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IMPORTANT CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR PRELIMS VOL 34

- SACRILEGE
- ALL INDIA MAYOR'S CONFERENCE
- FIRST MEETING OF CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY
- CONTROLLED AERIAL DELIVERY SYSTEM
- NEW DEVELOPMENT BANK
- AGNI PRIME
- PM KISAN
- NSE PRIME
- SUPERSONIC MISSILE ASSISTED TORPEDO



SCAN TO EXPLORE





IMPORTANT CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR PRELIMS VOL- 34

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INDIAN POLITY

1) SACRILEGE

IN NEWS: - The lynching of the youth for allegedly trying to desecrate the Guru Granth Sahib has ignited what has been a long-simmering controversy around Sacrilege in Sikhism.

ABOUT SACRILEGE

- Beadbi' or 'sacrilege' means being disrespectful towards Guru Granth Sahib Ji.
- The concept of sacrilege in Sikhism emanates largely from the fact that Sikhs consider the Guru Granth Sahib to be a living Guru.
- The Sikhs consider the Guru Granth Sahib and everything associated with it as highly sacred. These include:
 - the 'dastar' or the 'pagri', the headgear worn by Sikhs, is also considered sacred, as is the 'kirpan', the sword that baptised Sikhs carry.
 - The hair and beard maintained by Sikhs are also sacred, and touching or disrespecting these also amounts to sacrilege.
 - In Sikhism, the Guru is considered to be a living entity, hence any harm or disrespect to the guru is treated as a serious offence.
 - An alteration of Sikh religious traditions and practices, or a distortion of the history of the Gurus, is also sacrilege.
- Data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) shows that from 2018 to 2020, Punjab's rate of crimes (number of cases divided by population in lakhs) registered under Sections 295 to 297 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), which deal with sacrilege, was the highest.

- For all incidents of sacrilege in Punjab, police invoke Sections 295 and 295A of the IPC.
- The punishment is two years' imprisonment in the case of Section 295, which involves destruction, damage to or defiling of a "place of worship", or "any object held sacred".
- Section 295A provides for three years of imprisonment for the "deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religious feelings of any class of citizens".
- In the wake of criticism for the sacrilege incidents of 2015, the then Akali-BJP government passed a bill in the state assembly that amended the IPC.
- This amendment added Section 295AA, which would invite life imprisonment for sacrilege of the Guru Granth Sahib.
- But the bill did not receive the assent of the President, and was returned by the Union Home Ministry on the grounds that it was against the secular spirit of the Constitution of India.
- In 2018, when Captain Amarinder Singh was chief minister, the amendment was again passed by the assembly, and it covered holy books of all religions, to tide over the objection raised by the home ministry.
- The amendments led to the insertion of Section 295AA (Punjab-specific) into the IPC saying "whoever causes injury, damage or sacrilege to Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Srimad Bhagwad Geeta, Holy Quran and Holy Bible with the intention to hurt the religious feelings of the people, shall be punished with imprisonment for life".
- The amendment also increased the punishment for "injuring or defiling [a] place of worship with [the] intent to insult the religion of any class" from imprisonment of two years to 10 years.
- These Bills were given assent by the Punjab Governor. However, these Bills are pending for the assent of the President since October 2018.

2) FIRST MEETING OF CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

IN NEWS: - The Constituent Assembly of India had held its first meeting 75 years ago on December 9, 1946.

ABOUT FIRST MEETING OF CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

- Distinguished people from different parts of India, different backgrounds and even differing ideologies came together with one aim- to give the people of India a worthy Constitution.
- The first sitting of the Constituent Assembly was Presided over by Dr Sachchidananda Sinha, who was the eldest member of the Assembly. He was introduced and conducted to the Chair by Acharya Kripalani.
- Historical Background:
 - 1934: Demand for the Constituent Assembly was made by M.N. Roy.
 - 1940: Demand was accepted by the British government.
 - 1946: 9th December, CA conducted the first session on Draft Constitution.
 - 1949: 26th November, CA finally adopted the Constitution of India.
 - 1950: 26th January, the Constitution of India came into force.
- Constituent Assembly took 2 years, 11 months & 17 days for drafting the Constitution of India.
- Dr Sachchidananda Sinha was appointed as 1st President of CA.
- Dr Rajendra Prasad was the chairman of the Constituent Assembly.
- Jawaharlal Nehru (PM) made the 'Objectives Resolution' on 13th December 1946, later adopted as Preamble on 22nd Jan 1947.
- Constituent assembly acted as the temporary legislature until a new one was to be constituted.
- **Features:**
 - Partly elected and partly nominated.

- Indirect election by provincial assemblies who themselves were elected on a limited franchise.
- Though an indirect mode of election, it included representatives from all sections of the society.
- Muslim League did not participate in the first meeting.

3) ALL INDIA MAYOR'S CONFERENCE

IN NEWS: - On December 17, 2021 All India Mayors Conference was organized in the district of Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh through virtual medium. It was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This was the first meeting of the All India Mayors Conference.

ABOUT ALL INDIA MAYOR'S CONFERENCE

- The Chief Minister said that the All India Mayors Conference is a part of a definite plan to take forward the development of urban areas. By understanding this model of systematic development and sharing their experiences in this conference, about 120 mayors from different regions of the country can contribute in advancing the sustainable model of development.
- The Prime Minister said that cities are the driving force of the economy. Cities should be made hubs of a vibrant economy. A holistic system should be developed, where all the facilities develop together to form an ecosystem and which invites economic activities as well as encourages them.
- The Prime Minister said that Uttar Pradesh's 'One District One Product' is an important scheme to develop self-employment. Through this scheme, work is being done to identify the traditional arts, handicrafts, entrepreneurship arts of the district and connect it with enterprise activities.
- He asked the mayors to develop a unique identity of a specific product or place in their city. He directed the mayors to prepare a list of street vendors

in their city and link them with schemes and provide digital transactions and financial literacy.

- The Prime Minister asked the mayors to develop differently-abled friendly facilities in cities under the 'Accessible India Campaign'.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

4) NEW DEVELOPMENT BANK

IN NEWS: - During BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) meet, India proposed that NDB's (New Development Bank) scope be expanded to strengthen Social Infrastructure besides promoting industry.

ABOUT NEW DEVELOPMENT BANK

- It is a multilateral development bank jointly founded by the BRICS countries at the 6th BRICS Summit in Fortaleza, Brazil in 2014.
- It was formed to support infrastructure and sustainable development efforts in BRICS and other underserved, emerging economies for faster development through innovation and cutting-edge technology.
- It is headquartered at Shanghai, China.
- In 2018, the NDB received observer status in the United Nations General Assembly, establishing a firm basis for active and fruitful cooperation with the UN.
- It has committed funding to a number of major infrastructure projects in India, including the Mumbai Metro rail, Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System and many Renewable Energy projects.
- The NDB has so far approved 14 Indian projects for an amount of nearly USD 4.2 billion.
- In 2020, India announced a 1 billion USD loan pact with NDB to boost rural employment and infrastructure.

INDIAN ECONOMY

5) PM KISAN

IN NEWS: - The Prime Minister released the 8th instalment of financial benefit under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN).

ABOUT PM KISAN

- Under the scheme, the Centre transfers an amount of Rs 6,000 per year, in three equal instalments, directly into the bank accounts of all landholding farmers irrespective of the size of their land holdings.
- It was launched in February 2019.
- It is a Central Sector Scheme with 100% funding from the Government of India.
- It is being implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- The entire responsibility of identification of beneficiary farmer families rests with the State / UT Governments.

PM-KISAN Mobile App:

- The PM-KISAN Mobile App developed and designed by the National Informatics Centre in collaboration with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has been launched.
- The farmers can view the status of their application, update or carry out corrections of their Aadhaar cards and also check the history of credits to their bank accounts.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. The PM KISAN scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Finance
2. It is a centrally sponsored scheme

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) NSE PRIME

IN NEWS: - The National Stock Exchange (NSE) has launched a new corporate governance initiative – ‘NSE Prime’

ABOUT NSE PRIME

- The National Stock Exchange (NSE) has launched a new corporate governance initiative – ‘NSE Prime’, a framework that prescribes higher standards of corporate governance for listed companies than those required by regulations.
- All the NSE-listed companies can adopt NSE Prime voluntarily.
- Listed companies that voluntarily choose to be part of NSE Prime will need to comply with pre-defined norms on an ongoing basis, which will be monitored by NSE.
- The initiative will raise the bar for corporate governance standards in India, enable investors to identify companies that have voluntarily signed up for higher standards of corporate governance, broaden the quality of investors in listed companies and further strengthen trust in Indian capital markets.
- The world’s largest derivatives exchange by trading volume, the NSE is ranked 4th in the world in the cash equities by a number of trades.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. The NSE Prime Scheme is launched by SEBI
2. The initiative will raise the bar for corporate governance standards in India

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

INTERNAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE

7) SUPERSONIC MISSILE ASSISTED TORPEDO

IN NEWS: - The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully launched the Supersonic Missile Assisted Torpedo System (SMART) from Wheeler Island in Odisha.

ABOUT SUPERSONIC MISSILE ASSISTED TORPEDO (SMART)

- It is a missile assisted release of the lightweight Anti-Submarine Torpedo System for anti-submarine warfare (ASW) operations far beyond torpedo range. It is a canister based missile system.
- The system is a next generation missile-based standoff torpedo delivery system.
- The system has been designed to enhance anti-submarine warfare capability far beyond the conventional range of the torpedo.
- SMART, when launched from a warship or a truck-based coastal battery, takes off like a regular supersonic missile.
- It covers most of its flight in the air at lower altitudes with two-way data link from the warship or an airborne submarine target detection system and provides the exact location of the hostile submarine to correct its flight path midway.
- Just when it approaches close enough to the submerged submarine, the missile will eject the torpedo system into the water and the autonomous torpedo will start moving towards its target to take out the submarine.

- Torpedo is a cigar-shaped, self-propelled underwater weapon, launched from a submarine, surface vessel, or airplane and designed for exploding upon contact with the hulls of surface vessels and submarines.
- Varunastra is the first indigenous heavyweight ship launched anti-submarine electric torpedo.

8) AGNI PRIME

IN NEWS: - A new generation nuclear capable ballistic missile Agni-P (Prime) was successfully test-fired by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) from Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam island off the coast of Odisha, Balasore.

ABOUT AGNI PRIME

- Agni-P is a new generation advanced variant of the Agni class (under IGMDP - Integrated Guided Missile Development Program).
- It is a canisterised missile with range capability between 1,000 and 2,000 km.
- Canisterisation of missiles reduces the time required to launch the missile while improving its storage and mobility.
- Many advanced technologies including composites, propulsion systems, innovative guidance and control mechanisms and state-of-the-art navigation systems have been introduced. The Agni-P missile would further strengthen India's credible deterrence capabilities.
- In comparison to other Agni class missiles, Agni-P has improved parameters including manoeuvring and accuracy.
- Agni Class of Missiles: They are the mainstay of India's nuclear launch capability.
- Range of other Agni Missiles:
 - Agni I: Range of 700-800 km.
 - Agni II: Range more than 2000 km.
 - Agni III: Range of more than 2,500 Km

- Agni IV: Range is more than 3,500 km and can fire from a road mobile launcher.
- Agni-V: The longest of the Agni series, an Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) with a range of over 5,000 km.

9) CONTROLLED AERIAL DELIVERY SYSTEM

IN NEWS: - A flight demonstration of the Controlled Aerial Delivery System of 500 kg capacity (CADS-500) was conducted by Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment (ADRDE). The flight demonstration is part of a series of activities organised towards celebrating 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', commemorating 75 years of Independence.

ABOUT CONTROLLED AERIAL DELIVERY SYSTEM

- The CADS-500 is used for precise delivery of payload upto 500 kgs at predetermined location by making use of manoeuvrable capabilities of Ram Air Parachute (RAP).
- It uses the Global Positioning System for the coordinates, altitude and heading sensors for the heading information during its flight.
- The CADS, with its onboard electronics unit, autonomously steers its flight path using waypoint navigation towards target location by operating controls.

ADRDE

- It is an Research & Development laboratory of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- It is involved in the development of paratrooper parachute systems, aircrew parachute systems, ammunition parachute systems, brake parachute, recovery parachute systems, aerial delivery parachute systems, heavy drop systems, inflatable systems, airship technologies and aircraft arrester barrier systems.

- Currently, it is involved in projects such as armament delivery parachutes, balloon barrage and surveillance systems, airships and related applications and space recovery parachutes.

10) VERTICAL LAUNCH SHORT RANGE SURFACE TO AIR MISSILE

IN NEWS: - The Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VL-SRSAM) was successfully flight tested by the Defence Research & Development Organization (DRDO) for the second consecutive time. It was launched from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur.

ABOUT VERTICAL LAUNCH SHORT RANGE SURFACE TO AIR MISSILE

- It is a quick reaction surface-to-air-missile indigenously designed and developed by DRDO for the Indian Navy, is meant for neutralising various aerial threats at close ranges, including sea-skimming targets.
- The missile has an operational range of 50 to km distance and features mid course inertial guidance through fiber optic gyroscope and active radar homing in terminal phase
- The launch of the system was conducted to validate integrated operation of all weapon system components, including the vertical launcher unit with controller, canisterised flight vehicle and weapon control system.
- The successful testing of these systems is crucial for future launches of the missile from Indian Naval ships.
- It will further boost the defence capability of Indian Naval Ships against aerial threats. It has also paved the way for integration of weapon systems onboard the Indian naval ships.
- The key DRDO facilities that contributed to the development of the system are the Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL) and Research Centre Imarat (RCI), both from Hyderabad, and Research & Development Establishment (Engineers), based at Pune.

ABOUT DEFENCE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION

- It is the Research & Development wing of the Ministry of Defence, with a vision to empower India with cutting-edge defence technologies.
- It was established in 1958 after combining the Technical Development Establishment (TDEs) of the Indian Army and the Directorate of Technical Development & Production (DTDP) with the Defence Science Organization (DSO).

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. The DRDO is under the Ministry of Home Affairs
2. It was established in 1958 after combining the Technical Development Establishment (TDEs) of the Indian Army and the Directorate of Technical Development & Production (DTDP) with the Defence Science Organization (DSO).

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

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY**11) BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AMENDMENT BILL 2021**

IN NEWS: - The government has introduced the Biological Diversity (Amendment) Bill, 2021 which seeks to facilitate access to biological resources and traditional knowledge by the Indian traditional medicine sector.

ABOUT BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AMENDMENT BILL 2021

- The amendments seek to decriminalise certain provisions and bring more foreign investments in the chain of biological resources, including research, patent and commercial utilisation, without compromising the national interest.
- However, opposition parties have cited concerns over the bill and it is being referred to a select committee. They demanded the bill to be referred to the Parliament standing committee.
- The bill looks to relax certain rules in the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.
- The 2002 Act imposed a heavy “compliance burden” on Indian medicine practitioners, seed sector, industry & researchers and made it hard to conduct collaborative research and investments.
- **Simplify Research Process:** The amendments also streamline the process of Patenting for Indian researchers to encourage patenting. For this, regional patenting centres will be opened across the country.
- **Boosting Indian Medicine System:** It seeks to give a fillip to “Indian system of medicine”, and facilitate fast-tracking of research, patent application process, transfer of research results while utilising the biological resources available in India. It seeks to empower local communities to be able to utilise resources, particularly of medicinal value, such as seeds.
- The Bill looks to encourage farmers to increase cultivation of medicinal plants.
- These objectives to be achieved without compromising the objectives of the United Nation Convention on Biological Diversity.
- **Decriminalising Certain Provisions:** It seeks to decriminalise certain provisions in the chain of biological resources. These changes were brought in consonance with India’s ratification of Nagoya Protocol (access to generic

resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilisation) in 2012.

- **Allowing Foreign Investments:** It also allows for foreign investment in research in biodiversity. However, this investment will necessarily have to be made through Indian companies involved in biodiversity research. For foreign entities the approval from the National Biodiversity Authority is necessary.
- **Exempting AYUSH Practitioners:** The Bill seeks to exempt registered AYUSH medical practitioners and people accessing codified traditional knowledge, among others, from giving prior intimation to State biodiversity boards for accessing biological resources for certain purposes.

BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY ACT 2002

- The BDA, 2002 was enacted for the conservation of biological diversity and fair, equitable sharing of the monetary benefits from the commercial use of biological resources and traditional knowledge.
- The main intent of this legislation is to protect India's rich biodiversity and associated knowledge against their use by foreign individuals.
- It seeks to check biopiracy, protect biological diversity and local growers through a three-tier structure of central and state boards and local committees.
- The Act provides for setting up of a National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs) and Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) in local bodies.
- The NBA will enjoy the power of a civil court.

ACCESS AND BENEFIT SHARING

- Under the Convention of Biological Diversity, and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing to which India is a party, it is mandated that

benefits derived from the use of biological resources are shared in a fair and equitable manner among the indigenous and local communities.

- When an Indian or foreign company or individual accesses biological resources such as medicinal plants and associated knowledge, it has to take prior consent from the national biodiversity board.
- The board can impose a benefit-sharing fee or royalty or impose conditions so that the company shares the monetary benefit from commercial utilisation of these resources with local people who are conserving biodiversity in the region.

12) HAIDERPUR WETLAND

IN NEWS:- Haiderpur Wetland of Western Uttar Pradesh has been recognized as 47th Ramsar site in the country and 10th in Uttar Pradesh and 2463rd in the world, which has been confirmed by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

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ABOUT HAIDERPUR WETLAND

- The Haiderpur Wetland is spread over an area of 6908 hectares on the Muzaffarnagar-Bijnor border between the Ganges and the Solani River. It is a part of Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Haiderpur Wetland is a man-made lake, which was formed in 1984. The biodiversity here attracts birds. Exotic birds reach here by crossing the hills of Mongolia.
- Also there are many species of dolphins, turtles, alligators, crocodiles, butterflies and deer etc. There are over 30 plant species and over 300 bird species, as well as over 40 fish species and over 102 waterfowl species.

- A conference was held on 2 February 1971 in Ramsar, Iran. The countries involved in this signed an agreement related to the protection of wetlands and it came into effect from December 21, 1975.
- According to the Ramsar Convention, a wetland is a place that is full of water for at least eight months in a year and is home to more than 200 species of birds.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. The Haiderpur Wetland is on the border between the Ganges and the Indus River.
2. Haiderpur Wetland is a natural lake

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



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