

**ECONOMY****Marine Aids to Navigation Bill 2021**

Recently, the Parliament has passed the Marine Aids to Navigation Bill 2021. The bill will repeal the Lighthouse Act, 1927, an over nine-decade-old law governing the traditional navigation aid, i.e. lighthouses.

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

- Uptil now, the administration and management of Lighthouse and Lightships in India is governed by Lighthouse Act 1927 for safe navigation.
- Lighthouses serve two main purposes viz. as a navigational aid and to warn boats of dangerous areas. It is like a traffic sign on the sea.
- However, as the technology evolved, systems were put in place where with the help of Radar and other sensors, vessels were advised from shore about the position. Thus, Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) came into existence and found wide acceptability.
- These modern, technologically improved aids to marine navigation systems have changed their profile from a 'passive' service to that of 'passive as well as interactive' service.
- The need for enactment of a new Act is necessitated to provide an appropriate statutory framework which reflects the modern role of marine aids to navigation and to be in compliance with India's obligations under International Conventions.

**Salient Features of the Bill:****• Main Objectives:**

1. Incorporating the global best practices and technological developments,
2. Complying with India's International obligations in the field of Marine Aids to Navigation,
3. Making the legislative framework user-friendly,
4. Promoting ease of doing business.

- **Scope of the Law:** The Bill applies to the whole of India including various maritime zones including territorial waters, continental shelf, and exclusive economic zone.

- **Defined Mechanism:** It defines aid to navigation as a device, system or service, external to vessels, designed and operated to enhance safe and efficient navigation of individual vessels and vessel traffic. Vessel traffic service means a service implemented under the Act to improve the safety and efficiency of vessel traffic and to protect the environment.

- **Institutional Mechanism:** The Bill provides that the Central government shall appoint a Director General, who will inter alia advise the central government on matters related to aids to navigation. It also provides for appointments of Deputy Director Generals and Directors for districts.

- **Heritage Lighthouse:** The Bill empowers the Central Government to designate any aid to navigation under its control as a "heritage lighthouse". In addition to their function as aids to navigation, such lighthouses will be developed for educational, cultural, and tourism purposes.

- **Offences and Penalties:** It comprises a new schedule of offences, along with commensurate penalties for obstructing and damaging the aids to navigation, and non-compliance with directives issued by the Central Government and other bodies.

**Intended Benefits:**

- Improved Legal Framework for Matters related to Aids to Navigation & Vessel Traffic Services and covers the future developments in the field of Marine Navigation.
- Management of 'Vessel Traffic Services' for enhancing the safety and efficiency of shipping and to protect the environment.
- Skill development through Training and Certification for the operators of 'Aids to Navigation' and 'Vessel Traffic Services' at par with International standards.
- Auditing and Accreditation of Institutes to cater to the need of Training and Certification at par with global standards.
- Marking of "Wreck" in general waters to identify sunken / stranded vessels for safe and efficient navigation.
- Development of Lighthouses for the purpose of education, culture and tourism, which would tap the tourism potential of coastal regions and contribute to their economy.

**2.Promoting Digital Banking**

Recently, the Union Minister of State for Finance has stated in the Rajya Sabha that the Government has taken a number of steps to facilitate digital banking, doorstep banking services and digital lending platforms.

**Key Points****Digital Banking:**

- It is the digitization (or moving online) of all the traditional banking activities and programs services that were historically only available to customers when physically inside of a bank branch. This includes activities like Money Deposits, Withdrawals, and Transfers, Checking/Saving Account Management, Applying for Financial Products, Loan Management, Bill Pay, Account Services.

**Challenges:**

- Internet access is not the only barrier to adoption of digital payments.
- Educating users as well as ensuring the security of their data is essential.

**Initiatives Highlighted:**

- **EASE Reforms Agenda:** It was launched in January 2018 jointly by the government and PSBs.
  1. It was commissioned through Indian Banks' Association and authored by Boston Consulting Group.
  2. EASE Agenda is aimed at institutionalizing CLEAN and SMART banking.
  3. EASE Reforms Index: The Index measures performance of each PSB on 120+ objective metrics. The goal is to continue driving change by encouraging healthy competition among PSBs.
  4. EASE 1.0: The EASE 1.0 report showed significant improvement in PSB performance in resolution of Non Performing Assets (NPAs) transparently.
  5. EASE 2.0: EASE 2.0 builds on the foundation of EASE 1.0 and introduced new reform Action Points across six themes to make reforms journey irreversible, strengthen processes and systems, and drive outcomes. The six themes of EASE 2.0 are: Responsible Banking; Customer Responsiveness; Credit Off-take, PSBs as Udyami Mitra (SIDBI portal for credit management of MSMEs); Financial Inclusion & Digitalisation; and Governance and Human Resource (HR).
  6. EASE 3.0: It seeks to enhance ease of banking in all customer experiences, using technology viz. Dial-a-loan, Partnerships with FinTechs and E-commerce companies, Credit@click, Tech-enabled agriculture lending, EASE Banking Outlets etc.
  7. EASE 4.0: State-run banks will focus on co-lending with non-banking firms, digital agriculture financing, synergies and technological resilience for 24x7 banking as part of their reforms agenda for this fiscal, EASE 4.0.
- **PSBloansin59 minutes.com** : Initiation of digital lending has been made contactless through PSBloansin59 minutes.com, using triangulation of credit bureau, income-tax and goods and services tax (GST) data, to provide online in principle approval for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) loans.
- **Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS) Platform** : Online bill discounting for MSMEs has been enabled on a competitive basis through Public Sector Banks (PSBs) onboarding onto the TReDS platform and the proportion of online discounted bills has grown rapidly. Bill Discounting is a trade-related activity in which a company's unpaid invoices which are due to be paid at a future date are sold to a financier (a bank or another financial institution).
- **Jeevan Pramaan' Initiative** : This initiative for pensioners has enabled senior citizen pensioners the facility to update their annual life certificate online.
- **Doorstep Banking Services** : PSB Alliance, an initiative of all PSBs and Indian Banks' Association, has launched doorstep banking services for all customers. Through 'Door Step Banking', customers can avail major Banking transaction services at their Doorstep.

**Current Status:**

- Now, nearly 72% of financial transactions of PSBs are done through digital channels, with doubling of customers active on digital channels from 3.4 crore in FY 2019-20 to 7.6 crore in FY 2020-21.
- The share of financial transactions undertaken through home and mobile channels has increased from 29% in FY 2018-19 to 76% in FY 2020-21.

**Way Forward**

Digital is the only way forward. Banks will have to hitch to this bandwagon by adapting new age technologies like Blockchain, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, and Internet of Things (IOT). Cross-selling through Intelligent Analytics driven on the strength of big data and curated product offerings for different customer segments is what will distinguish banking offerings.

### **3. World Economic Outlook: IMF**

The latest edition of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) World Economic Outlook has cut its 2021 growth forecast for India to 9.5% from 12.5% estimated earlier in April 2021. While re-calibrating its forecast IMF considered two major factors which are access to vaccines and risk of new Corona-variants.

#### **Key Points**

##### **Indian Economy:**

- Indian economy is expected to grow by 9.5% in 2021 and 8.5% in 2022 (larger than the 6.9% it had projected in April). In 2020, India's economy witnessed an estimated contraction of 8%.
- The IMF has cut its growth forecast because of the Covid-19 Second Wave that hit the recovery momentum, damaging consumer confidence and rural demand.

##### **Global Economy:**

- Retained its global growth forecast at 6% for the year 2021, and it is expected to grow at 4.9% for the year 2022. In 2020, the global economy contracted by 3.3%

##### **Global Trade Volume:**

- Revised up its predictions of global trade volume growth by a sharp 130 bps for 2021 to 9.7% and 50 bps for 2022 to 7%. India is set to benefit from an expected rise in global trade prospects once its supply side gains traction.

##### **Suggestions:**

- **Tighter External Financial Conditions** : Emerging markets should prepare for possibly tighter external financial conditions by lengthening debt maturities where possible and limiting the buildup of unhedged foreign currency debt.
- **Avoid Premature Tightening Policies** : Central banks should avoid premature tightening policies when faced with transitory inflation pressures but should be prepared to move quickly if inflation expectations show signs of de-anchoring.
- **Prioritize Health Spending** : Fiscal policy should continue to prioritize health spending, including on vaccine production and distribution infrastructure, personnel, and public health campaigns, to boost take-up. Fiscal policy is the means by which a government adjusts its spending levels and tax rates to monitor and influence a nation's economy.

##### **International Monetary Fund**

- The IMF was set up along with the World Bank after the Second World War to assist in the reconstruction of war-ravaged countries. The two organisations were agreed to be set up at a conference in Bretton Woods in the US. Hence, they are known as the Bretton Woods twins.
- Created in 1945, the IMF is governed by and accountable to the 189 countries that make up its near-global membership. India joined on 27th December, 1945.
- The IMF's primary purpose is to ensure the stability of the international monetary system — the system of exchange rates and international payments that enables countries (and their citizens) to transact with each other. The Fund's mandate was updated in 2012 to include all macroeconomic and financial sector issues that bear on global stability.

##### **Reports by IMF:**

1. Global Financial Stability Report.
2. World Economic Outlook.

##### **World Economic Outlook**

- It is a survey by the IMF that is usually published twice a year in the months of April and October.
- It analyzes and predicts global economic developments during the near and medium term.
- In response to the growing demand for more frequent forecast updates, the WEO Update is published in January and July between the two main WEO publications released usually in April and October.

### **INTERNATIONAL RELATION**

#### **Joint Actions in Afghanistan: China-Pakistan**

Recently, China and Pakistan have decided to launch Joint Actions in Afghanistan to stop the war-torn country from becoming a hotbed for terrorism. The recent withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan has been matched by the swift advance of the Taliban across the nation.

##### **Key Points**

##### **Joint Action:** It has been outlined in five areas:

- To avoid the expansion of war and prevent Afghanistan from falling into a full-scale civil war.

- To promote the intra-Afghan negotiations between the government and the Taliban and establish “a broad and inclusive political structure”.
- To resolutely combat terrorist forces and push all major forces in Afghanistan to draw a clear line against terrorism.
- To promote cooperation among Afghanistan’s neighbours and to explore the construction of a platform for cooperation among them.
- To closely work on international fora on the Afghan issue.

**Need:**

- **Terrorism in Pakistan :** Pakistan is concerned over the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which has been waging an insurgency against the country for several years.
- **Rise in Uyghur Militants :** China is worried over the regrouping of the Uyghur militants from Xinjiang, China who operate under the aegis of East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), which Beijing alleges has links with Al-Qaeda. The recently released 12th report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team of the United Nation has confirmed the presence of the ETIM militants in Afghanistan.
- **Economic Interests:**
  1. If the situation in Afghanistan further deteriorates, Pakistan as well as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will be in danger. Also many other Chinese projects in Afghanistan and Pakistan will be in danger.
  2. There was a recent bomb attack on a shuttle bus carrying Chinese engineers at Dasu area of Upper Kohistan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan where a Chinese company is building a 4320-mw dam on the Indus river.
  3. India has opposed the CPEC, which passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), although China has pushed ahead with projects and stepped up its investments in PoK.

**Background of Situation in Afghanistan:**

- On 11th September 2001, terrorist attacks (9/11) in America killed nearly 3,000 people. Osama Bin Laden, the head of Islamist terror group al-Qaeda, was quickly identified as the man responsible.
- The Taliban, radical Islamists who ran Afghanistan at that time, protected Bin Laden, and refused to hand him over. So, a month after 9/11, the US launched airstrikes against Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom).
- After the attacks, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) coalition troops declared war on Afghanistan.
- The US dislodged the Taliban regime and established a transitional government in Afghanistan.
- In July 2021, the US troops departed from the biggest airbase in Afghanistan after the 20-year-long war, effectively ending their military operations in the country.
- The US withdrawal has turned the balance of power in the battleground in favour of the Taliban.

**India’s Interests:**

- **Investments :** Protecting its investments, which run into billions of rupees, in Afghanistan.
- **Taliban :** Preventing a future Taliban regime from being a pawn of Pakistan.
- **Pakistan’s Terror Base :** Making sure that the Pakistan-backed anti-India terrorist groups do not get support from the Taliban.

**Way Forward**

- India’s Afghan policy is at a major crossroads; to safeguard its assets there as well as to stay relevant in the unfolding ‘great game’ in and around Afghanistan, India must fundamentally reset its Afghanistan policy.
- India needs to re-evaluate its decisions and be more omnidirectional in its approach to deal with all forces that are central to the future of Afghanistan.
- India must, in its own national interest, begin ‘open talks’ with the Taliban before it is too late. The time for hesitant, half-embarrassed backchannel parleys is over.
- The changing political and security situation requires India to be more open to adapting its maximalist position and starting a dialogue with the Taliban.

**INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE**

**India’s 40th World Heritage Site: Dholavira**

Recently, UNESCO has announced the Harappan city of Dholavira in Gujarat as India’s 40th world heritage site. It is the first site of Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC) in India to be included on the coveted

list. With this successful nomination, India now enters the Super-40 club for World Heritage Site inscriptions.

- Apart from India, Italy, Spain, Germany, China and France have 40 or more World Heritage sites.
- India has 40 world heritage sites overall, which includes 32 cultural, 7 natural and one mixed property. Ramappa Temple (Telangana) was India's 39th World Heritage Site.

### Key Points

#### About Dholavira:

- It is one of the most remarkable and well-preserved urban settlements in South Asia.
- It was discovered in 1968 by archaeologist Jagat Pati Joshi.
- After Mohen-jo-Daro, Ganweriwala and Harappa in Pakistan and Rakhigarhi in Haryana of India, Dholavira is the fifth largest metropolis of Indus Valley Civilization (IVC). IVC flourished around 2,500 BC, in the western part of South Asia, what today is Pakistan and Western India. It was basically an urban civilization and the people lived in well-planned and well-built towns, which were also the centers for trade.
- The site contains ruins of an ancient IVC/Harappan city. It comprises two parts: a walled city and a cemetery to the west of the city. The walled city consists of a fortified Castle with attached fortified Bailey and Ceremonial Ground, and a fortified Middle Town and a Lower Town. A series of reservoirs are found to the east and south of the Citadel.



#### Location:

- The ancient city of Dholavira is an archaeological site at Kachchh District, in the state of Gujarat, which dates from the 3rd to mid-2nd millennium BCE.
- Dholavira's location is on the Tropic of Cancer.
- It is located on Khadir bet island in the Kachchh Desert Wildlife Sanctuary in the Great Rann of Kachchh.
- Unlike other Harappan antecedent towns normally located near to rivers and perennial sources of water, the location of Dholavira in the island of Khadir bet.
  1. This was strategic to harness different mineral and raw material sources (copper, shell, agate-carnelian, steatite, lead, banded limestone, among others).
  2. It also facilitated internal as well as external trade to the Magan (modern Oman peninsula) and Mesopotamian regions.

#### Archeological Findings:

- Artifacts that were found here include terracotta pottery, beads, gold and copper ornaments, seals, fish hooks, animal figurines, tools, urns, and some imported vessels.
  1. Remains of a copper smelter indicate Harappans, who lived in Dholavira, knew metallurgy.
  2. It is believed that traders of Dholavira used to source copper ore from present-day Rajasthan and Oman and UAE and exported finished products.
  3. It was also a hub of manufacturing jewellery made of shells and semi-precious stones, like agate and used to export timber.
- 10 large stone inscriptions, carved in Indus Valley script, perhaps the world's earliest sign board.
- Near the ancient city is a fossil park where wood fossils are preserved.
- Unlike graves at other IVC sites, no mortal remains of humans have been discovered at Dholavira.

#### Distinct Features of the Dholavira Site:

- Cascading series of water reservoirs.
- Outer fortification.
- Two multi-purpose grounds, one of which was used for festivities and other as a marketplace.

- Nine gates with unique designs.
- Funerary architecture featuring tumulus — hemispherical structures like the Buddhist Stupas.
- Multi-layered defensive mechanisms, extensive use of stone in construction and special burial structures.

**Decline of Dholavira:**

- Its decline also coincided with the collapse of Mesopotamia, indicating the integration of economies. Harappans, who were maritime people, lost a huge market, affecting the local mining, manufacturing, marketing and export businesses once Mesopotamia fell.
- Dholavira entered a phase of severe aridity due to climate change and rivers like Saraswati drying up. Due to a drought-like situation, people started migrating toward the Ganges valley or towards south Gujarat and further beyond in Maharashtra.
- Further, the Great Rann of Kutch, which surrounds the Khadir island on which Dholavira is located, used to be navigable, but the sea receded gradually and the Rann became a mudflat.

**Other Harappan Sites in Gujarat**

- **Lothal:** Before Dholavira was excavated, Lothal, in Saragwala village on the bank of Sabarmati in Dholka taluka of Ahmedabad district, was the most prominent site of IVC in Gujarat.
  1. It was excavated between 1955 and 1960 and was discovered to be an important port city of the ancient civilisation, with structures made of mud bricks.
  2. From a graveyard in Lothal, 21 human skeletons were found.
  3. Foundries for making copperware were also discovered.
  4. Ornaments made of semi-precious stones, gold etc. were also found from the site.
- **Rangpur** on the bank of Bhadar river in Surendranagar district was the first Harappan site in the state to be excavated.
- **Rojdi** in Rajkot district, Prabhas near Veraval in Gir Somnath district.
- **Lakhabaval in Jamnagar, and Deshalpar** in Bhuj taluka of Kutch are among other Harappan sites in the state.

**Other World Sites in Gujarat**

Other than Dholavira, there are 3 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Gujarat.

1. **Historic city of Ahmedabad**
2. **Rani ki Vav, Patan**
3. **Champaner & Pavagadh**

**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY****Nauka Module of Russia**

Recently, the Russian Space Agency Roscosmos, launched its biggest space laboratory named Nauka to the International Space Station (ISS). Earlier, four astronauts were launched to the ISS from Florida as part of a collaboration between NASA and SpaceX under the Commercial Crew Program. The mission is called Crew-2.

**International Space Station**

- ISS is a habitable artificial satellite - the single largest man-made structure in low earth orbit.
- It is a collaborative effort between five participating space agencies: NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), Roscosmos (Russia), JAXA (Japan), ESA (Europe) and CSA (Canada).
- A space station is essentially a large spacecraft that remains in low-earth orbit for extended periods of time.
- It is like a large laboratory in space, and allows astronauts to come aboard and stay for weeks or months to carry out experiments in microgravity.

**Other Space Stations**

- China has launched an unmanned module "Tianhe" of its permanent space station that it plans to complete by the end of 2022.
- India is also planning to launch its own space station by 2030, joining the league of US, Russia, and China to an elite space club.

**Key Points****About Nauka Module:**

- Nauka means Science in Russian. This is Russia's most ambitious research facility in space and is fitted with an oxygen generator, robotic cargo crane, a toilet and a bed for Russian astronauts.

- This was sent into orbit using a Proton rocket (family of rockets in Russia - the most powerful in Russia's space inventory) and will take eight days to reach the ISS. During this period, engineers and flight controllers will test Nauka in space, and prepare for its arrival on the space station.
- It will replace Pirs, and will be attached to the critical Zvezda module, which provides all of the space station's life support systems and serves as the structural and functional centre of the Russian Orbital Segment (ROS). Pirs has been part of the space station since September 2001, functioning as a docking port for Russian visiting spacecraft and an airlock for Russian spacewalks.

**Significance:**

- It will increase the habitable volume of the ISS to 70 cubic Metres. Cosmonauts will use the extra space to conduct experiments and to store cargo.
- Nauka will serve as a new science facility, docking port, and spacewalk airlock for future operations.
- For more than 20 years, people have been carrying out research under microgravity conditions which is not possible on earth, this module will help augment the ongoing research. Research is being carried out in various disciplines such as, biology, human physiology, and physical, material and space science.

**IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM****Exercise INDRA-21**

The 12th Edition of Indo-Russia joint military Exercise INDRA will be held at Volgograd, Russia in August 2021.

**Key Points****About Exercise INDRA:**

- The exercise will entail conduct of counter terror operations under the United Nations mandate by a joint force against international terror groups.
- The INDRA series of exercises began in 2003 and was conducted as a bilateral naval exercise alternately between the two countries. However, the first joint Tri-Services Exercise was conducted in 2017.
- The last joint, tri-services exercise between India and Russia was conducted in India in December 2019. It was held simultaneously at Babina (near Jhansi), Pune, and Goa.

**Significance of Military Exercises:**

- In the domain of international relations, military diplomacy has, in recent years, emerged as a major tool to further diplomatic interests of nations.
- Participation in international level military exercises is an indication of the highest level of trust and confidence between the member nations.
- On the operational side, military exercises enable militaries to understand each other's drills and procedures, overcome language barriers, and facilitate familiarisation with equipment capabilities.
- This is particularly useful in the event of joint operations whether in war or in operations other than war (OOTW) like, humanitarian aid, disaster relief, anti-piracy, etc – when nations come together for a common cause.
- Perhaps, the most important advantage of joint military exercises is 'strategic signalling'. A joint exercise with one or more nations serves the purpose of signalling to a third country the influence we have in the region and a demonstration of our resolve to further our diplomatic objectives.
- On the intangible side, military exercises promote brotherhood and camaraderie between soldiers and militaries. Besides goodwill, it is a tool for projection of a nation's soft power – culture, language, customs, beliefs, food habits and lifestyle.

**DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE**

**Qns. Discuss the objectives and key features of Essential Defence Services Bill 2021. (250 words)**

**Ans:**

**Introduction**

The Essential Defence Services Bill, 2021 was recently introduced in the Lok Sabha. The bill seeks to replace the ordinance issued in June 2021. The Essential Defence Services Bill is aimed at preventing the staff of the government-owned ordnance factories from going on a strike by anyone engaged in the essential defence services. The bill allows the central government to prohibit strikes, lock-outs, and lay-offs in units engaged in essential defence services.

**Body**
**Objectives:**

- The Bill is aimed at preventing the staff of the government-owned ordnance factories from going on a strike.
- Around 70,000 people work with the 41 ordnance factories around the country.
- The Bill mentioned that that it is meant to “provide for the maintenance of essential defence services so as to secure the security of nation and the life and property of public at large and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto”.
- According to the government, “Indian Ordnance Factories is the oldest and largest industrial setup which functions under the Department of Defence Production of the Ministry of Defence. The ordnance factories form an integrated base for indigenous production of defence hardware and equipment, with the primary objective of self-reliance in equipping the armed forces with state of the art battlefield equipment.” as the objective of the bill.

**Key features:**
**Essential defence services:**

- **Essential defence services include any service in:** any establishment or undertaking dealing with production of goods or equipment required for defence related purposes, or any establishment of the armed forces or connected with them or defence. These also include services that, if ceased, would affect the safety of the establishment engaged in such services or its employees.
- In addition, the government may declare any service as an essential defence service if its cessation would affect the:
  1. Production of defence equipment or goods
  2. Operation or maintenance of industrial establishments or units engaged in such production
  3. Repair or maintenance of products connected with defence.

**Strikes:**

Under the Bill, strike is defined as cessation of work by a body of persons acting together. It includes:

1. Mass casual leave
2. Coordinated refusal of any number of persons to continue to work or accept employment
3. Refusal to work overtime, where such work is necessary for maintenance of essential defence services, and any other conduct which results in, or is likely to result in, disruption of work in essential defence services.

**Prohibition on strikes, lock-outs, and lay-offs:**

- Under the Bill, the central government may prohibit strikes, lock-outs, and lay-offs in units engaged in essential defence services. The government may issue such order if necessary in the interest of:
  1. Sovereignty and integrity of India
  2. Security of any state
  3. Public order
  4. Public
  5. Decency
- The prohibition order will remain in force for six months, and may be extended by six months.
- Strikes and lock-outs that are declared after the issue of the prohibition order, or had commenced before the prohibition order was issued will be illegal.
- The prohibition will not apply to lay-offs made due to power shortage or natural calamity, or lay-offs of temporary or casual workmen.

**Punishment for illegal lock-outs and lay-offs:** Employers violating the prohibition order through illegal lock-outs or lay-offs will be punished with up to one-year imprisonment or Rs 10,000 fine, or both.

**Punishment for illegal strikes:**

- Persons commencing or participating in illegal strikes will be punished with up to one-year imprisonment or Rs 10,000 fine, or both.
- Persons instigating, inciting, or taking actions to continue illegal strikes, or knowingly supplying money for such purposes, will be punished with up to two years’ imprisonment or Rs 15,000 fine, or both.
- Further, such an employee will be liable to disciplinary action including dismissal as per the terms and conditions of his service.
- In such cases, the concerned authority is allowed to dismiss or remove the employee without any inquiry, if it is not reasonably practicable to hold such inquiry.

- All offences punishable under the Ordinance will be cognisable and non-bailable.

**Public utility service:**

- The Bill amends the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 to include essential defence services under public utility services.
- Under the Act, in case of public utility services, a six-week notice must be given before:
  1. persons employed in such services go on strike in breach of contract or
  2. employers carrying on such services do lock-outs.

**Conclusion**

The employee unions and associations had threatened to go on strike last year as well, when the government had declared that it will start the process towards OFB corporatisation. Thus, there is a need to provide for the maintenance of essential defence services so as to secure the security of nation and the life and property of public at large and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

**DAILY QUIZ**

Q1. Consider the following statements about International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC):

1. It is a multi-modal transportation established in 2000 for the purpose of promoting transportation cooperation among the Member States.
2. This corridor connects India Ocean and Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea via Pakistan.

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

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. Jupiter has Auroras near both its poles which emit X-rays.
2. Auroras are caused by ions crashing into Jupiter's atmosphere.
3. Juno is a NASA space probe was launched with a primary goal to study Jupiter's

Which of the given above statements is/are correct?

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

Q3. National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) is a registered society originally formed by the:

- a. Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation (MoWR, RD&GR)
- b. Planning Commission
- c. **Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**
- d. None of the above

Q4. Consider the following statements about Agarwood:

1. It is an evergreen tree that can grow to 40 metres.
2. It is an endemic species of India.
3. It is listed as 'Critically Endangered' in the IUCN Red List.

Which of the given above statements is/are not correct?

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

Q5. Consider the following statements about Koundinya Wildlife Sanctuary:

1. It is the only sanctuary in Andhra Pradesh with a population of Asian elephants.
2. It is covered by southern tropical dry deciduous and thorn forests.

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