

**GOVERNANCE****Global Conference on Criminal Finances and Cryptocurrencies**

Recently, the 4th Global Conference on Criminal Finances and Cryptocurrencies was held virtually.

**Key Points**

- The Conference was organised by Interpol, Europol and the Basel Institute on Governance.
- The annual Conference is an initiative of the Working Group on Cryptocurrencies and Money Laundering established in 2016 by the three organisations.

**Aim:**

- To strengthen knowledge, expertise and best practices for investigations into financial crimes and intelligence on virtual assets and cryptocurrencies.

**Participants:**

- Over 2,000 representatives from 132 countries attended the Conference. Representatives from Law enforcement agencies, Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs), International organisations and the private sector etc. participated.

**Issues Discussed:**

- They met virtually to shape international cross-sector solutions against the criminal use of cryptocurrencies, exploring criminal flows and operations in the dark markets, ransomware and sextortion, money laundering involving virtual assets, and the transfer of drug proceeds using cryptocurrencies.
- The conference served as an opportunity to underline the need for countries and jurisdictions to increase the exchange of tactical information and best practices.

**Importance of the Conference:**

- A multi-agency and multidisciplinary approach involving both the private and public sectors is a key to tackling criminal finances and the misuse of cryptocurrencies.
- By combining the expertise and data on financial crime held by the private sector with the investigative capabilities of law enforcement, collective capabilities can be enhanced.

**Interpol**

- The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) is an intergovernmental organization that helps coordinate the police force of 194 member countries.
- Each of the member countries hosts an INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB). This connects their national law enforcement with other countries and with the General Secretariat.
- The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is designated as the National Central Bureau of India.
- It is headquartered in Lyon, France

**Europol**

- It is the European Union's law enforcement agency. Its main goal is to achieve a safer Europe for the benefit of all the EU citizens.
- Headquartered in The Hague, the Netherlands, it supports the 27 EU Member States in their fight against terrorism, cybercrime and other serious and organised forms of crime.

**Basel Institute on Governance**

- Established in 2003, the Basel Institute on Governance is a not-for-profit Swiss foundation dedicated to working with public and private partners around the world to prevent and combat corruption.
- The Basel Institute is an Associated Institute of the University of Basel.

**INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE****Laxmi Devi Temple: Hoysala**

Recently, a Hoysala-era idol of Goddess Kali of the Lakshmi Devi Temple at Doddagaddavalli, Karnataka has been found damaged.

**Key Points****Lakshmi Devi Temple:**

- Lakshmi Devi temple was built by the Hoysalas in the year 1114 CE during the rule of king Vishnuvardhana.
- The building material is Chloritic schist, more commonly known as soapstone.
- The temple does not stand on a jagati (platform), a feature which became popular in later Hoysala temples.

- The temple is a chatuskuta construction (4 shrine and tower). The towers are in Kadamba nagara style. The mantapa is open and square. The reason for the square plan is the presence of shrines on all four sides of the mantapa.
- There is a separate fifth shrine of Bhairava, an avatar of Lord Shiva.
- The main deity is Goddess Lakshmi whereas all Hoysala temples are dedicated to either Lord Vishnu, Lord Shiva and in some cases to Jains.
- An archaeological Survey of India (ASI) monument and is also among the monuments proposed for the UNESCO World Heritage Site.



#### Hoysala Temple Architecture:

- It is the building style developed under the rule of the Hoysalas and is mostly concentrated in southern Karnataka.
- Hoysala temples are sometimes called hybrid or vesara as their unique style seems neither completely dravida nor nagara, but somewhere in between.
- They are easily distinguishable from other medieval temples by their highly original star-like ground-plans and a profusion of decorative carvings.
- The temples, instead of consisting of a simple inner chamber with its pillared hall, contain multiple shrines grouped around a central pillared hall and laid out in the shape of an intricately-designed star.
- The most characteristic feature of these temples is that they grow extremely complex with so many projecting angles emerging from the previously straightforward square temple, that the plan of these temples starts looking like a star, and is thus known as a stellate-plan.



**Some of the famous temples are:**

- Hoysaleswara (Lord of the Hoysalas) Temple: At Halebid, Karnataka and built in dark schist stone by a Hoysala king in AD 1150.
- Chennakeshava Temple: At Somnathpur, Karnataka and was built around AD 1268 under Narasimha III.
- Kesava Temple: At Belur, Hassan district of Karnataka built by Vishnuvardhana.

**Hoysala**

- During the 12th and 13th centuries, Hoysalas of Karnataka grew to prominence in South India and became the most important patrons centred at Mysore.
- They ruled almost all the present day Karnataka.
- Their capital was Belur which was later shifted to Halebidu.
- The period was an important era for the growth of the art, architecture and religion in South India.

**INDIAN ECONOMY****Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor**

Rajasthan government has planned two special investment regions along the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) to generate developmental opportunities for the State.

**Key Points****Background:**

- The Government of India is developing various Industrial Corridor Projects as part of the National Industrial Corridor programme which is aimed at development of futuristic industrial cities in India which can compete with the best manufacturing and investment destinations in the world.
- The same will create employment opportunities and economic growth leading to overall socio-economic development.
- The Programme has an overall sanctioned corpus of Rs. 20,084 crore. 11 Industrial Corridors Projects are being taken up for development with 30 Projects to be developed in four phases up to 2024-25.
- National Industrial Corridor Development and Implementation Trust (NICDIT) is under the administrative control of Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) for coordinated and unified development of all the industrial corridors which are at various stages of development and implementation.

**DMIC:**

- Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) is the first Industrial Corridor project which was announced.
- DMIC Development Corporation (DMICDC) incorporated in 2008, is the implementing agency for the project.
- DMICDC has been registered as a company with 49% equity of Government of India, 26% equity of the JBIC (Japan Bank for International Cooperation) and the remaining held by government financial institutions.
- The project aims to create smart, sustainable industrial cities by leveraging high speed, high capacity connectivity backbone provided by the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) to reduce logistic costs in an enabling policy framework.
- These new cities will come up in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra.
- The 1,504 kms long Western DFC is from J N Port in Mumbai, Maharashtra to Dadri in the state of Uttar Pradesh.
- The DFC project is one of the Indian Railways' largest infrastructure projects, undertaken by the government at a cost Rs. 81,459 crore.
- This is the first time that India has embarked on the process of planned urbanisation with manufacturing as the key economic driver.
- The vision for DMIC is to create a strong economic base with a globally competitive environment and state of the art infrastructure to activate local commerce, enhance foreign investments and attain sustainable development.

**INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

**India-China on Brahmaputra**

The construction of several dams along the Brahmaputra river (known as Yarlung in China) on the Chinese side has become a repeated cause of concern for India.



As India and China continue to grow demographically as well as economically amid increased consumption among its citizenry, both nations face water constraints and in a race to develop new projects in order to overcome them.

**Key Points**

**Brahmaputra:**

- It originates under the name of Siang or Dihang, from the Chemayungdung glacier of the Kailash range near the Mansarovar lake. It enters India west of Sadiya town in Arunachal Pradesh.
- Tributaries: Dibang, Lohit, Siang, Burhi Dihing, Tista, and Dhansari.
- It is a perennial river and has several peculiar characteristics due to its geography and prevailing climatic conditions.
- It is flooded twice annually. One flood is caused by the melting of the Himalayan snow in summer and the other due to the monsoon flows.
- The frequency of these floods have increased and are devastating due to climate change and its impact on high and low flows.
- These pose a concern for the population and food security in the lower riparian states of India and Bangladesh.
- The river is in itself dynamic as frequent landslides and geological activity force it to change course very often.

**Chinese Perspective:**

- China is home to close to 20% of the world's population and has only 7% of its water resources, which also faces severe pollution caused by rapid industrialisation.
- China's southern regions are water-rich in comparison to the water-stressed northern part and to solve that, it plans to link the major rivers in these regions through canals, aqueducts and other linking projects to ensure water security.
- For that, China has been blocking rivers like the Mekong and its tributaries, affecting Southeast Asian countries like Thailand, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.
- China, being an upper riparian state in Asia, sees these projects as a continuation of its historic tributary system.
- The smaller states have no means of effectively resisting or even have significant leverage in negotiations.

- In the Himalayas, there are multiple operational dams in the Yarlung Tsangpo basin with more dams commissioned and under construction.

**Indian Perspective:**

- India has 17% of the world's population and 4% of water.
- It is severely water-stressed and in summer, a vast majority of urban areas face water shortage.
- A majority of India's population reside in the Gangetic plains which enjoy water throughout the year but the southern and western regions experience harsh and dry summer and the rainfall is scarce and erratic in the eastern coast.
- An ambitious north-south river-linking project has been proposed in India as well. However, it has come under criticism for potentially disturbing fragile ecosystems.

**Concerns Raised:****Degradation of the Basin:**

- Massive amounts of silt carried by the river would get blocked by dams leading to a fall in the quality of soil and eventual reduction in agricultural productivity.

**Threats to Flora and Fauna:**

- Brahmaputra basin is one of the world's most ecologically sensitive zones and is identified as one of the world's 34 biological hotspots.
- This region has several species of flora and fauna which are endemic to only this part of the world.
- The Kaziranga National Park houses 35 mammalian species out of which 15 are listed as threatened in the IUCN Red List.
- The river itself is home to the Gangetic river dolphin, which is listed as critically endangered.

**Unfavourable Location:**

- The location of the dams also poses a risk as the Himalayas are one of the most vulnerable to earthquakes and seismic activity.
- Landslides resulting from earthquakes pose a significant threat. For example, the 2015 Nepal earthquake and the resultant landslides wiped out several dams and other facilities.

**Risk to Inhabitants:**

- Damming this perennial river would result in water security in an era of unprecedented shifting climate patterns.
- The sheer size of the infrastructure projects undertaken by China and increasingly by India, poses a significant threat to the populations living downstream.
- Close to a million people live in the Brahmaputra basin in India and tens of millions further downstream in Bangladesh.

**Strategic Implications:**

- There is the potential to significantly change the flow rate during times of standoffs and high tensions.
- During the 2018 Doklam border standoff between India and China, China stopped communication of water flow levels from its dams, effectively rendering India blind to floods during the standoff.

**Way Forward**

- With India-China relations hitting its lowest point since the 1962 war, border infrastructure has come under intense scrutiny. Alternative solutions to solving the water crisis which have to be adopted in order to neutralise this ticking water bomb.
- Both nations must cease new constructions on the river and commit to potentially less destructive solutions like building a decentralised network of check dams, rain-capturing lakes and using traditional means of water capture.
- These measures have shown effective results in restoring the ecological balance while supporting the populations of the regions in a sustainable manner.
- India and China do not have a water-sharing agreement and they should work upon it. Both nations share hydrological data so it becomes important to share genuine data and have a continuous dialogue on issues like a warning of droughts, floods and high water discharges.

**IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM****Trilateral Maritime Exercise SITMEX-20**

Recently, the second edition of the India, Thailand and Singapore trilateral Naval exercise SITMEX-20 concluded in the Andaman Sea.

**Key Points****Background:**

- The Prime Minister of India, during his keynote address at Shangri-La Dialogue in June 2018 announced the conduct of a trilateral naval exercise between India, Singapore and Thailand.
- The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) Shangri-La Dialogue is Asia's premier defence summit. It was launched in 2002.
- The first edition of Singapore-India-Thailand Maritime Exercise (SITMEX), hosted by Indian Navy, was conducted off Port Blair in September 2019. SITMEX is conducted annually.
- Aim: The SITMEX series of exercises are conducted to enhance mutual interoperability and imbibing best practices between Indian Navy, Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) and Royal Thai Navy (RTN).
- It also aims to strengthen mutual confidence and develop common understanding and procedures towards enhancing the overall maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region.
- The exercise is in line with India's SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) vision.
- 2020 Edition: The 2020 edition of the exercise is being hosted by RSN (Singapore).
- The Indian Navy deployed indigenous Anti-Submarine Warfare corvette INS Kamorta and missile corvette INS Karmuk for the exercise.

**Other Military Exercises between India and Thailand:**

- MAITREE (Army)
- SIAM BHARAT (Air Force)
- Indo-Thai CORPAT (Navy), which was conducted recently.

**Other Military Exercises between India and Singapore:**

- Bold Kurukshetra (Army)
- Joint Military Training (Air Force)
- SIMBEX (Navy)
- Indian Navy (IN) is scheduled to host the 27th edition of India - Singapore Bilateral Maritime Exercise SIMBEX-20 from 23rd to 25th November 2020 in Andaman Sea.
- It has been conducted annually since 1994.

**DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE**

**Qns What do you understand by Western Disturbances? Discuss its impact on Indian weather systems. (250 words)**

Ans:

The western cyclonic disturbances are weather phenomena of the winter months brought in by the westerly flow from the Mediterranean region.

- The word 'Western' refers to the direction from which they originate with regard to India.
- The word 'disturbance' is used because the air within the low pressure systems tends to be unstable or disturbed.
- They are extratropical storms that bring winter rain to the northwestern parts of the Indian subcontinent.

**Areas of Influence of western Cyclonic Disturbances**

- The western cyclonic disturbances originate in the Mid- latitude region near the Atlantic ocean and Europe.
- The low pressure typically forms over the Mediterranean Sea and travels over Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan before entering India loaded with moisture.
- In India they usually influence the weather of the north and north-western regions.

**Mechanism**

- Origin: During winters, a high-pressure system develops in the regions around Ukraine which causes the cold air from polar regions to collide with the relatively warm and moist air at lower/temperate latitudes.

- The warm air mass is usually a part of the westerlies and carries a lot of moisture. When the two air masses at different temperatures meet, a front is formed.
- Eastward movement towards India: The formation of a front leads to cloud formation and heavy rainfall in areas coming under the influence of the frontal activity. This leads to formation of temperate cyclones in the upper atmosphere.
- At such heights, these cyclones come into contact with the subtropical westerly jet stream which carries them eastwards.
- In the course of its travel, the cyclone gathers moisture from the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf. It enters India mainly through the states of Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan.

### Impact

- Climate: Western Disturbances are the cause of the most winter and pre-monsoon season rainfall across North-West India.
- This phenomenon is usually associated with cloudy sky, higher night temperatures and unusual rain. It is estimated that India gets close to 5-10% of its total annual rainfall from western disturbances.
- In winter, western winds bring moderate to heavy rain in low lying areas and heavy snow to mountainous areas of the Indian subcontinent.
- South west monsoon covers most of India but parts of North India don't get much rain from it. These regions depend upon rain from western disturbance during the winter season from November to March.
- The snow from the western disturbances also feed the glaciers which are the source of most of the rivers in Northern India.
- After winter the western disturbances help in the activation of monsoon in certain parts of northwest India.
- The interaction of the monsoon trough with western disturbances may occasionally cause dense clouding and heavy precipitation.
- Winter rainfall and agriculture: An average of 4-5 western disturbances form during the winter season and the rainfall distribution varies in every western disturbance.
- Precipitation during the winter season has great importance in agriculture particularly for rabi crops including wheat, which is one of the most important Indian crops.
- The rainfall brought about by western disturbances have a direct impact on economies of wheat producing states like Haryana and Punjab.
- Weak western disturbances are even associated with crop failure and water problems across north India.
- Strong western disturbances can help residents, farmers and governments avoid many of the problems associated with water scarcity.
- Disaster: Unseasonable rainfall and hail brought about by western disturbances damages the crops in the North Indian states like Haryana, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.
- These storms also bring about lightning in areas affected by it. Recently, in Rajasthan, a number of casualties have been caused by lightning brought about by western disturbances.
- Natural disasters like cloudburst in Leh (2010), the Kashmir floods in 2014 and even 2013 floods in Uttarakhand were caused by the Western Disturbances.
- These calamities killed thousands of people and caused a lot of destruction in towns and cities situated on the bank of flooded rivers.

### Conclusion

- Western Disturbances is a complex weather phenomena and has profound impact on climate and agriculture of India. It is also a source of a number of natural disasters that occur every year in India causing huge loss of lives and property.
- Thus, western disturbances need to be studied in much more detail. Like tropical cyclones or monsoon, there needs to be an end to end tracking of western disturbances to make it less hazardous.

**DAILY QUIZ**

1. Which of the following statements are correct regarding Hoysala Temple Architecture?
1. The temples are a Dravidian style of architecture mainly concentrated in Southern Karnataka.
  2. The temples are dedicated to Lord Vishnu, Lord Shiva and Jains.
  3. Chennakesava and Kesava temples in Karnataka are the examples of Hoysala architectures.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only**
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

2. Which of the following Military Exercises are conducted between India and Thailand?

1. SITMEX
2. MAITREE
3. SIAM BHARAT
4. Bold Kurukshetra

Choose the correct answer using code given below:

- a) 1 and 4 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1, 2 and 3**
- d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

3. With reference to National Commission for Minorities (NCM), consider the following statements:

1. It is a constitutional body to protect minority rights conferred under Article 29 and 30 of the Constitution..
2. Five religious communities are notified as minority communities at present.

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 National Industrial Corridor programme, consider the following statements:

1. Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor is co funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency.
2. Bengaluru-Mumbai Economic Corridor is being developed with the help of Asian development bank..

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 Brahmaputra river, consider the following statements:

1. It originates from the Chemayungdung glacier of the Zaskar range.
2. Tista and Dhansari are its tributaries.
3. It is flooded twice annually.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 3 only
- b) 2 and 3 only**
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3 only



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## VST : TEST CENTRES

**BHUBANESWAR, CUTTACK, BERHAMPUR, SAMBALPUR, KOLKATA**

Syllabus	No. of Questions
History of Modern India	5
Geography of India	5
General Science	8
Environment & Ecology	7
Indian Constitution	8
Indian Economy	7
Current Affairs	10

### TEST PATTERN: OBJECTIVE TYPE OFFLINE TEST

Total Marks	:	100
Total Questions	:	50Q
Time Duration	:	1 Hour
Per Question	:	2 Marks
Negative Marking	:	0.66 Marks

- Ex. Vanik Students refers to those students who were previously enrolled in classroom courses like Banking, SSC, Banking+ SSC+ Railway, OSSC, ASO, CT/B.Ed batches.
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