

NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC**Sexual Harassment at Workplace**

The Group of Ministers (GoM) headed by Home Minister Amit Shah, which was constituted to strengthen the legal framework to prevent sexual harassment at the workplace, has finalised its recommendations which will be put up for comments from the public soon.

Sexual Harassment of Women and Workplace Act, 2013:

- The Women and Child Development Ministry had steered the Sexual Harassment of Women and Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act in 2013, which was applicable to government offices, the private sector, NGOs and the unorganised sector.
- It made the employer responsible to prevent or deter acts of sexual harassment at the workplace.
- The 2013 Act had shortcomings like giving the powers of a civil court to the internal complaints committee without specifying if the members need to have a legal background. It only imposed a fine of Rs. 50,000 on employers for non-compliance.
- The Act said the employer shall provide assistance to the woman if she chooses to file a complaint under the IPC “against the perpetrator after the conclusion of the enquiry”.
- The proposed amendments would be largely based on the Vishaka Guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court in 1997, on which the 2013 Act was based.

Incidence:

- As per National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) the number of sexual harassment incidents at “work or office premises” registered under Section 509 IPC (words, gesture or act to insult the modesty of a woman) were 479 and 401 in the years 2017 and 2018 respectively.
- Among the cities, the highest number of such cases were registered in Delhi (28), Bengaluru (20), Pune (12) and Mumbai (12) in 2018.
- The total number of sexual harassment incidents in 2018 including that in public places, shelter homes and others was 20,962.

Pulse Polio Programme

The Union health ministry launched this year’s Pulse Polio Programme.

About:

- Polio or poliomyelitis is a highly infectious viral disease, which mainly affects young children.
- The virus is transmitted by person-to-person, spread mainly through the faecal-oral route or, less frequently, by a common vehicle (e.g. contaminated water or food) and multiplies in the intestine, from where it can invade the nervous system and can cause paralysis.
- Initial symptoms of polio include fever, fatigue, headache, vomiting, stiffness in the neck, and pain in the limbs. In a small proportion of cases, the disease causes paralysis, which is often permanent.
- There is no cure for polio, it can only be prevented by immunization.

Pulse Polio programme:

- India launched the Pulse Polio immunisation programme in 1995, after a resolution for a global initiative of polio eradication was adopted by the World Health Assembly (WHA) in 1988.
- Children in the age group of 0-5 years are administered polio drops during national and sub-national immunisation rounds (in high-risk areas) every year.
- The last polio case in the country was reported from Howrah district of West Bengal in 2011. The WHO in 2012, removed India from the list of countries with active endemic wild polio virus transmission. In 2014, the South-East Asia Region of the WHO, of which India is a part, was certified as polio-free.
- To prevent the virus from coming to India, the government has since March 2014 made the Oral Polio Vaccination (OPV) mandatory for those travelling between India and polio-affected countries, such as Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Syria and Cameroon.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**Development Support Services To States For Infrastructure Projects (D3S-I)**

NITI Aayog entered into a MoU with the UT of Ladakh for Development of Infrastructure Projects in the UT through its key initiative ‘Development Support Services to States for Infrastructure Projects (D3S-i)’.

About:

- NITI Aayog has implemented a structured initiative for “Development Support Services for States (DSSS) for Infrastructure Projects” with a vision to achieve transformational, sustained delivery of infrastructure projects with state of art capacity disseminated at all levels of governance.
- The key objective behind the objective is creating PPP success stories and rebooting infrastructure project delivery models
- The DSSS Infrastructure initiative involves providing project level support from Concept plan till financial closure to State Governments / UTs.

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES**Northern White Rhinos**

Researchers have created another embryo — the third — of the nearly extinct northern white rhino, a remarkable success in an ongoing global mission to keep the species from going extinct.

About:

- The death of Sudan in 2018, who was earlier at the Dvur Králové Zoo in the Czech Republic, left the world with only two northern white rhinos, Najin, 30, and Fatu, 19 — both female.
- The northern white is one of the two subspecies of the white (or square-lipped) rhinoceros, which once roamed several African countries south of the Sahara.
- According to IUCN, the subspecies is considered Critically Endangered (Possibly Extinct in the Wild).
- The other subspecies, the southern white is, by contrast, the most numerous subspecies of rhino, and is found primarily in South Africa. There is also the black (or hook-lipped) rhinoceros in Africa, which too, is fighting for survival, and at least three of whose subspecies are already extinct.

Related Info : The Indian rhinoceros is different from its African cousins, most prominently in that it has only one horn. There is also a Javan rhino, which too, has one horn, and a Sumatran rhino which, like the African rhinos, has two horns.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE ETC**K-4 Missile**

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully test-fired a 3,500-km range submarine-launched ballistic missile, K-4.

About:

- K-4 is one of the two underwater missiles that were being developed by DRDO. The other one is the over 700 kilometre strike range BO-5 missile.
- The missile has been tested several times earlier as part of developmental trials to validate different parameters.
- Once inducted, these missiles will be the mainstay of the Arihant class of indigenous ballistic missile nuclear submarines and will give India the stand-off capability to launch nuclear weapons submerged in Indian waters.
- INS Arihant, the first and only operational SSBN, is armed with K-15 Sagarika missiles with a range of 750 km.

Important Info :

- The test was conducted from a submerged pontoon off the Visakhapatnam coast. A pontoon simulates the situation of a launch from a submarine.
- According to DRDO, there are very few countries which have managed to achieve this technological breakthrough with India's Circular Error Probability (CEP) is much more sophisticated than Chinese missiles. The CEP determines the accuracy of a missile. The lower the CEP, the more accurate the missile is.
- SSBN is the US Navy hull classification symbol for a nuclear-powered, ballistic missile-carrying submarine. The SS denotes "submarine" or "submersible", the B denotes "ballistic missile," and the N denotes "nuclear powered."

Centre For Excellence in Blockchain Technology

National Informatics Centre (NIC) has set up the Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Blockchain Technology in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

About:

- Blockchain technology is upcoming & niche technology and adoption of the same in sectors such as health, finance, agriculture and various other sectors would aid the government in implementing various programmes and provide trust and immutability to the assets.
- The CoE has developed Blockchain based Proof of Concepts (PoCs) for select government use cases to understand potential benefits provided by this emerging technology.
- With National Informatics Centre (NIC) providing a robust and an agile infrastructure, the CoE shall also provide Blockchain as a Service (BaaS) for efficient hosting of Blockchain network.

PRELIMS SPECIFIC FACTS- INDICES, DAYS, EVENTS, AWARDS ETC**National Highways Excellence Awards**

Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways presented the 'National Highways Excellence Awards' to outstanding performers in National Highways (NH) sector.

About:

- 'National Highways Excellence Awards' were instituted in the year 2018. Following the success of the first cycle of awards in 2018, the Ministry decided to make the National Highways Excellence Awards an annual feature.

- The aim is to recognise companies which are performing exceptionally well in the construction, operations, maintenance and tolling stages of highway development as well as in the arena of road safety.

The seven award categories are:

- Excellence in Project Management,
- Excellence in Operation and Maintenance,
- Excellence in Toll Management,
- Excellence in Highway Safety,
- Innovation,
- Outstanding Work in Challenging Conditions, and
- Green Highway.

National Road Safety Week

Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways alongwith National Safety Council of India (NSC) observed the 31st National Road Safety Week from 11th January to 17th January 2020 for generating awareness about safe road usage. The theme of this year was "Bringing Change Through Youth".

National Safety Council of India (NSC):

- National Safety Council (NSC) was set up by the Ministry of Labour, Government of India (GOI) in 1966 to generate, develop and sustain a voluntary movement on Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) at the national level.
- It is an apex nonprofit making, autonomous body, registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860 and the Bombay Public Trust Act 1950.
- It is managed by a tripartite 51-member Board of Governors headed by the Chairman, nominated by the Government of India.

ODISHA DEVELOPMENT

Irrawaddy Dolphins

Odisha Forest Department officials sighted 146 endangered Irrawaddy dolphins in Chilika Lake, which boasts of the highest single lagoon population of the aquatic mammal in the world.

About:

- Scientific name: Orcaella Brevirostris.
- These dolphins have a bulging forehead, SHORT BEAK, and 12-19 teeth on each side of both jaws. They pop out their head out of the water to breathe, followed by its back; the tail is rarely seen.
- Habitats: Lakes, Rivers, Estuaries, and Coasts.
- Regions where they are found: Coastal areas in South and Southeast Asia, and in three river namely The Irrawaddy (Myanmar), the Mahakam (Indonesian Borneo) and the Mekong.
- Population: The total population of these animals in the world is estimated to be less than 7,500. Of these, the highest — 6,400 — was reported from Bangladesh. The population in Chilika is considered to be the highest single lagoonal population.
- Threat: Dolphins had been under stress in Chilika due to unregulated boating by tourists as well as illegal prawn enclosures.
- IUCN Status: Endangered.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. Examine the specificities of Indian culture and society. What are the changes that you observe in society over recent decades?

Ans

Indian Society and Culture exhibit many unique features that make diverse, united and a natural physio-cultural nation state.

- Demography: India is still in the third stage of demographic transition with a relatively young population cohort. This presents the situation of demographic dividend.
- Caste System: Predominantly observed in Hindu Society but has affected other religions as well. Such societal division is rooted in the varna system of ancient times, but have gone transition resulting in numerous jatis and subdivision today.
- Family and Kinship is a central social institution and generally governed by patriarchal norms, exceptions exist like the matrilineal system in Kerala and Meghalaya.
- Commerce had been closely linked with caste and community setup like Baniyas, Banjaras.
- Cultural Diversity: Religion, Lingual, Racial, Tribal etc. have been ethos and cherished values.

Such a social setup has been going through changes post-independence, more intensely in the era of Globalisation.

- Social phenomena of Sanskritization, increasing urbanisation is changing the traditional caste hierarchy. These at times become reasons for conflict, especially in the form of movements against social inequality and discrimination.
- India's population growth has been declining since 2011. The adverse child sex ratio presents the dilemma of prevalent son preference among the educated middle class.
- Individualism, consumerism is changing the family structure from joint towards nuclear.
- Globalisation, Liberalisation era has ushered in more liberal values, as a result phenomenon of Westernization, Capitalism is changing preferences that affect social and cultural values and norms, especially among the younger cohort of the population.

Way Forward: The effect of such changes is both; positive like Glocalization, adoption of Indian practices and values by the Western world like Yoga etc., negative like development's adverse effect of tribal identity, Communalism etc. It's important to encash over gains and resolve challenges with constitutional principles.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQs

- With reference to the Sexual Harassment of Women and Workplace Act, 2013, consider the following statements:
 - It made the employer responsible to prevent or deter acts of sexual harassment at the workplace.
 - It only imposed a fine of Rs. 50,000 on employers for non-compliance.
 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
- With reference to the Irrawaddy dolphins, consider the following statements:
 - The population in Chilika is considered to be the highest single lagoonal population.
 - It is listed as vulnerable on IUCN Red list.
 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
- With reference to the K-4 missile, consider the following statements:
 - It is one of the two underwater missiles that were being developed by DRDO.
 - The range of K-4 missile is 750km.
 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
- National Informatics Centre (NIC) has recently set up the Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Blockchain Technology in:
 - Bengaluru
 - Delhi
 - Mumbai
 - Kochi
- With reference to the 'Development Support Services to States for Infrastructure Projects (D3S-i)', consider the following statements:
 - It is an initiative of NITI Aayog.
 - The key objective behind the objective is creating PPP success stories and rebooting infrastructure project delivery models.
 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
- With reference to the National Safety Council of India (NSC), consider the following statements:
 - It was set up by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways in 1966.
 - It is an apex nonprofit making, autonomous body, registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860 and the Bombay Public Trust Act 1950.
 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
- With reference to the 'National Highways Excellence Awards', consider the following statements:
 - It was instituted in the year 2018.
 - The aim is to recognise companies which are performing exceptionally well in the construction, operations, maintenance and tolling stages of highway development as well as in the arena of road safety.
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- With reference to the 'Northern White Rhino', consider the following statements:
 - It is listed as vulnerable on IUCN Red list.
 - The Indian rhinoceros is different from its African rhinos, most prominently in that it has only one horn.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
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 (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2