote professional conduct and medical ethics and also maintain national registers of (a) licensed medical practitioners and (b) Community Health Providers (CHPs).
- As for admissions and licensing, the Bill provides for a National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for admission to all undergraduate and post-graduate “super-speciality” medical education, while providing for another one, National Exit Test (NEXT) for granting “license” to practice and admission to postgraduate “broad-speciality courses”.
- The Bill also proposes for the NMC to “frame guidelines for determination of fee and other charges” for 50% of seats in private medical institutions and deemed to be universities.
- Currently, state governments determine fees for 85% of seats in such institutions and the rest are left for the management.

- Other powers of the NMC include permission to establish new medical colleges, start post-graduate courses, increase the number of seats, recognition of medical qualifications in and outside India etc

IMA's four major concerns

- The first one is over the CHPs being allowed to practice modern medicine. The Bill does not define who they are or what qualifications they hold and yet they are to be given licenses to the extent of one-third of the total number of licensed medical practitioners in India
- The second major objection is to the proposed National Exit Test (NEXT) for giving both licenses for practice (to those who have already cleared the MBBS exam) as well as for admission to post-graduate "broad-speciality courses"
- The third major objection is to "frame guidelines" to determine fees and all other charges for 50% of seats in private medical institutions and deemed to be universities (the MCI did not have such powers).
- The fourth major objection is about the power the Bill gives to the central government to give policy and other directives to the NMC and its autonomous boards which will be binding and final.

Six reasons why governments would like to regulate medical education:

- To ensure that doctors are appropriately trained and skilled to address the prevailing disease burden
- To ensure that medical graduates reflect a uniform standard of competence and skills
- To ensure that only those with basic knowledge of science and aptitude for the profession get in
- To ensure ethical practice in the interest of the patients
- To create an environment that enables innovation and research
- To check the corrosive impact of the process of commercialisation on values and corrupt practices.

Conclusion: No law is perfect. It is dependent upon the people who interpret and implement it. Government has, under this Bill, given to itself an unprecedented power to appoint people in the various arms of the proposed structure. The quality and integrity of these people will then define the future of the health system in India.

INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE, HISTORY

Deciphering Indus Script

According to the research paper titled 'Interrogating Indus inscription to unravel their mechanism of meaning conveyance', the Indus inscriptions can be compared to the structured messages found on stamps, coupons, tokens and currency coins of modern times.

The Indus inscriptions have not been deciphered due to the absence of bilingual texts, extreme brevity of the inscriptions, and ignorance about the language(s) encoded by Indus script.

Findings

- The majority of the Indus Valley inscriptions were written logo graphically (by using word signs) and not by using phonograms (speech sounds units), claims a recent research paper published in Palgrave Communications, a Nature group journal.
- The paper mainly focuses on understanding how Indus inscriptions conveyed meanings, rather than on deciphering what they conveyed.
- The inscribed seals and tablets were used in some administrative operation that controlled the commercial transactions of the ancient Indus Valley Civilisation.
- According to paper, though many ancient scripts use rebus methods to generate new words, the inscriptions found on the Indus seals and tablets have not used rebus as the mechanism to convey meaning.
- The researcher also rejected the popular hypothesis that the seals were inscribed with Proto-Dravidian or Proto-Indo-European names of the seal-owners.

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES**Economic Valuation of Tiger Reserves**

The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has released a study titled “Economic Valuation of Tiger Reserves in India: A Value+ Approach”. The study, authored by the Centre for Ecological Services Management at the Indian Institute of Forest Management (Bhopal), estimated the economic valuation, based on ecosystem services, of ten tiger reserves in the country. The ten Tiger Reserves are:

- Anamalai (Tamil Nadu),
- Bandipur (Karnataka),
- Dudhwa (Uttar Pradesh),
- Melghat (Maharashtra),
- Nagarjunsagar-Srisailem (Andhra Pradesh/ Telangana),
- Pakke (Arunachal Pradesh),
- Palamau (Jharkhand),
- Panna (Madhya Pradesh),
- Simlipal (Odisha), and
- Valmiki (Bihar)

The objective behind the report is to enhance tiger conservation by highlighting the holistic economic benefits of protected areas.

The Approach: The Value+ approach was used in the study, where the “VALUE” represents all the benefits in monetary terms for those services where monetary economic valuation is possible and derived based on the available knowledge, tools and methods. The “+” represents all those benefits for which economic valuation is currently not possible on account of lack of accepted methodologies, knowledge, available technology, current resources and/or understanding of the system.

Ecosystem Services and Tiger Reserves

- Ecosystems Services can be defined as benefits in terms of goods or services provided by nature which are of fundamental importance to human well-being, for health, livelihoods, and survival.
- In the context of natural resource development, Tiger Reserves are the primary repositories of forests and other natural ecosystems.
- A range of ecosystem services emanate from tiger reserves such as Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) provisioning, employment generation, carbon sequestration, biological control, habitat for species, genepool protection, gas regulation, pollination, fuelwood, fodder grazing, watershed protection, increased soil fertility, physical and mental well being, spiritual tourism etc.

Economic Value of Tiger Reserves

- The study findings indicate that the natural ecosystems in the Tiger Reserves (TRs) provide adequate resources to humans in the range of Rs. 1643-7042 crore.
- TRs offer protection from disease, predators, and parasites, which is an avoided cost in the range of Rs. 7.7 crore to Rs. 24.15 crore.
- They also help in maintaining a benign physical and chemical environment for amenable living conditions by providing necessary infrastructure and ecosystem services worth Rs. 2567-8260 crore.
- The tiger reserves play a significant role in the lives of local communities and conserve a range of traditional values apart from providing recreation and leisure. Thus the socio-cultural fulfilment benefits from these TRs range from 0.3 crore to 62.144 crore.
- They conserve ecosystems and natural assets worth Rs. 15310-98530 crore.

Army Launches E Car to Combat Pollution

- The Indian Army has launched e-cars for use of its officials. The e-car initiative has been launched in partnership with Energy Efficiency Services Ltd (EESL) in a joint venture of the Central PSUs under the Ministry of Power.

- The Indian Army has planned to operate 10 e-cars as a pilot project and develop further such e-cars in Delhi to ensure minimal emissions and efficiency.
- The e-car initiative is expected to boost further development of electric vehicle technology and its adoption by the general public in the near future.

Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) :

- It is a joint venture of four National Public Sector Enterprises– NTPC Limited, Power Finance Corporation Ltd (PFC), REC and POWERGRID. It was set up under the Ministry of Power.
- EESL is a Super Energy Service Company (ESCO) and leads the market-related activities of the National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency (NMEEE), one of the eight national missions under the Prime Minister's National Action Plan on Climate Change.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE ETC**Growing Human Organs in Animals**

- Scientists in Japan have received the permission of the government to try growing human organs in animals.
- The research led by Hiromitsu Nakauchi, a professor of genetics at Stanford University, is the first of its kind.
- The research involves generating animal embryos — mice, rats or pigs — that lack a particular organ such as a pancreas.
- The modified embryos are then implanted with human “induced Pluripotent Stem (iPS)” cells that can grow into the missing pancreas.
- The embryos would be transplanted into wombs where they could theoretically be carried to term with a functioning human pancreas.

Concerns:

- Implanting animal embryos with human cells creates what is known as a chimera- an entity with both animal and human cells.
- The process throws up complex ethical issues, particularly over concerns that it may not be possible to completely control which organs are formed in the animal by the human iPS cells.
- Benefit: This experiment may lead to a future where human organs for transplant could be grown inside animals.

Hope Probe

- The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has announced that it will launch the 'Hope Probe', the Arab world's first spacecraft to Mars, in July 2020.
- The space programme, also known as the Emirates Mars Mission (EMM), aims at collecting information on Mars, meteorological layers and study the causes of loss of hydrogen and oxygen gases -- the two main constituents of water -- from the upper layer of the Martian atmosphere.
- The mission, if successful, will become the first space exploration programme to take a picture of the Mars atmosphere.
- The 'Hope Probe' will be launched into orbit in mid-July 2020. The spacecraft is expected to reach Mars orbit in the first quarter of 2021, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the founding of the UAE.

ODISHA DEVELOPMENT**Srimandir Reforms Case: SC Refuses To Accept Puri Shankaracharya's Impleadment Petition**

- The Supreme Court today rejected an impleadment petition filed by Puri Shankaracharya Swami Nischalananda Saraswati for making him a party in Srimandir reforms case.
- The Apex Court has declined to make him a party in the case because it thinks that it will be burdensome for him.

Background: Earlier, the Shankaracharya had suggested several reforms for the 12th century shrine and urged the apex court to make him a party in the case.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns: Critically Examine the major concerns for the Global Tiger Recovery programme.

Ans:

Petersburg Declaration on doubling the tiger population was signed in 2010 under which all 13 tiger range countries in Asia and partner organizations of the Global Tiger Initiative agreed to a Global Tiger Recovery Program, the first-ever coordinated, range-wide and international effort to save the world tigers. The tiger range countries that are part of the Global Tiger Recovery Program are Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Thailand, and Vietnam. However, China and Indonesia were not present at the conference. The Declaration in turn established 29 July as the International Tiger Day (also known as Global Tiger Day) to be observed annually to raise awareness for tiger conservation.

Major concerns

- Nearly a decade has passed since the governments of these 13 tiger home range countries came together to double the global tiger population (T X 2) by 2022 as envisaged by the Petersburg Declaration on Tiger Conservation issued at the St. Petersburg Tiger Summit. However the progress on the targets envisaged by the declaration has not been at par.
- Moreover, over one-third of tiger conservation sites in the world are severely at risk of losing their wild tigers — the majority of which are in Southeast Asia.
- Known hot spots for illegal trade in tiger parts include the Indo-Nepalese border, South India, Central India, Mekong-China, Indonesia-China and Russia-China
- As per the Conservation Assured Tiger Standards (CATS) survey of tiger sites done in 2018 many of these areas lack basic plans for effective management, with over 60 per cent of the sites facing several limitations in anti-poaching.
- It has been founded that in the last century 97% of all wild tigers had disappeared, with only around 3,000 left alive.
- Tigers are on the brink of extinction. Many factors have caused their numbers to fall, including habitat loss, hunting and poaching, climate change. Only 12.5 percent of the tiger conservation areas meet the globally agreed upon science-based standards.
- However, countries like India, Nepal and Russia have shown that tiger recovery is possible, despite challenges in poaching, funding and sustaining community livelihoods, which can be overcome with strong political commitment.
- The efforts to step up global commitment to protect the remaining wild tiger populations should therefore be assisted by centralized data bank of all tiger range countries, stringent law enforcement and enhanced cross-country cooperation between countries where there is high demand for tiger parts as well as countries which are home to tiger populations. Nepal has already proved that zero poaching is possible with a professionalized approach to wildlife protection. Effective management is thus the single most important action and to achieve this, long-term investment in tiger conservation areas is absolutely essential.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS BASED MCQS

1. Consider the following statements w.r.t the recently passed Triple Talaq Act.
 1. The law now gives a police officer the power to arrest the offender without requiring a warrant.
 2. The police takes cognisance only if the complaint is filed by the aggrieved woman.
 3. The aggrieved woman is entitled to demand a maintenance for her and her dependent children under the Act
 Which of the statements is/are incorrect?
 - (a) 2 only
 - (b) 1 and 3**
 - (c) 2 and 3
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
2. Which of the following statements is/are correct w.r.t. to the 'Induced Pluripotent Stem (iPS) cells'?
 1. They are pluripotent stem cells i.e. capable of becoming any cell in the human body.
 2. They are generated from adult cells by reprogramming them.
 3. iPSCs can self-renew and differentiate into extra-embryonic cells.
 Select the correct answer using the code given below:
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 1 and 2 only**
 - (c) 1 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
3. The 'Hope Probe', sometimes mentioned in the news is a
 - (a) Emirates Mars Mission**
 - (b) First Indian mission to study the Sun
 - (c) NASA's Mercury Mission
 - (d) Japan mission to clean the space-debris
4. Consider the following statements
 1. National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill, 2019 proposes to replace Medical Council of India (MCI) with National Medical Commission.
 2. While the Medical Council of India (MCI) was an autonomous body with two-third of its members (160 plus) being directly elected by the medical fraternity, the new one would have 25 members with no directly elected member.
 Which of the statements is/are incorrect?
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only**
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2**
5. Which of the following statements w.r.t Indus Script is/are correct?
 1. Indus Script was recently deciphered for the first time.
 2. The majority of the Indus Valley inscriptions were written logo graphically and not by using phonograms.
 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 pairs of Tiger Reserves and States match correctly?
 1. Anamalai: Tamil Nadu
 2. Dudhwa: Bihar
 3. Melghat :Maharashtra
 4. Pakke: Kerala
 5. Palamau: Chhatisgarh
 Select the correct answer using codes given below
 - (a) 1 and 3**
 - (b) 2, 3 and 4
 - (c) 1, 3 and 5
 - (d) 2, 4 and 5
7. Consider the following statements:
 1. The study 'Economic Valuation of Tiger Reserves in India: A Value+ Approach' is released by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).
 2. The study is authored by the Centre for Ecological Services Management at the Indian Institute of Forest Management.
 3. The Indian Institute of Forest Management is an autonomous institute of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, established in 1982.
 Which of the statements is/are correct?
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 1 and 2 only**
 - (c) 2 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3**
8. Which among the following defense forces has recently approved use of e-cars to combat pollution?
 - (a) Indian Army**
 - (b) Border Security Force
 - (c) Indian Navy
 - (d) Indo-Tibetan Border Police