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IMPORTANT CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR PRELIMS VOL 31

- PRE LEGISLATIVE CONSULTATION POLICY
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- NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT SURVEY
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SCAN TO EXPLORE





IMPORTANT CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR PRELIMS VOL - 31

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INDIAN POLITY

1) DUARE RATION SCHEME

IN NEWS: - The West Bengal government launched the 'Duare Ration' (ration at doorstep) scheme for providing food grains under the Public Distribution System (PDS) at the doorstep for the entire population of the State.

ABOUT DUARE RATION SCHEME

- Under the scheme, dealers would deliver ration at the doorstep of the beneficiaries.
- There are around 21000 rational dealers in the state and the government would provide a subsidy of Rs. 1 lakh to each dealer to purchase a delivery vehicle.
- Ration dealers will also be allowed to recruit two assistants for which state would pay half their salaries.
- Each vehicle would be parked at a convenient location in a neighbourhood so that residents need not walk more than 500 metres to avail the ration.
- It is expected to benefit around 10 crores of people of the state.

ABOUT PDS

- It is a government managed process of ensuring that food, staples, grains and other necessities are being provided to the poorer sections of the society in India.
- Food and some non-food items are provided at a subsidised rate through a chain of Fair Price Shops (FPS) or Ration Shops.
- The system is managed by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.

2) PRE LEGISLATIVE CONSULTATION POLICY

IN NEWS: - In recent times, there have been calls for more transparency and information regarding bills that are passed in parliament. \

ABOUT PRE LEGISLATIVE CONSULTATION POLICY

- In 2014, the Pre-Legislative Consultation Policy was adopted, mandating a host of rules, including that whenever the Government makes any law, it must place a draft version of it in the public domain for at least 30 days.
- This policy provides a forum for citizens and relevant stakeholders to interact with policymakers.
- The policy also says that along with the draft, a note explaining the law in simple language and justifying the proposal, its financial implication, impact on the environment and fundamental rights, a study on the social and financial costs of the bill, etc. should be uploaded.
- The respective departments should also upload the summary of all the feedback that they receive on the circulated draft.

3) e-AMRIT PORTAL

IN NEWS: - India launched 'E-Amrit', a web portal on electric vehicles (EVs), at the COP26 Summit in Glasgow, UK.

ABOUT e-AMRIT PORTAL

- E-Amrit is a one-stop destination for all information on electric vehicles— busting myths around the adoption of EVs, their purchase, investment opportunities, policies, subsidies, etc.
- The portal has been developed and hosted by NITI Aayog under a collaborative knowledge exchange programme with the UK government.
- It intends to complement initiatives of the government on raising awareness about EVs.
- It aims to sensitize consumers on the benefits of switching to electric vehicles.

4) NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT SURVEY

IN NEWS: - The Union Government has conducted the National Achievement Survey (NAS) across India, assessing about 38 lakh students from 1.23 lakh schools in 733 districts in 36 States and Union Territories.

ABOUT NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT SURVEY

- It is a nationwide survey to assess the learning outcomes and health of the education system.
- It is the largest, nationwide, sample-based education survey conducted across India.
- It is undertaken by the Ministry of Education.
- The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) conducted NAS 2021.
- The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) designed an assessment framework and tools for NAS-2021.
- It provides a system-level reflection on the effectiveness of school education.
- It collects information on relevant background variables such as school environment, teaching processes, and student home and background factors.
- It covers the whole spectrum of schools including Government schools (both State and Central government), Government-aided schools, and Private schools across India.
- The NAS 2021 was conducted in 22 mediums of instruction that covered English, Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Hindi, Malayalam, Marathi, Manipuri, Mizo, Punjabi, Odia, Telugu, Tamil, Bodo, Urdu, Garo, Konkani, Khasi, Bhutia, Nepali, and Lepcha.
- It was conducted in different subjects for different grades. The subject and grades wise break up is below:
 - Grade 3 and 5: Language, EVS, and Mathematics
 - Grade 8: Language, Science, Mathematics, and Social Science

- Grade 10: Language, Science, Mathematics, Social Science, and English

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. It is a nationwide survey to assess the learning outcomes and health of the education system.
2. It is undertaken by NITI Aayog

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

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

5) FISHING CATS

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IN NEWS: - The Wildlife Institute of India (WII-Dehradun) Conservation Biologists will begin collaring ten Fishing Cats (*Prionailurus viverrinus*) in the Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS) in Andhra Pradesh.

ABOUT FISHING CATS

- About twice the size of a typical house cat, the fishing cat is a feline with a powerful build and stocky legs.
- It is an adept swimmer and enters water frequently to prey on fish as its name suggests.
- It is known to even dive to catch fish.
- It is nocturnal and apart from fish also preys on frogs, crustaceans, snakes, birds, and scavenges on carcasses of larger animals.

- It is capable of breeding all year round but in India its peak breeding season is known to be between March and May.
- Conservation status
 - IUCN Red List: Endangered
 - CITES: Appendix II
 - Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I
- One of the major threats facing the fishing cat is the destruction of wetlands, which is its preferred habitat.
- As a result of human settlement, drainage for agriculture, pollution, and wood-cutting most of the wetlands in India are under threat of destruction.
- Another threat to the fishing cat is the depletion of its main prey-fish due to unsustainable fishing practices.
- It is also occasionally poached for its skin.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. The preferred habitat for fishing cats is desert
2. It is listed as least concern in the IUCN Red list

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

6) GRADED RESPONSE ACTION PLAN

IN NEWS: - The Environment Pollution (Prevention & Control) Authority (EPCA) has directed Delhi and neighbouring States to implement air pollution control measures under very poor and severe category air quality of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)

ABOUT GRADED RESPONSE ACTION PLAN

- The action plan which was formulated in 2016 and notified in 2017 for Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR).
- The plan was formulated after several meetings were held by Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA) with state government representatives and experts.
- These are institutionalized measures to be taken when air quality deteriorates, hence works only as an emergency measure.
- GRAP includes the measures which will be taken by different government agencies to prevent worsening of Air Quality of Delhi-NCR and prevent PM10 and PM2.5 levels to go beyond the 'moderate' national Air Quality Index (AQI) category.
- If air quality reaches the severe+ stage, GRAP talks about shutting down schools and implementing the odd-even road-space rationing scheme.
- The plan requires action and coordination among 13 different agencies in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan (NCR areas).

Environment Pollution Control Authority

- It was notified in 1998 under the Environment Protection Act, 1986.
- EPCA is a Supreme Court mandated body tasked with taking various measures to tackle air pollution in the National Capital Region.

7) GLASGOW CLIMATE PACT

IN NEWS: - The Glasgow Agreement was finally adopted after a last-minute intervention by India to water down language on “phasing out” coal to merely “phasing down”.

ABOUT GLASGOW CLIMATE PACT

- The Glasgow meeting was the 26th session of the Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, or COP26.

- These meetings are held every year to construct a global response to climate change.
- Each of these meetings produce a set of decisions which are given different names.
- In the current case, this has been called the Glasgow Climate Pact.
- Earlier, these meetings have also delivered two treaty-like international agreements, the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 and the Paris Agreement in 2015.

8) KAISER -I -HIND

IN NEWS: - Arunachal Pradesh has approved the large, brightly coloured Kaiser-i-Hind as the State butterfly.

ABOUT KAISER -I -HIND

- Its scientific name is *Teinopalpus imperialis*
- It is one of the very rare and elusive swallowtail butterflies which are found at medium and higher elevations.
- Swallowtail butterfly is any of a group of butterflies in the family Papilionidae (order Lepidoptera).
- It flies high in the canopy of broad leaved temperate evergreen forests.
- The temperate evergreen forests are found in the Eastern and Western Himalayas.
- This butterfly with a 90-120 mm wingspan is found in (West Bengal, Meghalaya, Assam, Sikkim and Manipur) along the Eastern Himalayas.
- Its presence indicates the existence of a good forest ecosystem and protection.
- The butterfly also flutters in Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam and southern China.
- Protection Status:
 - IUCN: Near Threatened
 - CITES: Appendix II

- Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule II



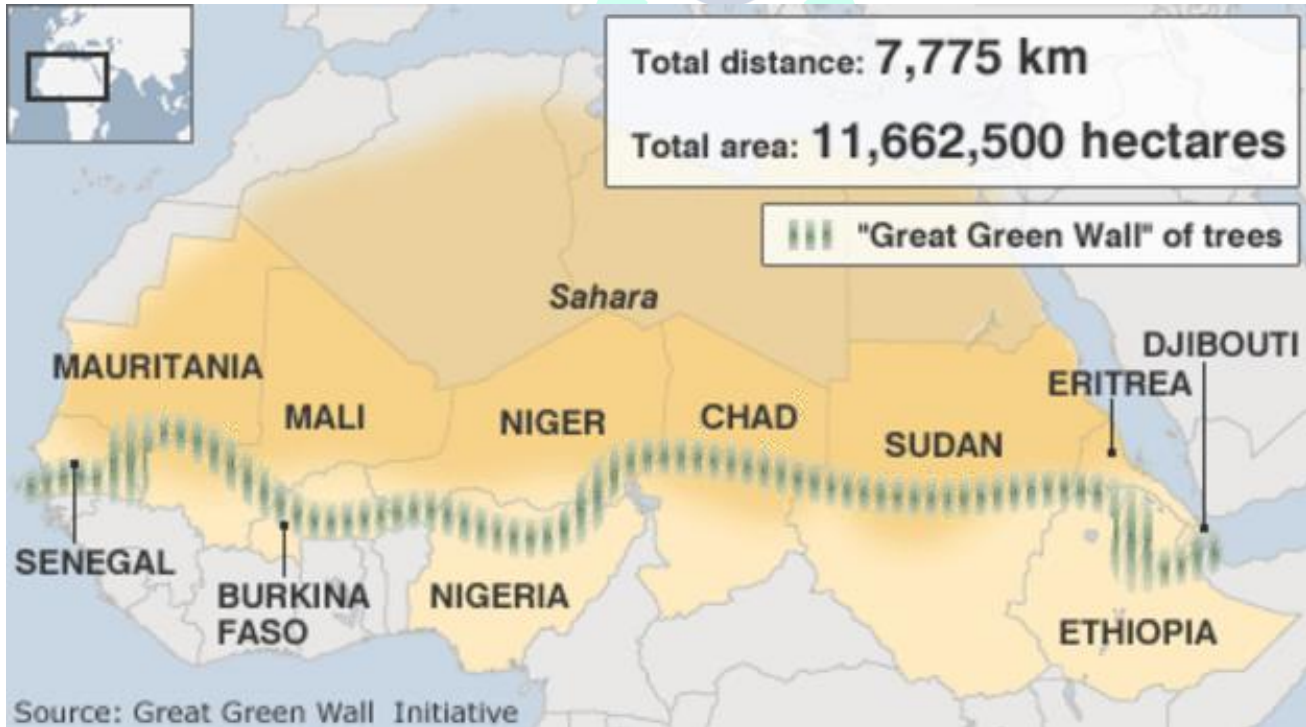
9) GREAT GREEN WALL PROJECT

IN NEWS:- Africa's Great Green Wall (GGW) programme to combat desertification in the Sahel region has an important contribution towards combating climate change: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Study.

ABOUT GREAT GREEN WALL PROJECT

- It was launched in 2007 by the African Union.
- Initial idea for the GGW: A band of trees about 8,000 kilometers long and 8 kilometers wide, stretching across Africa from east to west.
- The GGW programme aims to restore 100 million hectares of degraded ecosystems across 11 countries in the region.
- It aims to promote sustainable development and climate change mitigation.

- By 2030, the GGW aims to sequester 250 million tonnes of carbon, restore 100 million hectares of currently degraded land and create 10 million jobs for the world's poorest people.
- Countries selected as intervention zones for the Great Green Wall are:
- Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Sudan.



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

10) FREEDOM OF AIR

IN NEWS: - A flight from Srinagar to Sharjah had to avoid flying over Pakistan after the country denied permission to use its airspace for the said flight. With this refusal, Pakistan has violated the first freedom of air.

ABOUT FREEDOM OF AIR

- Following the Chicago Convention in 1944, the signatories decided to set rules that would act as fundamental building blocks to international commercial aviation.
- As a part of these rules, initially, six 'freedoms of air' were decided.
- These freedoms or rights still operate within the ambit of multilateral and bilateral treaties.
- It allows to grant airlines of a particular country the privilege to use and/or land in another country's airspace.

'Freedoms' accorded

1. Flying over a foreign country without landing
2. Refuel or carry out maintenance in a foreign country without embarking or disembarking passengers or cargo
3. Fly from the home country and land in a foreign country
4. Fly from a foreign country and land in the home country
5. Fly from the home country to a foreign country, stopping in another foreign country on the way
6. Fly from a foreign country to another foreign country, stopping in the home country on the way
7. Fly from a foreign country to another foreign country, without stopping in the home country
8. Fly from the home country to a foreign country, then on to another destination within the same foreign country
9. Fly internally within a foreign country

11) INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

IN NEWS: - Iran has invited the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for talks after the UN official expressed concern over a lack of contact with Iranian authorities.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

- The IAEA is an international organization that seeks to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy and to inhibit its use for any military purpose, including nuclear weapons.
- As the preeminent nuclear watchdog under the UN, the IAEA is entrusted with the task of upholding the principles of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1970.
- It was established as an autonomous organization on July 29, 1957, at the height of the Cold War between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.
- Though established independently of the UN through its own international treaty, the agency reports to both the UN General Assembly and the UNSC.

JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF ACTION

- The 2015 deal promises Iran economic incentives in exchange for limits on its nuclear program, and is meant to prevent Tehran from developing a nuclear bomb.
- The U.S. unilaterally pulled out of the deal in 2018 under then-President Donald Trump, but Britain, France, Germany, China and Russia have tried to preserve the accord.
- Under the deal with world powers, the other signatories were to provide Iran with 20% enriched uranium needed for its research reactor.
- Under the terms of the nuclear deal, Iran was prohibited from enriching uranium above 3.67% with the exception of its research reactor activities.

ART AND CULTURE**12. ADI SHANKARACHARYA**

IN NEWS: - A 12-foot statue of Adi Shankaracharya has been unveiled at Kedarnath, where the acharya is believed to have attained samadhi at the age of 32 in the ninth century.

ABOUT ADI SHANKARACHARYA

- Born in Kaladi village on the bank of the Periyar, the largest river in Kerala
- He was a disciple of the scholar Govindacharya.
- He was constantly on the move — bearing the flag of Advaita Vedanta, challenging prevailing philosophical traditions including Buddhism and Jainism.
- He is believed to have established the ritual practices at the Badri and Kedar dhams.
- Adi Shankara is generally identified as the author of 116 works — among them the celebrated commentaries (bhashyas) on 10 Upanishads, the Brahmasutra and the Gita, and poetic works including Vivekachudamani, Maneesha Panchakam, and Saundaryalahiri.
- He also composed texts like Shankarasmrithi, which seeks to establish the social supremacy of Nambuthiri Brahmins.

ADVAITA VEDANTA

- Advaita Vedanta articulates a philosophical position of radical nondualism, a revisionary worldview which it derives from the ancient Upanishadic texts.
- According to Advaita Vedantins, the Upanishads reveal a fundamental principle of nonduality termed 'brahman', which is the reality of all things.
- Advaitins understand brahman as transcending individuality and empirical plurality.
- They seek to establish that the essential core of one's self (atman) is brahman. The fundamental thrust of Advaita Vedanta is that the atman is pure non-intentional consciousness.
- It is one without a second, nondual, infinite existence, and numerically identical with brahman.

13) PURI HERITAGE CORRIDOR PROJECT

IN NEWS:- The Odisha Government is expected to soon lay the foundation stone of the Puri heritage corridor, which is being developed at a cost of Rs 800 crore.

ABOUT PURI HERITAGE CORRIDOR PROJECT

- The project is a part of the Augmentation of Basic Amenities and Development of Heritage and Architecture (ABADHA) scheme for developing Puri as a world-class heritage city.
- Conceived in 2016, the Puri Heritage Corridor Project was unveiled in December 2019 to transform the holy town of Puri into an international place of heritage.
- The project includes redeveloping major portions of the holy town and in the vicinity of the Jagannath temple for visitors and tourists.
- The project will include Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) building redevelopment, a 600-capacity Srimandir reception centre, Jagannath cultural centre, Badadanda heritage streetscape, beachfront development, Puri lake, Musa river revival plan, etc..

JAGANNATH TEMPLE

- It is believed to have been constructed in the 12th century by King Anatarvarman Chodaganga Deva of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty.
- Jagannath Puri temple is called 'Yamanika Tirtha' where, according to the Hindu beliefs, the power of 'Yama', the god of death, has been nullified due to the presence of Lord Jagannath.
- This temple was called the "White Pagoda" and is a part of Char Dham pilgrimages (Badrinath, Dwaraka, Puri, Rameswaram).
- There are four gates to the temple- Eastern 'Singhdwara' which is the main gate with two crouching lions, Southern 'Ashwadwara', Western 'Vyaghra Dwara' and Northern 'Hastidwara'. There is a carving of each form at each gate.

- In front of the entrance stands the Aruna stambha or sun pillar, which was originally at the Sun Temple in Konark.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. The Puri Heritage Corridor Project is a part of the Augmentation of Basic Amenities and Development of Heritage and Architecture (ABADHA) scheme
2. The project includes redeveloping major portions of the holy town and in the vicinity of the Jagannath temple for visitors and tourists.

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

14) RANI GAIDINLIU

IN NEWS:- The 'Rani Gaidinliu Tribal Freedom Fighters Museum' is being built in Manipur's Tamenglong district (Rani Gaidinliu's birthplace).

ABOUT RANI GAIDINLIU

- Rani Gaidinliu was a Naga spiritual leader.
- Gaidinliu belonged to the Rongmei clan of the Zeliangrong tribe in the Tamenglong district of western Manipur.
- Born on January 26, 1915.
- At 13, she became associated with freedom fighter and religious leader, Haipou Jadonang, and became his lieutenant in his social, religious and political movement.

- Jadonang, who was also a Rongmei, started the 'Heraka movement', based on ancestral Naga religion, and envisioned an independent Naga kingdom (or Naga-Raja).
- Rani Gandiliu's association with Jadonang prepared her to fight the British. After the execution of Jadonang, she took up the leadership of the movement — which slowly turned political from religious.
- Rani started a serious revolt against the British and was eventually imprisoned for life. She was released after 14 years, in 1947
- Acknowledging her role in the struggle against the British, Jawaharlal Nehru called her the "Daughter of the Hills" and gave her the title "Rani" or queen.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

15. DOUBLE ASTEROID REDIRECTION TEST (DART)

IN NEWS: - NASA will launch its first planetary defense test mission named the Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART).

ABOUT DOUBLE ASTEROID REDIRECTION TEST (DART)

- The DART spacecraft will be launched on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket.
- The mission is to test the new technology to be prepared in case an asteroid heads towards Earth in the future.
- The aim is to test the newly developed technology that would allow a spacecraft to crash into an asteroid and change its course.
- After the mission has collided with the asteroid, scientists will study its impact on the trajectory of the asteroid with a range of telescopes deployed on different regions of the planet.
- DART will be the first demonstration of the kinetic impactor technique to change the motion of an asteroid in space.

- The target of the spacecraft is a small moonlet called Dimorphos (Greek for “two forms”).
- Dimorphos orbits a larger asteroid named Didymos (Greek for “twin”).
- It is a suicide mission and the spacecraft will be completely destroyed.
- The collision is expected to take place between 26th September and 1st October, 2022.
- DART is a low-cost spacecraft.
- It has two solar arrays and uses hydrazine propellant for maneuvering the spacecraft.
- It also carries about 10 kg of xenon which will be used to demonstrate the agency’s new thrusters called NASA Evolutionary Xenon Thruster-Commercial (NEXT-C) in space.
- NEXT-C gridded ion thruster system provides a combination of performance and spacecraft integration capabilities that make it uniquely suited for deep space robotic missions.
- The spacecraft carries a high-resolution imager called Didymos Reconnaissance and Asteroid Camera for Optical Navigation (DRACO).
- Images from DRACO will be sent to Earth in real-time and will help study the impact site and surface of Dimorphos (the target asteroid).
- DART will also carry a small satellite or CubeSat named LICIACube (Light Italian CubeSat for Imaging of Asteroids).
- LICIACube is expected to capture images of the impact and the impact crater formed as a result of the collision.
- Didymos is a perfect system for the test mission because it is an eclipsing binary which means it has a moonlet that regularly orbits the asteroid and which can be seen when it passes in front of the main asteroid.
- Earth-based telescopes can study this variation in brightness to understand how long it takes Dimorphos to orbit Didymos.



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