

www.vishnuias.com



NOVEMBER

03.11.2021

CURRENT AFFAIRS

A MAGAZINE FOR CIVIL SERVICES PREPARATION

JOIN OUR TELEGRAM: <https://t.me/vishnuiasmentor>

Articles of the day
THE HINDU & INDIAN EXPRESS

UPSC

General Studies

Test Series

Online &
Offline
classes

One-Stop
Solution

Free daily
materials

GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1. Infrastructure for the Resilient Island States (IRIS)

The PM has launched the Initiative for the Resilient Island States (IRIS) for developing infrastructure of small island nations.

IRIS

- The Small Island Developing States or SIDS face the biggest threat from climate change.
- To mitigate this, India's space agency ISRO will build a special data window for them to provide them timely information about cyclones, coral-reef monitoring, coast-line monitoring etc. through satellite.
- IRIS will be a part of the India-UK Coalition for Disaster Resilient infrastructure (CDRI).

About CDRI

- The CDRI is an international coalition of countries, UN agencies, multilateral development banks, the private sector etc. that aim to promote disaster-resilient infrastructure.
- Its objective is to promote research and knowledge sharing in the fields of infrastructure risk management, standards, financing, and recovery mechanisms.
- It was launched by the Indian PM Modi at the 2019 UN Climate Action Summit in September 2019.

Focus areas

- CDRI's initial focus is on developing disaster-resilience in ecological, social, and economic infrastructure.
- It aims to achieve substantial changes in member countries' policy frameworks and future infrastructure investments, along with a major decrease in the economic losses suffered due to disasters.

2. National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)

The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) will examine the complaint of a decorated Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) officer against caste-based allegations by a Maharashtra minister.

About National Commission for Scheduled Castes

- NCSC is a constitutional body under Article 338 of the Indian Constitution.
- It functions under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- It was established with a view to provide safeguards against the exploitation of Scheduled Castes.
- It aims to promote and protect their social, educational, economic and cultural interests, special provisions were made in the Constitution.

How were they established?

- The original constitution provided for the appointment of a Special Officer under Article 338.
- The special officer was designated as the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- The 65th Constitutional Amendment Act 1990, amended Article 338 of the Constitution to introduce a joint NC for SCs and STs.
- Later by 89th Amendment, NC for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) and NC for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) were separated by creating a new Article 338-A.

Functions

- To investigate and monitor all matters relating to the safeguards provided for the SCs
- To inquire into specific complaints with respect to the deprivation of rights and safeguards of the Scheduled Castes
- To participate and advise on the planning process of socio-economic development of the SCs
- To evaluate the progress of their development under the Union and any State
- To present to the President, annually and at such other times as the Commission may deem fit, reports upon the working of those safeguards
- To make in such reports recommendations as to the measures that should be taken by the Union or any State
- To discharge such other functions as the President may, subject to the provisions of any law made by Parliament, by rule specify

Note: National Commission for Backward Castes is also a constitutional body too. According to article 340, President shall establish a commission to examine the condition of social and backward class.

3. Manipuri Basanta Raasa

As part of the celebrations of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, a celebration of Destination North East India, dance and music of Manipur was organised.

Manipuri Raas Leela

- The Raas Leela, also referred to as Manipuri Dance, is one of the major Indian classical dance forms, originating from the state of Manipur.
- The dance form is based on Hindu Vaishnavism themes, and exquisite performances of love-inspired dance drama of Radha-Krishna called Raas Leela.

Notable features

- It is marked by a performance that is graceful, fluid, sinuous with greater emphasis on hand and upper body gestures.
- It is accompanied with devotional music created with many instruments, with the beat set by cymbals (kartal or manjira) and double-headed drum (pung or Manipuri mrdanga) of sankirtan.
- The dance drama choreography shares the plays and stories of Vaishnavite Padavalis, that also inspired the major Gaudiya Vaishnava-related performance arts found in Assam and West Bengal.

4. The 'Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Rights Act)'

The President of India has empowered (under **clause (1) of Article 239 of the Constitution**) the **Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh** to exercise the powers and discharge the functions of the State Government under **the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006** within the Union territory.

About the Forest Rights Act:

The Act passed in 2006 grants legal recognition to the rights of traditional forest dwelling communities.

Rights under the Act:

Title rights - i.e. ownership - to land that is being farmed by tribals or forest dwellers as on 13 December 2005, subject to a maximum of 4 hectares; ownership is only for land that is actually being cultivated by the concerned family as on that date, meaning that no new lands are granted.

Use rights - to minor forest produce (also including ownership), to grazing areas, to pastoralist routes, etc.

Relief and development rights - to rehabilitation in case of illegal eviction or forced displacement; and to basic amenities, subject to restrictions for forest protection.

Forest management rights - to protect forests and wildlife.

Eligibility criteria:

According to Section 2(c) of Forest Rights Act (FRA), to qualify as **Forest Dwelling Scheduled Tribe (FDST)** and be **eligible for recognition of rights under FRA**, three conditions must be satisfied by the applicant/s, who could be "members or community":

1. Must be a Scheduled Tribe in the area where the right is claimed; and
2. Primarily resided in forest or forests land prior to 13-12-2005; and
3. Depend on the forest or forests land for bonafide livelihood needs.

And to qualify as **Other Traditional Forest Dweller (OTFD)** and be eligible for recognition of rights under FRA, two conditions need to be fulfilled:

1. Primarily resided in forest or forests land for three generations (75 years) prior to 13-12-2005.
2. Depend on the forest or forests land for bonafide livelihood needs.

Process of recognition of rights:

1. The gram sabha, or village assembly, will initially pass a resolution recommending whose rights to which resources should be recognised.
2. This resolution is then screened and approved at the level of the sub-division (or taluka) and subsequently at the district level.

The screening committees consist of three government officials (Forest, Revenue and Tribal Welfare departments) and three elected members of the local body at that level. These committees also hear appeals.

GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology, Environment

5. RBI issues revised Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework

The RBI has issued a revised Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework for banks to enable supervisory intervention at “appropriate time” and also act as a tool for effective market discipline.

What is the PCA framework?

- Prompt Corrective Action Framework refers to the central bank’s watchlist of weak banks.
- The regulator imposes restrictions like curbs on lending on such banks.
- The PCA Framework applies only to commercial banks and does not cover cooperative banks and non-banking financial companies.

When was PCA introduced?

- The RBI’s PCA Framework was introduced in December 2002 as a structured early intervention mechanism along the lines of the US Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation’s PCA framework.
- The last PCA Framework was issued by the RBI on April 13, 2017, and implemented with respect to banks’ financials as of March 31, 2017.

Latest PCA norms

- The revised PCA framework will be effective from January 1, 2022.

- Capital, asset quality and leverage will be the key areas for monitoring in the revised framework.
- That apart, RBI has also revised the level of shortfall in total capital adequacy ratio that would push the lender to “risk threshold three” category.

When exactly does a bank fall into this list?

- The RBI has specified certain regulatory trigger points with respect to three parameters for the initiation of the process:
- **Capital-to-risk weighted assets ratio (CRAR):** It is a measure of a bank’s capital to ensure that it can absorb a reasonable amount of loss and complies with statutory Capital requirements.
- **Net Non-Performing Assets (NPA)**
- **Return on assets (RoA):** It is an indicator of how well a company utilizes its assets in terms of profitability.

What are the trigger points on capital and how does a breach invite action?

1. CRAR

- If CRAR falls to less than 9 percent, the RBI asks banks to submit a capital restoration plan, restricts new businesses and dividend payments.
- The RBI also orders recapitalisation, restrictions on borrowings from the inter-bank market, reduction of stake in subsidiaries and reduction of exposure to sensitive sectors.
- Such sectors include the capital markets, real estate or investments in non-statutory liquidity ratio securities.
- If CRAR is less than 6 percent but equal to or more than 3 percent, the RBI could take additional steps if the bank fails to submit a recapitalisation plan.

2. NPA levels

- If net NPAs rise beyond 10 percent but are less than 15 percent, a special drive to reduce bad loans and contain the generation of fresh NPAs begins.
- The RBI reviews the bank’s loan policy and takes steps to strengthen credit-appraisal skills.

3. Return on assets

- If RoA is less than 0.25 percent, restrictions on accessing/renewing costly deposits and CDs kick in and the RBI bars the bank from entering new lines of business.

- The bank's borrowings from the inter-bank market, making dividend payments and increasing staff will be restricted.

Significance of PCA

- **The financial health of a bank:** Essentially PCA helps RBI monitor key performance indicators of banks, and taking corrective measures, to restore the financial health of a bank.
- **Averting a crisis:** PCA is intended to help alert the regulator as well as investors and depositors if a bank is heading for trouble. The idea is to head off problems before they attain crisis proportions.

6. Giant Magellan Telescope (GMT)

In Chile's dry Atacama Desert, stargazers are scanning the clear night skies to detect the existence of life on other planets and study so-called 'dark energy'. Central to the race to peer into distant worlds is the GMT.

Giant Magellan Telescope (GMT)

- The GMT is a ground-based extremely large telescope under construction.
- It is US-led in partnership with Australia, Brazil, and South Korea, with Chile as the host country.
- It will consist of seven 8.4 m (27.6 ft) diameter primary segments, that will observe optical and near infrared (320–25000 nm) light.
- It will have the resolving power of a 24.5 m (80.4 ft) primary mirror and collecting area equivalent to a 22.0 m (72.2 ft) one which is about 368 square meters.
- It is expected to have a resolving power 10 times greater than the Hubble Space Telescope.

7. RBI panel on ARCs

To streamline the functioning of **asset reconstruction companies (ARCs)**, the Reserve Bank panel has come out with a host of suggestions.

Background:

The RBI had set up a committee **headed by Sudarshan Sen** to undertake a comprehensive review of the working of **asset reconstruction companies (ARCs)** in the financial sector ecosystem and recommend suitable measures for enabling them to meet the growing requirements.

Suggestions:

1. Create an online platform for the sale of stressed assets.
2. Allow ARCs to act as resolution applicants during the IBC process.
3. The scope of Section 5 of the SARFAESI Act be expanded to permit ARCs to acquire financial assets from all regulated entities, including AIFs, FPIs, AMC's making investment on behalf of MFs and all NBFCs including HFCs.
4. For accounts above ₹500 crore, two bank-approved external valuers should carry out a valuation to determine liquidation value and fair market value.
5. Also, the final approval of the reserve price should be given by a high-level committee that has the power to approve the corresponding write-off of the loan.

What is an Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC)?

It is a specialized financial institution that buys the Non Performing Assets (NPAs) from banks and financial institutions so that they can clean up their balance sheets. This helps banks to concentrate in normal banking activities. Banks rather than going after the defaulters by wasting their time and effort, can sell the bad assets to the ARCs at a mutually agreed value.

- The asset reconstruction companies or ARCs are **registered under the RBI**.

Legal Basis:

The **Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002** provides the legal basis for the setting up of ARCs in India.

- The SARFAESI Act helps reconstruction of bad assets without the intervention of courts. Since then, a large number of ARCs were formed and were registered with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) which has got the power to regulate the ARCs.

Capital Needs for ARCs:

- As per amendment made in the SARFAESI Act in 2016, an ARC should have a minimum net owned fund of Rs. 2 crore.
- The RBI raised this amount to Rs. 100 crore in 2017. The ARCs also have to maintain a capital adequacy ratio of 15% of its risk weighted assets.

8. One Sun, One World, One Grid

This initiative was announced on the second day of **COP26** by **India and the United Kingdom** to tap solar energy and have it travel seamlessly across borders.

About the initiative:

- The initiative brings together **the International Solar Alliance and the UK's green grid initiative** and complements India's focus on harnessing the sun's energy.
- The **grid will be set up over the next few years by the International Solar Alliance (ISA)**, another initiative authored by India initially, to transport solar power to different countries.
- The vision behind the OSOWOG is 'The Sun Never Sets' and is a constant at some geographical location, globally, at any given point of time.

Implementation:

- A Ministerial Steering Group will work towards accelerating the making of large solar power stations and wind farms in the best locations, linked together by continental-scale grids crossing national borders.
- The Ministerial Steering Group includes France, India, the United Kingdom and the United States, and will also have representatives from Africa, the Gulf, Latin America and Southeast Asia.

Significance of world grid:

With one worldwide grid, we can access clean energy at all places. The need to store energy would also lessen, and the viability of solar projects will increase.

Potential and benefits of the initiative:

- India would generate 40% of power from non-fossil fuels by 2030 and has called for connecting solar energy supply across borders giving the mantra of 'One World One Sun One Grid'.
- The proposed integration would lead to reduced project costs, higher efficiencies and increased asset utilization for all the participating entities.
- This plan will require only incremental investment because it will not require a parallel grid infrastructure due to working with existing grids.
- It will help all the participating entities in attracting investments in renewable energy sources as well as utilizing skills, technology and finances.
- Resulting economic benefits would positively impact poverty alleviation and support in mitigating water, sanitation, food and other socio-economic challenges.
- It will allow national renewable energy management centers in India to grow as regional and global management centers.
- At a global level, almost 2,600 GW of interconnection capacity may be possible up to 2050, delivering estimated power savings of 226 billion euros per year.

One Sun Declaration:

The announcement was accompanied by the "One Sun Declaration", which stated that, "realising the vision of 'One Sun One World One Grid' through interconnected green grids can be transformational, enabling all of us to meet the targets of **the Paris Agreement** to prevent dangerous climate change, to accelerate the clean energy transition, and to achieve the sustainable development goals.

- The declaration has been endorsed by 80 ISA member countries.

THE INDIAN EXPRESS

GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1. National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

Context Fifteen years after the Supreme Court issued directions for police reforms, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has asked the Union Home Ministry (MHA) and the State Governments to set up police complaints authorities as per the judgment in *Prakash Singh vs Union of India*, 2006.

Key recommendations

- The status of compliance should be displayed on the websites of the Ministry and the State Home Departments.
- The MHA and the Law Ministry should consider implementing the recommendations of the 113th report of the Law Commission to add Section 114 B to the Indian Evidence Act.
 - This would ensure that in case a person sustains injuries in police custody, it is presumed that the injuries were inflicted by the police and the burden of proof to explain the injury lies on the authority concerned.
- Making the legal framework technology-friendly to speed up the criminal justice system.
- The SC's December 2020 order to install CCTV cameras with night vision in all police stations should be "implemented immediately" to ensure accountability.

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

- NHRC was established in 1993.
- It is in conformity with the Paris Principles, adopted at the first international workshop on national institutions for the protection of human rights held in Paris in 1991.
- **Status:** It is a statutory organization established under the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi.
- **Functions:**
 - To investigate the violation of human rights/ the failures of the states/other to prevent a human rights violation

- The commissions may also take on research about human rights, create awareness campaigns through various mediums, and encourage the work of NGOs.
- **Composition:**
 - Chairperson, four full-time Members and four deemed Members.
 - A Chairperson, should be retired Chief Justice of India or a Judge of the Supreme Court.
- **Appointment:** The Chairperson and members of the NHRC are appointed by the President of India, on the recommendation of a committee consisting of:
 - The Prime Minister (Chairperson)
 - The Home Minister
 - The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha
 - The Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha
 - The Speaker of the Lok Sabha
 - The Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha
- They hold office for a term of three years or until they attain the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier.
- The President can remove them from the office under specific circumstances.

2. Proposal to declare Guru Purab as 'World Pedestrian Day'

Context Recently, Punjab Police has proposed that the birth anniversary (Gurpurab) of Sikhism founder Guru Nanak Dev be declared as 'World Pedestrian Day'.

Why was it proposed?

- Guru Nanak Dev as the world's most notable and revered pedestrian
- In a period of 24 years (1500-1524), Guru Nanak traveled in all directions to show the path of love, equality, humanity, and selfless service to mankind.
- Most of his journeys were made on foot with his companion Bhai Mardana.
- Later his travels were documented in texts called 'janamsakhis'.
- These sites are now spread across nine nations as per current geographical divisions – India, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, China (Tibet), Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan.

Do you know?

- In these journeys, he preached the new concept of God as "Supreme, All powerful and Truthful, Formless (Nirankar), Fearless (Nirbhau), Without hate (Nirvair), the Sole (Ik), the Self-Existent (Saibhang), the Incomprehensible and Everlasting creator of all things (Karta Purakh), and the Eternal and Absolute Truth (Satnam)".

- His writings, in the form of 974 spiritual hymns were incorporated in the scripture Guru Granth Sahib by the fifth Guru Arjan Dev ji.

3. Ministry of Rural Development signs MoU with Flipkart

In News: Flipkart, India's homegrown e-commerce marketplace, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Rural Development of the Government of India (MoRD), for their ambitious Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM) program, to help empower local businesses and self-help groups (SHGs) – especially those that are led by women – by bringing them into the e-commerce fold.

- The partnership is aligned with the DAY-NRLM's goal of strengthening the capabilities of rural communities for self-employment and entrepreneurship, thus providing further impetus to the Prime Minister's vision of an "Atmanirbhar Bharat".
- This MoU is a part of the Flipkart Samarth program and aims to provide skilled yet under-served communities of craftsmen, weavers and artisans with national market access through the Flipkart marketplace, as well as dedicated support for knowledge and training.
- Will be a great platform for capacity-building, enhancing and impacting rural livelihoods, especially for women.
- This step will mobilize and channelize the resources required for building and supporting rural businesses to realize their full potential for growth, which is crucial for inclusive and robust national development, especially during the current post-COVID era.

4. Global Methane Pledge

The Global Methane Pledge was launched recently at the ongoing UN COP26 climate conference in Glasgow. So far, over 90 countries have signed this pledge, which is an effort led jointly by the United States and the European Union.

Methane is the second-most abundant greenhouse gas in the atmosphere, after carbon dioxide, and, therefore, pledges related to cutting down its emissions are significant.

What is the Global Methane Pledge?

- The pledge was first announced in September by the US and EU, and is essentially an agreement to reduce global methane emissions. One of the

central aims of this agreement is to cut down methane emissions by up to 30 per cent from 2020 levels by the year 2030.

- According to the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, methane accounts for about half of the 1.0 degrees Celsius net rise in global average temperature since the pre-industrial era.
- Rapidly reducing methane emissions is complementary to action on carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, and is regarded as the single most effective strategy to reduce global warming in the near term

What is climate impact of methane?

- According to the UN, 25 per cent of the warming that the world is experiencing today is because of methane, a greenhouse gas, which is also a **component of natural gas**.
- Because it is a greenhouse gas, its presence in the atmosphere increases Earth's temperature.
- There are various sources of methane including **human and natural sources**. Human sources of methane include landfills, oil and natural gas systems, agricultural activities, coal mining, wastewater treatment, and certain industrial processes, the US Environmental Protection Agency notes.
- The oil and gas sectors are among the largest contributors to human sources of methane.
- NASA notes that human sources (also referred to as anthropogenic sources) of methane are responsible for 60 per cent of global methane emissions. These emissions come primarily from the **burning of fossil fuels**, decomposition in landfills and the agriculture sector.
- In India, for instance, in 2019, the Ministry of Coal asked state-run coal miner Coal India Limited (CIL) to produce 2 MMSCB (million metric standard cubic metres) per day of **coalbed methane (CBM)** gas in the next 2 to 3 years.
 - CBM, like shale gas, is extracted from what are known as unconventional gas reservoirs – where gas is extracted directly from the rock that is the source of the gas (shale in case of shale gas and coal in case of CBM).
 - The methane is held underground within the coal and is extracted by drilling into the coal seam and removing the groundwater. The resulting drop in pressure causes the methane to be released from the coal.

Why is dealing with methane important for climate change?

- According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), while methane has a much shorter atmospheric lifetime (12 years as compared to centuries for

CO₂), it is a much more potent greenhouse gas simply because it absorbs more energy while it is in the atmosphere.

- In its factsheet on methane, the UN notes that methane is a powerful pollutant and has a **global warming potential that is 80 times greater than carbon dioxide**, about 20 years after it has been released into the atmosphere.
- Significantly, the average methane leak rate of 2.3 per cent “erodes much of the climate advantage gas has over coal”, the UN notes.
- The IEA has also said that more than 75 per cent of methane emissions can be mitigated with the technology that exists today, and that up to 40 per cent of this can be done at no additional costs.

5. India-USA: Trade and Climate

As 2021 closes, with COVID-19 still a present danger and China emerging as superpower on the global stage, India and the U.S. as strategic partners have a long way to go.

US & India: Trade & Climate

- The U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, John Kerry, has visited India twice already, and India and the U.S. are collaborating under the Climate and Clean Energy Agenda Partnership.
- Both countries are also **taking leading roles in Climate Change**, articulating their climate concerns and commitments.
- If India and the U.S., coordinate policies to incentivise sharing of **climate-related technologies** and align approaches for reducing emissions associated with trade, the climate-trade inter-relationship can be a net positive one.

Concerns

- While India just announced a net zero goal for 2070, it has called for western countries – like USA- to commit to **negative emissions targets**. This might create troubles in bilateral relationship.
- India’s **insistence on climate justice** & adequate carbon space for itself, is likely to be received poorly by U.S. negotiators.
- Likewise, the failure of the U.S. and India to articulate a shared vision for a comprehensive trade relationship (**failure to sign FTA**) raises doubts about how serious they are about expanding their relationships.
- **Protectionist tendencies** in both countries can create hurdles in deepening of economic relationships.

- India insistence on **technology transfer for climate mitigation** that can undermine incentives for innovation in both countries can create troubles in forging enhanced trade & climate partnership between two countries.
- If the U.S. decides that imports from India be subject to increased tariffs in the form of carbon border adjustment mechanisms, it can hurt the future trade prospects between both the countries.

Way Ahead

- India and the U.S. could find opportunities to align their climate and trade approaches better, starting with a resolution of their disputes in the World Trade Organization (WTO) on solar panels.
- The two countries could also chart a path that allows trade to flow for **transitional energy sources**, such as fuel ethanol.
- Concerted action on both the climate and trade fronts is mutually beneficial and will lend additional strength to the foundation of a true partnership for the coming century.

GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology, Environment

6. COP26

Leaders at the COP26 global climate conference in Glasgow have pledged to stop deforestation by the end of the decade and slash emissions of the potent greenhouse gas methane to help slow climate change.

- **Fossil fuels:** They have been unable to agree more broadly on rapid reductions in the use of fossil fuels which has upset the poorer, smaller countries likely to suffer its worst effects.
- **Methane emission:** Nearly 90 countries have joined a U.S.-EU-led effort to slash emissions of methane 30% by 2030 from 2020 levels.
- **Deforestation and land degradation:** Over 100 national leaders pledged to halt and reverse deforestation and land degradation by the end of the decade, underpinned by \$19 billion in public and private funds to invest in protecting and restoring forests.
- **Hike in climate finance**
 - At the Ministerial meeting of Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC), India said that climate finance cannot continue at the levels decided in 2009

- It emphasised that it should be at least \$1 trillion to meet the goals of addressing climate change.

What is COP26?

- The Conference of Parties (COP) comes under the United Nations Climate Change Framework Convention (UNFCCC) which was formed in 1994.
- 2021 marks the 26th Conference of Parties (thus the name COP26) and will be held in the Scottish Event Campus in Glasgow.
- The UNFCCC was established to work towards “stabilisation of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere.”
- It laid out a list of responsibilities for the member states which included:
 - Formulating measures to mitigate climate change
 - Cooperating in preparing for adaptation to the impact of climate change
 - Promoting education, training and public awareness related to climate change
- One of the most important conferences, COP21 took place in 2015, at Paris, France. Member countries agreed to work together to ‘limit global warming to well below 2, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels.’

7. Green Grids Initiative: One Sun, One World, One Grid

Green Grids Initiative As part of One Sun, One World, One Grid initiative was announced by India and the United Kingdom at COP26 to tap solar energy and have it travel seamlessly across borders.

- The objective included trading energy from sun, wind and water across borders to deliver more than enough clean energy to meet the needs of everyone on earth.

Key takeaways

- The initiative was endorsed by more than 80 countries.
- The ISRO has developed an application that could compute the potential solar energy at any point on earth and help decide if it would be suitable for solar energy installations.
- A Ministerial Steering Group will work towards accelerating the making of large solar power stations and wind farms in the best locations, linked together by continental-scale grids crossing national borders.

- The Ministerial Steering Group includes France, India, the United Kingdom and the United States, and will also have representatives from Africa, the Gulf, Latin America and Southeast Asia.

8. T.N. Forest and Wildlife Crime Control Bureau

The Tamil Nadu State Government has issued orders for setting up the Tamil Nadu Forest and Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (TNFWCB) with four zonal offices in Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai and Ramanathapuram.

Key takeaways

- **Committee formed:** It constituted a committee for formulating a draft policy on ecological restoration of forest areas infested with invasive plant species.
 - The panel would also identify, demarcate and assess the extent of area infested with invasive alien species and formulate a Standard Operating Procedure for removal, disposal and eco-restoration of infested areas.
- **State-wide data:** The TNFWCB shall develop and maintain State-wide data on forest and wildlife offences, forest offenders and wildlife smuggling incidences.
- **Use of IT practices:** It would use information technology practices and forest and wildlife crime information in conjunction with various intelligence agencies which will help in better adaptation to changing crime and criminal practices.
- **Cadre of well-trained officials:** The Bureau is expected to create a cadre of well-trained officials from among government departments for effective monitoring of illegal trade.

Objectives of the TNFWCB

- Improving investigation quality for better control of illegal wildlife trade
- Building informant networks among local communities
- Mapping poaching and illegal trade hotspots in the State for better action.

Introduction of exotic tree species

- Most of the exotic tree species like wattle, pine and eucalyptus were introduced in forest areas of Tamil Nadu to satisfy industrial/commercial needs.
- However, they have had an adverse impact on the ecology of the area, such as modifying/affecting hydrology, forest/grassland community and wildlife.

- The non-native species suppressed native species by disrupting the food web in an ecosystem by restricting or replacing native food sources
- The invasion was regarded as one of the major threats to biodiversity

9. Infrastructure for Resilient Island States

Prime Minister launched of 'Infrastructure for Resilient Island States' initiative at COP26 Summit in Glasgow

Infrastructure for Resilient Island States: Small Island Developing States -SIDS- will mobilize technology, finance, and necessary information rapidly. Promotion of quality infrastructure in Small Island States will benefit both lives and livelihoods there.

Significance: The biggest threat from climate change is to the 'Small Island Developing States- SIDS'. In such countries, climate change is a major challenge not only for the security of their lives, but also for their economies. Such countries depend a lot on tourism, but due to natural calamities, even tourists are afraid to come there.

Background: Sensing the threat of Climate Change looming over small island countries, India made special arrangements for cooperation with Pacific islands and CARICOM nations.

- Trained their citizens in solar technologies, and contributed continuously to the development of infrastructure there.
- India's space agency, ISRO will build a special data window for SIDS. With this, SIDS will continue to receive timely information about cyclones, coral-reef monitoring, coast-line monitoring, etc. through satellite.
- The IRIS initiative is a part of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient infrastructure that would focus on building capacity, having pilot projects, especially in small island developing states.
- The new initiative is the result of cooperation between India, the UK and Australia and included the participation of leaders of small island nations Fiji, Jamaica and Mauritius.

Prelims Practice Questions

1. Which of the following Committees of the Constituent Assembly was headed by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel?

1. Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights.
2. Committee on Minorities and Tribal and Excluded Areas.
3. Provincial Constitution Committee
4. Union Power Committee

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A 1 and 2 only
B 3 and 4 only
C 4 only
D 1, 2, and 3

Answer :D

Explanation

- Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was the first Home Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of India.
- He played an important role in the integration of many Indian princely states to make an Indian federation.
- He Headed various Committees of the **Constituent Assembly of India**, namely:
 - **Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights.**
 - **Committee on Minorities and Tribal and Excluded Areas.**
 - **Provincial Constitution Committee**
 - The Union Power Committee was headed by Jawaharlal Nehru.
 - **Hence, option D is correct.**

2. Who among of the following Mughal Emperors shifted emphasis from illustrated manuscripts to album and individual portrait?

- a. Humayun
- b. Akbar
- c. Jahangir

d. Shah Jahan

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Jahangir shifted emphasis from illustrated manuscripts to the album and individual portraits.

3. Consider the following statements:

1. ASEAN was established by the Manila declaration in 1967.
2. ASEAN is India's fourth largest trading partner.

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 : B

Explanation

- The **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** is a regional grouping that promotes economic, political, and security cooperation.
 - It was **established in August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand** with the **signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration)** by the founding fathers of ASEAN, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- Its chairmanship rotates annually, based on the alphabetical order of the English names of Member States.
- ASEAN countries have a total population of 650 million people and a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of USD 2.8 trillion. **It is India's 4th largest trading partner** with about USD 86.9 billion in trade. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

4. Which of these nations is not a part of the BASIC group of nations?

- a. South Africa
- b. China
- c. Bangladesh
- d. India

Answer: c

Explanation:

- The BASIC countries (also Basic countries or BASIC) are a bloc of four large newly industrialized countries - Brazil, South Africa, India and China.

5. "Hindus and Muslims are the two eyes of the beautiful bride that is Hindustan. Weakness of any one of them will spoil the beauty of the bride." This statement is associated with whom amongst the following?

- a. Aurobindo Ghosh
- b. Raja Ram Mohan Roy
- c. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan
- d. Mahatma Gandhi

Answer: c

Explanation:

- This quote was said by **Sir Syed Ahmed Khan**.

6. Consider the following statements:

1. The World Bank was created in 1944, as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD).
2. The World Development Report is released by the World Bank.

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 : C

Explanation

World Bank

- **About:**
 - It was created in 1944, as the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)** along with the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**. The IBRD later became the World Bank. **Hence statement 1 is correct.**
 - The **World Bank Group is a unique global partnership of five institutions** working for sustainable solutions that reduce poverty and build shared prosperity in developing countries.
- **Members:**
 - It has 189 member countries.
 - India is also a member country.
- **Major reports:**
 - **Ease of Doing Business (Stopped publishing recently).**
 - **Human Capital Index.**
 - **World Development Report.**
 - **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- **Its Five development institutions:**
 - **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)**
 - **International Development Association (IDA)**
 - **International Finance Corporation (IFC).**
 - **Multilateral Guarantee Agency (MIGA)**
 - **International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)**
 - India is not a member of this.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1Q. India's women who are enrolled in education and employment are far less than their counterparts. Examine the reasons and probable solutions for this gap in India. (250 words)

Approach

- Give an estimate of gender gap in India in education and employment
- Discuss the reasons for this gender gap
- Suggest measures that need to be taken

2Q. Despite achieving a near universal enrolment in primary school education, India has not been able to ensure concurrent learning, as demonstrated by latest ASER report. Examine. (250 words).

Approach

- Discuss the gaps in learning in India in primary education
- Discuss the reasons for this gap
- Examine the challenges and solutions that can be taken up to close this gap