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THE HINDU

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

1. Chola inscriptions on qualifications for civic officials

In the Kancheepuram district of Tamil Nadu, some Chola-era inscriptions on Kanthaleeswarar Temple bear testimony to the qualifications required for members of the village administrative council.

Inscription details: Kudavolai System

- The Kudavolai system was very vital and unique feature of administration of villages of Cholas.
- In the system one representative is elected from each ward and every village had 30 wards.
- The village administrative committee was called as variyam.
- The election was unique as names of contestants were written on palm leaf and put in a pot.

Taxation details

- The rulers were considerate while taxing agricultural produce.
- For areca nuts, only 50% tax would be collected for the first 10 years after cultivation. Farmers would pay full tax only after the trees started yielding fruits.
- Similarly, 50% tax was imposed on banana crops until the yield.

GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

2. What are the concerns of digital health mission?

The Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM), was recently launched by the PM.

About Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission

- The pilot project of the National Digital Health Mission was announced by PM Modi during his Independence Day speech from the Red Fort on August 15, 2020.
- The mission will enable access and exchange of longitudinal health records of citizens with their consent.
- This will ensure ease of doing business for doctors and hospitals and healthcare service providers.

The key components of the project include

- **Health ID** for every citizen that will also work as their health account, to which personal health records can be linked and viewed with the help of a mobile application,
- **Healthcare Professionals Registry (HPR)**
- **Healthcare Facilities Registries (HFR)** that will act as a repository of all healthcare providers across both modern and traditional systems of medicine

How will it work?

- In order to be a part of the ABDM, citizens will have to create a unique health ID – a randomly generated 14-digit identification number.
- The ID will give the user unique identification, authentication and will be a repository of all health records of a person.
- The ID can also be made by self-registration on the portal, downloading the ABMD Health Records app on one's mobile or at a participating health facility.
- The beneficiary will also set up a Personal Health Records (PHR) address for the issue of consent, and for future sharing of health records.

Major privacy issues involved

- **Informed Consent:** The citizen's consent is vital for all access. A beneficiary's consent is vital to ensure that information is released.

- **Data leakages issue:** Personalised data collected at multiple levels are a “sitting gold mine” for insurance companies, international researchers, and pharma companies.
- **Digital divide:** Other experts add that lack of access to technology, poverty, and lack of understanding of the language in a vast and diverse country like India are problems that need to be looked into.
- **Data Migration:** The data migration and inter-State transfer are still faced with multiple errors and shortcomings in addition to concerns of data security.

Other challenges

- **Existing digitalization is yet incomplete:** India has been unable to standardise the coverage and quality of the existing digital cards like One Nation One Ration card, PM-JAY card, Aadhaar card, etc., for accessibility of services and entitlements.
- **Lack of healthcare facilities:** The defence of data security by expressed informed consent doesn't work in a country that is plagued by the acute shortage of healthcare professionals to inform the client fully.
- **Lack of finance:** With the minuscule spending of 1.3% of the GDP on the healthcare sector, India will be unable to ensure the quality and uniform access to healthcare that it hoped to bring about.

3. Panel set up to implement Assam Accord

The Assam government on Saturday set up an eight-member sub-committee to examine and prepare a framework for the implementation of all clauses of the Assam Accord of 1985.

What is Assam Accord?

- The Assam Accord was a Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) signed the Government of India and the leaders of the Assam Movement.
- It the movement demanded the identification and deportation of all illegal foreigners – predominantly Bangladeshi immigrants.
- They feared that past and continuing large scale migration was overwhelming the native population, impacting their political rights, culture, language and land rights.
- The Assam Movement caused the estimated death of over 855 people.
- It ended with the signing of the Assam Accord in 1985.

What are the major clauses of Assam Accord?

- Clause 5: Foreigners Issue
- Clause 6: Constitutional, Legislative & Administrative safeguards
- Clause 7: Economic Development
- Clause 9 : Security of International Border
- Clause 10: Prevention of Encroachment of Government lands
- Clause 11: Restricting acquisition of immovable property by foreigners
- Clause 12: Registration of births and deaths

Which clauses are being discussed?

- A sub-committee has been tasked to examine and prepare a framework for implementation of all clauses of Assam Accord in general with special emphasis on Clause 6, Clause 7, Clause 9 and Clause 10.

4. How Election Commission decides on party symbols

Context:

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has frozen the 'Bungalow' election symbol of the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), so that **neither of the two factions of the party will be able to use it in the coming Assembly byelections** for the Kusheshwar Asthan and Tarapur seats in Bihar.

Background:

This is not something new. Over the last few years, two other prominent cases of parties splitting, followed by a tussle over the election symbol, have been seen with regard to the Samajwadi Party (Cycle) and the AIADMK (Two leaves) in 2017.

As per the guidelines, to get a symbol allotted:

1. A party/candidate has to provide a list of three symbols from the EC's free symbols list at the time of filing nomination papers.
2. Among them, one symbol is allotted to the party/candidate on a first-come-first-serve basis.

3. When a recognised political party splits, the Election Commission takes the decision on assigning the symbol.

Powers of Election Commission:

The **Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968** empowers the EC to recognise political parties and allot symbols.

- Under Paragraph 15 of the Order, it can decide disputes among rival groups or sections of a recognised political party staking claim to its name and symbol.
- The EC is also the only authority to decide issues on a dispute or a merger. The Supreme Court upheld its validity in **Sadiq Ali and another vs. ECI in 1971**.

How many types of symbols are there?

As per the **Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) (Amendment) Order, 2017**, party symbols are either:

1. **Reserved:** Eight national parties and 64 state parties across the country have “reserved” symbols.
2. **Free:** The Election Commission also has a pool of nearly 200 “free” symbols that are allotted to the thousands of unrecognised regional parties that pop up before elections.

What are the Election Commission’s powers in a dispute over the election symbol when a party splits?

On the question of a **split in a political party outside the legislature**, Para 15 of the Symbols Order, 1968, states: “When the Commission is satisfied that there are rival sections or groups of a recognised political party each of whom claims to be that party the Commission may decide that one such rival section or group or none of such rival sections or groups is that recognised political party and **the decision of the Commission shall be binding on all such rival sections or groups.**”

- **This applies to disputes in recognised national and state parties** (like the LJP, in this case). For splits in registered but unrecognised parties, the EC usually advises the warring factions to resolve their differences internally or to approach the court.

Please note that before 1968, the EC issued notifications and executive orders under the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961.

5. Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)

Context:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a newly designed **Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)** mobile application on October 2, 2021, Gandhi Jayanti.

- The app would **enable anyone to fund provision of tap water in rural parts of India.**

About the Jal Jeevan Mission:

JJM envisages supply of **55 litres of water per person per day to every rural household through Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) by 2024.**

It is under **the Ministry of Jal Shakti.**

- It was launched in 2019.

The mission ensures:

1. Functionality of existing water supply systems and water connections.
2. Water quality monitoring and testing as well as sustainable agriculture.
3. Conjunctive use of conserved water.
4. Drinking water source augmentation.
5. Drinking water supply system, grey water treatment and its reuse.

It also encompasses:

1. Prioritizing provision of FHTCs in quality affected areas, villages in drought prone and desert areas, Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) villages, etc.
2. Providing functional tap connection to Schools, Anganwadi centres, Gram Panchayat buildings, Health centres, wellness centres and community buildings.

3. Technological interventions for removal of contaminants where water quality is an issue.

Implementation:

- The Mission is based on a **community approach** to water and includes extensive Information, Education and Communication as a key component of the mission.
- JJM looks to create a **jan andolan for water**, thereby making it everyone's priority.
- The fund sharing pattern between the Centre and states is 90:10 for Himalayan and North-Eastern States, 50:50 for other states, and 100% for Union Territories.

6. United Nations Security Council

Context:

North Korea has warned the **UN Security Council** against criticising the isolated country's missile programme.

What's the issue?

- North Korea has warned the UNSC about the consequences it will bring in the future in case it tries to encroach upon the sovereignty of North Korea.
- It has accused the UN body of a "double-dealing standard" because it doesn't equally take issue with similar weapons tests by the U.S. and its allies.

Background:

After a six-month hiatus, North Korea resumed missile tests in September, launching newly developed missiles, including nuclear-capable weapons that place South Korea and Japan within their striking distances.

Present scenario:

Under multiple UN Security Council resolutions, North Korea is banned from engaging in any ballistic missile activities as the country aims to mount nuclear weapons on its ballistic missiles.

About UNSC:

- **The United Nations Charter** established six main organs of the United Nations, including the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).
- The Security Council has **the power to make decisions that member states are then obligated to implement under the Charter.**
- **Permanent and Non-Permanent Members:** The UNSC is composed of 15 members, 5 permanent and 10 non-permanent.
- Each year, **the General Assembly elects five non-permanent members for a two-year term.**

About Security Council Presidency:

1. The presidency of the Council is **held by each of the members in turn for one month**, following the English alphabetical order of the Member States names.
2. It **rotates among the 15 member-states** of the council monthly.
3. **The head of the country's delegation is known as the President of the United Nations Security Council.**
4. The president serves to coordinate actions of the council, decide policy disputes, and sometimes functions as a diplomat or intermediary between conflicting groups.

Proposed UNSC reforms:

Reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) encompasses five key issues: categories of membership, the question of the veto held by the five permanent members, regional representation, the size of an enlarged Council and its working methods, and the Security Council-General Assembly relationship.

Case for Permanent Membership of India in UNSC:

1. India is the founding member of the UN.
2. Most significantly, India has almost twice the number of peacekeepers deployed on the ground than by P5 countries.
3. India is also the largest democracy and second-most populous country.
4. India's acquired status of a Nuclear Weapons State (NWS) in May 1998 also makes India a natural claimant as a permanent member similar to the existing permanent members who are all Nuclear Weapon States.
5. India is the undisputed leader of the Third world countries, as reflected by its leadership role in Non-Aligned Movement and G-77 grouping.

GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology, Environment

7. IAO Hanle: A promising astronomical observatory

A new study shows that the Indian Astronomical Observatory (IAO) located in Hanle is one of the emerging sites for infrared and optical astronomy studies.

About IAO Hanle

- The IAO, located in Hanle at Mount Saraswati near Leh in Ladakh, has one of the world's highest located sites for optical, infrared and gamma-ray telescopes.
- It was established in 2001 and is operated by the Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bangalore.
- It is currently the ninth highest optical telescope in the world, situated at an elevation of 4,500 meters.

Major telescopes at Hanle include:

1. Himalayan Chandra Telescope (An optical-infrared telescope named after India-born Nobel laureate Subrahmanyam Chandrasekhar)
2. GROWTH-India Telescope (A robotic optical telescope)
3. High Altitude Gamma Ray Telescope

Distinct factors of IAO Hanle

- IAO Hanle offers a clear view of space among all observatories globally.
- This is due to its advantages of more clear nights, minimal light pollution, background aerosol concentration, extremely dry atmospheric condition and uninterrupted monsoon.

- Hanle site is as dry as Atacama Desert in Chile and much drier than Devasthal and has around 270 clear nights in a year and is also one of the emerging sites for infrared and submillimetre optical astronomy.
- This is because water vapor absorbs electromagnetic signals and reduces their strength.

THE INDIAN EXPRESS

GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1. Election Symbols after Party Split

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has frozen an election symbol of a political party in Bihar to which a cabinet minister belonged.

What are the Election Commission's powers in a dispute over the election symbol when a party splits?

- The question of a split in a political party outside the legislature is dealt by Para 15 of the Symbols Order, 1968.
- It states that the ECI may take into account all the available facts and circumstances and undertake a test of majority.
- The decision of the ECI shall be binding on all such rival sections or groups emerged after the split.
- This applies to disputes in recognised national and state parties.
- For splits in registered but unrecognised parties, the EC usually advises the warring factions to resolve their differences internally or to approach the court.

How did the EC deal with such matters before the Symbols Order came into effect?

- Before 1968, the EC issued notifications and executive orders under the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961.
- The most high-profile split of a party before 1968 was that of the CPI in 1964.
- A breakaway group approached the ECI in December 1964 urging it to recognise them as CPI(Marxist). They provided a list of MPs and MLAs of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and West Bengal who supported them.

- The ECI recognised the faction as CPI(M) after it found that the votes secured by the MPs and MLAs supporting the breakaway group added up to more than 4% in the 3 states.

What was the first case decided under Para 15 of the 1968 Order?

- It was the first split in the Indian National Congress in 1969.
- Indira Gandhi's tensions with a rival group within the party came to a head with the death of President Dr Zakir Hussain on May 3, 1969.

Is there a way other than the test of majority to resolve a dispute over election symbols?

- In almost all disputes decided by the EC so far, a clear majority of party delegates/office bearers, MPs and MLAs have supported one of the factions.
- Whenever the EC could not test the strength of rival groups based on support within the party organisation (because of disputes regarding the list of office bearers), it fell back on testing the majority only among elected MPs and MLAs.

What happens to the group that doesn't get the parent party's symbol?

- The EC in 1997 did not recognise the new parties as either state or national parties.
- It felt that merely having MPs and MLAs is not enough, as the elected representatives had fought and won polls on tickets of their parent (undivided) parties.
- The EC introduced a new rule under which the splinter group of the party – other than the group that got the party symbol – had to register itself as a separate party.
- It could lay claim to national or state party status only on the basis of its performance in state or central elections after registration.

2. China- Taiwan relations- Background:

China has claimed Taiwan through its **“one China” policy** since the Chinese civil war forced the defeated Kuomintang, or Nationalist, to flee to the island in 1949 and has vowed to bring it under Beijing's rule, by force if necessary.

- While **Taiwan is self-governed** and de facto independent, it has never formally declared independence from the mainland.
- Under the **“one country, two systems” formula**, Taiwan would have the right to run its own affairs; a similar arrangement is used in Hong Kong.

Presently, Taiwan is claimed by China, which refuses diplomatic relations with countries that recognise the region.

Indo- Taiwan relations:

- Although they do not have formal diplomatic ties, Taiwan and India have been cooperating in various fields.
- India has refused to endorse the “one-China” policy since 2010.

GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology, Environment

3. Pandora Papers on Offshore Financial Trusts

There are at least 380 persons of Indian nationality in the Pandora Papers.

What are the Pandora Papers?

- The Pandora papers are the largest trove of leaked data exposing tax haven secrecy in history.
- They provide a rare window into the hidden world of offshore finance, casting light on the financial secrets of some of the world’s richest people.
- It includes over 11.9 million leaked files from 14 global corporate services firms which set up about 29,000 off-the-shelf companies and private trusts in not just obscure tax jurisdictions.
- These documents relate to the ultimate ownership of assets ‘settled’ (or placed) in private offshore trusts and the investments including cash, shareholding, and real estate properties, held by the offshore entities.

Indians included in these

- There are at least 380 persons of Indian nationality in the Pandora Papers.
- There are almost 60 prominent individuals and companies including the most decorated cricketer of India.

What do these papers reveal?

- They reveal how the rich, the famous and the notorious, many of whom were already on the radar of investigative agencies, set up complex multi-layered trust structures for estate planning.
- This is particularly in jurisdictions that are loosely regulated for tax purposes, but characterized by air-tight secrecy laws.
- The purposes for which trusts are set up are many, and some genuine too.

But a scrutiny of the papers also shows how the objective of many is two-fold:

1. **Tax Avoidance:** to hide their real identities and distance themselves from the offshore entities so that it becomes near impossible for the tax authorities to reach them and,
2. **Tax Evasion:** to safeguard investments – cash, shareholdings, real estate, art, aircraft, and yachts – from creditors and law enforcers.

How is Pandora different from the Panama Papers and Paradise Papers?

- The Panama and Paradise Papers dealt largely with offshore entities set up by individuals and corporates respectively.
- The Pandora Papers investigation shows how businesses disguised as Trusts have created a new normal with rising concerns of money laundering, terrorism funding, and tax evasion.

4. Revealing India's actual farmer population

Context

Depending on the source, there is a wide variation in the number of farmers in India.

What is the extent of variation?

- The last **Agriculture Census for 2015-16** placed the total “operational holdings” in India at **146.45 million**.
- The Pradhan Mantri-Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) scheme has **110.94 million beneficiaries**.
- National Statistical Office's **Situation Assessment of Agricultural Households (SAAH)** report for 2018-19 pegs the country's “agricultural households” at **93.09 million**.

What explains the variation?

- This wide variation has largely to do with methodology.
- The **Agriculture Census** looks at any land used even partly for agricultural production, the land does not have to be owned by that person (“cultivator”), who needn’t also belong to an “agricultural household”.
- The SAAH report, on the other hand, considers only the **operational holdings of agricultural households**.
- Members of a household may farm different lands.
- The SAAH takes all these lands as a single production unit.
- It does not count multiple holdings if operated by individuals living together and sharing a common kitchen.
- Accounting for only “agricultural households”, while not distinguishing multiple operating holdings within them, brings down India’s official farmer numbers to **just over 93 million**.
- **Expansive definition:** SAAH’s definition of “agricultural households” is expansive.
- It covers households having at least one member self-employed in agriculture and whose annual value of produce exceeds Rs 4,000.
- Such self-employment needs to be for only 30 days or more during the survey reference period of six months.

So, what is the actual number of farmers?

- The estimate of actual number is based on the following methodology.
- The SAAH report gives data on agricultural household **income from farm and non-farm sources**, both state-wise and across different land-possessed/operational holding size classes.
- From the above data, we can categorise “full-time/regular” farmers as those households whose net receipts from farming are at least **50 per cent of their total income** from all sources.
- The SAAH report also has state-wise estimates of agricultural households for **each land-possessed size class**.
- By taking only those size classes in which the dependence ratios are higher than (or close to) 50 per cent, and adding up the corresponding estimated number of agricultural households, we are able to arrive at the total “**full-time/regular**” farmers for each state.
- Following the above methodology, India’s “serious” farmer population, in turn, adds up to **36.1 million, which is hardly 39 per cent of the SAAH estimate**.

Policy implications of having actual numbers of farmers significantly lower than estimated

- If the actual number of farmers deriving a significant share of their income from agriculture per se is only 40 million a host of policy implications follow.
- **Targeted policy:** One must recognise that farming is a specialised profession like any other.
- “Agriculture policy” should, then, target those who can and genuinely depend on farming as a means of livelihood.
- Minimum support prices, government procurement, agricultural market reforms, fertiliser and other input subsidies, Kisan Credit Card loans, crop insurance or export-import policy on farm commodities will matter mainly to “full-time/regular” farmers.
- **Land size matters:** The SAAH report reveals that the 50 per cent **farm income dependence threshold** is crossed at an all-India level only when the holding size exceeds one hectare or 2.5 acres.
- This is clearly the minimum land required for farming to be viable, which about 70 per cent of agricultural households in the country do not possess.
- **Policy for labourers:** What should be done for this 70 per cent, who are effectively labourers and not farmers?
- Their problems cannot be addressed through “agriculture policy”.
- The **scope for value-addition and employment** can be more outside than on the farm – be it in aggregation, grading, packaging, transporting, processing, warehousing and retailing of produce or supply of inputs and services to farmers.

Conclusion

Agriculture policy should aim not only at increasing farm incomes but also adding value to produce outside and closer to the farms. A more sustainable solution lies in reimagining agriculture beyond the farm.

5. The Draft Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Amendment Rules, 2021

Context:

The **Draft Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Amendment Rules, 2021** were recently published September 30, 2021.

- Please note that the draft amendment introduces some key additions and revisions to the Electricity (Rights of Consumer) Rules, 2020.

Overview of the new rules:

- **Distribution licencees** should ensure 24×7 uninterrupted power supply to all consumers so that there is no requirement of running Diesel Generating (DG) sets.
- **The electricity regulatory commission** could consider a separate reliability charge for the distribution company, if it required funds for investment in infrastructure.
- The **state electricity regulatory commission** should also make a provision of penalty in case the standards laid down are not met by the distribution company.

6. Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020

These rules serve to “empower” consumers with rights that would allow them to access continuous supply of quality, reliable electricity.

The following areas are covered under the rules:

1. Rights of consumers and Obligations of Distribution licensees;
2. release of new connection and modification in existing connection;
3. metering arrangement;
4. billing and payment;
5. disconnection and reconnection;
6. reliability of supply;
7. consumer as ‘prosumer’;
8. standards of performance of licensee;
9. compensation mechanism;
10. call centre for consumer services;
11. grievance redressal mechanism.

Key Provisions:

1. States will have to implement these rules and discoms will be held more accountable for issues like delays in providing and renewing connections of electricity.

2. They are also obligated to provide round-the-clock electricity to consumers, as per the Ministry of Power.
3. To ensure compliance, the government will apply penalties that will be credited to the consumer's account.
4. There are certain exceptions to these rules, especially where use for agricultural purposes is concerned.

Background:

Electricity is a **Concurrent List** (Seventh Schedule) subject and the central government has the authority and the power to make laws on it.

Prelims Practice Questions

1. Consider the following statements regarding Submarine Volcanoes:

1. They cause explosive eruptions beneath the ocean's surface.
2. They adversely affect the ocean's surface and may also lead to a Tsunami.

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

Answer : D

Explanation

- Submarine volcanoes are exactly what they sound like – volcanoes **located beneath the ocean's surface**.
 - From Hawaii to Indonesia to Iceland, hundreds of islands across the globe have been formed by submarine volcanoes.
- Because they erupt into water instead of air, submarine volcanoes behave quite differently than terrestrial volcanoes. For instance, **it's uncommon for submarine volcanoes to have explosive eruptions. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**

- The sheer weight of the water above them creates very high pressure, usually resulting in what are known as passive lava flows along the seafloor. **Most submarine eruptions do not disturb the ocean surface. Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**

2. In which of the following states can Gangetic River dolphins be found?

1. Assam
2. Uttar Pradesh
3. Rajasthan
4. Jharkhand
5. West Bengal

Options:

- a. 2, 4 and 5 only
- b. 1, 2 and 4 only
- c. 4 and 5 only
- d. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Ganges river dolphins once lived in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Karnaphuli-Sangu river systems of Nepal, India, and Bangladesh. But the species has been declining from most of its early distribution ranges.
- Ganges river dolphins prefer deep waters, in and around the confluence of rivers. The distribution range of the Ganges river dolphins in India covers seven states namely, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal.

3. What is the role of the European Council, one of the principal organs of the European Union (EU)?

- a. Provides political direction to the European Union
- b. Acts as the legislature of the European Union
- c. Pass legislations and exercise control over the budget of the EU
- d. Settle legal disputes between EU member states

Answer: a

Explanation:

- The European Council is the body of the Heads of state or government of EU member states, President of the European Council and President of the European Commission.
- It is based in Brussels and is presided by the President of the European Council.
- The European Council gives the necessary political impetus for the development of the Union and sets its general objectives and priorities. It is to be noted that it does not legislate.

4. Uronema africanum Borge, recently seen in news, is:

- a. An alga that can digest low density plastic sheets.
- b. An oil eating bacteria.
- c. A soil fungus, which uses enzymes to rapidly break down plastic materials.
- d. A bacterium that can aid the production of bioplastics.

Answer: a

Explanation:

- Researchers from University of Madras and Presidency College, Chennai, have isolated an alga that breaks down low density polyethylene. The alga identified is microalga Uronema africanum Borge. This is a species of microalgae that is commonly found in Africa, Asia and Europe.
- The alga used for the study has been harvested from a lake in Chennai.
- The microalga was found to produce enzymes, hormones, toxins such as cyanotoxins and some polysaccharides which were able to slowly degrade polyethylene into monomers which will not have harmful effect in the atmosphere.
 - Low-density polyethylene is highly resistant to degradation.

5. Which of the following Reports & Indices are released by the National Statistical Office (NSO)?

1. Index of Industrial Production (IIP)
2. Consumer Price Index (CPI)
3. Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A 1 and 2 only
- B 2 and 3 only
- C 1 and 3 only
- D 1, 2 and 3

Answer : D

Explanation

- The **National Statistical Office (NSO)** is the central statistical agency of the Government mandated under the Statistical Services Act 1980 under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
 - It is responsible for the development of arrangements for providing statistical information services to meet the needs of the Government and other users for information on which to base policy, planning, monitoring and management decisions.
 - The services include collecting, compiling and disseminating official statistical information.
- **The Reports & Indices by NSO are:**
 - **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)**
 - **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**
 - Sustainable Development Goals National Indicator Framework Progress Report
 - **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)**
- Hence, option D is correct.

6. Which of the following passes is/are located in Ladakh?

1. Kela Pass
2. Umling La
3. Khardung La

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

Answer : d

Mains Practice Questions

1Q. "Next to war, famine and pandemic the worst thing that can happen to agriculture is absentee-landlordism". Analyse this statement with reference to the land revenue system of Britishers in India. (250 words)

Approach

- In the introduction briefly explain the meaning of absentee landlordism.
- Establish the relationship of absentee landlordism with the land revenue system of Britishers.
- Highlight the implications of absentee landlordism on the agriculture sector.
- In the body, starting with the cause, analyse the effects of absentee landlordism under various headings in such a way that their implications are elaborated.
- Conclude by summarising the effects of absentee landlordism and with the future changes brought about by it.

2Q. Discuss the importance of public services reforms in ensuring good governance in India. (250 words)

Approach

- Briefly define public services reforms in the introduction and establish its relationship with Good Governance.
- Elaborate some of the important public services reforms initiated in India. Also, highlight their importance in achieving some of the components of good governance.
- Mention the challenges that impede these reforms.
- Conclude with some valid suggestions about what more efforts are needed to make public services reform ensure Good Governance.