

NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC**Eradicating Malaria By 2050**

A report published by The Lancet Commission on malaria eradication concludes that it is possible to eradicate malaria as early as 2050 — or within a generation — with the right strategies and sufficient funding.

About:

- Analyses indicate that socioeconomic and environmental trends, together with improved coverage of malaria interventions, will create a world in 2050 with malaria persisting in pockets of low-level transmission in equatorial Africa.
- To achieve eradication by 2050, the report identifies three ways:
- First, the world must improve implementation of malaria control programmes.
- Second, they must develop innovative tools to overcome the biological challenges to eradication.
- Third, malaria-endemic countries and donors must provide the financial investment needed.

Global scenario of Malaria:

- Since 2000, global malaria incidence and death rates declined by 36 and 60 %, respectively.
- In 2017, 86 countries reported 219 million cases and 4,35,000 malaria deaths, down from 262 million cases and 8,39,000 deaths in 2000.
- Today, more than half of the world's countries are malaria-free.
- However, there are over 200 million cases of malaria reported each year, claiming nearly half a million lives. Malaria cases are rising in 55 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.
- There is also inequity, with 29 countries (27 in Africa) accounting for the large majority of new cases and 85 % of global deaths in 2017. Two countries (Nigeria and Democratic Republic of Congo) account for 36 % of global cases.

INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE, HISTORY**Onam**

The President of India Ram Nath Kovind greeted fellow citizens on the eve of Onam.

About:

- Onam is the biggest and the most important festival of the state of Kerala.
- Time and Duration:
- It is a harvest festival, celebrated in the beginning of the month of Chingam, the first month of Malayalam Calendar (Kollavarsham). This corresponds with the month of August-September according to Gregorian Calendar.
- Carnival of Onam lasts from four to ten days. First day, Atham and tenth day, Thirunam are most important of all.

Background:

- According to a popular legend, the festival is celebrated to welcome King Mahabali, whose spirit is said to visit Kerala at the time of Onam.
- Elaborate feasts, folk songs, elegant dances, energetic games, elephants, boats and flowers all are a part of the dynamic festival called Onam.
- The most impressive part is the grand feast called Onasadya, prepared on Thirunam. It is a nine-course meal consisting of 11 to 13 essential dishes.
- Another key feature is Vallamkali, the Snake Boat Race, held on the river Pampa.
- There is also a tradition to play games, collectively called Onakalikal, on Onam. Men go in for rigorous sports like Talappanthukali (played with ball), Ambeyyal (Archery), Kutukutu and combats called Kayyankali and Attakalam.
- Women indulge in cultural activities.
- They make intricately designed flower mats called, Pookalam in the front courtyard of house to welcome King Mahabali.
- Kaikotti kali and Thumbi Thullal are two graceful dances performed by women on Onam.

Yadadri Temple

The Telangana government has ordered immediate removal of images of Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao and party symbols carved on the pillars of Yadadri temple after they created a furore. It issued instructions to officials that there should be no symbols other than those of religious significance in the temple complex that was being rebuilt by the government.

About:

- Nomenclature: Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Temple is also known as Yadadri and Yadagirigutta temple.
- Location: It is situated on a hillock in Yadagirigutta of Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, Telangana.
- Features: It is a Hindu temple dedicated to Narasimha, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The sanctum sanctorum or Garbhagriha of the temple is located in a cave, under a huge slating rock, which covers half the abode.
- Renovation: A new temple is being built at the old temple site. The Chief Minister of Telangana, K. Chandrashekhara Rao initiated the renovation of the temple. The work started in 2016 and the entire temple project is expected to be completed by the end of 2019.
- The temple was renamed as Yadadri by Vaishnavite ascetic Chinna Jeeyar Swamy, who is overseeing its construction.

Key features:

- The temple is built entirely in stone (by sculpting a hill of granite into a temple), probably the first one after the monolithic Kailasa Temple in the Ellora caves that was built in 8th
- The centuries-old practice of using lime mortar to join different stone parts is being used. The architecture of the temple is based on Agama Shashtra.

GEOGRAPHY**Equatorial Indian Ocean Monsoon Oscillation (EQUINOO)**

Recently, the Indian Institute of Sciences (IISc), Bengaluru has released a study about Equatorial Indian Ocean Oscillation (EQUINOO) and its effects over Indian Summer Monsoon.

Positive phase of Equatorial Indian Ocean Oscillation (EQUINOO) is favourable to the Indian summer monsoon. Summer monsoon of 2019 picked up steam despite a delayed start due to increased cloud formation which is a feature of a positive phase of EQUINOO.

EQUINOO

- It is an oscillation between enhanced cloud formation and rainfall over the Western Equatorial Indian Ocean (WEIO) and suppressed clouding over the Eastern Equatorial Indian Ocean (EEIO), west of Sumatra.
- A positive EQUINOO phase is when the surface sea temperature in WEIO is above 27.5 degree Celsius leading to enhanced clouding, which is then suppressed in the eastern equatorial Indian Ocean.
- Positive phase of the 'Equatorial Indian Ocean Oscillation (EQUINOO)
- Enhanced cloud formation and rainfall in western part of the equatorial ocean near the African coast, whereas this activity is suppressed near Sumatra.
- This phase produces good rains over India

CONSTITUTION AND POLITY**Sanjay Mitra Committee**

Centre has set up a 3-member panel to oversee the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories.

About:

- Mandate: The committee will look into the distribution of assets and liabilities of Jammu and Kashmir between two successor Union territories, which will come into existence on 31st of October this year.
- Composition: The committee will be headed by Former Defence Secretary Sanjay Mitra. It will have Retired IAS officer Arun Goyal and Retired Indian Civil Accounts Service officer Giriraj Prasad Gupta as members.
- Background: On 5th of last month, the Centre had announced the abrogation of the special status given to J&K under Article 370 and bifurcation of the state into the two UTs.

One year after 'Navtej Johar', imagining an equality law

One year since the SC judgment in Navtej Johar v. Union of India on Sec 377. We have moved from a society where transgender, intersex, lesbian, gay, bisexual and gender non-conforming persons were treated as criminals to constitutional recognition of rights to sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

Impact of the judgment

- The recognition of these rights impacts not only LGBTI persons, but everyone as it protects out rights of self-expression, equality, and autonomy.

- It laid the ground for stronger equality recognition : Judgment in the Joseph Shine case decriminalising adultery (2018) and the judgment in the Sabarimala case recognising the rights of women to enter religious shrines (2018).
- It also led to the decriminalising of same-sex intercourse in other jurisdictions such as the High Court of Botswana and inspired a constitutional challenge to Section 377A in Singapore.

Challenges remain

- Decriminalization is the first step towards the recognition of equal rights. Navtej decision has to be followed by positive steps for equality.
- Transgender persons still face a number of legal barriers and LGBTI people continue to face discrimination, exclusion, abuse, and harassment at work, school, health care settings and in public places.
- We still do not have equality and anti-discrimination law to protect persons from discrimination on different protected grounds.
- Even the only close statute, Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. only addresses discrimination against persons with disabilities in the public sector and does not address the private sector.
- Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 make some discriminatory acts criminal offenses but do not provide civil remedies such as damages for acts of discrimination.
- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 is limited to sexual harassment at work.
- The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019 addresses only transgender and intersex persons' rights. The rights of equality and non-discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation are not covered.

What's next

- Overarching legislation is needed to guarantee equality to all persons on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sex, caste, religion, age, disability, marital status, pregnancy, nationality, and other grounds.
- The law should impose obligations of equality and non-discrimination on all persons, public and private, and in the areas of education, employment, healthcare, land and housing and access to public places.
- It should provide for civil remedies to stop discriminatory behaviour, costs and damages, and positive action to make reparations.
- We need an equality law to define what equality would encompass.
- Supreme Court comes held in its privacy judgment in K.S. Puttuswamy v. Union of India (2017) that equality and liberty cannot be separated, and equality encompasses the inclusion of dignity and basic freedoms.

Conclusion Situations like what we see in J&K show us that we need an equality law that not only addresses discrimination against individuals but also addresses structural forms of discrimination and exclusion.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS

Eurasian Economic Forum

Recently, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) organized the Eurasian Economic Union meeting.

- The forum called for greater cooperation in the spheres of communication, technology, and development amongst its member-nations.
- The entire event was organized to discuss and deliberate upon China's Belt and Road Initiative, because of which India, despite being present in the SCO summit, decided to skip this meeting.
- The forum promoted the revival of the ancient Great Silk Road in Eurasia in a new, modern format.
- On the sidelines of this summit, in the meeting on economics and tourism, speakers pushed the idea of the SCO member states' Eight Wonders Exhibition Tour, in which one historical monument or place corresponding to each member country will be represented on the pamphlet.
 - For Kazakhstan, it was the Petroglyphs of Tamgaly,
 - For China, it was the Daming Palace of the Tang dynasty, and
 - For India, the monument chosen was the 182-metre Statue Of Unity of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

INDIAN ECONOMY**India's Second Multi Modal Terminal on Ganga at Sahibganj**

Recently, Prime Minister has inaugurated India's second riverine Multi Modal terminal built at Sahibganj in Jharkhand. This is being constructed on National Waterway-1 (River Ganga) under Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP) aided by World Bank. The First MultiModal Terminal has been constructed at Varanasi over River Ganga.

Importance of Multi-Modal terminal

- Industries in Jharkhand and Bihar will be opened up to the global market
- Accessibility for Indo-Nepal cargo connectivity through waterways route.
- Easier transportation of domestic coal from the local mines in Rajmahal area to various thermal power plants located along National Waterway-1.
- Stone chips, fertilisers, cement and sugar are also expected to be transported through the terminal.
- The connectivity to Kolkata, Haldia and further to the Bay of Bengal through convergence of Road-Rail-River Transport at Sahibganj.
- Connectivity to North-East States through Bangladesh by river-sea route.

CHC Farm Machinery

Union Minister of State for Agriculture launched a multilingual Mobile App "CHC Farm Machinery" during a conference on Crop Residue Management in New Delhi.

About:

- The Mobile App "CHC Farm Machinery" will allow farmers to avail custom hiring services of CHCs located in a radius of 50 km.
- The App connects the farmers with Custom Hiring Centers (CHCs) in their area. With this, farmers can now get affordable access to cutting-edge technology at their doorsteps.
- It can be downloaded on any android phone from Google Play Store.

Custom Hiring Centers (CHCs)

- In 2010, Custom hiring centres (CHCs) for farm implements were established in 100 National Innovations on Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA) villages by government of India.
- A committee of farmers' nominated by the gram sabha manages the custom hiring centre.
- More than 25 different types of farm machinery are stocked in 100 CHCs, the most popular are rotavator, zero till drill, drum seeder, multi-crop planter, power weeder and chaff cutter.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE ETC**Bombay blood group**

Over the last two weeks, the "Bombay blood group", a rare blood type, has been at the centre of attention in Mumbai's healthcare scene. Demand for the blood type has coincidentally spiked at hospitals, but supply has been scarce.

Bombay blood group

- The four most common blood groups are A, B, AB and O.
- The rare, Bombay blood group was first discovered in Mumbai (then Bombay) in 1952.
- Each red blood cell has antigen over its surface, which helps determine which group it belongs to.
- The Bombay blood group, also called hh, is deficient in expressing antigen H, meaning the RBC has no antigen H.
- For instance, in the AB blood group, both antigens A and B are found. A will have A antigens; B will have B antigens. In hh, there are no A or B antigens.

Rare in India, rarer globally

- Globally, the hh blood type has an incidence of one in four million.
- It has a higher incidence in South Asia; in India, one in 7,600 to 10,000 are born with this type.
- This blood type is more common in South Asia than anywhere else because of inbreeding and close community marriages.
- It is genetically passed. Shared common ancestry among Indians, Sri Lankans, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis has led to more cases of hh blood phenotype in this region.

Testing for the group

- To test for hh blood, an Antigen H blood test is required.
- Often the hh blood group is confused with the O group.
- The difference is that the O group has Antigen H, while the hh group does not.
- If anyone lacks Antigen H, it does not mean he or she suffers from poor immunity or may be more prone to diseases.

- Their counts for haemoglobin, platelets, white blood cells and red blood cells are similar to the count of others based on their health index.
- Because of rarity, however, they do face problems during blood transfusion.

Transfusion limitations

- The individuals with Bombay blood group can only be transfused autologous blood or blood from individuals of Bombay hh phenotype only which is very rare.
- Rejection may occur if they receive blood from A, B, AB or O blood group. In contrast, hh blood group can donate their blood to ABO blood types.

ODISHA DEVELOPMENT

Odisha conundrum: Top-5 in economic growth, Top-6 in Poor count!

A big paradox stares at Odisha. When the State with an average annual growth rate of around 8.1 per cent for the period 2012-19 figured among the top-5 high growth states nationally, it languished among the bottom – 6 poorest regions in the country.

- While nearly 4 (3.6) per 10 people in the State are categorised as poor (living below \$1 a day), the intensity of poverty (means deprivation among the poor) in Odisha seems very high. Moreover, 1 in every 10 persons lives in severe poverty in the State. And another two in every ten individuals are greatly vulnerable to poverty, which means the risk of they being pushed into the category of poor remains very high.
- Such a tale of the poor count in Odisha was recently revealed jointly by Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHDI), an arm of University of Oxford, and UNDP.
- The OPHDI – UNDP's Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) has put Odisha among the bottom - 6 poorest regions in the country by assigning it an overall score of 0.16. The State is behind Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Assam.
- Though the Odisha Government has been claiming of achieving an inclusive growth, the MPI tells a different story.
- Odisha is the only state in the top-5 club that shows such a high incidence and intensity of poverty in the country. The other states in the club like Gujarat, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have incidence of poverty hovering between 15-21 per cent vis-a-vis Odisha's 35.9 per cent.
- The details throw more grave facts. The big worry is when around 16 per cent of population in Odisha were vulnerable to poverty in 2015, the count has climbed to 19.1 per cent in 2019.
- Even as the State has Re 1-a-kg rice scheme under NFSA, inaccessibility to nutrition has been the biggest contributor to poverty in Odisha. The bottom-line of the findings is Odisha ranked high in the MPI because, the accessibility to two square meals a day is very poor in the State. The report puts the contribution of nutrition to State's MPI at around 30 per cent.
- Another big disclosure is, despite a plethora of housing schemes (PMAY (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana), Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana etc), lack of accessibility to housing in the State has been the second biggest contributor to the MPI in Odisha.
- Other multiplier factors for State's high MPI are large scale open defecation, high use of traditional/fossil cooking fuels etc. Above all, poor income leading to poor assets at hand played the top-up factor in manufacturing high MPI rating for Odisha nationally.
- The contributing factors to poverty in Odisha hint at the inequitable economic growth in the State. Because, when the State's Eco-Survey 2018-19 has claimed of Odisha's faster increase in the per capita income, the reflection on ground, however, is not discernible.
- The OPHDI – UNDP has computed the MPI by taking into account over 10 indicators divided into three dimensions such as education, health and standard of living (from nutrition to sanitation, cooking fuel, water & electricity).

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns Critically Examine the issues involved with the IPC-Sec 377.

Answer

Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code 1860, a relic of British India, states that “whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal shall be punished.” This included private consensual sex between adults of same sex. After the recent SC judgement, provisions of Section 377 remain applicable in cases of non-consensual carnal intercourse with adults, all acts of carnal intercourse with minors, and acts of bestiality.

Issues Involved

➤ Fundamental Rights

- Sexual orientation and its relationship to the Fundamental Rights of the individuals has been at the heart of the debate.
- SC in its judgement specifically said that the Right to Privacy and the protection of sexual orientation lie at the core of the fundamental rights guaranteed by Article 14 (Equality before Law), Article 15 (Prohibition of discrimination on the basis of race, religion, caste, sex, place of birth), Article 21 (Protection of life and liberty) and Article 19 (Freedom of expression) of the Constitution.
- The Supreme Court, while decriminalising consensual sex between homosexuals, observed that members of the LGBTQ community possessed the same fundamental rights as others.

➤ Health Issues

- Criminalisation of homosexuality leads to discrimination and results in LGBTQ people getting poor or inadequate access to services within the health system.
- It also creates barriers to both the availability and the ability to access HIV prevention, testing and treatment services.
- Public health evidence also indicates a clear relationship of a lack of social acceptance and legal rights with substance abuse, violence, isolation, and mental illness.

➤ Law and morality

- Those against legalising gay sex argue that it is against the moral values of the society. However, activists arguing for it say what is forbidden in religion need not be prohibited in law.

Landmark Judgements related to issues

- Naz Foundation vs. Govt. of NCT of Delhi (2009) - Delhi High Court struck off section 377, legalising consensual homosexual activities between adults.
- Suresh Kumar Koushal Case (2013) -SC overturned the previous judgment by Delhi High Court (2009) that decriminalised homosexual acts and criminalised homosexuality once again. SC argued that in 150 years, less than 200 persons had been prosecuted under Section

377. Therefore, "plight of sexual minorities" could not be used as argument for deciding constitutionality of law. Further, SC ruled that it was for the legislature to look into desirability of deleting section 377 of IPC.

- Justice K.S. Puttaswamy vs. Union of India (2017)- SC ruled that Fundamental Right to Privacy is intrinsic to life and liberty and thus, comes under Article 21 of the Indian constitution. SC declared that bodily autonomy was an integral part of the right to privacy. This bodily autonomy has within its ambit sexual orientation of an individual.
- Navtej Singh Johar vs. Union Of India (2018) - Decriminalised homosexuality dismissing the position taken by SC in Suresh Kumar Koushal case (2013) that the LGBTQ community constitute a minuscule minority and so there was no need to decriminalise homosexual sex.

Impact of Decriminalising Homosexuality

- Sexual minorities in India are one step closer to living with dignity.
- LGBTQ Community will be able to come out in the open with their sexual preferences.
- Discrimination faced by them in accessing health and their harassment by Police will cease.
- Decriminalisation has also been associated with more self-acceptance as well as psychological and emotional security among LGBTQ Community.
- This judgement will spur LGBTQ Community to demand more progressive laws like Gay marriage laws, right to form partnerships, inheritance, employment equality, protection from gender-identity-based discrimination among others.
- The judgment has opened up grey areas, and guidelines will be needed to deal with cases where, say, a gay individual withdraws "consent" and lodges a complaint against the partner. India's laws on sexual assault do not recognise men as victims of rape.

Way forward

- Though the judgement goes a long way in removing the stigma attached with the LGTBQ community, there is need for a multi pronged approach to deal with issue of prejudice and discrimination prevalent in society against them.
- The LGTBQ community needs an anti-discrimination law that empowers them to build productive lives and relationships irrespective of gender identity or sexual orientation and place the onus to change on state and society and not the individual.
- Government bodies, especially related to Health, and Law and Order need to be sensitised and made aware about the changed position of law to ensure that the LGBTQ community is not denied public services or harassed for their sexual orientation.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQS

1. "Sanjay Mitra committee", recently seen in news is related to which of the following aspects?
 - (a) Expert Committee on Tribal Health.
 - (b) Assess the socio-economic status of tribals.
 - (c) To look into various issues related to Linguistic and Religious minorities in India.
 - (d) To oversee the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories.**
2. With reference to the global scenario of Malaria, consider the following statements:
 1. Today, more than half of the world's countries are malaria-free.
 2. Two countries (India and South Africa) account for 36 % of global cases.
 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
3. With reference to the Yadadri temple being renovated in Telangana, consider the following statements:
 1. The temple is built entirely in stone.
 2. The architecture of the temple is based on Agama Shashtra.
 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 the "CHC Farm Machinery", consider the following statements:
 1. The Mobile App "CHC Farm Machinery" will allow farmers to avail custom hiring services of CHCs located in a radius of 50 km.
 2. In 2010, Custom hiring centres (CHCs) for farm implements were established in 100 National Innovations on Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA) villages by government of India.
 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. Onam is the biggest and the most important festival of which of the following Indian states?
 - (a) Tamil Nadu
 - (b) Kerala**
 - (c) Andhra Pradesh
 - (d) Karnataka
6. With reference to the Bombay blood group (hh blood) consider the following statements:
 1. It is a rare blood group that is deficient in antigen H.
 2. The individuals with the Bombay blood group can only be transfused blood from individuals having hh blood.
 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
7. With reference to Equatorial Indian Ocean Monsoon Oscillation (EQUINOO). Consider the following statements:
 1. It signifies enhanced cloud formation and rainfall over the Eastern Equatorial Indian Ocean compared to Western Equatorial Indian Ocean.
 2. The positive phase of EQUINOO compliments the El-Nino effect on Indian monsoon.
 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**
8. Consider the following statements:
 1. Government of India has recently launched India's second riverine Multi-Modal terminal in Assam over river Brahmaputra.
 2. This is being constructed under the Jal Marg Vikas Project.
 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
9. Which of the following countries are member states of the Eurasian Economic Union?
 1. Armenia
 2. Belarus
 3. Turkmenistan
 4. Kazakhstan
 5. Russia
 Select the correct option using the code given below:
 - (a) 3, 4 and 5
 - (b) 2, 3 and 5
 - (c) 1, 2, 4 and 5**
 - (d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
10. Which of the following cases are related to the issues related to the Section 377 of the IPC?
 1. Naz Foundation Case, 2009
 2. Suresh Kumar Koushal Case, 2013
 3. Navtej Singh Johar Case, 2018
 Select the correct answer using codes given below
 - (a) 1 and 2
 - (b) 1 and 3
 - (c) 2 and 3
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3**