

INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE, HISTORY**Odisha to give facelift to 11th century Lingaraj Temple**

The Odisha government has announced to give a facelift to the 11th century Lingaraj Temple, akin to its pre-350-year structural status.

1. The efforts will be to create a spiritual and ecological ambience in and around the Lingaraj Temple.

About

Lingaraja Temple is a temple dedicated to Shiva and is one of the oldest and largest temples in Odisha.

Built by king Jajati Keshari of Soma Vansh.

It is built in red stone and is a classic example of Kalinga style of architecture.

Located to the north of the temple is Bindusagar Lake.

The temple is believed to be built by the kings from the Somavamsi dynasty, with later additions from the Ganga rulers.

The temple has images of Vishnu, possibly because of the rising prominence of Jagannath sect emanating from the Ganga rulers who built the Jagannath Temple in Puri in the 12th century.

Deula style:

The temple is Lingaraj Temple built in the Deula style that has four components namely, vimana (structure containing the sanctum), jagamohana (assembly hall), natamandira (festival hall) and bhoga-mandapa (hall of offerings), each increasing in the height to its predecessor.

Nuakhai Juhar

Nuakhai Juhar is the agricultural festival is also called Nuakhai Parab or Nuakahi Bhetghat.

Nuakhai is a combination of two words signifies eating of new rice as 'nua' means new and 'khai' means eat.

1. It is one of the most ancient festivals celebrated in Odisha, Chhattisgarh and areas of neighbouring states to welcome the new crop of the season.

2. On this day, people worship food grain and prepare special meals. Farmers offer the first produce from their lands to Goddess Samaleswari, the famous 'Mother Goddess' of Sambalpur district of Odisha.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS**Teesta river dispute**

India and Bangladesh have been engaged in a long-standing dispute over water-sharing in the Teesta.

Adding to the existing tensions, Bangladesh is now discussing an almost \$1 billion loan from China for a comprehensive management and restoration project on the Teesta river.

Why India is concerned and worried?

Bangladesh's discussions with China come at a time when India is particularly wary about China following the standoff in Ladakh.

How have relations between Bangladesh and China been developing?

1. China is the biggest trading partner of Bangladesh and is the foremost source of imports.
2. Recently, China declared zero duty on 97% of imports from Bangladesh. The concession flowed from China's duty-free, quota-free programme for the Least Developed Countries.
3. China is the biggest arms supplier to Bangladesh.

About Teesta river:

1. Teesta river is a tributary of the Brahmaputra (known as Jamuna in Bangladesh), flowing through India and Bangladesh.

2. It originates in the Himalayas near Chunthang, Sikkim and flows to the south through West Bengal before entering Bangladesh.

3. The Teesta Barrage dam helps to provide irrigation for the plains between the upper Padma and the Jamuna.

Efforts to resolve the dispute:

Negotiations on how to share the water have been going on since 1983.

1. A 2011 interim deal – that was supposed to last 15 years – gave India 42.5 percent of the Teesta’s waters and gave Bangladesh 37.5 percent. Bengal opposed this deal so it was shelved and remains unsigned.

Bangladesh sought a fair and equitable distribution of Teesta waters from India, on the lines of the Ganga Water Treaty 1996.

1. The treaty is an agreement to share surface waters at the Farakka Barrage near their mutual border.

In 2015, the Indian Prime Minister’s visit to Dhaka generated expectations to take forward the issue but it still remains unresolved.

However, In India, individual states have significant influence over transboundary agreements, impeding the policymaking process.

1. West Bengal is one of the key stakeholders of the Teesta agreement and is yet to endorse the deal.

Importance of Teesta River:

For Bangladesh:

1. Its flood plain covers about 14% of the total cropped area of Bangladesh and provides direct livelihood opportunities to approximately 73% of its population.

For West Bengal:

1. Teesta is the lifeline of North Bengal and almost half a dozen of districts of West Bengal are dependent on the waters of Teesta.

Hamas

Hamas is a Palestinian Islamist political organization and militant group that has waged war on Israel since the group’s 1987 founding, most notably through suicide bombings and rocket attacks. It seeks to replace Israel with a Palestinian state. It also governs Gaza independently of the Palestinian Authority.

NATIONAL AFFAIRS & CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

Domicile-based job quota

The Madhya Pradesh government’s recent decision to reserve all government jobs for “children of the state” raises questions relating to the fundamental right to equality.

What’s the issue now?

Reservation solely based on place of birth would raise constitutional questions.

What does the Constitution say?

Article 16 of the Constitution, which guarantees equal treatment under law in matters of public employment, prohibits the state from discriminating on grounds of place of birth or residence.

Article 16(2) states that “no citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect of, any employment or office under the State”. The provision is supplemented by the other clauses in the Constitution that guarantee equality.

Enabling provisions:

However, Article 16(3) of the Constitution provides an exception by saying that Parliament may make a law “prescribing” a requirement of residence for jobs in a particular state. This power vests solely in the Parliament, not state legislatures.

Why does the Constitution prohibit reservation based on domicile?

When the Constitution came into force, India turned itself into one nation from a geographical unit of individual principalities and the idea of the universality of Indian citizenship took root.

1. As India has common citizenship, which gives citizens the liberty to move around freely in any part of the country, the requirement of a place of birth or residence cannot be qualifications for granting public employment in any state.

What has the Supreme Court said on reserving jobs for locals?

The Supreme Court has ruled against reservation based on place of birth or residence.

1. In 1984, ruling in *Dr Pradeep Jain v Union of India*, the issue of legislation for “sons of the soil” was discussed. The court expressed an opinion that such policies would be unconstitutional but did not expressly rule on it as the case was on different aspects of the right to equality.

2. In a subsequent ruling in *Sunanda Reddy v State of Andhra Pradesh* (1995), the Supreme Court affirmed the observation in *Pradeep Jain* to strike down a state government policy that gave 5% extra weightage to candidates who had studied with Telugu as the medium of instruction.
3. In 2002, the Supreme Court invalidated appointment of government teachers in Rajasthan in which the state selection board gave preference to “applicants belonging to the district or the rural areas of the district concerned”.
4. In 2019, the Allahabad High Court struck down a recruitment notification by the UP Subordinate Service Selection Commission which prescribed preference for women who are “original residents” of the UP alone.

How do some states then have laws that reserve jobs for locals?

Exercising the powers it has under Article 16(3), Parliament enacted the Public Employment (Requirement as to Residence) Act, aimed at abolishing all existing residence requirements in the states and enacting exceptions only in the case of the special instances of Andhra Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura and Himachal Pradesh.

1. Constitutionally, some states also have special protections under Article 371.
2. Andhra Pradesh under Section 371(d) has powers to have “direct recruitment of local cadre” in specified areas.
3. In Uttarakhand, class III and class IV jobs are reserved for locals.

Some states have gone around the mandate of Article 16(2) by using language.

1. States that conduct official business in their regional languages prescribe knowledge of the language as a criterion. This ensures that local citizens are preferred for jobs. For example, states including Maharashtra, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu require a language test.

National Recruitment Agency (NRA)

The Union Cabinet has approved setting up of National Recruitment Agency, an independent body to conduct examination for government jobs.

1. Initially, it will organise a CET to screen/shortlist candidates for the Group B and C (non - technical) posts, which are now being conducted by the Staff Selection Commission (SSC), Railways Recruitment Board (RRBs) and Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS). Later on, more exams may be brought under it.

When was it first announced?

The setting up of such an agency to conduct a common eligibility test (CET) was announced in the Union Budget by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in February.

Composition:

It will be headed by a Chairman of the rank of the Secretary to the Government of India. It will have representatives of the Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Finance/Department of Financial Services, the SSC, RRB & IBPS.

Functions of the proposed NRA:

It will conduct a common preliminary examination for various recruitments in the central government.

Based on the common eligibility test (CET) score a candidate can apply for a vacancy with the respective agency.

How the test will be conducted?

The Common Eligibility Test will be held twice a year.

1. The test will be conducted for three levels: graduate, higher secondary (12th pass) and the matriculate (10th pass) candidates.
2. However, the present recruitment agencies— IBPS, RRB and SCC — will remain in place.
3. Based on the screening done at the CET score level, final selection for recruitment shall be made through separate specialised Tiers (II, III, etc.) of examination which shall be conducted by the respective recruitment agencies.

Other details:

1. The CET score of a candidate shall be valid for a period of three years from the date of declaration of the result.
2. To make it easier for candidates, examination centres would be set up in every district of the country.

3. While there will be no restriction on the number of attempts to be taken by a candidate to appear in the CET, it will be subject to the upper age limit.
4. The examinations will be conducted in 12 languages.

Why is the NRA needed? What are the challenges faced by students and agencies?

1. As of now, aspirants have to take different exams that are conducted by various agencies for central government jobs.
2. Candidates have to pay fees to multiple recruiting agencies and also travel long distances for appearing in various exams.

On an average 2.5 crore to 3 crore aspirants appear for about 1.25 lakh vacancies in the central government every year.

Cabinet Approves Proposal For Leasing Out 3 Airports:

Jaipur, Guwahati and Thiruvananthapuram airports of Airports Authority of India (AAI) will be leased out through Public Private Partnership (PPP) to Adani Enterprises Ltd. The lease is for a period of fifty years.

Millennium Alliance:

Millennium Alliance Round 6 & COVID19 Innovation Challenge-Award Ceremony was recently held. 49 innovations in 5 focus areas were recognised.

What is Millennium Alliance?

1. It is an innovation-driven and impact-focused initiative leveraging collaborative resources to identify test and scale Indian innovations that address global development solutions.
2. It is a consortium of partners (Public-Private Partnership) including the Department of Science and Technology, Govt. of India, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID), Facebook and Marico Innovation Foundation.

No Audit of PM-CARES Fund: SC:

Supreme Court has delivered its judgement on PM CARES funds.

What's the issue?

The petition was filed by an NGO named Centre for Public Interest Litigation (CPIL) had sought a direction to the Centre to transfer the funds of PM Cares Fund to the NDRF.

Highlights of the judgment:

1. The Court has "refused" to order transfer of funds from the PM CARES Fund to the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF). They "are two entirely different funds with different object and purpose".
2. PM CARES Fund, being a public charitable trust, "there is no occasion for audit by the Comptroller & Auditor General of India".
3. The Court also rejected the request for a new National Plan under the National Disaster Management Act, 2005, to deal with Covid-19 situation.
4. The court held that there is "no statutory prohibition on individuals to make voluntary contributions to NDRF" under Section 46(1)(b) of the DM Act.
5. The court also declined to intervene with the "minimum standards of relief" and the necessary guidelines issued by the government under Section 12 of the DM Act.

About PM CARES Fund:

Set up on March 28, the PM CARES Fund is a charitable trust registered under the Registration Act, 1908.

The trust does not receive any Budgetary support or any Government money.

It was constituted with an objective to extend assistance in the wake of public health emergency that is pandemic COVID-19".

Who administers the fund?

Prime Minister is the ex-officio Chairman of the PM CARES Fund and Minister of Defence, Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Finance, Government of India are ex-officio Trustees of the Fund.

Sutlej Yamuna Link (SYL) Canal

At a recent meeting, the Punjab Chief Minister asked the Central government to be cautious on the contentious Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal issue, saying it has the potential to disturb the nation's security.

1. The meeting was convened following the Supreme Court's direction to the Centre on July 28 to mediate between the two States to resolve the issue.

How this issue could disturb nation's security?

Pakistan has been making continuous attempts to foment trouble and to try and revive the separatist movement through the banned Sikhs for Justice organisation. The water issue could further destabilise the State.

Punjab's demands:

Suitable amendments should be made to the proposed Inter State River Water Disputes Act to set up a new tribunal, to ensure that Punjab gets adequate water "in a just and equitable manner in keeping with its total demand and securing livelihood of the future generations."

What is the Sutlej Yamuna Link (SYL) Canal, and the controversy over it?

Historical background:

1. The creation of Haryana from the old (undivided) Punjab in 1966 threw up the problem of giving Haryana its share of river waters.
2. Punjab was opposed to sharing waters of the Ravi and Beas with Haryana, citing riparian principles, and arguing that it had no water to spare.
3. However, Centre, in 1976, issued a notification allocating to Haryana 3.5 million acre feet (MAF) out of undivided Punjab's 7.2 MAF.
4. The Eradi Tribunal headed by Supreme Court Judge V Balakrishna Eradi was set up to reassess availability and sharing of water. The Tribunal, in 1987, recommended an increase in the shares of Punjab and Haryana to 5 MAF and 3.83 MAF, respectively.

The canal:

To enable Haryana to use its share of the waters of the Sutlej and its tributary Beas, a canal linking the Sutlej with the Yamuna, cutting across the state, was planned.

A tripartite agreement was also negotiated between Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan in this regard.

1. The Satluj Yamuna Link Canal is a proposed 214-kilometer long canal to connect the Sutlej and Yamuna rivers. However, the proposal met obstacles and was referred to the Supreme Court.

What is Haryana's demand?

Haryana has been seeking the completion of the SYL canal to get its share of 3.5 million acre-feet of river waters. It has maintained that Punjab should comply with the 2002 and 2004 Supreme Court orders in this regard. Haryana is getting 1.62 million acre-feet of the Ravi-Beas waters.

Minimum age of marriage for women:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced that the Centre will decide on the recommendations of a committee set up to reconsider the minimum age of marriage for women.

1. The minimum age of marriage, especially for women, has been a contentious issue.

Background:

The Union Ministry for Women and Child Development set up a committee in June, headed by Jaya Jaitley, to examine matters pertaining to age of motherhood, imperatives of lowering Maternal Mortality Ratio and the improvement of nutritional levels among women.

1. It will examine the correlation of age of marriage and motherhood with health, medical well-being, and nutritional status of the mother and neonate, infant or child, during pregnancy, birth and thereafter.

What the law says?

Currently, the law prescribes that the minimum age of marriage is 21 and 18 years for men and women, respectively.

1. The minimum age of marriage is distinct from the age of majority, which is gender-neutral.
2. An individual attains the age of majority at 18 as per the Indian Majority Act, 1875.
3. For Hindus, Section 5(iii) of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 sets 18 years as the minimum age for the bride and 21 years as the minimum age for the groom. Child marriages are not illegal but can be declared void at the request of the minor in the marriage.

4. In Islam, the marriage of a minor who has attained puberty is considered valid under personal law.
5. The Special Marriage Act, 1954 and the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 also prescribe 18 and 21 years as the minimum age of consent for marriage for women and men respectively.

Why is the law being relooked at?

From bringing in gender-neutrality to reduce the risks of early pregnancy among women, there are many arguments in favour of increasing the minimum age of marriage of women.

1. Early pregnancy is associated with increased child mortality rates and affects the health of the mother.
2. Despite laws mandating minimum age and criminalising sexual intercourse with a minor, child marriages are very prevalent in the country.
3. Also, according to a study, children born to adolescent mothers (10-19 years) were 5 percentage points more likely to be stunted (shorter for their age) than those born to young adults (20-24 years).

Indian Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (IAPPD):

It is a national level Non-Governmental organization established in the year 1978.

1. The organization was formed with an Imperative to moderating the pace of population growth for a smoother course of development so as to ensure an overall improvement in the quality of life of the people and maintain a proper balance between population and development.

National Council for transgenders:

The Centre has constituted the national council for transgender persons.

Composition: Headed by the Union social justice minister and comprising representatives from 10 central departments, five states and members of the community.

The council is India's first and formed under Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.

1. The council has five main functions — advising the central government on the formulation of policies, programmes, legislation and projects with respect to transgender persons; monitoring and evaluating the impact of policies and programmes designed for achieving equality and full participation of transgender persons; reviewing and coordinating the activities of all the departments; redressing grievances of transgender persons; and performing such other functions as prescribed by the Centre.

INDIAN ECONOMY

Insolvency process will be initiated against Anil Ambani

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has allowed the initiation of insolvency proceedings against Anil Ambani after two companies promoted by him failed to pay dues on Rs 1,200 crore that they had borrowed from State Bank of India (SBI).

1. The insolvency process will be initiated against Ambani as he had given personal guarantee against the loans provided to his firms.

Personal insolvency:

The case is significant as it is one of the first cases of insolvency against a major business group head.

The rules for initiation of personal insolvency were notified last year in December.

What is the process for personal insolvency?

As the NCLT has allowed the appointment of an interim resolution professional (IRP) in the matter, SBI will now approach the IRP with a list of the assets provided by Ambani as a personal guarantee when his companies had sought the loan.

In the case of banks providing loans against personal guarantee, the guarantor has to furnish a list of assets whose value is equivalent to the total amount of loan being given.

1. In case of failure to pay these assets, these guarantees can be invoked.

What happens to Anil Ambani after the insolvency process is over?

Like corporate insolvency processes, a businessperson is free to start with a clean slate after a personal insolvency case against them is over.

The lenders will be eligible to recover their dues only from the collateral deposited or personal assets belonging to that person.

However, any or all assets mentioned in the list provided at the time of sanctioning of the loan, even if transferred to someone else, can also be attached and sold.

1. Ambani will be free to run other businesses which are not under insolvency, or which are able to service their debts and obligations on time.

National Food Security Act 2013:

Department of Food & Public Distribution issues directions to States/UTs to include all eligible disabled persons under the National Food Security Act 2013.

1. It has also asked the states to ensure that they get their entitled quota of food grains under NFSA & Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana.

Enabling provisions:

Section 38 of the Act mandates that the Central Government may from time to time give directions to the State Governments for effective implementation of the provisions of the Act.

The Section 10 of the National Food Security Act, 2013 provides for coverage of persons under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana in accordance with the guidelines applicable to the said scheme and the remaining households as priority households in accordance with such guidelines as the States Government may specify.

1. Disability is one of the criteria for inclusion of beneficiaries under AAY households

National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013:

The objective is to provide for food and nutritional security in human life cycle approach, by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity.

Key features:

1. Coverage and entitlement under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS): The TPDS covers 50% of the urban population and 75% of the rural population, with uniform entitlement of 5 kg per person per month. However, the poorest of the poor households will continue to receive 35 kg per household per month under Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY).
2. Subsidised prices under TPDS and their revision: For a period of three years from the date of commencement of the Act, Food grains under TPDS will be made available at subsidised prices of Rs. 3/2/1 per kg for rice, wheat and coarse grains.
3. Identification of Households: The identification of eligible households is to be done by States/UTs under TPDS determined for each State.
4. Nutritional Support to women and children: Children in the age group of 6 months to 14 years and pregnant women and lactating mothers will be entitled to meals as per prescribed nutritional norms under Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and Mid-Day Meal (MDM) schemes. Malnourished children up to the age of 6 have been prescribed for higher nutritional norms.
5. Maternity Benefit: Pregnant women and lactating mothers will also be receiving maternity benefit of Rs. 6,000.
6. Women Empowerment: For the purpose of issuing of ration cards, eldest woman of the household of age 18 years or above is to be the head of the household.
7. Grievance Redressal Mechanism: Grievance redressal mechanism available at the District and State levels.
8. Cost of transportation & handling of food grains and FPS Dealers' margin : the expenditure incurred by the state on transportation of food grains within the State, its handling and FPS dealers' margin as per norms to be devised for this purpose and assistance to states will be provided by the Central Government to meet the above expenditure.
9. Transparency and Accountability: In order to ensure transparency and accountability, provisions have been made for disclosure of records relating to PDS, social audits and setting up of Vigilance Committees.
10. Food Security Allowance: In case of non-supply of entitled food grains or meals, there is a provision for food security allowance to entitled beneficiaries.

11. Penalty: If the public servant or authority fails to comply with the relief recommended by the District Grievance Redressal Officer, penalty will be imposed by the State Food Commission according to the provision.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE ETC**What is Vaccine Nationalism?**

Even before the end of final stage human trials or regulatory approval, several wealthier countries like Britain, France, Germany and the US have entered into pre-purchase agreements with Covid-19 vaccine manufacturers, a development that has come to be known as “vaccine nationalism”.

1. There are fears that such advance agreements will make the initial few vaccines unaffordable and inaccessible to everyone apart from the rich countries in a world of roughly 8 billion people.

What is Vaccine Nationalism? How it works?

Vaccine nationalism occurs when a country manages to secure doses of vaccine for its own citizens or residents before they are made available in other countries.

This is done through pre-purchase agreements between a government and a vaccine manufacturer.

How was it used in the past?

Vaccine nationalism is not new. During the early stages of the 2009 H1N1 flu pandemic, some of the wealthiest countries entered into pre-purchase agreements with several pharmaceutical companies working on H1N1 vaccines.

1. At that time, it was estimated that, in the best-case scenario, the maximum number of vaccine doses that could be produced globally was two billion.
2. The US alone negotiated and obtained the right to buy 600,000 doses. All the countries that negotiated pre-purchase orders were developed economies.

Why its not good? What are the associated concerns?

1. Vaccine nationalism is harmful for equitable access to vaccines.
2. It further disadvantages countries with fewer resources and bargaining power.
3. It deprives populations in the Global South from timely access to vital public health goods.
4. Taken to its extreme, it allocates vaccines to moderately at-risk populations in wealthy countries over populations at higher risk in developing economies.

What needs to be done?

1. International institutions — including the WHO — should coordinate negotiations ahead of the next pandemic to produce a framework for equitable access to vaccines during public health crises.
2. Equity entails both, affordability of vaccines and access opportunities for populations across the world, irrespective of geography and geopolitics.

What is being done now?

To bring about equitable and broad access, WHO, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, and Gavi have come up with an initiative known as “Covax Facility”. The facility aims to procure at least two billion doses of Covid-19 vaccines by the end of next year for deployment and distribution mainly in the low- and middle-income countries.

What is the national digital health mission?

In his address to the nation on Independence Day, the PM has launched the National Digital Health Mission which rolls out a national health ID for every Indian.

1. The scheme will be rolled out through a pilot launch in the Union Territories of Chandigarh, Ladakh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Puducherry, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep.

What is the National Digital Health Mission?

It is a digital health ecosystem under which every Indian citizen will now have unique health IDs, digitised health records with identifiers for doctors and health facilities.

1. The Mission is expected to bring efficiency and transparency in healthcare services in the country.
2. The new scheme will come under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.

Key features:

1. It comprises six key building blocks — HealthID, DigiDoctor, Health Facility Registry, Personal Health Records, e-Pharmacy and Telemedicine.
2. The National Health Authority has been given the mandate to design, build, roll-out and implement the mission in the country.
3. The core building blocks of the mission is that the health ID, DigiDoctor and Health Facility Registry shall be owned, operated and maintained by the Government of India.
4. Private stakeholders will have an equal opportunity to integrate and create their own products for the market. The core activities and verifications, however, remain with the government.
5. Under the Mission, every Indian will get a Health ID card that will store all medical details of the person including prescriptions, treatment, diagnostic reports and discharge summaries.
6. The citizens will be able to give their doctors and health providers one-time access to this data during visits to the hospital for consultation.

What was the need for this mission?

The mission aims to liberate citizens from the challenges of finding the right doctors, seeking appointment, payment of consultation fee, making several rounds of hospitals for prescription sheets, among several others and will empower people to make an informed decision to avail the best possible healthcare.

Background:

The ambitious National Digital Health Mission finds its roots in a 2018 Niti Aayog proposal to create a centralised mechanism to uniquely identify every participating user in the National Health Stack.

Have there been global instances of such a centralised health record system?

In 2005, the UK's National Health Service (NHS) started deployment of an electronic health record systems with a goal to have all patients with a centralised electronic health record by 2010. While several hospitals acquired electronic patient records systems as part of this process, there was no national healthcare information exchange. The program was ultimately dismantled after a cost to the UK taxpayer was more than £12 billion, and is considered one of the most expensive healthcare IT failures.

BIS' draft standard for drinking water supply:

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has prepared a draft standard for the supply system of piped drinking water— 'Drinking water supply quality management system — requirements for piped drinking water supply service'.

1. The draft has been prepared by the BIS' Public Drinking Water Supply Services Sectional Committee.

Highlights of the draft:

1. It outlines the process of water supply, from raw water sources to household taps.
2. It outlines the requirements for a water supplier or a water utility on how they should establish, operate, maintain and improve their piped drinking water supply service.
3. It states that the water treatment process should be planned in such a manner that after treatment the drinking water should conform to the Indian Standard (IS) 10500 developed by the BIS.
4. It contains guidelines for top management of the water utility, in terms of accountability and customer focus, establishing a quality policy for their service, monitoring the quality of water released to people, and conducting a water audit.
5. It states that the concept of district metering area (DMA) should be adopted where possible. DMA is a concept for controlling leakages in the water network, which is essentially divided into a number of sectors, called the DMAs, and where flow meters are installed to detect leaks.
6. It mentions that water should be sampled at the treatment plant every four hours against quality parameters. In the distribution system, the sampling should be done every eight hours at the water reservoirs. Random sampling should also be done at household levels.

Significance of the draft and need for it:

The standard holds importance as it is expected to make the process of piped water supply more uniform, especially in rural and underdeveloped areas of the country where the system runs on various government orders and circulars.

10. What are flavonoids?

Flavonoids are a group of phytonutrients present in almost all vegetables and fruits.

They, along with carotenoids, are responsible for the varied colours of fruits and vegetables.

1. They are associated with health benefits being good antioxidants, having anti-inflammatory properties and also offer benefits for the immune system.

Why in News?

Recently, scientists from Agharkar Research Institute (ARI), found the first synthetic route for producing flavonoids molecules related to the treatment of tuberculosis and chikungunya.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Q. What is Curative Petition?

Recently, the Supreme Court held Prashant Bhushan guilty of criminal contempt of court for his tweets against the CJI S.A. Bobde and against the judiciary.

Now, Prashant Bhushan has asked the Court to defer the punishment till the review petition is filed and decided.

He also submitted that the remedy of curative petition is also available.

About Curative Petition:

The concept was first evolved by the Supreme Court of India in Rupa Ashok Hurra vs. Ashok Hurra and another case (2002) on the question whether an aggrieved person is entitled to any relief against the final judgement/order of the Supreme Court, even after the dismissal of a review petition.

1. The court used the Latin maxim “actus curiae neminem gravabit”, which means that an act of the court shall prejudice no one. Its objectives are twofolds- avoid miscarriage of justice and to prevent abuse of process.

Related Constitutional provisions:

The concept of the curative petition is supported by Article 137 of the Indian Constitution.

It provides that in the matter of laws and rules made under Article 145, the Supreme Court has the power to review any judgement pronounced (or order made) by it.

Procedure:

A curative petition may be filed after a review plea against the final conviction is dismissed.

It can be entertained if the petitioner establishes that there was a violation of the principles of natural justice, and that he was not heard by the court before passing an order.

It must be rare rather than regular.

A curative petition must be first circulated to a Bench of the three senior-most judges, and the judges who passed the concerned judgment, if available.

Only when a majority of the judges conclude that the matter needs hearing should it be listed before the same Bench.

The Bench at any stage of consideration of the curative petition can ask a senior counsel to assist it as amicus curiae (Friend of the court).

A curative petition is usually decided by judges in the chamber unless a specific request for an open-court hearing is allowed.