

NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC**Infant Mortality**

As outrage continues over the deaths of babies in J K Lon Hospital in Kota, Rajasthan, and in the civil hospital in Rajkot, Gujarat, the fact remains that India has the most child deaths in the world. In 2017, UNICEF estimated 8,02,000 babies had died in India.

About:

- The infant mortality rate (IMR) in the country currently stands at 33 per 1,000 live births. This means babies numbering in the region of 8,50,000 die every year in India, or an average daily toll to 2,350.
- In 2017, states such as Arunachal Pradesh (42), Madhya Pradesh (47), Assam (44), Uttar Pradesh (41), Meghalaya (39), Odisha (41) and Chhattisgarh (38) had a higher IMR than Gujarat (30) and Rajasthan (38).
- According to the National Family Health Survey-4, only 78.9% births in India happen in a facility. This means 21.1% or about 54 lakh births in a year still happen outside of a facility where hygiene levels can be low, sometimes without the help of a trained health worker.
- Special newborn care units (SNCUs) have been established at district hospitals and sub-district hospitals with an annual delivery load more than 3,000 to provide care for sick newborns.

GEOGRAPHY- PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC**National Institute Of Ocean Technology (Niot)**

Over hundred global scientists in the field of ocean studies converged in the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) in Chennai to participate in the Central Indian Ocean Leadership Workshop with the support of the United Nations. The scientists represent fifteen Indian Ocean Rim countries.

About:

- Established in: 1993.
- Status: An autonomous society under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India.
- Administration: NIOT is managed by a Governing Council and the Director is the head of the Institute.
- Mandate: to develop reliable indigenous technologies to solve the various engineering problems associated with harvesting of non-living and living resources in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), which is about two-thirds of the land area of India.
- Headquarters: Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

CONSTITUTION AND POLITY**TULU**

Activists are making efforts to include Tulu in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

About:

- Tulu is a textbook example of linguistic discrimination.
- Tulu is a Dravidian language whose speakers are concentrated in two coastal districts of Karnataka and in Kasaragod district of Kerala. Kasaragod district is called 'Sapta bhasha Samgama Bhumi (the confluence of seven languages)', and Tulu is among the seven.
- The Census 2011 reports 18,46,427 native speakers of Tulu in India.
- The Tulu-speaking people are larger in number than speakers of Manipuri and Sanskrit, which have the Eighth Schedule status.

Advantages of including Tulu in the Eighth Schedule:

- If included in the Eighth Schedule, Tulu would get recognition from the Sahitya Akademi.
- Tulu books would be translated into other recognised Indian languages.
- Members of Parliament and MLAs could speak in Tulu in Parliament and State Assemblies, respectively.

- Candidates could write all-India competitive examinations like the Civil Services exam in Tulu.

Yuelu Proclamation:

- The Yuelu Proclamation, made by the UNESCO at Changsha, The People's Republic of China, in 2018, says that the protection and promotion of linguistic diversity helps to improve social inclusion and partnerships.

Minority Institutions

The Supreme Court has held that state can regulate minority educational institutions.

About:

- The Supreme Court held that the State is well within its rights to introduce a regulatory regime in the "national interest" to provide minority educational institutions with well-qualified teachers in order for them to "achieve excellence in education."
- The managements of minority institutions cannot ignore such a legal regime by saying that it is their fundamental right under Article 30 of the Constitution to establish and administer their educational institutions according to their choice.

Background:

- The judgment came on a challenge to the validity of the West Bengal Madrasah Service Commission Act of 2008.
- The State Act mandated that the process of appointment of teachers in aided madrasahs, recognised as minority institutions, would be done by a Commission, whose decision would be binding.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS**Jus Cogens**

Responding to President Donald Trump's threat to attack sites that were "important to Iran and Iranian culture", Iran's Foreign Minister said that Trump threatens to commit again new breaches of **JUS COGENS**.

About:

- **JUS COGENS** or **ius cogens**, meaning "compelling law" in Latin, are rules in international law that are peremptory or authoritative, and from which states cannot deviate.
- These norms cannot be offset by a separate treaty between parties intending to do so, since they hold fundamental values. Today, most states and international organisations accept the principle of **jus cogens**, which dates back to Roman times.
- The **jus cogens** rules have been sanctioned by the Vienna Conventions on the Law of Treaties of 1969 and 1986. According to both Conventions, a treaty is void if it breaches **jus cogens** rules.
- Besides treaties, unilateral declarations also have to abide by these norms.
- So far, an exhaustive list of **jus cogens** rules does not exist. However, the prohibition of slavery, genocide, racial discrimination, torture, and the right to self-determination are recognised norms. The prohibition against apartheid is also recognised as a **jus cogens** rule, from which no derogation is allowed, since apartheid is against the basic principles of the United Nations.

INDIAN ECONOMY**First Advance Estimates of National Income, 2019-20**

The National Statistical Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has released the First Advance Estimates of National Income at both Constant (2011-12) and Current Prices, for the financial year 2019-20 along with the corresponding estimates of expenditure components of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

About:

- The First Advance Estimates of GDP have been released in accordance with the release calendar of National Accounts. The approach for compiling the Advance Estimates is based on Benchmark-Indicator method.

- Gross Domestic Product: The growth in real GDP during 2019-20 is estimated at 5.0 per cent as compared to the growth rate of 6.8 per cent in 2018-19.
- Gross Value Added (GVA) at Basic Prices: Estimated growth of real GVA in 2019-20 is 4.9 per cent as against 6.6 per cent in 2018-19.
- National Income: In terms of growth rates, the National Income registered a growth rate of 7.6 per cent in 2019-20 as against the previous year's growth rate of 11.3 per cent.
- The Per Capita Net National Income during 2019-20 is estimated to be ₹ 1,35,050 showing a rise of 6.8 per cent as compared to ₹ 1,26,406 during 2018-19 with the growth rate of 10.0 per cent.

2nd National GST Conference

The 2nd National GST Conference of the Commissioners of State Tax and Chief Commissioners of Central Tax was held under the chairmanship of Revenue Secretary, Ministry of Finance.

The following measures were decided during the conference for necessary action:

- To constitute a Committee of Centre and State officers to examine and implement quick measures in a given time frame to curb fraudulent refund claims including the inverted tax structure refund claims and evasion of GST.
- Considering fraudulent IGST refund claims, it was explored to link foreign exchange remittances with IGST refund for risky and new exporter.
- All major cases of fake Input Tax Credit, export/import fraud and fraudulent refunds shall also be compulsorily investigated by investigation wing of the Income Tax Department.
- MoU would be signed among CBDT, CBIC and GSTN to exchange data through API, from CBDT to GSTN and CBIC and vice-versa. It was decided that this data should be shared on quarterly basis, instead of being shared on yearly basis.
- It was also suggested to provide a single bank account for foreign remittance receipt and refund disbursement.

Insolvency And Bankruptcy Board Of India (Liquidation Process) (Amendment) Regulations, 2020

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) notified the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Liquidation Process) (Amendment) Regulations, 2020 on 6th January 2020.

About:

- It amends the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Liquidation Process) Regulations, 2016.
- The amendment clarifies that a person, who is not eligible under the Code to submit a resolution plan for insolvency resolution of the corporate debtor, shall not be a party to a compromise or arrangement of the corporate debtor under section 230 of the Companies Act, 2013.
- It also clarifies that a secured creditor cannot sell or transfer an asset, which is subject to security interest, to any person, who is not eligible under the Code to submit a resolution plan for insolvency resolution of the corporate debtor.
- The amendment provides that a secured creditor, who proceeds to realise its security interest, shall contribute its share of the insolvency resolution process cost, liquidation process cost and workmen's dues, within 90 days of the liquidation commencement date.
- It shall also pay excess of realised value of the asset, which is subject to security interest, over the amount of its claims admitted, within 180 days of the liquidation commencement date.
- Where the secured creditor fails to pay such amounts to the Liquidator within 90 days or 180 days, as the case may be, the asset shall become part of Liquidation Estate.

Supervisory Action Framework For Primary (Urban) Co-Operative Banks (UCBS)

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to impose restrictions on urban cooperative banks (UCBs) for deterioration of financial position, in line with the prompt corrective action (PCA) framework that is imposed on commercial banks.

About:

- Under this revised Supervisory Action Framework (SAF), UCBs will face restrictions for worsening of three parameters:
 - when net non-performing assets exceed 6% of net advances,
 - when they incur losses for two consecutive financial years or have accumulated losses on their balance sheets, and
 - if capital adequacy ratio falls below 9%.
- For breach of such risk thresholds, UCBs will have to submit an action plan to correct the situation like reducing net NPAs below 6%, for restoring the profitability and wiping out the accumulated losses, and increasing capital adequacy ratio to 9% or above within 12 months.
- The RBI may also seek a board-approved proposal for merging the UCB with another bank or converting itself into a credit society if CAR falls below 9%.
- It can impose restrictions on declaration or payment of dividend or donation. Some of the other curbs include restricting fresh loans and advances carrying risk-weights more than 100% on incurring capital expenditure beyond a specified limit and on expansion of the balance sheet.
- The move comes in the wake of the recent crisis at the PMC Bank.

Small Finance Bank

Shivalik Mercantile Co-operative Bank Limited has become the first urban cooperative bank (UCB) that has been granted 'in-principle' permission to convert into a small finance bank by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

About:

- The 'in-principle' approval will be valid for 18 months, within which Shivalik Mercantile Co-operative Bank had to comply with the norms of a SFB.
- On being satisfied that the applicant has complied with the requisite conditions as part of "in-principle" approval, the RBI would consider granting it a licence for commencement of banking business under Section 22 (1) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 as a SFB.

Background:

- In June 2018, the RBI had announced that it would allow voluntary transition of UCBs which meet certain conditions into SFBs, in pursuance of the recommendations of High Powered Committee on UCBs (2015), chaired by Shri R Gandhi.
- Accordingly, the "Scheme on voluntary transition of Urban Co-operative Bank into a Small Finance Bank" was issued on September 27, 2018.

ISSUES RELATED TO INTERNAL SECURITY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Snow And Avalanche Study Establishment (SASE)

Snow and Avalanche Study Establishment (SASE) has issued an Avalanche warning to Leh in Ladakh region.

About:

- Parent body: SASE is a laboratory of the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO).
- HQ: It is located near Manali, Himachal Pradesh.
- Mandate: Its primary function is research in the field of snow and avalanches to provide avalanche control measures and forecasting support to Armed forces.

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES

Great Indian Bustard (GIB)

A major conservation effort for saving the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) launched about four years ago is bringing a ray of hope.

About:

- Since June last year, nine Great Indian Bustard (GIB) eggs collected from the Desert National Park in Jaisalmer where a conservation centre has been set up, have hatched, and the chicks are reported to be doing well.

- This is the largest number of hatchings reported within a six-month frame by any GIB conservation programme in the world.
- The Ministry of Environment has allotted special funds to the tune of Rs 33 crore, a part of which was used to set up the incubation and chick-rearing centre in Jaisalmer.

Great Indian Bustard (GIB)

- Scientific Name: Ardeotis nigriceps.
- Physical description: It is one of the heaviest flying birds.
- Distribution: it is found mainly in the Indian subcontinent. Its population is confined mostly to Rajasthan and Gujarat. Small population also occur in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. It is the State bird of Rajasthan.
- Population: Barely 150 of these birds are estimated to be surviving now globally.
- Conservation status:
 - Listed in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972,
 - Listed in Appendix I of CITES,
 - Listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List.

DEFENCE AND SECURITY

Government Owned Contractor Operated (Goco) Model

The Army has started identifying potential industry partners to implement the Government Owned Contractor Operated (GOCO) model for its base workshops and ordnance depots.

About:

- A Request For Information was issued in December, 2019 to shortlist service providers with experience in “warehousing, logistics and supply chain management” for Central Ordnance Depot, Kanpur.
- The Army has also started evaluating the GOCO model for Army Base Workshops (ABW) to drive “higher operational efficiencies”.
- The GOCO model was one of the recommendations of the Lt. Gen. DB Shekatkar (Retd.) committee to “enhance combat capability and re-balance defence expenditure.”

QUOTE OF THE DAY

A person who never made mistakes never tried anything new.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns: Land reforms in India, are necessary not only to boost agricultural growth but also to eradicate poverty in rural areas. Discuss.

Ans:

Agricultural land is the most important productive resource for rural India. Land is also an important form of property. In post-independent India, equity in agriculture called for land reforms which primarily refer to change in the ownership of landholdings. Land reform refers to institutional measures directed towards altering the existing pattern of ownership, tenancy and management of land. It includes measures and policies relating to redistribution of land, regulation of rent, improving the conditions of tenancy, cooperative organisation, agricultural education, and so on.

Measures of Land Reforms

- Abolition of intermediaries between the State and tenants
- Tenancy reforms that provide
 - security to tenants,
 - rationalisation and regulation of rent, and
 - conferment of ownership rights on tenants
- Fixation of a ceiling on landholdings
- Consolidation of holdings

Objectives of Land Reforms

- Restructuring of agrarian relations to achieve an egalitarian structure
- Elimination of exploitation in land relations
- Actualization of the goal of “land to the tiller”

- Improvement of socio-economic conditions of the rural poor by widening their land base
- Increasing agricultural production and productivity
- Facilitating land-based development of rural poor; and
- Infusion of a great measure of equality in local institutions

Land reform and Rural Poverty Reduction

- Increased agricultural growth and productivity and thus enhanced farmers' income due to land reforms is directly related to rural poverty reduction.
- Increased access to land for the poor landless masses by the redistribution of land ensures them an income guarantee.
- Land reform leads to increased rural agricultural wages that help in ensuring more income to the rural landless labourers and thus crucial to rural poverty reduction.
- Regulation of rents gives some security to the tenants.
- Abolition of intermediaries strengthens the position of the actual landholders and cultivators that help them to enhance their social and economic stature.

Conclusion: The pace of implementation of land reform measures has been slow. The objective of social justice has, however, been achieved to a considerable degree. Land reform has a great role in the rural agrarian economy that is dominated by land and agriculture. New and innovative land reform measures should be adopted with new vigour to eradicate rural poverty. Modern land reforms measures such as land record digitisation must be accomplished at the earliest

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQs

- Consider the following statements:
 - Recently the Supreme Court has held that state can regulate minority educational institutions.
 - Article 25 grants all minorities shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

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
- Which of the following language(s) is/are listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India?
 - Nepali
 - Santhali
 - Tulu

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 and 2 only
 (b) 2 and 3 only
 (c) 1 and 3 only
 (d) 1, 2 and 3
- With reference to the "Small Finance Bank", consider the following statements:
 - Shivalik Mercantile Co-operative Bank Limited has become the first urban cooperative bank (UCB) that has been granted 'in-principle' permission to convert into a small finance bank by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
 - The minimum paid-up equity capital for small finance banks shall be Rs 100 crore under 'on-tap' license regime.

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
- With reference to the "JUS COGENS", consider the following statements:

1. They are rules in international law that are peremptory or authoritative, and from which states cannot deviate.
2. This have been sanctioned by the Vienna Conventions on the Law of Treaties of 1969 and 1986.

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. Under the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) revised Supervisory Action Framework (SAF), urban cooperative banks (UCBs) will face restrictions for worsening of which of the following parameters?
 1. when net non-performing assets exceed 6% of net advances
 2. when they incur losses for two consecutive financial years or have accumulated losses on their balance sheets
 3. if capital adequacy ratio falls below 9%

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3**

6. With reference to the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Liquidation Process) (Amendment) Regulations, 2020, consider the following statements:
 1. The amendment clarifies that a person, who is not eligible under the Code to submit a resolution plan for insolvency resolution of the corporate debtor, shall not be a party to a compromise or arrangement of the corporate debtor under section 230 of the Companies Act, 2013.
 2. The amendment provides that a secured creditor, who proceeds to realise its security interest, shall contribute its share of the insolvency resolution process cost, liquidation process cost and workmen's dues, within 30 days of the liquidation commencement date.

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 the 2nd National GST Conference, consider the following statements:
 1. It was decided to constitute a Committee of Centre and State officers to examine and implement quick measures in a given time frame to curb fraudulent refund claims.
 2. It was decided that all major cases of fake Input Tax Credit, export/import fraud and fraudulent refunds shall be compulsorily investigated by investigation wing of the Income Tax Department.

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 National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), consider the following statements:
 1. It is an autonomous society under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India.
 2. Its headquarters is at Kochi.

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. With reference to the First Advance Estimates of National Income, 2019-20, consider the following statements:
1. The growth in real GDP during 2019-20 is estimated at 5.0 per cent as compared to the growth rate of 6.8 per cent in 2018-19.
 2. In terms of growth rates, the National Income registered a growth rate of 7.6 per cent in 2019-20 as against the previous year's growth rate of 11.3 per cent.
- 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
10. Snow and Avalanche Study Establishment (SASE) is a laboratory of the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO), located in:
- (a) **Manali, Himachal Pradesh.**
(b) Shimla, Himachal Pradesh.
(c) Leh, Ladakh
(d) Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh
11. With reference to the infant mortality rate (IMR), consider the following statements:
1. The infant mortality rate (IMR) in the country currently stands at 53 per 1,000 live births.
 2. According to the National Family Health Survey-4, only 78.9% births in India happen in a facility.
- 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
12. With reference to the Great Indian Bustard (GIB), consider the following statements:
1. Its population is confined only to Rajasthan and Gujarat.
 2. It listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List.
- 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
13. With reference to the Government Owned Contractor Operated (GOCO) model, consider the following statements:
1. The GOCO model was one of the recommendations of the Lt. Gen. DB Shekatkar (Retd.) committee.
 2. It aims to "enhance combat capability and re-balance defence expenditure".
- 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