

**NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION,  
EMPOWERMENT ETC****Syama Prasad Mookerjee Tunnel**

Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways announced renaming of Chenani Nashri Tunnel on NH 44 in Jammu & Kashmir as Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee Tunnel.

**About:**

- This 9 km tunnel is the longest such state of art tunnel in the country, connecting Udhampur to Ramban in Jammu.
- It cuts down 31 km of travel distance and reduces the travel time between the two points by about two hours, in addition to substantial saving in fuel cost.

**Syama Prasad Mukherjee**

- Syama Prasad Mukherjee (1901 – 1953) was an Indian politician who served as the Minister for Industry and Supply in Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's cabinet.
- He quit Congress because of differences of opinion with Nehru led government on the issue of Jammu & Kashmir. He founded the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the predecessor to the Bharatiya Janata Party, in 1951.
- About 66 years ago, Dr Mookerjee was arrested illegally from Lakhanpur, and was taken to Srinagar through Chenani Nashari. Dr Mookerjee was a sitting member of Lok Sabha at that time.

**INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS****India-Japan**

Recently, the President of India visited Japan. The visit was the first presidential visit to Japan after a gap of 19 years. The last presidential visit was in 1990 when the then President, Ramaswamy Venkatraman, attended the enthronement ceremonies of Emperor Emeritus Akihito who stepped down in 2018.

**Key Highlights**

- The President attended the enthronement ceremony of the Emperor Naruhito of Japan in the Imperial Palace.
- He visited the Tsukiji Hongwanji Buddhist Temple and planted a sapling from Bodhi Gaya.
- He also visited the Shinto Meiji Shrine and interacted with a delegation from the Gotemba Pagoda.
  - The Shrine is dedicated to the deified spirit of Emperor Meiji . The Meiji restoration in 1868 was a watershed moment in Japanese history in which Japan was completely transformed into a modern country.
  - The Peace Park in Gotemba City provides a beautiful view of Mt. Fuji (the highest mountain in Japan) and houses the chalky stupa. The stupa, the symbol of the park, keeps the Buddha's ashes presented by late Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.
- He addressed the members of Indian diaspora in Tokyo and sought their support for creating a progressive and prosperous India.
- He also laid the foundation stone for Sri Sathya Sai Sanathana Samskruti Project at Sai no Sato, Kakegawa, Japan.
  - Sai no Sato will be developed as a temple on the lines of Akshardham and Swaminarayan Temple to promote Indian traditional culture.

**India-Japan Ties**

- India and Japan share robust ties with cooperation in areas of defence, science and cooperation and trade.
- In 2014, India and Japan upgraded their relationship to 'Special Strategic and Global Partnership'.
- Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Railway (MAHSR) is a very important area of cooperation between India and Japan in Railway Sector.

- A “India-Japan Digital Partnership” (I-JDP) was launched during the visit of the Prime Minister of India to Japan in October 2018, furthering existing areas of cooperation as well as new initiatives within the scope of cooperation in S&T/ICT, focusing more on “Digital ICT Technologies”.
- The India-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) that came into force in August 2011 covers trade in goods, services, movement of natural persons, investments, Intellectual Property Rights, custom procedures and other trade related issues.
- India and Japan defence forces organize a series of bilateral exercises namely, JIMEX, SHINYUU Maitri, and Dharma Guardian. Both the countries also participate in Malabar exercise with USA.

### **Kartarpur Sahib Corridor Agreement**

India has signed the Agreement with Pakistan on the modalities for operationalisation of the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor to facilitate pilgrims to visit Gurudwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur through Kartarpur Sahib Corridor.

#### **Background:**

- Location: Gurudwara Darbar Sahib is located at Kartarpur in Pakistan’s Narowal district. It stands on the bank of the River Ravi, about 120 km northeast of Lahore.
- Significance: It was here that the First Sikh Guru (Nanak Dev) assembled a Sikh community and lived for 18 years until his death in 1539. It is the final resting place of Guru Nanak.
- The Union Cabinet passed a resolution in November 2018 to celebrate the historic occasion of 550th Birth Anniversary of Sri Guru Nanak Devji. It also approved the development of the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor from Dera Baba Nanak to the International Boundary, to facilitate pilgrims from India to visit Gurudwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur.

#### **The highlights of the Agreement are: -**

- Indian pilgrims of all faiths and persons of Indian origin can use the corridor;
- The travel will be Visa Free; Pilgrims need to carry only a valid passport;
- Persons of Indian Origin need to carry OCI card along with the passport of their country;
- The Corridor is open from dawn to dusk. Pilgrims travelling in the morning will have to return on the same day;
- The Corridor will be operational throughout the year, except on notified days, to be informed in advance;
- The Pakistan side has assured India to make sufficient provision for ‘Langar’ and distribution of ‘Prasad’. However, there has been no progress on resolving the disagreement over a \$20 fee that Pakistan intends to levy on each traveller.

### **United Nations Day**

Each year on 24 October, the United Nations (UN) celebrates its anniversary. UN Day marks the anniversary of the entry into force of the UN Charter and the founding of the Organization in 1945. The name "United Nations" was coined by United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The main organs of the UN are:

- the General Assembly,
- the Security Council,
- the Economic and Social Council,
- the Trusteeship Council,
- the International Court of Justice,
- the UN Secretariat.

The forerunner of the United Nations was the League of Nations, an organization conceived in circumstances of the First World War, and established in 1919 under the Treaty of Versailles "to promote international cooperation and to achieve peace and security."

It will celebrate its 75th anniversary on 24 October 2020.

**INDIAN ECONOMY****Minimum Support Price**

The Government has hiked the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Rabi crops for the marketing season 2020-21, after decision was taken at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), headed by the Prime Minister.

The increase in MSP for Rabi Crops is in line with the principle of fixing the MSPs at a level of at least 1.5 times of the all India weighted average cost of production [CoP], which was announced in the Union Budget 2018-19.

**Minimum Support Price**

- The MSP is the rate at which the government buys grains from farmers.
- Reason behind the idea of MSP is to counter price volatility of agricultural commodities due to the factors like variation in their supply, lack of market integration and information asymmetry.
- Fixation of MSP
- The MSP is fixed on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).
- Factors taken into consideration for fixing MSP include:
  - Demand and supply;
  - Cost of production (A2 + FL method)
  - Price trends in the market, both domestic and international;
  - Inter-crop price parity;
  - Terms of trade between agriculture and non-agriculture;
  - A minimum of 50% as the margin over cost of production; and
- The Commission also makes visits to states for on-the-spot assessment of the various constraints that farmers face in marketing their produce, or even raising the productivity levels of their crops.
- Based on all these inputs, the Commission then finalizes its recommendations/reports, which are then submitted to the government.
- The government, in turn, circulates the CACP reports to state governments and concerned Central Ministries for their comments.
- After receiving the feed-back from them, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) of the Union government takes a final decision on the level of MSPs and other recommendations made by the CACP.
- Procurement: The Food Corporation of India (FCI), the nodal central agency of the Government of India, along with other State Agencies undertakes procurement of crops.

**ISSUES RELATED TO INTERNAL SECURITY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT****Data On Police Organizations (DOPO 2018)**

Union Minister for Home Affairs released Bureau of Police Research and Development's (BPRD) flagship publication Data on Police Organizations (DoPO 2018).

**About:**

- The Data on Police Organisation (DoPO) in India is a compilation of information on police infrastructure, manpower and other resources from all States, UTs, CAPFs and CPOs. Major highlights of the DoPO 2018 are as under:
- For the one year, since the 2017 edition of the DoPO, there has been an increase of 19,686 Police personnel in the sanctioned strength of the State Police and 16,051 in the strength of CAPFs.
- There has been 20.95% increase in the strength of Woman Police. It brings the total percentage of women in the Indian Police to 8.73%.
- The overall Police Population Ratio (PPR) at the state level stood at 95 policemen per lakh population, which shows marginal increase.

- Police Stations have increased from 15579 to 16422. This includes Cyber Police Stations whose number has risen from 84 to 120.
- Electronic surveillance has improved, as there has been an addition of 2,10,278 CCTV Cameras. Now this number, as per the latest count, is 2,75,468.

**ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES****India Plans First-Ever Snow Leopard Survey**

India will commission its first-ever snow leopard survey to estimate the population and geographical range of the snow leopard.

**About:**

- It is a member of the genus 'Panthera' to which tiger, leopard and lion also belong. Its Scientific name is "Panthera uncia".
- They inhabit alpine and subalpine zones at elevations from 3,000 to 4,500 m (9,800 to 14,800 ft). It is native to the mountain ranges of Central and South Asia.
- The 12 range countries are Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
- India is home to 10% of the global population in less than 5% of its global range.

**Conservation status:**

- In 2017, status of Snow leopard in the Red List of the IUCN was changed from 'endangered' to 'vulnerable'.
- Listed in Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972.
- Listed in Appendix I of the CITES, which makes trading of animal body parts (i.e., fur, bones and meat) illegal in signatory countries.

**Project snow leopard:** It was launched in 2009 in the 5 Himalayan states of Jammu & Kashmir, HP, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh to conserve India's high altitude wildlife populations such as Snow Leopard, Asiatic Ibex, Tibetan Argali, Ladakh Urial, Chiru, Takin etc.

**Commission For The Conservation Of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)**

A push by Australia and France to create a massive ocean sanctuary in east Antarctica is in doubt as nations meet in Hobart to discuss the plans, with China and Russia opposing.

**About:**

- **Members:** CCAMLR is an international commission with 26 Members (India being one of them), and a further 10 countries have acceded to the Convention.
- **History:** CCAMLR was established by international convention in 1982. This was in response to increasing commercial interest in Antarctic krill resources, a keystone component of the Antarctic ecosystem and a history of over-exploitation of several other marine resources.
- **Objective:** Conserving Antarctic marine life.
- **Secretariat:** Hobart, Australia.

**East Antarctic Marine Protected Areas (MPA):**

- In 2010, Australia, France and the European Union proposed the creation of East Antarctic marine park to protect one million sq.km. of ocean by creating a massive ocean sanctuary in east Antarctica.
- But China and Russia have repeatedly blocked the proposal at meetings of CCAMLR. All 26 members of the organisation must consent to the marine park's creation.
- It has previously established other major ocean Antarctic sanctuaries — including the world's largest spanning 1.55 million sq.km. in the Ross Sea — but governments and environmental groups say more action is needed to protect the last pristine continent.

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE****ETC****Wild Poliovirus Type 3 (WPV3)**

In an announcement by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on World Polio Day (October 24), an independent commission of experts declared that wild poliovirus type 3 (WPV3) has been eradicated worldwide.

About:

- This follows the eradication of smallpox and wild poliovirus type 2. With this, 2 out of 3 wild poliovirus strains have been eradicated.
- Efforts are being taken to eliminate the wild poliovirus type 1. This virus remains in circulation in just two countries, Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- There are three individual and immunologically distinct wild poliovirus strains: wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1), wild poliovirus type 2 (WPV2) and wild poliovirus type 3 (WPV3).
- Symptomatically, all three strains are identical, in that they cause irreversible paralysis or even death. But there are genetic and virological differences, which make these three strains three separate viruses that must each be eradicated individually.

Polio:

- Polio (poliomyelitis) is a highly infectious disease caused by a virus. The virus is transmitted by person-to-person spread mainly through the faecal-oral route.
- It invades the nervous system, and can cause total paralysis in a matter of hours. 1 in 200 infections leads to irreversible paralysis. Among those paralysed, 5% to 10% die when their breathing muscles become immobilized.
- Polio mainly affects children under 5 years of age.
- There is no cure for polio, it can only be prevented. Polio vaccine, given multiple times, can protect a child for life.

**DEFENCE****Doing Business Report 2020**

The World Bank released its latest Doing Business Report (DBR, 2020).

About:

- Doing Business 2020 measures regulations across 190 economies in 12 business regulatory areas to assess the business environment in each economy. Ten of these indicators were used to estimate an ease of doing business score this year.
- The DBR ranks countries on the basis of Distance to Frontier (DTF), a score that shows the gap of an economy to the global best practice.
- The top 10 best places in the world to do business are New Zealand (with a score of 86.8 out of 100), Singapore (86.2), Hong Kong SAR, China (85.3), Denmark (85.3), the Republic of Korea (84), the United States (84), Georgia (83.7), the United Kingdom (83.5), Norway (82.6), and Sweden (82).

India's performance:

- India has recorded a jump of 14 positions against its rank of 77 in 2019 to be placed now at 63rd rank among 190 countries.
- India's Distance to Frontier (DTF) score improved to 71 from 67.23 in the previous year.
- For the third consecutive year India is amongst the top 10 improvers. As a result of continued efforts by the Government, India has improved its rank by 79 positions in last five years [2014-19].
- India continues to maintain its first position among South Asian countries. It was 6th in 2014.
- India has improved its rank in 7 out of 10 indicators. India saw the biggest jump in ranking in "resolving insolvency" category, to 52nd rank from 108th, while its ranking improved substantially in Dealing with Construction Permits (to 27th from 52nd) and "Trading across Borders" (to 68th from 80th).

**QUOTES FOR ESSAY- EDUCATION**

**"Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world."**

**Nelson Mandela.**

## DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

**Qns: To deal with agrarian crisis, government has been adopting short term measures like farm loan waivers, MSP for crops without addressing the real causes of farm distress. Discuss the reasons for present agrarian crisis, impact of populist measures and suggest long term reforms needed in agrarian sector.**

Ans:

- Agriculture employs more than 50% of the total workforce in India and contributes around 17-18% to the country's GDP. Compared to the 4.9% growth in 2016-17, agriculture growth slowed down to 2.1% in 2017-18.
- The push to adopt high-yielding varieties, the system of purchase at Minimum Support Prices (MSP) that covered costs and offered a remunerative return, and the sale of foodgrains through the public distribution system at subsidised prices to protect the consumer and clear acquired stocks are some steps taken by the government to address the current agrarian distress.
- From trade liberalisation, deregulation and a greater role for market forces to the proposal of doubling the farmers' income by 2022 and several announcements of farm loan waiver have failed to address the real reasons behind the persisting farm distress.

### Reasons for Present Agrarian Crisis

- Lack of infrastructure development which includes irrigation facilities. Lack of comprehensive groundwater and surface-water management, to provide all farmers sustained and equitable access.
- The decline in investment in agriculture leading to slow technological development in the sector.
- Higher input costs: Increasing monetization and mechanization of agriculture has also increased the cost of cultivation.
- Frequent droughts and increasing vulnerability to climate change followed by loss of biodiversity.
- Lack of market interventions and lack of institutional credit availability for small and marginal farmers who do not have collateral.

### Impact of Populist Measures

Minimum Support Price (MSP):

- The market prices continue to remain below the MSP in the absence of market intervention by the government.
- Not all crops under MSP are procured by the government.
- No stable policy regime of procurement and disposal of various commodities and lack of marketing infrastructure.
- Higher MSPs lead to food inflation. The MSP formula based on just cost is not followed by proper procurement policy.

Loan waivers:

- Diversion of funds for loan waivers which can be used for capital investment.
- It provides temporary relief measure.

Lack of implementation:

- Various Price Support Scheme, Price Deficiency Payment (PDP) and Private Procurement & Stockist Scheme that were announced have not been implemented by most of the states.

- Agriculture is a state subject, and there remains a gap between Centre and States' approach to agrarian distress.

#### Long-Term Reforms Needed

- Connecting to market: large-scale agri-marketing reforms.
- Reforming APMC markets to abolishing the Essential Commodities Act and rolling back all export restrictions.
  - Encouraging contract farming, allowing private agri-markets in competition with APMC markets, opening and expanding futures trading, negotiable warehouse receipt system, focus on e-NAM with a due system of assaying, grading, delivery and dispute settlement mechanisms.
- Investment in infrastructure and research: Supply-side reforms including those pertaining to technological improvements and water management to boost productivity in a sustainable manner. Large-scale investments in building infrastructure, market access, storage, technology and revival of the non-farm sector to absorb the excess labour from agriculture.
- Policy intervention: Need to move from price support policies or loan waivers to income/investment support on a per acre basis.
  - Avoiding leakages: The money should be directly deposited into the farmers' accounts, linked with their Aadhaar number, and the information sent to their mobile phones through an SMS.
- Public-Private Partnerships are needed to build efficient value chains, especially of perishables, creating more number of jobs.
- As the Chakravarty Committee on Banking had suggested, long-range market cost of delivering rural financial services is needed. Making rural lending not just a part of 'Priority Lending' but also a business.

#### Conclusion

- Telangana's Rythu Bandhu scheme under which the government gives Rs 4,000 per acre (that is, about Rs 10,000/ha) as investment support to farmers before every sowing season can be replicated by other states as well.
- Farmers can use the money to buy seeds, fertilisers, and pesticides rather than borrow from informal sources at exorbitant interest rates and fall into a debt trap in case of crop failure.
- The government has been making efforts through Soil Health Cards, PM Krishi Sinchayee Yojana, Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing (Promotion & Facilitation) Act, 2017, Kisan RuPay Card, CHAMAN Project. However, effective implementation and continuous monitoring are required to make the benefits reach its targeted beneficiaries.

**DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQS**

1. Which of the following report is not released by the World Bank?
  - (a) Global Economic Prospects Report
  - (b) Ease of Doing Business Report
  - (c) World Development Report
  - (d) World Economic Outlook Report**
2. Consider the following statements regarding the 'Minimum Support Price' policy:
  1. It is the minimum assured price at which the government purchases farmers' crops.
  2. The MSP is announced by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).
 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. Polio vaccine can be given orally only.
  2. Polio vaccine is covered under Mission Indradhanush.
 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. With reference to the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), consider the following statements:
  1. India is not a member of the commission.
  2. Its secretariat is located at Hobart, Australia.
 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. With reference to the snow leopard, consider the following statements:
  1. In 2017, status of Snow leopard in the Red List of the IUCN was changed from 'endangered' to 'vulnerable'.
  2. Project snow leopard was launched in 2009 in all hilly states in India.
 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
6. With reference to the Data on Police Organizations (DoPO 2018), consider the following statements:
  1. There has been 20.95% decrease in the strength of Woman Police.
  2. The total percentage of women in the Indian Police to 8.73%.
 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. Dr Syama Prasad Mukerjee Tunnel, recently seen in news, connects:
  - (a) Udhampur to Ramban in Jammu.**
  - (b) Ratnagiri to Mumbai
  - (c) Karanjadi and Diwan Khavati in Maharashtra
  - (d) None of the above