

GEOGRAPHY- PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC**Godavari And Kaveri River Linking Project**

Union Minister for Jal Shakti informed Rajya Sabha about the Godavari and Kaveri River Linking Project.

About:

- The draft Detailed Project Report (DPR) of Godavari – Cauvery link project consisting of 3 links viz., Godavari (Inchampalli/Janampet) - Krishna (Nagarjunasagar), Krishna (Nagarjunasagar) - Pennar (Somasila) and Pennar (Somasila) – Cauvery (Grand Anicut) link projects has been completed by National Water Development Agency (NWDA).
- As per the draft DPR, about 247 TMC can be diverted from Godavari river to Nagarjunsagar dam(through lifting) and further south for meeting the demands of Krishna, Pennar and Cauvery basins.
- The stage of implementation of a project would be reached after DPR is prepared with the consensus of concerned States and the requisite statutory clearances are obtained.

CONSTITUTION AND POLITY**Sc/St Amendment Act, 2018**

The Supreme Court today upheld the constitutional validity of the SC/ST Amendment Act, 2018 which rules out anticipatory bail in case of atrocities against SC/STs.

About:

- The Apex Court said, anticipatory bail can only be granted in cases where prima facie case is not made out.
- It said, a preliminary inquiry is not essential before lodging an FIR under the act nor is the approval of senior police officials.

Related Info:

- The SC/ST Amendment Act 2018 was brought to nullify the effect of a Supreme Court ruling which had diluted the provisions of the stringent Act.
- Earlier, on the 20th of March, 2018, taking note of rampant misuse of the stringent SC/ST Act, the top court ruled out the immediate arrest on any complaint filed under the law.
- Violent protests had taken place across the country after the apex court's verdict in which several persons lost their lives and many were injured.

GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.**Welfare Schemes For Women Workers**

Union Minister for Labour and Employment informed Lok Sabha about the Welfare Schemes for Women Workers.

About:

- Schemes such as National Crèche Scheme, Working Women Hostel, Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme, providing collateral free loan under Mudra scheme, Ujjwala Scheme for curbing trafficking etc. are being implemented for providing safe working condition to women workers.
- A number of protective provisions have been incorporated in various labour laws like
- Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 which provides for same wages for same and similar nature of work and prevents discrimination;
- Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 which provides for paid maternity leave for 26 weeks and mandatory crèche facility in the establishments having 50 or more employees.
- Special training programmes for women workers are being conducted by Dattopant Thengadi National Board for Workers Education & Development (erstwhile Central Board of Workers Education) through which women workers are made aware about their rights, duties and various protective provisions under various labour legislations.

Scholarship Schemes For Indian Students For Pursuing Higher Studies Abroad

Union Minister for Human Resource Development informed Lok Sabha that Government of India is implementing schemes for scholarship/grant for Indian students travelling abroad for higher studies.

About:

- National Overseas Scholarship for Scheduled Caste Students: The scheme is implemented by the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment under which financial assistance is provided to the meritorious Scheduled Caste students for pursuing Master level courses and Ph.D. in foreign universities/institution accredited by the concerned country.

- National Overseas Scholarship for Scheduled Tribe Students: The scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs where financial assistance is provided to the meritorious Scheduled Tribe students for pursuing Master level courses, Ph.D. and Post Doctoral programme in foreign Universities in the field of engineering, technology and science.
- Overseas Doctoral Fellowship Programme: The Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), a Statutory body of the Department of Science and Technology launched an Overseas Doctoral Fellowship Program with specific Universities to build national capacity where the talent supply of researchers in areas of interest to the country is sub-critical.
- All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) in collaboration with 'Mathematics of Information Technology and Computer Systems (MITACS)' provides a platform from 2018 to the students of AICTE approved institutions to undergo Internship in Canadian Universities through its scheme 'Sending Students Abroad for Research Internships'.

'e-Credentials / e-Certificates'

The Minister for Skill Development informed Lok Sabha that Directorate General of Training (DGT), Ministry of Skill Development proposes to issue digital 'e-Credentials / e-Certificates.'

About:

- e-Credentials are an electronic scheme-based standard for describing credentials data in a machine-readable format (JSON-LD representation of RDFa- Resource Description Framework, a web standard) along with its printable human-friendly version to make credential exchange between digital agents open and reliable.
- Certificates issued according to this specification can be aligned to one or more educational standards. They are secured using digital signatures. These will also be pushed in DigiLocker.
- This standard is an open standard, free to use, and does not cost anything extra to the Government or the student.
- This would enable candidates to verifiably state their skill levels with a high degree of trust in authenticity to aggregators, matchers, and employers.

Web Portal For Star Rating Of Mines

In order to promote green, safe and sustainable mining practices using technology as a tool, Ministry of Coal (MoC) has launched a web portal for star rating of coal mines.

About:

- Based on the star ratings obtained through a well-defined mechanism on this web portal, the highest scoring mines in the country will be awarded in a public ceremony.
- Besides, all the mines will be given an official certificate by the CCO mentioning their star rating and the particular reporting year.
- The mines that score from 91 to 100% will get 5 star, 81 to 90% 4 star, 71 to 80% 3 star, 61 to 70% 2 star, 41 to 60% 1 star and mines that score from 0 to 40% will get No star on the portal as per laid down procedures of the Star Rating Policy for Coal Mines in India.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Steel Imports

Union Minister for Steel informed Lok Sabha about the Steps taken for reduction in Steel Imports.

About:

- In order to minimize import of steel, the Government has taken following measures:
- Domestically Manufactured Iron and Steel Products Policy (DMI&SP) has been notified with an objective to encourage consumption of domestically produced steel by Government organisations.
- To meet the domestic demand for high performance steel, the Government, is facilitating R&D in the sector through the establishment of Steel Research and Technology Mission of India (SRTMI).
- The Ministry is addressing the issue of quality of steel products that are produced as well as block import of sub-standard steel. It has notified Steel and Steel Products Quality Control (QC) Orders.
- To prevent import due to unfair trade, the government has imposed Anti-Dumping Duty on a number of steel products imports.
- To reduce dependence on imported steel scrap, the government has notified the Steel Scrap Recycling Policy.
- The Government has recently introduced Steel Imports Monitoring System (SIMS) to monitor steel imports.

Public Enterprises Survey -2018-19

The Public Enterprises Survey -2018-19 was tabled in both the Houses of Parliament.

About:

- The Department of Public Enterprises (DPE), Ministry of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises, Government of India brings out the Public Sector Enterprises Survey on the performance of Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) every year.
- As per the Survey 2018-19, there were total 348 CPSEs as on 31st March, 2019 out of which 249 were operational. Remaining 86 CPSEs were under construction and 13 CPSEs were under closure or liquidation.
- Total paid up capital in all CPSEs as on 31.3.2019 stood at Rs. 2,75,697 crore as compared to Rs. 2,53,977 crore as on 31.3.2018, showing a growth of 8.55%.
- Overall net profit of operating CPSEs during 2018-19 stood at Rs. 1,42,951 crore as compared to Rs. 1,23,751 crore during 2017-18 showing a growth in overall profit of 15.52%.
- ONGC, Indian Oil Corporation and NTPC were the top three profitable PSUs in 2018-19, whereas BSNL, Air India and MTNL incurred highest losses for a third consecutive year.

PRELIMS SPECIFIC FACTS- INDICES, DAYS, EVENTS, AWARDS ETC**92nd Academy Awards**

The 92nd Academy Awards was held at Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.

About:

- Parasite won four awards at the Oscars – Best Picture, Best International Film, Best Director and Best Original Screenplay.
- Parasite is the first non-English language film to win best picture in the 92-year history of the Academy Awards.
- Director Bong Joon Ho created history by becoming the first Asian and South Korean filmmaker to bag the best director Oscar.
- Joaquin Phoenix took home the Best Actor award for his performance in Joker. Renée Zellweger won the Oscar for her performance in Judy.

Related Info:

- The Academy Awards, more popularly known as the Oscars, are awards for artistic and technical merit in the film industry. These are given annually by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS).
- The 92nd Academy Awards ceremony, presented by the AMPAS, honored the best films of 2019.

National Deworming Day (NDD)

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) conducted the tenth round of National Deworming Day (NDD). This will be followed by the mop-up day on February 17, 2020.

About:

- As part of this campaign, children and adolescents aged 1-19 years are being administered Albendazole (400 mg) across government, government-aided schools, anganwadis, private schools and other educational institutions.
- The NDD is implemented with an objective to reduce the prevalence of Soil Transmitted Helminths (STH), commonly called the parasitic intestinal worms, among all children and adolescents.
- Infections with the main STH – roundworm, whipworm and hookworms – contribute to 50.1 lakh disability adjusted life-years (DALYs) worldwide (WHO, 2010).
- Launched in 2015, the NDD is the largest public health program implemented on a single day reaching crores of children and adolescents through two NDD rounds every year.
- Implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Human Resource Development, NDD is a key intervention of Anemia Mukh Bharat.

ODISHA DEVELOPMENT**Forest Cover Increased In Odisha: Forest Survey Of India**

A review meeting regarding the use of funds under Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) was held in Bhubaneswar.

About:

- According to a survey report of Forest Survey of India 2019, forest cover across Odisha has increased significantly.
- As per the new report from forest survey of India, about 274 km forest cover and 655 square km outside the forest tree cover have increased in Odisha.
- The Odisha government approved its annual action plan entailing an expenditure of Rs 803.65 crore under CAMPA for the 2020-21 fiscal to increase the green cover in the coastal state.
- A new target has been set to take up plantation in 1,500 hectares, with 1,600 saplings per hectare during 2020-21 and to grow 5,71,48,000 seedlings during the period,
- The issue of forest fire protection figured in the meeting. Rs 41.13 crore was approved for maintenance of the fire protection line, operation of 216 fire protection squads and support to the Vana Surakhya Samiti (VSS) for fire protection work, the official said.

CAMPA Act:

- To compensate the loss of forest area and to maintain the sustainability, the Government of India came up with a well-defined Act, known as CAMPA (Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority).
- The law establishes the National Compensatory Afforestation Fund under the Public Account of India, and a State Compensatory Afforestation Fund under the Public Account of each state.
- These Funds will receive payments for: (i) compensatory afforestation, (ii) net present value of forest (NPV), and (iii) other project specific payments.
- The National Fund will receive 10% of these funds, and the State Funds will receive the remaining 90%.
- According to the Act's provision, a company diverting forest land must provide alternative land to take up compensatory afforestation.
- For afforestation, the company should pay to plant new trees in the alternative land provided to the state.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. Growing criminalisation of polity is a threat to the basic structure of the constitution. Discuss.

Ans:

According to the Association for Democratic Reforms, 43% of winners of Lok Sabha 2019 have criminal cases against them, an increase from 34% in 2014. The Basic Structure doctrine was first given by the Supreme Court in the Kesavananda Bharati Case, and it held that the basic structure of the Constitution could not be abrogated even by a constitutional amendment. Socio-economic justice and effective access to justice have been considered to be the part of the basic structure of the Indian Constitution. Lawmakers with criminal background and corruption can, therefore, be a threat to the basic structure.

Impact of the Criminalization

- Lawbreakers become the lawmaker which undermines the credibility of the parliament
- Loss of public faith in the judicial machinery
- It is self-perpetuating
- According to the Padmanabhaiah committee, criminalization of politics is the main reason behind both politicization and criminalization of police

Public Interest Foundation & Others v Union of India, the petitioner held that the criminalization of politics is a threat to the basic structure of the constitution:

- It is against the Supremacy of the Constitution, as the Constitution never aimed that lawbreaker becomes the lawmaker.
- It is against the Secular character of the Constitution, as criminals often use communal statements to garner votes.
- It is against the principle of 'Rule of Law'.
- It is against the unity and integrity of India, as criminals often use divisive politics to win the election.
- It is against the principle of 'individual freedom'
- It is against the principle of free and fair elections

Judiciary action against the criminalization of politics:

- Supreme Court proposed to make political parties accountable for criminalizing politics by inviting criminals on a party ticket

- It would direct Election Commission to insist that parties get new member to declare criminal cases against him/her
- Publishes so whole country may know about it
- EC can deregister party if not adhered
- Parties should incorporate a clause in membership form requiring member to file an affidavit disclosing criminal activities
- Supreme Court accepted the Center's request to set up 12 fast track courts to prosecute criminal cases pending against MPs and MLAs within 1 year

Way Forward

- Public awareness is needed. They need to choose their leaders carefully.
- Joint supports of political parties is needed. Rapid criminalisation of politics cannot be arrested by merely disqualifying tainted legislators but should begin by “cleansing” the political parties.
- Basic structure of the Constitution, essentially highlights the spirit of the document. It is important to ensure that any threat to it is dealt with immediately.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQs

- With reference to the National Deworming Day (NDD), consider the following statements:
 - As part of this campaign, children and adolescents aged 1-19 years are being administered Albendazole (400 mg) across government, government-aided schools, anganwadis, private schools and other educational institutions.
 - It is implemented with an objective to reduce the prevalence of Soil Transmitted Helminths (STH), commonly called the parasitic intestinal worms, among all children and adolescents.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2**
 - Neither 1 nor 2
- With reference to the Public Enterprises Survey 2018-19, consider the following statements:
 - It was released by NITI Aayog.
 - ONGC, Indian Oil Corporation and NTPC were the top three profitable PSUs in 2018-19.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - 1 only
 - 2 only**
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
- With reference to the ‘e-Credentials / e-Certificates, consider the following statements:
 - e-Credentials are an electronic scheme-based standard for describing credentials data in a machine-readable format along with its printable human-friendly version to make credential exchange between digital agents open and reliable.
 - Certificates issued according to this specification can be aligned to one or more educational standards.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2**
 - Neither 1 nor 2
- With reference to the Supreme Court judgment on SC/ST Amendment Act 2018, consider the following statements:
 - Anticipatory bail can only be granted in cases where prima facie case is not made out.
 - A preliminary inquiry is essential before lodging an FIR under the act.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - 1 only**
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
- Which of the following union ministry has recently has launched a web portal for star rating of coal mines?
 - Ministry of Commerce and Industry

- (b) Ministry of Finance
(c) Ministry of Power
(d) None of the above
6. Which of the following are the steps taken by the Union Government to minimize import of steel?
1. Establishment of Steel Research and Technology Mission of India (SRTMI).
 2. Imposed Anti-Dumping Duty on a number of steel products imports.
 3. Steel Imports Monitoring System (SIMS) to monitor steel imports.
- 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
7. With reference to the Welfare Schemes for Women Workers, consider the following statements:
1. Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 which provides for paid maternity leave for 26 weeks and mandatory crèche facility in the establishments having 50 or more employees.
 2. Special training programmes for women workers are being conducted by Dattopant Thengadi National Board for Workers Education & Development through which women workers are made aware about their rights, duties and various protective provisions under various labour legislations.
- 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 schemes for scholarship/grant for Indian students travelling abroad for higher studies, consider the following statements:
1. National Overseas Scholarship for Scheduled Caste Students is implemented by the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment under which financial assistance is provided to the meritorious Scheduled Caste students for pursuing Master level courses and Ph.D. in foreign universities/institution accredited by the concerned country.
 2. The Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), a Statutory body of the Department of Science and Technology launched an Overseas Doctoral Fellowship Program with specific Universities to build national capacity where the talent supply of researchers in areas of interest to the country is sub-critical.
- 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. Which of the following projects comes under Godavari and Kaveri River Linking Project?
1. Godavari (Inchampalli/Janampet) - Krishna (Nagarjunasagar)
 2. Krishna (Nagarjunasagar) - Pennar (Somasila)
 3. Pennar (Somasila) – Cauvery (Grand Anicut)
- 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
10. Which of the following is the first non-English language film to win best picture in the 92-year history of the Academy Awards?
- (a) Parasite**
(b) Joker
(c) Once upon a time in Hollywood
(d) 1917