

NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC**“Sanchay Jal, Behtar Kal” Campaign**

Rolling out its water conservation plan under the Jal Shakti Abhiyan, the Centre said it would focus its time-bound, mission-mode campaign on 1,592 “water-stressed” blocks in 257 districts.

Sanchay Jal, Behtar Kal Campaign

- It is a campaign for rainwater harvesting and water conservation.
- The plan would rely largely on mass awareness programmes.
- It will also involve focused implementation and convergence of existing water conservation schemes under the NREGS, Integrated Watershed Management Programme, and PMKSY’s per-drop-more-crop (micro-irrigation) programme.
- The five targeted interventions would include water conservation and rainwater harvesting, renovation of traditional and other water bodies/ tanks, re-use and bore-well recharge structures, watershed development, and intensive afforestation.

Why such move?

- India’s water availability is estimated to decline to 1,341 cubic meter per capita per year by 2025 (from 5,177 cubic meter per capita per year in 1951).
- But there are also examples of states such as Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat and others that have undertaken efforts to resolve it.
- The United Nations, under its sustainable development goals, expects all countries to provide clean drinking water to every household by 2030.
- At present, only 8% of the total rainwater in the country is harvested — one of the many reasons why it needs to become a people’s movement.

Rashtriya Avishkar Abhiyan

Rashtriya Avishkar Abhiyan is running successfully to motivate children to learn Science, Maths and Technology through observation and experimentation confirmed HRD Minister.

Rashtriya Avishkar Abhiyan (RAA)

- Rashtriya Avishkar Abhiyan is a unique concept developed by the Ministry of HRD that aims to inculcate a spirit of inquiry, creativity and love for Science and Mathematics in school children.
- It was launched on 9th July, 2015 by Late Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Former President of India.
- It is a convergent framework across School Education and Higher Education to motivate children of the age group from 6-18 years in learning Science, Mathematics and Technology.
- It focuses on learning through observation, experimentation, inference drawing, model building, etc. both through inside and outside classroom activities and processes.
- It seeks to create curiosity, excitement and spirit of innovation and exploration amongst school children.
- It encourages higher education institutions to become Mentoring Institutions and assist secondary and elementary schools in the study of Science and Mathematics.

STRIDE scheme

UGC announces new Initiative – Scheme for Trans-disciplinary Research for India’s Developing Economy (STRIDE) to boost research culture in India.

Key features:

- STRIDE will provide support to research projects that are socially relevant, locally need-based, nationally important and globally significant.
- STRIDE shall support research capacity building as well as basic, applied and transformational action research that can contribute to national priorities with focus on inclusive human development.
- STRIDE shall support creation, development and integration of new ideas, concepts and practices for public good and strengthening civil society.

STRIDE Objectives:

- To identify young talent, strengthen research culture, build capacity, promote innovation and support trans-disciplinary research for India’s developing economy and national development.

- To fund multi institutional network high-impact research projects in humanities and human sciences.

Significance: STRIDE scheme will strengthen research culture and innovation in colleges and Universities and help students and faculty to contribute towards India's developing economy with help of collaborative research. Focus on Humanities and Human Sciences will boost quality research on Indian languages and knowledge systems.

Swadesh Darshan Scheme:

Recognizing the potential of rural tourism in the country, the Ministry has identified Rural Circuit as one of the thematic circuits identified for development under this scheme and is aimed at leveraging tourism as a force multiplier for revitalizing the rural economy and for giving both domestic and international tourists a glimpse of the rural aspect of the country.

About Swadesh Darshan Scheme:

- Tourism Ministry launched the scheme.
- Objective: to develop theme-based tourist circuits in the country. These tourist circuits will be developed on the principles of high tourist value, competitiveness and sustainability in an integrated manner.

Features of Swadesh Darshan Scheme:

- 100% centrally funded for the project components undertaken for public funding.
- To leverage the voluntary funding available for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives of Central Public Sector Undertakings and corporate sector.
- Funding of individual project will vary from state to state and will be finalized on the basis of detailed project reports prepared by PMC (Programme Management Consultant).
- PMC will be a national level consultant to be appointed by the Mission Directorate.
- A National Steering Committee (NSC) will be constituted with Minister in charge of M/O Tourism as Chairman, to steer the mission objectives and vision of the scheme.
- A Mission Directorate headed by the Member Secretary, NSC as a nodal officer will help in identification of projects in consultation with the States/ UTs governments and other stake holders.

CONSTITUTION AND POLITY

J&K Reservation Bill

Recently Rajya Sabha has passed the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Bill. Passed by Lok Sabha last week, the Bill partially amends a Presidential Order of 1954 in order to amend the state's Reservation Act.

About the Bill

- The Bill amends the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Act, 2004 and replaces an Ordinance promulgated on March 1, 2019.
- The earlier Act provided for reservation in appointment and promotions in state government posts, and admission to professional institutions for certain reserved categories.
- The Act provides for reservation in appointment and promotions in certain state government posts to persons belonging to socially and educationally backward classes.
- It defines socially and educationally backward classes to include persons living in areas adjoining the Actual Line of Control.

Amendments to the Bill

- With the constitutional amendments, the benefits of reservation available to the residents along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) have been extended to residents living along the International Border (IB).
- This benefits residents in Jammu, Samba and Kathua.
- Through the Presidential Order, the Cabinet applied the 77th Constitutional Amendment of 1995 to J&K, giving benefits of reservation in promotion to SCs and STs in government service.
- The Cabinet also applied the 103rd Constitutional Amendment of 2019 to J&K, which gave 10% reservation to Economically Weaker Sections among people in the general category.

What is the 1954 executive order?

- The 1954 order is an executive order issued by the President under Article 370 to extend provisions of an Act of Parliament to J&K State, which can be done only with the concurrence of the state government.
- The Constitution of India applies to Jammu & Kashmir by virtue of Article 370, which provides a mechanism for the way it applies.
- Article 370 defines state government as ‘the Maharaja’ and/or the ‘Sadar-i-Riyasat’ aided by a council of ministers.

Then what is the controversy?

- At the centre of the controversy is the question whether the Governor, in the absence of an elected government, has the authority to give consent to extend a law of Parliament and change the constitutional arrangement between J&K and the Union.
- While bringing the ordinance, the Union govt. said the amendments were recommended by the State Administrative Council (SAC) headed by J&K Governor.
- While no one in J&K has opposed the decision to provide benefits to SCs, STs and EWS, there has been opposition to the route taken by the Centre and its nominee the J&K Governor.
- It is accused that Union Govt. “breached” Article 370 while issuing the amendment to the 1954 Presidential Order.

Issue with Governor’s authority

- The issue of the Governor’s powers was defined by the Supreme Court in Mohammad Maqbool Damnoo versus State of J&K (1972).
- While dealing with the replacement of an elected Sadr-i-Riyasat with the Centre-appointed Governor, the court observed that a Governor is “head of government aided by a council of ministers”.
- It is not as if the state government, by such a change (replacing elected Sadr-i-Riyasat with Centre-appointed Governor) is made irresponsible to the state legislature.

Arguments by regional parties

- One of the main regional parties has challenged the amendment to the Presidential Order of 1954.
- The regional parties contend that “concurrence” means the concurrence of an elected government, and not that of a nominated government.
- Elected govt. is a must for any amendment to the Presidential Order of 1954, and that this is thus in contravention of Article 370.
- They contend that the government means an elected government and that the President cannot seek concurrence of the Governor because “the Governor is a representative of the President”.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONSJapan resumes commercial whaling after 31 years

Japan has resumed commercial whaling after 31 years, meeting a long-cherished goal of traditionalists that’s seen as a largely lost cause. Japan’s six-month notice to withdraw from the International Whaling Commission took effect.

Background

- Some countries under the umbrella of scientific research are continuously killing the whales and selling meat and producing whale oil, which has brought various whales under the category of endangered species and are vanishing day by day.
- Japan, Iceland and Norway are some of the countries recorded with largest number of commercial whaling.
- Japan was an IWC member since 1951.

Reasons for Japan’s Withdrawal

- Japan has been practicing commercial whale hunting for past 30 years under a scientific programme, granted as an exception under the IWC ban.
- Small-scale whaling is traditional in some parts of Japan, but whale meat was only ever popular in the postwar period.
- Japan has used whales not only as a source of protein but also for a variety of other purposes.

- Engagement in whaling has been supporting local communities, and thereby developed the life and culture of using whales.

Why whale meat?

- Whale meat was an affordable source of protein during the lean times after World War II, with consumption peaking at 223,000 tons in 1962.
- But whale was quickly replaced by other meats.
- Whale meat consumption was down to 6,000 tons in 1986, a year before the commercial whaling moratorium imposed by the IWC.

International Whaling Commission (IWC)

- The IWC is an Inter-Governmental Organization set up by the terms of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW) signed in Washington, D.C in 1946.
- It aims to provide for the proper conservation of whale stocks and thus make possible the orderly development of the whaling industry.
- The main duty of the IWC is to keep under review and revise as necessary the measures laid down in the Schedule to the Convention which govern the conduct of whaling throughout the world.
- The body is the first piece of International Environmental Legislation established in 1946.
- Commercial whaling was banned by the IWC in 1986 after some species were almost driven to extinction.
- 89 countries have the membership of in IWC and all the member countries are signatories to this convention.
- India is a member state of the IWC.

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES

Fly ash

The National Green Tribunal has sought a report from the authorities on the current status on disposal and management of fly ash. The report has been sought, following a plea alleging unscientific handling of fly ash generated by a unit of NTPC.

What is Fly Ash?

- Fly ash is a major source of PM 2.5 (fine, respirable pollution particles) in summer. It becomes air borne, and gets transported to a radius of 10 to 20 kms.
- It can settle on water and other surfaces.
- Fly ash contains heavy metals from coal, a large amount of PM 2.5 and black carbon (BC).
- Proper disposal of fly ash is still not happening in many places.

What can be done?

- Fly ash, the end product of combustion during the process of power generation in the coal based thermal power plants, is a proven resource material for many applications of construction industries and currently is being utilized in manufacturing of Portland Cement, bricks/blocks/tiles manufacturing, road embankment construction and low-lying area development, etc.
- At present, 63% of the fly ash is being utilized and target is for 100% utilization of the fly ash. There is need for education and awareness generation.
- Road contractors and construction engineers need to know the benefits of using fly ash in construction.
- Measures need to be taken to reduce the cost of construction of roads using fly ash by way of tax structure, subsidies and transportation services.
- Besides, there is a need to prevent the ash from coming to the power plant by washing the coal at its place of origin. The government should also come out with a policy to encourage fly ash use in cement plant.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Mediocrity will never do. You are capable of something better.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns: Critically examine the consequences of the Article 370 of the constitution in the context of the tension between J&K based parties & the Centre?

Ans: Article 370 provides the special status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Though, the special status has always been debatable, recently a tension was started between J&K based parties and Central Government, that Cabinet is in the process of repealing Article 370. This procedure, however, requires Jammu and Kashmir legislative assembly's consent and a unilateral decision for its removal cannot be taken. The repealing of Article 370 of the Constitution has been a poll promise of the BJP. The BJP has been opposing the special status for Jammu and Kashmir for a long time. It has earlier claimed that it could not repeal Article 370 during the NDA government of 1999-2003 due to lack of majority. Since BJP has received a majority this time in parliament, the tensions have escalated to new heights.

Consequences of Article 370:

- Article 370 bars the non subjects/ people from outside the state to buy immovable as well as movable property here, set any industry or manufacturing unit, while no other state bars any state subject of J&K to invest there, acquire land or set business establishment.
- Article 370 act as obstacle in attracting the flow of investment from big business houses which are running mega projects and giving employment to thousands of educated youth according to their academic, professional, skilled, and non skilled capabilities.
- Due to this lack of job avenues to the educated unemployed youth of state is forcing them to move out to other states for finding suitable source of bread earning. If this silent migration of youth continues, it will convert the state into a land of old and aged people in next 15-20 years, which is indeed a very serious matter and need to be taken note of by the government.
- Unemployment in J&K has promoted militancy. A poor youth after completing education with limited resources, after sitting idle for long, gets easily lured by the people who push them into anti-national activities by giving few thousands of rupees.
- Article 370 is a source of gender bias in disqualifying women from the State of property rights.
- Article 370 was and is about providing space, in matters of governance, to the people of a State who felt deeply vulnerable about their identity and insecure about the future. It was about empowering people, making people feel that they belong, and about increasing the accountability of public institutions and services. Article 370 is synonymous with decentralization and devolution of power, phrases that have been on the charter of virtually every political party in India.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS BASED MCQS

- Consider the following statements w.r.t the “Sanchay Jal, Behtar Kal” Campaign.
 - It is a campaign launched by Madhya Pradesh for water conservation in its water-stressed blocks.
 - It converges with center’s PMKSY’s per-drop-more-crop (micro-irrigation) programme.
 Which of the statements is/are correct?
 - 1 only
 - 2 only**
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
- Which of the following statements is/are incorrect about the Rashtriya Aavishkar Abhiyan (RAA)?
 - It is a programme of the Ministry of Science and Technology.
 - It is a convergent framework across School Education and Higher Education to develop scientific temperament of students.
 Select the correct answer from the codes given below:
 - 1 only
 - 2 only**
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
- Consider the following statements w.r.t the Scheme for Trans-disciplinary Research for India’s Developing Economy (STRIDE) .
 - It launched by the NITI Aayog.
 - It has a focus to strengthen research culture and innovation in colleges and Universities.
 Which of the statements is/are correct?
 - 1 only
 - 2 only**
 - Both 1 nor 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
- Consider the following statements w.r.t the Swadesh Darshan Scheme?
 - Its main aim is to develop theme-based tourist circuits throughout country.
 - It is a 100% centrally funded for the project components undertaken for public funding.
 Which of the statements is/are correct?
 - 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 nor 2**
 - Neither 1 nor 2
- Regarding the current relationship between J&K and India which of the following is/are correct?
 - Fundamental Duties are not applicable to J&K.
 - Preventive detention laws made by the Parliament are not applicable to J&K.
 - Part VI of the Constitution of India is not applicable to J&K.
 - Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 1950 is basic order that regulates the constitutional position of J&K and its relationship with the Union.
 Select the correct answer from the codes given below:
 - 1, 2 and 3**
 - 1, 2 and 4
 - 2 and 4
 - 1, 2, 3 and 4
- Consider the following statements w.r.t the Article 35-A of the Constitution.
 - Article 35-A does not allow non-state subject to avail scholarships offered by J&K state government.
 - This article treats male as well as female state subjects on equal parameters in all respects.
 Which of the statements is/are correct?
 - 1 only**
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 nor 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
- Consider the following statement w.r.t the International Whaling Commission.
 - It is an Inter-Governmental Organization set up by the terms of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW) signed in Washington, D.C in 1946
 - India is a member state of the IWC.
 - Japan which had withdrawn itself out of the commission has recently resumed it’s whaling operation.
 Which of the statements is/are correct?
 - 1 and 2
 - 2 and 3
 - 1 and 3
 - 1, 2 and 3**
- Consider the following statements w.r.t to Fly ash.
 - Fly ash consists of fine particles of ash that mix and escape from chimneys of coal-fired boilers and is now collected by using electrostatic precipitators before they escape.
 - India produces lot of fly ash with high calcium content, meaning they are not highly cementitious materials.
 - Fly ash is treated with sodium hydroxide to convert it into a geopolymer making it stronger for making road pavements.
 Which of the statements are correct?
 - 1 and 2
 - 2 and 3
 - 1 and 3**
 - 1, 2 and 3