

GOVERNANCE**MCA 21 Version 3.0: Digital Corporate Compliance Portal**

Recently, the government launched the first phase of the latest update to its digital corporate compliance portal, Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) 21 Version 3.0. It will help in improving Ease of Doing Business in India. India ranked 63rd out of 190 countries in Ease Doing Business 2020: World Bank Report.

Key Points**About:**

- It will leverage the use of latest technologies to further streamline the Corporate Compliance and stakeholders experience. MCA 21 has been part of Mission Mode projects of the Government of India. MCA21 Version 3.0 is part of the 2021 Budget announcement.
- MCA21 is the online portal of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) that has made all company related information accessible to various stakeholders and the general public. It was launched in 2006.
- The entire project is proposed to be launched within the Financial Year 2021-22 and will be data analytics and machine learning driven.
- The MCA21 V3.0 in its entirety will not only improve the existing services and modules, but will also create new functionalities like e-adjudication, compliance management system, advanced helpdesk, feedback services, user dashboards, self-reporting tools and revamped master data services.
- It comprises a revamped website, new email services for MCA Officers and two new modules, namely, e. Book and e. Consultation.

Objective: It is designed to fully automate all processes related to the proactive enforcement and compliance of the legal requirements under the Companies Act, 1956, New Companies Act, 2013 and Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008. This will help the business community to meet their statutory obligations.

Benefits:

- Easy access to the updated legislations along with a tracking mechanism for historical changes in law.
- It will give new meaning to corporate compliance culture and will further enhance the trust and confidence in the Corporate regulatory and governance system.

Other Measures taken to Improve Ease of Doing Business:

- **Integrated Incorporation Form** : Simplified Proforma for Incorporating Company Electronically (SPICe) was introduced which extends 8 services from three Ministries through a single form.
- **RUN – Reserve Unique Name**: It is a web service used for reserving a name for a new company or for changing its existing name. The web service helps verify whether the name chosen for the company is unique.
- **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code**: The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code of 2016 has introduced new dimensions in resolving insolvency in India. It is India's first comprehensive legislation of corporate insolvency.

INTERNATIONAL RELATION**India - Israel Agreement on Agriculture Cooperation**

India and Israel have signed "a three-year work program agreement" for development in agriculture cooperation.

Key Points

Three-year Work Program:

- The programme aims to grow existing Centres of Excellence, establish new centers, increase CoE's value chain, bring the Centres of Excellence into the self-sufficient mode, and encourage private sector companies and collaboration.
- Both countries are implementing the "INDO-ISRAEL Agricultural Project Centres of Excellence" and "INDO-ISRAEL Villages of Excellence".

Indo-Israeli Agriculture Project:

- Indo-Israeli Agricultural Cooperation Project started in 2008 following the signing of a three-year Action Plan based on a Government to Government Agreement.
- Both started an agricultural fund worth \$50 million that focused on dairy, farming technology and micro-irrigation.
- By March 2014, 10 centres of excellence operated throughout India offering free training sessions for farmers on efficient agricultural techniques using Israeli technological expertise. Vertical farming, drip irrigation and soil solarization are taught at the centres.

INDO-ISRAEL Villages of Excellence (IIVOE):

- This is a new concept aimed at creating a model ecosystem in agriculture across eight states, alongside 13 Centers of Excellence within 75 villages.
- The program will promote the increase of net income and better the livelihood of the individual farmer, transforming traditional farms into modern-intensive farms based on Indo-Israel Agriculture Action Plan (IIAP) standards.
- Large-scale and complete value chain approach with economic sustainability, embedded with Israeli novel technologies and methodologies will be tailored to local conditions.
- The IIVOE program will focus on: (1) Modern Agriculture infrastructure, (2) Capacity Building, (3) Market linkage.

Indo-Israel Bilateral Cooperation

- **Historical Ties:**
 1. The strategic cooperation between the two countries began during the Sino-India War of 1962.
 2. In 1965, Israel supplied M-58 160-mm mortar ammunition to India in the war against Pakistan.
 3. It was one of the few countries that chose not to condemn India's Pokhran nuclear tests in 1998.
- **Economic Cooperation:**
 1. From US\$ 200 million in 1992 (comprising primarily trade in diamonds), bilateral merchandise trade stood at US\$ 5.65 billion (excluding defence) in 2018-19, with the balance of trade being in India's favour by US\$ 1.8 billion. Trade in diamonds constitutes close to 40% of bilateral trade.
 2. India is Israel's third largest trade partner in Asia.
 3. Israeli companies have invested in India in energy, renewable energy, telecom, real estate, water technologies, and are focusing on setting up R&D centers or production units in India.
 4. The first recipients of grants from the Israel-India Industrial R&D and Technological Innovation Fund (I4F) were announced in July 2018, including companies working to better the lives of Indians and Israelis through efficient water use, improving communications infrastructure, solar energy use, and life-changing surgeries. The fund aims to help Israeli entrepreneurs enter the Indian market.
- **Defence Cooperation:**
 1. Israel has been among the top four arms suppliers to India for almost two decades now, notching military sales worth around USD 1 billion every year.
 2. The Indian armed forces have inducted a wide array of Israeli weapon systems over the years, which range from Phalcon AWACS (airborne warning and control systems) and Heron,

- Searcher-II and Harop drones to Barak anti-missile defence systems and Spyder quick-reaction anti-aircraft missile systems.
- The acquisitions also include a host of Israeli missiles and precision-guided munitions, from Python and Derby air-to-air missiles to Crystal Maze and Spice-2000 bombs.
 - Covid-19 Response:**
 - In 2020, an Israeli team arrived in India with a multi-pronged mission, codenamed Operation Breathing Space to work with Indian authorities on the Covid-19 response.

INDIAN AGRICULTURE

Whiteflies: Threat to Agriculture

Whiteflies are tiny, sap-sucking insects that may become abundant in vegetable and ornamental plantings, especially during warm weather. They excrete sticky honeydew and cause yellowing or death of leaves. According to a recent study, exotic invasive whiteflies in India are causing direct and indirect yield losses in agriculture, horticulture and forestry crop plants.

Key Points

Spread of Whiteflies:

- The first reported invasive spiralling whitefly (*Aleurodicus dispersus*) is now distributed throughout India except Jammu & Kashmir.
- Similarly, the rugose spiralling whitefly (*Aleurodicus rugioperculatus*) which was reported in Pollachi, Tamil Nadu in 2016 has now spread throughout the country including the islands of Andaman Nicobar and Lakshadweep.
- Aleurodicus dispersus* and *Aleurodicus rugioperculatus* have been reported on over 320 and 40 plant species, respectively.
- Most of the whitefly species are native to the Caribbean islands or Central America.

Reasons for Spread:

- The host range of all of the invasive whiteflies has been increasing due to their polyphagous nature (ability to feed on various kinds of food) and prolific breeding.
- The increasing import of plants and increasing globalization and movement of people has aided the spread of different varieties and their subsequent growth into invasive species.

Concerns:

- Damage to Crops:** Whiteflies reduce the production yield and also damage crops. Approximately 1.35 lakh hectares of coconut and oil palm in India are affected by the rugose spiralling whitefly. Other invasive whiteflies were also found to expand their host range on valuable plant species, especially coconut, banana, mango, sapota, guava, cashew, oil palm, and ornamental plants such as bottle palm, false bird of paradise, butterfly palm and important medicinal plants.
- Ineffectiveness of Insecticides:** Whiteflies have been difficult to control by using available synthetic insecticides.

Controlling Whiteflies:

- Biological Control Methods:**
- They are currently being controlled by naturally occurring insect predators, parasitoids (natural enemies of pests, provide biological control of pests in greenhouses and crop fields) and entomopathogenic fungi (fungi that can kill insects).
- Entomopathogenic fungi specific to whiteflies are isolated, purified, grown in the lab or mass-produced and applied into the whitefly infested field in combination with the release of lab-reared potential predators and parasitoids.
- They are not just environmentally friendly but also economically feasible.

Way Forward

Continuous monitoring of the occurrence of invasive species, their host plants and geographical expansion is needed, and if required, import of potential natural enemies for bio-control programmes can also be carried out.

SOCIAL ISSUE

Banni Grasslands

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) ordered all encroachments to be removed from Gujarat's Banni grasslands within six months.

Key Points

About Banni Grassland:

- **Location:**

1. Banni is the largest grassland of Asia situated near the Great Rann of Kutch in Gujarat.
2. It is spread over 2,618 kilometres and accounts for almost 45% of the pastures in Gujarat.

- **Ecosystem and Vegetation:**

1. Two ecosystems, wetlands and grasslands, are mixed side by side in Banni.
2. Vegetation in Banni is sparse and highly dependent on rainfall.
3. Banni grasslands, traditionally, were managed following a system of rotational grazing.
4. Banni is dominated by low-growing plants, forbs and graminoids, many of which are halophiles (salt tolerant), as well as scattered tree cover and scrub.
5. The area is rich in flora and fauna, with 192 species of plants, 262 species of birds, several species of mammals, reptiles and amphibians.

- **Reserve Forest:**

1. In 1955, the court notified that the grassland will be a reserve forest (the most restricted forests classified according to Indian Forest Act 1927).
2. In 2019, the tribunal ordered to demarcate the boundaries of the Banni grassland and restricted non-forest activities.
3. Wildlife Institute of India (WII) has identified this grassland reserve as one of the last remaining habitats of the cheetah in India and a possible reintroduction site for the species.

About Maldharis:

- Maldharis are a tribal herdsmen community inhabiting Banni.
- Originally nomads, they came to be known as Maldharis after settling in Junagarh (mainly Gir Forest).
- The literal meaning of Maldhari is keeper (dhari) of the animal stock (mal).
- The livestock include sheep, goats, cows, buffalo, and camels.
- The Gir Forest National Park is home to around 8,400 Maldharis.

Provisions of the Forest Rights Act 2006:

- Under the provisions of the Act, forest dwellers cannot be displaced unless the rights settlement process has been completed.
- Moreover, the Act has a special provision for setting up 'Critical Wildlife Habitats (CWH)', for the conservation of the species.
- It strengthens the conservation regime of the forests while ensuring livelihood and food security of the FDST (Forest Dwelling Scheduled Tribes) and OTFD (Other Traditional Forest Dwellers).
- **The Act identifies four types of rights:**
 1. Title rights: It gives FDST and OTFD the right to ownership to land farmed by tribals or forest dwellers subject to a maximum of 4 hectares.
 2. Use rights: The rights of the dwellers extend to extracting Minor Forest Produce, grazing areas etc.
 3. Relief and development rights: To rehabilitate in case of illegal eviction or forced displacement and to basic amenities, subject to restrictions for forest protection.

4. Forest management rights: It includes the right to protect, regenerate or conserve or manage any community forest resource which they have been traditionally protecting.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM

Exports of GI Certified Gholvad Sapota: Maharashtra

A consignment of Dahanu Gholvad sapota has been exported to the United Kingdom from Maharashtra's Palghar district, providing a major boost to shipments of Geographical Indication (GI) certified products from India.

Sapota (Chikoo) is grown in many states- Karnataka, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. Karnataka is known to be the highest grower of the fruit, followed by Maharashtra.

Key Points

About

- **Gholvad Sapota:** The fruit is known for its sweet and unique taste. It is believed that the unique taste is derived from calcium rich soil of Gholvad village in Palghar district (Maharashtra).

Other GI Certified Products from Maharashtra: Alphonso Mango, Puneri Pagadi, Nashik Valley Wine, Mahabaleshwar Strawberry, Warli Painting.

Geographical Indication (GI) Certification:

- GI is an indication used to identify goods having special characteristics originating from a definite geographical territory. It is used for agricultural, natural and manufactured goods.
- The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 seeks to provide for the registration and better protection of geographical indications relating to goods in India. The Act is administered by the Controller General of Patents, Designs and TradeMarks- who is the Registrar of Geographical Indications. The Geographical Indications Registry is located at Chennai.
- The registration of a geographical indication is valid for a period of 10 years. It can be renewed from time to time for a further period of 10 years each.
- It is also a part of the World Trade Organisation's Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).
- Recent Examples: Jharkhand's Sohrai Khovar painting, Telangana's Telia Rumal, Tirur Vetilla (Kerala), Dindigul Lock and Kandangi Saree (Tamil Nadu), Odisha Rasagola, etc.
- Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA - Ministry of Commerce and Industry) has a focus on promotion of exports of GI products.
- Shahi Litchi from Bihar has been exported to the United Kingdom. India is the second largest producer of litchi (Litchi chin) in the world, after China.
- Earlier, a consignment of GI certified Banganapalli & Survarnakha mangoes sourced from farmers in Krishna & Chittoor districts of Andhra Pradesh was exported to South Korea.

2. National Award for Recycling Carbon Technology

A Bangalore based startup has received the National Award 2021 from Technology Development Board (TDB) for developing a commercial solution for conversion of carbon dioxide (CO₂) to chemicals and fuels. The startup has received funding under the Nano Mission.

Key Points

About:

- The startup developed efficient catalysts and methodologies for the conversion of carbon dioxide (CO₂) to methanol and other chemicals.

- It has led to improvisation of process engineering to enhance the production of chemicals and fuels from anthropogenic CO₂ generated from various sources including coal and natural gas power generation sectors, steel industry, cement industry, and chemical industries.
- It has integrated multiple components involved in the CCUS (Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Sequestration) to develop a complete solution for the environmental issues due to global warming.
- The Recycling Carbon Technology will be transferred to Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology.

Carbon Capture, Utilization and Sequestration (CCUS):

- It is a process that captures carbon dioxide emissions from sources like coal-fired power plants and either reuses or stores it so it will not enter the atmosphere.
- Carbon dioxide storage in geologic formations includes oil and gas reservoirs, unmineable coal seams and deep saline reservoirs - structures that have stored crude oil, natural gas, brine and carbon dioxide over millions of years.

Technology Development Board

- TDB is a statutory body established by the Technology Development Board Act, 1995.
- It was established in 1996 and functions under the Department of Science of Technology.
- It provides financial assistance to companies working for commercialization of indigenous technologies and adaptation of imported technologies for domestic applications.
- As part of National Technology Day (11th May), the TDB presents the National Awards, to industrial concerns who have successfully commercialized an indigenous technology.

Nano Mission

- The Government of India launched the Nano Mission in 2007 as an "umbrella capacity-building programme".
- It is being implemented by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) under the Ministry of Science and Technology.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. Explain the term cultural relativism and associated problems with it.

Ans:

Introduction

Cultural relativism is the ability to understand a culture on its own terms and not to make judgments using the standards of one's own culture. Using the perspective of cultural relativism leads to the view that no one culture is superior to another culture when compared to systems of morality, law, politics, etc.

Body

Significance of Cultural Relativism

- It is a concept that cultural norms and values derive their meaning within a specific social context.
- This is also based on the idea that there is no absolute standard of good or evil, therefore every decision and judgment of what is right and wrong is individually decided in each society.
- The concept of cultural relativism also means that any opinion on ethics is subject to the perspective of each person within their particular culture.
- In a holistic understanding of the term cultural relativism, it tries to promote the understanding of cultural practices that are unfamiliar to other cultures.

- Increasing knowledge of cultural diversity in the world has created doubts about objective morality.
- This led cultural relativists to conclude that there are no moral standards that transcend culture and by which the standards of a culture can be judged

Associated problems With Cultural Relativism

Cultural relativism leads to many unacceptable implications. For Example:

- A culture may try to marginalize or decimate a minority. It cannot be justified on the ground that it is admissible within that society's ethos.
- It propagates the idea that differences should be settled by the majority and as an accepted feature of the culture.
- If slavery or infanticide is practiced in a culture, it can be regarded as failing to measure up to the universal standard of morality.

Conclusion

Cultural relativism presents the challenge to ethics as universal standards of right or wrong, as it comes from the claim that moral judgments are relative to the individual or particular societies and are not universally applicable.

DAILY QUIZ

Q1. Among the following Tiger Reserves, which one has the largest area under "Critical Tiger Habitat"?

- Corbett
- Bandipur
- Sathyamangalam
- Nagarjunasagar- Srisailem**

Q2. Consider the following statements about Climate and clean air coalition (CCAC):

1. It is a joint initiative of UNFCCC and World Bank.
2. The Coalition addresses short lived climate pollutants.
3. It is a global efforts that unites governments, civil society and private sector.

Which of the given above statements is/are correct?

- 1 and 2 only
- 2 only
- 2 and 3 only**
- 3 only

Q3. A Global Methane Assessment report released jointly by the:

1. Climate and Clean Air Coalition
2. United Nations Environment Programme
3. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Select the correct answer using the code below:

- 1 and 2 only**
- 1 and 3 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

Q4. What is "Kabasura Kudineer", sometimes mentioned in the news?

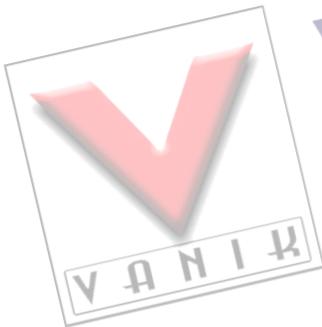
- Traditional medicine**

- b. Invasive tree species
- c. Sacred grove
- d. None of the above

Q5. Consider the following statements regarding the e-Sanjeevani OPD:

1. The e-Sanjeevani OPD is a flagship telemedicine platform of the Government, developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).
 2. It provides free consultations to Indian citizens.
- Which of the given above statements is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only**
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2



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