

INTERNATIONAL RELATION**7th edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Conclave, PARIS**

The 7th edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Conclave of Chiefs is being hosted by the French Navy at Paris from 15th-16th Nov 21. The inaugural edition of IONS was held in Feb 2008 at New Delhi, with the Indian Navy as the Chair for two years. The IONS Chair is presently held in France.

Important Points**About:**

- The IONS is a voluntary and inclusive initiative that brings together navies of Indian Ocean Region (IOR) littoral states to increase maritime co-operation and enhance regional security.
- It also serves to develop an effective response mechanism and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) against natural disasters.
- The chairmanship of IONS has been held by India (2008-10), UAE (2010-12), South Africa (2012-14), Australia (2014-16), Bangladesh (2016-18) and Islamic Republic of Iran (2018-21). France assumed the Chairmanship in June 2021 for a two-year tenure.

Members:

- IONS includes 24 member nations that touch or lie within the IOR, and 8 observer nations.
- The members have been geographically grouped into the following four sub-regions:
 - South Asian Littorals: Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and United Kingdom (British Indian Ocean Territory)
 - West Asian Littorals: Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates
 - East African Littorals: France (Reunion), Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, and Tanzania.
 - South East Asian and Australian Littorals: Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Timor-Leste.

Significance For India:

- IONS fits into India's three-fold ambitions in the region:
 - Strengthening and deepening the relations with the Indian Ocean littoral states,
 - Establishing its leadership potential and aspirations of being a net-security provider, and
 - Fulfilling India's vision of a rules-based and stable maritime order in the IOR.
- It will help India to consolidate its sphere of influence from the Straits of Malacca to Hormuz.
- IONS can be used to counterbalance the increasing presence of China in the region.

Other Important Groupings/Initiatives Associated with IOR:

- **Indian Ocean Rim Association:** The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) was established in 1997. It is aimed at strengthening regional cooperation and sustainable development within the Indian Ocean region.
- **Indian Ocean Commission:** Recently, India has been approved as an observer of the Indian Ocean Commission, the inter-governmental organization that coordinates maritime governance in the south-western Indian Ocean.

Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR): It was launched in 2015.

- Through SAGAR, India seeks to deepen economic and security cooperation with its maritime neighbours and assist in building their maritime security capabilities.

Information Fusion Centre for the Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR): It was set up by India in 2018, as an information-sharing hub of maritime data.

Asia Africa Growth Corridor: The idea of Asia Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC) emerged in the joint declaration issued by India and Japan in 2016. The AAGC is raised on four pillars of Development and Cooperation Projects, Quality Infrastructure and Institutional Connectivity, Enhancing Capacities and Skills and People-to-People partnership.

Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation: It is a sub-regional organization that came into being in 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration. It mainly aims to create an enabling environment for rapid economic development, accelerate social progress, and promote collaboration on matters of common interest in the IOR.

SOCIAL JUSTICE**16th edition of the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER 2021)**

Recently, the 16th edition of the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER 2021) survey was released. The survey analysed the impact of Covid-19 on learning. It shows an increase in dependence on private tuitions and an absence of ready access to smartphones. Specific attention is needed to help make up for learning losses, especially in the lowest classes.unities.

Key Points**Increasing Enrollment in Government School:**

- There was an unprecedented jump in government school students, and a 10-year low in private school enrolments.
- A clear shift from private to government schools — from 64.3% in 2018 to 65.8% in 2020, to 70.3% in 2021. A fall in private school enrolment from 28.8% in 2020 to 24.4% in 2021.

Tuition-dependent:

- It has reported a growing dependency on private tuition classes.
- Students, especially those from poor families, are dependent more than ever on private tuition.

Digital Divide:

- There exists a stark digital divide, which carries the risk of severely affecting the learning abilities of primary grade students.
- Almost a third of all children in Classes I and II did not have a smartphone available at home.

Problems with New Entrants:

- From having no experience of pre-primary class or anganwadis to the lack of access to digital devices, the pandemic has left the youngest entrants in India's formal education system particularly vulnerable.
- 1 in 3 children in Classes I and II have never attended an in-person class.
- Students who entered the school system after the pandemic will require time to settle down, get ready for the formal education system.

Learning Gap:

- 65.4% teachers flagged the problem of children being “unable to catch up” as one of their biggest challenges.
- This is also a warning that their learning outcomes are set to be affected unless addressed with urgency.
- During the recent National Achievement Survey (NAS) of the central government, teachers and field investigators across the country reported that primary grade kids struggled to make sense of questions to test basic comprehension and numerical skills.

Positive Trend: The report captured a decline in the proportion of children not currently enrolled in the 15-16 age group. This is one of the sections which faces the highest risk of dropping out.

- In 2010, the proportion of 15-16-year-olds who were out of school was 16.1%.
- Driven by the government's push to universalise secondary education, this number has been steadily declining and stood at 12.1% in 2018. The decline continued in 2020 to 9.9% and to 6.6% in 2021.

Findings

A Multi-Pronged Approach: Flexible rescheduling the academic timetable and exploring options in collaboration with schools, teachers, and parents for providing access to education to a larger section of students. Giving priority to the less advantaged students who do not have access to e-learning.

Making Online Education More Effective: Shorter but quality discussions rather than long hours of monotonous sitting and one-way communication, should be preferred. The teacher's role has to go beyond just being in control of the class to being a facilitator for the transfer of knowledge.

Focussing more on Knowledge Aspect: Education is not about competence but more about motivation. The students are meant to discover not just cover the syllabus.

GOVERNANCE**National Workshop on Digital India Land Record Modernisation Programme (DILRMP)**

Recently, the Ministry of Rural Development inaugurated 'Bhumi Samvaad' - National Workshop on Digital India Land Record Modernisation Programme (DILRMP). The Ministry also launched the National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS) portal and Dashboard.

Important Points**Launch:**

- The DILRMP was approved by the Cabinet on 21st August, 2008.
- For modernization of land records system in the country, a modified programme, viz., the National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP), now renamed as Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP), has been formulated.
- Two Centrally sponsored schemes of Computerization of Land Records (CLR) and Strengthening of Revenue Administration and updating of Land Records (SRA&ULR) were merged.

About:

- It is a Central Sector scheme that has been extended to 2023-24, to complete its original targets as well as expand its ambit with a slew of new schemes.
- It attempts to build upon the commonalities that exist in the arena of land records in various States to develop an appropriate Integrated Land Information Management System (ILIMS) across the country, on which different States can also add State-specific needs as they may deem relevant and appropriate.
- **ILIMS:** The system contains information on parcel ownership, land use, taxation, location boundaries, land value, encumbrances and many more.
- It is being implemented by the Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development).

Aim:

- To usher in a system of updated land records, automated and automatic mutation, integration between textual and spatial records, inter-connectivity between revenue and registration, to replace the present deeds registration and presumptive title system with that of conclusive titling with title guarantee.

Benefits:

- Real-time land ownership records will be available to the citizen.
- Free accessibility to the records will reduce interface between the citizen and the Government functionaries, thereby reducing rent seeking and harassment. Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode of service delivery will further reduce citizen interface with Govt. machinery, while adding to the convenience.
- The single-window service or the web-enabled "anytime-anywhere" access will save the citizen time and effort in obtaining RoRs (Record of Rights), etc.
- Automatic and automated mutations will significantly reduce the scope of fraudulent property deals.
- Conclusive titling will also significantly reduce litigation.
- Certificates based on land data (e.g., domicile, caste, income, etc.) will be available to the citizen through computers.
- This method will permit e-linkages to credit facilities.
- Information on eligibility for Government programs will be available, based on the data.

Other Related Initiatives:**National Generic Document Registration System:**

- It is a major shift from the existing manual registration system to online registration of all transactions in sale-purchase and transfer of land.
- It is a big step towards National Integration and a leap towards 'One Nation One Software'.

Unique Land Parcel Identification Number:

- Being described as “the Aadhaar for land”, it is a number that would uniquely identify every surveyed parcel of land and prevent land fraud, especially in the hinterlands of rural India, where land records are outdated and often disputed.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM**Odisha Government: To lay the foundation stone of the Puri heritage corridor project**

The Odisha Government is expected to soon lay the foundation stone of the Puri heritage corridor, which is being developed at a cost of Rs 800 crore. The project is a part of the Augmentation of Basic Amenities and Development of Heritage and Architecture (ABADHA) scheme for developing Puri as a world-class heritage city.

Important Points

- Conceived in 2016, the Puri Heritage Corridor Project was unveiled in December 2019 to transform the holy town of Puri into an international place of heritage.
- The project includes redeveloping major portions of the holy town and in the vicinity of the Jagannath temple for visitors and tourists.
- The project will include Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) building redevelopment, a 600-capacity Srimandir reception centre, Jagannath cultural centre, Badadanda heritage streetscape, beachfront development, Puri lake, Musa river revival plan, etc..

Jagannath Temple**Construction:**

- It is believed to have been constructed in the 12th century by King Anantavarman Chodaganga Deva of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty.

Mythology:

- Jagannath Puri temple is called ‘Yamanika Tirtha’ where, according to the Hindu beliefs, the power of ‘Yama’, the god of death, has been nullified due to the presence of Lord Jagannath.

Architecture:

- This temple was called the “White Pagoda” and is a part of Char Dham pilgrimages (Badrinath, Dwaraka, Puri, Rameswaram).
- There are four gates to the temple- Eastern ‘Singhdwara’ which is the main gate with two crouching lions, Southern ‘Ashwadwara’, Western ‘Vyaghra Dwara’ and Northern ‘Hastidwara’. There is a carving of each form at each gate.
- In front of the entrance stands the Aruna stambha or sun pillar, which was originally at the Sun Temple in Konark.

Festival: The World famous Rath Yatra (Car Festival) & Bahuda Yatra.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. Discuss the MPLAD scheme for the creation of durable community assets and its features for effective development of each constituency.

Introduction

- The Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) was launched in December, 1993, to provide a mechanism for the Members of Parliament to recommend works of developmental nature for creation of durable community assets and for provision of basic facilities including community infrastructure, based on locally felt needs. The MPLADS is a Central Sector Scheme which is fully funded by Government of India. The annual MPLADS fund entitlement per MP constituency is Rs. 5 crore.
- Citing economic recovery, the Union Cabinet has restored the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) that was suspended in April 2020 subsuming the funds for the scheme in the consolidated fund of India. However, the MPs will get ₹2 crore instead of the annual approved ₹5 crore.

Body**Objectives:**

- To enable MPs to recommend works of developmental nature with emphasis on the creation of durable community assets based on the locally felt needs to be taken up in their Constituencies.
- Lok Sabha Members can recommend works within their constituencies and elected Members of Rajya Sabha can recommend works within the State they are elected from.
- Nominated Members of both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha can recommend works anywhere in the country.
- To create durable assets of national priorities viz. drinking water, primary education, public health, sanitation and roads, etc.

Features for effective development of each constituency

- An MP knows the developmental and welfare issues of his constituency better than anyone else. The MPLADS has enabled MPs to play a leadership role in the developmental process of his constituency and sort out its day-to-day problems.
- It is one of the ways government funds are transferred to the grassroots with precision. Local MPs can channel fund for specific needs of local communities, whether it is to tar a road, install streetlights or water pumps, or bolster local school and healthcare infrastructure.
- Besides capacity building in the local economy, these works also offer jobs to local people. The pork barrel policy of State and Union Governments often leads to skewed development and regional imbalance. The ruling party channels public money to particular constituencies based on political considerations, at the expense of broader public interests. The elected opposition legislators of those constituencies fall victim to this pork barrel politics.
- MPLADS has been an antidote to the above favouritism. The Scheme provided opposition MPs some chance to cater to the developmental needs of their constituency.
- Of the MPLADS corpus, 15% has been earmarked for the development of Scheduled Castes and 5% for the Scheduled Tribes. Around ₹20 lakh of the MPLADS fund per annum has been allotted for the welfare of differently abled people.

Challenges in MPLADS

- Since its inception in 1993, MPLADS has attracted increasing scholarly and media attention focusing on the various ways in which its politicised nature leads to the underutilisation of funds or the misallocation of funds over space and time.
- MPs in the run-up to an election allocate significantly more funds than at other times to projects that eventually end up incomplete.
- The Comptroller and Auditor-General of India (CAG) has time and again flagged instances of financial mismanagement and artificial inflation of amounts spent.
- Within MPLADS, the automatic 'rollover' of unspent MPLADS funds from one year to the next enables politicians to concentrate their project recommendations before anticipated election dates, which is associated with higher project failure rates.
- MPLADS is not governed by any statutory law and is subject to the whims and fancies of the government of the day.
- MPLADS encroaches upon the domain of local self-governing institutions and thereby violates Part IX and IX-A of the Constitution. The scheme faces conflict with Doctrine of Separation of Powers as MPs are involved in executive functions.

Findings

- There is a need to eliminate the automatic rollover provision. In addition, providing information to voters on the efforts of incumbents, or lack thereof, with regard to the progress of specific public works projects could incentivize newly elected MPs to follow through on the proposals made by their predecessors.
- Political parties could also help by encouraging competent incumbents to stand for election again in the same constituency which could have beneficial effects on any future discretionary spending programmes.

- More broadly, policies that minimise discretion and that require more stringent and standardised criteria for the approval of project proposals could also reduce the negative effect of democratic elections on public service provision.
- This could also reduce negative effects of demands by the public for greater accountability and transparency from lawmakers to design programmes to benefit the public instead of supporting the interests of incumbent politicians. violation of the SAARC Charter, it will be better to proceed with a “small SAARC” option.

DAILY QUIZ

- Q1. Which one of the following is located on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea?
- (a) Golan Heights
 - (b) 2 and 3 only
 - (c) Gaza Strip**
 - (d) Amman
- Q2. Consider the following statements about Input Tax Credit (ITC):
1. It is the tax that a business pays on a purchase and that it can use to reduce its tax liability when it makes a sale.
 2. A business under composition scheme cannot avail of input tax credit.
- 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
- Q3. The Chhattisgarh Model was in news recently, is related to which of the following?
- (a) Preventing the spread of the coronavirus
 - (b) Community policing
 - (c) Stubble burning and pollution control**
 - (d) None of the above
- Q4. Vanniyars are one of the largest and most consolidated backward communities in
- (a) Meghalaya
 - (b) Rajasthan
 - (c) Madhya Pradesh
 - (d) Tamil Nadu**
- Q5. Consider the following statements:
1. Asiatic lion is naturally found in India only.
 2. Double-humped camel is naturally found in India only.
 3. One-horned rhinoceros is naturally found in India only.
- Which of the statements given above is / are correct?
- (a) 1 only**
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) 1 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3