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**Articles of the day - THE HINDU (14-12-2019)**

**I**

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**II**

**Prelims & Mains practice questions**

**GS 1 : Heritage and culture ,Geography of the World and Society**

**1. Unexplored caves house Adivasi temples**

The rocky hills of the desolate inter-State border that Kerameri mandal in Kumram Bheem (KB) Asifabad district shares with Jivti taluk in Chandrapur district of Maharashtra are home to a few natural caves. They look quite mysterious as little is known about the centuries-old hollow structures.

The natural wonders known to the aboriginal people – like the Jangubai Cave Temple and the Kaplai Caves – are their pilgrim centres which have remained hidden from the outside world. Reason? Difficulty in accessing the places, and more importantly, because the Adivasis do not like 'interference' of outsiders in the name of exploration.

## **Adivasis' ancient antres**

Among the caves of faith is the Jangubai Cave Temple, a popular pilgrim centre for the Raj Gond, Pardhan and Kolam tribes of former composite Adilabad district. It is located in Kota-Parandoli gram panchayat, and is the smaller one running to a length of just about 75 ft. It is the Kaplai Caves which are said to be much longer, even running into a few kilometres, according to Kolam tribe elders.

### **Under cavern stream**

A stream runs under the rocky roof inside the cave which is where the Adivasis take the holy dip. The water now found is at a distance of about 70 metres from the steeply inclined mouth. Kolam pilgrims from Jaduguda and Gundala in Narnoor mandal of Adilabad district recently visited the place for giving the wooden 'ayyak' (traditional totem) or Bheem god the annual ritualistic bath in the cave stream.

The pilgrims perform puja, and visit the temple of Lord Shiva located about 300 metres from Kaplai in another green valley. This temple is on a large piece of rock at a higher place and can be accessed through a staircase. However, it got damaged due to the heavy monsoon rains.

### **Jangubai Cave Temple and Kaplai Caves**

The Jangubai Cave Temple and the Kaplai Caves are considered as a pilgrimage site by aboriginal tribes like Gond, Pradhan and Kolam.

- These caves are located at Maharashtra -Telangana border.

## **Kolam Tribe**

- 
- The Kolam tribe (or in their own language, Kolavar) is a scheduled tribe of Maharashtra. They also live in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh.
- They have a language of their own (Kolami) which belongs, like Gondi, to the intermediate group of Dravidian languages.
- They are monogamous and follow Hinduism.
- Recently in 2018, the Government has identified Katkaria (Kathodia), Kolam and Maria Gond as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).
  - The Ministry of Tribal Affairs is administering the scheme "Development of PVTGs" for the overall development of PVTGs. This scheme is flexible and enables the States to focus on areas that they consider is relevant to PVTGs and their socio-cultural environment.

## Gond Tribe

- The Gonds tribe is spread over Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Bihar, and West Bengal.
- Their main concentration is in forest and hilly areas between the Vidhyans and Satpura.

## GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

### 2.Targets missed, Accessible India campaign's deadline extended



### Context:

The deadline for government's Accessible India campaign has been extended due to slow progress.

### Background:

- Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment had launched Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan) as a nation-wide campaign for achieving universal accessibility for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs).
- Accessible India Campaign or Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan initiative is in line with Article 9 of the (UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) to which India is a signatory since 2007.
- The scheme also comes under Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 under section 44, 45, 46 for equal Opportunities and protection of rights which provides non-discrimination in Transport to Persons with Disabilities.
- According to the 2011 Census of India, 2.21 percent of the population or approximately 26.8 million Indians suffer from a disability.
- The scheme envisages incremental improvements with initial targets being conservative. It envisages further development with bigger targets in the following

years. In this way, the overall environment becomes more inclusive and provides equal opportunities to the PwD.

- Accessibility is about giving equal access to everyone. Without being able to access the facilities and services found in the communities, persons with disabilities will never be fully included. Accessible India Campaign will seek the cooperation of all Central Government Departments/Ministries and State Governments to seek “accessible police stations”, “accessible hospitals”, “accessible tourism”, and “accessible digital India” etc.
- Organizations, both public and private are encouraged to use their **CSR funds** for building accessible infrastructure. They may adopt projects of their interest e.g. making a hospital accessible or creating an accessible toilet in a school.
- Accessible India Campaign has the following three important components:

### **Part A: Built Environment Accessibility**

#### **Objective 1: Enhancing the proportion of accessible government buildings**

- An accessible government building is one, where persons with disabilities have no barrier in entering it and using all the facilities therein. This covers the built environment – services, steps and ramps, corridors, entry gates, emergency exits, parking – as well as indoor and outdoor facilities including lighting, signage, alarm systems, and toilets.
- It involves specific targets for cities with respect to accessibility audits and conversion into fully accessible buildings.

### **Part B: Transportation System Accessibility**

#### **Objective 2: Enhancing the proportion of accessible airports**

- An airport is accessible if a person with a disability has no barrier in entering it, using all the facilities, and boarding and disembarking from airplanes. This covers the built environment – surfaces, steps and ramps, corridors, entryways, emergency exits, parking – as well as indoor and outdoor facilities including lighting, signage, alarm systems and toilets.
- Specific targets involve conducting an accessibility audit of all the international airports and converting them into fully accessible international airports (July 2016). Conducting an accessibility audit of all the domestic airports and converting them into fully accessible airports (March 2018).

#### **Objective 3: Enhancing the proportion of accessible railway stations**

- Targets involve ensuring that A1, A & B categories of railway stations in the country are converted into fully accessible railway stations (July 2016) and ensuring that 50% of railway stations in the country are converted into fully accessible railway stations (March 2018).

#### **Objective 4: Enhancing the proportion of accessible Public Transport**

- The target involves ensuring that 25% of Government-owned public transport carriers in the country are converted into fully accessible carriers (March 2018).

### **Part C: Information and Communication Eco-System Accessibility**

- Access to information creates opportunities for everyone in society. People use information in many forms to make decisions about their daily lives. This can range from actions such as being able to read price tags, to physically enter a hall, to participate in an event, to read a pamphlet with healthcare information, to understand a train timetable, or to view webpages. No longer should societal barriers of infrastructure, and inaccessible formats stand in the way of obtaining and utilizing information in daily life.

Objective 5: Enhancing the proportion of accessible and usable public documents and websites that meet internationally recognized accessibility standards.

- Public documents refer to all documents issued by the national government as well as all sub-national documents. They include all publications such as laws, regulations, reports, forms, and informational brochures.
- Targets involve conducting accessibility audit of 50% of all government (both Central and State Governments) websites and converting them into fully accessible websites (March 2017) and ensuring that at least 50% of all public documents issued by the Central Government and the State Governments meet accessibility standards (March 2018).

Objective 6: Enhancing the pool of sign language interpreters

- The target involves training and developing 200 additional sign language interpreters (March 2018).

Objective 7: Enhancing the proportion of daily captioning and sign-language interpretation of public television news programs.

- The target involves developing and adoption of national standards on captioning and sign-language interpretation in consultation with National media authorities (July 2016) and ensuring that 25% of all public television programs aired by government channels meet these standards (March 2018).

### **Concerns:**

- The original deadlines under the Accessible India campaign were July 2016 for conducting an accessibility audit of 25-50 of the most important government buildings in 50 cities and making them completely accessible and March 2018.

- Under the **Rights of PwD Act, 2016**, all existing and new public buildings have to follow the accessibility standards notified on June 15, 2017. The existing buildings were given five years to comply. The deadlines have not been complied with.
- **Due to slow progress, revised deadlines have been extended to March 2020.**

### GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology, Environment

#### **3. 'Need community driven, decentralised solutions to water crisis'**

##### **Context:**

Ramon Magsaysay awardee Rajendra Singh's talk on "Citizen-centric Advocacy and Water Literacy in India"

##### **Details:**

##### The water crisis in India:

- Sharing data on water crisis in India, Dr. Singh, also the winner of the Stockholm Water Prize, said that in 2019, **190 districts** were flooded while 365 districts across 17 states faced drought. He said that **72% of India faced high to extremely high water stress.**
- **Water in 2.65 lakh villages across the country was not fit for drinking.**

##### Solutions propounded:

##### Awareness generation:

- There is an urgent need for a "**water literacy**" **movement in India** and especially in urban areas to create awareness of the problem.
- There is the need for a **national water-policy** which must be people-centric.

##### Decentralized approach:

- Rajendra Singh, better known as 'The Waterman of India', believes that **community-driven, and decentralized water management solutions** are the answers to the country's water crisis. And that, though the water crisis is a global problem, the solution to it has to be local.

##### Water harvesting:

- Singh has asserted that the **solution to the water crisis does not lie in the linking of the rivers, but in water harvesting.**
- In metro cities such as Delhi, Gurugram, Faridabad, and Meerut, where the problem of depleting groundwater was even more severe, rainwater should be harvested and not allowed to be mixed with sewage.

Focus on Agricultural water productivity:

- There is a need for **congruity between the crop and the rain patterns** since around **80% of the water is used in agriculture.**

Concept of River rights:

He has asserted that it is high time to talk about the **“river rights” and not just human rights.** India has had an age-old tradition of respect for water and can offer solutions to the world.

Works carried out:

- Referring to the community-based efforts in water harvesting in Rajasthan for more than four decades, Dr. Singh said that around 12,000 waterbodies were built leading to recharge of 2.5 lakh tube wells and reverse migration of around 17 lakh people.

#### 4. Twin troubles

##### Context

Economic data released by the government suggest that India may be stepping even closer to stagflation.

##### Indices

- **IIP** - The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) contracted 3.8% in October against a rate of 8.4% witnessed during the same month last year.
- **Inflation** - Retail inflation jumped to a 40-month high of 5.5% in November. This is fuelled by a sharp jump in food prices. It might drop as fresh food supplies hit the market.
- **Stagflation** - Low growth combined with high price inflation is sure to cause headaches for policymakers.
- **Growth** - Economic growth has declined for six consecutive quarters now. This is one of the longest downturns in recent history.

##### Problem

- **RBI's limitation** - Due to inflation raising its ugly head, the RBI is unlikely to cut rates aggressively in the next few months at least.
- **More on Fiscal policy** - it is entirely up to the government now to find ways to boost growth. The government cannot delay reforms.



## Government's inaction

- **Blaming Monetary policy** – The government maintained that the country's growth rate was held back by the tight monetary policy stance adopted by the RBI.
- **Repo rate cut** – as the benchmark interest rate was cut five times so far this year, the government can no longer shift the blame on to the RBI.
- **Cyclical slowdown** – the government is now blaming that the slowdown in growth is merely a cyclical one that will end sooner than later.
- **Lack of reforms** – the Centre has failed in bringing about major structural reforms to the economy. But for the recent cut in corporate tax rates, the government has not come up with any other significant reform in response to the slowdown.

## The root cause of the slowdown

- Low growth along with high inflation raises questions about the root cause of the slowdown.
- Demand shortfall? It has been attributed to a drastic fall in consumer demand.
- Rate cuts didn't help – Aggressive rate cuts by the RBI cannot stop the continuous slide in growth rate.
- Supply-side is also in deep trouble.

## Way ahead

- Economic reforms can lift the potential growth rate of the economy.
- Further rate cuts by the RBI will only add to the government's troubles by stoking inflation in the wider economy.

## 5. No talks yet in Fin Min on GST hike: FM

### Context:

Chief Economic Advisor's (CEA) update on the progress made after governments reform measures to revive the economy.

### Details:

### Moves to revive economy:

### Liberalization:

- On steps to boost investment, the **government's** continuous **liberalization reforms** had resulted in **record foreign direct investments of \$35 billion** in the first half of 2019-20, up from \$31 billion in the first half of the previous year. It marks an **impressive 13% growth**.

Increasing Government expenditure:

- The government has already undertaken 66% of the **budgeted capital expenditure** of Rs.3.38 lakh crore for the current fiscal year.

Other observations:

Repo-rate linked loans:

- Following the Reserve Bank of India's guidelines mandating banks to link their lending rates to external benchmarks, all public sector banks had introduced repo rate-linked loan products. As of November 27, 8.18 lakh repo-linked loans, amounting to Rs.72,201 crores, had been sanctioned.

Composition of employment:

- The composition of employment in the country was gradually changing. While casual workers made up 30% of the workforce in 2011-12, they made up 25% in 2017-18. This shift has been towards salaried employment, which rose to 23% in 2017-18 from 17% in 2011-12.
- In the same period, the proportion of workers in agriculture had decreased to 44% from 49%. The proportion in services had increased to 31% from 27%, and in manufacturing to 25% from 24%.

**6. Moody's cuts India GDP forecast to 5.6% for 2019**

**Context:**

Moody's Investors Service has lowered its 2019 GDP growth forecast for India to 5.6%.

**Details:**

- Moody's Investors Service has lowered its 2019 GDP growth forecast for India to 5.6% which is lower than the 7.4% growth in 2018.
- The agency noted that India's economic growth has decelerated since mid-2018, with real GDP growth slipping from nearly 8% to 5% in the second quarter (April-June) of 2019 and further slipping to 4.5% in July-September quarter.
- Moody's Investors Service expects economic growth to pick up in 2020 and 2021 to 6.6% and 6.7%, respectively, but sees the pace of growth remaining lower than in the past.

**Reasons for the slowdown:**

- Consumption demand has decreased notably, with slow employment growth weighing on consumption. This has led to a weak demand side in the economy.

**Concerns:**

- The lower than expected growth rate of India is a concern.
- Moody's has stated that the fiscal measures undertaken by the government, such as corporate tax rate cuts, bank recapitalization, infrastructure spending plans, support for the auto sector and others, do not directly address widespread weakness in consumption demand, which has been the chief driver of the economy.

**Prelims practice question**

**Q1. Which of the following statements are correct?**

1. Indian states of Assam and Mizoram are the only two states with which Tripura shares a border.
2. Tripura was part of an independent princely state under the protectorate of the British Empire which joined the newly independent India in 1949.

Which of the given statement/s is/are incorrect?

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

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

Tripura is a state in north eastern India. It is bordered by Bangladesh to the north, south, and west, and the Indian states of Assam and Mizoram to the east.

Q2. **Kalapani Territorial Dispute**, recently seen in news, is between:

- (a) India and Pakistan
- (b) India and Bangladesh
- (c) India and Nepal
- (d) India and Myanmar

Answer : c

**Kalapani territory** is a disputed territory between **India and Nepal**. While Nepal claims Kalapani to be a part of its Darchula district, the region is administered in India as a part of Pithoragarh district in Uttarakhand.

Kalapani is located at an altitude of 3600m on the Kailash Manasarovar route. It borders Uttarakhand in India and Sudurpashchim Pradesh in Nepal.

Kalapani is controlled by India's Indo-Tibetan Border Police since the 1962 border war with China. Nepal claims that the river to the west of Kalapani is main Kali, hence it belongs to Nepal. But India claims that ridgeline to the east of Kalapani is the border, hence the Kalapani area belongs to India.

**History of the dispute:** In 1816, The East India Company and Nepal signed the Treaty of Sagauli to mark out Nepal's western border. It defined river Mahakali as the western border. River Mahakali has several tributaries which merge at Kalapani. India claims that the river begins at Kalapani where all the tributaries merge whereas Nepal claims that it begins from Lipulekh pass, the origin of most of its tributaries. It has therefore laid claim to all the areas east of the Lipu Gad.

Q3. Which of the following statements are wrong?

1. **Article 371** appear in Part XXI of the Constitution, titled 'Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions'.
2. Article 371 was part of the Constitution at the time of its commencement on January 26.

Choose the correct option:

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

Answer: d

**Explanation:**

- Articles 370 and 371 were part of the Constitution at the time of its commencement on January 26, 1950; Articles 371A through 371J were incorporated subsequently.
- Articles 371(A-J) were incorporated through amendments under Article 368, which lays down the power of the Parliament to amend the Constitution and procedure therefor.
- Article 371 deals with the case of Maharashtra and Gujarat.
- Article 371 of the Constitution, accords “**special provisions**” for 11 states, including six states of the Northeast.
- Articles 369 through 392 (including some that have been removed) appear in Part XXI of the Constitution, titled ‘Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions’. Article 370 deals with ‘Temporary Provisions with respect to the State of Jammu and Kashmir’; Articles 371, 371A, 371B, 371C, 371D, 371E, 371F, 371G, 371H, and 371J define special provisions with regard to another state (or states).

**Q4. World Press Freedom Index is published by :**

- (a) Reporters Without Borders
- (b) World Press Institute
- (c) Transparency International
- (d) Economic Intelligence Unit

Answer : a

**World Press Freedom Index is published by Reporters Without Borders.**

The Index evaluates the state of journalism in 180 countries and territories every year. Norway is ranked first in the 2019 Index, while India’s rank fell by two places to 140 from 138.

Reporters Without Borders is an international non-governmental organization that aims at defending journalists and media assistants imprisoned or persecuted for doing their job and exposes the mistreatment and torture of them in many countries.

It fights against censorship and laws that undermine press freedom, gives financial aid to journalists or media outlets in difficulty, as well to the families of imprisoned journalists, and works to improve the safety of journalists, especially those reporting in war zones.

Recently published World Press Freedom Index 2019 (RSF) shows how hatred for journalists has degenerated into violence, contributing to an increase in fear. The number of countries regarded as safe, where journalists can work in complete security, continues to decline, while authoritarian regimes continue to tighten their grip on the media

**Q5. Which of the following statements are correct?**

1. The **accessible India Campaign** was launched by The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.
2. Accessible India Campaign envisages improvements in built Environment Accessibility, Transportation System Accessibility and Information and Communication Eco-System Accessibility.

Choose the correct option:

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

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has launched Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan) as a nation-wide Campaign for achieving universal accessibility for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs).

**Q.6 Recently inducted 'Varunastra' into the Indian Navy, is a/an:**

- (a) nuclear powered submarine
- (b) aircraft carrier
- (c) anti-submarine torpedo
- (d) navigation satellite system.

Answer : c

The Varunastra is an Indian advanced heavyweight anti-submarine torpedo, developed by Naval Science and Technological Laboratory of the DRDO for the Indian Navy. It is also capable of targeting quiet and stealthy submarines both in deep and littoral waters even in an intense countermeasure atmosphere.

India has joined the elite bloc of nations like Russia, Germany, Italy, and France with such capacity. The development comes with India signing a \$170 million contract for the

supply of over 70 torpedoes for arming both warships and submarines. The supply of torpedoes will be executed in the next 42 months.

The ship-launched electrically-propelled underwater weapon is equipped with the most advanced automatic and remote-controlled guidance systems, according to Bharat Dynamics Ltd (BDL) – the manufacturer of the weapon system.

### Mains practice Questions

**Q. 1 Explaining the importance of an independent judiciary, highlight the relevant Constitutional provisions that safeguard and ensure the independent and impartial functioning of the Supreme Court.**

#### Approach:

- Briefly discuss the idea of independent judiciary.
- Explain the importance of an independent judiciary.
- Highlight the Constitutional provisions that safeguard and ensure the independent and impartial functioning of the Supreme Court.

**Q. 2 Why did the Constituent Assembly replace the original plan to have elected governors in favour of appointment by the President? Also, bring out the arguments that are raised against the current form of appointment of Governors.**

#### Approach:

- Discuss why the Constituent Assembly replace the original plan to have elected Governors in favour of appointment by the President.
- State the arguments raised against the current form of appointment of Governors.
- Mention the recommendations of various Committees in this regard.
- Conclude on the basis of the above points

