

**Uniform Civil Code****Why in the News?**

- The Uttarakhand Assembly is likely to pass the State's Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill during its four-day-long session in February.

**About Uniform Civil Code (UCC)**

- A Uniform Civil Code refers to a single law for the entire country, applicable to all religious communities in their personal matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption etc.
- It is intended to replace the system of fragmented personal laws, which currently govern interpersonal relationships and related matters within different religious communities.

**Constitution of India on UCC**

- Article 44 of the Constitution lays down that the State shall endeavour to secure a Uniform Civil Code for the citizens throughout the territory of India.
- Article 44 is one of the Directive Principles mentioned in Part-IV of the Constitution.
  - These, as defined in Article 37, are not justiciable (not enforceable by any court) but the principles laid down therein are fundamental in governance.
  - These principles consists of all the ideals which the State should follow and keep in mind while formulating policies and enacting laws for the country.

**Present Status of Personal Laws in India**

- Personal law subjects such as marriage, divorce, inheritance come under the Concurrent list of the Constitution.
  - Both, the Parliament and state legislature can make laws with respect to any of the matters enumerated in the Concurrent List.
- The Hindu personal laws have been codified into four parts by the Parliament in 1956:
  - The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955
  - The Hindu Succession Act, 1956
  - The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956
  - The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956
- The term 'Hindu' also includes Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists for the purpose of these laws.
- Muslim personal laws are not codified per se, and are based on their religious texts, though certain aspects of these are expressly recognised in acts such as the Shariat Application Act, 1937 and Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, 1939 and Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019.
- Christians, Zoroastrians and Jews are also governed by their own personal laws.

**Exception of Goa**

- Goa is, at present, the only state in India with a uniform civil code.
- The Portuguese Civil Code of 1867, which continues to be implemented after India annexed the territory in 1961, applies to all Goans, irrespective of their religious or ethnic community.

**Need for a Uniform Civil Code in India**

- A Uniform Civil Code would provide equal status to all citizens irrespective of the community they belong to.
- Personal laws of different religions are widely divergent and there is no consistency in how issues like marriage, succession and adoption are treated for people belonging to different communities, which is contradictory to Article 14 of the Constitution, which guarantees Equality before the Law.
- Personal laws, because they derive from tradition and custom, also tend to give undue advantage to men.
  - This becomes evident in examples such as Muslim men being allowed to marry multiple wives, but women being forbidden from having multiple husbands.
  - Men (fathers) are also treated as 'natural guardians' and are given preference under the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act.
- A UCC could lead to consistency and gender equality in India.

**Criticism of Uniform Civil Code**

- Although it reinforces equality before the law, the idea of a UCC clashes with the Right to Freedom of Religion, provided under Article 25 of the Constitution.
  - Separate personal laws are one of the ways in which people have exercised their right to practise their own religion, which has been particularly important for minorities.
- The UCC could become a tool to erode this right, suppress minorities and homogenise culture.

**Way Forward**

- A progressive and broadminded outlook should be encouraged among the people to understand the spirit of the UCC. For this, education, awareness and sensitisation programmes must be taken up.
- Meanwhile, discriminatory personal laws should be amended/abolished accordingly.
- The Law Commission in its report titled "Reform of Family Law" (2018) had suggested that the best way forward would be to preserve the diversity of personal laws while ensuring that they do not contradict fundamental rights.
- The report suggested that by codifying different personal laws, one can arrive at certain universal principles that prioritize equity rather than blanket imposition of a Uniform Civil Code.

**News Summary**

- In May 2022, the Uttarakhand government announced the constitution of a five-member committee led by former Supreme Court judge Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai to draft the Uniform Civil Code.
  - The committee received over 2.15 lakh suggestions from the public and held over 38 public meetings across the state over the course of preparing the draft.
- Recently, the panel submitted its final report on the UCC.
- The Uttarakhand Legislative Assembly is now likely to pass the Uniform Civil Code Bill in the upcoming assembly session.
- The draft will be discussed in a meeting of the State Cabinet before it is tabled in the form of a Bill in the Assembly.

**What Provisions Can be Expected in Uttarakhand's Uniform Civil Code?**

- The draft UCC is set to focus on gender equality by introducing provisions that treat men and women equally, especially in matters pertaining to inheritance.
- Catering to demands from Muslim women in the State, it will also revoke practices governing marriage and divorce such as polygamy, iddat (mandatory period of waiting to be observed by women following the dissolution of a Muslim marriage) and triple talaq.
- The Code is also likely to extend an equal property share to Muslim women against the existing 25% share accorded under Muslim personal laws.
- Other issues such as divorce, marriage registrations, adoption, and social security for ageing parents will also be covered under the law.

**ECONOMY****Rs 1 Lakh Crore Corpus to Incentivise R&D in Private Sector****Why in News?**

- In a significant initiative to incentivise R&D in the private sector, the Finance Minister announced (in the Interim Union Budget 2024-25) the establishment of a financial corpus of Rs 1 lakh crore.
- The government is likely to involve financial institutions including the NaBFID, the NIIF, or the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) for operationalising its Budget announcement.

**Budget 2024-25 Announcement - Rs 1 Lakh Crore Corpus to Incentivise R&D in Private Sector**

- It will provide low-cost or zero-interest loans for research and innovation and the private companies could avail of interest-free loans for up to 50 years (long-term financing or refinancing facility) through this new mechanism.
- This will encourage the private sector to scale up research and innovation significantly in sunrise domains.
- The new fund is in sync with the government efforts to encourage private sector involvement in research activities. For example, it had set up (last year) a National Research Foundation (NRF).

**What is the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID)?**

- NaBFID is a specialised Development Finance Institution (DFI) in India aimed at supporting the country's infrastructure sector.
  - This is because the country's infrastructure sector can significantly gain from an enabling credit flow by means of attractive instruments and channelised investment.
- NaBFID was set up in 2021, by an Act of the Parliament (The National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development Act, 2021).
- Its objective is to
  - Address the gaps in long-term non-recourse finance for infrastructure development,
  - Strengthening the development of bonds and derivatives markets in India, and
  - Sustainably boosting the country's economy.

**What is the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF)?**

- NIIF is a government-backed quasi-sovereign wealth fund (government stake [49%] and rest held by foreign and domestic investors) established to provide long-term capital to the country's infrastructure sector.

- It was set up in 2015 and registered with SEBI as a Category-II Alternative Investment Fund (AIF).

### **News Summary Regarding Govt's Plan to Involve Financial Institutions for Operationalising Corpus Fund of Rs 1 Lakh Crore:**

- The discussions for the research and innovation corpus have taken into account the view that the success rate for some of the projects may not be too high. It needs a long gestation to prove itself.
- The Centre is considering long-duration loans of up to 50 years with zero interest to the financial institution, as it does for capex for states.
  - The institution then, in turn, may consider providing credit at nil or concessional rate to another financial institution for refinancing or directly finance a commercial venture.
- A combination of one or more than one financial institution could be considered to provide long-term, concessional credit of Rs 1 lakh crore.
- This is commercial funding, for-commercial, for-profit ventures but the venture should be for an innovative, new technology to be proven.
- With this, the government aims to provide an enabling ecosystem for ventures in cutting-edge, developing technologies to take off.
- Inter-ministerial deliberations are taking place on the sectors to be considered under this funding.
- The amount of Rs 1 lakh crore will be spread out over the years for various projects, which may be decided by an expert committee.

### **PRELIM FACTS**

#### **1. Tidal Disruption Event (TDE)**

- An international team of astronomers recently conducted multi-wavelength observations of AT 2023clx—the closest to Earth tidal disruption event (TDE).

#### **About Tidal Disruption Event (TDE):**

- Tidal disruption events (TDEs) are astronomical phenomena that occur when a star passes close enough to a supermassive black hole and is pulled apart by the black hole's tidal forces, causing the process of disruption.
- Such tidally disrupted stellar debris starts raining down on the black hole and radiation emerges from the innermost region of accreting debris, which is an indicator of the presence of a TDE.
- How does a TDE typically unfold?
  - Close Approach: A star in a galaxy approaches a black hole on a very close trajectory due to gravitational interactions within the galaxy.
  - Tidal Forces: As the star gets closer to the black hole, the gravitational forces acting on it become increasingly uneven due to the difference in gravitational pull on the near side and far side of the star. These tidal forces can be strong enough to disrupt the star.
  - Stellar Disruption: When the tidal forces exceed the self-gravitational forces holding the star together, it undergoes a process called "tidal disruption." The star is stretched and eventually torn apart into a stream of gas and debris.
  - Accretion Disk Formation: The debris from the disrupted star forms an accretion disk around the black hole. This disk is composed of hot gas and dust, and it spirals inwards towards the black hole.
  - Energy Release: As the material in the accretion disk spirals inwards, it releases a tremendous amount of energy in the form of X-rays and ultraviolet radiation.
  - Flares and Observations: TDEs are often observed as bright flares of radiation from the centre of a galaxy. These flares can last for several months to years, gradually fading as the disrupted star's material is consumed by the black hole.

#### **2. Subika Painting**

- Manipur boasts a rich cultural heritage but some of its invaluable art forms like Subika Paintings are on the brink of extinction due to neglect.

#### **About Subika Paintings:**

- It is a style of painting which is intricately linked to the Meitei community's cultural history.
- It is surviving through its six manuscripts — Subika, SubikaAchouba, SubikaLaishaba, SubikaChoudit, SubikaCheithil and ThengrakhelSubika.
- Although the royal chronicle, CheitharolKumbaba, doesn't mention a specific founder, there is a possibility that this art form existed when the writing tradition was introduced in the state.
- Experts estimate the use of Subika paintings since the 18th or 19th century.

#### **Key points about SubikaLaisaba:**

- The painting of SubikaLaisaba is a composition of cultural motifs made by pre-existing features and other influences stimulated from their cultural worldviews.

- Among the six manuscripts, SubikaLaishaba represents a direct and authentic continuation of the Meitei cultural tradition depicted through visual images.
- The illustrations of SubikaLaishaba have visual language from the elements such as lines, shapes, forms, colours, and patterns.
- These visual images become Meitei's cultural motif, a structure to create visual effects as well as express cultural significance, meaning and values.
- The visual images found in this manuscript are painted on handmade paper.
- It is also found that materials of manuscript are prepared indigenously either handmade paper or barks of tree.

### **3. Thanthai Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary**

- The Tamil Nadu government has declared 80,114.80 hectares of reserve forests in Bargur Hills in Erode district, as the Thanthai Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary.

About Thanthai Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary:

- This region is part of the corridor that connects the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve (STR) to the Male Mahadeshwara Hills Tiger Reserve and the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary, and plays a crucial role in maintaining a viable tiger population.
- These forests occupy a prominent position in the Eastern Ghats as they merge with the Western Ghat at the Nilgiris.
- The vast landscape is home to diverse flora and fauna, making it an ideal habitat for various life forms.
- The landscape is interconnected to the Kollegal forests of Karnataka and the Nilgiris, creating one of the most diverse habitats in the region.
- It is one of the tiger corridors identified by the National Tiger Conservation Authority.
- The region is also part of the Nilgiris Elephant Reserve and is home to a healthy population of large herbivores including elephants and the Indian Gaur.
- Also, the landscape is the catchment of the Palar River that drains into the Cauvery River and is a crucial source of water for agricultural activities.
- It is also of cultural and historical significance to tribal and local communities who depend on these ecosystems for their livelihoods and traditional practices.

### **4. Volt Typhoon**

- The United States government recently shut down a major China-backed hacking group dubbed "Volt Typhoon" that attacked hundreds of routers and had been working to compromise U.S. cyber infrastructure.

About Volt Typhoon:

- It is a state-sponsored hacking group based in China that has been active since at least 2021.
- The group typically focuses on espionage and information gathering.
- It has targeted critical infrastructure organizations in the US, including Guam.
- To achieve their objective, the threat actor puts strong emphasis on stealth, relying almost exclusively on living-off-the-land techniques and hands-on-keyboard activity.
- The recurring attack pattern of Volt Typhoon begins with initial access via exploitation of public-facing devices or services.
- Volt Typhoon employs the comparatively uncommon practice of leveraging preinstalled utilities for most of their victim interactions.
- Compromised small office/home office (SOHO) devices are used by the attackers to proxy communications to and from the affected networks.
- They issue commands via the command line to (1) collect data, including credentials from local and network systems: (2) put the data into an archive file to stage it for exfiltration: and then (3) use the stolen valid credentials to maintain persistence.
- Volt Typhoon was a particularly quiet operator that hid its traffic by routing it through hacked network equipment, like home routers, and carefully expunging evidence of intrusions from the victim's logs.
- This combination of behaviors makes detection especially difficult, as defenders must be able to differentiate between attacker activities and those of power users or administrative staff.

### **5. Mesolithic Period**

- Mesolithic era rock paintings have been recently discovered at Sitamma Loddi, Gattusingaram, in Peddapalli district, Telangana.

About Mesolithic Period:

- Mesolithic, also called Middle Stone Age, is an ancient cultural stage which existed between the Paleolithic (Old Stone Age) and the Neolithic (New Stone Age).

- Timeframe: This period is generally considered to have occurred between approximately 12,000-10,000 years ago.
- Some of the defining characteristics of the Mesolithic Age are as follows:
  - People transitioned from using large chipped stone tools to using smaller chipped stone tools (microliths).
- Microliths were probably stuck onto handles of bone or wood to make tools such as saws and sickles.
- At the same time, older varieties of tools continued to be in use.
  - People transitioned from hunting large herds animals in groups to a more hunter-gatherer lifestyle.
  - Towards the end of the Mesolithic Age, people began growing crops and practicing animal husbandry, which is the controlled cultivation, management, and production of domestic animals.
  - It was during the Mesolithic Age that the dog was domesticated.
  - The permanent settlements in the Mesolithic Age varied from villages of huts to walled cities.
  - During the Mesolithic Age, the climate was warming after the last ice age, which occurred at the end of the Palaeolithic period.
  - The art created in the Mesolithic Age is highly reflective of the change in climate that was happening at the time.
  - During the Mesolithic period, humans developed cave paintings, engravings, and ceramics to reflect their daily lives.
  - In certain areas of the world, a range of pottery was made during the Mesolithic Age.
- Mesolithic Sites in India: Bagor in Rajasthan, Sarai Nahar Rai in Allahabad, Jharkhand, Chhota Nagpur plateau. In Odisha Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundargarh are major Mesolithic sites in India. In south India, Godavari bases are rich in microliths.

### ANSWER WRITING

**Q. Discuss the significance of a code of conduct for the elected members in realizing the true ideals of democracy. Also, develop an ethical framework for such a code of conduct.**

Answer: A code of conduct for elected members is essential for a true democracy. It sets out the expectations for the behaviour of elected members and provides guidance for their actions. This helps to ensure that elected officials are held to the highest standard of ethical behaviour and that they are accountable for their actions.

**Significance of Code of Conduct for the elected members for realizing the true ideals of democracy:**

- Establishes Transparency: If elected members are transparent in their actions, decisions and dealings the public will be aware of the decisions made by the elected members and that they have access to information on the activities of the elected members.
- Encourages Accountability: A code of conduct ensures accountability of the elected members for their actions. This encourages them to act responsibly and can help to prevent corruption and misuse of power.
- Promotes Ethics: Elected members adhere to ethical standards in their decision-making and dealings. This helps to promote fairness and justice and ensures that the elected members are not taking advantage of their positions for personal gain.
- Improves Governance: Elected members are acting responsibly and are properly governing the country. This can help to ensure that the public's needs and concerns are being addressed, that the government is working efficiently and effectively, and that the country is being run in the best interest of its citizens.

**Ethical framework for such a code of conduct:**

- Abide by the law: Elected members should always abide by the law, whether that is local, state, or federal laws.
  - For example, elected members should not break campaign finance laws or violate any other laws when running for office or once in office.
- Maintain integrity: Elected members should always act with integrity and be honest in all their actions.
  - For example, elected members should not accept any gifts from lobbyists or special interests that could create a conflict of interest.
- Follow ethical standards: Strive to follow ethical standards in their public and private lives.
  - For example, elected members should not use their office for personal gain or to benefit themselves or their family members.
- Be transparent: Elected members should always be transparent in their actions and be willing to share information with their constituents.
  - For example, elected members should make all their financial records and decisions publicly available to ensure full transparency.

### Conclusion

The code of conduct serves to ensure that elected members honour their oath of office by exercising their authority responsibly and without bias. It also helps to ensure that elected members act in the best interest of the

public, rather than in their own personal interest. They should act in a manner that is consistent with the principles of democracy and uphold the ideals of justice, equality and fairness.

**MCQs**

- The term 'Ergosphere' is often mentioned in the news, it refers to
  - New layer discovered in earth's interior
  - Layer of Sun's outer atmosphere
  - New layer identified in the atmosphere
  - Region between event horizon and stationary limit of a rotating black hole.**
- Consider the following statements regarding Atmospheric Rivers:
  - These are located in upper levels of the atmosphere ahead of a tropical cyclone.
  - These are the largest transport mechanisms of freshwater on earth.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
  - 1 only
  - 2 only**
  - Both 1 and 2
  - Neither 1 nor 2
- Consider the following statements:
  - The Interim Budget's purpose is to ensure the continuity of government expenditure and essential services until the new government can present a full-fledged budget after taking office.
  - As per Article 112 of the Indian Constitution, the annual financial statement is laid before both Houses of Parliament.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
  - 1 only
  - 2 only
  - Both 1 and 2**
  - Neither 1 nor 2
- Codex Alimentarius standards are used for which of the following?
  - Fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.
  - Governing the movements of living modified organisms (LMOs).
  - To limit and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
  - Protecting consumer's health and ensuring fair practices in the food trade.**
- Consider the following pairs:
 

Ramsar Site	State
1. Aghanashini Estuary	(a) Karnataka
2. Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary	(b) Tamil Nadu
3. Longwood Shola Reserve Forest	(c) Kerala

 Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?
  - 1 and 2 only**
  - 2 and 3 only
  - 1 and 3 only
  - 1, 2 and 3
- One Stop Centres (OSCs) are being set up under the Mission Shakti. They deals with
  - Single Window System for Coal Sector
  - Empowerment of Women**
  - Sports Facilities for Women
  - Entrepreneurship
- Consider the following statements:
 

Statement-I: The Food System Economics Commission released a report titled "The Economics of the Food System Transformation," emphasizing the urgent need for a sustainable overhaul of current food systems, estimated to cost a total of USD 500 billion annually.

Statement-II: The Food System Economics Commission (FSEC) is a private consortium of scientists across nationalities and academic fields, aimed at identifying the challenges to food system security and the policy changes required to overcome them.

 Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?
  - Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct, and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I.
  - Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct, and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I.**
  - Statement-I is correct, but Statement-II is incorrect.
  - Statement-I is incorrect, but Statement-II is correct.
- With reference to the laughing gull, a migratory bird, consider the following statements:
  - They are known for their adaptability and opportunistic feeding habits.
  - These birds are native to Western Africa.
  - They are categorized 'Least Concern' in the IUCN Red Data List.
 Which of the statements given above are correct?
  - 1 and 2 only
  - 2 and 3 only
  - 1 and 3 only**
  - 1, 2 and 3
- In the context of "sapinda marriage", which one of the following does the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, aim to regulate?
  - Inter-caste marriages
  - Arranged marriages only
  - Marriages based on love
  - Marriages within prohibited degrees of relationship**
- With reference to the Economic Survey, consider the following statements:
  - It is prepared under the guidance of the Chief Economic Adviser of India.
  - The document is binding in nature and was first presented in 1964.
  - It gives an outlook on India's GDP growth, inflation rate and projection, forex reserves, and trade deficits.
 Which of the statements given above are correct?
  - 1 and 2 only
  - 2 and 3 only
  - 1 and 3 only**
  - 1, 2 and 3