

NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC**Census 2021**

Union Minister for Home Affairs, Amit Shah laid the Foundation Stone for construction of Jangana Bhawan – a new building of the Registrar General of India (RGI) that conducts census –in New Delhi.

About:

- Announcing that the 2021 census exercise would be carried out digitally, Union Home Minister Amit Shah suggested one card for all utilities in future.
- He said there was no formal proposal for the common utility card, but digital census had the potential to bring all cards such as Aadhaar, passport, bank account, and driving licence on one platform.
- The decennial census exercise will be undertaken in 2021 and, for the first time, move from paper to digital format. Mr. Shah said ₹12,000 crore would be spent on preparation of the National Population Register (NPR) and census.

National Population Register (NPR):

- The NPR links biometric and demographic details of any ordinary resident, thus making it a comprehensive database of residents.
- The NPR exercise is different from the census and is not linked to the National Register of Citizens (NRC).
- For the purpose of the NPR, an ordinary resident is defined as a person who has resided in a local area for the past six months or more or a person who intends to reside in that area for the next six months or more.

GEOGRAPHY**Cyclonic Storm 'HIKAA'**

A deep depression over the Arabian Sea has intensified into cyclonic storm 'Hikka' that will cause strong winds along the Gujarat coast.

- The Cyclone is found over the region near about 490 km west-southwest of Veraval (Gujarat), 520 km south-southwest of Karachi (Pakistan) and 710 km east-southeast of Masirah (Oman).
- Hikka is likely to hit the Oman coast, south of Masirah, close to Duqm, which is a port and a refinery.
- The name Hikka has been given by the Maldives.
- Hikka is moving at a speed of 10 kmph packing wind speed of 90 kmph.
- The warm sea-surface temperatures of 29 to 30-degree celsius (the threshold limit is 27.5-degree celsius) will aid the convection (the process of cloud-building), favouring the system strength in the short term.
- But the prospect of penetration of dry air from the hot Arabian peninsula may act against the process of cloud building which might reduce the strength of the cyclone.
- India Meteorological Department has predicted 'Light to Moderate rainfall in many places' and 'Heavy Rainfall in isolated places' in coastal districts of Saurashtra and Kutch due to the possible formation of a deep depression over east-central and North-East the Arabian Sea off Gujarat coast.
- In coastal areas of Gujarat, the sea state expected to remain "rough to very rough" for the next few hours.

Arabian Sea Cyclones

- Cyclonic activity is comparatively less intense in the Arabian sea, as compared to the Bay of Bengal, where high-intensity severe cyclones originate frequently.
- In the last 120 years, just about 14% of all cyclonic storms, and 23% of severe cyclones, around India have occurred in the Arabian Sea.
- Arabian Sea cyclones are also relatively weak compared to those emerging in the Bay of Bengal.

- Gujarat coastline, where most of the cyclones emerging in the Arabian Sea are headed, is not very densely populated, ensures that the damage potential of the cyclones on the western coast is comparatively low.

GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.

Vahan

Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has reiterated the necessity of linking all vehicle data with VAHAN database to avoid harassment and inconvenience to citizens under the amended Motor Vehicles (MV) Act.

About:

- Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has set up a central depository called Vahan to store data relating to all vehicles.
- As per the directions of the Supreme Court, the Ministry had earlier issued a notification for amendment in the rule 115 of central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989 for linkage of PUC certificate with VAHAN database.
- The States and UTs have been asked to ensure that all PUC centres upload emission test data electronically to VAHAN database as per guidelines issued in compliance with Supreme Court directions.

UMMID

Union Health Minister launched 'UMMID' initiative to tackle inherited genetic diseases of newborn babies. He also inaugurated NIDAN (National Inherited Diseases Administration) Kendras.

About:

- Full Name: UMMID (Unique Methods of Management and treatment of Inherited Disorders).
- Objective: The new initiative aims at creating awareness about genetic disorders amongst clinicians and establish molecular diagnostics in hospitals so that the benefits of developments in medical genetics could reach patients.
- Bodies involved: Department of Biotechnology (DBT), M/o Science and Technology has started the UMMID Initiative.
- Strategy: The UMMID initiative aims to –
 - establish NIDAN Kendras to provide counselling, prenatal testing and diagnosis, management, and multidisciplinary care in Government Hospitals wherein the influx of patients is more,
 - produce skilled clinicians in Human Genetics, and
 - undertake screening of pregnant women and new born babies for inherited genetic diseases in hospitals at aspirational districts.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS

International Day of Sign Languages

International Day of Sign Languages was observed on September 23, 2019.

About:

- United Nations has declared 23rd September as International Sign Language Day. This day was formally accepted by the United Nations Assembly in 2017.
- Sign languages are fully-fledged natural languages, structurally distinct from the spoken languages.
- The objective of the day is to raise awareness of the importance of sign language in the full realization of the human rights of people who are deaf.
- The theme of this year is "Sign Language Rights for All".

Celebrations in India:

- 'Sign Language Day' was celebrated by the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC), an autonomous body under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities,

- On this day, Social Justice and Empowerment Minister distributed awards to the winners of the Second Indian Sign Language Competition 2019. For the Competition, entries were invited from children with hearing disability on jokes, stories and essays in Indian Sign Language, studying in Delhi-NCR.

INDIAN ECONOMY

Ispati Irada

Union Minister for Steel participated in the Chintan Shivir: Towards a Vibrant, Efficient and Globally Competitive Indian Steel sector, organized by Ministry of Steel.

About:

- The event aims to bring all stakeholders together to deliberate on a roadmap for making Indian Steel Sector more vibrant, efficient and globally competitive.
- Launching the new logo of Steel Ministry “ISPATI IRADA”, the Minister said that the “ISPATI IRADA” campaign aims to increase appropriate usage of steel in the country and bring more strength to society.
- The brand “Ispati Irada” will be allowed to be used by entities working on this theme.

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES

India And Climate Change

At the United Nations Climate Action Summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that India’s renewable energy target will be increased to 450 GW.

Key highlights of his speech:

- Modi reiterated India’s commitment to the creation of 175 GW renewable energy capacity by 2022 under the Paris Climate Agreement. India’s renewable energy target will be further increased to 450 GW.
- India would spend approximately \$50 billion “in the next few years” on the Jal Jeevan Mission to conserve water, harvest rainwater and develop water resources.
- 80 countries have joined the International Solar Alliance initiated by India.
- He also announced two international initiatives.
- First, a platform with Sweden and other countries, for governments and the private sector to work together to develop low carbon pathways for industry.
- Second, a Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. This initiative was approved by the Union Cabinet last month and ₹480 crore has been allocated for technical assistance and projects. The U.K., Australia and island nations such as Fiji and the Maldives will be part of this coalition.

Russia adopts 2015 Paris Agreement

Russia has formally adopted the 2015 Paris climate agreement and will now allocate financial resources to developing countries for prevention and adaptation to climate change.

About:

- The Paris Agreement, which Russia signed in 2016, gives countries a choice in how to join the accords by ratification, acceptance, approval or accession to the agreement, depending on their national legislation.
- The decision to “accept” the accord signifies “Russia’s consent to the obligations under the Paris Agreement.”
- While not formally named a “ratification,” the government said in a statement that the decree signifies Russia’s adoption of the agreement and “Russia’s consent to the obligations under the Paris Agreement”.
- One of the world’s key energy producers, Russia has remained one of the largest economies and polluters that signed but failed to ratify the accord.

Emissions Trading Scheme (Ets)

Gujarat government has launched what is being described as the world's first market for trading in Particulate Matter (PM) emissions.

Salient features of the Gujarat scheme:

- Launched in Surat, the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) is a regulatory tool that is aimed at reducing the pollution load in an area and at the same time minimising the cost of compliance for the industry.
- ETS is a market in which the traded commodity is particulate matter emissions.
- The Gujarat Pollution Control Board (GPCB) sets a cap on the total emission load from all industries.
- Various industries can buy and sell the ability to emit particulate matter, by trading permits (in kilograms) under this cap. For this reason, ETS is also called a cap-and-trade market.

Global scenario:

While trading mechanisms for pollution control do exist in many parts of the world, none of them is for particulate matter emissions, the CDM (carbon development mechanism) under the Kyoto Protocol allows trade in 'carbon credits'; the European Union's Emission Trading System is for greenhouse gas emission; and India has a scheme run by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency that enables trading in energy units.

Climate Change

According to a new UN report compiled by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the world is falling badly behind in the race to avert climate disaster, with the five-year period ending 2019 set to be the hottest ever.

Key findings of the report:

- Average global temperature between 2015-2019 is on track to be the hottest of any five-year period on record.
- The period is currently estimated to be 1.1 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial (1850-1900) times and 0.2 degrees Celsius warmer than 2011-2015. The past four years were already the hottest since record-keeping began in 1850.
- Rather than falling, carbon dioxide grew two percent in 2018, reaching a record high of 37 billion tonnes.
- There is also no sign yet of reaching what is known as "peak emissions," the point at which levels will start to fall, though these are not growing at the same rate as the global economy.
- The extent of Arctic summer sea ice has declined at a rate of 12% per decade over the past 40 years, with the four lowest values between 2015 and 2019.
- Overall, the amount of ice lost from the Antarctic ice sheet increased by a factor of six each year between 1979 and 2017, while glacier loss for 2015-19 is also the highest for any five-year period on record.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Excuses will turn your dreams into dust.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns : What are the steps that need to be taken to promote sustainable agriculture and food security in the wake of climate change?

Ans

At the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are targets to end hunger, achieve food security, and improve nutrition. According to the definition given by the World Food Summit in 1996, there are three main dimensions to food security: food availability, access to food, and food absorption.

- Food availability: India's food production, is highly vulnerable to climate change largely because the sector continues to be highly sensitive to monsoon variability and production is severely constrained by low yield growth.
- Access: Displacement, loss of livelihood or damage to productive assets due to any extreme weather events will have a direct impact on household food security because of production shocks and declines that are projected under future climate change.
- Absorption: Change in climatic conditions could lead to a reduction in the nutritional quality of foods (reduced concentration in proteins and minerals like zinc and iron). This will accelerate the largely neglected epidemic known as "hidden hunger" or micronutrient deficiency.

Reforms needed and Government Interventions

- The government of India has launched the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) to promote sustainable agriculture and to ensure food security.
- Resilient Intercropping System: To deal with delayed monsoon alternate crops of short duration varieties like black gram, groundnut can be grown etc. That will help in maintaining a source of income if the monsoon is delayed.
- Zero tillage Adoption of Zero Tillage will reduce the loss and increase the production. Zero-till (ZT) sowing minimizes losses due to lodging of wheat (bending of the stem).
- Efficient water use: Efficient water and nutrient management should be done to enhance efficiency. Methods like drip-irrigation must be used in place of flood irrigation to save water.
- Climate tolerant crops: The government should incentivize farmers to use climate-tolerant crop varieties. It will help farmers to deal with crop failures due to climate change. E.g. Pokkali Rice in Kerala which is a saline tolerant rice variety.
- Crop Diversification: Crop diversification refers to the addition of new crops or cropping systems to agricultural production on a particular farm. Crop diversification helps in agriculture sustainable and helps in maintaining ecological balance.
- Urban Agriculture: Urban agriculture, urban farming, or urban gardening is the practice of cultivating, processing and distributing food in or around urban areas. This can address major dimensions of food security.
- Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF): Practice like ZBNF leads to improvements in yield, soil conservation, seed diversity, quality of produce, household food autonomy, income, and health.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQS

1. With reference to the 'UN Climate Action Summit', consider the following statements:
 1. The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) was launched at this summit.
 2. The secretariat of CDRI is headquartered in New Delhi.
 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. Consider the following statements:
 1. Unique Methods of Management and Treatment of Inherited Disorders (UMMID) is an initiative of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
 2. Under the UMMID initiative, NIDAN Kendras have been established to provide prenatal testing and diagnosis to the patients.
 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. Consider the following statements:
 1. A mature temperate cyclone is characterized by the strong spirally circulating wind around the centre which is known as the eye.
 2. Cyclonic activities are more intense in the Bay of Bengal as compared to the Arabian sea.
 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. Vahan, a central depository recently seen in news, is an initiative of which ministry?
 - (a) **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways**
 - (b) Ministry of Shipping
 - (c) Ministry of Tourism
 - (d) Ministry of Civil Aviation
5. What is "Ispati Irada", recently seen in news?
 - (a) **New logo and campaign of Steel Ministry.**
 - (b) Steel Mining Technology
 - (c) A CSR initiative of NALCO
 - (d) None of the above
6. With reference to a new UN report compiled by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) on Climate Change, consider the following statements:
 1. Average global temperature between 2015-2019 is on track to be the hottest of any five-year period on record.
 2. Carbon dioxide concentration has fallen drastically in 2018.
 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 International Day of Sign Languages, consider the following statements:
 1. United Nations has declared 23rd September as International Sign Language Day.
 2. 'Sign Language Day' was celebrated by the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC), an autonomous body under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.
 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 2015 Paris climate agreement, consider the following statements:
 1. Recently Russia has formally adopted the 2015 Paris climate agreement.
 2. It aims to keep a global temperature rise of this century well below 4 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.
 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 States has recently launched what is being described as the world's first market for trading in Particulate Matter (PM) emissions?
 - (a) **Gujarat**
 - (b) Punjab
 - (c) West Bengal
 - (d) Goa