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IMPORTANT CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR PRELIMS VOL 37

- **NATIONAL MONUMENTS AUTHORITY**
- **EUTHANASIA IN INDIA**
- **MUNICH SECURITY CONFERENCE**
- **NORD STREAM PIPELINE**

- **KAWAL TIGER RESERVE**
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SCAN TO EXPLORE

IMPORTANT CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR PRELIMS VOL - 37

INDIAN POLITY

1) NATIONAL MONUMENTS AUTHORITY

IN NEWS: - The Center for Heritage Conservation (CHC) of CEPT University in Ahmedabad has been recognised as one of the expert heritage bodies with powers to prepare bylaws to protect monuments by the National Monuments Authority (NMA) under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

ABOUT NATIONAL MONUMENTS AUTHORITY

- It is established under The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2010 (AMASR Act, 2010).
- It is under the Union Ministry of Culture.
- The Act provides for NMA to be constituted with a Chairperson and up to 5 Whole Time and 5 Part Time Members each and a Member Secretary. Director-General of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is an ex officio Member.
- It is headquartered at New Delhi.
- Several functions have been assigned to the NMA for the preservation of centrally protected monuments through management of the prohibited and regulated area around these monuments. Some of the responsibilities are –
  - To consider grant of permissions to applicants for construction related activity in the prohibited and regulated area.
  - To formulate heritage by-laws for protected monuments in the country to determine nature of new construction activity in regulated areas.

2) EUTHANASIA IN INDIA

IN NEWS: - A man became the first person in Colombia to be euthanized without the prerequisite of suffering from a terminal illness. His decision to die has

reignited the debate over euthanasia and its application under the laws of different countries.

ABOUT EUTHANASIA

- Mercy Killing, also known as Euthanasia is an act of providing painless death to a suffering individual who wouldn't survive if medical facilities are removed from their help.

- The term Euthanasia comes from two Ancient Greek words: 'Eu' means 'Good', and 'thantos' means 'death', so Euthanasia means good death.

- Euthanasia can be also divided into two types according to means of death.

  - **Active Euthanasia:** It is also known as 'Positive Euthanasia' or 'Aggressive Euthanasia'. It refers to causing intentional death of a human being by direct intervention. It is a direct action performed to end useless life and a meaningless existence. For example, by giving lethal doses of a drug or by giving a lethal injection. Active euthanasia is usually a quicker means of causing death and all forms of active euthanasia are illegal.

  - **Passive Euthanasia:** It is also known as 'Negative Euthanasia' or 'Non-Aggressive Euthanasia'. It is intentionally causing death by not providing essential, necessary and ordinary care or food and water. It implies discontinuing, withdrawing or removing artificial life support systems. Passive euthanasia is usually slower and more uncomfortable than active. Most forms of voluntary, passive and some instances of non-voluntary, passive euthanasia are legal.

LEGAL PROVISIONS IN INDIA

- **Aruna Shanbaug Case:** The issue was heard in the Supreme Court (SC) and final judgment came in the year 2018 making the Right to die in a dignified way a part of Right to Life under Article 21.

- As of now, only passive Euthanasia is allowed in India by the Supreme Court.

- Article 21 includes the right to die or not first came into consideration in the case State of Maharashtra v. Maruti Shripati Dubal.

- It was held in this case by the Bombay High Court that 'right to life' also includes 'right to die' and Section 309 was struck down.

- The court clearly said in this case that the right to die is not unnatural; it is just uncommon and abnormal. Also, the court mentioned many instances in which a person may want to end his life.

- This was upheld by the Supreme Court in the case P. Rathinam v. Union of India. However, in the case Gian Kaur v. State of Punjab it was held by the five-judge bench of the Supreme Court that the "right to life" guaranteed by Article 21 of the Constitution does not include the "right to die".

- The court clearly mentioned in this case that Article 21 only guarantees right to life and personal liberty and in no case can the right to die be included in it. In India, like almost in other countries, euthanasia has no legal aspect.

- Every act of aiding and abetting the commission of suicide are punished under the section 306 of the I.P.C.

- Distinguishing euthanasia from suicide, Justice Lodha in Naresh Maratra Sakhee vs Union of India, observed that, "suicide by its nature is an act of self-killing or self-destruction, an act of terminating one's own act and without the aid or assistance of any other human agency.

- "Mercy killing is nothing but homicide, whatever the circumstances in which it is affected. Unless it is specifically accepted it cannot be an offense. Indian Penal Code further punishes not only abetment of homicide, but also abetment of suicide".

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. All forms of active euthanasia are illegal.

2. Passive Euthanasia is allowed in India

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

3) MUNICH SECURITY CONFERENCE

IN NEWS: - The latest edition of Munich Security Conference assumed significance as it was here that the Ukrainian President appealed for help ahead of the Russian invasion.

ABOUT MUNICH SECURITY CONFERENCE

- It is the world's leading forum for debating international security policy.
- It is a venue for diplomatic initiatives to address the world's most pressing security concerns.
- It is held annually.
- The MSC's objective is to build trust and to contribute to the peaceful resolution of conflicts by sustaining a continuous, curated and informal dialogue within the international security community.
- The primary objective of the MSC was to make sense of international affairs in an age when weapons of mass destruction had become part of the game.
- The MSC conceives of its conferences as a type of "marketplace of ideas" where initiatives and solutions are developed and opinions are exchanged.

- In addition to its annual flagship conference, the MSC regularly convenes high-profile events on particular topics and regions and publishes the Munich Security Report.

- Senior decision-makers as well as thought-leaders from around the world, including heads of state, ministers, leading personalities of international and non-governmental organizations, high-ranking representatives of industry, media, academia, and civil society, come to engage in an intensive debate.

- The MSC strives to increase its geographic diversity and reach to include all relevant stakeholders.

- The Munich Security Conference embraces a comprehensive definition of security, which encompasses not only traditional national or military security, but also takes into account among others the economic, environmental and human dimensions of security.

- Over its sixty years of existence, the MSC would address the threats like terrorism, religious fanaticism, cyber warfare, electronic intelligence and emerge as the ultimate platform for policy makers to exchange ideas in a friendly atmosphere.

- From an exclusive meeting of security experts and specialists, MSC emerged as a top destination of world leaders in the post-Cold War era.

- The latest edition of the MSC also highlighted the complexities of the new powers like India and China.

- It transited from transatlantic conference to a worldwide dialogue, where new groupings like Indo-Pacific and Quad are being discussed.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. The Munich Security Conference is held biennially
2. The Munich Security Report is prepared by the Munich Security Conference

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

4) NORD STREAM PIPELINE

IN NEWS: - the US has said it will stop the Nord Stream if Russia attacks Ukraine.

ABOUT NORD STREAM PIPELINE

● Nord Stream, the longest subsea pipeline, is an export gas pipeline which runs under the Baltic Sea carrying gas from Russia to Europe.

● Nord Stream consists of two pipelines, which have two lines each.

● Nord Stream 1 was completed in 2011 and runs from Vyborg in Leningrad (Russia) to Lubmin near Greifswald, Germany.

● Nord Stream 2 which runs from Ust-Luga in Leningrad to Lubmin was completed in September 2021 and has the capacity to handle 55 billion cubic meters of gas per year once it becomes operational.

● The twin pipelines together can transport a combined total of 110 billion cubic metres (bcm) of gas a year to Europe for at least 50 years.

● The Nord Stream crosses the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of several countries including Russia, Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Germany, and the territorial waters of Russia, Denmark, and Germany.

● In Germany, the pipeline connects to the OPAL (Baltic Sea Pipeline) and NEL (North European Pipeline) which further connects to the European grid.

ENVIRONMENT

5) KAWAL TIGER RESERVE

IN NEWS: - The Kawal Tiger Reserve will host a first of its kind bird walk for Bird lovers

ABOUT KAWAL TIGER RESERVE

- Kawal Tiger Reserve is located at Adilabad district in Telangana state of India.
- The Government of India declared Kawal wildlife sanctuary as Tiger Reserve in 2012.
- The Kawal wildlife sanctuary was established in 1965 and later declared as the Protected Area (PA) in 1999 under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- Dry Deciduous Teak Forests mixed with Bamboo are the main flora found in the region.

- Mammal species that have been sighted include tiger, leopard, gaur, cheetal, sambar, nilgai, barking deer, chowsingha, sloth bear.
- The River Kadam (a tributary of Godavari) flows through this area.
- The area is increasingly getting threatened by growing human encroachments, rampant poaching, illegal wood felling and habitat loss.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. Kawal Tiger Reserve is located at Adilabad district in Andhra Pradesh state
2. Evergreen Forests mixed with Bamboo are the main flora found in the region.

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) COASTAL VULNERABILITY INDEX

IN NEWS: - Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) has carried out coastal vulnerability assessment for entire Indian coast at states level.
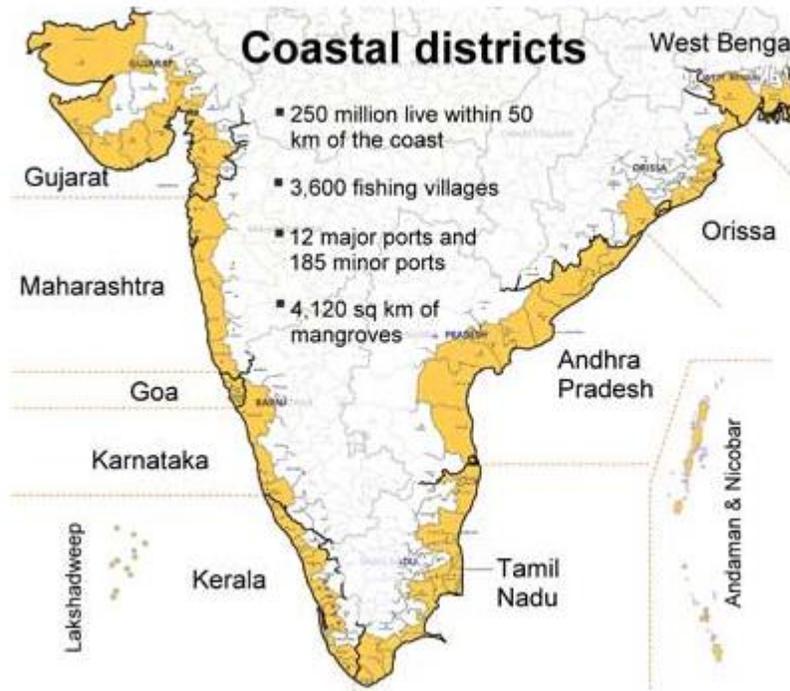
ABOUT COASTAL VULNERABILITY INDEX (CVI)

- Under the CVI, INCOIS has brought out an Atlas comprising 156 maps on 1:1,00,000 scales to prepare a CVI.
- These maps determine the coastal risks due to future sea-level rise based on the physical and geological parameters for the Indian coast.
- The CVI uses the relative risk that physical changes will occur as sea-level rises are quantified based on parameters like:
  - Tidal range
  - Wave height

- ○ Coastal slope
- ○ Coastal elevation
- ○ Shoreline change rate
- ○ Geomorphology
- ○ Historical rate of relative sea-level change
- A coastal Multi-Hazard Vulnerability Mapping (MHVM) was also carried out using above mentioned parameters.
- These parameters were synthesized to derive the composite hazard zones that can be inundated along the coastal low-lying areas due to extreme flooding events.
- This MHVM mapping was carried for the entire mainland of India on a 1:25000 scale.
- These maps depict the coastal low-lying areas exposed to the coastal inundation.

INCOIS

- INCOIS is an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).
- It is located in Hyderabad & was established in 1999. It is a unit of the Earth System Science Organisation (ESSO), New Delhi.
- The ESSO operates as an executive arm of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) for its policies and programmes.
- It is mandated to provide the best possible ocean information and advisory services to society, industry, government agencies and the scientific community through sustained ocean observations and constant improvement through systematic and focused research.

Coastal districts

- 250 million live within 50 km of the coast
- 3,600 fishing villages
- 12 major ports and 185 minor ports
- 4,120 sq km of mangroves

1) PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM

IN NEWS: - Five Micronesian nations suspended breakaway plans from a crucial Pacific Islands political bloc as U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in the region. The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru and Palau "have agreed to temporarily rescind their withdrawal" from the Pacific Islands Forum. The five territories announced a year ago they were quitting the group after their nominee lost the vote for a new forum secretary general.

ABOUT PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM

- Pacific Island Forum is an 'Inter-governmental organization'. It was established in year 1971.

- The objective of the organization is to work in support of Forum member governments, to enhance the economic and social well-being of the people of the South Pacific by fostering cooperation between governments and between international agencies.

- The summit of the organization held annually and which is presided by the host country. The summit discusses about decisions related to the development and implementations of policies in the region.

- The forum has 18 members, which are as follows- Australia, Cook Islands, Federation of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kribati, Nauru, Palau,

Republic of Marshal Island, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

● Recently, due to interference in the political activities of Micronesian countries and earthquake in Tonga, this organization is in a lot of discussion.

SCHEMES

7) REWARD PROJECT

IN NEWS: - The GoI, the State Governments of Karnataka and Odisha, and the World Bank have signed a $115 million for the REWARD Project.

ABOUT REWARD PROJECT

● REWARD stands for Rejuvenating Watersheds for Agricultural Resilience through Innovative Development.

● The project aims to help national and state institutions adopt improved watershed management practices to help increase farmers' resilience to climate change, promote higher productivity and better incomes.

● REWARD is being implemented in three to four Indian States.

● It is proposed as a 6 years Project.

Objectives of the project

● The outcomes are prevention of soil run-off, regeneration of natural vegetation, rainwater harvesting, and recharging of the groundwater table.

● This enables multi-cropping and the introduction of diverse agro-based activities, which help to provide sustainable livelihoods to the people residing in the watershed area.

8) RUSA

IN NEWS: - The Government has approved the scheme of Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) for continuation till 31st March.2026 or till further review, whichever is earlier.

ABOUT RUSA

- It is the centrally sponsored scheme launched in October 2013 that aims at providing strategic funding to higher education institutions throughout the country.

- The central funding (in the ratio of 60:40 for general category States, 90:10 for special category states and 100% for union territories) is norm based and outcome dependent.

- The funding flows from the Ministry of Education through the state governments/union territories to the State Higher Education Councils before reaching the identified institutions.

- The funding to states would be made on the basis of critical appraisal of State Higher Education Plans, which would describe each state's strategy to address issues of equity, access and excellence in higher education.

- New phase of RUSA targets to reach out the unserved, underserved areas, remote/ rural areas, difficult geographies, LWE (Left-Wing Extremism) areas, NER (North Eastern Region), Aspirational Districts, tier-2 cities, areas with low GER (Gross enrolment ratio) etc., and to benefit the most disadvantaged areas and SEDGs (Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups).

- The new phase of the scheme has been designed to implement some of the recommendations and aims of the New Education Policy, which suggests some key changes to the current higher education system to revamp and re-energize it and thereby deliver quality higher education, with equity and inclusion.

- State Governments will be supported for Gender inclusion, Equity Initiatives, ICT, Enhancing employability through vocationalisation & skill upgradation.

- States will also be supported for creation of new Model Degree Colleges.

- State Universities will be supported for Multi-Disciplinary Education and Research.
- Grants will be provided for strengthening both accredited and non-accredited Universities and Colleges for undertaking various activities including teaching-learning in Indian languages.

Objectives

- Improve the overall quality of state institutions by conforming to the prescribed norms and standards.
- Adoption of accreditation (certification of competency) as a mandatory quality assurance framework.
- Promoting autonomy in state universities and improving governance in institutions.
- Ensure reforms in the affiliation, academic and examination system.
- Ensure adequate availability of quality faculty in all higher educational institutions and ensure capacity building at all levels of employment.
- Create an enabling atmosphere for research in the higher education system.
- Correct regional imbalances in access to higher education by setting up institutions in unserved and underserved areas.
- Improve equity in higher education by providing adequate opportunities to the disadvantaged.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

9) DOXXING

IN NEWS: - Meta's oversight board has suggested Facebook and Instagram to make strict doxxing rules. Meta was asked to consider doxxing as an offence which should prompt temporary account suspension.

ABOUT DOXXING

- Doxxing is publishing and analysing others' personal information on the internet with a malicious intent that can reveal the person's real identity making them victims of harassments and cyber-attacks.

- The firm highlighted how doxxing is used to shame or punish people who would rather stay anonymous, because of their controversial beliefs or other types of non-mainstream activity.

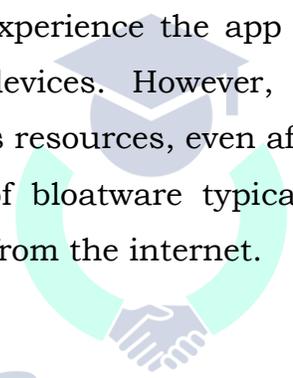- Doxxing can result in emotional distress, loss of employment and even physical harm or death.

10)   BLOATWARE APPS

IN NEWS: - Bloatware apps are being criticized for taking up the storage of the device unnecessarily and affecting the system's battery life and overall performance.

ABOUT BLOATWARE APPS

- Potentially Unwanted Programs (PUP), more popularly known as bloatware apps are needless programs that take a toll on your device's performance.

- Device manufacturers introduced these bloatware apps to provide users with additional programs that they might want to use, while making money on the way.

- Gradually, these apps, rather than being helpful, end up being a headache for users.

- Generally, these apps that run in the background are hidden and locating them becomes a tough job for the users.

- It could be any software on your computer, phone or tablet that consumes a lot of resources like — memory, storage and battery life.

- There are three most common types of bloatwares that can be found on any device.

- ○ **Utilities:** These types of bloatwares come from manufacturers and third-party developers and are usually pre-loaded on your device. These offer added functionality to your device.

- ○ **Trialware:** Users can experience the app as most of them offer free trial modes in new devices. However, these programs keep on consuming your device's resources, even after the trial period is over.

- ○ **Adware:** These types of bloatware typically gets downloaded while downloading softwares from the internet.