

GEOGRAPHY**Dindigul Lock and Kandangi Saree**

- The Geographical Indications Registry has granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag to two products from Tamil Nadu: Dindigul lock and Kandangi saree.
- The Dindigul locks are known throughout the world for their superior quality and durability, so much so that even the city (Dindigul) is called Lock City.
- Government institutions such as prisons, godowns, hospitals, and even temples use these locks instead of other machine-made ones.
- The Kandangi sarees are manufactured in the entire Karaikudi taluk in Sivaganga district.
- Worn in summer, these are characterised by large contrast borders. Some are known to have borders covering as far as two-thirds of the saree which is usually around 5.10 m-5.60 m in length.
- A GI Tag indicates that the product originates from a definite territory in India and has unique characteristics or qualities.

GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.**North East Rural Livelihood Project**

The North East Rural Livelihood Project (NERLP) has empowered the poor and improved the lives of people in about 3,00,000 rural households in Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim.

About North East Rural Livelihood Project

Launched in 2012, the NERLP is a World Bank aided, multi-state Rs. 683 crore project under the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER). The project has been implemented in 11 districts of Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim with an aim to improve rural livelihoods especially that of women, unemployed youth and the most disadvantaged, in the four North Eastern States. There are four components to the Project:

- Social empowerment
- Economic empowerment
- Partnership development
- Project management

The specific project objectives are to :

Create sustainable community institutions around women Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Youth Groups of men and women (YG) and Community Development Groups (CDG).

- Build capacity of community institutions for self governance, bottom up planning, democratic functioning with transparency and accountability.
- Increase economic and livelihood opportunities.
- Develop partnership of community institutions for natural resource management, microfinance, market linkages, and sectoral economic services.
- The project also works in partnerships with expert organizations to focus on cluster development through value chain.

Outcomes

- It has impacted the lives of about 18 lakh population, with creation of common economic assets (including rural infrastructure) worth around total Rs. 136 crores.
- Under the project, 10,462 boys and girls have been trained in various job skills and 5,494 of them are employed as of now.
- Various activities have been undertaken by CDGs such as reclamation of wasteland, construction of check-dams, plantation, horticulture projects etc.
- Livelihood activities pursued by SHG members have increased considerably, thus increasing family incomes.
- Women have become more knowledgeable and expressive and display better leadership qualities.

Fit India Movement

- The Prime Minister on the occasion of National Sports Day launched the 'Fit India Movement' as the People's Movement & urged people to make fitness their lifestyle.
- National Sports Day is celebrated every year on 29th August to honor the legendary hockey player Major Dhyan Chand Singh.
- The President of India on this occasion honoured the eminent athletes from various sports with the prestigious Khel Ratna, Arjuna Awards, Dronacharya Awards, and Dhyan Chand Award.

Campaign Angikaar and E-Course

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has launched two initiatives: Angikaar, a campaign for behavioural change and an e-Course on 'Vulnerability Atlas of India'.

Campaign Angikaar

- It has been launched for social behaviour change, focusing on issues such as water & energy conservation, waste management, health, tree plantation, sanitation and hygiene for beneficiaries of completed houses under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - PMAY (U).
 - The campaign will converge with schemes and missions of other Ministries dealing with the stated subjects.
 - The convergence would especially focus on Ujjwala for gas connection and Ayushman Bharat for health insurance to the beneficiaries of PMAY (U).
- The campaign will be initiated in all target cities on 2nd October 2019 commemorating 150th Gandhi Jayanti and culminate on the occasion of Human Rights Day, 10th December, 2019.

E-course on Vulnerability Atlas

- It is a unique course that offers awareness and understanding about natural hazards, helps identify regions with high vulnerability with respect to various hazards and specifies district-wise level of damage risks to the existing housing stock.
- The e-course will be a tool for effective & efficient disaster mitigation & management in the field of Architecture, Civil Engineering, Urban & Regional Planning, Housing & Infrastructure Planning, Construction Engineering & Management and Building & Materials Research.

Study to Check Antibiotic Resistance in Ganga

The Union Government has commissioned a study to assess the microbial diversity along the entire length of the Ganga and test if stretches of the river contain microbes that may promote "antibiotic resistance".

About:

Duration: The project is expected to last two years.

It will be undertaken by: Motilal Nehru Institute of Technology, Allahabad; National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), Nagpur; Sardar Patel Institute of Science & Technology, Gorakhpur, as well as start-up companies, Phixgen and Xcelris Labs.

Parent programme: The research project will be undertaken by the National Mission for Clean Ganga under the Jal Shakti Ministry.

Aims of the study:

- To assess the microbial diversity along the entire length of the Ganga.
- To indicate the type of "contamination" (sewage and industrial) in the river and "threat to human health (antibiotic resistance surge)".
- To identify sources of Escherichia coli, a type of bacteria that lives in the gut of animals and humans. While largely harmless, some species have been linked to aggravating antibiotic resistance.

INDIAN ECONOMY

Domestic Demand and Economy's Animal Spirits

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) annual report for the year 2018-19 has stated that the low domestic demand is holding back the animal spirits of the economy. The 'animal spirit' is a term coined by the famous British economist, John Maynard Keynes, to describe how people arrive at financial decisions, including buying and selling securities, in times of economic stress or uncertainty.

Insights from the Report

- The report emphasized the need for the revival of consumption and investment pattern in the economy during 2019-20.
- It claimed that the slowdown could be cyclical in nature rather than a deep structural one. But there are some crucial structural issues in land, labour, & agricultural marketing that require urgent reforms.
- Banks are recovering, but Non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) have irrational exuberance and considerable overleveraging.
- Cases of frauds reported by banks saw a 15% jump in 2018-19 on a year-on-year basis.

State of the Economy

- There is a broad-based cyclical downturn in several sectors of the economy like, manufacturing, hotels, trade, transport, communication and broadcasting, construction, and agriculture, which need urgent structural reforms.

- Farm sector also requires crucial intense reforms such as reforms in cold storage facilities and the market mechanism, in order to double the farmer's income by 2022.
- The investment rate (measured by the ratio of gross capital formation to GDP) had fallen to 32.3% in 2017-18, which is a cause of worry and needs grave attention.
- The Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA) ratio of the banking system declined to 9.1% in March this year from 11.2% in the previous year, which is a healthy sign for the financial system.
- Banks are staging recovery because of several reforms initiated in the past such as, Recapitalization, & Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).
- In 2018-19, retail electronic payment transactions increased by 59% to Rs 23.3 billion from Rs 14.6 billion in the previous year, resulting in an increase in the share of electronic transactions in the volume of retail payments.

Required Reforms

- Reviving consumption demand and private investment is the need of the hour. It may involve:
- Strengthening the banking and non-banking sectors,
- Increased spending on infrastructure,
- Implementation of much needed structural reforms in the areas of labour laws & taxation.
- Other legal reforms, which will enhance the Ease of Doing Business in India.
- Faster implementation of capital expenditures by public authorities and similar other measures as announced by the Finance Ministry recently in this regard have the potential to inject growth impulses into the economy.

ISSUES RELATED TO INTERNAL SECURITY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Status Of Policing In India Report 2019

A new report titled "Status of Policing in India Report 2019: Police Adequacy and Working Conditions" was released by Common Cause and the Lokniti programme of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS).

Key findings of the report:

- 28% police personnel believe that pressure from politicians is the biggest hindrance in a crime investigation. The other obstacles cited were related to society, legal systems and internal working systems in police.
- 38% personnel reported always facing pressure from politicians in cases of crime involving influential persons. Roughly one third also reported "always" facing pressure from their seniors in the police force.
- 50 % of police personnel feel that Muslims are likely to be "naturally prone" to committing crimes.
- 35 % of police personnel think it is natural for a mob to punish the "culprit" in cases of cow slaughter, and 43 % think it is natural for a mob to punish someone accused of rape.
- 37 per cent personnel feel that for minor offences, a small punishment should be handed out by the police rather than a legal trial.

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES

Compensatory Afforestation Fund

The Union Environment Ministry has transferred Rs. 47,436 crore to 27 States for afforestation. The funds are long-pending dues, part of the Compensatory Afforestation Fund (CAF), that has been collected for nearly a decade as environmental compensation from industry.

- The funds transferred are in addition to State Budget. The centre expects that states will utilize the funds towards forestry activities to achieve the objectives of the Nationally-Determined Contributions (NDCs) of increasing forest & tree cover.
- The Fund will be used as per provisions of the CAF Act and Rules.

Compensatory Afforestation Fund

- The CAF Act was passed by the centre in 2016 and the related rules were notified in 2018.
- The CAF Act was enacted to manage the funds collected for compensatory afforestation which till then was managed by ad hoc Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA).
 - Compensatory afforestation means that every time forest land is diverted for non-forest purposes such as mining or industry, the user agency pays for planting forests over an

equal area of non-forest land, or when such land is not available, twice the area of degraded forest land.

- As per the rules, 90% of the CAF money is to be given to the states while 10% is to be retained by the Centre.
- The funds can be used for treatment of catchment areas, assisted natural generation, forest management, wildlife protection and management, relocation of villages from protected areas, managing human-wildlife conflicts, training and awareness generation, supply of wood saving devices and allied activities.

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

Electromagnetic Interference, Compatibility and Pulse

The Society for Applied Microwave Electronics Engineering and Research (SAMEER) with its vast experience in the areas of Electromagnetic Interference, Compatibility and Pulse (EMI/EMC/EMP) can help Defence Services, academic institutions, public and private industries to evolve better.

Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP)

- It is a short burst of electromagnetic energy.
- A pulse's origin may be a natural or man-made in occurrence.
- It has the potential to disrupt, degrade, and damage technology and critical infrastructure systems.
- At higher energy levels a powerful EMP event such as a lightning strike can damage physical objects such as buildings and aircraft structures.
- It can also affect large geographic areas, disrupting elements critical to the nation's security and economic prosperity and could adversely affect global commerce and stability
- In a world ridden with conflicts, electromagnetism can be misused and weaponised.
- Smart cities which are run on Information and Communication Technologies are also extremely vulnerable to EMP.
- It could also directly or indirectly permeate the national security establishment, including the military and intelligence community, undermining their ability to respond to the national command authority and provide for the country's security.
- To avert threats like Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) attacks, developing futuristic defence mechanisms and creation of EMP- resistant infrastructure is necessary.

Electromagnetic Interference (EMI)

- When the radio frequency spectrum is disturbed by an external source it affects an electrical circuit by electromagnetic induction, it is called as Electromagnetic Interference.
- The disturbance may degrade the performance of the circuit or even stop it from functioning.
- Both man-made and natural sources can be generated by changing electrical currents and voltages which can create EMI.
- It can be used intentionally for radio jamming especially in electronic warfare.

Electromagnetic Compatibility (EMC)

- It is the ability of electrical equipment and systems to function acceptably in their electromagnetic environment.
- It works by limiting the unintentional generation, propagation and reception of electromagnetic energy which may cause unwanted effects such as electromagnetic interference (EMI) or even physical damage in operational equipment.
- The goal of EMC is to maintain regular operation of different equipment in a common electromagnetic environment.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The difference between Ordinary and Extraordinary is just that little 'EXTRA'.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns: Outline the salient features of the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016. What are the challenges for its implementation?

Ans:

The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016 has come into force in 2016. It extends to the whole of India except the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Salient features of Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016:

The salient features of Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016 are:

- Establishment of the National Compensatory Afforestation Fund under the Public Account of India, and a State Compensatory Afforestation Fund under the Public Account of each state.
- The payments into the funds include:
 - Compensatory afforestation,
 - Net Present Value (NPV), and
 - Any project specific payments.
- The National Fund will get 10% of funds collected and the remaining 90% will go to respective State Fund.
- The collected funds will be utilized for:
 - Afforestation,
 - Regeneration of forest ecosystem,
 - Wild life protection and
 - Infrastructure development.
- Levies are imposed on development projects that seek land inside a Reserved Forest or a Protected Area (PA) in a sanctuary or a national park.
- Establishment of National and State Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authorities (CAMPA) to manage the funds.
- NPV quantifies the services provided by the forest.
- It includes:
 - goods and services (tourism and timber);
 - regulating services (climate change); and
 - None-material benefits (recreation).
- It seeks to provide:
 - Safety,
 - Security and
 - Transparency in utilization of CAMPA funds which are currently kept in Nationalized Banks and managed by an ad-hoc body.
- These funds would be brought under the focus of Parliament and State Legislatures by transferring them to non-lapsable interest bearing funds.
- The determination of NPV will be delegated to an expert committee constituted by the central government.

The importance of the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016 are:

- Ensures the utilization of approximately Rs 50,000 crore rupees available with the Ad-hoc CAMPA for afforestation, regeneration of forest, infrastructure development and protection of wild life.
- Impact generated by the diversion of forests will get reduced,
- Backward tribal areas would get employment opportunities, and
- Increases green cover and creation of productive assets.

The challenges of Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016 are:

- Forest bureaucracy: No safeguards against the forest bureaucracy implementing compensatory-plantations on already dense forests.
- Availability of non-forest land for Afforestation: Difficulty is faced especially in smaller states and heavily forested states like Chhattisgarh to find non-forest lands for afforestation.
- Diversion of Fund: The diversion of funds for other activities would take away the focus from the prime objective of compensating for the forest cover lost to developmental or industrial development.
- Provisions of Forest Rights Act, 2006 being ignored: Consultations, an important guideline to be followed, are not stipulated for all afforestation projects nor involve the affected gram sabhas.
- Against democratic devolution: Provisions of the act are against the principles of democratic devolution as laid down in the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments.

Way ahead:

- Enable independent audit of all connected programmes.
- Implementation of the projects should be through the Compensatory Afforestation Fund to ensure effective and proper utilization of funds.
- Address concerns over its discordances with Forest Rights Act (FRA), lack of livelihood generation and eviction and poor participation of local communities.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQ

1. With reference to the North East Rural Livelihood Project (NERLP), consider the following statements:
 1. NERLP forms an important aspect of the “Act East Policy”.
 2. It is funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).
 3. The project aims to improve rural livelihoods especially that of women, unemployed youth and the most disadvantaged, in the entire North-Eastern region of India.Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - (a) 1 and 2
 - (b) **1 only**
 - (c) 1 and 3
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
2. Recently in news, the term ‘#FridaysForFuture’ is related to which of the following?
 - (a) Labour Laws
 - (b) **Climate Change**
 - (c) Industry 4.0
 - (d) None of the above
3. With reference to Angikaar Campaign, consider the following statements:
 1. The campaign focuses on social behaviour change and on issues such as water & energy conservation, tree plantation, etc.
 2. It has been launched by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.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. With reference to Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM), consider the following statements:
 1. It is a Central Sector Scheme focussing on the upliftment of urban poor by enhancing sustainable livelihood opportunities through skill development.
 2. Portal for Affordable Credit and Interest Subvention Access (PAiSA) is a platform under DAY-NULM which simplifies and streamlines the release of interest subvention for setting up individual micro-enterprises.
 3. Recently DAY-NULM was awarded the SKOCH Governance Gold Award for its Portal for Affordable Credit and Interest Subvention Access (PAiSA).Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - (a) 1 and 2
 - (b) 3 only
 - (c) **2 and 3**
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
5. With reference to Electromagnetic Pulse, consider the following statements:
 1. It is a short burst of electromagnetic energy.
 2. A lightning strike is a type of Electromagnetic Pulse.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
6. With reference to the Fit India Movement, consider the following statements:
 1. The Fit India movement is aimed at encouraging people to inculcate physical activity and sports in their day to day life.
 2. National Sports Day is celebrated on 29th August every year to mark the birth anniversary of legendary athlete Milkha Singh.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