



# Civils Cafe

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## IMPORTANT CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR PRELIMS VOL 27

- JURISDICTION ENHANCEMENT OF BSF
- DIGISAKSHAM INITIATIVE
- PODU SHIFTING CULTIVATION
- MAHARATNA STATUS TO POWER FINANCE CORPORATION
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SCAN TO EXPLORE





**IMPORTANT CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**FOR PRELIMS VOL - 27**

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**INDIAN POLITY****1) JURISDICTION ENHANCEMENT OF BSF**

**IN NEWS:** - The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has extended the jurisdiction of the Border Security Force (BSF) up to 50 km inside the international borders in Punjab, West Bengal and Assam. This notification replaces a 2014 order under the BSF Act, 1968, which also covered the States of Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland and Meghalaya. It also specifically mentions the two newly created Union Territories- J&K and Ladakh.

**ABOUT BORDER SECURITY FORCE**

- The BSF is India's border guarding organization on its border with Pakistan and Bangladesh.
- It comes under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- It was raised in the wake of the 1965 War on 1 December 1965 for ensuring the security of the borders of India and for matters connected therewith.
- The BSF has its own cadre of officers but its head, designated as a Director-General (DG), since its raising has been an officer from the Indian Police Service (IPS).

**Powers exercised by BSF in its jurisdiction**

BSFs jurisdiction has been extended only in respect of the powers it enjoys under:

- Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC)
- Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920 and
- Passport Act, 1967

**Arrest and search**

- BSF currently has powers to arrest and search under these laws.
- It also has powers to arrest, search and seize under the NDPS Act, Arms Act, Customs Act and certain other laws.

- Its powers under these will continue to be only up to 15 km inside the border in Punjab, Assam and West Bengal, and will remain as far as 80 km in Gujarat.

### PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. The BSF is India's border guarding organization on its border with China
2. It comes under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Which among the above statements are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 or 2

### GOVERNANCE

#### 2) DIGISAKSHAM INITIATIVE

**IN NEWS:** - The Union Labour Ministry and Microsoft India have jointly launched a digital skilled platform — DigiSaksham — to enhance youth employability.

#### ABOUT DIGISAKSHAM INITIATIVE

- It is joint initiative with Microsoft India is an extension of the Government's ongoing programs to support the youth from rural and semi-urban areas.
- Through DigiSaksham initiative, free of cost training in digital skills including basic skills as well as advance computing, will be provided to more than 3 lakh youths in the first year.
- The Jobseekers can access the training through National Career Service (NCS) Portal.
- DigiSaksham will be implemented in the field by Aga Khan Rural Support Programme India (AKRSP-I).

- Under the initiative, there will be basically three types of training viz. Digital Skills – Self paced learning, VILT mode training (Virtual Instructor led) and ILT mode training (Instructor led).
- The ILT training which is in person training would be conducted at the Model Career Centres (MCCs) and National Career Service Centres (NCSC) for SCs/STs across the country.
- Students will be able to access training in areas like Java Script, Data Visualisation, Advance Excel, Power Bi, HTML, Programming languages, software development fundamentals, Introduction to coding etc.

### PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. The DigiSaksham initiative is launched by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
2. Through DigiSaksham initiative, free of cost training in digital skills including basic skills as well as advance computing, will be provided to more than 3 lakh youths in the first year.

Which among the above statements are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 or 2

## INDIAN ECONOMY

### 3) MAHARATNA STATUS TO POWER FINANCE CORPORATION

**IN NEWS:** - The government has accorded the 'Maharatna' status to state-owned Power Finance Corporation (PFC).

## ABOUT POWER FINANCE CORPORATION

- Power Finance Corporation Ltd. (PFC) is an Indian financial institution under the ownership of Ministry of Power.
- Established in 1986, it is the financial backbone of Indian Power Sector.
- PFC is the 8th highest profit making Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) as per the Department of Public Enterprises Survey for FY 2017–18.
- It is India's largest NBFC and also India's largest infrastructure finance company.

## MAHARATNA STATUS

- The Maharatna dispensation was ushered in by the Union government for mega Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) to become global giants (introduced in 2010).
- “Maharatna” status is granted to a company which has recorded more than Rs. 5,000 crore of net profit for three consecutive years, an average annual turnover of Rs. 25,000 crore for three years or should have an average annual net worth of Rs. 15,000 crore for three years. It should also have global operations or footprints.

## AGRICULTURE

### 4) PODU SHIFTING CULTIVATION

**IN NEWS:** - The Telangana government has decided to move landless, non-tribal farmers engaged in shifting cultivation inside forests to peripheral areas as it looks to combat deforestation.

### ABOUT PODU SHIFTING CULTIVATION

- Podu is a traditional system of cultivation used by tribes in India, whereby different areas of jungle forest are cleared by burning each year to provide land for crops.

- Podu is a form of shifting agriculture using slash-and-burn methods.

### **SHIFTING CULTIVATION**

- Shifting cultivation is a form of agriculture or a cultivation system, in which, at any particular point in time, a minority of 'fields' are in cultivation and a majority are in various stages of natural re-growth.
- Over time, fields are cultivated for a relatively short time, and allowed to recover, or are fallowed, for a relatively long time.
- Eventually, a previously cultivated field will be cleared of the natural vegetation and planted in crops again.
- Fields in established and stable shifting cultivation systems are cultivated and fallowed cyclically.
- This type of farming is also called jhumming in India.

## **ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY**

### **5) EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY**

**IN NEWS:** - The government has notified the Guidelines on Extended Producers Responsibility (EPR) on plastic packaging under Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016. The guidelines will come into effect from 1st July 2022.

#### **ABOUT EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY**

- Extended Producers Responsibility is essentially the use of financial incentives to encourage manufacturers to design environmentally friendly products by making producers accountable for their product management during end-stage consumption.
- It differs from product stewardship as it relieves the government from the burden of managing certain products by making manufacturers internalize the cost of recycling within the product price.
- EPR is carried out bearing in mind that brand owners have the greatest control over product design and hence are in a better position to design

their products in such a manner that it will reduce harmful effects on the environment as a whole.

- Extended Producers Responsibility is done through, reuse, buyback, or recycling.
- The producer has also the option of delegating this responsibility to a third-party which can be paid by the producer for used-product management.
- This shifts the responsibility for waste management from the government to private industries, making it easy for producers or sellers to internalise waste management and ensure the safe handling of their products.

### **MAIN FEATURES OF THE NEW GUIDELINES**

Four categories of plastic packaging specified:

- Category one will include rigid plastic packaging.
- Category two will include flexible plastic packaging of single layer or multilayer (more than one layer with different types of plastic), plastic sheets and covers made of plastic sheet, carry bags, plastic sachet or pouches.
- Category three will include multi-layered plastic packaging (at least one layer of plastic and at least one layer of material other than plastic).
- Category four includes plastic sheet or like used for packaging as well as carry bags made of compostable plastics.

The guidelines also include:

- Specifications for reuse, recycling, use of recycled plastic content, and end-of-life disposal of non-recyclable plastic packaging.
- Setting up a centralised online portal by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) for the registration as well as filing of annual returns by producers, importers and brand-owners, plastic waste processors of plastic packaging waste by March 31.

- Producers of plastic packaging will have to manage 35% of the 'Q1' waste in metric tonnes in 2021-22. Q1 is calculated by adding the last two years' average weights of plastic packaging material sold and pre-consumer plastic packaging waste, and subtracting the annual quantity of plastic packaging supplied to brand owners.
- The EPR target will be increased to 70% in 2022-23 and 100% from 2023-24 onwards.
- The recycling obligation for producers will be 50% for rigid plastics in 2024-25, 60% in 2025-26, 70% in 2026-27, and 80% from 2027-28 onwards.
- Environmental compensation shall be levied based upon polluter pays principle, with respect to non-fulfilment of EPR targets by producers, importers and brand owners, for the purpose of protecting and improving the quality of the environment and preventing, controlling and abating environment pollution.
- For the first time, the guidelines allow for the sale and purchase of surplus extended producer responsibility certificates. Thus setting up a market mechanism for plastic waste management.

## 6) BLUE CARBON

**IN NEWS:** - India's Sundarbans National Park is among five sites that have the highest blue carbon stocks globally, according to a new assessment

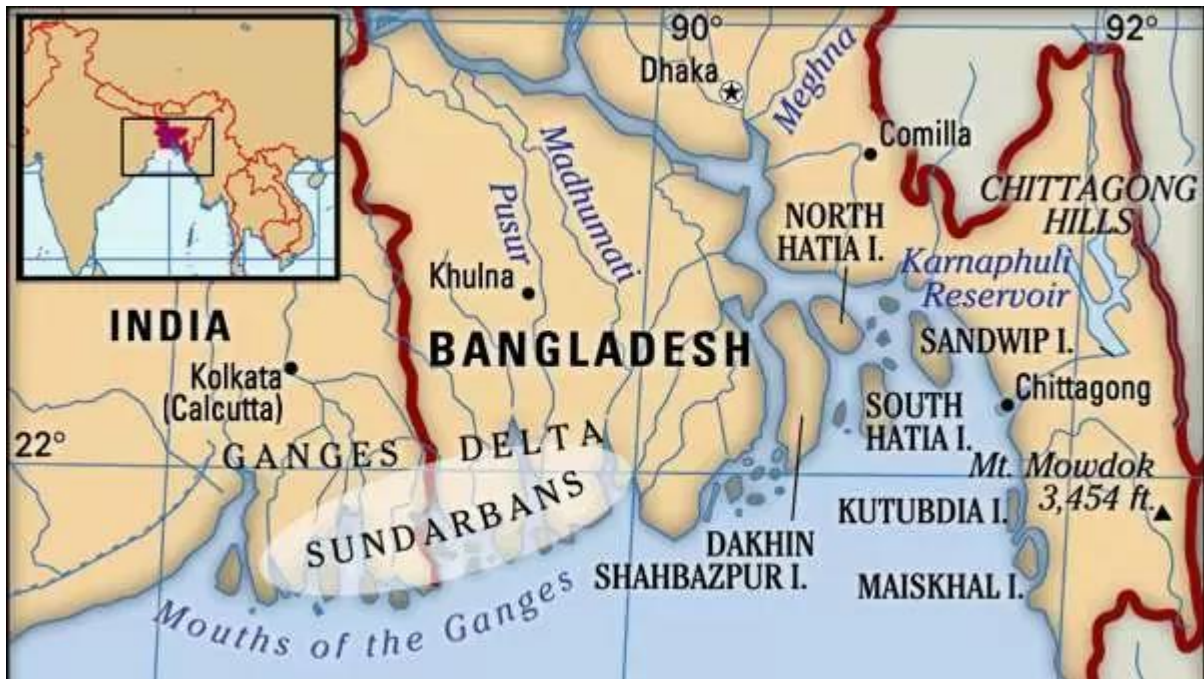
### ABOUT BLUE CARBON

- Blue carbon is simply the term for carbon captured by the world's ocean and coastal ecosystems.
- Our ocean and coasts provide a natural way of reducing the impact of greenhouse gases on our atmosphere, through sequestration (or taking in) of this carbon.
- Sea grasses, mangroves, and salt marshes along our coast "capture and hold" carbon, acting as something called a carbon sink.

- These coastal systems, though much smaller in size than the planet's forests, sequester this carbon at a much faster rate, and can continue to do so for millions of years.
- Most of the carbon taken up by these ecosystems is stored below ground where we can't see it, but it is still there. The carbon found in coastal soil is often thousands of years old.
- When these coastal systems are damaged, an enormous amount of carbon is emitted back into the atmosphere, where it can then contribute to climate change.

### **ABOUT SUNDERBANS**

- Sunderbans, formerly Sunderbunds, is a vast tract of forest and saltwater swamp forming the lower part of the Ganga (Padma)-Brahmaputra River delta in southeastern West Bengal state, northeastern India, and southern Bangladesh.
- The tract extends approximately more than 250 kms west-east along the Bay of Bengal from the Hugli River estuary in India to the western segment of the Meghna River estuary in Bangladesh.
- A network of estuaries, tidal rivers, and creeks intersected by numerous channels, it encloses flat, densely forested, marshy islands.
- Three-fifths of the Sunderbans area is in Bangladesh, out of the approximate 10 thousand square kilometers of area it covers.
- Much of the area has long had the status of a forest reserve, but conservation efforts in India were stepped up with the creation of the Sunderbans Tiger Reserve in 1973.
- Sunderbans National Park, established in 1984, constitutes a core region within the tiger reserve; it was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1987.



### PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. Blue carbon is simply the term for carbon captured by the world's ocean and coastal ecosystems.
2. India's Sundarbans National Park is among five sites that have the highest blue carbon stocks globally

Which among the above statements are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 or 2

**Answer: - c**

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS****7) INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY**

**IN NEWS:** - The International Energy Agency (IEA) has invited India, the world's third-largest energy consumer, to become its full-time member. Currently, India is an associate member of IEA.

**ABOUT INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY**

- It was established in 1974 as an autonomous intergovernmental organization under the OECD framework.
- Its objective is to ensure reliable, affordable, and clean energy for its member countries and beyond.
- It has four main areas of focus: a) Energy security b) Economic development c) Environmental awareness and d) Engagement worldwide.
- It has 30 member countries and eight association countries. India became an associate member in 2017.
- IEA member countries need to maintain total oil stock levels equivalent to at least 90 days of the previous year's net imports.
- Secretariat: Paris, France.
- It releases the World Energy Outlook report annually.
- The Agency's mandate has broadened to focus on providing analysis, data, policy recommendations and solutions to help countries ensure secure, affordable and sustainable energy for all.
- In particular, it has focused on supporting global efforts to accelerate the clean energy transition and mitigate climate change.
- The IEA has a broad role in promoting rational energy policies and multinational energy technology co-operation with a view to reaching net zero emissions.

- India, in March 2017, became an associate member of the Paris-based body which advises industrialised nations on energy policies.
- Today the IEA acts as a policy adviser to its member states, as well as major emerging economies such as Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and South Africa to support energy security and advance the clean energy transition worldwide.
- This proposal if accepted will require New Delhi to raise strategic oil reserves to 90 days requirement.

### PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. The International Solar Alliance releases the World Energy Outlook
2. The secretariat of the International Solar Alliance is located at Paris

Which among the above statements are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 or 2

**Answer: - d**

## ART AND CULTURE

### 8) KUDAVOLAI SYSTEM

**IN NEWS:** - In the Kancheepuram district of Tamil Nadu, some Chola-era inscriptions on Kanthaleeswarar Temple bear testimony to the qualifications required for members of the village administrative council.

### ABOUT KUDAVOLAI SYSTEM

- The Kudavolai system was very vital and unique feature of administration of villages of Cholas.

- In the system one representative is elected from each ward and every village had 30 wards.
- The village administrative committee was called as variyam.
- The election was unique as names of contestants were written on palm leaf and put in a pot.
- Taxation details
  - The rulers were considerate while taxing agricultural produce.
  - For areca nuts, only 50% tax would be collected for the first 10 years after cultivation. Farmers would pay full tax only after the trees started yielding fruits.
  - Similarly, 50% tax was imposed on banana crops until the yield.

## 9) MOUNT HARRIET

**IN NEWS:** - The Centre has rechristened Mount Harriet, a historical tourist spot in the Andaman and Nicobar islands, as 'Mount Manipur'.

### ABOUT MOUNT HARRIET

- Mount Harriet, the third-highest island peak in A&N Islands, where Manipur's Maharaja Kulchandra Singh and 22 other freedom fighters were imprisoned during the Anglo-Manipuri war (1891).
- Mount Harriet served as the summer headquarters of the Chief Commissioner during British Raj.
- It is believed to be named after British artist and photographer, Harriet Christina Tytler, who was the wife of Robert Christopher Tytler, a soldier who served in the British Indian Army.
- It has been renamed in a tribute to those freedom fighters of Manipur.
- Manipur celebrates Khongjom Day on 23rd April in commemoration of the freedom fighters of Anglo-Manipuri War.



## ABOUT ANGLO MANIPUR WAR

- Considered an epoch in the history of Manipur, the Anglo-Manipur War was fought between the kingdom of Manipur and the British over a month in 1891.
- The battle was triggered by a coup in the palace of Manipur, which had been marked by internal factionalism in the years leading up 1891.
- The British government took advantage of the “internal dissension” among the princes of the royal family.
- Many say the war was described as a “blow to British prestige”. Despite their victory, it had led to the death of five important officers.
- In India, it was viewed as being part of the general uprising against British rule in the country, soon after the Revolt of 1857.
- The war led to Manipur officially becoming a princely state under the indirect rule of the British crown.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### 10) INDIAN SPACE ASSOCIATION

**IN NEWS:** - Indian Space Association (ISpA) was recently formally launched by Prime Minister Modi. It will be the premier industry association of space and satellite companies.

#### ABOUT INDIAN SPACE ASSOCIATION

- ISpA aims to be a forum of the space industry in the Indian private sector and partner the Government of India and other key stakeholders across space industry segments in making the nation self-reliant in the area as well as to become a global service provider.
- ISpA aims to contribute to the Government of India’s vision of making India Atmanirbhar and a global leader in the space arena, which is fast emerging as the next growth frontier for mankind.

- ISpA is represented by leading home grown and global corporations with advanced capabilities in space and satellite technologies.
- Its founding members include Bharti Airtel, Larson & Toubro, Nelco (Tata Group), OneWeb, Mapmyindia, Walchandnagar Industries and Alpha Design Technologies.
- Other core members include Godrej, Hughes India, Ananth Technology Limited, Azista-BST Aerospace Private Limited, BEL, Centum Electronics, and Maxar India.
- The association will engage with stakeholders across the ecosystem for the formulation of an enabling policy framework that fulfils the Government's vision.
- ISpA will also work towards building global linkages for the Indian space industry to bring in critical technology and investments into the country to create more high skill jobs.
- ISpA also plans to work in very close coordination with IN-SPACe to further the space vision of the Government.

### 11) PNEUMOCOCCAL 13 VALENT CONJUGATE VACCINE

**IN NEWS:** - Ministry of Health has launched a nationwide expansion of Pneumococcal 13-valent Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) under the Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP).

#### ABOUT PNEUMOCOCCAL 13 VALENT CONJUGATE VACCINE

- It was for the first time in the country that PCV would be available for universal use.
- PCV13 protects against 13 types of bacteria that cause pneumococcal disease

## PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASES

- Pneumococcal disease is a name for any infection caused by bacteria called *Streptococcus pneumonia* or *pneumococcus*. Most people carry *pneumococcus* in their nose and throat, where the bacteria do not cause any symptoms.
- Causes: Bacteria, viruses, or fungi can lead to pneumonia.
- Top causes include:
  - Flu viruses
  - Cold viruses
  - RSV virus (the top cause of pneumonia in babies aged 1 or younger)
  - Bacteria called *Streptococcus pneumonia* and *Mycoplasma pneumonia*.
- Pneumonia is contagious and can be spread through coughing or sneezing. It can also be spread through fluids, like blood during childbirth, or from contaminated surfaces.
- Symptoms: Cough with phlegm or pus, fever, chills and difficulty breathing.

## UNIVERSAL IMMUNISATION PROGRAMME

- It was launched in 1985 to prevent mortality and morbidity in children and pregnant women against 12 vaccine-preventable diseases.
- The UIP is one of the largest public health programmes targeting close to 26.7 million newborns and 29 million pregnant women annually.
- Under UIP, free of cost vaccination is provided against twelve vaccine-preventable diseases i.e. Tuberculosis, Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Polio, Hepatitis B, Pneumonia and Meningitis due to *Haemophilus Influenzae* type b (Hib), Measles, Rubella, Japanese Encephalitis (JE) and Rotavirus diarrhoea.

- It is one of the largest health programmes in the world. Despite being operational for many years, UIP has been able to fully immunize only 65% of children under 1 year of age.

## 12) ZEOLITE OXYGEN CONCENTRATORS

**IN NEWS:** - In India, IISc has transferred the technology of making Zeolite oxygen concentrators to over 20 companies.

### ABOUT ZEOLITE OXYGEN CONCENTRATORS

- Zeolites are highly porous, 3-D meshes of silica and alumina. In nature, they occur where volcanic outflows have met water. Synthetic zeolites have proven to be a big and low-cost boon.
- At the heart of oxygen concentrator technology are synthetic frameworks of silica and alumina with nanometre-size pores that are rigid and inflexible. Beads of one such material, zeolite 13X, about a millimetre in diameter, are packed into two cylindrical columns in an oxygen concentrator.
- The chemistry here is tailored to the task of separating oxygen from nitrogen in air. Being highly porous, zeolite beads have a surface area of about 500 square meters per gram.
- Interaction between the negatively charged zeolite and the asymmetric nucleus (quadrupole moment) of nitrogen causes it to be preferentially adsorbed on the surface of the zeolite.
- Oxygen remains free, and is thus enriched. Air has 78% nitrogen, 20.9% oxygen and smaller quantities of argon, carbon dioxide, etc. Once nitrogen is under arrest, what flows out from the column is 90%+plus oxygen. After this, lowering the pressure in the column releases the nitrogen, which is flushed out, and the cycle is repeated with fresh air.

## MISCELLANEOUS

**13) MUNDAPOTA KELA TRIBE**

**IN NEWS:** - Members of the Mundapota Kela community in Odisha perform an unthinkable act of their head buried in soil, which requires exceptional breath control, for a living.

**ABOUT MUNDAPOTA KELA TRIBE**

- The community — Mundapota Kela (a denotified tribe) — is left with few members who earn a livelihood with this bizarre act.
- It is believed to have migrated to Odisha from Rayalaseema area of Andhra Pradesh decades ago.
- Being street performers, they travel from one village to another and bury their heads in soil for several minutes.
- They collect rice, vegetables and money from villagers for putting up the show.
- The population of Mundapota is scattered across the state
- The community is extremely poor
- Till the 2011 census, they have not been enumerated as Scheduled Caste

**DENOTIFIED TRIBES**

- Denotified tribes are those that were notified under the Criminal Tribes Acts enforced during British Rule, whereby entire populations were branded criminals by birth. In 1952, the Act was repealed and the communities were de-notified.
- The Nomadic tribes maintain constant geographical mobility while semi-nomads are those who are on the move but return to a fixed habitations once a year, mainly for occupational reasons.



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