

NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC**National Awards For The Empowerment Of Persons With Disabilities (Pwds)**

The Vice President of India Venkiah Naidu will Confer National Awards for outstanding work done towards empowerment of PwDs on International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3rd December.

About:

- On the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities i.e. 3rd December, the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice confers National Awards for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.
- These are conferred on Individuals, Institutions, Organizations, State/District etc for their outstanding achievements and work done towards empowerment of Persons with Disabilities every year.
- All the 21 disabilities specified in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 have been included under the National Award Guidelines.
- For the year 2019, the awards are being given under 14 categories such as Best Employee/Self-Employed Person with Disabilities; Best Innovation or Product, aimed at improving the life of Persons with Disabilities; Best District in providing rehabilitation services, Best Sports-person with Disabilities etc.

INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE, HISTORY**Operation 'Clean Art'**

Operation Clean Art was recently conducted in India to ensure that the mongoose hair brush trade be closed down across the country.

About:

- Operation Clean Art was the first pan India operation to crack down on the smuggling of mongoose hair in the country.
- It was conceived by Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB).
- It was a planned raid, not to apprehend criminals, but to check on organised factories that were making paint brushes with mongoose hair.
- Raids were carried out not only in Uttar Pradesh, but also at Jaipur in Rajasthan, Mumbai and Pune in Maharashtra, and in Kerala, on the same day. The entire operation across the country yielded 54,352 brushes and 113 kg of raw hair.

Related Info:

- There are six species of mongoose found in India.
- The mongoose is listed under Schedule II of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 - making its hunting, possession, transportation and trade a punishable offence.
- Mongoose hair is in high demand among artists worldwide because of the quality of brushes they help create, which define lines clearly and hold paint properly. India is a major source for these brushes. For about 150 kg of mongoose hair, at least 6,000 animals would have been killed.

Hornbill Festival

The 20th Edition of Hornbill Festival began at Naga Heritage Kisama in Nagaland this evening.

About:

- Venue: It is held at Naga Heritage Village, Kisama which is about 12 km from Kohima in Nagaland.
- Duration: It is annually held from 1 - 10 December.
- Background: The first festival was held in 2000.
- Organizers: It is organized by the State Tourism and Art & Culture Departments of the Government of Nagaland.
- Objective: To encourage inter-tribal interaction and to promote cultural heritage of Nagaland.

Key highlights of festival:

- Festival highlights include the traditional Naga Morungs exhibition and the sale of arts and crafts, food stalls, song and dance shows, indigenous games etc.
- One of the major highlights of this festival is the Hornbill International Rock Festival where local and international rock bands perform.

Nomenclature:

The festival is named after the bird "Indian hornbill", which is displayed in the folklore of most of the state's tribes. There are 9 hornbill species in India of which Great Hornbill is the most famous. It is also called the 'Festival of Festivals'.

CONSTITUTION AND POLITY

Demand for Reforms in Rajya Sabha

Recently, the members of Parliament have demanded equal representation for states and more time to speak in Rajya Sabha.

Representation for States

- The Upper House is the Council of States and thus it is expected to reflect the true spirit of federalism through the uniform representation for all states.
- But, currently, the seats in Rajya Sabha are allotted on the basis of population of the particular state. Hence, the number of representatives varies from state to state. For example, Uttar Pradesh has 31 members while Tripura has 1 member only.
- Also, smaller states need to have more number of representatives in the house according to issues and needs of the state.
- Currently, the northeastern states, barring Assam have only one seat each in the Rajya Sabha.
- The recent demand asks for allocation of seats in Rajya Sabha on the lines of USA.
- In the USA, all states are given equal representation in the Senate, irrespective of their population. The USA has 50 states and the Senate has 100 members—2 from each state.

Time to Speak in Rajya Sabha

- Currently, the independent or nominated members and MPs from smaller parties get less time to speak in the House. The inadequacy of time to speak for the nominated members restricts the benefits from their special expertise.
- The members of Rajya Sabha are given time to speak according to the strength of their party in the House.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS

Exercise Surya Kiran – XIV

Joint military exercise 'SURYA KIRAN – XIV' between India and Nepal will be conducted at Salijhandi, Rupendehi district of Nepal from 03 to 16 December 2019.

About:

- Exercise SURYA KIRAN - XIV is an annual event which is conducted alternatively in Nepal and India.
- The aim of this exercise is to conduct a Battalion level combined training between Indian Army and Nepal Army to increase interoperability in jungle warfare and counter terrorist operations in mountainous terrain, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief etc.

Saudi Arabia Becomes First Arab Nation to Head G20

Recently, Saudi Arabia became the first Arab nation to take over the G20 Presidency on December 1, 2019.

- It has taken over from Japan and it will host the G20 Summit in its capital, Riyadh on November 21 and 22, 2020.
- The theme of Summit- "Realising Opportunities of the 21st Century for All".

The three key aims of the G20 Presidency, 2020 are:

- Empowering People by creating the conditions in which all people mainly women and youth can live, work and thrive.
- Safeguarding the Planet by fostering collective efforts to protect our global common-pool resources.
- Shaping New Frontiers by adopting long-term and bold strategies to share the benefits of innovation and technological advancement.

Challenges

- As the presiding nation, Saudi Arabia has to work towards mitigating global risks like climate change, demographic issues, such as low birth rates, rising life expectancy and aging societies which requires coordinated efforts at global level. However, rising populism and nationalism may prevent the progress at the multilateral level.

- It has promoted a liberalisation drive, including granting greater rights to women. However, incidents like the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi drew intense global criticism over human rights issues in Saudi Arabia.
- Therefore, G20 member states should exert pressure on the Saudi Arabia for its authoritative policies and hold it accountable for its human rights obligations.

G20

- The G20 is an informal group of 19 countries and the European Union, with representatives of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.
- The G20 membership comprises a mix of the world's largest advanced and emerging economies, representing about two-thirds of the world's population, 85% of global gross domestic product, 80% of global investment and over 75% of global trade.

Headquarter

- The G20 operates as a forum and not as an organisation. Therefore, it does not have any permanent secretariat or management and administrative structure.

Origin

- 1997-1999 Asian Financial Crisis: This was a ministerial-level forum which emerged after G7 invited both developed and developing economies. The finance ministers and central bank governors began meeting in 1999.
- Amid 2008 Financial Crisis the world saw the need for a new consensus-building at the highest political level. It was decided that the G20 leaders would begin meeting once annually.

Members

- The members of the G20 are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union.
- One nation holds the Chair every year, known as 'G20 Presidency'. Argentina chaired the G20 summit of 2018 and Japan for 2019.

ISSUES RELATED TO INTERNAL SECURITY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Pathagarhi Movement

Recently, the Union government withdrew amendments to the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 which would have diluted tribal rights over forests. These amendments evoked sustained protests by tribal and environmental activists.

The state government of Jharkhand tried to amend the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act, 1908 and Santhal Parganas Tenancy Act, 1876 to facilitate easier land acquisition norms which added to the problem. They were also withdrawn later on.

However, these decisions gave rise to the Pathalgarhi incidents in the tribal belt demanding implementation of the FRA and provisions of the Panchayats (Extension of Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), 1996.

Pathagarhi Rebellion

- It is a protest in which tribal people embed stone slabs (pathals) on the outskirts of a village or area, demarcating the limits of where their writ runs, prohibiting the entry of any institution connected to the state.
- It is mainly concentrated in the four districts in the State— namely Khunti, Gumla, Simdega and West Singhbhum.
- In Munda tribal custom, placement of a huge stone marks the death of a person. The Pathalgadi movement draws on this tradition of honouring the community's ancestors.

The Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Area) Act, 1996

- It safeguards and preserves the traditions and customs of the people, and their cultural identity, community resources, customary mode of dispute resolution.
- PESA empowers Gram Sabha/Panchayat at an appropriate level with the right to mandatory consultation in land acquisition, resettlement and rehabilitation of displaced persons.
- It seeks to reduce alienation in tribal areas as they will have better control over the utilisation of public resources.
- It will help minimise exploitation of tribal population as they will be able to control and manage money lending, consumption and sale of liquor and also village markets.

- It promotes cultural heritage through the preservation of traditions, customs and cultural identity of tribal population.

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES

Gangetic Dolphins

According to data provided in Rajya Sabha by Ministry of Environment, At last count, the rivers of Assam and Uttar Pradesh respectively had 962 and 1,275 Gangetic dolphins (or *Platanista gangetica*).

About:

- The population assessment in Assam was done between January and March 2018, while the UP count of 1,272 is for 2015, up from 671 in 2012.
- In Assam, the assessment was carried out in three rivers, with the Brahmaputra accounting for 877 of the 962 dolphins.

Related Info:

- In addition to the species being India's national aquatic animal, the Gangetic dolphin has been notified by the Assam government as the state aquatic animal, too.
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has listed the Gangetic dolphin as an endangered species in India.
- The Conservation Action Plan for the Gangetic Dolphin, 2010-2020, identified threats to these dolphins that include the impact of river traffic, construction of irrigation canals and depletion of their prey-base.

Jeholbaatar Kielanae

Researchers have unearthed well-preserved middle ear bones from a new species of an extinct rodent that lived 145-66 million years ago in what is now northeastern China.

About:

- The study, published in the journal Nature, looked at fossils of the extinct rodent-like mammal — *Jeholbaatar kielanae* — at Jehol Biota of China, and noted that these animals had a middle ear that is distinct from those of its relatives.
- The fossil clues provide solid evidence of the morphology and formation of the inner ear bones, which are fully detached from the lower jaw. The new fossil reveals a transitional stage in the evolution of the surangular — a “reptilian” jawbone.
- In these extinct mammals, the evolution of the middle ear may have probably been triggered by functional constraints on the bones and muscles involved in feeding.
- This advance may lead to better understanding of the evolution of hearing.

Trachischium Apteii

Researchers have discovered a new species of non-venomous burrowing snake Tally Valley Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh, named *Trachischium apteii*.

About:

- The newly discovered species belongs to a group of fossorial snakes that live mostly underground, and surface mainly during or after a heavy monsoon shower.
- *Trachischium* are commonly called slender snakes. Seven species are distributed across the Himalayas, and the Indo-Burma and Indo-China regions.
- *Trachischium apteii* was named so to honour the contribution of Deepak Apte, noted marine biologist and Director of the BNHS.
- Morphologically, the snake is distinguished by smooth and dorsal scales arranged in 15 rows throughout the body. The dorsal colour of the holotype is dark brown to black with faint dorsal longitudinal lines.
- Large-sized members of the genus measure about 293 mm to 299 mm.

Dyanganga Wildlife Sanctuary

Recently a tiger travelled 1300 km distance between Maharashtra and Telangana passing through Dyanganga Wildlife Sanctuary and Tipeswar Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra to get new territory and partners.

Dyanganga Wildlife Sanctuary

- The Dnyanganga Sanctuary is situated in the Buldhana district of Maharashtra.
- It is a part of the Melghat Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra.
- It is located near the Dnyanganga River which is a tributary of the Tapi River.

Tipeshwar Tiger Reserve

- It is located in Yawatmal district of Maharashtra.
- The rivers such as Purna, Krishna, Bhima, and Tapti flow through the sanctuary.
- Due to the presence of a sufficient quantity of water, it is also popularly known as Green Oasis of Maharashtra

PRELIMS SPECIFIC FACTS- INDICES, DAYS, EVENTS, AWARDS ETC

55th Jnanpith Award

Eminent Malayalam poet Akkitham Achuthan Namboothiri, popularly known as Akkitham, has been chosen for the 55th Jnanpith Award.

About:

- Some of his celebrated creations include "Veeravadam", "Balidarsanam", "Nimisha Kshethram", "Amrita Khatika", "Akkitham Kavithaka", "Epic of Twentieth Century" and "Antimahakalam".
- A Padma Shri awardee, he has won several literary accolades including the Sahitya Akademi Award (1973), Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award (1972 and 1988), Mathrubhumi Award, Vayalar Award, and Kabir Samman.

Jnanpith Award:

- It is given by Bharatiya Jnanpith, a literary and research organization based in Delhi.
- It is given annually to an author for their "outstanding contribution towards literature".
- It is bestowed only on Indian writers writing in Indian languages included in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India and English.
- Instituted in:
- There are no posthumous conferral. Also only works published during the preceding twenty years is considered for the award.
- The award consists of cash prize is Rs.11 lakh and a Bronze replica of Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of knowledge and wisdom.

ODISHA DEVELOPMENT

Reconstitution Of Panel On HC Bench In South & Western Odisha Challenged

A public interest litigation case challenging reconstitution of the panel on setting up of permanent bench of Orissa High Court in South and Western Odisha was filed in the court. A bench of the court constituting Chief Justice K S Jhaveri and Justice K R Mohapatra reportedly conducted a hearing on the petition.

About:

- It is worthwhile to mention here that the Odisha government had constituted a commission under the chairmanship of Justice CR Pal to review all aspects of the issue. After a detail investigation, the panel had submitted its report to the State government in 2014. However, the Commission's report is yet to be presented in the State Assembly.
- The State Government, on the other hand, has already reconstituted the panel earlier this year and appointed the Development Commissioner as its head. Special Secretary, Home in charge of the High Court is its convenor while Secretaries of Home, Finance, Revenue and Law departments are its members.
- The advocate who filed the petition has also demanded scrapping of the committee claiming that reconstitution of the panel without presenting reports of the previous panel in the State Assembly is unlawful.

Odisha CM Launches 'MadhuApp' For Students

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched 'MadhuApp'. The educational app, named after Utkal Gourav Madhusudan Das, was rolled out as a first-of-its-kind initiative by the State government in Ganjam district.

About:

- School students can download the app and watch the videos to understand their lessons in a better and efficient manner.
- Launching the application through video conferencing, CM Naveen Patnaik addressed the students from 22 blocks of the district. Patnaik in his speech termed Utkal Gourav Madhusudan Das as role model for others and advised the students to study well and make the State and country proud.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Every day is a new change to make your dreams come true.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. Explain the significance of Gandhi's Talisman for a civil servant in pursuit of administrative justice?

Ans:

Gandhi said "Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much, recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man/woman whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him/her. Will it lead to swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then your self will melt away."

This talisman can help a civil servant in pursuit of administrative justice in the following ways:

- Framing inclusive policies: A civil servant must make sure that the benefits of government policies reach the most needful person. Gandhi's vision of 'Sarvodaya through Antyodaya' can only be achieved when welfare policies are inclusive and well-directed.
- Judicious utilization of resources: All public resources must be utilized in a fair and transparent manner. It is the duty of civil servants to check underutilization and misappropriation of public funds.
- For ex: public money spent on building unnecessary statues and parks can be better utilized for the welfare of the poor.
- Special provisions for the marginalized: A civil servant should think about how his actions will benefit the marginalized sections of the society.
- For ex: a civil servant must ensure that the government offices are accessible for the differently-abled citizens.
- He/she can make sure that there are separate and clean toilets for school girls.
- Motivating the staff: Civil servants may face the problem of the unskilled and demotivated workforce in government offices. It is his duty to make them realize that efficiency in their work is critical for delivering public services to the last man standing.
- Handling continuous public criticism: Civil servants are constantly under public scrutiny for their actions. A civil servant must not stop taking decisions which will benefit the poor and downtrodden, even though he/she has to face criticism for that.
- Managing political interference in work: Political interference must be handled deftly without offending the public representative for the larger public interest. Unnecessary transfers due to political vendetta may deprive the public of the intended benefits of an officer's proposed policies.
- Managing personal life: The family of civil servants may face several challenges due to frequent transfers to remote places lacking even the basic infrastructure. Hence, a civil servant should be motivated to work even in remote places and see it as an opportunity to develop better schools, hospitals and public places in such areas.

Conclusion: Hence, just as the Preamble acts as a key to our constitution, the Gandhian Talisman acts as a key to the soul of humanity. It holds immense value and provides searchlight in the darkest hour of moral dilemma for any civil servant.

Qns. Examine the problem of infiltration in India, alongwith with its impact and possible solutions.

India shares 15,106.7 km of international boundary with its neighbors which is long and porous and some boundaries are also disputed. These characteristics of border cause significant and unique problems for India.

Problem of Infiltration in India and its impact

- **Illegal Migration:** India faces problem of illegal migration from Bangladesh and other neighboring countries. It leads to pressure on resources creating a source of conflict in India. Illegal migration has also created ethnic conflict in north east as local population in many states have been reduced to minority causing sense of insecurity and hence ethnic conflicts.
- **Terrorism:** India has been major victim of cross border terrorism sponsored by Pakistan which is mostly executed through cross border infiltration. Recent attacks in Pathankot, Uri and Pulwama underline the security challenge posed by infiltration.
- **Insurgency and Left Wing Extremism:** Infiltration is being used by external forces to support Insurgency in North east by extending support of arms and ammunition through infiltration. Similarly Left wing Extremist groups also find external support through infiltration.
- **Import of Counterfeit currency and Drugs smuggling:** India faces significant menace of fake currency and drugs smuggling which is routed through borders due to easy cross border infiltration.

Solutions

Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System

- India should adopt an integrated and holistic solution for tackling problem of Infiltration.
- The proposed CIBMS is touted as a more robust and integrated system that is capable of addressing the gaps in the present system of border security by seamlessly integrating human resources, weapons, and high-tech surveillance equipment.
- It has three main components:
 - new high-tech surveillance devices such as sensors, detectors, cameras, ground-based radar systems, micro-aerostats, lasers as well as existing equipment for round-the-clock surveillance of the international border;
 - an efficient and dedicated communication network including fibre optic cables and satellite communication for transmitting data gathered by these diverse high-tech surveillance and detection devices; and a command and control centre to which the data will be transmitted in order to apprise the senior commanders about the happenings on the ground and thus providing a composite picture of the international border
- India has started building strategic roads, advanced landing air strip, new infantry battalion and strike corps and has revamped the border check posts.
- **Building socio-economic Infrastructure:** Border infrastructure is critical as border population is strategic asset to maintain border security. Thus schemes like Border Area Development Plan and Border Infrastructure and Management (BIM) need to be implemented effectively.
- **Use of space technology in Border management:** The Government can promote use of space technology in improving Border Management:- Island development, Border Security, Communication and Navigation, GIS & Operations Planning System and Border Infrastructure Development.

Conclusion: Infiltration is major threat to India's security it needs to be dealt in a holistic manner focusing on both security infrastructure as well as socio-economic infrastructure.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQs

1. Consider the following statements:
 1. The elected and nominated members of Rajya Sabha are given equal time to speak in the House.
 2. The seats in Rajya Sabha are allotted on the basis of the population of that particular state.
 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. Dyanganga Wildlife Sanctuary is located in
 - (a) Uttar Pradesh
 - (b) Uttarakhand
 - (c) Maharashtra**
 - (d) Bihar
3. Recently in the news, 'Operation Clean Art' is:
 - (a) A crackdown on illegal trade in mongoose hair**
 - (b) A cleanliness drive under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan
 - (c) An initiative to support artists under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana
 - (d) An exhibition of recycled products
4. With reference to the Hornbill Festival held annually in Nagaland, consider the following statements:
 1. The first festival was held in 2000.
 2. The festival is named after the bird "Indian hornbill", which is displayed in the folklore of most of the state's tribes.
 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. Recently, researchers have unearthed well-preserved middle ear bones of 'Jeholbaatar kielanae', a new species of an extinct rodent from:
 - (a) China**
 - (b) Mexico
 - (c) Egypt
 - (d) India
6. Which of the following has been notified by the Assam government as the state aquatic animal of Assam?
 - (a) Gangetic Dolphin**
 - (b) Ganges Shark
 - (c) Mugger Crocodile
 - (d) Dugong
7. Researchers have recently discovered a new species of non-venomous burrowing snake named 'Trachischium aptei' from which of the following Wildlife Sanctuary?
 - (a) Kalakkad Wildlife sanctuary
 - (b) Tally Valley Wildlife Sanctuary**
 - (c) Dachigam Wildlife Sanctuary
 - (d) Manas Wildlife Sanctuary
8. With reference to the Jnanpith Award, consider the following statements:
 1. Eminent Malayalam poet Akkitham Achuthan Namboothiri has been chosen for the 55th Jnanpith Award.
 2. It is bestowed only on Indian writers writing in Indian languages included in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India and not in English.
 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. Joint military exercise 'SURYA KIRAN – XIV' is being held between India and:
 - (a) Nepal**
 - (b) Sri Lanka
 - (c) Myanmar
 - (d) Bhutan
10. With reference to the National Awards for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, consider the following statements:
 1. These are conferred on Individuals, Institutions, Organizations, State/District etc for their outstanding achievements and work done towards empowerment of Persons with Disabilities every year.
 2. All the 21 disabilities specified in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 have been included under the National Award Guidelines.
 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