

# PRAYAS4IAS

AN INITIATIVE BY THE PRAYAS INDIA

JULY WEEK 5

## EARTH OVER SHOOT DAY



## July (Week 5)

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# Prelims

## NATIONAL

### Ramappa Temple

(Source: [The Hindu](#) )

**Context:** In a major diplomatic triumph, the 13th century Ramappa temple in Palampet, Telangana, was declared as a UNESCO World Heritage Site

#### Details:

- The nomination for a World Heritage Site for the Ramappa and Kakatiya temples was made in 2014.
- The site was in the reckoning for inscription in 2020 but the WHC meeting was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Built by Racherla Senapati Rudrayya, a general of Kakatiya king Ganapatideva, in the 13th century, the main temple is flanked by the collapsed structures of the Kateshwarayya and Kameshwarayya temples in Palampet, about 220 km from Hyderabad.
- The temple, known for its exquisite craftsmanship and delicate relief work, is a savvy blend of technical know-how and materials of its time.
- The foundation is built with the “sandbox technique”, the flooring is granite and the pillars are basalt.
- The lower part of the temple is red sandstone while the white gopuram is built with light bricks that reportedly float on water.



#### What is a World Heritage Site tag?

- A World Heritage Site is a location with an “outstanding universal value”.
- This signifies “cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity”.
- To be included, sites must meet at least one of the ten selection criteria.
- These include the site representing a masterpiece of human creative genius, exhibiting an important interchange of human values over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, bearing a unique or exceptional testimony to cultural tradition or to be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement.
- The UNESCO website notes that until the end of 2004, World Heritage sites were selected on the basis of six cultural and four natural criteria.
- But with the adoption of the revised Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, only one set of ten criteria exists.

#### How are sites recognised?

- Ramappa temple, a 13th century temple named after its architect, Ramappa, was proposed by the government as its only nomination for the UNESCO World Heritage site tag for the year 2019. Even so, the temple has been in UNESCO's tentative list since 2014.
- The World Heritage Convention's operational guidelines say that a tentative list is like an inventory of properties a country thinks should be on the World Heritage Site.
- After UNESCO includes a property in the Tentative List, the country prepares a nomination document that will be considered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.
- In May, the Maharashtra government submitted a tentative "serial" nomination seeking the World Heritage Site tag for 14 forts from the era of 17th century Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj on the theme of Maratha Military Architecture in Maharashtra.
- The serial nomination was forwarded by the Archaeological Survey of India to UNESCO through the Ministry of Culture. UNESCO accepted the nomination and added the proposed sites in its Tentative Lists.

### OCI Card

(Source: [The Hindu](#) )

**Context:** *The Delhi High Court has said that the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) cannot insist on the physical or virtual presence of both the spouses for processing Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) card applications for one of them.*

### **Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) – Introduction**

- The Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) Scheme was introduced by amending the Citizenship Act, 1955 in August 2005 in response to demands for dual citizenship by the Indian diaspora, particularly in developed countries.
- It was launched during the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention at Hyderabad in 2006.

### **Who is called an Overseas Citizen of India?**

- An Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) is a person who is technically a citizen of another country having an Indian origin.
- They were citizens of India on 26th January 1950 or thereafter except who is or had been a citizen of Pakistan, Bangladesh or such other country.
- Multi-purpose and life-long visa are provided to the registered Overseas Citizen of India for visiting India and are also exempted from registration with Foreign Regional Registration Officer or Foreign Registration Officer for any length of stay in India.

### **What is an OCI Card?**

- Launched in 2005, under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, the OCI card was introduced for fulfilling the demands for dual citizenship among the Indians living in different developed countries.
- The OCI card provides Overseas Citizenship of India to live and work in India for an indefinite period of time but does not provide the right to vote, hold constitutional offices or buy agricultural properties.

### **Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Card: Eligibility**

- A person must meet the following eligibility criteria before applying for the OCI scheme:



- He/She is a citizen of another country having an Indian origin. He/She was a citizen of India on or before the commencement of the constitution; or
- He/She is a citizen of another country, but was eligible for the citizenship of India at the time of the commencement of the constitution; or
- He/She is a citizen of another country and belonging to a territory that became a part of India after the 15th August 1947; or
- He/She is a child/grandchild/great grandchild of such a citizen; or
- He/She is a minor child, whose parents are both Indian citizens or one parent is a citizen of India and
- He/She is a spouse of foreign origin of an Indian citizen or of an OCI cardholder
- Any person having citizenship of Bangladesh or Pakistan is not eligible to apply for the OCI card. Even a person having a background of serving any foreign military are also not eligible for the scheme.

### OCI: Conferment of Rights

- The registered Overseas Citizens of India are not entitled to several rights that are conferred on a citizen of India.
  - Right to equality of opportunity under article 16 of the Constitution with regard to public employment.
  - Right for election as President and Vice-President under article 58 and article 66 respectively.
  - They are not entitled to the rights under article 124 and article 217 of the Constitution.
  - Right to register as a voter under section 16 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950(43 of 1950).
  - Rights with regard to the eligibility for being a member of the State Council/Legislative Assembly/Legislative Council.
  - For an appointment to the posts of Public Services and Union Affairs of any State.

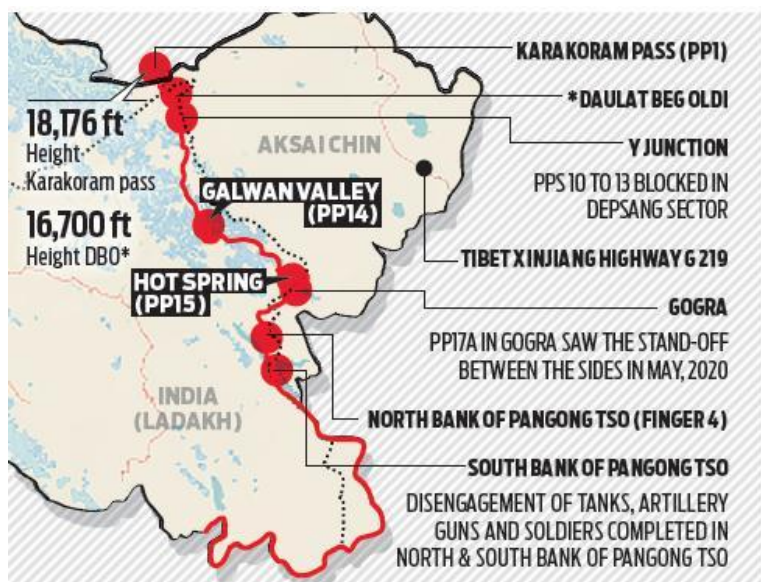
### Gogra and Hot Springs

(Source: [The Hindu](http://TheHindu) )

**Context:** India and China are set to hold the 12th round of Corps Commander-level talks aimed at resolving the stand-off in eastern Ladakh soon, and an agreement for disengagement at Gogra and Hot Springs is likely to be reached.

#### Details:

- **Location of Hot Springs and Gogra Post:**
  - Hot Springs is just **north of the Chang Chenmo river** and Gogra Post is **east of the point where the river takes a hairpin bend** coming southeast from Galwan Valley and turning southwest.
  - The area is **north of the Karakoram Range of mountains**, which lies north of the **Pangong Tso lake**, and south east of Galwan Valley.
- **Importance:**
  - The area lies close to **Kongka Pass**, one of the main passes, which, according to China marks the boundary between India and China.



- **India's claim** of the international boundary lies significantly east, as it includes the entire Aksai Chin area as well.
- Hot Springs and Gogra Post are **close to the boundary between two of the most historically disturbed provinces** (Xinjiang and Tibet) of China.

### **Jal Jeevan Mission**

(Source: [The Hindu](#) )

**Context:** Over a third of government schools and anganwadis still do not have tap water access even 10 months after the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) launched a 100-day campaign to provide the facility. There has been minimal progress since a Parliamentary Standing Committee pulled up the JJM in a March report, pointing out the importance of repeated washing of hands as part of COVID-19 safety protocols for schools to reopen.

#### **Jal Jeevan Mission**

- 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.
- JJM focuses on **integrated demand and supply-side management of water at the local level**.
  - Creation of local infrastructure for source sustainability measures as **mandatory** elements, like **rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge** and **management of household wastewater for reuse**, would be undertaken in **convergence** with other government programmes/schemes.
- 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.
- **Funding Pattern:** 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.

### **Dholavira in Gujarat on UNESCO World Heritage list**


(Source: [The Hindu](#) )

**Context:** The Harappan city of Dholavira, in present-day Gujarat, was named the 40th Indian site on UNESCO's World Heritage list.

#### **About the Harappan city of Dholavira:**

- Dholavira is the 6<sup>th</sup>-largest of more than 1,000 Harappan sites discovered so far.



- It demonstrates multifaceted achievements in terms of urban planning, construction techniques, water management, social governance and development, art, manufacturing, trading, and belief system.
  - With extremely rich artefacts, the well preserved urban settlement of Dholavira depicts a vivid picture of a regional centre with its distinct characteristics that also contributes significantly to the existing knowledge of Harappan Civilization as a whole.
- 
- The property comprises two parts: a walled city and a cemetery to the west of the city.
    - The walled city consists of a fortified castle with attached fortified Bailey and Ceremonial Ground, and a fortified Middle Town and a Lower Town.
    - A series of reservoirs are found to the east and south of the Citadel.
    - The great majority of the burials in the Cemetery are memorial in nature.
  - Unlike other Harappan antecedent towns normally located near rivers and perennial sources of water, the location of Dholavira in the island of Khadir was strategic to harness different mineral and raw material sources (copper, shell, agate-carnelian, steatite, lead, banded limestone, among others) and to facilitate internal as well as external trade to the Magan (modern Oman peninsula) and Mesopotamian regions.
  - A classic example of a proto-historic Bronze Age urban settlement pertaining to the Harappan civilisation, Dholavira bears evidence of a multi-cultural and stratified society.
  - While the earliest evidence can be traced back to 3000 BCE, this city flourished for nearly 1,500 years, representing a long continuous habitation.
  - Dholavira also showcases an excellent water conservation and management method quite unique to the ancient world.

### Other Harappan sites in Gujarat

- Before Dholavira was excavated, Lothal, in Saragwala village on the bank of Sabarmati in Dholka taluka of Ahmedabad district, was the most prominent site of IVC in Gujarat.
- It was excavated between 1955 and 1960 and was discovered to be an important port city of the ancient civilisation, with structures made of mud bricks.
- From a graveyard in Lothal, 21 human skeletons were found. Foundries for making copperware were also discovered. Ornaments made of semi-precious stones, gold etc. were also found from the site.
- Besides Lothal, Rangpur on the bank of Bhadar river in Surendranagar district was the first Harappan site in the state to be excavated. Rojdi in Rajkot district, Prabhas near Veraval in Gir Somnath district, Lakhabaval in Jamnagar, and Deshalpar in Bhuj taluka of Kutch are among other Harappan sites in the state.



## **Telangana's Dalit Bandhu scheme**

(Source: [Indian Express](#) )

**Context:** *Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR) recently said his government is ready to spend Rs 80,000 crore to Rs 1 lakh crore for Dalit Bandhu, touted as the country's biggest direct benefit transfer scheme, to empower Dalits across the state.*

### **What is the Telangana Dalit Bandhu scheme?**

- Dalit Bandhu is the latest flagship programme of the Telangana government.
- It is envisioned as a welfare scheme for empowering Dalit families and enable entrepreneurship among them through a direct benefit transfer of Rs 10 lakh per family.
- This is, once implemented on the ground, going to be the biggest cash transfer scheme in the country.
- A Dalit empowerment programme on these lines was first announced in the state budget earlier this year.

## **Powers of a Commission of Inquiry**

(Source: [Indian Express](#) )

**Context:** *The West Bengal government has set up a Commission of Inquiry into the alleged surveillance of phones using the Pegasus spyware developed by the Israeli cyber-intelligence company NSO Group. The Commission, comprising former Supreme Court Justice Madan B Lokur and former Calcutta High Court Justice Jyotirmay Bhattacharya, will look into the alleged breach of privacy of several individuals — journalists, activists, businesspersons, police officials, politicians — both in the government and the opposition.*

### **What is its mandate?**

- According to the notification issued by the West Bengal government, the Commission will “enquire into and report on inter alia the reported Interception and the possession, storage and use of such information collected through such Interception, in the hands of State actors and non-State actors.”
- The notification said reports that are part of a global investigation by 17 media organisations drawing on data accessed by Paris-based Forbidden Stories are a “definite matter of public importance”.

### **What are its powers?**

- Under The Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952, a Commission set up by the government shall have the powers of a civil court, while trying a suit under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.
- This means that the Commission has powers to summon and enforce the attendance of any person from any part of India and examine her on oath, and receive evidence, and it can order requisition of any public record or copy from any court or office.
- Under Section 5 of the Act, the Commission also has the power to require any person, subject to any privilege which may be claimed by that person under any law for the time being in force, to furnish information on such points or matters that, in the opinion of the Commission, may be useful for, or relevant to, the subject matter of the inquiry.

### **Why has a state government set up the Commission?**

- While both central and state governments can set up such Commissions of Inquiry, states are restricted by subject matters that they are empowered to legislate upon.

- However, it matters who orders an inquiry first. Not just politically, but also under the law.
- If the central government set up the commission first, then states cannot set up a parallel commission on the same subject matter without the approval of the Centre.
- But if a state has appointed a Commission, then the Centre can appoint another on the same subject if it is of the opinion that the scope of the inquiry should be extended to two or more states.

#### **What kind of subjects can a Commission probe?**

- Under Section 2(a) of the 1952 Act, Commissions set up by the central government can make an inquiry into any matter relatable to any of the entries in List I (Union List) or List II (State List) or List III (Concurrent List) in the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution, while Commissions set up by state governments can look into entries in List II or List III.
- In the Pegasus inquiry commission, the West Bengal government has cited public order and police entries.
- While these subjects are in the State List, an argument could also be made that the subject matter of the inquiry essentially falls under the Central List.
- Entry 31 of the Union List or List I deals with posts and telegraphs, telephones, wireless, broadcasting and other like forms of communication.

### **Cloudbursts**

(Source: [Indian Express](#) )

**Context:** *Recently, at least seven people were killed, 17 injured and over 35 missing after a cloudburst hit a remote village of Jammu and Kashmir. Recently, cloudbursts have been reported from several places in J&K, Union Territory of Ladakh, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. A 2017 study of cloudbursts in the Indian Himalayas noted that most of the events occurred in the months of July and August.*

#### **What is a cloudburst?**

- Cloudbursts are short-duration, intense rainfall events over a small area.
- According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), it is a weather phenomenon with unexpected precipitation exceeding 100mm/h over a geographical region of approximately 20-30 square km.
- A study published last year studied the meteorological factors behind the cloudburst over the Kedarnath region.
- They analysed atmospheric pressure, atmospheric temperature, rainfall, cloud water content, cloud fraction, cloud particle radius, cloud mixing ratio, total cloud cover, wind speed, wind direction, and relative humidity during the cloudburst, before as well as after the cloudburst.
- The results showed that during the cloudburst, the relative humidity and cloud cover was at the maximum level with low temperature and slow winds.
- It is expected that because of this situation a high amount of clouds may get condensed at a very rapid rate and result in a cloudburst.
- Several studies have shown that climate change will increase the frequency and intensity of cloudbursts in many cities across the globe.
- In May, the World Meteorological Organization noted that there is about a 40% chance of the annual average global temperature temporarily reaching 1.5°C above the pre-industrial level in at least one of the next five years.
- It added that there is a 90% likelihood of at least one year between 2021 and 2025 becoming the warmest on record and dislodge 2016 from the top rank.

## **Pre-packs for MSMEs**

(Source: [Indian Express](#) )

**Context:** *The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2021, passed by Lok Sabha has proposed 'pre-packs' as an insolvency resolution mechanism for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The Bill will replace The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance, 2021.*

### **What are 'pre-packs'?**

- A pre-pack envisages the resolution of the debt of a distressed company through a direct agreement between secured creditors and the existing owners or outside investors, instead of a public bidding process.
- This system of insolvency proceedings has become an increasingly popular mechanism for insolvency resolution in the United Kingdom and Europe over the past decade.
- Under the pre-pack system, financial creditors will agree to terms with the promoters or a potential investor, and seek approval of the resolution plan from the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).
- The approval of at least 66 per cent of financial creditors that are unrelated to the corporate debtor would be required before a resolution plan is submitted to the NCLT.
- The NCLTs will be required to either accept or reject an application for a pre-pack insolvency proceeding before considering a petition for a CIRP.

### **How are pre-packs better than CIRP?**

- One of the key criticisms of the CIRP has been the time it takes for resolution.
- At the end of March 2021, 79 per cent of the 1,723 ongoing insolvency resolution proceedings had crossed the 270-day threshold.
- A major reason for the delays is the prolonged litigation by erstwhile promoters and potential bidders.
- The pre-pack in contrast, is limited to a maximum of 120 days with only 90 days available to stakeholders to bring a resolution plan for approval before the NCLT.
- Another key difference between pre-packs and CIRP is that the existing management retains control in the case of pre-packs; in the case of CIRP, a resolution professional takes control of the debtor as a representative of financial creditors.
- Experts note that this ensures minimal disruption of operations relative to a CIRP.

## **Gharib Nawaz Employment Scheme**

(Source: [PIB](#) )

**Context:** *The Ministry of Minority Affairs is implementing the Gharib Nawaz Employment Scheme.*

### **About the Gharib Nawaz Employment Scheme:**

- The scheme was launched by the Ministry of Minority Affairs in 2017-18 so that short term job oriented skill development courses may be provided to youth from minority communities in order to enable them for skill based employment.
- This scheme is implemented as per common norms of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSD&E) through the empanelled Program Implementation Agencies (PIAs).



- The scheme is implemented by the Maulana Azad Education Foundation, an autonomous body under the aegis of the Ministry of Minority Affairs.
- Under this scheme, 'Garib Nawaz' skill development centres are run for the purpose of developing skills among the minority youth.

### **Creamy layer among OBCs**

(Source: [Indian Express](#) )

**Context:** *A proposal to revise the criteria for defining the “creamy layer” among OBCs has been pending for years, and MPs have raised the issue during the ongoing Monsoon Session of Parliament.*

#### **What is the creamy layer?**

- It is a concept that sets a threshold within which OBC reservation benefits are applicable.
- While there is a 27% quota for OBCs in government jobs and higher educational institutions, those falling within the “creamy layer” cannot get the benefits of this quota.
- Based on the recommendation of the Second Backward Classes Commission (Mandal Commission), the government on August 13, 1990 had notified 27% reservation for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBCs) in vacancies in civil posts and services that are to be filled on direct recruitment.
- After this was challenged, the Supreme Court on November 16, 1992 (Indira Sawhney case) upheld 27% reservation for OBCs, subject to exclusion of the creamy layer.

#### **How is it determined?**

- Following the order in Indra Sawhney, an expert committee headed by Justice (retired) R N Prasad was constituted for fixing the criteria for determining the creamy layer.
- On September 8, 1993, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) listed out various categories of people of certain rank/status/income whose children cannot avail benefit of OBC reservation.
- For those not in government, the current threshold is an income of Rs 8 lakh per year. For children of government employees, the threshold is based on their parents' rank and not income.
- For instance, an individual is considered to fall within the creamy layer if either of his or her parents is in a constitutional post; if either parent has been directly recruited in Group-A; or if both parents are in Group-B services.
- If the parents enters Group-A through promotion before the age of 40, their children will be in the creamy layer.
- Children of a Colonel or higher-ranked officer in the Army, and children of officers of similar ranks in the Navy and Air Force, too, come under the creamy layer. There are other criteria as well.
- Income from salaries or agriculture land is not clubbed while determining the creamy layer, according to a DoPT clarification issued on October 14, 2004.

### **Juvenile Justice Bill**

(Source: [Indian Express](#) )

**Context:** *The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Bill, 2021, which seeks to amend the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015, was passed in Rajya Sabha recently. The Bill was tabled in Lok Sabha*



*during the budget session in March this year where it had received overwhelming support from both the ruling party as well as the Opposition.*

### **What is the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, which is being amended through this new Bill?**

- The Act was introduced and passed in Parliament in 2015 to replace the Juvenile Delinquency Law and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children Act) 2000.
- One of the main provisions of the new Act is allowing the trial of juveniles in conflict with law in the age group of 16-18 years as adults, in cases where the crimes were to be determined.
- The nature of the crime, and whether the juvenile should be tried as a minor or a child, was to be determined by a Juvenile Justice Board.
- This provision received impetus after the 2012 Delhi gangrape in which one of the accused was just short of 18 years, and was therefore tried as a juvenile.
- The second major provision is with regards to adoption, bringing a more universally acceptable adoption law instead of the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act (1956) and Guardians of the Ward Act (1890) which was for Muslims, although the Act did not replace these laws.
- The Act streamlined adoption procedures for orphans, abandoned and surrendered children and the existing Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) has been given the status of a statutory body to enable it to perform its function more effectively.

### **Why has the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection Amendment) Bill, 2021 been brought by the government?**

- Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani, who tabled the Bill in Rajya Sabha, said the changes, which give increased powers and responsibilities to District Magistrates, were being made to not only ensure speedy trials and increased protection of children at the district level, with checks and balances in place, but to also speed up the adoption processes in the country.
- According to the amendment, District Magistrates, including Additional District Magistrates, can now issue adoption orders under Section 61 of the JJ Act, in order to ensure speedy disposal of cases and enhance accountability.
- Adoption processes were currently under the purview of courts, and with an overwhelming backlog, each adoption case could take years to be passed. This change will ensure that more orphans in need of homes, will be adopted faster.

### **What powers will District Magistrates now have under the new Act?**

- The District Magistrates have been further empowered under the Act to ensure its smooth implementation, as well as garner synergized efforts in favour of children in distress conditions.
- This means that DMs and ADMs will monitor the functioning of various agencies under the JJ Act in every district – this includes the Child Welfare Committees, the Juvenile Justice Boards, the District Child Protection Units and the Special Juvenile Protection Units.
- The amendment has been brought in based on a report filed by the NCPCR in 2018-19 in which the over 7,000 Child Care Institutions (or children's homes) were surveyed and found that 1.5 per cent do not conform to rules and regulations of the JJ Act and 29 per cent of them had major shortcomings in their management.
- The NCPCR report also found that not a single Child Care Institution in the country was found to be 100 per cent compliant to the provisions of the JJ Act.
- CCIs can be government-run, government-aided, privately-run or run through government, private or foreign funding. These institutions, while falling under the CWC and the state child protection units, had very little oversight and monitoring.
- Even to receive a licence, after an application was made, if the children's home were to not receive a reply from the government within three months time, it would be "deemed registered" for a period of six months, even without government permission.

- The new amendment ensures that this can no longer happen and that no new children's home can be opened without the sanction of the DM.
- Now, DMs are also responsible for ensuring that CCIs falling in their district are following all norms and procedures. During the NCPCR survey, for instance, CCIs with large funds, including foreign funding, had been found keeping children in unsanitary conditions in portacabins.
- Since the survey, the WCD Ministry shut down 500 illegal child welfare institutions that had not been registered under the JJ Act.

#### **How will the Child Welfare Committees be monitored?**

- The DM will also carry out background checks of CWC members, who are usually social welfare activists, including educational qualifications, as there is no such provision currently.
- The DMs are also to check possible criminal backgrounds to ensure that no cases of child abuse or child sexual abuse is found against any member before they are appointed.
- The CWCs are also to report regularly to the DMs on their activities in the districts.

#### **What are the changes made in offences by juveniles?**

- Under the 2015 Act, offences committed by juveniles are categorised as heinous offences, serious offences, and petty offences. Serious offences include offences with three to seven years of imprisonment.
- Most heinous crimes have a minimum or maximum sentence of seven years. According to the Juvenile Justice Act 2015, juveniles charged with heinous crimes and who would be between the ages of 16-18 years would be tried as adults and processed through the adult justice system.
- The Bill adds that serious offences will also include offences for which maximum punishment is imprisonment of more than seven years, and minimum punishment is not prescribed or is less than seven years.
- Both heinous and serious crimes have also been clarified for the first time, removing ambiguity. This provision has been made to ensure that children, as much as possible, are protected and kept out of the adult justice system.
- Heinous crimes with a minimum imprisonment of seven years pertain mostly to sexual offences and violent sexual crimes.
- Presently, with no mention of a minimum sentence, and only the maximum seven year sentence, juveniles between the ages of 16-18 years could also be tried as adults for a crime like the possession and sale of an illegal substance, such as drugs or alcohol, which will now fall under the ambit of a "serious crime".
- The Act provides that offences against children that are punishable with imprisonment of more than seven years, will be tried in the Children's Court while offenses with punishments of less than seven years imprisonment will be tried by a Judicial Magistrate.

### **Project BOLD**

**Context:** KVIC & BSF Launch Project BOLD in Jaisalmer to Prevent Desertification and Support Rural Economy.

#### **Project BOLD**

- The project named "Bamboo Oasis on Lands in Drought" (BOLD) is the first of its kind exercise in India launched on July 4 2021 from the tribal village Nichla Mandwa in Udaipur, Rajasthan.

- Project Bold is a unique scientific exercise serving the combined national objectives of reducing desertification and providing livelihood and multi-disciplinary rural industry. You can read in detail about DAY-NRLM National Rural Livelihood Mission on the given link.
- Its aim is to boost the income of the tribal people and solve environmental concerns. Read more about TRIFED – Development of Tribal People in India on the linked page.
- It is aligned with Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s call for reducing land degradation and preventing desertification in the country by creating bamboo-based green patches of land in arid and semi-arid zones.
- The project has been initiated by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) under the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises.
- It has been launched as part of KVIC’s “Khadi Bamboo Festival” to celebrate 75 years of independence “Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav”.

### **BOLD – Bamboo Oasis on Lands in Droughts**

- Under the BOLD project, 5000 saplings of special bamboo species – Bambusa Tulda and Bambusa Polymorpha from Assam have been planted. You can read about Beema Bamboo in the given link.
- Over 16 acres of vacant arid Gram Panchayat land of village NichlaMandwa has been used for the plantation.
- With this, KVIC also created a world record of planting the highest number of bamboo saplings on a single day at one location.
- KVIC is set to replicate the Project at Village Dholera in Ahmedabad district in Gujarat and Leh-Ladakh region by August this year.
- Total 15,000 bamboo saplings will be planted before August 21.

### **Benefits of Project BOLD**

- It will help in reducing the land degradation percentage of the country.
- It will be a haven of sustainable development and food security. Detailed information on Sustainable Development Goals – SDGs can be read here.
- The bamboo plantation program in Udaipur will boost self-employment in the region
- It will benefit a large number of women and unemployed youths in the region by connecting them to skill development programs. Go through the details of the National Skill Development Mission – NSDM on the linked page.
- It can provide livelihood opportunities for locals and tribal men and women in the form of handicrafts, making bamboo furniture, culinary items, paper, bags, handbags, textile, household items, to name a few.
- Economic activities from Bamboo such as construction purposes, will save locals the cost of timber, bricks, and steel.

### **Reasons for choosing Bamboo for developing Green patches**

- Bamboos are a diverse group of evergreen perennial flowering plants.
- Bamboos are very fast-growing plants and can be harvested in about three years.
- It is known for conserving water and reducing evaporation of water from the land surface, which is an important feature in arid and drought-prone regions.
- Bamboo can be used to control pollution by making use of bamboo charcoal, which has absorption properties.
- It devours high amounts of nitrogen and this helps decrease water pollution.

## **Raja Mircha Chilli**

(Source: [PIB](#) )

**Context:** *King Chilli 'Raja Mircha' from Nagaland exported to London for the first time.*

### **Raja Mircha Chilli:**

- Nagaland King Chilli or Raja Mircha belongs to genus Capsicum of family Solanaceae.
- Naga king chilli has been considered as the world's hottest chilli and is constantly on the top five in the list of the world's hottest chilies based on the Scoville Heat Units (SHUs).
- The chilli from Nagaland is also referred to as Bhoot Jolokia and Ghost Pepper.
- It got GI certification in 2008.





## INTERNATIONAL

### Earth Overshoot Day

(Source: [Down to Earth](#) )

**Context:** *Humanity has again used up all biological resources that our planet regenerates during the entire year by July 29, 2021, according to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).*

#### What is Earth Overshoot Day?

- The concept of Earth Overshoot Day was first **conceived by Andrew Simms** of the UK think tank New Economics Foundation, which partnered with Global Footprint Network in **2006** to launch the **first global Earth Overshoot Day campaign**.
  - At that time, Earth Overshoot Day fell in October.
  - World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the world's largest conservation organization, has participated in Earth Overshoot Day since 2007.
- It is computed by Global Footprint Network by **dividing the planet's biocapacity** (the amount of ecological resources Earth is able to generate that year), **by humanity's Ecological Footprint** (humanity's demand for that year), **and multiplying by 365**, the number of days in a year:
- **Earth Overshoot Day = (Planet's Biocapacity / Humanity's Ecological Footprint) x 365**
  - Global Footprint Network is an **international non profit organization** founded in the year 2003. It's key strategy has been to make available robust Ecological Footprint data.
    - **The Ecological Footprint** is a metric that comprehensively compares human demand on nature against nature's capacity to regenerate.

#### So what caused the date to come back to what it was in 2019?

- WWF noted that the prime driver was the 6.6 per cent increase in the global carbon footprint in 2020.
- There was also the 0.5 per cent decrease in 'global forest biocapacity' due to a rise in deforestation of the Amazon's rainforests.
- Some 1.1 million hectares of rainforest were lost in Brazil alone, which is home to the largest swathe of Amazonian rainforest.
- Even worse, there would be a 43 per cent year-over-year increase in deforestation in 2021, WWF said.
- The carbon footprint of transportation will be lower this year than pre-pandemic levels, according to WWF. Carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions from road transport and domestic air travel will be five per cent below 2019 levels.
- CO2 emissions due to international aviation will be 33 per cent below 2019 levels. This is according to estimates from the International Energy Agency.
- But global energy-related CO2 emissions will increase 4.8 per cent from last year as economies try to recover from the impact of COVID-19. Global coal use is estimated to constitute 40 per cent of the total carbon footprint.
- The WWF statement said a business-as-usual scenario will simply not work if the date for World Overshoot Day is to be pushed behind.
- It suggested a number of measures such as cutting down on food wastage, commercial technologies for buildings, industrial processes and electricity production and cutting down on transportation.



# Country Overshoot Days 2021

When would Earth Overshoot Day land if the world's population lived like...



Source: National Footprint and Biocapacity Accounts, 2021 Edition  
[data.footprintnetwork.org](http://data.footprintnetwork.org)



## Nauka

(Source: [Indian Express](https://www.indianexpress.com) )

**Context:** Pirs, a Russian module on the International Space Station (ISS) used as a docking port for spacecraft and as a door for cosmonauts to go out on spacewalks, was detached from the 22-year-old floating laboratory. In its place, Russia's space agency Roscosmos will be attaching a significantly larger module called Nauka, which will serve as the country's main research facility on the space station.

### Details:

- The ISS is a pathbreaking collaborative effort between five participating space agencies: NASA (United States), Roscosmos (Russia), JAXA (Japan), ESA (Europe) and CSA (Canada).
- Nauka, which was launched from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on July 21 using a Proton rocket, is scheduled to be integrated with the ISS.

### **What does Russia's new Nauka module do?**

- Nauka, which is 42 feet long and weighs 20 tonnes, was supposed to be launched as early as 2007, as per the ISS's original plan. However, due to a range of technical issues, the launch kept getting postponed.
- Nauka — meaning “science” in Russian — is the biggest space laboratory Russia has launched to date, and will primarily serve as a research facility.
- It is also bringing to the ISS another oxygen generator, a spare bed, another toilet, and a robotic cargo crane built by the European Space Agency (ESA).
- The new module was sent into orbit using a Proton rocket — the most powerful in Russia's space inventory — on July 21, and will take eight days to reach the ISS.
- During this period, engineers and flight controllers will test Nauka in space, and prepare for its arrival on the space station.
- On the ISS, Nauka will be attached to the critical Zvezda module, which provides all of the space station's life support systems and serves as the structural and functional centre of the Russian Orbital Segment (ROS) — the Russian part of the mammoth floating laboratory.
- It will take up to 11 Russian spacewalks over seven months to fully integrate Nauka with the ISS.
- The module that exited the Zvezda on Monday to make way for Nauka was called Pirs, meaning “pier” in Russian, a considerably smaller structure that was only used as a docking port for Russian spacecraft and allowed for cosmonauts to enter or leave the ISS for spacewalks.
- Pirs was pulled away from the ISS using a Progress MS-16/77P cargo ship, which had remained docked to the module since February.

### **United Nations Food Systems Summit**

(Source: [PIB](#) )

**Context:** *Pre-Summit Ministerial Roundtable of United Nations Food Systems Summit held.*

#### **UN Food Systems Summit:**

- The UN Food Systems Summit aims to launch bold new actions to transform the way the world produces and consumes food, as part of the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.
- Guided by five Action Tracks, the Summit will bring together key players from the worlds of science, business, policy, healthcare and academia, as well as farmers, indigenous people, youth organizations, consumer groups, environmental activists, and other key stakeholders.
  - Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
  - Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
  - Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
  - Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
  - Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress
- The pre-summit is taking place on 27 – 28 July 2021 at Rome, Italy. The summit itself would be held in September 2021.

## **Liverpool lost its UNESCO World Heritage listing**

(Source: [Indian Express](#) )

**Context:** *The UK ranks eighth in the worldwide list of UNESCO World Heritage sites. But instead of its previous 32 distinguished sites, there are now only 31. The Liverpool city made no effort to continue to comply with World Heritage criteria, instead pushing ahead with more major building projects — in 2012, UNESCO threatened to revoke Liverpool’s World Heritage status because of “substantial” building interventions.*

### **‘Loss of maritime character’**

- A UNESCO commission report in June stated that large-scale infrastructure projects, including the Liverpool Waters residential and office complex as well as the Bramley-Moore Dock Stadium, would mean a loss of the character of the “maritime mercantile city” of Liverpool — the reason to strip the city of its title.
- The UN body is currently debating which landscapes, monuments or places should be added to the list of World Heritage Sites in the future, and also removing sites that, in its opinion, no longer deserve the title. And the city of Liverpool no longer does, it feels.

### **Is UNESCO’s selection Eurocentric?**

- The distinction of being a UNESCO World Heritage Site has a positive PR effect as well as an energizing influence on tourism — all good incentives for applying for the title.
- Since the founding of the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage on November 16, 1972, many countries have recognized this attractiveness, says Christoph Brumann, research group leader at the Max Planck Institute for Ethnological Research in Halle, Germany.
- Apparently, some countries benefit more than others, and Europe is home to the largest number of World Heritage Sites, according to UN statistics.

## **Typhoon In-Fa**

(Source: [The Hindu](#) )

**Context:** *Airline flights were cancelled in eastern China and cargo ships were ordered out of the area as Typhoon In-fa churned toward the mainland after dumping rain on Taiwan. This comes amid ongoing rescue efforts to move residents out of flooded neighbourhoods in central China after torrential rains killed at least 56 people*

### **Details:**

- In-fa has churned off the country’s eastern coast.
- A cargo boat overturned after being lashed by strong waves on Saturday close to a port in Pio Duran town in Albay province, southeast of Manila.
- Its 10 crewmen were rescued by firefighters and villagers, who used a rope to pull the overturned boat closer to the coast.



## **Moon-forming region seen around exoplanet for the first time**

(Source: [The Hindu](#) )

**Context:** *Scientists for the first time have spotted a moon-forming region around a planet beyond our solarsystem - a Jupiter-like world surrounded by a disc of gas and dust massive enough that it could spawn three moons the size of the one orbiting Earth.*

### **Details:**

- The researchers used the ALMA observatory in Chile's Atacama desert to detect the disc of swirling material accumulating around one of two newborn planets seen orbiting a young star called PDS 70, located 370 light years from Earth.
- A light year is the distance light travels in a year, about 9.5 trillion km.
- More than 4,400 planets have been discovered outside our solar system, called exoplanets. No circumplanetary discs had been found until now because all the known exoplanets resided in “mature” – fully developed – solar systems, except the two infant gas planets orbiting PDS 70.
- In our solar system, the impressive rings of Saturn, a planet around which more than 80 moons orbit, represent a relic of a primordial moon-forming disc, said study co-author Stefano Facchini of the European Southern Observatory.
- The orange-coloured star PDS 70, roughly the same mass as our Sun, is about 5 million years old. The two planets are even younger. Both planets are similar (although larger) to Jupiter, a gas giant.
- It was around one of the two planets, called PDS 70c, that a moon-forming disc was observed. Researchers have now confirmed initial evidence of a disc around this planet.

### **Birth of a moon**

- Stars burst to life within clouds of interstellar gas and dust scattered throughout galaxies.
- Leftover material spinning around a new star then coalesces into planets, and circumplanetary discs surrounding some planets similarly yield moons.
- The dominant mechanism thought to underpin planet formation is called “core accretion,” said study co-author Richard Teague of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics.
- In this scenario, small dust grains, coated in ice, gradually grow to larger and larger sizes through successive collisions with other grains.
- This continues until the grains have grown to a size of a planetary core, at which point the young planet has a strong enough gravitational potential to accrete gas which will form its atmosphere.



# Mains

## GS II

### The caste census debate

(Source: [Indian Express](#) )

**Context:** Recently, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai said in response to a question in Lok Sabha: “The Government of India has decided as a matter of policy not to enumerate caste-wise population other than SCs and STs in Census.” Since then, during the weekend, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and his predecessor Jitan Ram Manjhi have separately demanded a caste-base census. Weeks earlier, Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale had raised the same demand.

#### **What kind of caste data is published in the Census?**

- Every Census in independent India from 1951 to 2011 has published data on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, but not on other castes. Before that, every Census until 1931 had data on caste.
- However, in 1941, caste-based data was collected but not published. M W M Yeats, the then Census Commissioner, said a note: “There would have been no all India caste table... The time is past for this enormous and costly table as part of the central undertaking...” This was during World War II.
- In the absence of such a census, there is no proper estimate for the population of OBCs, various groups within the OBCs, and others.
- The Mandal Commission estimated the OBC population at 52%, some other estimates have been based on National Sample Survey data, and political parties make their own estimates in states and Lok Sabha and Assembly seats during elections.

#### **How often has the demand for a caste census been made?**

- It comes up before almost every Census, as records of debates and questions raised in Parliament show. The demand usually come from among those belonging to Other Backward Classes (OBC) and other deprived sections, while sections from the upper castes oppose the idea.
- Besides Nitish Kumar, Manjhi and Athawale, such demands in recent days have come from BJP national secretary Pankaja Munde (in a tweet on January 24), and the Maharashtra Assembly which passed a resolution on January 8 urging the Centre to hold a caste-based Census in 2021.
- On April 1, the constitutional body National Commission for Backward Classes urged the government to collect data on the population of OBCs “as part of Census of India 2021 exercise”.
- A writ petition seeking caste enumeration, filed by one G Mallesh Yadav of Hyderabad, is pending in the Supreme Court, which issued notices on this on February 26 this year.

#### **What has been the current government’s stand?**

- Before his latest statement, Nityanand Rai had told Rajya Sabha on March 10 too: “The Union of India after Independence, decided as a matter of policy not to enumerate caste wise population other than SCs and STs.”
- But on August 31, 2018, following a meeting chaired by then Home Minister Rajnath Singh that reviewed preparations for Census 2021, the Press Information Bureau stated in a statement: “It is also envisaged to collect data on OBC for the first time.”
- When *The Indian Express* filed an RTI request asking for the minutes of the meeting, the Office of Registrar General of India (ORGI) responded: “Records of deliberations in ORGI prior to MHA

(Ministry of Home Affairs) announcement on August 31, 2018 to collect data on OBC is not maintained. There was not issued any minutes of the meeting.”

### **Where did the UPA stand on this?**

- In 2010, then Law Minister Veerappa Moily wrote to then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh calling for collection of caste/community data in Census 2011.
- On March 1, 2011, during a short-duration discussion in Lok Sabha, Home Minister P Chidambaram spoke of several “vexed questions”:
  - There is a Central list of OBCs and State-specific list of OBCs. Some States do not have a list of OBCs; some States have a list of OBCs and a sub-set called Most Backward Classes.
  - The Registrar General has also pointed out that there are certain open-ended categories in the lists such as orphans and destitute children.
  - Names of some castes are found in both the list of Scheduled Castes and list of OBCs.
  - Scheduled Castes converted to Christianity or Islam are also treated differently in different States.
  - The status of a migrant from one State to another and the status of children of inter-caste marriage, in terms of caste classification, are also vexed questions.
- Amid uproarious scenes, the then Prime Minister said: “I assure you that the Cabinet will take a decision shortly.”
- Later, a Group of Ministers was constituted under Finance Minister the late Pranab Mukherjee.
- After several rounds of deliberations, the UPA government decided to go for a full-fledged Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC).

### **What happened to the SECC data, then?**

- With an approved cost of Rs 4,893.60 crore, the SECC was conducted by the Ministry of Rural Development in rural areas and the Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation in urban areas. The SECC data excluding caste data was finalised and published by the two ministries in 2016.
- The raw caste data was handed over to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, which formed an Expert Group under former NITI Aayog Vice-Chairperson Arvind Pangaria for classification and categorisation of data.
- It is not clear whether it submitted its report; no such report has been made public.
- The report of a Parliamentary Committee on Rural Development presented to the Lok Sabha Speaker on August 31, 2016, noted about SECC: “The data has been examined and 98.87 per cent data on individuals’ caste and religion is error free. ORGI has noted incidence of errors in respect of 1,34,77,030 individuals out of total SECC population of 118,64,03,770. States have been advised to take corrective measures.”
- This time, the demand is that castes be enumerated as part of Census 2021 itself.

### **What is the contrary view?**

- The RSS has not made any recent statements on a caste census, but has opposed the idea earlier.
- On May 24, 2010, when the debate on the subject had peaked ahead of Census 2011, then RSS sarkaryawah Suresh Bhaiyaji Joshi had said in a statement from Nagpur: “We are not against registering categories, but we oppose registering castes.”
- He had said a caste-based census is against the idea of a casteless society envisaged by leaders like Babasaheb Ambedkar in the Constitution and will weaken ongoing efforts to create social harmony.

## **Brexit in troubles**

(Source: [The Hindu](#) )

**Context:** *On July 21, the Boris Johnson administration informed the European Union (EU) that it wants to renegotiate the Brexit deal's Northern Ireland Protocol. The EU has ruled out a renegotiation, but says it is open to "practical, flexible solutions".*

### **What's behind Northern Ireland Protocol?**

- The sovereign territory of the U.K. includes England, Wales, Scotland, and what is known as Northern Ireland, which occupies a portion of the island of Ireland.
- The lion's share of the island (26 of the 32 counties) forms the independent Republic of Ireland. Ireland has long seen tensions between the Catholics/Nationalists, who want a unified Irish republic, and the Protestants/Unionists, who are loyal to the British crown.
- The long and violent conflict between the two sides — known as The Troubles — ended with the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, whose fragile peace rests on a principle that Brexit has now disrupted: there won't be a border (and all that entails, such as checkpoints and customs) between Northern Ireland and Ireland.
- Northern Ireland is the only part of the U.K. that shares a land border with the EU, as Ireland is an EU member-state. As long as the U.K. was part of the EU, there was no problem. But Brexit took the U.K. out of the EU's customs union.
- It created a problem whose solution needed two seemingly contradictory outcomes: preserving the sanctity of the EU's single market, as well as that of the U.K.'s domestic market. The Protocol's solution was to avoid a customs check on the island of Ireland.
- Instead, it envisaged a 'sea border' at the ports of Northern Island. Certain goods — meant only for Northern Ireland but not for Ireland, which falls within the EU market — would undergo checks here before entering the island.

### **Why does the U.K. want changes?**

- The creation of an economic barrier between the British mainland and Northern Ireland has affected the free flow of goods between the two. Businesses in Northern Ireland have been complaining about cumbersome paperwork and compliance costs.
- Some British companies would like to avoid the hassle altogether by withdrawing supplies to Northern Ireland.
- All this has angered the Unionists, who see it as another attempt to dilute their links with the U.K., pushing them into the arms of the Irish republic.
- April this year saw rioting in Northern Ireland for nearly two weeks, with government vehicles being burned and 90 police officers injured.
- Clearly, apart from the economic irritants, Brexit seems to have resurrected old sensitivities about political identity, with the Unionists questioning why they alone — among U.K. citizens — should suffer differential treatment.
- While the Johnson regime has expressed concerns over the "febrile" situation in Ireland, the U.S. — which helped broker the 1998 Agreement — has warned the U.K. against disturbing the fragile peace over Brexit.

### **What is Britain proposing?**

- In a nutshell, the U.K. is telling the EU, "Trust us to protect your single market."
- It has proposed five changes to the Protocol: no more checks on goods moving from mainland Britain to Northern Ireland where a business self-certifies that its products are not meant for use in the EU; a dual regime wherein goods made to either U.K. standards or EU standards can circulate anywhere in Ireland;



removal of the need for any ‘export declarations’ on goods going from Northern Ireland to Great Britain; rewriting of the clause in Article 10 that requires the U.K. subsidies that affect trade with Northern Ireland to comply with EU rules; and finally, ending the right of EU institutions such as the European Court of Justice to enforce the Protocol.

### What lies ahead?

- These proposals would be unacceptable to the EU, as they outsource the enforcement of the Protocol — and the European customs union — entirely to the U.K. Besides, it’s only last year that the U.K. signed the Protocol, and given that nothing has changed since then, the EU will insist that the U.K. honour the deal.
- The two sides will certainly seek a solution through talks. But if talks fail, the U.K. could invoke Article 16, which allows the unilateral suspension of a part of the agreement in extreme circumstances.
- In such a scenario, the economic barrier might shift to a land border on the island, which would basically shred the 1998 Agreement, and the peace that came with it.
- Interestingly, one U.K. legislator has admitted that the Northern Ireland Protocol was not a sincere effort to address the problem but merely a ‘fudge’ that sought to close the Brexit deal by kicking the can down the road.
- Now that ‘fudge’ has returned to haunt the Brexiters.

### Where did the Centre go wrong on cooperatives?

(Source: [The Hindu](#) )

**Context:** *The recent Supreme Court verdict striking down a part of the 97th Constitution Amendment, insofar as it dealt with cooperative societies under the domain of the States, has brought the focus on the extent to which the Centre can seek to lay down policy for the functioning of cooperative societies. The correctness of the erstwhile United Progressive Alliance government’s move to amend the Constitution to provide a reformist framework for the functioning of cooperatives is in question.*

### What is the 97th Constitution Amendment?

- The Union government, in its Statement of Objects and Reasons for the amendment, referred to the “weaknesses” in safeguarding the interests of members of cooperatives and the fulfilment of the objectives of these institutions.
- It referred to delayed elections, nomination of office-bearers for long durations, reduced accountability in management and inadequate professionalism in many societies.
- It spoke of the need to initiate fundamental reforms to revitalise these institutions and ensure “their autonomy, democratic functioning and professional management”.
- Recognising that ‘cooperative societies’ came under Entry 32 of the State List in the Seventh Schedule, the Amendment proposed to create a framework for the functioning of cooperative societies. State laws on cooperatives should conform to this framework.
- It introduced Part IXB in the Constitution so that the concept of cooperative societies gains constitutional recognition. It was on the lines of Part IX, which deals with panchayats, and Part IXA, which deals with urban local bodies.
- The idea was to empower Parliament to frame laws for cooperative societies that function across States (multi-State cooperative societies) and State legislatures to make laws for all other cooperative societies falling under their jurisdiction.



- The Amendment set out basic rules such as a maximum of 21 directors in a society, a fixed term of five years for elected members, a six-month cap on the time limit for which a society's board of directors can be kept under supersession or suspension, and reservation of one seat for the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes, and two seats for women on the board of every cooperative society, that is, every society that has members from these sections.

### **What was the legal infirmity in the Amendment?**

- On a legal challenge to the validity of the 97th Amendment, the Gujarat High Court struck down Part IXB in its entirety on two grounds.
- First, the Amendment required not only a two-thirds majority in Parliament, which was obtained, but also had to be ratified by 50% of the State legislatures.
- This was because the Amendment impinged on a subject over which only the State legislatures had law-making powers. In the absence of such ratification, the Part was declared unconstitutional.
- It also ruled that the Part violated the basic structure of the Constitution in that it was in breach of federal principles.

### **What was the Supreme Court's view?**

- The Centre's defence was that the Amendment did not alter the entry in the State List on 'cooperative societies'.
- In fact, it specified that the State legislatures would enact the relevant laws based on a common framework. There was no need for ratification by the Assemblies, as no subject was shifted from the State List to the Central or Concurrent List. However, the Supreme Court rejected the argument.
- The Amendment had the effect of limiting and circumscribing the scope and extent to which States could frame laws on cooperative societies. This impacted on their legislative power and would therefore amount to a change that would require ratification by the Assemblies.
- All three judges on the Bench that heard the Union government's appeals agreed with the Gujarat High Court that the ratification by the State legislatures was required for Part IXB, and in the absence of such ratification, the Part had to be struck down.
- However, the majority, comprising Justices Rohinton F. Nariman and B.R. Gavai, declared the Part inoperative only in respect of cooperative societies that came under the States. It would be valid as far as multi-State cooperative societies were concerned as Parliament had the power to regulate their functioning.
- Justice K.M. Joseph, in his dissenting view, ruled that Part IXB could not be severed into two sections, one covering State cooperatives and the other for multi-State cooperatives.
- It set out a framework for the State cooperatives and only added a clause that in respect of multi-State cooperatives, Parliament will enact the relevant law.
- As the latter provision had no independent life if the portion concerning the State cooperatives was struck down, the 'doctrine of severability' cannot be applied, and the entire Part had to be declared unconstitutional.

### **What now survives in the 97th Amendment?**

- The Amendment added the words "or cooperative societies" to Article 19(1)(c) of the Constitution to expand the fundamental right to form associations or unions to cover cooperative societies too.
- It also added a 'Directive Principle' through Article 43B, which says: "The State shall endeavour to promote voluntary formation, autonomous functioning, democratic control and professional management of cooperative societies." These clauses remain undisturbed.
- In line with the Supreme Court's judgment, Part IXB dealing with cooperative societies will survive, but only with reference to multi-State societies.

### **How does the ruling affect Cooperation Ministry?**



- The Ministry of Cooperation was formed recently, apparently with a view to giving a fillip to the cooperative movement and reforming the functioning of cooperative societies.
- Until now, the subject was dealt with by the Agriculture Ministry. It administered the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002.
- The new Ministry will continue this work. For now, it will not be in a position to compel States to bring their cooperative laws in conformity with the Centre's vision.
- Regarding the fate of the constitutional framework for all cooperative societies in the country, the Centre has the option of re-enacting the Amendment with a two-thirds majority in Parliament and obtaining ratification by 50% of the State legislatures.

### **Evaluating India's options in Afghanistan**

(Source: [The Hindu](#) )

**Context:** *It is not a coincidence that the United States is exiting Afghanistan at the same time that the focus of its foreign policy is shifting to East Asia. There is growing consensus in Washington DC that the U.S., instead of staying engaged in the lost wars, which adds little value to American power, should now urgently prepare itself for the unfolding geopolitical contest with China. America's strategic response to China's rise is its Indo-Pacific strategy, which seeks to build a bloc of Indian and Pacific Ocean democracies aimed at containing China's rise and challenging its high-functioning single party dictatorship. The U.S. wants India to play a key role in this bloc, which along with Australia and Japan, make up the so-called Quad grouping.*

#### **Details:**

- But there is one problem. India, unlike the other members, is the only continental Asian power in the Quad, which shares a contested land border with China and is vulnerable to the geopolitical changes in the Eurasian landmass.
- The U.S. may have retreated from Afghanistan as part of a grand strategy to take on China in maritime Asia, in which it needs India's involvement, and India might find it tempting to join the ranks, especially after China's aggression on the Line of Actual Control last year.
- But the irony is that the American withdrawal and the vacuum it leaves in Afghanistan and continental Asia in general — which is being filled by China and Russia — is reinforcing India's identity as a continental Asian power.
- Barring a brief interregnum in the 1990s, India has historically enjoyed good ties with Afghanistan, which go back to the 1950 Treaty of Friendship. Indian interests and influence suffered when the Taliban, backed by Pakistan, captured Kabul in 1996.
- But India was back in action as soon as the Taliban were ousted from power after the U.S. invasion in 2001. It has made huge investments and commitments ever since, which run into over \$3 billion, and cultivated strong economic and defence ties with the Afghan government.
- Now, it is again staring at uncertainty with the U.S. pullback having effectively changed the balance of power in Afghanistan and the Taliban making rapid territorial gains.
- The U.S.'s strategic objectives in Afghanistan were limited, as U.S. President Joe Biden himself pointed out earlier this month — killing Osama bin Laden and disrupting al-Qaeda networks. Defeating the Taliban and nation-building were part of the neoconservative ideological project, which has evidently failed.
- This means, the U.S., having met its realist objectives, can abandon the Afghan government and exit the theatre — which is what Mr. Biden is doing. But India cannot.



- It has to protect its investments, prevent Afghanistan from becoming another safe haven for anti-India terrorist groups, and also check Pakistan deepening its influence in Kabul.

### **Talking with the Taliban**

- So what should India do? One option, as many commentators have already pointed out, is to hold talks with the Taliban. India has already established contacts with the Taliban in Doha.
- Talking to them would allow New Delhi to seek security guarantees from the insurgents in return for continued development assistance or other pledges (in the 1990s, India had backed the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance) as well as explore the possibility of the Taliban's autonomy from Pakistan.
- At this point, talking to the Taliban looks inevitable. But India should not overlook the deep ties between Pakistan's security establishment and the Haqqani Network, a major faction within the Taliban that's driving the successful campaigns on the battlefield.
- The U.S. overlooked it while fighting the Taliban along with Pakistan, and it paid a heavy price for it.
- There is no guarantee that India's quest for engagement with the Taliban would produce a desirable outcome.
- So India should broad-base its options. While talking to the Taliban to protect its interests, New Delhi should also enhance aid to Afghanistan's legitimate government and security forces and work with other regional powers for long-term stability in the country.

### **Kabul versus the Taliban**

- True, the Taliban now control or contest most of Afghanistan's countryside. But still, it is not a foregone conclusion that they could take Kabul easily. The Afghan military has some 200,000 battle-hardened soldiers, including the highly trained special forces.
- In the cities, which saw relative freedoms and rights compared to the dark period of the Taliban regime, the government, despite its infighting, corruption and incompetence, still commands support. There is no Northern Alliance this time.
- The Taliban have already taken northern districts, including Badakhshan and Takhar. The only force that is standing up to the Taliban is the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces.
- India should urgently step up training Afghan forces and provide military hardware, intelligence and logistical and financial support so that Kabul can continue to defend the cities.
- New Delhi should also coordinate with other regional powers to support the Afghan government because if the government forces crumble before the Taliban, the prospects for a political settlement would be narrowed. Why should a winning Taliban make concessions?

### **Regional solution**

- There is a convergence of interests between India and three key regional players — China, Russia and Iran — in seeing a political settlement in Afghanistan.
- These three countries have already opened public, direct talks with the Taliban. But these contacts are largely tactical in nature. For China, whose restive Xinjiang province shares a border with Afghanistan, a jihadist-oriented Taliban regime would not serve its internal interests.
- Russia, which fears that instability would spill over into the former Soviet Republics, has already moved to secure its Central Asian perimeter.
- For the Shia theocratic Iran, a Sunni Deobandi Taliban with which it had almost gone to war in 1998, will continue to remain an ideological, sectarian and strategic challenge.
- None of these countries would like to see the Taliban taking over Kabul militarily, which means there would be an isolated Sunni Islamist regime in a country with fractured ethnic equations. There would neither be legitimacy for a Taliban regime nor peace in Afghanistan.
- India, to break this impasse, should take a layered approach. Its immediate goal should be the safety and security of its personnel and investments.





- The long-term goal should be finding a political solution to the crisis. And if a political solution is not achieved, it should seek non-conventional methods, like what it did in the 1990s, to offer support to its allies within Afghanistan and retain some influence. None of this can be achieved unless it works together with the regional powers.
- Russia has cultivated links with the Taliban in recent years. India would need Russia's support in any form of direct engagement with the Taliban. When it comes to Afghanistan, Iran is an irreplaceable country.
- It shares a long border with Afghanistan and has built contacts through several stakeholders in the country, especially the ethnic minorities.
- The original objective of India's Chabahar project in Iran was to create a direct access to Afghanistan, bypassing Pakistan.
- This direct access is critical for India in all different scenarios — move supplies to Kabul in larger quantities, retain its presence in the event of a civil war or carry out covert operations if the Taliban take power by force.
- But India, under pressure from the U.S., slowed down on the Chabahar connectivity projects, which finally prompted Iran to drop India and go ahead. Building strategic ties with Iran, irrespective of the U.S.'s policy towards the Islamic Republic, is essential for India's Afghan bets.
- Finally, India should talk with China, with the objective of finding a political settlement and lasting stability in Afghanistan.
- Central to this approach is India striking the right balance between its continental realities and the U.S.'s pivot to maritime Asia.
- The U.S., and the West in general, are done with Afghanistan. India, as one of the countries that would be impacted by the consequences of American withdrawal, has to work with Eurasian powers to protect its interests and stabilise Afghanistan.

### **No need for a drastic population policy**

(Source: [The Hindu](#) )

**Context:** *Population policy is suddenly in the news in India with Bharatiya Janata Party-ruled States such as Assam and Uttar Pradesh proposing to bring in or bringing in draft legislation aimed at controlling their populations. The Uttar Pradesh Population (Control, Stabilisation and Welfare) Bill of 2021 promotes a two-child policy, according to which those people having more than two children will be barred from contesting local body elections and become ineligible to apply for State government jobs. A similar law has also been proposed in Assam, where the Chief Minister has even announced a 'population army' to curb the birth rate in Muslim-dominated areas in lower Assam. The U.P. Chief Minister has said that the aim of the policy is to reduce the total fertility rate in his State.*

#### **Details:**

- The Chief Ministers of these States don't seem to have read the document on population projection, published by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2019.
- According to this document, U.P. will reach a replacement rate (the rate at which women give birth to enough babies to sustain population levels) of 2.1 by 2025, and Assam by 2020.
- If the replacement fertility rate has already been achieved in Assam and will be achieved by 2025 in U.P., what is the need for any drastic population policy?

#### **Decreasing fertility rates**

- The need arises because population policy is an important weapon in the arsenal of the Hindutva brigade to attack the Muslim population in the country.

- The Assam Chief Minister's 'population army' in Muslim areas and the U.P. Chief Minister's many utterances prove this.
- However, even on this score, their policy framework is wrong. According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-2 data, the total fertility rate (TFR), which is the average number of children that women of reproductive age group have had in their lifetime, in 1998-99 in U.P. was 3.87 for Hindus and 4.76 for Muslims.
- In 2015-16, it decreased to 2.67 for Hindus and 3.1 for Muslims. This means that the TFR declined by 1.2 for Hindus and by 1.66 for Muslims, which is higher. The NFHS-5 data for 2019-20 for U.P. have not been published.
- When it is published, data will show that the fertility rate for both Hindus and Muslims has declined even further.
- The fertility trend for Assam is even starker. According to NFHS data, Assam had a TFR of 3.5 in 1992-93, which decreased to 1.9 in 2019-20.
- Even after such a drastic decline in TFR, the Chief Minister's enthusiasm to decrease it even further has no merit other than scoring political points based on a distorted notion of religious demography. In 1998-99, the TFR for Hindus in Assam was 2.0, which declined to 1.59 in 2019-20.
- For Muslims, it declined from 3.05 to 2.38 in the same period. While the fertility rate of Hindus is less than the replacement level, the fertility rate of Muslims is near that level and will reach there in the near future without any policy intervention.
- The point is that fertility rate does not depend on religion. It depends on socio-economic characteristics like education, income, maternal and child health conditions, and other associated factors. The graphs above show this in a concise manner.
- We have taken the district-wise fertility rates for Hindus and Muslims in four States: U.P., Assam, West Bengal and Bihar (calculated from NFHS-4 2015-16 data). The horizontal axis shows the fertility rate for Hindus and the vertical axis shows the fertility rate for Muslims.
- It is clear from the graphs that there is a positive relationship between the fertility rates of Hindus and Muslims.
- In other words, in districts where Hindus have a high fertility rate, the fertility rate of Muslims is also high. This cannot be explained by religion but by socio-economic factors in these districts. It is also clear that there are districts in these four States where the fertility rate for Hindus is actually higher than that of Muslims.
- The fertility rate of Hindus is greater than Muslims in four districts of Assam, 11 districts of Bihar, 22 of U.P. and three of West Bengal. Therefore, to stigmatise Muslims in terms of population growth and breeding more children is a figment of the right-wing imagination and not supported by facts.

### **Preference for a male child**

- The preceding discussion pointed out that the population control policy of imposing a two-child norm is not supported by data. However, it can have other unintended consequences.
- Generally, any discussion on fertility focuses on policy recommendations regarding increasing female education, which is no doubt important.
- However, a single-minded focus on this policy instrument ignores the issue of a preference for male children, which is dominant in the country.
- An earlier study of women's fertility in Hindi heartland States showed that the proportion of graduate women who had two living daughters but still wanted another child was 23.7% in Bihar, 27.3% in U.P. and 28.3% in Rajasthan.
- This is nothing but an indicator of a preference for sons in a patriarchal and caste-dominated society.
- Given such a preference for male children, the two-child norm will only increase sex-selective abortions of girl children, and female infanticide, since couples will want to maintain both the two-child norm as proposed to be enacted by the government as well as their preference for sons.

### Problem of ageing

- The experience of China also shows that if the state imposes its decision on families' fertility choices, such a decision is bound to fail. With the one-child policy, the proportion of the aged population is increasing in China.
- Fewer younger workers are available, which might result in a slowdown of economic growth. As a result, the government has been forced to relax the one-child policy and adopt a three-child policy.
- In India too, as per the population projection report, the proportion of people aged 60 years and above will increase from 13.8% in 2011 to 23.1% in 2036. The two-child norm will only further aggravate the problem of ageing.
- The lesson to be drawn is that the decision on children is best made by the family, which can be nudged towards making choices that ensure a stable population growth. As a famous demographer argued, the fertility behaviour of a couple is a "calculus of conscious choice".
- India's decades-old population policy has achieved replacement level fertility in the country without taking any coercive measures.
- Governments should have faith in these time-tested policies and respect the choices of people rather than impose warped and motivated ideas regarding demography on the people.

### **The long road to winning the battle against trafficking**

(Source: [The Hindu](#) )

**Context:** July 30 is United Nations World Day against Trafficking in Persons. It is also a time to reflect on India's human trafficking crisis. Between April 2020 and June 2021, an estimated 9,000 children have been rescued after being trafficked for labour, according to a child rights non-governmental organisation (NGO). In other words, 21 children have been trafficked every day over nearly 15 months. The Childline India helpline received 44 lakh distress calls over 10 months. Over a year, 2,000 children have arrived at its shelter homes and 800 rescued from hazardous working conditions.

### Increased vulnerability

- The media frequently publishes individual stories of trafficking. Children as young as 12 are trafficked across States to work in factories in appalling conditions, where owners are turning to cheap labour to recoup their losses from the novel coronavirus pandemic.
- In November 2020, four children, between 12 and 16 years, died after being trafficked for labour from Bihar to Rajasthan; some of them had injuries from beatings.
- Child marriages are also rampant — over 10,000 cases were tracked between April and August 2020. In Madhya Pradesh, about 391 child marriages were stopped in April-May 2021, while in Odisha, 726 child marriages were prevented between January-May 2021.
- A child rights NGO, working with the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights has highlighted the problem of rampant child labour. In a certain stretch within the national capital, at least 120 children can be seen working. The factors causing increased vulnerability are identifiable.
- Its report states: "The [corona] virus has resulted in loss of income and economic crisis, causing families' reduced capacity to care for children in the long-term. It has also caused, in some instances, loss of parental care due to death, illness or separation, thereby placing children at heightened risk for violence, neglect or exploitation."
- These factors are compounded by an erosion of some of the checks against child labour and child marriage provided by law, as well as the scrutiny of schools and society.

- The increase in Internet access in current times has also led to cyber-trafficking. An August 2020 report by a member of a child rights group in India notes that popular social media platforms and free messaging apps are often used to contact young people.
- Often, the trafficker or middleman lures the person to a place under the pretext of offering him employment. Once removed from their locality, they face challenges of limited resources, unfamiliarity with the area and perhaps the local language.
- Threats of violence from the trafficker, and, importantly, the absence of any identifiable authority to approach other than the police — who are often seen as threats themselves — make it nearly impossible for trafficked persons to report the incident.
- A recent report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on the effects of the pandemic on trafficking echoes these findings. It says, traffickers are taking advantage of the loss of livelihoods and the increasing amount of time spent online to entrap victims, including by advertising false jobs on social media. In addition, there is an increased demand for child sexual exploitation material online due to lockdowns.

#### **Scant data, other gaps**

- The Government admitted in Parliament as recently as March 2021 that it does not maintain any national-level data specific to cyber trafficking cases. The efficacy of certain schemes launched by the Ministry of Home Affairs to improve investigation and prosecution of cyber crimes remains to be seen.
- India is still classified by the U.S. Department of State as a Tier-2 country in its report on global human trafficking.
- This means that the Government does not fully meet the minimum standards under U.S. and international law for eliminating trafficking, but is making significant efforts to comply. The lack of implementation is illustrated by the state of the Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs).
- AHTUs are specialised district task forces comprising police and government officials. In 2010, it was envisioned that 330 AHTUs would be set up (<https://bit.ly/3rEwouF>). RTI responses in August 2020 showed that about 225 AHTUs had been set up, but only on paper.
- If properly staffed and funded, AHTUs could provide crucial ground-level data on the methods and patterns of traffickers, which in turn can strengthen community-based awareness and vigilance activities. Global practices such as in Nigeria, Africa, should be encouraged in India, in consonance with a larger framework to protect women and children by incentivising education and creating safe employment opportunities.

#### **Draft Bill, judicial issues**

- With focus now shifting to the new draft anti-trafficking Bill, the point to be highlighted is that there is no shortage of anti-trafficking policy in India.
- Where the system is found lacking is in the implementation of the laws. Significant discussion is required on the provisions of the Bill, particularly with respect to bringing in the National Investigation Agency and increasing the punishment for offences, including the death penalty as an option in some cases.
- It is not proven that more stringent laws, particularly the death penalty, have any greater deterrent effect on crime.
- The draft Bill also provides for AHTUs/committees at the national, State and district levels, but as noted, their effective functioning cannot be taken for granted. Legislating without the political will to implement and monitor effectiveness is futile.
- Special attention must also be paid to the challenges prosecutors and judges face in trafficking cases. There were 140 acquittals and only 38 convictions in 2019, according to government data. This points to a failure of investigation and cannot be solved by the draft Bill's provision that accused traffickers must be presumed guilty unless they can prove the contrary.



- Further, trials can drag on for years, with victims sometimes withdrawing their complaints after being intimidated by traffickers. Proper case management must be introduced to give meaning to the “fast track” courts.
- Other problems include the low number of beneficiaries of monetary compensation and the lack of consistent access to psychological counselling. Parts of the draft Bill recognise the importance of rehabilitation, but implementation is key.
- Most victims of trafficking are from low-income communities for whom the novel coronavirus pandemic and lockdowns have caused long-term financial distress. With schools continuing to be closed in much of India and no definite end to the pandemic in sight, it cannot be assumed that incidents of trafficking will decline with a return to “normalcy”.
- That apart, the failure of existing institutional mechanisms to foresee the present crisis should spur the Government and other stakeholders to take preventive action now. July 30 should be the beginning of the end of human trafficking in India.

## GS III

### Lessons from India's food security response

(Source: [The Hindu](#) )

**Context:** *With a reduction in COVID-19 infections as the second wave weakens in India, it is important to focus on the pandemic's disruptive impact on the food security and livelihoods of the poor and marginalised.*

#### **Details:**

- The deadly virus has been around for two years and it is not clear as to how and when it will end.
- However, we do have enough in terms of a hindsight analysis of policies and interventions that promise food and livelihood security, along with the strengthening of health support, for millions facing the wrath of the pandemic.
- It is imperative to also note an alarming escalation in the global hunger that is unfolding right now. There was a 'dramatic worsening' of world hunger in 2020, much of it likely related to the fallout of COVID-19.
- While the pandemic's impact has yet to be fully mapped, a multi-agency report, 'The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World', estimates that around a tenth of the global population – up to 81.1 crore persons – were undernourished last year.
- India has made enormous progress in food production over the years, with an inspiring journey towards self-sufficiency in food production marked by the Green Revolution.
- In 2020, India produced over 30 crore tonnes of cereals and had built up a food stock of 10 crore tonnes. The country has registered record harvests over the last few years. India exported a record 1.98 crore tonnes of rice and wheat in FY21.

#### **Pivoting safety nets**

- Coming to the impact of COVID-19's fallout, vulnerable and marginalised families in India continued to be buffered against the food crisis by its robust Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).
- Key measures initiated by the Union government included allowing the States to lift their allocations for six months in one go, in anticipation of a surge in demand for foodgrains through the public distribution system.
- As data shows, there was an unprecedented spike in the uptake of subsidised and free foodgrains during the lockdown. The public distribution system became a lifeline for millions hit by the pandemic.

#### **Increase entitlements**

- A dynamic analysis of the food security scenario and feedback from different stakeholders allowed the Government of India to increase entitlements given to National Food Security Act (NFSA) beneficiaries in 2020.
- For instance, under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), 81.3 crore NFSA beneficiaries received an additional 5 kg of foodgrains per person per month and 1 kg of pulses per family per month, free of cost, for eight months from April to November 2020.
- Under the Atmanirbhar Bharat package, 8 crore migrants were provided 5 kg of foodgrains per month, free of cost.
- The government also allowed NGOs/civil society organisations to buy rice and wheat at subsidised prices directly from nearby Food Corporation of India (FCI) warehouses.
- Rice was sold at ₹22 per kg (market price is ₹35 per kg) and wheat at ₹21 per kg (market price is ₹27 per kg) last year.

- The PMGKAY was introduced in 2020 for eight months to provide relief to 80 crore beneficiaries covered under NFSA from COVID-induced economic hardships. The scheme was reintroduced this year for the third phase implementation for two months till June, and later extended till November under the fourth phase.
- During the third phase of PMGKAY, about 89% of the allocated foodgrains were distributed to beneficiaries.
- The distribution reached 94% in May. Implemented for eight months last year and for seven months this year, the PMGKAY outlay will add up to a total expenditure of ₹2,28,000 crore over 15 months.

### Addressing challenges

- The COVID-19 pandemic has once again drawn attention to addressing the aspects of access and portability of food entitlements. It is critical to leave no one behind in times such as these and crucial for states to find solutions so that no one goes hungry.
- Ensuring that food support focuses on at-risk groups, including persons with disabilities, the elderly, single women-led households, transgender persons, HIV-affected persons, displaced persons, refugees and orphan children, is at the heart of 'Leave No One Behind'.
- The scale of India's public food distribution systems is immense and has gone through constant navigation and improvement, which is commendable. But more needs to still be done to improve access and inclusion among the missing vulnerable population.

### Way ahead

- First, the introduction of the One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) scheme is an innovation that can be a game changer, allowing beneficiaries to access their food entitlements from anywhere in the country.
  - This is especially important for a country like India with a massive mobile population and migration between States.
  - The scheme takes the massive digitisation of the supply chain, distribution and access to the next step, ensuring anyone benefits from anywhere in India.
- Second, climate change will continue to affect agriculture and food security, and the impact on the poor and vulnerable can be devastating.
  - Massive efforts are needed towards programmes that focus on building resilient agriculture that is adaptive to changing weather and needs through the introduction of newer varieties of crops, efficient irrigation systems, and the promotion of crops as per the agro-climate zones.
- Thirdly, a third of all food produced is wasted.
  - There should be enhanced efforts to prevent losses.
  - Lost or wasted energy used for food production accounts for about 10% of the world's total energy consumption, and annual greenhouse gas emissions associated with food losses and food waste reaches to around 3.5 gigatonnes of the CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent.
- Finally, 2021 offers a unique opportunity for advancing food security and nutrition through transforming food systems with the upcoming UN Food Systems Summit, the Nutrition for Growth Summit and the COP26 on climate change.
  - The outcomes of these events will certainly shape the actions of the second half of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition. India has a central role to play in this transformation and offering experiences and solutions to address the thought processes and models for a resilient, equitable, and food-secure world.

## Current Affairs Quiz

1) Consider the following statements with respect to UNESCO Heritage Sites:

1. Ahmedabad and Jaipur has been selected by UNESCO under Historic Urban Landscape Project.
2. English Port city Liverpool has been removed from list of world heritage sites due to concerns of overdevelopment.

Which of the statements given above is/are incorrect?

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

Answer : a

Recently Gwalior and Orchha cities have been selected by UNESCO under Historic Urban Landscape Project for inclusive development.

2) Renewable Integration in India Report is launched by NITI Aayog &-

- a. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- b. International Renewable Energy Agency (IREA)
- c. International Energy Agency (IEA)
- d. Energy Information Administration (EIA)

Answer : c

3) Which of the following statements is/are correct with respect to Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) Platinum Rating?

1. It has been awarded for green master planning, policy initiatives and implementation of green infrastructure by Confederation of Indian Industry's (CII's) IGBC.
2. Kandla SEZ (KASEZ) is the First Green SEZ to achieve the IGBC Green Cities Platinum Rating for Existing Cities.

Codes:

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

Answer : c

4) Which of the following statements is/are correct with respect to Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme?

1. It aims to improve the quality of technical education system in India.
2. It is a project implemented by the Ministry of Education in association with World Bank.

Code:

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

Answer : c

5) Which of the following statements is/are correct with respect to Special Economic Zones?





1. Board of Approval is the apex body of SEZ and is headed by the Secretary, Department of Commerce.
2. The Baba Kalyani led committee was constituted to evaluate the SEZ policy towards making it WTO compatible.

Codes:

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

Answer : c

6) Which of the following statements is/are correct with respect to Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD)?

1. It is the amount of dissolved oxygen needed by microorganisms to decompose organic matter under aerobic reaction.
2. The quality of water increases with an increase in Dissolved Oxygen levels.
3. The more organic matter like sewage and polluted bodies of water means the lesser is the BOD.

Codes:

- a. 1 & 2 only
- b. 2 & 3 only
- c. 1 & 3 only
- d. All of the above

Answer : a

The more organic matter there is (e.g., in sewage and polluted bodies of water), the greater is the BOD.

7) Which of the following statements are correct with respect to Gatekeeper Model?

- a. It is developed to block malicious software
- b. It is proposed to avoid strikes in public companies
- c. It aims to prevent suicides in Prison
- d. It is used by farmers to prevent Human-Wild animal conflict

Answer : c

- National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) issued guidelines on the management of mental health issues of the prisoners and prison staff.
- It recommended the gatekeeper model where selected inmates trained to identify prisoners at risk of suicide, would refer them to treatment or supportive service.

8) Kakatiya Ramappa Temple is situated in -

- a. Andhra Pradesh
- b. Karnataka
- c. Maharashtra
- d. Telangana

Answer : d

9) Which of the following statements is/are correct with respect to Marine Aids to Navigation Bill, 2021?

1. The bill which replaces the Lighthouse Act, 1927 applies to the whole of India including territorial waters, continental shelf, and exclusive economic zone.
2. The Bill provides that no person shall be allowed to operate on any aid to navigation or any vessel traffic service in any place unless he holds a valid training certificate.

Select the correct answer code:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only

- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer : c

10) Which of the following statements is/are correct with respect to Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Care and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2021?

- 1. Under the bill, the National Investigation Agency (NIA), a counter-terrorism agency, has been made the nodal investigative agency for trafficking crimes.
- 2. The Bill proposed a provision of separate protection and rehabilitation homes for transgender.
- 3. Under the bill, consent of the victim shall be irrelevant and immaterial in determination of the offence of trafficking in persons.

Codes:

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

Answer : d

11) Consider the following statements with respect to Nauka:

- 1. It is the biggest space laboratory and primary research facility of China.
- 2. It is a part of Harmony of the Heaven, the core module of Tiangong Space Station.

Select the CORRECT answer code:

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

Answer : d

Russia's space agency Roscosmos had recently launched the Nauka module.

Nauka was launched from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan using a Proton rocket, is scheduled to be integrated with the ISS.

12) Consider the following statements :

- 1. Dholavira is the second largest metropolis of IVC.
- 2. Graves in Dholavira have no mortal remains of humans.
- 3. The decline of Dholavira also coincided with the collapse of Mesopotamia.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are true?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. All of the above

Answer : c

After Mohen-jo-Daro, Ganweriwala and Harappa in Pakistan and Rakhigarhi in Haryana of India, Dholavira is the 5th largest metropolis of IVC.

13) Consider the following statements with respect to Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment Bill):

- 1. It introduced an alternate insolvency resolution process for MSMEs called the Pre-packaged Insolvency Resolution Process (PIRP).
- 2. Distressed Corporate Debtors (CDs) are permitted to initiate a PIRP with the approval of two-thirds of their creditors.
- 3. The PIRP allows for a Swiss challenge to the resolution plan submitted in case operational creditors are not paid 100 % of their outstanding dues.

Select the CORRECT answer code:

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

Answer : d

14) Which of the following pairs is/are correctly matched?

- | Products           | – States      |
|--------------------|---------------|
| 1. Raja Mircha     | – Karnataka   |
| 2. Kaji Nemu       | – Uttarakhand |
| 3. Mithila Makhana | – Bihar       |

Code:

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

Answer : a

Raja Mircha – Nagaland

Kaji Nemu - Assam

15) Consider the following statements:

- 1. Monkey Pox is a viral zoonotic disease endemic to Nigeria.
- 2. It can be transmitted to humans with no specific treatment or vaccine available.

Select the CORRECT answer code:

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

Answer : c

16) Consider the following statements with respect to Gharib Nawaz Employment Scheme:

- 1. It was launched by Ministry of Minority Affairs.
- 2. It offers monthly stipend during job training and post placement support even after getting employment.

Which of the statements given above is/are incorrect?

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

Answer : d

Both statements are correct

17) Deposit Insurance Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) provides insurance cover on bank deposits in

- 1. All Scheduled Commercial Banks
- 2. All Cooperative Societies
- 3. All Foreign Banks
- 4. All Regional Rural Banks
- 5. All Non-Banking Financial Institutions

Codes:

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

Answer : c

18) Consider the following statements with respect to Right to be Forgotten:

- 1. It has been recognised as a statutory right in the European Union under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- 2. In India Information Technology Act, 2000 specifically provides for the right to be forgotten.

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

In India, there is no law that specifically provides for the right to be forgotten. However, the Personal Data Protection Bill 2019 recognised this right.

Information Technology Act, 2000 provides for safeguard against certain breaches in relation to data from computer systems.

19) Consider the following statements with respect to Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Bill, 2021:

- 1. The Bill empowers District Magistrate and Additional District Magistrate to issue adoption orders.
- 2. The Bill made that an offence which is punishable with imprisonment between three to seven years will be non-cognizable.

Select the CORRECT answer code:

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

Answer : c

20) Which of the following statements is/are incorrect with respect to Earth Overshoot Day?

- 1. UN-Environment Programme (UNEP) partnered with World Wide fund for Nature to launch the first global Earth Overshoot Day campaign.
- 2. Earth Overshoot Day is computed by dividing the planet's bio capacity by humanity's Ecological Footprint and multiplying by 365.

Codes:

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

Answer : a

UK think tank New Economics Foundation, partnered with Global Footprint Network in 2006 to launch the first global Earth Overshoot Day campaign.