

**GEOGRAPHY- PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC****Māori**

As the toll in the New Zealand volcano disaster climbed to 16, some Maori feel this volcano disaster was a form of divine retribution.

**About:**

- The Māori are the indigenous Polynesian people of New Zealand.
- In the 2018 census, there were 775,836 people in New Zealand identifying as Māori, making up 16.5 per cent of the national population. In addition, more than 140,000 Māori live in Australia.

**Related Info:**

White Island is a jewel of Aotearoa — the Maori name for New Zealand — and the local Ngati Awa tribe consider Whakaari to be a living ancestor. In the Maori cognition, it is wrong for anyone to stomp on her sacred soil.

**CONSTITUTION AND POLITY****ARTICLE 30(1)**

The Supreme Court has dismissed a plea challenging a Kerala High Court order which held that an educational institution to claim minority status has be “established and administered” by the minority community, and not merely administered by it.

**About:**

- The bench observed during the hearing that it was clear that under Article 30(1), for an institution to claim minority status, it has to be both "established and administered" by the community.
- Article 30(1) of the Constitution of India gives linguistic and religious minorities a fundamental right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.
- The Supreme Court in T.M.A. Pai Foundation vs. State of Karnataka (2002) held that a minority, whether linguistic or religious, is determinable only by reference to demography of the State and not by taking into consideration the population of the country as a whole.
- The National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions Act has been enacted to safeguard the educational rights of the minorities enshrined in Article 30(1) of the Constitution.
- Section 2(g) of the Act defines a Minority Educational Institution as a college or institution (other than a University) established or maintained by a person or group of persons from amongst the minorities.

**GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.****Year End Review -2019 Of Ministry Of Corporate Affairs**

In pursuance to objective of providing greater “Ease of Doing Business”, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has taken several landmark initiatives / decisions during last one year ( January-November, 2019).

**These are:**

- Simplified Proforma for Incorporating Company Electronically (SPICE) introduced which extends 8 services (CIN, PAN, TIN, DIN, Name, EPFO, ESIC and GSTN) from three Ministries through a single form.
- De-criminalization of technical & procedural violations under Companies Act and reducing the burden on criminal courts & NCLT by shifting 16 offences sections to monetary penalty regime vide Companies (Amendment )Bill , 2019 notified on 31st July ,2019
- Government Process Re-Engineering by Introducing “RUN – Reserve Unique Name” web service for name reservation for companies & LLP and Re-engineering the Process of allotment of Director Identification Number (DIN).
- Provisions relating to issue of shares with Differential Voting Rights (DVRs) modified with the objective of enabling promoters of Indian companies to retain control of their companies, even as they raise equity capital from global investors.
- Enabling provisions with regard to Mediation and Conciliation under the Companies Act, 2013 enforced.

- Provisions relating to creation of Debenture Redemption Reserve (DRR) revised with the objective of deepening the bond market & reducing the cost of capital.
- Independent Director's Databank launched to provide an easy to access & navigate platform for the registration of existing Independent Directors as well as individuals aspiring to become independent directors.
- Setting up Central Registration Centre for name reservation and incorporation of companies & LLPs within 1-2 days as opposed to an average of at least 15 days earlier.
- First National CSR Awards distributed.

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

### **Britain Elections**

Britain elected Boris Johnson of the Conservative Party as its Prime Minister in the recently concluded elections. This victory gives Boris Johnson a clear mandate to take the United Kingdom out of the European Union without any delay.

### **Key Points**

- Johnson called for an early election after reaching a new divorce deal with the EU. He turned the poll into a de facto Brexit referendum.
- Brexit: In 2016, a referendum was held by the U.K. government and the nation voted to leave the EU. Now the process is under the U.K. Parliament for formal withdrawal from the EU.
- Brexit supporters wanted Britain to take back full control of its borders and reduce the number of people coming here to live and/or work.

### **Impact on Britain:**

- It will give a boost to the nationalism with tougher laws on immigration.
- Britain will also have to deal with Brexit's effect on its economy, including the long process of new bilateral trade agreements with many other countries, including India.

### **Challenges**

- The road ahead is not smooth even after a timely exit. The Brexit agreement itself is controversial and it could erect an effective customs border between Britain and the island of Ireland after implementation.
- It raises the concern on Brexit's impact on the Good Friday Agreement.
- Negotiating an agreement on the U.K.'s future relationship with the EU is an equally challenging task.
- The Scottish National Party swept Scotland's seats which might revive pro-independence sentiments in Scotland.
  - Scotland had a referendum in 2014 on whether it should stay in the U.K. or be independent of it. The referendum rejected independence and the Scottish population was in favour of remaining in the European Union.
  - Scotland rejected independence by 55% to 45%.

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

### **COP25**

International climate talks at COP25 closed with no deal on carbon markets. The negotiators postponed until next year a key decision on global carbon markets.

### **About:**

- The 2019 United Nations Climate Change Conference, also known as COP25, is the 25th United Nations Climate Change conference.
- It was held in Madrid, Spain, from 2 to 13 December 2019 under the presidency of the Chilean government.
- The conference incorporates the 25th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the 15th meeting of the parties for the Kyoto Protocol (CMP15), and the second meeting of the parties for the Paris Agreement (CMA2).

**Outcome:**

- The final declaration underscored the “urgent need” to cut planet-heating greenhouse gases in line with the goals of the landmark 2015 Paris climate change accord.
- That fell far short of promising to enhance countries’ pledges to cut greenhouse gases next year which developing countries had lobbied the delegates to achieve.
- Negotiators left some of the thorniest issues for the next climate summit in Glasgow in a year, including the liability for damages caused by rising temperatures that developing countries were insisting on.

**Hydrogen Fuel Cell**

Supreme Court has asked government to look into the feasibility of hydrogen-based tech to deal with vehicular air pollution in capital. India is looking closely at Japan, which is gearing up to put on its roads thousands of vehicles based on a hydrogen cell technology, also known as ‘fuel cells’.

**About:**

- At the heart of the fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEV) is a device that uses a source of fuel, such as hydrogen, and an oxidant to create electricity by an electrochemical process.
- The fuel cell combines hydrogen and oxygen to generate an electric current, water being the only byproduct. Like conventional batteries under the bonnets of automobiles, hydrogen fuel cells too convert chemical energy into electrical energy.
- Advantages of fuel cells: Fuel cells produce much smaller quantities of greenhouse gases and none of the air pollutants that cause health problems. Such cells are also far more energy efficient than traditional combustion technologies. Unlike battery-powered electric vehicles, fuel cell vehicles do not need to be plugged in.
- Disadvantages of fuel cells: The process of making hydrogen needs energy which is often from fossil fuel sources. That has raised questions over hydrogen’s green credentials. There are questions of safety as hydrogen is more explosive than petrol. The vehicles are expensive, and fuel dispensing pumps are scarce.

**Globally, EVs are bracketed under following broad categories:**

- BEVs which have no internal combustion engine or fuel tank, and run on a fully electric drivetrain powered by rechargeable batteries.
- Conventional hybrid electric vehicles or HEVs which combine a conventional internal combustion engine system with an electric propulsion system, resulting in a hybrid vehicle drivetrain that substantially reduces fuel use.
- Plug-in hybrid vehicles or PHEVs, such as the Chevrolet Volt, too have a hybrid drivetrain that uses both an internal combustion engine and electric power for motive power, backed by rechargeable batteries that can be plugged into a power source.
- FCEVs use hydrogen to power an onboard electric motor. Since they are powered entirely by electricity, FCEVs are considered EVs — but unlike BEVs, their range and refuelling processes are comparable to conventional cars and trucks.

**Sustainable Development Cell (Sdc)**

Coal Ministry has decided to establish a Sustainable Development Cell (SDC) to promote environmentally sustainable coal mining in the country.

**About:**

- The Cell will advise, mentor, plan and monitor the mitigation measures taken by the coal companies for maximizing the utilization of available resources in a sustainable way, minimizing the adverse impact of mining and mitigating it for further eco-system services.
- It will address environmental concerns during the decommissioning or closure of mines.
- The move gains significance as the new private entities are now going to form a significant part of the future.

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

The Government is testing a prototype of an Indian equivalent of popular messaging platforms, such as WhatsApp and Telegram, for secure internal use.

About:

- Government Instant Messaging System (GIMS) is being packaged for employees of Central and state government departments and organisations for intra and inter organisation communications.
- Objective: It is being developed as a secure Indian alternative without the security concerns attached with apps hosted abroad or those owned by foreign entities. Like WhatsApp, GIMS employs end-to-end encryption for one-to-one messaging.
- Benefits: GIMS is being touted as a safer bet as the platform has been developed in India, the server hosting it is installed within the country and the information stored would be in government-based cloud — NIC-operated data centres that are only meant for captive use by the government and its departments.
- Developers: It is designed and developed by the Kerala unit of National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- Present status: The platform is in the pilot testing stage across some states, including Odisha — and is learnt to have been released to the Indian Navy to be tried out on trial basis.

**Strandhogg**

The Union Home Ministry has sent an alert to all States warning them about the vulnerability of the Android operating system to a bug called 'StrandHogg.'

About:

- StrandHogg allows real-time malware applications to pose as genuine applications and access user data of all kind.
- These malware can then potentially listen to their conversations, access photo album, read/send messages, make calls, record conversations and get login credentials to various accounts.
- While all versions of Android are vulnerable to this bug, it may not be apparent to the affected users that malware applications are already on board their device.
- Pop-ups asking for permission to send notifications, messages etc., are one of the main entry points for 'StrandHogg' to launch the attack.

**ODISHA DEVELOPMENT****Women & Child Development & Mission Shakti Department Included Under 'Mo Sarkar'****Initiative**

Odisha government included the Women & Child Development & Mission Shakti department under the 'Mo Sarkar' Initiative in order to implement different schemes meant for the women and children effectively.

- Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched the initiative at Lok Seva Bhawan and interacted with some women through video conferencing.
- The State government has launched several welfare projects under Women & Child Development & Mission Shakti for the women and children and it is impotent to ensure that the beneficiaries get benefit from such projects.
- Employee of Women & Child Development & Mission Shakti have played a vital role in bringing down the maternal mortality rate (MMR) and Infant mortality rate (IMR) in the State. And because of their dedicated and selfless works the 'Mamata' scheme has now become a model for other state in India.

**DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE**

**Qns: The environmental thinking in India needs to go beyond enacting rules and regulations to a greater focus on outcomes and results that emerge from a sense of shared understanding and common purpose. Discuss.**

**Ans:**

The environment is a Residuary list subject. In pursuance of this, parliament enacted many laws like Wildlife Protection Act 1972, Environment Protection Act 1986, Air Pollution Act 1981 etc. But in spite of all these acts environmental condition in India remains very dismal:

- The World Health Organization reports that thirteen of the 20 most polluted cities are in India.
- According to World Bank economy-wide cost of environmental degradation is estimated to 5.7 per cent of India's GDP

Thereby signalling this command and control approaches that India has deployed cannot sufficiently address current environmental and natural resource problems So a new framework for environmental governance is required, that is multilevel, multi-actor, based on ecosystems and outcomes rather than on mere compliance.

The environmental framework should in-cooperate following principles:

**Adopt the Principle of Subsidiarity**

- Since many environmental issues are local and regional in nature, addressing them requires the involvement of local regional jurisdictions and the engagement of local people.
- For that reforms in urban local bodies are needed to better manage waste, both institutional and technical
- Intergovernmental transfers as suggested by 14th Finance Commission should be promoted.
- Empowering the Inter-State Council would help to advance this agenda.

**Prioritize Mitigation of Air and Water Pollution**

- Reduction of waste and wastewater at the source;
- Onsite treatment where possible;
- Recycling of wastewater as water for non-consumptive use
- The air quality situation in Indian cities is grave, as is the case in several water bodies.
- In this context, States should strengthen the pollution control boards to take action against violators and impose penalties and charges, also investment should be made in the board's resources and capacity
- Public investments at the state level are required to increase the availability of bus fleets, metros, and informal public transport such as improved electric auto rickshaws
- For affluent areas in cities and metropolitan areas, congestion tax or vehicle quotas
- The central government should urgently introduce reforms to manage waste and wastewater.

**Adopt Green Accounting in National and State Income**

- The conventional treatment of these environmental resources, being free, has resulted in their overuse and exploitation.
- Green income accounting seeks to modify income accounts to incorporate the use or depletion of environmental and natural resources
- The key objective of such accounting is to make visible the use of environmental resources in economic production; until now, their use has been invisible
- The environmental framework should reflect an understanding of the interrelationships of food, energy, and water, and the linkages between ecosystems and human well-being.

Management of the environment refers not to actually managing the environment, which is not possible, but to influencing and shaping the interactions of humans and their activities with the environment. That can not be done only by rule of law, it has to be backed by a civic culture based on harmony between economy and environment.



**DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQs**

1. With reference to the Global Sulphur cap complaint fuel oil, consider the following statements:
  1. International Maritime Organization (IMO) regulations to reduce sulphur oxides (SOx) emissions from ships first came into force in 2005, under Annex VI of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (known as the MARPOL Convention).
  2. From 1 January 2020, the limit for sulphur in fuel oil used on board ships operating outside designated emission control areas will be reduced to 0.50% m/m (mass by mass).

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 Article 30(1) of the Constitution of India, consider the following statements:
  1. Article 30(1) of the Constitution of India gives linguistic and religious minorities a fundamental right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.
  2. The Supreme Court in T.M.A. Pai Foundation vs. State of Karnataka (2002) held that a minority, whether linguistic or religious, is determinable only by taking into consideration the population of the country as a whole.

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 'COP25' 2019 United Nations Climate Change Conference, consider the following statements:
  1. International climate talks at COP25 closed with no deal on carbon markets.
  2. It was held in Chile under the presidency of the Chilean government.

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 Sustainable Development Cell (SDC), consider the following statements:
  1. Union Ministry of Coal has recently decided to establish a Sustainable Development Cell (SDC) to promote environmentally sustainable coal mining in the country.
  2. It will address environmental concerns during the decommissioning or closure of mines.

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. Consider the following statements:
  1. Central Registration Centre for name reservation and incorporation of companies is an initiative of Union Ministry of Finance.
  2. Provisions relating to creation of Debenture Redemption Reserve (DRR) have been revised by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs with the objective of deepening the bond market & reducing the cost of capital.

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. What is 'StrandHogg', recently seen in news?
 

(a) **Bug in android applications**  
(b) Newly found exoplanet  
(c) Crypto currency of Peru  
(d) None of the above
7. With reference to the hydrogen fuel cell, consider the following statements:
  1. The fuel cell combines hydrogen and oxygen to generate an electric current, water being the only byproduct.
  2. Fuel cells produce much smaller quantities of greenhouse gases and none of the air pollutants that cause health problems.

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. With reference to the Government Instant Messaging System (GIMS), consider the following statements:
  1. It is being packaged for employees of Central and state government departments and organisations for intra and inter organisation communications.
  2. It is designed and developed by the DRDO.

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 Māori are the indigenous Polynesian people of which of the following country?
 

(a) **New Zealand**            (b) France  
(c) Spain                      (d) Italy