

**NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC****Super 50**

Maharashtra's Tribal Development Department in association with the Pace Educational Trust has launched an academic programme for young tribal students aspiring to be doctors and engineers.

**About the Scheme**

- The initiative is inspired by the work of Patna's Anand Kumar who runs an initiative called 'Super 30' for underprivileged students to sit for Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) entrance exam.
- The Super 50 programme will mentor 50 most meritorious tribal students from the State and prepare them for engineering and medical exams.
- Tribal students from the state who have passed their class 10th exam are eligible to enroll for the entrance test.
- It will be a two-year residential programme, where the students will be provided hostel and mess facilities, a tablet, NCERT books and career counselling.

**Kashmir Super 50**

- Project Kashmir Super 50, a joint initiative by Indian Army, Center for Social Responsibility and Leadership (CSRL) and PETRONET LNG Limited (PLL) was launched in March 2013 to transform the educational status of children from economically weaker sections in the Kashmir region.
- It is an 11-month program in which 50 students are selected every year and they are provided with complete free residential coaching for IIT-JEE, JKCET and other premier Engineering Institutes.

**Op-Blue Freedom**

- After the success of the Chandigarh leg, Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju and former India football captain Baichung Bhutia flagged off the Delhi leg of Op-Blue Freedom.
- Op-Blue Freedom is a nation-wide adaptive scuba diving programme for people with disabilities as well as the able bodied.
- This is an initiative in which a group of armed forces veterans train adventure enthusiasts in special forces skills like survival techniques, emergency first response skills, unarmed combat, endurance and fitness.

**GEOGRAPHY****Kutch Desert**

The study of fossils from Kutch in Gujarat has revealed that the hot arid desert of Kutch was once a humid subtropical forest.

**Findings of Study:** The fossil from Palasava suggest that a rich diversity of fauna and flora sustained in warm, humid/wet, tropical to sub-tropical environmental conditions during the Middle Miocene.

- The bulk of fossils unearthed in Kutch have so far been mainly marine organisms, due to their proximity to the Arabian Sea. Geological changes eventually closed off the salt-flats' connection to the sea and the region turned into a large lake, eventually becoming salty wetlands.
- It points to clues on how mammals dispersed between Africa and the Indian subcontinent when part of India was in the Gondwanaland supercontinent that existed nearly 300 million years ago.

**Kutch Desert**

- Kutch Desert covers a vast area of 45,612 sq. km and is bounded to the north and northwest by Sindh (Pakistan), west and southwest by the Arabian Sea, and to the northeast by Rajasthan.
- The Rann of Kachchh comprises a unique example of Holocene sedimentation. It covers a large tracts of 23,000 sq. km and has been arbitrarily divided into two parts namely the Great Rann and Little Rann.
- Kachchh furnishes an interesting example of four diverse geomorphic type of terrain namely (i) the Rann, (ii) the low lying Banni plains, (iii) the hilly region, and (iv) the coastal plains.
  - Such physiographic diversity is a reflection of geology, climate and sea level changes in this region
- It is connected to the Arabian Sea through Kori Creek in the west and the Gulf of Kachchh in the east, and is very close to sea level.
- The Wild Ass Wildlife Sanctuary, situated in the Indian state of Gujarat, is the largest wildlife sanctuary in the country. It is spread in the entire area of the little Rann of Kutch where small grass-covered areas, known as baits, forms the flora and is an important source to support the fauna of the region.

**Tirur Vettala**

- Recently Kerala's tirur vettala has obtained Geographical Indication tag.

- Tirur Vettilla is a type of betel leaf which is grown in Tirur and nearby areas of Malappuram district of Kerala.
- Tirur Vettilla is unique for its significantly high content of total chlorophyll and protein in fresh leaves.
- Tirur vettilla possess some special biochemical characters like unique flavour and aroma.
- Eugenol is the major essential oil in Tirur betel leaf contributing to its pungency.
- The leaves are nutritive and contain anticarcinogens, showing future opportunities in anticancer drugs
- Betel vine was reported to have immunosuppressive activity and antimicrobial property
- The Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Cell of Kerala Agricultural University has received National IP Award, 2019 of Government of India its efforts in the facilitation of GI Registration.

### **Catalina Channel**

Madhya Pradesh para swimmer Satendra Singh Lohia has become the first Asian swimmer to cross the Catalina Channel of America. Satendra holds the Asian record of crossing both the English and Catalina channels.

#### **About:**

- Stretching between Santa Catalina Island and Los Angeles in California, the Catalina Channel is 21 miles long.
- It's comparable to the English Channel in terms of distance and water conditions, although it's a little warmer.

#### **Santa Catalina Island:**

Santa Catalina Island is a rocky island off the coast of the U.S. state of California in the Gulf of Santa Catalina. The island name is often shortened to Catalina Island or just Catalina.

Santa Catalina is part of the Channel Islands of California archipelago and lies within Los Angeles County.

### **GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.**

#### **NISHTHA: Teachers' Training Programme**

The Union Human Resource Development Minister has launched 'National Initiative for School Heads and Teachers Holistic Advancement (NISHTHA)', a national mission to improve learning outcomes at the elementary level.

NISHTHA Website, Training Modules, Primer Booklet and a Mobile App were also launched by the Minister.

#### **About 'National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement'**

NISHTHA is the largest teachers' training programme of its kind in the world.

Objective: To motivate and equip teachers to encourage and foster critical thinking in students.

Teachers will get awareness and develop their skills on various aspects related to:

- Learning Outcomes,
- Competency-Based learning and Testing,
- Learner-centered Pedagogy,
- School Safety and Security,
- Personal-social qualities,
- Inclusive Education,
- ICT in teaching-learning including Artificial Intelligence,
- Health and well-being including yoga,
- Initiatives in School Education including library, eco-club, youth club, kitchen garden,
- School Leadership qualities,
- Environmental Concerns,
- Pre-school, Pre-vocational Education and School-Based assessment.

**Aim:** To build the capacities of around 42 lakh participants covering all teachers and heads of schools at the elementary level in all Government schools, faculty members of State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) and District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs),

Block Resource Coordinators and Cluster Resource Coordinators in all States and UTs.

**Implementation:** Training will be conducted directly by 33120 Key Resource Persons (KRPs) and State Resource Persons (SRP) identified by the State and UTs, who will in turn be trained by 120 National Resource Persons identified from National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), etc.

- States and UTs have an option to contextualize the training modules and use their own material and resource persons also, keeping in view the core topics and expected outcomes of NISHTHA.

- The prominent features of the programme are activity based modules including in-built continuous feedback mechanism, online monitoring and support system, training need and impact analysis (Pre and Post training).

**Mobile Application:** A Mobile App and Learning Management System (LMS) based on MOODLE (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment) have been developed by NCERT.

LMS will be used for registration of Resource Persons and Teachers, dissemination of resources, training gap and impact analysis, monitoring, mentoring and measuring the progress online.

### **Cabinet Secretary**

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of Rajiv Gauba as the new Cabinet Secretary with a tenure of two years from 30th of this month. Mr. Gauba who is a 1982 batch IAS officer of Jharkhand cadre will replace P.K. Sinha.

### **Cabinet Secretariat:**

#### **Administration:**

- The Cabinet Secretariat functions directly under the Prime Minister.
- The administrative head of the Secretariat is the Cabinet Secretary who is also the ex-officio Chairman of the Civil Services Board.
- The business allocated to Cabinet Secretariat under Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961 includes: (i) Secretarial assistance to the Cabinet and Cabinet Committees; and (ii) Rules of Business.

#### **Functions:**

- The Cabinet Secretariat is responsible for the administration of the Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rules, 1961 and Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961 facilitating smooth transaction of business in Ministries/ Departments.
- The Secretariat assists in decision-making in Government by ensuring Inter-Ministerial coordination, ironing out differences amongst Ministries/Departments and evolving consensus.
- Management of major crisis situations in the country is also one of the functions of the Cabinet Secretariat.

## **INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS**

### **New Sovereign Council in Sudan**

Recently, the swearing-in of a new sovereign council and appointment of Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, took place in Sudan.

- It marked the transition towards the civilian rule, as it is the first time that Sudan was not under full military rule since Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir took the control in a military coup in 1989.
- The New sovereign council replaces the Transitional Military Council (TMC) that was formed after the Omar al-Bashir was removed.
- The New sovereign council (11 member body) is a civilian-dominated ruling council but it will be headed by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, who already headed the TMC.
- For the first 21 months of the 39-month transition period, General Burhan will lead Sudan, until a fully civilian government takes over.

## **INDIAN ECONOMY**

### **New Norms for FPI**

Recently, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has released new norms that sought to simplify the compliance and operational requirements for Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs).

- The norms are issued to check the outflows of FPIs as the shares worth over Rs 22,000 crore were sold in July and August 2019.
- FPIs have been withdrawing from Indian equities after the government introduced higher tax surcharge on the super-rich in the Budget 2019.
- FPI regulations have been redrafted based on the recommendation of H R Khan committee.
- Revised regulations:**
  - Removed broad-based criteria: SEBI decided to do away with the requirement that every FPI should have at least 20 investors.
  - Simplification of the KYC (Know-Your-Customer) document requirement for overseas investors.
  - SEBI has also allowed central banks of countries that are not members of Bank for International Settlement (BIS) to register as FPIs in India.

- According to SEBI, such entities are relatively long term, low-risk investors as they are directly/indirectly managed by the government.
- FPIs shall be permitted for off-market transfer of securities which are unlisted, or illiquid, to a domestic or foreign investor.
- SEBI has also permitted offshore funds floated by Indian asset management companies to register themselves as FPIs and invest in Indian markets.
- SEBI has decided that FPIs may be re-categorized into two categories - Categories I and II - instead of the present requirement of three categories.
- Apart from changes in FPIs regulations, SEBI has amended the Prohibition of Insider Trading regulations to include a clause to reward whistle-blowers.

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

##### **State Rooftop Solar Attractiveness Index–SARAL**

Recently, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has launched the State Rooftop Solar Attractiveness Index–SARAL.

- SARAL is the first of its kind index to provide a comprehensive overview of state-level measures adopted to facilitate rooftop solar deployment.
- It would create a more conducive environment for solar rooftop installations, encourage investment and lead to the accelerated growth of the sector, by creating healthy competition among the States.
  - Karnataka has been placed at the first rank in the index followed by Telangana, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh.
- SARAL currently captures five key aspects :
  - Robustness of policy framework,
  - Implementation environment,
  - Investment climate,
  - Consumer experience,
  - Business ecosystem
- It has been designed collaboratively by the MNRE, Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation (SSEF), Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) and Ernst & Young (EY).
- SARAL is in concurrence with the Government's target of installing 175 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2022, of which 100 GW of solar power is to be operational by March 2022, (40 out of 100 GW is expected to come from grid-connected solar rooftops).
- The rooftop solar deployment will make power sector sustainable and viable (as the cost of solar energy is reducing) and it will help to ensure 24/7 power supply to all consumers.
- Along with that, it will help in India in fulfilling its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) highlighted at Paris climate deal.

##### **Illegal Tiger Trade**

Recently a new report titled 'Skin and Bones Unresolved: An Analysis of Tiger Seizures from 2000-2018' compiled by TRAFFIC, in partnership with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature has quantified the illegal global trade in tigers and tiger parts over a 19-year period between 2000 and 2018.

- It was the fourth in a series on tiger trade by TRAFFIC, a wildlife trade monitoring network headquartered in the United Kingdom.

##### **Findings of Report**

- The TRAFFIC report uses the 2016 WWF estimate of 2,226 tigers in India. It is home to more than 56% of the global wild tiger population.
- India has the world's largest tiger population — 2,967 in the Tiger Census released in July, 2019.
- India is the country with the highest number of seizure incidents (463, or 40% of all seizures) as well as tigers seized (625). In terms of various body parts seized, India had the highest share among countries for tiger skins (38%), bones (28%) and claws and teeth (42%).
- The top three countries with the highest number of seizure incidents were India (463 or 40.5% of total seizures) and China (126 or 11.0%), closely followed by Indonesia (119 or 10.5%).

##### **Adratiklit Boulahfa**

Scientists from the London's Natural History Museum (NHM) have described Adratiklit boulahfa, a new species of stegosaurus.

- Adratiklit boulahfa, a new species of stegosaurus is dated to 168 million years ago, which makes it the oldest known member of that group of dinosaurs ever known.

- Location of discovery: It is also the first stegosaurus to be found in North Africa. Its remains were discovered in the Middle Atlas mountains of Morocco.
- Genus: The scientists believe it is not only a new species but also belongs to a new genus. Adratiklit's closest relatives is the European stegosaurus Dacentrurus.
- Name: The name is derived from the words used by the Berber (an ethnic group indigenous to North Africa) for mountains (Adras), lizard (tiklit) and the area where the specimen was found (Boulahfa).
- Features: The Adratiklit was armoured and herbivorous, and lived on the ancient supercontinent of Gondwana, which later split into Africa, South America, Australia and Antarctica.

#### **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE ETC**

##### **Indian Space Debris**

According to the latest assessment of space debris by National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), out of the 101 pieces of debris (big enough to be tracked) created by India's Anti-Satellite System(A-SAT) test, 49 continued to remain in orbit.

- It is possible that more pieces, smaller ones, created from the test, are floating around but were not being tracked.
- It has been estimated that nearly 400 pieces were created from India's test.
- After the test, India had said that, since the test was carried out in the lower atmosphere, it did not expect to add any significant amount of space debris.
  - Whatever debris is generated will decay and fall back on to the earth within weeks.
- The report is the first credible estimation in public domain of the amount of debris created by India's anti-satellite test (conducted on 27th March, 2019) and what remains of it four months down the line.
- India had 97 functional, and non-functional but intact satellites in space as on 30th June 2019, and 157 pieces of trackable space debris, including fragments of rockets that become junk after delivering their payloads in their specified orbits.
  - This is a very small proportion of the total of 19,404 large objects in space sent by all countries, of which 14,432 are debris and junk parts of used rockets.

##### **Leprosy**

Union Minister for Health has asked the Ministers of Law, Minister of Social Justice and Chief Ministers for amending 108 discriminatory laws against persons affected by Leprosy.

- He stated that the National Leprosy Eradication Programme(NLEP) has achieved enormous success in leprosy control particularly in the last four decades.
- He also stated that India is committed for justice and equality of all individuals including persons with disabilities as per the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).
- He has also mentioned about the WHO's Global Leprosy Strategy 2016 – 2020. The strategy aims at (a) zero children with leprosy-affected disabilities by 2020 and (b) reduction of new patients diagnosed with leprosy-related deformities to >1 per million population.

##### **Leprosy:**

- Leprosy also known as Hansen's disease is a chronic neuro-muscular disorder. It is caused by several strains of Mycobacterium leprae. It has a long incubation period which makes detection difficult. Leprosy can be cured with Multi-Drug Therapy(MDT).
- India had launched the National Leprosy Eradication Programme in 1983 to eliminate leprosy through early detection, effective treatment and increased awareness.
- In 2005, India achieved the goal of elimination of leprosy as a public health problem defined as less than 1 case per 10,000 population.

#### **QUOTE OF THE DAY**

**What's meant to be will always find a way.**



## **DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE**

**Qns: Which factors impact the ocean currents formation and how do they influence climate in different regions of the world?**

**Answer:**

- Ocean currents are continuous movements of water in the ocean that follow set paths, kind of rivers in the ocean.
- There are two type of Ocean Currents, based on depth, viz. surface currents (surface circulation- which make up about 10% of all the water in the ocean) and deep water currents (thermohaline circulation- which make up the other 90% of the ocean).
- Based on temperature, Ocean currents are classified into two types: cold currents (Labrador Current) and warm currents (Kuroshio current)

Factors which impact the ocean current formations are:

- Planetary winds: The planetary winds are permanent winds (Trade winds, Westerlies and Polar Easterlies) that blow from one pressure belt to the other. The oceanic circulation pattern roughly corresponds to the earth's atmospheric circulation pattern. E.g.: There is a change in the direction of ocean currents with a change in direction of the monsoon winds in the Indian Ocean.
- Temperatures: The differential heating of the Sun at the equator and the poles causes a difference in the temperature of ocean water. Warm water from the equator slowly moves along the surface towards the poles, while the cold water from the poles slowly creeps along the bottom of the sea towards the equator.
- Salinity: Waters of low salinity have lower density enabling them to flow on the surface of waters of high salinity while waters of high salinity flow at the bottom.
- Earth's rotation: According to Ferrel's law- Coriolis forces deflect winds and freely moving objects to the right in the northern hemisphere and to the left in the southern hemisphere. Therefore, the movement of ocean currents in the northern hemisphere is in the clockwise and in the southern hemisphere it is in the anti-clockwise direction.
- Landmass: A land mass obstructs the direction of flow of ocean current and divides the ocean current to flow in a different direction.

The ocean currents are very important in determining the climates of different regions of the world, especially those regions bordering on the ocean.

- Local Climate: Warm and Cold currents affect the local climate of a region. E.g.: the North Atlantic Drift keeps the coasts of North Sea (western coast of Europe) warm which is unusual for such high latitudes. Similarly, the warm waters of the Kuroshio current in the North Pacific ocean keep the ports of the Alaskan coast ice-free in winter.
- Precipitation: Warm currents flow along the east coast of continents resulting in warm and rainy climates while cold currents flow along the west coast of continents.
- Desert Formation: Cold ocean currents have a direct effect on desert formation in west coast regions of the tropical and subtropical continents. E.g.: Peru Current, also called Humboldt Current, is a cold-water current of the southeast Pacific Ocean and a primary reason for the aridity of Atacama desert (driest desert of the world).
- Moderating effect: They are responsible for moderate temperatures at coasts. eg: Warm North Atlantic Drift in England, Canary cold current in Spain, Portugal etc.
- Tropical cyclones: They pile up warm waters in tropics and this warm water is the major force behind tropical cyclones.

Conclusion: Not only there are number of factors which impact the formation of ocean currents, but also the ocean current themselves play a major role in determining regional as well as global climate.

## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQ**

1. With reference to 'NISHTHA', which of the following statements is/are NOT correct?
  1. It was launched by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in August 2018.
  2. It is the largest industrial training programme in the world.
  3. Its objective is to motivate and equip teachers to encourage and foster critical thinking in students.Select the correct answer using the code given below:
  - (a) 1 only
  - (b) 2 only
  - (c) **1 and 2 only**
  - (d) 2 and 3 only
2. Consider the following statements:
  1. The Wild Ass Wildlife Sanctuary, situated in the Indian state of Gujarat is spread in the entire area of the little Rann of Kutch.
  2. The Rann of Kachchh comprises a unique example of Holocene sedimentation.
  3. The sediments of the Holocene, both continental and marine, cover the smallest area of the globe of any epoch in the geologic record.Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
  - (a) 1 only
  - (b) **1 and 2 only**
  - (c) 3 only
  - (d) 1, 2 and 3
3. With reference to a recent research published by a team of Indian and French researchers on the 'Kutch desert', consider the following statements:
  1. The hot arid desert of Kutch was once a humid sub-tropical forest.
  2. Geological changes eventually closed off the salt-flats' connection to the sea and the region turned into a large lake, eventually becoming salty wetlands.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
4. Consider the following statements:
  1. Space debris encompasses only the artificial (man-made) particles.
  2. That anti-satellite test made India only the fourth country in the world to have the capability to destroy a space-based infrastructure of an enemy country.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
5. With reference to 'State Rooftop Solar Attractiveness Index (SARAL)', which of the following statements is/are correct?
  1. It is the first of its kind index to provide a comprehensive overview of state-level measures adopted to facilitate rooftop solar deployment.
  2. It was launched by the Ministry of Science and Technology.
  3. Gujarat has been placed at the first rank in the index followed by Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only  
(b) **2 only**  
(c) 2 and 3 only  
(d) 1, 2 and 3
6. Consider the following statements:
1. The report, 'Skin and Bones Unresolved: An Analysis of Tiger Seizures from 2000-2018' has been compiled by the TRAFFIC, in partnership with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
  2. As per the report, Russia is the country with the highest number of Tiger seizure incidents.
  3. India has the world's largest tiger population in the world.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2  
(b) **2 only**  
(c) 1 and 3  
(d) 1, 2 and 3
7. What is Op-Blue Freedom, recently seen in news?
- (a) It is a new Umbrella Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF), housed at the World Bank, that supports healthy and productive oceans.
  - (b) **It is a nation-wide adaptive scuba diving programme for people with disabilities as well as the able bodied.**
  - (c) It is an initiative of Government of India to develop seaports and maritime transport sectors under Sagarmala programme.
  - (d) It is an initiative of WWF for the sustainable economic development of the ocean.
8. With reference to the Cabinet Secretary, consider the following statements:
1. Secretary in the ministry of home affairs, Rajiv Gauba has been appointed as India's new cabinet secretary.
  2. Cabinet Secretary is the ex-officio Chairman of the Civil Services Board.
  3. National Authority, Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is an office in the Cabinet Secretariat, Government of India.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2  
(b) 2 and 3  
(c) 1 and 3  
(d) **1, 2 and 3**
9. With reference to the revised SEBI (Foreign Portfolio Investors) Regulations, consider the following statements:
1. The broad-based eligibility criteria for institutional foreign investors has been removed.
  2. Offshore funds floated by Indian Mutual Funds shall now be permitted to invest in India without obtaining registration as FPI.
- 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