

**GOVERNANCE**

**Section 51 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005**

Recently, the former Chief Secretary of West Bengal was served a show cause notice by the Home Ministry under Section 51 of the Disaster Management (DM) Act, 2005.

**Key Points**

**About the Show Cause Notice:**

- The notice was issued for failing to comply with the Centre's directions to attend the review meeting on Cyclone Yaas chaired by the Prime Minister in Bengal's Kalaikunda. The Act is violative of Section 51 (b) of the DM Act, 2005.
- Though the DoPT (Department of Personnel and Training) is the cadre-controlling authority of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers, the show cause notice was served under provisions of the DM Act, which is under the purview of the Home Ministry.

**Section 51 (b) of the DM Act:**

- The section prescribes "punishment for obstruction" for refusal to comply with any direction given by or on behalf of the Central government or the State government or the National Executive Committee or the State Executive Committee or the District Authority under the Act.
- Anyone refusing to comply with orders is liable for punishment with imprisonment up to one year, or fine, or both. In case this refusal leads to death of people, the person liable shall be punished with imprisonment up to two years.
- Section 51 of the Act has two important reservations. Under the Act, the action on the part of the person has to be 'without reasonable cause' and 'failure of an officer to perform the duty without due permission or lawful excuse'.

**Previous Use of Provisions of DM Act:**

- In April 2020, the Home Ministry made spitting in public a punishable offence. The guidelines issued by the Ministry under the DM Act, which are binding on the states, also made "wearing of face masks in public places mandatory."
- In March 2020, when thousands of migrants gathered at Anand Vihar railway station in Delhi due to the sudden announcement of the countrywide lockdown, two Delhi government officers were served show cause notice by the Centre under the DM Act for dereliction of duty.

**About DM Act:**

- The DM Act was passed by the government of India in 2005 for the efficient management of disasters and other matters connected to it. However it came into force in January 2006.
- It was invoked for the first time in the country in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic in the year 2020.
- The Centre, through the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) headed by the Prime Minister, invoked the provisions of the Act to streamline the management of the pandemic, empowering District Magistrates to take decisions and centralise other decisions on supply of oxygen and movement of vehicles.

**Main Features of DM Act 2005:**

- **Nodal Agency:** The Act designates the Ministry of Home Affairs as the nodal ministry for steering the overall national disaster management.
- **Institutional Structure:** It puts into place a systematic structure of institutions at the national, state and district levels.
- **Finance:** It contains the provisions for financial mechanisms such as the creation of funds for emergency response, National Disaster Response Fund and similar funds at the state and district levels.
- **Civil and Criminal Liabilities:** The Act also devotes several sections to various civil and criminal liabilities resulting from violation of provisions of the Act.

**INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

**China Relaxes Two Child Policy: Lessons for India**

Recently, China relaxed its two child policy and announced it will now allow three children per married couple. It also announced that it would increase the retirement age by a few months every year. For the past four decades, the retirement age in China has been 60 for men and 55 for women.

**Key Points**

**China's Population Policies:**

- **One Child Policy:**

1. China embarked upon its one-child policy in 1980, when its government was concerned that the country's growing population, which at the time was approaching one billion, would impede economic progress.
2. Chinese authorities have long hailed the policy as a success, claiming that it helped the country avert severe food and water shortages by preventing up to 40 crore people from being born.
3. It was a source of discontent, as the state used brutal tactics such as forced abortions and sterilisations.
4. It also met criticism and remained controversial for violating human rights, and for being unfair to the poor.
- **Two Child Policy:** From 2016, the Chinese government finally allowed two children per couple— a policy change that did little to arrest the rapid fall in population growth.
- **Three Child Policy:**
  1. It was announced after China's 2020 census data showed that the country's rate of population growth is falling rapidly despite the 2016 relaxation.
  2. The country's fertility rate has dropped to 1.3, far below the replacement level of 2.1 required for a generation to have enough children to replace it.
  3. The United Nations expects China's population to begin declining after 2030, but some experts say this could happen as early as in the next one or two years.

#### **Concerns of Falling Population:**

- **Decreased Labour:** When the young population in a country declines, it creates labour shortages, which have a major detrimental impact on the economy.
- **Increased Social Spending:** More older people also means that demands for healthcare and pensions can soar, burdening the country's social spending system further when fewer people are working and contributing to it.
- **Critical for Developing Nations:**
  1. A problem unique to China, though, is that unlike the other developed countries part of this trend, it is still a middle-income society, despite being the world's second-largest economy.
  2. Prosperous countries like Japan and Germany, which face similar demographic challenges, can depend on investments in factories, technology and foreign assets.
  3. China, however, still depends on labour-intensive manufacturing and farming.
  4. A drop in demographic dividend could thus hurt China and other developing nations like India more than those in the rich world.

#### **Lessons For India:**

- **Avoid Stringent Measures:** Stringent population control measures have landed China in a human crisis that was inevitable. If coercive measures like a two-child limit are enforced, India's situation could be worse.
- **Women Empowerment:** The proven ways to lower the fertility rate are to give women the control over their fertility and ensure their greater empowerment through increased access to education, economic opportunities and healthcare. As a matter of fact, China's fertility reduction is only partly attributable to coercive policies, and is largely because of the sustained investments the country had made in education, health and job opportunities for women.
- **Need to Stabilize Population:** India has done very well with its family planning measures and now it is at replacement level fertility of 2.1, which is desirable. It needs to sustain population stabilisation because in some States like Sikkim, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Kerala and Karnataka, the total fertility rate is way below replacement level, which means it can experience in 30-40 years what China is experiencing now.

#### **India's Case**

##### **India's Population Growth:**

- India's population is estimated to be over 1.36 billion as of March 2021, indicating an estimated 12.4% growth over the last decade. That is lower than the 17.7% between 2001 and 2011.
- However, a 2019 United Nations report had projected India to overtake China as the most populous country by 2027. India is expected to add nearly 273 million people between 2019 and 2050.

##### **Indian Measures for Population Control:**

- **Prime Minister's Appeal:** During his Independence Day Speech in 2019, the Prime Minister appealed to the country that population control was a form of patriotism.

- **Mission Parivar Vikas:** The Government launched Mission Parivar Vikas in 2017 for substantially increasing access to contraceptives and family planning services in 146 high fertility districts.
- **Compensation Scheme for Sterilization Acceptors:** Under the scheme, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare provides compensation for loss of wages to the beneficiary and also to the service provider (& team) for conducting sterilizations from the year 2014.
- **National Family Planning Indemnity Scheme (NFPIS) :** This scheme was launched in the year 2005. Under this scheme, clients are insured in the eventualities of death, complication and failure following sterilization.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATION

### SCO Agreement on Mass Media Cooperation

The Union Government approved the signing and ratification of an Agreement on 'Cooperation in the field of Mass Media' between all the Member States of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The Agreement was signed in June 2019. It will provide an opportunity for the Member States to share new innovations and best practices in the field of Mass Media.

#### **Key Points**

#### **Main Areas of Cooperation:**

- Creation of a favorable system for mutual and wide distribution of information via Mass Media in a bid to deepen the knowledge about the lives of the people of their States.
- Cooperation among the Editorial Offices of the Mass Media of their States as well as between the relevant Ministries, Agencies, and Organizations in the field of Mass Media.
- Promoting equal and mutually beneficial cooperation between professional associations of journalists of the States.
- Aiding broadcast of television and radio programs and those distributed legally within the territory of the State.
- Encouraging the exchange of specialists and experience in the field of Mass Media, offer mutual assistance in training media professionals, and promote cooperation between scientific research and educational institutions in the field of Mass Media.

### **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO):**

- **About:** SCO is a permanent intergovernmental international organisation. It's a Eurasian political, economic and military organisation aiming to maintain peace, security and stability in the region.
- **Formation:** It was created in 2001. The SCO Charter was signed in 2002, and entered into force in 2003.
- **Official Language:** The SCO's official languages are Russian and Chinese.
- **Members:** Eight countries are part of SCO, which are: Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan.
- **SCO has two Permanent Bodies:** SCO Secretariat in Beijing (China), and Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in Tashkent (Uzbekistan).
- The Chairmanship of SCO is by rotation for a year by Member States. The Republic of Tajikistan has assumed chairmanship of SCO for 2021-22.
- The 20th Summit of the SCO took place in 2020.
- Recently, the Vice President of India has launched the first ever SCO Online Exhibition on Shared Buddhist Heritage.

## INDIAN POLITY

### New Pension Rules for Civil Servants

Recently, the Central Government has amended its pension rules putting new restrictions on officials of intelligence and security organisations after retirement. The government has amended Rule-8(3)(a) of the CCS (Central Civil Services) Pension Rules-1972. The Centre has notified Central Civil Services (Pension) Amendment Rules, 2020.

#### **Key Points**

#### **Background:**

- The said rules were first drafted in 1972 and have been amended 47 times.
- In 2008, Rule 8 pertaining to "pension subject to future good conduct" was first amended by inserting the condition that retired intelligence and security officials will not publish any material that affects the "sovereignty and integrity of India, the security, strategic, scientific or

economic interests of the State, or relation with a foreign State or which would lead to incitement of an offence”.

**Amended Rule-8(3)(a):**

- Officials retired from certain intelligence or security establishments (included under 2nd schedule of RTI Act) will not be allowed to write anything about their organisation without permission. The Second Schedule of the Right to Information (RTI) Act 2005 covers 26 organisations including the Intelligence Bureau, R&AW, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, CBI, NCB, BSF, CRPF, ITBP and CISF.
- Requires the retired officials to sign an undertaking - Form 26 - and declare that without the prior approval of the competent authority they will not publish any information related to the “domain of the organisation and obtained by virtue of my working in the said organisation”.
- The amendment expands the scope to include any information related to “domain of the organisation, any reference or information about any personnel and his designation, and expertise or knowledge gained by virtue of working in that organisation.”

**Purpose of the Amendment:**

- The amendment was in process for around four years after the Committee of Secretaries recommended it.
- The move was prompted by concerns arising out of the fact that some high-profile retired officers had written books on their tenure, and some of these had revealed information.

**Implications:**

- This amendment to Rule 8 means that pension can be withheld or withdrawn if the pensioner disobeys the rules.
- This change in rules is likely to impact retired officials of security and intelligence organisations who write in newspapers and magazines or author books on their former organisations and experiences.

**Rules Pertaining to Government Servants**

**Rule 9 of CCS Pension Rules-1972 (Departmental Proceeding after Retirement):** It says that if any government official has committed any misconduct and retires, he or she may face departmental proceedings only until four years after the date of committing that misconduct.

**Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964:**

It puts some restrictions on Government Employees while in Service.

1. Rule 7: It restricts government servants from resorting to or abetting any form of strike or coercion.
2. Rule 8: It restricts them, except with government sanction, from owning or participating in the editing or management of any newspaper or other periodical publication or electronic media.
3. Rule 9: It restricts a government servant from making statements of fact or opinion in writing or in a telecast or a broadcast “which has the effect of an adverse criticism of any current or recent policy or action of the Central Government or a State Government”.

**Restriction on Political Activity while in Service:**

- The Conduct Rules bars government servants from being associated with any political party or organisation, and from taking part or assisting any political activity.
- An amendment in 2014 said, “Every government employee shall at all times maintain political neutrality” and “commit himself to and uphold the supremacy of the Constitution and democratic values”

**Rule 26, All India Services (Death-cum-Retirement Benefits Rules) 1958 (Employment after Retirement):**

- It restricts a pensioner from any commercial employment for one year (until 2007 it was 2 years) after retirement, except with previous sanction of the central government.
- Non-compliance can lead the central government declaring that the employee “shall not be entitled to the whole or such part of the pension and for such period as may be specified”.

**Joining Politics after Retirement:**

- There is no rule to stop government servants from joining politics after their retirement.
- In 2013, the Election Commission had written to the DoPT (Department of Personnel and Training) and Law Ministry, suggesting a cooling-off period for bureaucrats joining politics after retirement, but it was rejected. The Legislative Department of the Ministry of Law advised “that any such restriction (against officials joining politics or contesting polls) may not stand the



test of valid classification under Article 14 (equality before the law) of the Constitution of India". And the DoPT told the EC that its suggestions "may not be appropriate and feasible."

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### New Missions to Venus: NASA

Recently, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) announced two new robotic missions to Venus. Earlier, scientists obtained new data about Venus by bouncing radio waves off the planet.

#### **Key Points**

**Aim:** The two sister missions aim to understand how Venus became an inferno-like world capable of melting lead at the surface.

#### **About:**

- **DaVinci Plus:** It will be the first of the two, it will analyze the thick, cloudy Venusian atmosphere in an attempt to determine whether the inferno planet ever had an ocean and was possibly habitable. A small craft will plunge through the atmosphere to measure the gases.
- **Veritas:** It will be the second one seeking a geologic history by mapping the rocky planet's surface.
- **Significance:** The new missions will give fresh views of the planet's atmosphere, made up mostly of carbon dioxide, down to the core.

#### **Previous Missions:**

- **US:** Mariner series 1962-1974, Pioneer Venus 1 and Pioneer Venus 2 in 1978, Magellan in 1989.
- **Russia:** Venera series of space crafts 1967-1983, Vegas 1 and 2 in 1985.
- **Japan:** Akatsuki in 2015.
- **Europe:** Venus Express in 2005.
- **Indian Initiative:** India plans to launch a new orbiter named Shukrayaan to Venus in 2024.

#### **Venus & Earth:**

- Venus has been called Earth's twin because of the similarities in their masses, sizes, and densities and their similar relative locations in the solar system.
- No planet approaches closer to Earth than Venus; at its nearest it is the closest large body to Earth other than the Moon.
- Venus has 90 times the atmospheric pressure of Earth.

#### **Reason For Studying Venus:**

- It will help to learn how Earth-like planets evolve and what conditions exist on Earth-sized exoplanets (planets that orbit a star other than our sun).
- It will help in modelling Earth's climate, and serves as a cautionary tale on how dramatically a planet's climate can change.

## IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM

### First Human Case of H10N3 Bird Flu

Recently, China has reported the first case of human infection with the H10N3 strain of bird flu in Jiangsu province.

#### **Key Points**

- H10N3 is a subtype of the Influenza A virus which is commonly known as the bird flu virus.
- It is a low pathogenic, or relatively less severe, strain of the virus in poultry and the risk of it spreading on a large scale is very low. Among animals, it can spread through respiratory droplets, similar to flu and Covid-19.
- The strain is not a very common virus, only about 160 isolates of the virus have been reported in the past 40 years (till 2018), that too, mostly in wild birds or waterfowl in Asia and some parts of North America. None had been detected in chickens as of now.
- There are many different strains of avian influenza in China and some sporadically infect people, generally those working with poultry.
- However, there have been no significant numbers of human infections with bird flu since the H7N9 strain killed around 300 people during 2016-2017.

#### **Bird Flu**

#### **About:**

- Bird flu, also known as Avian influenza (AI), is a highly contagious viral disease affecting several species of food-producing birds (chickens, turkeys, quails, guinea fowl, etc.) as well as pet birds and wild birds.
- Occasionally mammals, including humans, may contract avian influenza.

**Types of Influenza Viruses:**

- Influenza viruses are grouped into three types; A, B, and C.
- Only type A is known to infect animals and is zoonotic, meaning it can also infect humans. Avian influenza virus subtypes include A(H5N1), A(H7N9), A(H9N2) and A(H10N3).
- Type B and C mostly infect humans and typically cause mild disease.

**Classification:**

- Influenza viruses are classified into subtypes based on two surface proteins, Hemagglutinin (HA) and Neuraminidase (NA). For example, a virus that has an HA 7 protein and NA 9 protein is designated as subtype H7N9.
- Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) A(H5N1) virus occurs mainly in birds and is highly contagious among them.
- HPAI Asian H5N1 is especially deadly for poultry.

**Impact:**

- Avian Influenza outbreaks can lead to devastating consequences for the country, particularly the poultry industry.
- Farmers might experience a high level of mortality in their flocks, with rates often around 50%.

**Prevention:** Strict biosecurity measures and good hygiene are essential in protecting against disease outbreaks.

**Eradication:** If the infection is detected in animals, a policy of culling infected and contact animals is normally used in an effort to rapidly contain, control and eradicate the disease.

**India's Status:**

- Fresh cases of bird flu were reported in different states of India between December 2020-January 2021 causing alarm across the country.
- Previously in 2019, India was declared free from Avian Influenza (H5N1), which had also been notified to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). The OIE is an intergovernmental organisation responsible for improving animal health worldwide. It is headquartered in Paris, France.

**DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE**

**Qns.** The interlinking of rivers can provide viable solutions to the multi-dimensional inter-related problems of droughts, floods, and interrupted navigation. Critically examine.

**Ans:**

**Introduction**

Interlinking of rivers envisions transferring water from water 'surplus' basins where there is flooding to water 'deficit' basins where there is drought/scarcity through inter-basin water transfer projects.

The northern plains of India are endowed with surplus water due to the presence of perennial rivers originating from the Himalayas. Southern and western India generally witnesses drought, as this region is drained by seasonal rivers whose water level largely depends on the Indian monsoon.

Body

**Proposed Benefits of the Interlinking of Rivers**

- **Hydropower Generation:** It would generate additional hydropower, which will help India fulfill its commitment to the Paris Climate Deal.
- **Round the year Navigation:** As it would address the low levels of water in southern India's rivers, it would provide around year waterways connectivity. This will reduce the cost of transportation & levels of pollution and help in economic development.
- **Irrigation Benefits:** Interlinking of rivers will increase the country's total irrigation potential, preventing some of the surface runoff into the sea.

**Associated Concerns With Interlinking of Rivers**

- **Perennial Rivers Are Not So Perennial:** A new analysis of rainfall data reveals that monsoon shortages grow in river basins with surplus water and falling in those with scarcities.
- **Federal Issue:** The spirit of federalism is ignored in the river interlinking project. Historically, there has been dissent on the part of the state governments regarding water sharing. For example, as evident from the ongoing disputes on rivers like Cauvery, Mahadayi.

- **Tensions With Neighboring Countries:** Bangladesh being a lower riparian state, is less likely to agree to India's interlinking project. Further, India will be less likely to pressure China on its version of the interlinking river. This will eventually affect lives in north-east India.
- **High Environmental & Economic Cost:** The interlinking of rivers project, which is of a sub-continent magnitude, will incur a huge economic cost. Moreover, it would harm many ecological factors like Delta formation, growth of mangroves, and aquatic life.

### Conclusion

Interlinking of rivers has its pros and cons, but given the economic, political, and environmental implications, it may not be a wise decision to carry out this project at a centralized national level. Instead, interlinking of rivers may be pursued in a decentralized manner, and more sustainable ways like rainwater harvesting should be promoted to mitigate floods and droughts.

### DAILY QUIZ

Q1. Who among the following is known as the 'Lady with the Lamp'?

- Anandibai Gopalrao Joshi
- Mother Teresa
- Sister Nivedita
- Florence Nightingale**

Q2. In the recent Information Technology (Amendment) Act 2008, the 'Indian Computer Emergency Response Team' (CERT-In) has been designed to serve as the nodal agency to perform which of the following functions?

- Approving the commercial plans of Internet Service providers (ISPs)
- Forecast and provide alerts of cyber security incidents
- Regulating the mergers and acquisitions of Internet Service Providers to maintain service quality
- Coordination of cyber incident response activities

Select the correct answer using the codes below:

- 1, 3 and 4 only
- 2 and 4 only**
- 2 only
- 1, 2, 3 and 4

Q3. Which of the following play a role in the Nitrogen cycle on earth?

- Blue-green algae
- Lightning
- Uptake of soil nutrients by plants
- Terrestrial Food chain

Select the correct answer using the codes below:

- 1, 2 and 3 only
- 2 and 4 only
- 1, 3 and 4 only
- 1, 2, 3 and 4**

Q4. Arrange the following regions/locations in West Asia from West to East:

- Azerbaijan
- Ashgabat
- Tel Aviv
- Damascus

Select the correct answer using the codes below:

- 3-4-2-1
- 4-3-1-2
- 4-3-2-1
- 3-4-1-2**

Q5. The one and a half degree channel lies closest to which of the following countries?

- Indonesia
- India
- Maldives**
- Sri Lanka