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IMPORTANT CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR PRELIMS VOL 30

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SCAN TO EXPLORE





IMPORTANT CURRENT AFFAIRS

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INDIAN POLITY

1) PRIVILEGE MOTION

IN NEWS: - Congress chief whip in the Rajya Sabha Jairam Ramesh has moved a privilege motion against Culture Minister G. Kishan Reddy over the appointment of former MP Tarun Vijay as the Chairperson of the National Monuments Authority, a post for which, Mr. Ramesh said, Mr. Vijay was not qualified.

ABOUT PRIVILEGE MOTION

- Parliamentary Privileges are certain rights and immunities enjoyed by members of Parliament, individually and collectively, so that they can “effectively discharge their functions”.
- Article 105 of the Constitution expressly mentions two privileges, that is, freedom of speech in Parliament and right of publication of its proceedings.
- Apart from the privileges as specified in the Constitution, the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, provides for freedom from arrest and detention of members under civil process during the continuance of the meeting of the House or of a committee thereof and forty days before its commencement and forty days after its conclusion.
- When any of these rights and immunities are disregarded, the offence is called a breach of privilege and is punishable under law of Parliament.
- A notice is moved in the form of a motion by any member of either House against those being held guilty of breach of privilege.
- The Speaker/RS chairperson is the first level of scrutiny of a privilege motion.
- The Speaker/Chair can decide on the privilege motion himself or herself or refer it to the privileges committee of Parliament.

- If the Speaker/Chair gives consent under relevant rules, the member concerned is given an opportunity to make a short statement.
- The Constitution also extends the parliamentary privileges to those persons who are entitled to speak and take part in the proceedings of a House of Parliament or any of its committees. These include the Attorney General of India.
- The parliamentary privileges do not extend to the President who is also an integral part of the Parliament. Article 361 of the Constitution provides for privileges for the President.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. Parliamentary Privileges extend to the President
2. The Constitution also extends the parliamentary privileges to those persons who are entitled to speak and take part in the proceedings of a House of Parliament or any of its committees.

Which among the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: - b

2) PANCHAYATS (EXTENSION TO SCHEDULED AREAS) ACT 1996

IN NEWS: - The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has celebrated the 25th year of the inauguration of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996 (PESA) as a part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

ABOUT PANCHAYATS (EXTENSION TO SCHEDULED AREAS) ACT 1996

- The Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 or PESA Act is a law enacted by the Government of India for ensuring self-governance

through traditional Gram Sabhas for people living in the Scheduled Areas of India.

- The PESA is considered to be the backbone of tribal legislation in India.
- After the Bhuria Committee recommendations in 1995, Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act 1996 came into existence for ensuring tribal self-rule for people living in scheduled areas of India.
- The PESA conferred the absolute powers to Gram Sabha, whereas state legislature has given an advisory role to ensure the proper functioning of Panchayats and Gram Sabhas.
- The power delegated to Gram Sabha cannot be curtailed by a higher level, and there shall be independence throughout

Powers and functions given to the Gram Sabhas:

- Right to mandatory consultation in land acquisition, resettlement and rehabilitation of displaced persons.
- Protection of traditional belief, the culture of the tribal communities
- Ownership of minor forest products
- Resolution of the local disputes
- Prevention of land alienation
- Management of village markets
- Right to control production, distillation, and prohibition of liquor
- Exercise of control over money-lending
- Any other rights involving the Scheduled Tribes.

3) CBI DIRECTOR

IN NEWS: - The Central Government has appointed 'Subodh Kumar Jaiswal' as a new Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

ABOUT CBI

- The CBI was set up in 1963 by a resolution of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

- Now, the CBI comes under the administrative control of the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.
- The establishment of the CBI was recommended by the Santhanam Committee on Prevention of Corruption (1962–1964).
- The CBI is not a statutory body. It derives its powers from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946.
- The CBI is the main investigating agency of the Central Government.
- It also provides assistance to the Central Vigilance Commission and Lokpal.
- It is also the nodal police agency in India which coordinates investigations on behalf of Interpol Member countries.
- The CBI is headed by a Director.
- The CBI has jurisdiction to investigate offences pertaining to 69 Central laws, 18 State Acts and 231 offences in the IPC.

ABOUT CBI DIRECTOR

- The Director of CBI as Inspector General of Police, Delhi Special Police Establishment, is responsible for the administration of the organisation.
- The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act (2013) amended the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act (1946) and made the following changes with respect to appointment of the Director of CBI:
- Appointment Committee: The Central Government shall appoint the Director of CBI on the recommendation of a three-member committee consisting of the Prime Minister as Chairperson, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and the Chief Justice of India or Judge of the Supreme Court (SC) nominated by him.
- The Delhi Special Police Establishment (Amendment) Act, 2014 made a change in the composition of the committee related to the appointment of the Director of CBI.

- It states that where there is no recognized leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha, then the leader of the single largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha would be a member of that committee.
- The Director of CBI has been provided security of two-year tenure in office by the CVC Act, 2003.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. The CBI is headed by a Director.
2. The CBI director is not provided with a security of tenure

Which among the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: - a

INDIAN ECONOMY

4) InvITs

IN NEWS: - The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has decided to use Infrastructure Investment Trust(s) (InvIT) as a vehicle for mobilising funds for constructing road infrastructure.

ABOUT InvITs

- They are institutions similar to mutual funds, which pool investment from various categories of investors and invest them into completed and revenue-generating infrastructure projects, thereby creating returns for the investor.
- They are regulated under the Sebi (Infrastructure Investment Trusts) Regulations, 2014 and the Indian Trust Act, 1882.
- They have a trustee, sponsor(s), investment manager and project manager.

- Trustee (certified by Sebi) has the responsibility of inspecting the performance of an InvIT.
- Sponsor(s) are promoters of the company that set up the InvIT.
- Investment manager is entrusted with the task of supervising the assets and investments of the InvIT.
- Project manager is responsible for the execution of the project.
- InvITs enable investors to buy a small portion of the units being sold by the fund depending upon their risk appetite.
- Given that such trusts comprise largely of completed and operational projects with positive cash flow, the risks are somewhat contained.
- Unit holders also benefit from favourable tax norms, including exemption on dividend income and no capital gains tax if units are held for more than three years.

4) PROMPT CORRECTIVE ACTION FRAMEWORK

IN NEWS: - The RBI has issued a revised Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework for banks to enable supervisory intervention at “appropriate time” and also act as a tool for effective market discipline.

ABOUT PROMPT CORRECTIVE ACTION FRAMEWORK

- PCA is a framework under which banks with weak financial metrics are put under watch by the RBI.
- The RBI introduced the PCA framework in 2002 as a structured early-intervention mechanism for banks that become undercapitalised due to poor asset quality, or vulnerable due to loss of profitability.
- It aims to check the problem of Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) in the Indian banking sector.
- The framework was reviewed in 2017 based on the recommendations of the working group of the Financial Stability and Development Council on

Resolution Regimes for Financial Institutions in India and the Financial Sector Legislative Reforms Commission.

- The PCA is invoked when certain risk thresholds are breached. There are three risk thresholds which are based on certain levels of asset quality, profitability, capital and the like.
- There are two types of restrictions, mandatory and discretionary. Restrictions on dividend, branch expansion, directors compensation, are mandatory while discretionary restrictions could include curbs on lending and deposit.
- If PCA is triggered Banks are not allowed to renew or access costly deposits or take steps to increase their fee-based income.
- Also, banks will also have to launch a special drive to reduce the stock of NPAs and contain generation of fresh NPAs.
- They will also not be allowed to enter into new lines of business. RBI will also impose restrictions on the bank on borrowings from the interbank market.

ABOUT REVISED FRAMEWORK

- The revised PCA framework will be effective from January 1, 2022.
- Capital, asset quality and leverage will be the key areas for monitoring.
- Indicators to be tracked for capital, asset quality and leverage would be CRAR/Common Equity Tier I Ratio, Net NPA Ratio and Tier I Leverage Ratio, respectively.

5) WTO's 12th MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

IN NEWS: - The World Trade Organization's 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12), a forum to ensure trade rules took place from 30 November to 3 December 2021.

ABOUT WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE MC12

- The WTO is an inter-governmental organization for negotiating trade agreements, settling trade disputes, monitoring trade policies and delivering technical assistance on trade to developing countries.
- The Ministerial Conference is the highest decision making body of the WTO.
- Trade ministers generally meet at the Ministerial Conference every two years, but MC12 was postponed due to COVID-19.
- MC12 will be chaired by Timur Suleimenov, the Kazakhstan President's Envoy for International Trade.

ABOUT WTO

- WTO is the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations
- It was created in 1995 superseding the 1947 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)
- Headquarters – Geneva, Switzerland
- WTO has over 160 members representing 98 per cent of world trade
- Ministerial Conference – It is the topmost decision-making body of WTO which usually meets every two years
- General Council - It is the WTO's highest-level decision-making body that has representatives from all member governments and meets regularly to carry out the functions of the WTO
- The General Council also meets under different rules as the Dispute Settlement Body and as the Trade Policy Review Body.

ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

6) LATE ORDOVICIAN MASS EXTINCTION

IN NEWS: - A paper published in the journal, Nature Geoscience, has come up with a new reason behind the first mass extinction, also known as the Late

Ordovician mass extinction. It notes that the cooling climate likely changed the ocean circulation pattern. This caused a disruption in the flow of oxygen-rich water from the shallow seas to deeper oceans, leading to a mass extinction of marine creatures.

ABOUT MASS EXTINCTION

- A mass extinction event is when species vanish much faster than they are replaced.
- This is usually defined as about 75% of the world's species being lost in a 'short' amount of geological time - less than 2.8 million years.
- First Mass Extinction: The Ordovician mass extinction that occurred about 445 million years ago killed about 85% of all species.
- Second Mass Extinction: The Devonian mass extinction (about 375 million years ago) wiped out about 75% of the world's species.
- Third Mass Extinction: The Permian mass extinction (about 250 million years ago) also known as the Great Dying caused the extinction of over 95% of all species.
- Fourth Mass Extinction: The Triassic mass extinction (about 200 million years ago) eliminated about 80% of Earth's species, including some dinosaurs.
- Fifth Mass Extinction: This Cretaceous mass extinction (about 65 million years ago) is known for wiping out non-avian dinosaurs.
- Sixth mass extinction: Some researchers have pointed out that we are currently experiencing a sixth mass extinction as the result of human-induced climate change. More than 99 per cent of all organisms that have ever lived on Earth are extinct. As new species evolve to fit ever-changing ecological niches, older species fade away. But the rate of extinction is far from constant.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. Currently we are experiencing the Late Ordovician Mass extinction
2. The Permian mass extinction also known as the Great Dying caused the extinction of over 95% of all species.

Which among the above statements are incorrect?

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

Answer: - a

7) INFRASTRUCTURE FOR RESILIENT ISLAND STATES

IN NEWS: - Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS) on the sidelines of the climate summit in Glasgow.

ABOUT INFRASTRUCTURE FOR RESILIENT ISLAND STATES (IRIS)

- Infrastructure for Resilient Island States or IRIS is the first major initiative by the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) started by India in 2019.
- IRIS seeks to operationalise the CDRI initiative.
- It is aimed at achieving sustainable development through a systematic approach to resilient, sustainable and inclusive infrastructure in Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
- Small island states are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. As sea levels rise, they face a threat of being wiped off the map.
- According to CDRI, several small island states have lost 9 per cent of their GDPs in single disasters during the last few years.

ABOUT CDRI

- Launched by Modi in September 2019 at the UN Secretary-General's Climate Action Summit in New York, US.
- It is a platform where knowledge is generated and exchanged on different aspects of disaster and climate resilience of infrastructure.
- It will create a mechanism to assist countries to upgrade their capacities and practices, with regard to infrastructure development in accordance with their risk context and economic needs.
- So far, 25 other countries, including Germany, Italy, Japan, Australia, and the United States have joined this coalition.
- CDRI is the second international collaboration set up by India in the climate change sphere, the other being the International Solar Alliance that has now evolved to the status of a “treaty-based” intergovernmental organisation.

8) PRINCIPLES FOR RESPONSIBLE BANKING

IN NEWS: - Global banks are pledging to report annually on the carbon emissions linked to the projects they lend to in an extension to the Principles for Responsible Banking (PRBs).

ABOUT PRINCIPLES FOR RESPONSIBLE BANKING

- The PRBs are a unique framework for ensuring that signatory banks' strategy and practice align with the vision society has set out for its future in the SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement.
- It was created in 2019 through a partnership between founding banks and the United Nations.
- India's YES BANK Limited is the only Indian signatory to this framework.
- The framework consists of 6 Principles designed to bring purpose, vision and ambition to sustainable finance.

- Signatory banks commit to embedding these 6 principles across all business areas, at the strategic, portfolio and transactional levels



9) CLIMATE CHANGE PERFORMANCE INDEX

IN NEWS: - The 17th edition of the Climate Change Performance Index 2021, compiled by Germanwatch, the New Climate Institute, and the Climate Action Network, was released.

ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE PERFORMANCE INDEX

- The index, which monitors climate mitigation progress of 57 countries and the European Union, places Sweden on top, while countries such as Morocco and the UK are also ranked high.
- The first three ranks of the overall rankings were kept empty because no country had performed well enough in all index categories to achieve an overall very high rating.
- The bottom-ranked country, the United States, therefore, was placed at 61.
- In the overall rankings, India is at number 10 with a score of 63.98. It is a high performer except in the renewable energy category, in which it is ranked “medium”.

- The report says that India is benefiting from its relatively low per-capita emissions.
- In terms of greenhouse gas emissions, Sweden, Egypt, Chile and the UK are in the top 7. India is ranked 12.
- Scandinavian countries such as Sweden achieved the best results because of their “outstanding” effort on renewable energy.
- Iran and Russia are ranked the lowest in this category. Overall, Australia, South Korea and Russia are among the lowest performing countries along with Kazakhstan and Saudi Arabia.
- China is ranked 33 overall and has an overall rating of “low”.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. Climate Change Performance Index is compiled by UNEP
2. In the Climate Change Performance Index 2021, the bottom ranked country is the United States

Which among the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: - b

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

10) TUNDRA SATELLITES

IN NEWS: - Russia has successfully placed into orbit a military satellite. The satellite is believed to be a Tundra Satellite, part of Russia's early warning anti-missile system named Kupol or dome.

ABOUT TUNDRA SATELLITES

- Tundra satellite system is a constellation of Missile Early Warning Satellites established by Russia between 2015 and 2020.
- It carries a secure emergency communications payload to be used in case of a nuclear war.
- It is a series of satellites that are the next generation of Russian early warning satellites to replace the early warning satellites of the Oko-1 system.
- This final Oko (Eye) satellite (missile defence early warning program) reportedly stopped operating in mid 2014, leaving Russia relying on ground-based missile detection systems.
- They are part of the EKS or Unified Space System (USS-Also sometimes referred as Kupol or dome), which will also include several satellites in geostationary orbit.
- Unveiled in 2019, Kupol is designed to detect launches of ballistic missiles and track them to their landing site, though its exact configuration is unknown.

11) BASIC COUNTRIES

IN NEWS: - In the UNFCCC COP26 held in Glasgow, India delivered a statement on behalf of the BASIC countries in which it was said that the developed countries had failed to deliver on the promise of providing USD 100 billion every year to the developing nations since 2009 as support for climate action.

ABOUT BASIC COUNTRIES

- BASIC is a grouping of four newly industrialized countries namely, Brazil, South Africa, India and China.
- The grouping was formed by an agreement in November 2009.
- The four countries decided to act together at the Copenhagen Summit.

- The Copenhagen Summit was the 15th meeting of parties of the UNFCCC, hence, also called the COP15 Summit.
- It was held in Copenhagen, Denmark in 2009.
- The BASIC group brokered the final Copenhagen Accord with the US.
- These emerging nations have a broadly common stance on decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and raising the extensive funds that are required to combat climate change.
- The BASIC countries grouping wields a lot of heft in international forums because of the sizes of the members and also due to the fact that all of them are emerging economic powerhouses.
- Put together, the four nations possess one-third of the world's geographical area and almost 40% of the world's population

ART AND CULTURE

12) UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK

IN NEWS: - The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated Srinagar as a part of UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN). After Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, Varanasi and Jaipur, Srinagar is the sixth Indian city to achieve this distinction.

ABOUT UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK

- The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was created in 2004 to promote cooperation with and among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development.
- The Network covers seven creative fields: Crafts and Folk Arts, Media Arts, Film, Design, Gastronomy, Literature and Music.
- Currently, the Indian cities in UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) are as follows:
 - Jaipur-Crafts and Folk Arts(2015).

- Varanasi-Creative city of Music (2015).
- Chennai-Creative city of Music(2017).
- Mumbai – Film (2019).
- Hyderabad – Gastronomy (2019).
- Srinagar - Crafts and Folk Arts (2021)

ABOUT UNESCO

- It is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN). It seeks to build peace through international cooperation in Education, the Sciences and Culture.
- It was founded in 1945 and is located in Paris, France.

13)JANJATIYA GAURAV DIVAS

IN NEWS: - The Union Cabinet has approved 15th November as Janjatiya Gaurav Divas to commemorate the birth anniversary of revered tribal leader and freedom fighter Birsa Munda

ABOUT BIRSA MUNDA

- Born on November 15, 1875, Birsa spent much of his childhood moving from one village to another with his parents.
- He belonged to the Munda tribe in the Chhotanagpur Plateau area.
- He received his early education at Salga under the guidance of his teacher Jaipal Nag.
- On the recommendation of Jaipal Nag, Birsa converted to Christianity in order to join the German Mission School. He, however, opted out of the school after a few years.
- The impact of Christianity was felt in the way he came to relate to religion later.
- Having gained awareness of the British colonial ruler and the efforts of the missionaries to convert tribals to Christianity, Birsa started the faith of 'Birsait'.
- Soon members of the Munda and Oraon community started joining the Birsait sect and it turned into a challenge to British conversion activities.

- The Mundas called him Dharati Aaba, the father of earth.
- The Great Tumult or Ulgulan was a movement started by Birsa Munda against the exploitation and discrimination against tribals by the local authorities.
- Although the movement failed, it did result in the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act which forbade tribal lands passing to non-tribals, protecting their land rights for the foreseeable future.
- On March 3, 1900, Birsa Munda was arrested by the British police while he was sleeping with his tribal guerilla army at Jamkopai forest in Chakradharpur. He died in Ranchi jail on June 9, 1900, at the young age of 25.
- In recognition of his impact on the national movement, the state of Jharkhand was created on his birth anniversary in 2000.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements regarding Birsa Munda

1. The Great Tumult or Ulgulan was a movement started by Birsa Munda
2. The Mundas referred to Birsa Munda as Dharati Aaba, the father of earth.

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



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Once you choose hope
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