

**NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC****Dropout Rate In Schools**

The Ministry of Human Resource Development released state-wise figures of the dropout rate in schools in Lok Sabha.

**About:**

- The dropout rate in schools is the highest in Assam, at both primary and secondary levels.
- The dropout rate in Assam at primary level was 10.1% in 2017-18, followed by Arunachal Pradesh (8.1), Mizoram (8), Uttar Pradesh (8) and Tamil Nadu (5.9).
- At secondary level, Assam's dropout rate was 33.7%, followed by Bihar (32), Odisha (28.3), Tripura (27.2) and Karnataka (24.3).

**Gender breakup:**

- The dropout rate among boys in primary schools in Assam was 11.2%, followed by Arunachal Pradesh (10). For girls at primary level, the highest five dropout rates were in Assam (8.9), followed by Mizoram (7.4).
- At secondary level, the dropout rates for boys were 32.1% in Assam, followed by Bihar (30.3). Among girls in secondary school, the highest five dropout rates were in Assam (35.2%), followed by Bihar (33.7)

**National Means-Cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme (Nmmss)**

Union Minister for Human Resource Development informed Rajya Sabha about the National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme (NMMSS).

**About:**

- Type: Central Sector Scheme.
- Implemented since: 2008.
- Objective: to award scholarships to meritorious students of economically weaker sections to arrest their drop out at class VIII and encourage them to continue the study at secondary stage.
- Features: Under the Scheme one lakh fresh scholarships @ of Rs.12000/- per annum per student are awarded to selected students of class IX every year and their continuation/renewal in classes X to XII for study in a State Government, Government-aided and Local body schools.

**National Scholarship Portal (NSP):**

- The scheme, NMMSS is boarded on National Scholarship Portal (NSP) since 2015-16.
- The NSP has been developed by Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY) for streamlining and fast tracking the release of Scholarships across Ministries / Departments with efficiency, transparency and reliability.

**INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE, HISTORY****Brihadeeswarar Temple**

The kumbhabhishegam (consecration) ceremony at the Sri Brahadeeswarar Temple was held after 23 years — and after the Madras High Court had settled an old argument over the ritual purification process, thus addressing the struggle for supremacy between the Sanskrit and Tamil traditions that lies at the heart of several cultural battles in the state.

**About:**

- Brihadeshwara Temple is also called as Rajarajesvaram or Peruvudaiyar Kovil temple.
- It is a Hindu temple dedicated to Shiva. The Kumbam (the apex or the bulbous structure on the top) of the temple is carved out of a single rock.
- It is located in South Bank of Kaveri river in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu.
- Peruvudaiyaar Kovil is an example of Tamil architecture from the Chola period. It was built by Tamil King Raja Raja Chola I and completed in 1010 AD.
- The temple is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site known as the "Great Living Chola Temples", along with Gangaikonda Cholapuram and Airavatesvara temple.

**Namaste Orchha**

Madhya Pradesh government is organizing a three-day multi-cultural festival to promote tourism in the heritage city of Orchha, Madhya Pradesh.

**About:**

- Namaste Orchha will take place between March 6 to 8, 2020 at Orchha, Madhya Pradesh. It will celebrate the cultural diversity, natural beauty and the architectural heritage of the town by showcasing music, dance, heritage walks, local cuisine, arts and handicrafts.
- The first day of the festival will be held at Jahangir Mahal, built in 17th Century by the then ruler Vir Singh Deo in honour of the Mughal emperor Jahangir.
- Noted Hindustani classical vocal singer Shubha Mudgal will perform alongside a giant African Baobab, a 500-year-old tree planted by Maharaja Vir Singh Deo.

#### Orchha:

- Orchha (or Urchha) is a town in Niwari district of Madhya Pradesh. Orchha lies on the Betwa River.
- Orchha was founded in the 16th century AD by the Bundela Rajput chief, Rudra Pratap Singh, who became the first King of Orchha and also built the Fort of Orchha.

### **CONSTITUTION AND POLITY**

#### **Second National Judicial Pay Commission**

The Second National Judicial Pay Commission has submitted its final Report covering the subject of Pay, Pension and Allowances, in the Registry of the Supreme Court.

#### About:

- The Commission has been constituted pursuant to the Order of the Supreme Court in All India Judges Association case.
- Justice P.V. Reddi, former Judge of the Supreme Court is the Chairman of commission.
- The Supreme Court will have to issue directions regarding the implementation of recommendations after hearing the stakeholders.

#### Recommendations on

- Pay:
  - It has recommended the adoption of Pay Matrix which has been drawn up by applying the multiplier of 2.81 to the existing pay, commensurate with the percentage of increase of pay of High Court Judges.
  - The highest pay which a District Judge (STS) will get, is Rs.2,24,100/-.
- Pension:
  - Pension at 50% of last drawn pay worked out on the basis of proposed revised pay scales is recommended w. e. f. 1-1-2016. The family pension will be 30% of the last drawn pay.
  - Recommendation has been made to discontinue the New Pension Scheme (NPS) which is being applied to those entering service during or after 2004. The old pension system, which is more beneficial to be revived.
- Allowances:
  - The existing allowances have been suitably increased and certain new features have been added. However, the CCA is proposed to be discontinued.
  - Certain new allowances viz. children education allowance, home orderly allowance, transport allowance in lieu of pool car facility, have been proposed.

### **SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Monetary Policy**

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) decided to keep the interest rates unchanged in the wake of a rise in inflation.

#### About:

- This is the second straight policy review meeting where the rates have been kept unchanged. The RBI reduced the rates by 135 bps between February and October 2019 before pressing the pause button in the December policy review.
- The central bank took two measures that could ease lending rates further.
- One, it opened a window to extend ₹ 1 lakh crore to the commercial banks at the repo rate, which is 5.15%. In order to ensure availability of adequate liquidity in the banking system, the RBI Governor announced that it will soon start conducting long-term repos of one-year and three-year tenors of appropriate sizes for up to a total amount of 1,00,000 crore rupees.

- Second, banks have been exempted from maintaining the cash reserve ratio (CRR) — which is 4% of the net demand and time liabilities now — for home, auto and MSME loans that are extended from January 31 to July 31.

### **15th finance commission**

The report of the 15th Finance Commission, along with an Action Taken Report, was tabled in Parliament.

#### **About:**

- The Commission has reduced the vertical devolution — the share of tax revenues that the Centre shares with the states — from 42% to 41%.
- The Commission intends to set up an expert group to initiate a non-lapsable fund for defence expenditure. It may do so by creating a separate fund from the gross tax revenue before computing the divisible pool — which means that states would get a smaller share of the taxes.
- It has considered the 2011 population along with forest cover, income distance, tax effort, area of the state, and “demographic performance” to arrive at the states’ share in the divisible pool of taxes.
- The use of 2011 population figures has resulted in states with larger populations like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar getting larger shares, while smaller states with lower fertility rates have lost out. Shares of the southern states, except Tamil Nadu, have fallen — with Karnataka losing the most.
- In order to reward population control efforts by states, the Commission developed a criterion for demographic effort — which is essentially the ratio of the state’s population in 1971 to its fertility rate in 2011 — with a weight of 12.5%. But its impact is not entirely clear.
- The Income distance criterion: Income distance is calculated as the difference between the per capita gross state domestic product (GSDP) of the state from that of the state with the highest per capita GSDP, with states with less income getting a higher share in order to allow them to provide services comparable to those provided by the richer ones.

#### **View of centre on recommendations003A**

- The Centre has rejected the 15th Finance Commission’s recommendation to give special grants worth ₹ 6,764 crore to States in 2020-21 to ensure that they do not receive less than the previous year’s allocation.
- Major recommendations accepted by the Centre include the 41% share for States out of the divisible pool of tax collections, the suggested grants-in-aid and post-devolution revenue deficit grants of ₹ 74,340 crore for 14 States. It also accepted recommendations for grants to local bodies, disaster-related grants and sectoral grants.

## **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE ETC**

### **Euthermia**

A new study, published in the journal eLife, that concluded the average human body temperature has never been constant in the first place.

#### **About:**

- Normal human body temperature, also known as normothermia or euthermia, is the typical temperature range found in humans.
- The thermometer reading of 98.6°F has been a gold standard for a century and a half, ever since a German doctor laid it down as the “normal” human body temperature.
- In 1851, Carl Reinhold August Wunderlich pioneered the use of the clinical thermometer. He took over a million measurements of 25,000 patients, and published his findings in a book in 1868, in which he concluded that the average human body temperature is 98.6°F.
- Most modern scientists feel Wunderlich’s experiments were flawed, and his equipment inaccurate. Different studies have found the human body temperature averaging out differently, including at 97.7°, 97.9° and 98.2°F.

#### **Recent study:**

- Now, new research has found that body temperatures have, in fact, been declining over the last two centuries as a result of changes in the environment over the past 200 years.
- While the authors are confident of a cooling trend, they do not offer an updated definition of “average body temperature” to cover all Americans today. The strong influences of age, time of day, and genders on body temperature preclude such a definition.

## **DEFENCE AND SECURITY**

### **Lucknow Declaration**

The first India-Africa Defence Ministers' Conclave (IADMC 2020) held in Lucknow on February 06, coinciding with DefExpo-2020, adopted the Lucknow Declaration.

About:

- Besides traditional partners in Eastern and Southern Africa, Western African states have also sought to deepen defence ties with India including training for its officers and joint defence exercises.
- The leaders recognised the importance of peace and security for both India and the African countries including "Silence the Guns; Creating Conducive Conditions for African Development" as the African Union's theme of the year.
- They welcomed the AU vision for peace and security in Africa that coincides with India's vision of SAGAR (Security And Growth for All in the Region).
- Defence Ministers also called for deeper cooperation in the domain of defence industries including through investments, joint venture in defence equipment software, digital defence, research and development on mutually beneficial terms.
- India has also made available defence equipment and supply to African countries through its robust India-Africa development partnership, including through grant assistance and Lines of Credit. This effort will be considerably enhanced.

### **PRELIMS SPECIFIC FACTS- INDICES, DAYS, EVENTS, AWARDS ETC**

#### **International Gandhi Awards For Leprosy**

The President of India presented the International Gandhi Awards for Leprosy to Dr N.S. Dharmashaktu under the Indian nomination (individual) category and the Leprosy Mission Trust under the institutional category.

About:

- Gandhi Memorial Leprosy Foundation, Wardha, a pioneering organisation established in 1951 in the field of leprosy in India, has instituted the award titled "International Gandhi Award" in 1986.
- Periodicity: The Award is presented once in two years and consists of Rs. 2 lakhs as cash award, a Medallion and a Citation.
- Number Of Awards: Two awards are presented either to individuals or institutions.
- Eligibility: The Award is given to a Leprosy Worker or Institution who/which has undertaken work in the field of leprosy for a period of not less than 10 years. The Award is open to medical, paramedical or non-medical and social workers in leprosy field.

Role Of Mahatma Gandhi: Mahatma Gandhi had evinced keen interest in mitigating the sufferings of persons affected by leprosy. Leprosy work was accorded importance by Gandhiji by including it in his 18 point constructive programme.

### **DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE**

**Qns: Dedicated corridors are being considered as future of Indian Railways. What are the various advantages dedicated corridors have over the existing Indian railways system?**

**Ans:**

Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) is a railway route, which is dedicated to freight (goods and commodity) traffic movement only. Two dedicated freight corridors, Dadri to Jawaharlal Nehru Port (western DFC) and Ludhiana to Son Nagar (eastern DFC) are currently under construction.

Advantages of DFCs:

- Reduce unit cost of transportation by speeding up freight train operations & higher productivity
- Increase rail share in freight market by providing customized logistic services
- Segregate freight infrastructure for focused approach on both passenger and freight business of Railways
- Create additional rail infrastructure to cater high levels of transport demand
- Introduce of high-end technology & IT packing of Freight Services
- Introduce time tabled freight services & guaranteed transit time

Dedicated Passenger Corridor:

- These are dedicated corridors for fast moving trains. On these routes, the train speed would be increased to above 160 kilometres per hour (kmph) over the next four or five years by revamping the entire signalling, tracks and fencing.

Advantages of DPC:

- Lower Cost: The project would cost much lower than for a DFC as the track standards required for passenger movement would be as obtaining on the Indian Railways (IR) system at present.
- Increase in Profit: Shifting of passenger services to DPC would generate capacity for freight services on IR's existing network and leave room for future growth in demand. Consequently, profits would increase.
- Punctuality: With the DPC, the level of punctuality of passenger trains would be higher than at present.
- Planning new services: Overnight services between major metros and fast intercity connections for medium distances can be planned.
- New avenues: It may be possible to exploit the real estate potential of the new and existing terminals and also to offer trains on a franchise to operators who would pay an "access charge" to IR or the company owning the DPC. It could also be used for running time-tabled super-fast parcel services and high-value consignments like cars and other consumer durables between important urban centres.
- Higher revenue: With better service quality and savings in time, the customers would also be willing to pay more, hence revenue could be higher
- Environment friendly: In addition to all the above advantages, these routes will also divert lot of traffic from road to rail, thereby providing enormous savings in fuel costs to the economy and reducing pollution.

**DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQs**

1. With reference to the International Gandhi Awards for Leprosy, consider the following statements:
  1. The President of India has recently presented the International Gandhi Awards for Leprosy to Dr N.S. Dharmashaktu under the Indian nomination (individual) category and the Leprosy Mission Trust under the institutional category.
  2. The Award is presented once in two years and consists of Rs. 2 lakhs as cash award, a Medallion and a Citation.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
2. Lucknow Declaration, recently seen in news, is related to:
  - (a) BRICS
  - (b) **First India-Africa Defence Ministers' Conclave (IADMC 2020)**
  - (c) SAARC summit 2020
  - (d) None of the above
3. With reference to the recommendations by the Second National Judicial Pay Commission, consider the following statements:
  1. It has recommended the adoption of Pay Matrix which has been drawn up by applying the multiplier of 2.81 to the existing pay, commensurate with the percentage of increase of pay of High Court Judges.
  2. Certain new allowances viz. children education allowance, home orderly allowance, transport allowance in lieu of pool car facility, have been proposed.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
4. With reference to the eutheria, consider the following statements:
  1. A new research has found that body temperatures have, in fact, been declining over the last two centuries as a result of changes in the environment over the past 200 years.
  2. Normal human body temperature, also known as normothermia or eutheria, is the typical temperature range found in humans.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
5. With reference to the report by Ministry of Human Resource Development on dropout rate in schools, consider the following statements:  
1. The dropout rate in schools is the highest in Bihar, at primary level.  
2. At secondary level, Assam's dropout rate was 33.7%, highest in India.  
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
6. Brihadeshwara Temple is located in South Bank of which of the following river?  
(a) **Kaveri**  
(b) Narmada  
(c) Pennar  
(d) Krishna
7. With reference to the Monetary Policy, consider the following statements:  
1. In order to ensure availability of adequate liquidity in the banking system, the RBI Governor announced that it will soon start conducting long-term repos of one-year and three-year tenors of appropriate sizes for up to a total amount of 1,00,000 crore rupees.  
2. Banks have been exempted from maintaining the cash reserve ratio (CRR) for home, auto and MSME loans that are extended from January 31 to July 31.  
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
8. Namaste Orchha is a three-day multi-cultural festival to promote tourism in:  
(a) Kerala  
(b) **Uttar Pradesh**  
(c) Madhya Pradesh  
(d) Sikkim
9. With reference to the National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme (NMMSS), consider the following statements:  
1. It is a centrally sponsored scheme.  
2. The objective is to award scholarships to meritorious students of economically weaker sections to arrest their drop out at class VIII and encourage them to continue the study at secondary stage.  
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
10. With reference to the 15th Finance Commission, consider the following statements:  
1. The Commission has reduced the vertical devolution — the share of tax revenues that the Centre shares with the states — from 42% to 32%.  
2. The Commission intends to set up an expert group to initiate a non-lapsable fund for defence expenditure.  
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