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

### Bru Refugees

Since October 1, six members of the Reang or Bru community have reportedly died in relief camps in Tripura, after the Centre decided to stop food supplies and cash dole. Now, the Tripura government announced that it would restore food supplies.

Bru Tribe:

- Residence: The Brus, also referred to as the Reangs, are spread across the north-eastern states of Tripura, Assam, Manipur, and Mizoram. In Tripura, they are recognised as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group.
- Culture: They speak the Reang dialect of Kokborok language which is locally referred to as Kau Bru. Their Hojagiri folk dance is well known all over the world. 'Buisu', not 'bihu' is the most popular festival of Reang tribes.

Conflict in Mizoram:

- In 1995, Mizos, the majority tribe of the state, demanded that Brus be left out of the state's electoral rolls as they contended that they are not indigenous to Mizoram.
- In 1997, ethnic violence forced the Brus to flee the state in large numbers to neighbouring Tripura. Currently, around 35,000 (more than 5,000 families) Bru refugees are living in Tripura camps.
- In June 2018, community leaders from the Bru camps signed an agreement in Delhi with the Centre and the two state governments, providing for repatriation in Mizoram. But most camp residents rejected the agreement as the package does not guarantee their safety in Mizoram.

## GEOGRAPHY- PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC

### Feni River

The Union Cabinet has given ex-post facto approval for the MoU between India and Bangladesh on withdrawal of 1.82 cusec of water from Feni River by India for drinking water supply scheme for Sabroom town Tripura, India.

Benefits:

- Feni River is a trans-boundary river that originates in Tripura and flows through Sabroom town and then enters Bangladesh. Muhuri River, also called Little Feni, from Noakhali District joins it near its mouth.
- As on date, there is no water sharing agreement on Feni river between India and Bangladesh. The present supply of drinking water to Sabroom town is inadequate. The ground water in this region has high iron content.
- Implementation of this scheme would benefit over 7000 population of Sabroom town .

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

### Shaala Darpan

Minister for Human Resource Development (HRD) launched Shaala Darpan portal for Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti.

About:

- Shaala Darpan is an end to end E-Governance school automation and management system for Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS).
- This single integrated platform has been developed for information sharing and knowledge dissemination for the 22000 employees and over 2 lakh students across schools and offices of Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti. It will bring transparency in Navodaya Vidyalayas.
- The system has several pluggable components that can interact with each other. These are:
o School Information and Management System for complete school automation
    o Bilingual Content Management Portal for information dissemination
    o Employee ERP to manage the day to day activities of all employees
    o Budget & Finance management system
    o Inventory & Store management system
    o Library management system

Related Info :

The Navodaya Vidyalayas are co-educational residential schools established by the Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti which is an autonomous organization under MHRD to provide quality modern education.

## Government e-Marketplace (GeM)

Government e-Marketplace (GeM) signed MoU with Central Bank of India for Payment Related Services.

About:

- GeM is an online market place that was launched in 2016.
- Objective: To ensure that public procurement of goods and services in India (done by government bodies) worth more than Rs. 5 lakh crore annually is carried out through the online platform.
- It has been developed by Directorate General of Supplies and Disposal (DGS&D) with technical support of National E-Governance Division (NEGD), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

Benefits of GeM:

- Transparency: GeM eliminates human interface in vendor registration, order placement and payment processing, to a great extent.
- Efficiency: Direct purchase on GeM can be done in a matter of minutes.
- Secure and safe: GeM is a completely secure platform and all the documents on GeM are e-Signed at various stages by the buyers and sellers.
- Savings to the Government: The transparency, efficiency and ease of use of the GeM portal has resulted in a substantial reduction in prices on GeM.

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS

## Bimstec Ports' Conclave

The Minister for Shipping inaugurated the first ever 'BIMSTEC Ports' Conclave' at Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh to be held on 7-8 November 2019.

About:

- The Ports' First Conclave of BIMSTEC nations is expected to explore the possibility of increasing economic cooperation by furthering EXIM trade and coastal shipping.
- The Conclave will also discuss on various investment opportunities, best practices adopted for productivity and safety at Ports.

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC):

- BIMSTEC is an international organization involving a group of countries in South Asia and South East Asia.
- Membership: It comprises seven countries lying in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal — Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand.
- Objective: Its primary objective is to improve connectivity between the members through multi-modal transport corridors. In general, there are '14 priority sectors' which cover almost all areas of cooperation such as energy, handling of refugees, anti-narcotic measures.

## Samudra Shakti

INS Kamorta, an Anti-Submarine Warfare Corvette is jointly exercising with Indonesian Warship KRI Usman Harun in the Bay of Bengal as part of the ongoing Indian Navy – Indonesian Navy Bilateral Exercise 'Samudra Shakti' from 06 Nov to 07 Nov 19.

About:

- Samudra Shakti is a Bilateral Naval Exercise between Navies of India and Indonesia.
- The aim of the exercise is to strengthen bilateral relations, expand maritime co-operation, enhance interoperability and exchange best practices.
- The second edition of this joint exercise includes manoeuvres, Surface Warfare exercises, Air Defence exercises, Weapon firing drills, Helicopter Operations and Boarding Operations.
- The strategic partnership between India and Indonesia was elevated to 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership' during the visit of Prime Minister of India in May 2018 and Defence co-operation has been a significant pillar in this partnership.

## INDIAN ECONOMY

## A Special Fund For Housing Projects

The Union Cabinet has approved the creation of an Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) of Rs. 25,000 crore to revive stalled affordable and middle-income housing projects across the country.

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Key Points

Fund Size:

- The fund size will initially be Rs. 25,000 crore with the government providing Rs. 10,000 crore and the State Bank of India (SBI) and the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) providing the balance.
- However, the fund is not capped at Rs. 25,000 crore and will likely grow as a lot of sovereign funds have shown interest.

Fund Management:

- The fund will be set up as Category-II Alternative Investment Fund registered with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).
- It will be managed by SBICAP Ventures Limited (SVL). It is a wholly owned subsidiary of SBI Capital Markets Ltd.

Eligible Projects: All affordable and middle-income housing projects that are

- Net worth positive
- Registered with the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) and
- That have not been deemed liquidation-worthy.
- Stuck projects classified as Non Performing Assets and those undergoing resolution under the National Company Law Tribunal will also be eligible for funding — a change from the announcement made in September 2019.

Funding Procedure:

- The fund will provide money in escrow accounts that can be used only for completion of the identified projects.
- The receivables from the project will be used to repay the fund.

Expected Benefits

- There are more than 1,600 housing projects which are stalled. The fund is expected to revive the same.
- This will help in alleviating stress for homebuyers, real estate players as well as banks that have backed these projects.

Impact on Other Sectors

- Revival of the real estate sector will also lead to demand of cement, iron & steel industries, thus also generating employment.
- The fund will also generate commercial return for its investors.
- The AIF is expected to pool investments from government-related and private investors, including public financial institutions, sovereign wealth funds, public and private banks, etc.

**Core Investment Companies**

A working group formed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recommended measures to strengthen Core Investment Companies (CIC). The group is headed by the former Corporate Affairs Secretary - Tapan Ray.

Key Recommendations

Registration: The current threshold of Rs 100 crore asset size and access to public funds for registration as CIC should be retained.

Related to Group Companies:

- Every group having a CIC should have a Group Risk Management Committee.
- The number of layers of CICs in a group should be restricted to two. As such, any CIC within a group shall not make investments through more than a total of two layers of CICs, including itself.

For Better Governance:

- CICs need to induct independent directors, conduct internal audits and prepare consolidated financial statements.
- There is a need for ring fencing boards of CICs by excluding employees/executive directors of group firms from its board.
- CICs should constitute board-level committees — Audit Committee, Nomination and Remuneration Committee and Group Risk Management Committee.

For Step - down CICs:

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- A Step-down CIC means the subsidiary company of a company which is a subsidiary of another company.
- Step-down CICs may not be permitted to invest in any other CIC, while allowing them to invest freely in other group companies.
- Capital contribution by a CIC in a step-down CIC, over and above 10% of its owned funds, should be deducted from its adjusted net worth, as applicable to other NBFCs.

## ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES

### Indian Air Quality Interactive Repository (IndAir)

The National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) along with the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has launched India's first web repository documenting air quality studies done in the last 60 years.

About:

- Indian Air quality Interactive Repository (IndAIR) is CSIR-Neeri's web facility.
- It has archived approximately 700 scanned materials from pre-internet era, 1,215 research articles, 170 reports and case studies, 100 cases and over 2,000 statutes to provide the history of air pollution research and legislation in the country.
- The repository, one of the few such facilities in the world, has the maximum number of studies — 262 — concerning Delhi-NCR.
- IndAIR reveals air pollution was recognised as a subject in India even in 1905, when a study was carried out for Bengal Smoking Nuisance Act. The studies by S C Roy of the meteorological office detailed on cloud seeding to deal with famine-ridden areas in 1954.

National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI):

- The CSIR-National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (CSIR-NEERI) is a pioneer laboratory in the field of environmental science and engineering and part of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). NEERI falls under the Ministry of Science and Technology (India) of central government.
- It was established in Nagpur in 1958 and has five zonal laboratories at Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Mumbai.

### Climate Change And Heat-Induced Mortality In India

A new study titled, 'Climate Change and Heat-Induced Mortality in India', was conducted by the Climate Impact Lab in collaboration with the Tata Centre for Development at the University of Chicago.

About:

- It has projected that 5 million more Indians may die per year from extreme heat due to climate change by 2100.
- India's energy use will more than double in the next 20 years, driven largely by fossil fuels. If emissions continue to be as high as they are at present, India will see a death rate of about 60 per 100,000 by 2100.
- This projected death rate is double the current death rate from oral cancer in India, which is the most common cancer in the country.
- The National Capital Region is projected to see 22 times more extremely hot days and more than 23,000 climate-related deaths annually by 2100 in a high-emission scenario.
- Odisha is projected to see the highest increase in the number of extremely hot days, at about 30 times more than what it is today. Punjab is projected to experience 85 extremely hot days a year, the highest among all states.
- Overall, the six states of Uttar Pradesh (4,02,280), Bihar (1,36,372), Rajasthan (1,21,809), Andhra Pradesh (1,16,920), Madhya Pradesh (1,08,370) and Maharashtra (1,06,749) are projected to account for over 64 per cent of the heat-related deaths.

# DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

**Qns: What are Common Service Centres? How do they promote the concept of good governance?**

Common Services Centre (CSC) programme is an initiative of the Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY),that serve as access points for delivery of various electronic services to villages in India, thereby contributing to a digitally and financially inclusive society.

It is a strategic cornerstone of the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), as part of its commitment in the National Common Minimum Programme to introduce e-governance on a massive scale.

CSC e-Governance Services India Limited is a Special Purpose Vehicle (CSC SPV) incorporated under theCompanies Act, 1956 by the MeitY, to monitor the implementation of the Common Services Centers Scheme. It provides a centralized collaborative framework for delivery of services to citizens through CSCs, besides ensuring systemic viability and sustainability of the scheme

Advantages of CSCs:

- The CSCs provide high quality and cost-effective video, voice and data content and services, in the areas of e-governance, education, health, telemedicine, entertainment as well as other private services.
- A highlight of the CSCs is that it offers web-enabled e-governance services in rural areas, including application forms, certificates, and utility payments such as electricity, telephone and water bills.
- In addition to the universe of G2C services, a wide variety of content and services that are offered are:
    - o Agriculture Services (Agriculture, Horticulture, Sericulture, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, Veterinary)
    - o Education & Training Services (School, College, Vocational Education, Employment, etc.)
    - o Health Services (Telemedicine, Health Check-ups, Medicines)
    - o Rural Banking & Insurance Services (Micro-credit, Loans, Insurance)
    - o Entertainment Services (Movies, Television)
    - o Commercial Services (DTP, Printing, Internet Browsing, Village level BPO)
    - o They promote the concept of good governance
- Accountability: Accountability can be attained in governance by making the entire process simple, clear and transparent, giving high priority to the needs and issues of society, ensuring security and safety to citizens, and facilitating free flow of information.
- Transparency: One important reason for the corruption is the unequal access to information or resources. The introduction of CSC scheme and ICT results in easy availability of information to everyone thereby promoting transparency.
- Participatory: The CSC is positioned as a change agent - that would promote rural entrepreneurship, build rural capacities and livelihoods, enable community participation and collective action for social change - through a bottom-up model with focus on the rural citizen
- Effective and Efficient: The objective is to develop a platform that can enable Government, private and social sector organizations to align their social and commercial goals for the benefit of the rural population in the remotest corners of the country through a combination of IT-based as well as non-IT-based services.
- Easy and integrated service delivery: The CSC Scheme, will act as the front-end delivery points for Government, private and social sector services to rural citizens of India, in an integrated manner.
- Responsiveness: The actors involved in the governance process become responsive when they are able to provide necessary services and information in a reasonable time frame. CSCs in India can ensure the timely delivery of services.
- Equity and Inclusiveness: It ensures equal opportunity to all and also helps to ensure safety and security to the citizen. CSC due to its wider reach promotes inclusiveness.

Conclusion

Undertaking such a mammoth task calls for active participation and close interaction amongst various stakeholders such as State Governments, local bodies, opinion makers and agencies/ institutions involved or having interest, commercial or otherwise, in rural areas/ markets.

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQs

1. With reference to the a 'Special Window for funding affordable housing projects', consider the following statements:
   1. For the purposes of the fund, the government shall act as the Sponsor and the total commitment to be infused by the Government would be upto INR 10,000 crore.
   2. The fund will be set up as a Category-11 AIF (Alternate Investment Fund) debt fund registered with SEBI and would be professionally run.

   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

2. With reference to the Shaala Darpan portal, consider the following statements:
   1. It is an end to end E-Governance school automation and management system for Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS).
   2. It was recently launched by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

   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. The Minister for Shipping recently inaugurated the first ever 'BIMSTEC Ports' Conclave' at which of the following places?
   **(a) Visakhapatnam**
   (b) Delhi
   (c) Chennai
   (d) Surat

4. Feni River is a trans-boundary river that originates in which of the following states?
   (a) Assam
   (b) Mizoram
   (c) Nagaland
   **(d) Tripura**

5. Which of the following organisations has recently launched India's first web repository documenting air quality studies done in the last 60 years?
   (a) Centre for Science and Environment
   (b) Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune
   (c) Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority
   **(d) None of the above.**

6. With reference to the Government e-Marketplace (GeM), consider the following statements:
   1. It is an online market place that was launched in 2016.
   2. It has been developed by Directorate General of Supplies and Disposal (DGS&D) with technical support of National E-Governance Division (NEGD), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

   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. Samudra Shakti is a Bilateral Naval Exercise between Navies of India and:
   (a) Thailand
   (b) Maldives
   (c) Sri Lanka
   **(d) Indonesia**

8. With reference to a new study titled, 'Climate Change and Heat-Induced Mortality in India', consider the following statements:
   1. It has projected that 1.5 million more Indians may die per year from extreme heat due to climate change by 2100.
   2. The National Capital Region is projected to see 22 times more extremely hot days and more than 23,000 climate-related deaths annually by 2100 in a high-emission scenario.

   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. The Brus or Reangs tribe, often mentioned in news, are recognised as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group in which of the following states?
   **(a) Tripura**
   (b) Himachal Pradesh
   (c) Uttarakhand
   (d) Sikkim