

GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.**Bru-Reang Refugee Crisis**

Union Home Minister presided over the signing of an agreement between Government of India, Tripura and Mizoram and Bru-Reang representatives to end the 23-year old Bru-Reang refugee crisis.

Salient features of the new agreement:

- Around 34,000 Bru refugees will be settled in Tripura and would be given aid from the Centre to help with their rehabilitation through a package of around Rs 600 crores.
- These people would get all the rights that normal residents of the States get and they would now be able to enjoy the benefits of social welfare schemes of Centre and State governments.
- Each of the displaced families would be given 40x30 sq.ft. residential plots, in addition to the aid under earlier agreement of a fixed deposit of Rs. 4 lakhs, Rs. 5,000 cash aid per month for 2 years, free ration for 2 years and Rs. 1.5 lakhs aid to build their house. The government of Tripura would provide the land under this agreement.

Background:

- In 1997, following ethnic tension, around 5,000 families comprising around 30,000 Bru-Reang tribals were forced to flee Mizoram and seek shelter in Tripura. These people were housed in temporary camps at Kanchanpur, in North Tripura.
- There had been a sustained demand of most Bru-Reang families that they may be allowed to settle down in Tripura, considering their apprehensions about their security.

Saksham 2020

'Saksham', an annual one-month long fuel conservation mega campaign of Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) under the aegis of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, was launched.

Saksham:

- Saksham is an acronym for Sanrakshan Kshamta Mahotsav.
- Agencies involved: It is an annual flagship event of Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) under the aegis of Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Govt. of India.
- Objective: To make citizens aware about the conservation and effective utilization of petroleum products.

Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA)

- Objective: Advising government to promote energy efficiency so as to Conserve fossil fuel, Save money and Reduce the environmental impact of oil use.
- Parent ministry: Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- Established in: 1978

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS**Ethnic Unity Law In Tibet**

The People's Congress of Tibet passed a law that makes ethnic unity in the region mandatory. These regulations will come into effect from May 1 and are meant to "strengthen ethnic unity".

About:

- The law makes it clear that Tibet has been an inalienable part of China since ancient times and that it is the common responsibility of the people of all ethnic groups to safeguard national reunification and take a clear stand against separatism.
- There are more than 40 ethnic minorities in the region, which account for 95 per cent of Tibet's population of over three million.
- This is not the first time that the phrase ethnic unity has been mentioned by China. Before this, in 2016, China began a campaign in the autonomous territory of Xinjiang to promote ethnic unity and called for people to respect the cultures of the minorities who call the region home.

Tibet

- The Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) is a province-level autonomous region in southwest China. It is the second-largest province-level division of China by area after Xinjiang.
- It is located on the Tibetan Plateau, the highest region on earth. Mount Everest is located on Tibet's border with Nepal.
- In 1951, the Tibetan representatives signed a 17-point agreement with the Central People's Government affirming China's sovereignty over Tibet and the incorporation of Tibet.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**Insolvency And Bankruptcy**

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) has notified the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Voluntary Liquidation Process) (Amendment) Regulations, 2020.

About:

- With this, IBBI amended the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Voluntary Liquidation Process) Regulations, 2017.

- The amendment provides that a Liquidator shall deposit the amount of unclaimed dividends and undistributed proceeds in a liquidation process along with any income earned thereon into the Corporate Voluntary Liquidation Account before submission of an application for dissolution of the corporate person.
- It also provides a process for a stakeholder to seek withdrawal from the Corporate Voluntary Liquidation Account.

Enhancing Security of Card Transactions

RBI has issued directions under Section 10(2) of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 (Act 51 of 2007) to increase the security of card transactions. These shall come into effect from March 16, 2020.

Key highlights of the direction:

- RBI has asked banks to allow only domestic card transactions at ATMs and point of sale (PoS) terminals in India at the time of issuance or reissuance of a card.
- The RBI has also asked banks to offer all cardholders the facility to switch on or off and set or modify transaction limits within the overall card limit.
- Issuers should provide cardholders the facility for enabling 'card not present' (domestic and international) transactions, 'card present' (international) transactions and contactless transactions.
- 'Card not present' transactions involve furnishing of card number and CVV (card verification value) in transactions executed online.
- 'Card present' transactions need the card for use in PoS or ATM terminals.
- Contactless transactions are done using RFID technology or near-field communication (NFC).

Off-Budget Transactions

S C Garg, former Economic Affairs secretary, has claimed that the actual fiscal deficit for 2018-19 is 4.7% — more than a full percentage point than the number claimed by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharam's Budget in July.

About:

- According to SC Garg, the official figures hide the true fiscal deficit. That's because some of the government's expenditure was funded by the so-called "off-budget" items.
- All government expenditure, revenues and debts are required to be carried out through the Consolidated Fund of India (CFI). If it is done so, the fiscal deficit of the Government should equal to the additional debt incurred during the year, all recorded in the CFI.
- Unfortunately, all these transactions are not recorded through the CFI all the time. Some debt/liabilities are not assumed outside the CFI — either in the Public Account or totally outside the formal accounting system of the Government i.e. outside CFI and Public Account.
- Such transactions are described popularly as Below the Line, Off Budget etc.

Fiscal Deficit:

- Meaning: Fiscal Deficit is the difference between the Revenue Receipts plus Non-debt Capital Receipts (NDCR) and the total expenditure. In other words, it is reflective of the total borrowing requirements of Government.
- Significance of fiscal deficit: If this ratio is too high, it implies that there is a lesser amount of money left in the market for private entrepreneurs and businesses to borrow. Lesser amount of this money, in turn, leads to higher rates of interest charged on such lending.
- Acceptable level of fiscal deficit: In India, the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act requires the central government to reduced its fiscal deficit to 3 per cent of GDP. India has been struggling to achieve this mark.

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES

Climate Change

According to World Meteorological Organization (WMO), The past decade (2010-2019) was the hottest on record and 2019 was the second warmest year ever, just shy of 2016, since records began.

About:

- The data from the Geneva-based WMO crunches several datasets including from NASA and the UK Met Office. It showed that the average global temperature in 2019 was 1.1 degree Celsius (34°F) above pre-industrial levels.
- Australia had its hottest, driest year on record in 2019, setting the scene for the massive bushfires.
- The hottest year on record was in 2016 due to the warming impact of a strong El Nino event.
- Since the 1960s, each decade has been warmer than the previous one, by significant amounts. While the 2010s continued this trend, the second half of the decade was especially warm — the five hottest years ever have occurred during that span.

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

GSAT-30

India's telecommunication satellite GSAT-30 was successfully launched into a Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO) on January 17, 2020 from Kourou launch base, French Guiana by Ariane-5 VA-251.

About:

- According to Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), GSAT-30 is aimed at providing high-quality television, telecommunications and broadcasting services. With a mission life of 15 years, GSAT-30 is an operational communication satellite for DTH, television uplink and VSAT services.
- GSAT-30 will serve as replacement to the aging INSAT-4A spacecraft services with enhanced coverage. The 3,357-kg GSAT-30 derives its heritage from ISRO's earlier INSAT/GSAT satellite series, and is equipped with 12 C and 12 Ku band transponders.
- The satellite will provide Indian mainland and islands coverage in Ku-band and extended coverage in C-band covering Gulf countries, a large number of Asian countries and Australia.

DEFENCE AND SECURITY

K9 Vajra-T Gun

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh flagged off 51st K9 VAJRA-T Gun from Larsen & Toubro (L&T) Armoured System Complex at Hazira in Gujarat.

About:

- Features: K-9 Vajra-T Gun is a 155-mm, 52-calibre self-propelled artillery gun with a maximum range of 40 km. The fire control system has been customised for desert conditions.
- Executing agency: Larsen & Toubro (L&T) Defence is currently executing the 'K9 VAJRA-T' Tracked, Self-Propelled Howitzer Guns program - the contract awarded to the company by Ministry of Defence through global competitive bidding.
- Timeline: In 2017, the Indian engineering conglomerate Larsen & Toubro (L&T) and South Korea's Hanwha Techwin signed a contract to make 100 K9 Vajra-T guns. All 100 guns will be delivered by November 2020.

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

29th Saraswati Samman

Eminent Sindhi writer Vasdev Mohi will be conferred with 29th Saraswati Samman for his short stories collection- Chequebook. Mr Mohi has authored 25 books of poetry, stories and translations. He has also received Sahitya Akademi Award.

About:

- Criteria: The award is annually given to an outstanding work of an Indian citizen published during the last 10 years in any of the languages mentioned in Schedule 8 of the constitution.
- Instituted by: KK Birla Foundation.
- Instituted in: 1991.
- Cash Prize: 15 lakh rupees.

Related Info: Besides the Saraswati Samman, the K.K. Birla foundation also gives away two other literary awards Vyas Samman and Bihari Puraskar besides G.D Birla Award for scientific research.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. Buddhism constitutes a bridge between India and South-East Asia. Comment.

The Buddhist faith, due to its emphasis on peaceful co-existence and its wide pan-Asian presence, lends itself well to India's soft-power diplomacy, through which India can establish strong relationship with South-Asian nations.

Factors that make Buddhism bridge between ASEAN and South-East Asia

- India's historical link with Buddhism: Buddhism originated in India and spread to South East Asia and other Asian countries. Spirituality, art, culture and faith that found their way across other regions, earned India a considerable amount of soft power.
- Mutual cultural experience: The Buddhist aspect of soft power relies not on the export of a cultural product, but on promoting certain shared religious and cultural associations, thereby creating a mutually erected platform upon which further relations are based.
- Large Buddhist population: Today, 97 percent of the world's Buddhist population lives in the Asian continent. It is within this context that one can understand the efforts of the Indian government at incorporating Buddhist heritage in order to form a basis for further diplomatic, economic, cultural, and strategic associations within its foreign policy and building bridges with ASEAN
- Buddhist sites: India has numerous sites of importance to the Buddhist faith, such as Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, and Nalanda which provides cultural bonds with Buddhist communities in South-East Asia.
- Protection to Tibetan Buddhist community: India has nurtured an image of being a protector of the persecuted because of the presence of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan parliament-in-exile in the city of Dharamshala following their failed insurrection against China.

Conclusion: Buddhism is gaining a strategic dimension and, India needs initiatives like reviving Nalanda University, promoting spiritual tourism across Buddhist circuit, initiating spiritual activities in partnership South- Asian nations, to further strengthen its soft power diplomacy.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQs

1. With reference to the GSAT-30, consider the following statements:
 1. It is an operational communication satellite for DTH, television uplink and VSAT services
 2. It will be able to provide coverage only in Indian mainland.
 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 29th Saraswati Samman, consider the following statements:
 1. Eminent Sindhi writer Vasdev Mohi will be conferred with 29th Saraswati Samman for his short stories collection- Chequebook.
 2. The award is annually given to an outstanding work of an Indian citizen published during the last 10 years in any of the languages mentioned in Schedule 8 of the constitution.
 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 Fiscal Deficit, consider the following statements:
 1. It is the difference between the Revenue Receipts plus Non-debt Capital Receipts (NDCR) and the total expenditure.
 2. In India, the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act requires the central government to reduced its fiscal deficit to 5 per cent of GDP.
 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. According to World Meteorological Organization (WMO), which of the following year was the second warmest year ever, since records began?
 (a) **2019** (b) 2017
 (c) 2015 (d) 2014
5. Which of the following Plateau is the highest region on earth?
 (a) **Tibet** (b) Colorado
 (c) ustyurt (d) Iranian
6. With reference to the K-9 Vajra-T Gun, consider the following statements:
 1. It is a 155-mm, 52-calibre self-propelled artillery gun with a maximum range of 40 km.
 2. The fire control system has been customised for desert conditions.
 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 RBI directions under Section 10(2) of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, consider the following statements:
 1. RBI has asked banks to allow only domestic card transactions at ATMs and point of sale (PoS) terminals in India at the time of issuance or reissuance of a card.
 2. The RBI has asked banks to offer all cardholders the facility to switch on or off and set or modify transaction limits within the overall card limit.
 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. 'Saksham' 2020, recently seen in news, is an initiative of which of the following Union ministry?
 (a) Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare
 (b) Ministry of Finance
 (c) Ministry of Tourism
 (d) **Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas**
9. With reference to the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Voluntary Liquidation Process) (Amendment) Regulations, 2020, consider the following statements:
 1. The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) has recently notified the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Voluntary Liquidation Process) (Amendment) Regulations, 2020.
 2. It provides a process for a stakeholder to seek withdrawal from the Corporate Voluntary Liquidation Account.
 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. In which among the following states Bru/Reang tribe is located?
 (a) **Tripura**
 (b) Sikkim
 (c) Arunachal Pradesh
 (d) Nagaland