

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE for



**U.P.S.C. - C.S.E.**

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*Success is born of action...*

## **Topic 1: ALL INDIA KISAN SABHA**

*Importance for Prelims: Modern History*

*Importance for Mains: Modern History*



All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) welcomed the four farm legislations passed by the Punjab Assembly and urged all other States to follow the model.

- In 1936, at the Lucknow session of the Congress, All India Kisan Sabha was formed with Sahajanand as its first president
- All India Kisan Sabha is also known as 'Akhil Bhartiya Kisan Sabha.' The secretary of this association was NG Ranga.
- The motives of the All India Kisan Sabha were:
  - To abolish the Zamindari system,
  - To reduce land revenue,
  - To institutionalize credit.

### **Rift between AIKS and INC:**

- A good number of the INC leaders were Zamindars themselves, while the peasants and workers came from another class. Thus this class clash within the INC was a hurdle, in implementing all the schemes that were visualized by Gandhi, Nehru and others.

- So, by and large, the INC failed to meet all the promises they had claimed to fulfil to the peasants. The peasants thus became disillusioned with the INC government.
- Thus, the All India Kisan Sabha felt betrayed by the INC and this is why, when in 1942, Mahatma Gandhi gave a call for the Quit India Movement, the peasant leaders such as Swami Sahajanand Saraswati appealed to the peasants not to support Gandhi or the INC.
- The peasant movement started being dominated by the socialists and communists and in the INC Haripura session, the rift between INC and AIKS became evident.
- In May 1942, CPI took over All India Kisan Sabha all across the country.
- There are two organisations at present working under the name AIKS (following the split of Communist Party of India in 1964):
  - ✓ All India Kisan Sabha – Communist Party of India's Peasant Wing
  - ✓ All India Kisan Sabha – Communist Party of India-Marxist's Peasant Front; also known as All India Kisan Sabha (36 Canning Lane).

**Additional Information: Various state Kisan Sabhas**

- Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha – 1929 by Sahajanand Saraswati
- UP Kisan Sabha – 1918 by Gauri Shankar Mishra and Indra Narayan Dwivedi and was supported by Madan Mohan Malaviya.
- Awadh Kisan Sabha – 1920 by Baba Ramachandra.



## Topic 2: RAMLILA

### *Importance for Prelims: Art & Culture*



The world famous Ramnagar Ramlila – which many consider to be the oldest in the world, being over 200 years old – began in Varanasi.

- The Traditional performance of Ramayana was inscribed on the **UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2008.**
- Ramlila, literally means “Rama’s play”, is a performance based on Ramayana epic.
- Ramlila recalls the battle between Rama and Ravana and consists of a series of scenes that include song, narration, recital and dialogue.
- Ramlila is performed **during the festival of Dussehra every year** across northern India. Out of them the most representative Ramlilas are performed in Ayodhya, Vrindavan, Almora, Sattna, Madhubani, Ramnagar and Benares.
- Staging of Ramlila is **based on the Ramacharitmanas**. Ramlilas recount episodes from the Ramacharitmanas through a series of performances.
- Ramacharitmanas are sacred texts devoted to the glory of Rama. It was composed in the Awadhi dialect of Hindi by Tulsidas in the 16th century with an objective of making the Sanskrit epic available to all.
- The performance of Ramlila lasts for ten to twelve days, but Ramlilas

performed in some places like Ramnagar may last for an entire month.

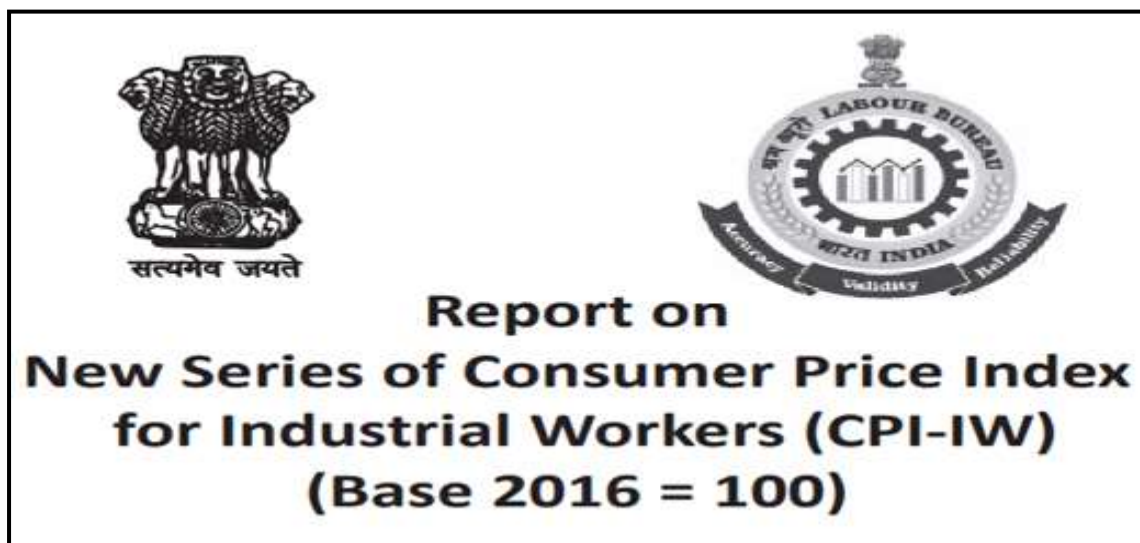
- The Ramlila holds the distinction of bringing the whole population together, without distinction of caste, religion or age.
- However, in the recent past owing to the development of mass media the play has experienced reduction in the audience thereby losing its principal role of bringing people and communities together.

### **Additonal Information: Khon Ramlila**

- Khon Ramlila is a masked form of Ramlila art of Thailand.
- It's a form of masked dance depicting the scenes of Ramlila. It has no dialogues and background voices narrate the whole story of Ramayana. It is also famous for its beautiful attire and golden masks.
- It is included in the list of UNESCO's Intangible cultural heritage.

### Topic 3:CPI -IW

*Importance for Prelims: Economy*



Base year of Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers revised from 2001 to 2016.

- Consumer Price Index or CPI is the measure of changes in the price level of a basket of consumer goods and services bought by households. CPI is a numerical estimation calculated using the rates of a sample of representative objects the prices of which are gathered periodically.
- The CPI captures changes in price level at the consumer level.
- Changes in prices at the producer level are tracked by the Wholesale Price Index(WPI).
- CPI can capture the change in the prices of services which the WPI cannot.

**Various Indices of CPI are :**

**CPI – Industrial Workers (CPI -IW):** It tries to measure the alterations over a time period on the prices of a fixed basket of goods and services utilised by Industrial Workers.

**CPI – Agricultural Labourers (CPI -AL):** This index measures the change

in the price of commodity basket consumed by the agricultural labourers. It is this used to revise minimum wages for agricultural labour in different States.

**CPI – Rural Labourers:** This index measures the change in the price of commodity basket consumed by the rural labourers.

- The above indices are published monthly by Labour Bureau under the Ministry of Labour and Employment for all India as well as States and Union Territories.
- Since the above three indices covered only a segment of the population and not the overall nation, we designed three more indices of CPI.

**CPI – Rural:** This index measures the change in the price of commodity basket consumed by the rural population

**CPI – Urban:** This index measures the change in the price of commodity basket consumed by urban population

**CPI – Combined:** It is computed by combining CPI Rural and CPI Urban Index. The base year for the above three indices is 2011-12 and are **published monthly by the National Statistical Office (NSO)**, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.



## Topic 4: INS KAVARATTI

*Importance for Prelims: Defence*



INS Kavaratti, the indigenously built Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) stealth corvettes by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata, was formally inducted into the Indian Navy .

- INS Kavaratti (P31) is an **anti-submarine warfare** corvette of the Indian Navy built under **Project 28**.
- It is **the last of four Kamorta-class corvettes** under various stages of induction with the Indian Navy.
- Kavaratti is capable of fighting under nuclear, biological and chemical environments.
- It will be a frontline warship of the Indian Navy with advanced stealth features and a low radar signature .
- This will also enhance its anti-submarine warfare capability.
- The ship's weapons and sensors suite is predominantly indigenous and showcases the nation's growing capability in this niche area.

## Topic 5: NAG MISSILES

*Importance for Prelims: Defence*



The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) carried out the final user trial of the Nag Missile at the Pokhran firing range.

- Nag is a **third-generation, fire-and-forget, anti-tank guided missile** developed by India's state-owned Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) to support both mechanised infantry and airborne forces of the Indian Army.
- It is an all weather conditions with day and night capabilities and with a minimum range of 500m and maximum range of 4 km.
- Nag can be launched from land and air-based platforms. The **land version** is currently available for integration on the **Nag missile carrier (NAMICA)**
- The helicopter-launched configuration, designated as **helicopter-launched NAG (HELINA)**, can be fired from Dhruv advanced light helicopter (ALH) and HAL Rudra (ALH WSI) attack helicopter.

## Topic 6: H1 B VISA

### *Importance for Prelims: International Relation*



The State Department has proposed not to issue temporary business visas for H-1B speciality occupations which allowed several companies to send their technology professionals for a short stay to complete jobs on site in the U.S.

- It is a **non-immigrant visa** that allows US companies to employ graduate level foreign workers in specialty occupations. It requires, Theoretical or technical expertise in specialized fields such as in IT, finance, accounting, architecture, engineering, mathematics, science, medicine, etc.
- Any professional level job that usually requires a bachelor's degree or higher can come under the H-1B visa for specialty occupations.
- The US H1-B visa is designed to be used for staff in specialty occupations. **H-1B has an option of green card application.**
- H-1B visa holders can bring their spouse and children under 21 years of age to the US under the H4 Visa category as dependents.
- An H4 Visa holder is allowed to remain in the US as long as the H-1B visa holder remains in legal status.
- While an H4 visa holder is not eligible to work in the US, they may

attend school, obtain a driver's license and open a bank account while in the US.

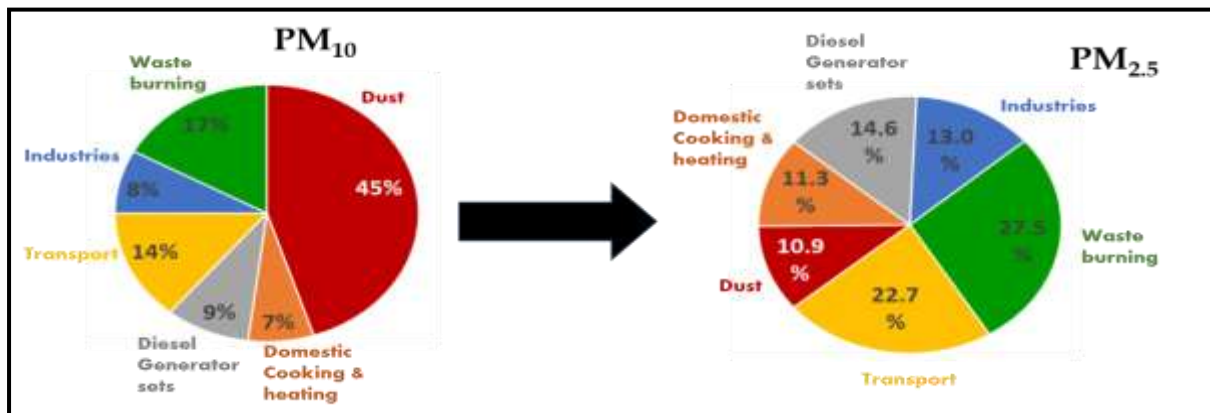
**Green Card:**

- It is officially known as a Permanent Resident Card.
- It is issued to immigrants to the US under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), 1952.
- It allows a person to live and work permanently in the US.



## Topic 7: AIR POLLUTANTS

### *Importance for Prelims: Environment*



Delhi woke up to high levels of air pollution on Friday as air quality index (AQI) slipped into 'very poor' category while some parts of the city saw AQI turn 'severe'.

Besides concentration of particulates (PM 2.5 ,PM 10), the CPCB also monitors gas concentrations, including of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>), sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), carbon monoxide (CO), and ozone (O<sub>3</sub>).

### **Major Air Pollutants:**

#### **CO:**

- By incomplete combustion of carbon based fuels, Automobile exhaust, Cigarette smoke Combines with hemoglobin to form carboxy haemoglobin, which is highly stable & reduces oxygen carrying capacity of blood. Slow our reflexes & make us confused & sleepy

#### **CO<sub>2</sub>:**

- Major greenhouse gas formed by respiration, burning of fuels, decomposition of lime, volcanic eruption.

#### **CFCs:**

- Released mainly from air conditioning systems & refrigeration. Detrimental to Ozone layer present in the stratosphere as



$\text{CFC} + \text{UV} \gg \text{Cl}$  (Chlorine radicals which causes breakdown of Ozone)

**Lead:**

- Present in petrol, diesel, lead batteries, paints, hair dye products etc. (Affects children in particular) Damages nervous system & cause digestive problems & in some cases causes cancer

**O<sub>3</sub>:**

- Formed when NO<sub>x</sub> particle from vehicle exhaust & volatile Hydrocarbons interact with each other in presence of sunlight

**SPM:**

- SPMs in air, when breathed in causes lung damage & respiratory problems

**SO<sub>2</sub>:**

- Produced from burning coal (60 %), mainly in thermal power plants + Petroleum products + in production of paper & smelting of metals Major contributor to smog causing lung diseases

**CH<sub>4</sub>:**

- Mainly CH<sub>4</sub> burns in fossil fuels + produced by burning of vegetation / rotting

**Acid Rain:**

- $\text{pH} < 5.6$  (Rain with oxides of sulphur & nitrogen (SO<sub>2</sub> & NO<sub>2</sub>)) – HNO<sub>3</sub> + H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>

**NO<sub>x</sub>**

- NO<sub>3</sub>- → Acts as a fertilizer to the soil
- Automobile exhaust produces NO<sub>2</sub> which damages plant leaves & retard rate of photosynthesis + also causes red haze & lung irritation

**Classical Smog**

- Occurs in cool humid climate Chemically reducing hence called reducing smog Smoke + fog + SO<sub>2</sub>.

## **Topic 8:ILO**

### ***Importance for Prelims: International Organization***



India assumed the role of chair of International Labour Organisation body from October 2020.

- The ILO was created in 1919 by the Versailles Peace Treaty.
- After the demise of the League of Nations, it became the first specialized agency associated with the UN.
- Its secretariat is in Geneva, Switzerland.
- It has 187 of the 193 UN member states plus the Cook Islands.
- It is responsible for drawing up and over seeing international labour standards.
- It has a tripartite governing structure – representing governments, employers, and workers.
- It publishes Global Wage report.

### **Eight Core Conventions of the ILO**

- Forced Labour Convention (No. 29)

- Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (No.105)
- Equal Remuneration Convention (No.100)
- Discrimination (Employment Occupation) Convention (No.111)
- Minimum Age Convention (No.138)
- Worst forms of Child Labour Convention (No.182)
- Freedom of Association and Protection of Right to Organised Convention (No.87)
- Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention (No.98)

**Note:** India has not ratified Convention No 98 and 87.

## **Topic 9: ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES ACT**

***Importance for Prelims: Important Legislations***



Govt imposes stock limits on onion to check prices under Essential commodities act.

### **Essential Commodities Act**

- The ECA is an act which was established to ensure the delivery of certain
- commodities or products, the supply of which if obstructed owing to hoarding or black-marketing would affect the normal life of the people.
- The ECA was enacted in 1955. This includes foodstuff, drugs, fuel (petroleum products) etc.
- It has since been used by the Government to regulate the production, supply and distribution of a whole host of commodities it declares 'essential' in order to make them available to consumers at fair prices.
- Additionally, the government can also fix the maximum retail price (MRP) of any packaged product that it declares an "essential commodity".
- The list of items under the Act includes drugs, fertilizers, Food items,

pulses and edible oils, and petroleum and petroleum products.

- The Centre can include new commodities as and when the need arises, and take them off the list once the situation improves.

### **How ECA works?**

- If the Centre finds that a certain commodity is in short supply and its price is spiking, it can notify stock-holding limits on it for a specified period.
- The States act on this notification to specify limits and take steps to ensure that these are adhered to.
- Anybody trading or dealing in the commodity, be it wholesalers, retailers or even importers are prevented from stockpiling it beyond a certain quantity.
- A State can, however, choose not to impose any restrictions. But once it does, traders have to immediately sell into the market any stocks held beyond the mandated quantity.
- This improves supplies and brings down prices. As not all shopkeepers and traders comply, State agencies conduct raids to get everyone to toe the line and the errant are punished.
- The excess stocks are auctioned or sold through fair price shops.
- Ex: The Union Government has brought masks and hand-sanitisers under the ECA to make sure that these products, key for preventing the spread of Covid-19 infection, are available to people at the right price and in the right quality

### **For Food Items:**

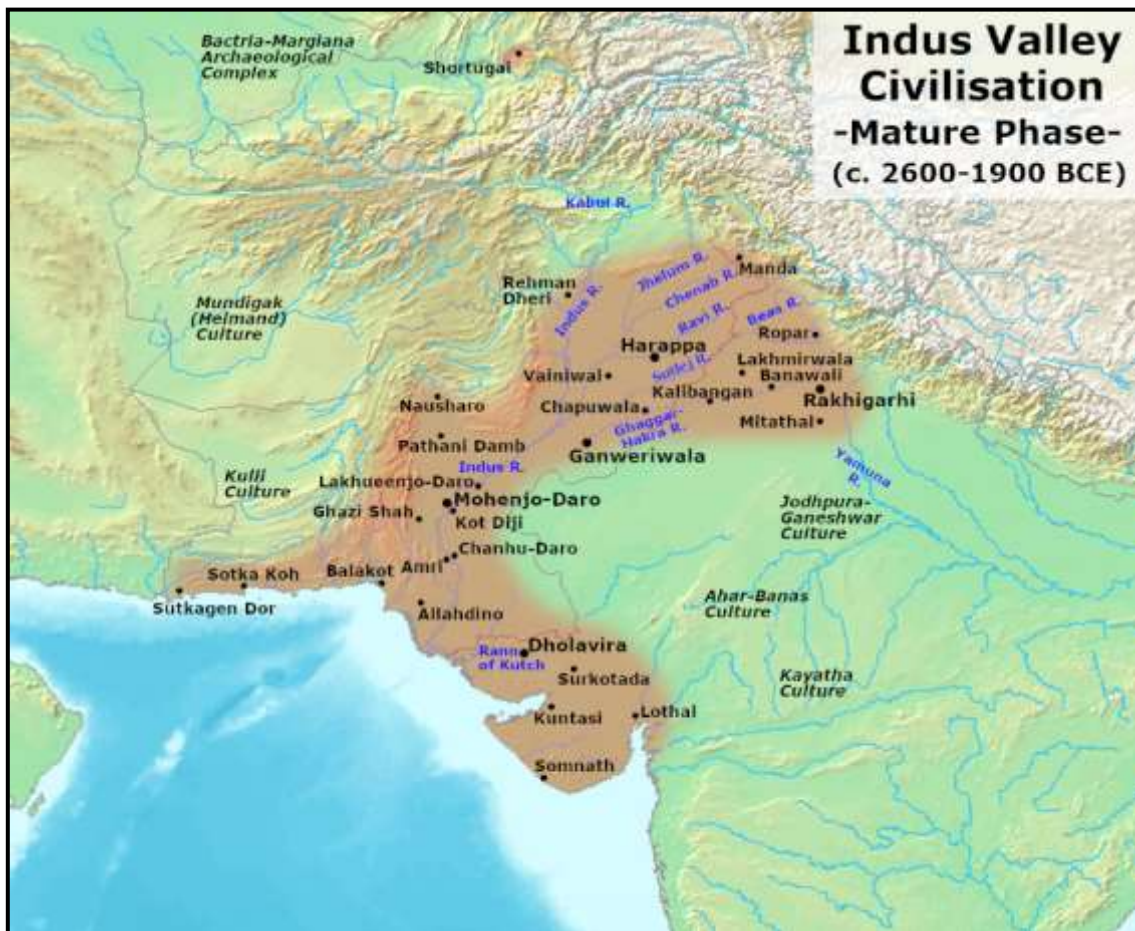
- Based on the deliberations, Government takes various measures from time to time to stabilize prices of essential food items which, inter-alia, include appropriately utilizing trade and fiscal policy instruments like import duty.



- The govt. can impose stock limits and advise State for effective action against hoarders & black marketers etc. to regulate domestic availability and moderate prices.
- The government utilizes the buffer of agri-horticultural commodities like pulses, onion, etc. built under Price Stabilization Fund (PSF) to help moderate the volatility in prices.

## **Topic 10: INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION**

*Importance for Prelims: History*



This year marks 100 years of discovery of Indus Valley Civilisation, and a new study has shown that dairy products were being produced by the Harappans as far back as 2500 BCE.

- Indus Valley Civilization was the first major civilization in South Asia, which spread across a vast area of land in present-day India and Pakistan (around 12 lakh sq.km).
- The time period of mature Indus Valley Civilization is estimated between BC. 2700-BC.1900 i.e. for 800 years. But early Indus Valley Civilization had existed even before BC.2700.

**Features of Indus Valley Civilization:**

- On the valleys of river Indus.
- Also known as Harappan Civilization.
- Beginning of city life.
- Harappan Sites discovered by – Dayaram Sahni (1921) – Montgomery district, Punjab, Pakistan.
- Mohanjodaro discovered by – R. D. Banerji – Larkana district, Sind, Pakistan.
- The city was divided into Citadel (west) and Lower Town (east).
- Red pottery painted with designs in black.
- Stone weights, seals, special beads, copper tools, long stone blades etc.
- Copper, bronze, silver, gold present.
- Artificially produced – Faience.
- Specialists for handicrafts.
- Import of raw materials.
- Plough was used.
- Bodies were buried in wooden coffins, but during the later stages ‘Hsymmetryculture’ evolved where bodies were buried in painted burial urns.
- Sugar cane not cultivated, horse, iron not used.

### **Indus Valley Sites and Specialties**

#### **HARAPPA**

- Seals out of stones
- Citadel outside on banks of river Ravi

#### **MOHENJODARO**

- Great Bath, Great Granary, Dancing Girl, Man with Beard, Cotton, Assembly hall  
The term means ” Mount of the dead”
- On the bank of river Indus

- Believed to have been destructed by flood or invasion (Destruction was not gradual).

### **CHANHUDARO**

- Bank of Indus river. – discovered by Gopal Majumdar and Mackey (1931)
- Pre-Harappan culture – Jhangar Culture and Jhukar Culture
- Only site without citadel.

### **KALIBANGAN**

- At Rajasthan on the banks of river Ghaggar, discovered by A. Ghosh (1953)
- Fire Altars
- Bones of camel
- Evidence of furrows
- Horse remains (even though Indus valley people didn't use horses).
- Known as third capital of the Indus Empire.

### **LOTHAL**

- At Gujarat near Bhogava river, discovered by S.R. Rao (1957)
- Fire Altars
- Beside the tributary of Sabarmati
- Storehouse
- Dockyard and earliest port
- double burial
- Rice husk
- House had front entrance (exception).

### **ROPAR**

- Punjab, on the banks of river Sutlej. Discovered by Y.D Sharma (1955)
- Dog buried with humans.

## **BANAWALI**

- Haryana
- On banks of lost river Saraswathi
- Barley Cultivation.

## **DHOLAVIRA**

- Biggest site in India, until the discovery of Rakhigarhi.
- Located in Khadir Beyt, Rann of Kutch, Gujarat. Discovered by J.P Joshi/Rabindra Singh (1990)
- 3 parts + large open area for ceremonies
- Large letters of the Harappan script (signboards).

## **Religion Of Indus Valley**

- Pashupathi Mahadev (Proto Siva)
- Mother goddess
- Nature/ Animal worship
- Unicorn, Dove, Peepal Tree, Fire
- Amulets
- Idol worship was practised ( not a feature of Aryans)
- Did not construct temples.
- The similarity to Hindu religious practises. (Hinduism in its present form originated later)
- No Caste system.

## **Society And Culture**

- The systematic method of weights and measures ( 16 and its multiples).
- Pictographic Script, Boustrophedon script – Deciphering efforts by I. Mahadevan
- Equal status to men and women
- Economic Inequality, not an egalitarian society



- Textiles – Spinning and weaving
- 3 types – burial, cremation and post-cremation were there, though burial was common.
- Majority of people Proto-Australoids and Mediterranean (Dravidians), though Mongoloids, Nordics etc were present in the city culture. Read more on races of India.

## **Topic 12: HIMALAYAN BROWN BEAR**

***Importance for Prelims: Environment***



Study predicts massive habitat decline for the Himalayan brown bear by 2050 due to climate change.

- The Himalayan brown bear is one of the largest carnivores in the highlands of Himalayas.
- It occupies the higher reaches of the Himalayas in remote, mountainous areas of Pakistan and India, in small and isolated populations, and is extremely rare in many of its ranges.
- IUCN Status: **Critically endangered**
- Distribution: In India, they are found in 23 protected areas of the northern states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand.

**IUCN ( International Union for Conservation of Nature )**

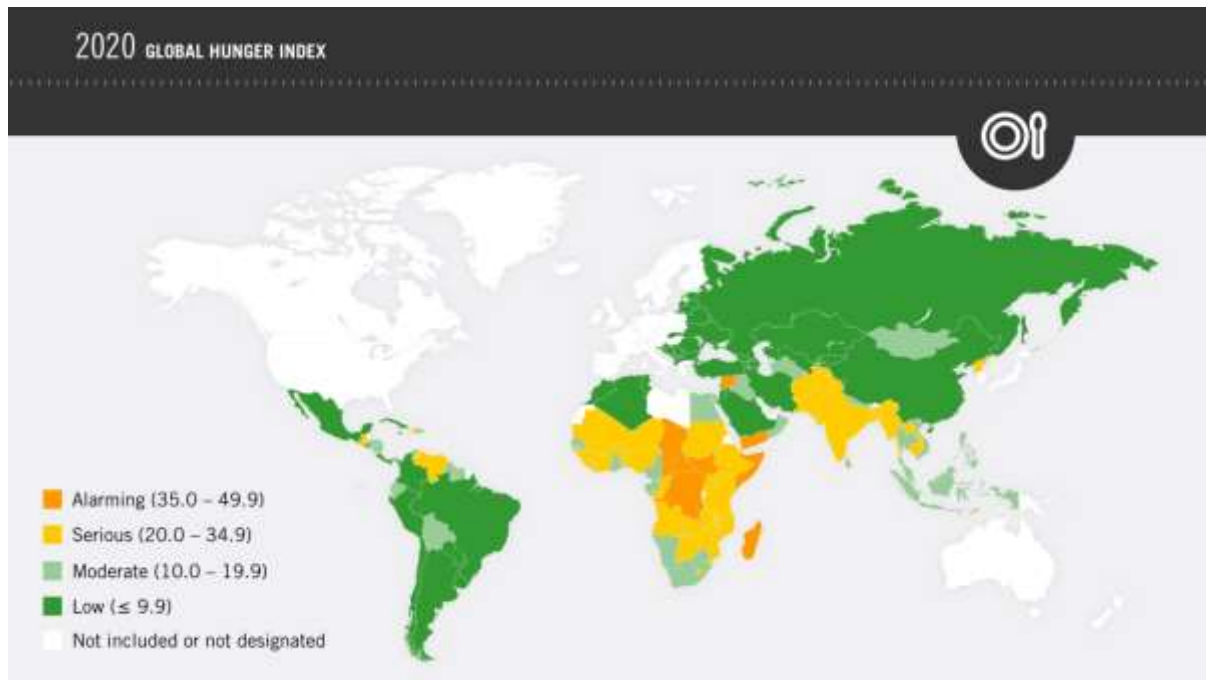
- IUCN is a membership union uniquely composed of both government and

civil society organisations.

- Created in 1948, it is the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it.
- It is headquartered in Switzerland.
- The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, is the world's most comprehensive inventory of the global conservation status of plant and animal species.

## **Topic 13:GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX**

***Importance for Prelims: International Report***



India has been ranked 94 on the 2020 Global Hunger Index (GHI), lower than neighbours like Bangladesh and Pakistan.

### **Global Hunger Index**

- Annual Report: Jointly published by Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe.
- It was first produced in 2006. It is published every October. The 2020 edition marks the 15th edition of the GHI.
- Aim: To comprehensively measure and track hunger at the global, regional, and country levels.

### **Calculation:**

The GHI scores are calculated each year to assess progress and setbacks in combating hunger. It is calculated on the basis of four indicators:

1. Undernourishment: Share of the population with insufficient caloric intake.
2. Child Wasting: Share of children under age five who have low weight for

their height, reflecting acute undernutrition.

3. Child Stunting: Share of children under age five who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition.
4. Child Mortality: The mortality rate of children under the age of five.

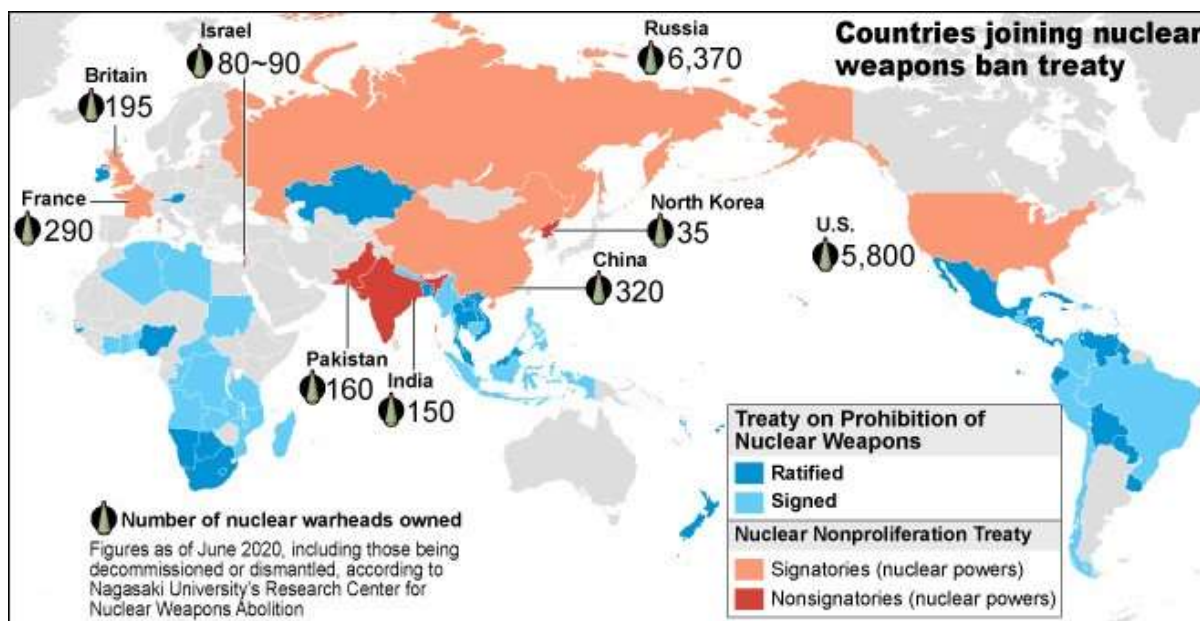
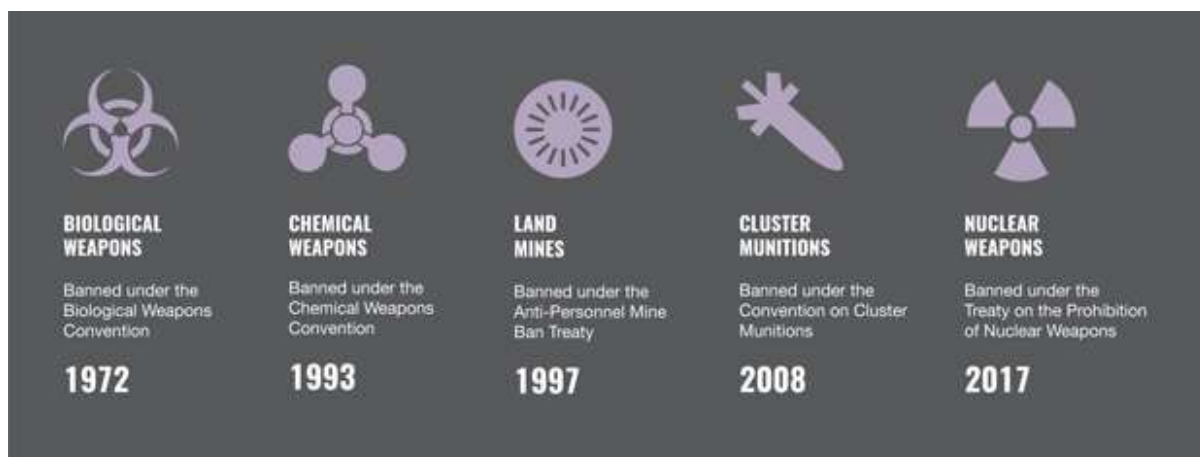
**Scoring:**

- Based on the values of the four indicators, the GHI determines hunger on a 100-point scale where 0 is the best possible score (no hunger) and 100 is the worst.
- Each country's GHI score is classified by severity, from low to extremely alarming.



## Topic 14:NUCLEAR WEAPON BAN TREATY

*Importance for Prelims: International Relation*



The United Nations announced that 50 countries have ratified a UN treaty to ban nuclear weapons triggering its entry into force in 90 days (latest-Honduras). A move hailed by anti-nuclear activists but strongly opposed by the United States and the other major nuclear powers.

### **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**

- The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), or the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty, is **the first legally binding international agreement** to comprehensively prohibit nuclear weapons, with the goal of

leading towards their total elimination.

- It was passed on 7 July 2017.
- In order to come into effect, signature and ratification by at least 50 countries is required.
- The treaty prohibits the development, testing, production, stockpiling, stationing, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons, as well as assistance and encouragement to the prohibited activities.
- India abstained from voting: India maintained that it recognises the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament-(CD) as the single multilateral disarmament negotiation forum & it is not convinced of the potential of the current treaty to address the disarmament issue.
- It was “not convinced” that the proposed conference could address the longstanding expectation of the international community for a comprehensive instrument on nuclear disarmament.

## **Topic 15: ISRAEL – SUDAN PEACE DEAL**

### ***Importance for Prelims: International Relations***

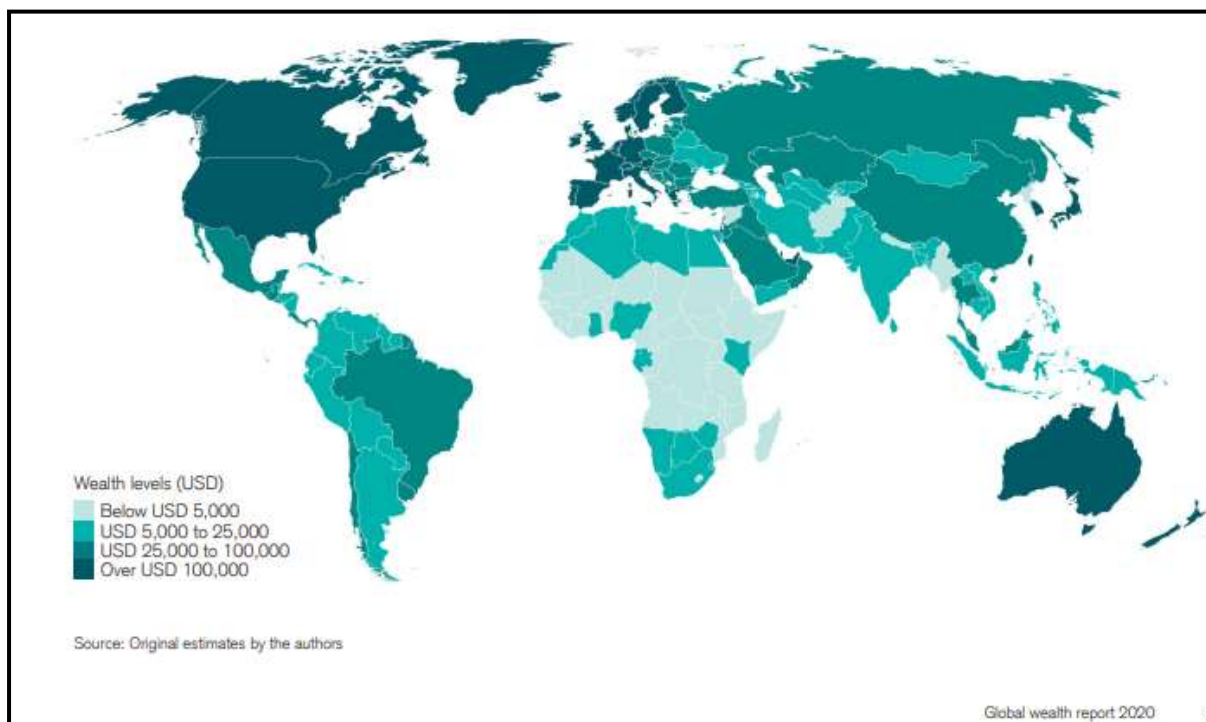


Sudan became the latest nation to make peace with Israel, after reaching a deal with the US administration ending the African nation's designation as a statesponsor of terrorism.

- The deal said the two countries agreed to start economic and trade relations, which could help Sudan revive an economy on the brink of collapse.
- EGYPT, TURKEY, JORDAN, UAE, BAHRAIN recognised Israel and signed a pact to break the impasse.

## **Topic 16:GLOBAL WEALTH REPORT**

***Importance for Prelims: International Report***



Credit Suisse has released the Global Wealth Report 2020.

- Credit Suisse is a financial services company based in Switzerland.
- The Credit Suisse Global Wealth Report provides the most comprehensive and upto-date coverage of information on household wealth worldwide.

### **Global Scenario:**

- In 2019, total global wealth rose by USD 36.3 trillion and wealth per adult reached USD 77,309, which is 8.5% more when compared to 2018.
- As a consequence, the world has been better placed to absorb any losses from Covid-19 during 2020.
- However, total household wealth dropped by USD 17.5 trillion between January and March 2020, a 4.4% decrease compared to the value at the end of 2019.
- Asia Pacific is the highest contributor of household wealth.

- Female workers have suffered disproportionately, partly because of their high representation in businesses and industries such as restaurants, hotels, personal service and retail that have been badly affected by the pandemic.

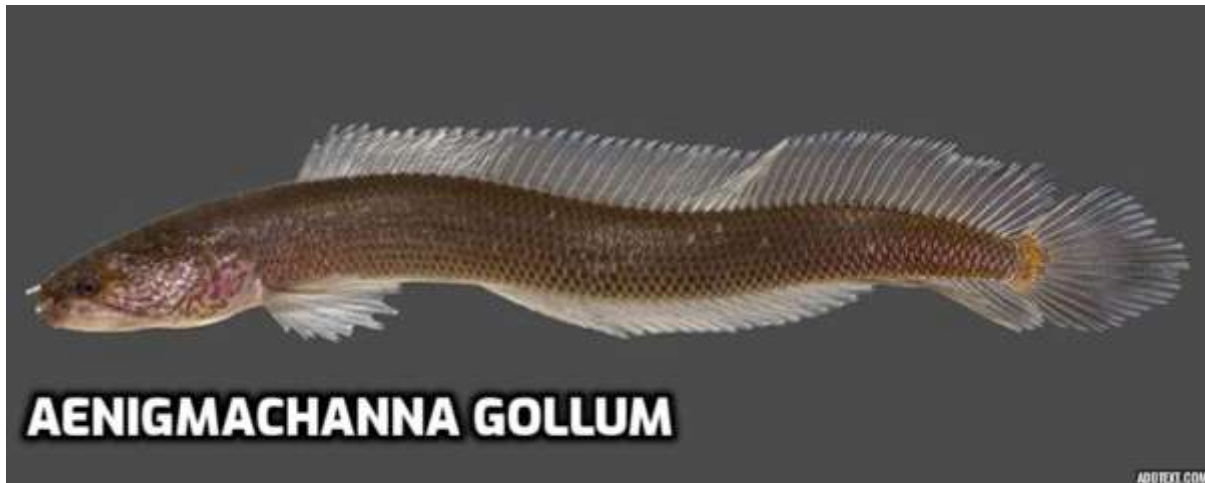
### **Indian Scenario:**

- Household wealth in India is dominated by property and other real assets, although financial assets have grown over time, now forming 22% of gross assets.
- Stocks, bonds, bank deposits are some examples of financial assets.
- The average wealth of Indian adults rose marginally to USD 17,420 at end-June 2020, as against USD 17,300 as of December 2019, showing some growth despite the Covid pandemic and lockdowns.
- Wealth inequality remains quite high in India.
- There is considerable poverty reflected in the fact that 73% of the adult population had wealth below USD 10,000 at the end of 2019.
- At the other extreme, a small fraction of the population (2.3% of adults) had a net worth over USD 1,00,000.
- With 4,593 ultra-high-net-worth individuals in the country as of end-2019, **India came in fourth after the USA, China and Germany.**
- Between January and April 2020, unemployment rates approximately tripled in India to 24%.



## **Topic 17: AENIGMACHANNA GOLLUM**

***Importance for Prelims: Environment***



Aenigmachanna gollum, a dragon snakehead fish that lives in underground aquifers, and which first announced its surfacing in social media posts in 2018.

- Aenigmachanna Gollum has a surprisingly large number of primitive characters, and detailed molecular phylogenetic analyses including of its Mitochondrial DNA suggested an ancient separation from Channidae.
- Many such species were earlier found in the aquifers of Kerala.
- Many of these species are blind, pigment-less, and have peculiar morphological characters that are otherwise not seen in species occurring in surface waters.

### **Significance of the discovery**

- The presence of two unique endemic families of freshwater fish in a small region like Kerala is unparalleled and indicates the exceptional diversity and endemism of fishes in this part of the world.
- The members of Aenigmachannidae are “living fossils” and comprise an ancient Gondwanan lineage that survived the break-up of the supercontinent and the northward drift of the Indian subcontinent.

## Topic 18: BIRDS OF GOD

### *Importance for Prelims: Environment*

‘Birds of God’ project is a true success because of the involvement of the community. There has never been such a quick turnaround to a conservation project in India, where one year a species was being hunted and in the next, it stopped. To celebrate the conservation story, the Nagaland government held an Amur Falcon Conservation Week and Festival earlier this month.

### **Amur Falcons:**

- Amur falcons, the world’s longest travelling raptors start travelling with the onset of winters.
- The raptors breed in south eastern Siberia and northern China, and migrate in millions across India and then over the Indian Ocean to southern Africa before returning to Mongolia and Siberia. Their 22,000-kilometre migratory route is one of the longest amongst all avian species.
- They get their name from the Amur River that forms the border between Russia and China.
- Doyang Lake in Nagaland is better known as a stopover for the Amur falcons during their annual migration from their breeding grounds to warmer South Africa. Thus, Nagaland is also known as the “Falcon Capital of the World.”
- The birds are the **least concern** under the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, **but the species is protected under the Indian Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, and the Convention on Migratory Species**, to which India is a signatory (which means it is mandatory to protect the birds).

## **Topic 19: LOKUR COMMITTEE**

***Importance for Prelims: Polity***

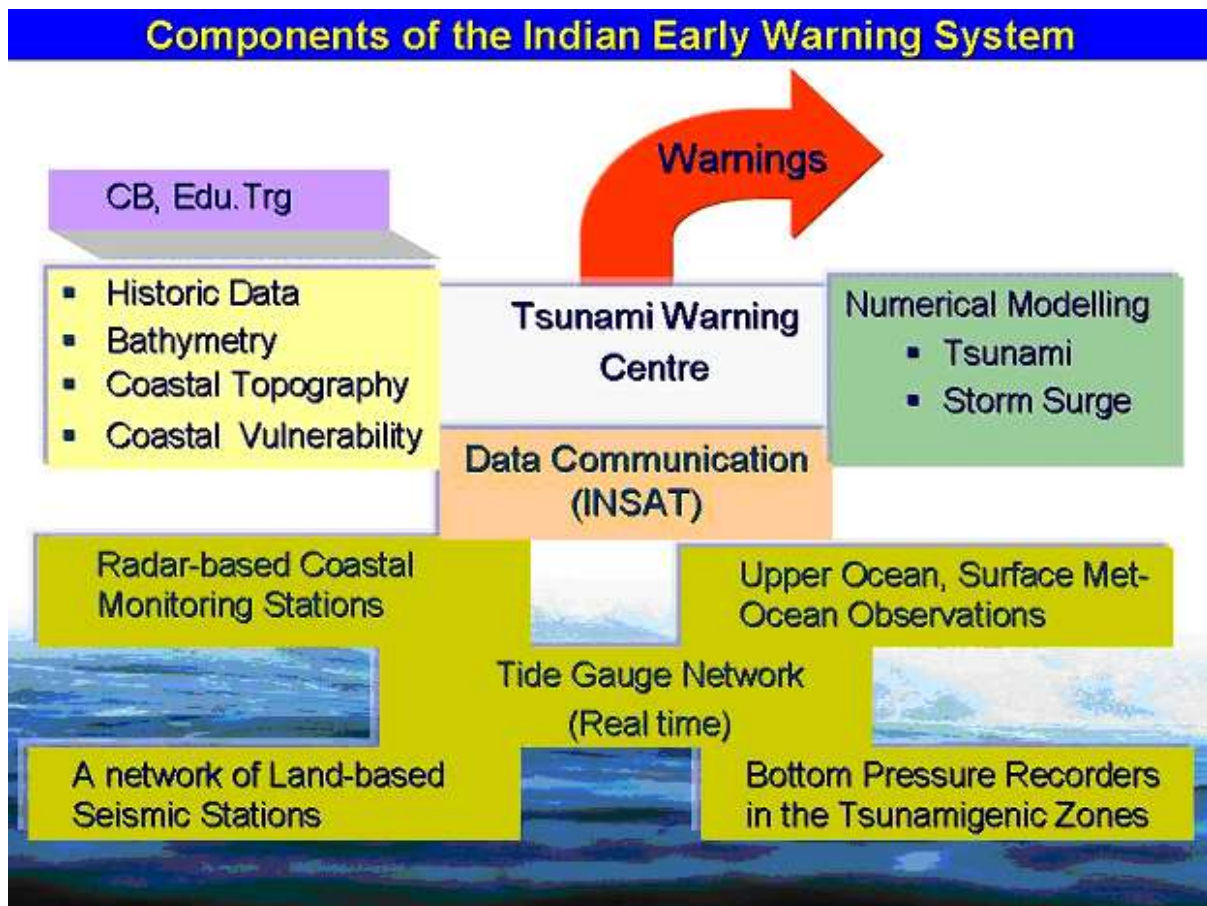


The Supreme Court on Monday decided to keep in abeyance its previous order appointing former Supreme Court judge Justice Madan B. Lokur to a one-man committee to monitor/prevent stubble-burning in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab.

- The committee will be helped by student volunteer forces deployed from the National Cadet Corps, the National Service Scheme and the Bharat Scouts and Guides, will protect Delhi-NCR (National Capital Region) from pollution caused by stubble-burning in the neighbouring Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh this winter.
- Student forces will patrol highways and fields in the three States and ensure that no fires are started in the fields.
- The Chief Secretaries of the three States will provide facilities to the committee and provide the student volunteers with adequate transportation to aid their vigil.
- Existing mobile teams and nodal officers of the States will report to the committee. The Supreme Court's own Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA) would consult with the committee on issues related to stubble-burning.

## Topic 21: INCOIS

*Importance for Prelims: National Organization*



India is much safer against tsunami threat than it was in 2004, because of the state-of-the-art tsunami early warning system established at Indian National Centre for Ocean Information System (INCOIS) according to INCOIS director.

- **INCOIS (an autonomous body under the Ministry of Earth sciences)** is also providing tsunami advisories to Indian Ocean region (25 countries) as a Tsunami Service Provider as the responsibility assigned by UNESCO-IOC.
- The Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre (ITEWC), INCOIS is the nodal agency to provide tsunami advisories to India. It is coordinating with the Disaster Management Officials (DMOs) for implementation of **Tsunami Ready programme** in India.

- It conducts IOWave Tsunami mock exercises biannually in coordination with ICG/IOTWMS and also conducts mock exercises at national level in alternative years in coordination with MHA and NDMA and State Disaster Management Agencies (SDMA) to strengthen the readiness to handle the emergency situations with stakeholders.

### **Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC):**

- IOC-UNESCO was established in 1960 as a body with functional autonomy within UNESCO and is the only competent organization for marine science within the UN system.
- The purpose of the Commission is to promote international cooperation and to coordinate programmes in research, services and capacity-building, in order to learn more about the nature and resources of the ocean and coastal areas.
- To apply that knowledge for the improvement of management, sustainable development, the protection of the marine environment, and the decision-making processes of its Member States.
- The IOC is recognized through the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as the competent international organization in the fields of Marine Scientific Research and Transfer of Marine Technology.




## Topic 22: SARAL JEEVAN BIMA

*Importance for Prelims: Govt Schemes*

# SARAL JEEVAN BIMA

## STANDARD TERM INSURANCE PLAN



**KEY FEATURES**

For policyholders aged  
**18 -65** years

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Policy tenure  
**5-40** years

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Minimum sum assured  
**₹5,00,000**

---

Maximum sum assured  
**₹25,00,000.**

---

Premium payments  
Single, regular or limited pay

---

Waiting period  
**45** days from policy issuance

**WHAT?**  
A simple insurance policy which pays nominees a fixed sum after the policyholder's death

**WHY?**

- Standardised wordings
- Easy and simple to understand
- All insurers to offer this product. Choosing becomes easy

IRDAI has come out with guidelines for Saral Jeevan Bima and has laid that all life insurers must offer this product from January 1 ,2021.

### **Key features**

- It will be a non-linked, non-participating individual pure risk premium life insurance plan providing for payment of the sum assured in lump sum to the nominee in case of the insured's death during the policy term.
- The plan will be for those in the 18-65 years age group.
- Policy term will be 5-40 years.
- It allows for a maximum maturity age of 70 years.
- Sum assured will be a minimum of ₹5 lakh and a maximum of ₹25 lakh. Insurers, however, have the option of offering sum assured beyond ₹25 lakh with all other terms and conditions remaining the same.

- The product shall be offered to individuals without restrictions on gender, place of residence, travel, occupation or educational qualifications.
- There will be only one exclusion under the policy – exclusion for suicide.
- There will be no maturity benefit. Neither will there be any surrender value nor can any loan be taken against the product.
- The policy will also offer optional Accident Benefit and Permanent Disability Rider.

### Significance

- There are many term products in the market with varying terms and conditions.
- But, Customers who cannot devote adequate time and energy to make informed choices find it difficult to select the right product. Therefore, It was felt necessary to introduce a standard, individual life insurance product with simple features and standard terms and conditions.
- Mandatory pure life insurance will also help in inclusion and insurance penetration in the country.

## **Topic 23: OUTSIDERS CAN BUY LAND IN J&K**

*Importance for Prelims: Polity*



The Union home ministry notified rules allowing outsiders to buy non-agricultural land in J&K more than a year after the region's special status under Articles 370 and 35A was scrapped, and it was split into two Union territories.

### **Background :**

- People from outside the state were barred from buying or owning immovable property there, settle permanently, or avail themselves of state-sponsored scholarship schemes before the nullification of Article 35A, which gave special rights to the Jammu & Kashmir's permanent residents.

### **Present Change :**

- Central Government has amended Jammu and Kashmir Development Act

by omitting the phrase ‘ Permanent resident of the state ‘ , paving the way for everyone to buy land. This act deals with the disposal of land in J&K The notification also substitutes the “whole of the State” with the “whole of the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir”. It also notifies to omit “being permanent resident of the State”, paving the way for everyone to buy land.

- Lieutenant Governor has said that agricultural land has been reserved for farmers.

## **Topic 24: UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES PREVENTION ACT**

### ***Importance for Prelims: Legislation***

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) designated 18 more individuals(all Pakistan based) as “terrorists” under the amended anti-terror law(UAPA) that was passed by Parliament last year.

- UAPA was passed in 1967. It aims at effective prevention of unlawful activities associations in India.
- Unlawful activity refers to any action taken by an individual or association intended to disrupt the territorial integrity and sovereignty of India.
- The Act assigns absolute power to the central government, by way of which if the Centre deems an activity as unlawful then it may, by way of an Official Gazette, declare it so.
- It has death penalty and life imprisonment as highest punishments.
- Under UAPA, both Indian and foreign nationals can be charged. It will be applicable to the offenders in the same manner, even if crime is committed on a foreign land, outside India.
- Under the UAPA, the investigating agency can file a charge sheet in maximum 180 days after the arrests and the duration can be extended further after intimating the court.
- The 2004 amendment, added “terrorist act” to the list of offences to ban organisations for terrorist activities, under which 34 outfits were banned. Till 2004, “unlawful” activities referred to actions related to secession and cession of territory.
- In August, Parliament cleared the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019 **to designate individuals as terrorists on certain grounds** provided in the Act.



- The Act empowers the Director General of National Investigation Agency (NIA) to grant approval of seizure or attachment of property when the case is investigated by the said agency.
- The Act empowers the officers of the NIA, of the rank of Inspector or above, to investigate cases of terrorism in addition to those conducted by the DSP or ACP or above rank officer in the state.

## Topic 25: WATER ON THE MOON

*Importance for Prelims: Geography*



NASA's SOFIA Discovers water on sunlit surface of moon.

- There may be far more water on the Moon than previously thought, according to two studies published by NASA raising the tantalising prospect that astronauts on future space missions could find refreshment and maybe even fuel on the lunar surface.
- Previous research including Chandrayaan-1 has found indications of

water by scanning the surface but these were unable to distinguish between water (H<sub>2</sub>O) and hydroxyl, a molecule made up of one hydrogen atom and one oxygen atom.

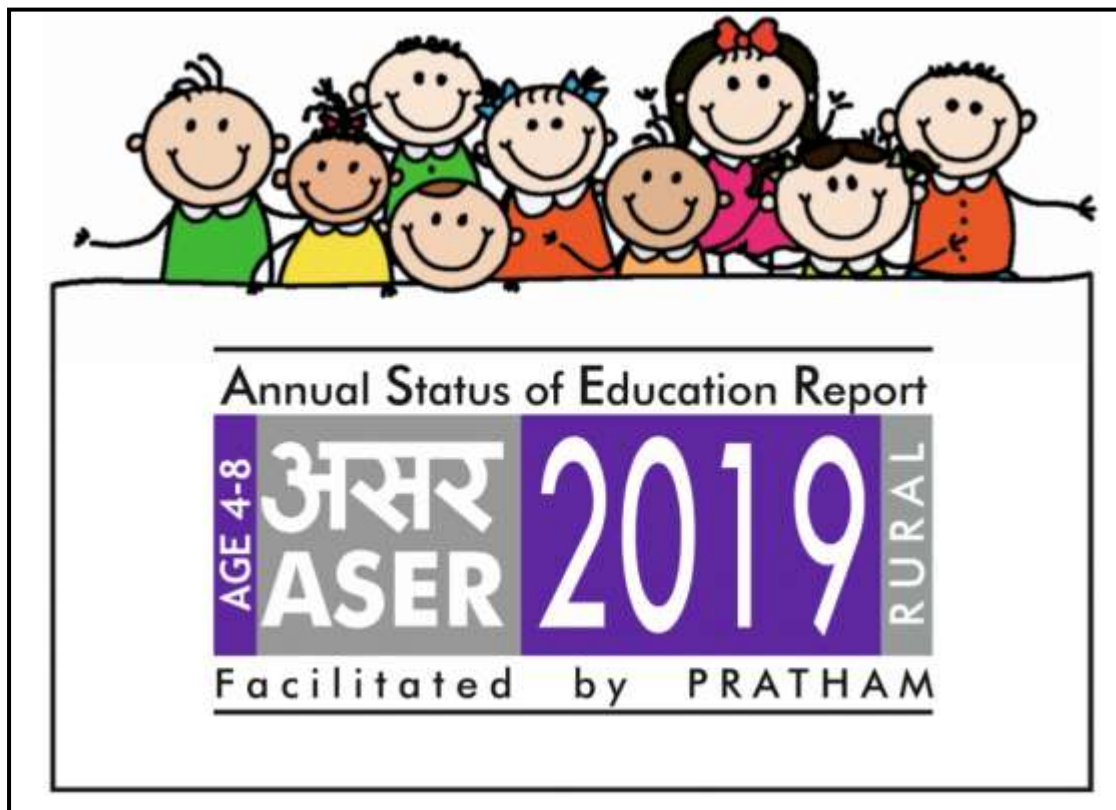
- But a new study provides further chemical proof that the Moon holds molecular water, even in sunlit areas.
- Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA) Airborne Telescope, scanned the lunar surface at a more precise wavelength than had been used before — six microns instead of three.
- Another study looks at areas of the Moon's polar regions, where water ice is believed to be trapped in lunar craters that never see sunlight.

### **Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy**

- Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA) is a Boeing 747SP jetliner modified to carry a 100-inch diameter telescope. It is a joint project of NASA and the German Aerospace Centre.
- It is flown at approx 45,000 feet, where its observations are not impacted by interference from Earth's atmosphere.
- SOFIA returns to Earth after every flight, allowing scientists to regularly update the instrument with the latest technology.

## Topic 26: ASER

*Importance for Prelims: Education*



Annual State of Education Report (ASER) survey wave 1 was conducted recently .

- This is an annual survey that aims to provide reliable estimates of children's enrolment and basic learning levels for each district and state in India.
- ASER has been conducted every year since 2005 in all rural districts of India.
- It is **the largest citizen-led survey** in India.
- It is also the only annual source of information on children's learning outcomes available in India today.
- Unlike most other large-scale learning assessments, ASER is **a household based rather than school-based survey**.

- This design enables all children to be included – those who have never been to school or have dropped out, as well as those who are in government schools, private schools, religious schools or anywhere else.
- The ASER 2020 Wave 1 survey focuses on the following key questions regarding provision of, access to, engagement with, and challenges concerning remote learning during school closures

**Major Findings :**

- About 20% of rural children have no textbooks at home.
- About one in three rural children had done no learning activity at all.
- About two in three had no learning materials or activity given by their school that week.
- Only one in ten had access to live online classes. It's not always about technology.



## **Topic 27: EOS-01**

### ***Importance for Prelims: Space Technology***

India would launch its latest earth observation satellite EOS-01 and nine international customer spacecraft onboard its PSLV-C49 rocket from the spaceport of Sriharikota.

- This is the first launch by the Indian Space Research Organisation since the COVID-19- induced lockdown came into force in March.
- EOS-01 is intended for applications in agriculture, forestry and disaster management support.
- The customer satellites are being launched under commercial agreement with New Space India Limited (NSIL), Department of Space.

### **Earth Observation Satellites**

- These satellites are used for observing the earth's surface and as a result they are often termed geographical satellites. India's IRS and RESOURCESAT are part of this.
- The data is used for several applications covering agriculture, water resources, urban development, mineral prospecting, environment, forestry, drought and flood forecasting, ocean resources and disaster management.
- Using these satellites it is possible to see many features that are not obvious from the earth's surface, or even at the altitudes at which aircraft fly.
- Using these earth observation satellites many geographical features have become obvious and they have even been used in mineral search and exploitation.

## **Topic 28: GIFT CITY**

### ***Importance for Prelims: Economy***

The United Kingdom has entered into a strategic partnership to develop India's fledgling international financial services centre GIFT City.

- GIFT (Gujarat International Finance Tec-City), located in Gandhinagar is India's first International Financial Services Centre.

### **International Financial Service Centre (IFSC)**

- An IFSC enables bringing back the financial services and transactions that are currently carried out in offshore financial centres by Indian corporate entities and overseas branches/subsidiaries of Financial Institutions (such as banks, insurance companies, etc.) to India.
- It offers a business and regulatory environment that is comparable to other leading international financial centres in the world like London and Singapore.
- IFSCs are intended to provide Indian corporates with easier access to global financial markets, and to complement and promote further development of financial markets in India.

### **Functions:**

- The authority will regulate financial products such as securities, deposits or contracts of insurance, financial services, and financial institutions which have been previously approved by any appropriate regulator such as Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) etc., in an IFSC.
- It will also regulate any other financial products, financial services, or financial institutions in an IFSC, which may be notified by the central government.
- It may also recommend to the central government any other financial

products, financial services, or financial institutions, which may be permitted in an IFSC.

**Members:**

- The International Financial Services Centres Authority will consist of nine members, appointed by the central government.
- They will include chairperson of the authority, a member each from the RBI, SEBI, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), and the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA); and two members from the Ministry of Finance. In addition, two other members will be appointed on the recommendation of a Selection Committee.
- All members of the IFSC Authority will have a term of three years, subject to reappointment.

**Possible Benefits:**

- The banking, capital markets and insurance sectors in IFSC which are regulated by multiple regulators – the RBI, SEBI, and IRDAI will be unified under the IFSC authority.
- The single window regulatory institution would accelerate the development of India's first IFSC at GIFT City, Gandhinagar.
- Both national and international institutions dealing with international financial services would utilise the IFSC platform for inbound and outbound investments with improved ease of doing business, thereby making GIFT IFSC a global financial hub.

## **Topic 29: VACCINE HESITANCY**

### ***Importance for Prelims: Science & tech***

The trend of vaccine hesitancy has increased in many countries between 2015 and 2019, showed a study published in journal The Lancet.

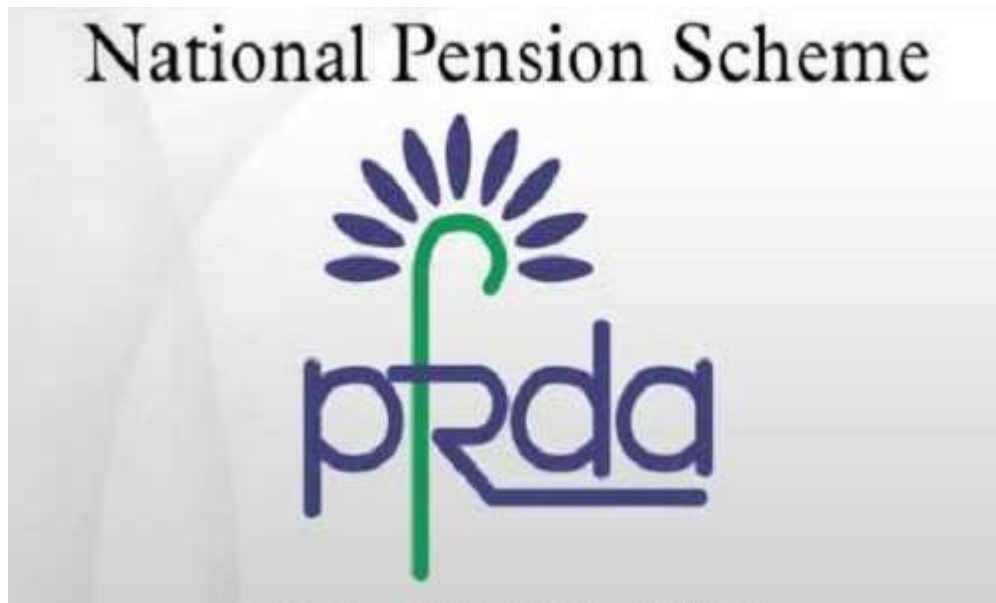
- WHO defines Vaccine hesitancy as a delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccines despite the availability of vaccination services. Vaccine hesitancy has been reported in more than 90% of countries in the world.

### **Reasons for Vaccine Hesitancy**

- The main issue with Vaccine hesitancy is misinformation.
- Religious propaganda that the vaccine may contain microbes, chemicals and animal-derived products which is forbidden by religious laws.
- Social media is used in stirring fear in people by falsely blaming vaccines for unrelated diseases is the bedrock of the Vaccine hesitancy all across the globe.
- For example, recently some sections in India are refraining from the polio vaccine.
- This is due to the misconception that the polio vaccine caused illness, infertility and was ineffective.
- Vaccine-derived diseases: Oral Polio Vaccines (OPV) contains weakened but live poliovirus. This virus from the vaccine is excreted by immunized children which can move from one person to another.
- This allows the virus to stick around and mutate to a more virulent form, raising the threat of vaccine-derived poliovirus (VDPV).
- Inconvenience in accessing vaccines is also the leading cause of Vaccine hesitancy.

## Topic 30: NATIONAL PENSION SCHEME

*Importance for Prelims: Economy*



National Pension Scheme (NPS) for traders, shopkeepers and self-employed has failed to make an impact, a senior Labour Ministry official has said.

- The National Pension System (NPS) is a pension scheme sponsored by the government that was started in 2004 for all government employees. The scheme was made open to all citizens in 2009.
- It is a **voluntary** and a **long-term retirement scheme**. It is regulated by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) and Central Government.

### **Eligibility:**

- Any employee from public, private and even the unorganized sectors can opt for this. Personnel from the armed forces are exempted. The scheme is open to all across industries and locations.
- The other eligibility criteria for opening an NPS account:
  - ✓ Must be an Indian citizen.
  - ✓ Must be between the ages of 18 and 65.



- ✓ Must be KYC compliant.
- ✓ Must not have a pre-existing NPS account.

**Benefits:**

- NPS offers returns higher than traditional instruments like the PPF (Public Provident Fund).
- It offers many investment options to subscribers who also have a say in where their funds are invested.
- The NPS reduces the retirement liabilities of the government.
- If the subscriber has been investing for at least three years, he/she can withdraw up to 25% for certain purposes before retirement (age 60). This withdrawal can be done for up to 3 times with a gap of at least 5 years between each withdrawal.
- The entire amount cannot be withdrawn by the account-holder on retirement.
- 60% can be withdrawn which has now been made tax-free. The rest 40% has to be kept aside so that the subscriber can receive a regular pension from an insurance firm.

## **Topic 31: NEW WAGE CODE**

### ***Importance for Prelims: Legislation***

New wage code bars bonus for those facing sex abuse charges.

- The Code on Wages lays down norms for annual bonus dues that accrue to employees, replacing the Payment of Bonus Act, 1965. The new Code, expected to become operational once the government notifies the rules, includes ‘conviction for sexual harassment’ as a ground for denying bonus payouts to employees.
- As per the extant law, bonus dues are barred only in case of employees dismissed for fraud, violent conduct and theft or sabotage.

### **Code on Wages Act**

- The new wage code removes the multiplicity of wage definitions, which can significantly reduce litigation as well as compliance cost for employers.
- The new Act links minimum wage across the country to the skills of the employee and the place of employment.
- It seeks to universalizes the provisions of minimum wages and timely payment of wages to all employees irrespective of the sector and wage ceiling.
- It seeks to ensure “**Right to Sustenance**” for every worker and intends to increase the legislative protection of minimum wage.
- **A National Floor Level Minimum Wage will be set by the Centre** and will be revised every five years, while states will fix minimum wages for their regions, which cannot be lower than the floor wage.
- It subsumes the following four labour laws:
  - The Payment of Wages Act, 1936
  - The Minimum Wages Act, 1948

- The Payment of Bonus Act, 1965
- The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.

### Types of Wages

- **Minimum Wage:** International Labour Organization defines it as “the minimum amount of remuneration that an employer is required to pay wage earners for the work performed during a given period, which cannot be reduced by collective agreement or an individual contract”.

The minimum wage includes the bare needs of life like food, shelter, and clothing.

- **Living Wage:** It is the wage needed to provide the minimum income necessary to pay for basic needs based on the cost of living in a specific community.

In addition to bare needs, a ‘living wage’ includes education, health, insurance, etc.

- **Fair Wage:** A ‘fair wage’ is a mean between ‘living wage’ and ‘minimum wage’.
- **Starvation Wage:** It refers to the wages which are insufficient to provide the ordinary necessities of life.

## **Topic 32: PUBLIC AFFAIRS INDEX**

### ***Importance for Prelims: Governance / Report***

#### **Overall PAI 2020 Index – Scores and Rankings**

Rank	Large States	PAI 2020 Index
1	Kerala	1.388
2	Tamil Nadu	0.912
3	Andhra Pradesh	0.531
4	Karnataka	0.468
5	Chhattisgarh	0.429
6	Telangana	0.388
7	Maharashtra	0.143
8	Punjab	0.091
9	Gujarat	0.054
10	Madhya Pradesh	-0.345
11	Rajasthan	-0.38
12	West Bengal	-0.489
13	Assam	-0.671
14	Haryana	-0.701
15	Jharkhand	-0.957
16	Bihar	-1.158
17	Odisha	-1.201
18	Uttar Pradesh	-1.461

In the recently released Public Affairs Index-2020, Kerala was adjudged the best governed State in the large States category, while Uttar Pradesh ended at the bottom.

- The index is released by the Public Affairs Centre, a not-for-profit organization, headed by former Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) chairman K. Kasturirangan.
- The index ranks States based on governance performance giving a composite index in the context of sustainable development.

#### **Performance of different States:**

##### **Large State category**

- At the top: Four southern States – Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh

and Karnataka stood in the first four ranks in terms of governance.

- At the bottom: Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Bihar were at the bottom of the ranking.

### **Small State category**

- At the top: Goa ranked first, followed by Meghalaya and Himachal Pradesh.
- The worst performers with negative points: Manipur, Delhi and Uttarakhand.

### **Union Territories**

- Chandigarh emerged at the top in the category of Union Territories followed by Puducherry and Lakshadweep.
- Dadar and Nagar Haveli, Andaman, Jammu and Kashmir and Nicobar were the worst performers.



## Topic 33: NUTRIE CEREALS

*Importance for Prelims: Health*



The poster is for the National Food Security Mission, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmer's Welfare, Govt of India. It features a background image of a golden wheat field. The title 'NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY MISSION' is in large, bold, green letters. Below it, a green banner reads 'New Initiatives of Nutri-Cereals from 2018-19 onwards:'. A list of five initiatives follows, each preceded by a hand icon: 'Breeder seed production of Nutri-Cereals.', 'Certified seed production.', 'Seed distribution of HYVs.', 'Seed minikits allocation free of cost to farmers.', and 'Publicity of nutri-cereals.'. At the bottom, there are four circular images showing different types of millets: green finger millet, brown sorghum, and two types of pearl millet. Below these images is a blue banner with logos and contact information: Kisan Suvidha APP, agriGol, AgriGol, agricoop.gov.in, and 1800-180-1551.

As the government sets to achieve its agenda of a malnutrition-free India and doubling of farmers' incomes, the promotion of the production and consumption of nutri-cereals seems to be a policy shift in the right direction.

### **Millets**

- Millet is common term to categorize small-seeded grasses that are often termed nutri-cereals or dryland-cereals.
- It mainly includes sorghum, ragi, pearl millet, small millet, proso millet, foxtail millet, barnyard millet, kodo millet etc.
- The three major millet crops currently growing in India are jowar

(sorghum), bajra (pearl millet) and ragi (finger millet).

- Major producers include Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Haryana.

### **Benefits**

- They are adapted to harsh environment of semi-arid tropics.
- They require low or no purchased inputs, thus they are backbone for dry land agriculture.
- Millets are nutritionally superior to wheat and rice owing to their higher levels of protein with more balanced amino acid profile, crude fibre and minerals such as Iron, Zinc, and Phosphorous
- Millets are important staple cereal crop for millions of small holder dry land farmers.
- They offer nutrition, resilience, income and livelihood for farmers even in difficult times.

### **Additional Information:**

- Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has endorsed India's call for declaring 2023 as the "International Year of Millets".