A. GS 1 Related

Category: Geography

1. Tropical cyclones of higher intensity demand a new category

Syllabus: Important Geophysical Phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone etc., geographical features and their location-changes in critical geographical features (including water-bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes.

Premis: Tropical cyclones

Mains: Recent patterns of Tropical cyclones

Context: The increasing intensity of tropical cyclones, attributed to global warming, has prompted discussions about the necessity of introducing a new category, Category 6, to the Saffir-Simpson (SS) hurricane wind scale. Tropical cyclones are powerful and destructive weather phenomena formed over warm tropical ocean basins, characterized by strong winds, heavy precipitation, and storm surges.
Issues

- Intensifying Cyclones: Global warming has led to the intensification of tropical cyclones, resulting in peak wind speeds exceeding those accommodated by Category 5 on the SS hurricane wind scale. Observations indicate a rising trend in the occurrence of cyclones with wind speeds far surpassing the existing scale's upper limit.
- Impact of Global Warming: The increase in greenhouse gas emissions has elevated sea surface temperatures and ocean heat content, providing favorable conditions for the intensification of tropical cyclones. Climate change-related factors, such as warmer atmosphere and extended warm waters, contribute to the strengthening and prolonged duration of cyclones.
- Need for Category 6: The SS hurricane wind scale, initially designed to categorize cyclones up to Category 5, lacks provisions for storms with wind speeds beyond 252 km/hour. As evidenced by recent research, there is a growing need to recognize and communicate the heightened risks posed by cyclones exceeding Category 5 intensity.

Significance

- Enhanced Risk Communication: Introducing Category 6 to the SS wind scale would facilitate more accurate risk communication regarding the dangers associated with exceptionally intense cyclones. This would enable communities and authorities to better prepare for and respond to extreme weather events.
- Disaster Management Preparedness: The recognition of Category 6 cyclones necessitates a reassessment of disaster management strategies and early warning systems. Governments, particularly in vulnerable regions like the North Indian Ocean, must enhance preparedness measures to mitigate the potential impact of future extreme cyclonic events.

Solutions

- Amendment of Wind Scale: Adoption of the proposed modification to the SS wind scale to include Category 6 for cyclones with peak wind speeds exceeding 309 km/hour would provide a standardized framework for classifying and communicating the severity of tropical cyclones.
- Adaptive Disaster Management: Governments, including India, should revise their disaster management policies and early warning systems to account for the heightened risk posed by Category 6 cyclones. This entails investing in infrastructure, strengthening evacuation procedures, and enhancing community resilience to withstand extreme weather events.
- Climate Mitigation Efforts: Addressing the root cause of intensifying tropical cyclones requires concerted global efforts to mitigate climate change. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and implementing adaptation measures are essential for minimizing the frequency and severity of extreme weather events in the long term.

Nut Graf: The proposal for Category 6 cyclones reflects the urgent need to adapt to the escalating risks posed by intensifying tropical cyclones in a warming climate. By recognizing and preparing for the challenges posed by extreme weather events, governments can safeguard vulnerable communities and build resilience in the face of climate change-induced disasters.
1. CAA Rules silent on fate of rejected applicants

Syllabus: Indian Constitution, Amendments and Significant provisions

Mains: Issues with CAA

Context: The Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) has raised concerns regarding the fate of rejected applicants, as the accompanying Rules lack provisions for review procedures. This absence of clarity has particularly alarmed potential applicants, such as the Matua community in West Bengal, who have been residing in India for decades but may face rejection due to document scrutiny or adverse security reports.

Issues

- Silent CAA Rules: The Rules under the CAA do not specify any review process for rejected applications by empowered committees, leaving applicants in uncertainty about their next steps.
- Potential Rejections: Applicants may face rejection if their documents fail scrutiny or if adverse security reports are issued against them, posing a significant risk, especially for communities like the Matuas who have migrated from Bangladesh and have been living in India for years.
- Detention Concerns: Rejected applicants fear the possibility of being sent to detention centers, exacerbating anxieties within affected communities and raising questions about the fairness of the citizenship process.

Significance

- Legal Ambiguity: The absence of review procedures in the Rules creates legal ambiguity and adds to the apprehensions of potential applicants, potentially undermining the objectives of the CAA.
- Community Impact: Communities like the Matuas, who stand to benefit from the CAA, are particularly concerned about the lack of clarity, as it directly affects their prospects of obtaining Indian citizenship.
- Humanitarian Concerns: The potential consequences of rejection, including detention, highlight the humanitarian aspect of the issue, necessitating a fair and transparent process for citizenship application and review.

Solutions

- Clarification of Rules: There is a pressing need for the government to clarify the Rules under the CAA to outline a transparent and fair review process for rejected applications, ensuring that due process is followed.
- Review Mechanisms: Establishing review mechanisms within the empowered committees or through an independent body can provide recourse for rejected applicants, safeguarding their rights and ensuring a just citizenship process.
- Community Engagement: Engaging with affected communities, such as the Matuas, and addressing their concerns through dialogue and proactive measures can foster trust in the citizenship process and alleviate fears of rejection and detention.
Nut Graf: The lack of clarity in the CAA Rules regarding the fate of rejected applicants raises significant concerns about the fairness and transparency of the citizenship process. Addressing these issues through clarification of rules, establishment of review mechanisms, and community engagement is crucial to uphold the principles of justice and inclusivity in the citizenship framework.

Category: Governance

1. IT Act change yet to aid MSMEs

Syllabus: Government policies and interventions for the development of various sectors

Mains: Steps taken by government for MSME

Context: The Union Budget introduced a significant change in the Income Tax Act, specifically Section 43 b (h), aimed at ensuring timely payments to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). While this intervention holds the potential to benefit MSMEs in the long run, its immediate impact has raised concerns among experts.

Issues

- Delayed Payments: Despite the provision in Section 43 b (h) of the Income Tax Act mandating timely payments to MSMEs, many small-scale industries continue to face delays in receiving payments from buyers. This delay not only affects the financial stability of MSMEs but also hampers their operational efficiency.
- Risk of Losing Buyers: Some MSMEs, particularly micro-units, face the risk of losing buyers who may opt to source from suppliers not registered under the UDYAN scheme. This could be attributed to the stringent payment timelines imposed by the revised Income Tax Act, which may prompt buyers to seek alternative suppliers to avoid potential tax implications.

Significance

- Financial Stability for MSMEs: Timely payments to MSMEs are crucial for their financial stability and sustainability. The intervention in the Income Tax Act aims to address the prevalent issue of delayed payments and provide much-needed relief to small-scale industries, enabling them to manage their cash flow effectively.
- Enhanced Business Environment: Ensuring timely payments fosters a conducive business environment for MSMEs, encouraging their growth and contribution to the economy. By mitigating the risks associated with delayed payments, MSMEs can operate more efficiently and seize growth opportunities.

Solutions

- Awareness and Outreach: Government agencies and industry associations should conduct awareness campaigns to educate MSMEs about the provisions of the revised Income Tax Act and the benefits of timely payments. Enhanced outreach efforts can ensure that MSMEs leverage the provisions effectively to their advantage.
Streamlined Implementation: Authorities responsible for enforcing the provisions of Section 43 b (h) should streamline implementation processes to minimize disruptions to MSMEs' operations. This may involve providing guidance and support to both MSMEs and buyers in adhering to the stipulated payment timelines.

Policy Adjustments: Policymakers should consider revising certain aspects of the intervention, such as extending the payment timelines or offering incentives to buyers who comply with the regulations. Flexibility in policy implementation can alleviate the immediate challenges faced by MSMEs while ensuring the overall objectives are met.

Nut Graf: The amendment to Section 43 b (h) of the Income Tax Act represents a significant step towards addressing the issue of delayed payments to MSMEs. While its implementation may pose challenges in the short term, particularly for micro-units, the long-term benefits of ensuring timely payments are substantial.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: Economy

1. Why is unemployment high among the youth?

Syllabus: Indian Economy, Mobilization of resources, Growth, Development and Employment

Mains: Reasons for high unemployment among the youth

Context: High youth unemployment remains a pressing issue in India, exacerbated by factors such as lack of job opportunities, skills mismatch, and gender disparities in the labor force. The India Employment Report 2024, jointly prepared by the Institute of Human Development (IHD) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), sheds light on the complexities of youth employment, education, and skills in the country, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to address the prevailing challenges.

Issues

- Youth Unemployment: Despite an increase in the proportion of young people receiving education, there has been a decline in the percentage of youth engaged in economic activities. Unemployment among educated youth, particularly those with secondary education or higher, has risen significantly over time, highlighting the magnitude of the crisis.
- Quality of Education: The report underscores the issue of unemployability among educated youth due to the poor quality of education. A significant portion of technically qualified youth lacks formal vocational training, hindering their prospects of securing gainful employment in various sectors.
- Informal Sector Dominance: The predominance of informal sector jobs further compounds the unemployment challenge, with a vast majority of youth finding themselves in low-productive and low-
earning positions. The decline or stagnation of real wages adds to the plight of workers, perpetuating the cycle of poverty and underemployment.

- Gender Disparities: Women's participation in the labor force remains significantly lower than men, with persistent gender gaps observed across rural and urban areas. Despite some improvements post-2019, the report highlights the need for policies to enhance women's engagement in productive activities and address barriers to their participation.

**Significance**

- Economic Growth Implications: The inability to effectively integrate youth into the labor market poses significant challenges to India's economic growth and development trajectory. Addressing youth unemployment and enhancing labor market participation are critical for sustaining long-term growth and reducing income inequality.
- Social Cohesion: High levels of youth unemployment and underemployment can lead to social unrest and discontentment, undermining social cohesion and stability. Targeted interventions aimed at creating employment opportunities and improving job quality are essential for fostering inclusive growth and social harmony.

**Solutions**

- Skill Development: Separating skill development from formal education and investing in vocational training programs can enhance the employability of youth and bridge the skills gap in the labor market.
- Formal Sector Promotion: Policies aimed at creating more formal sector jobs and improving working conditions are imperative to provide youth with secure and decent employment opportunities. Supporting micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) can also contribute to job creation and economic growth.
- Gender Mainstreaming: Implementing measures to promote gender equality in the labor force, such as providing access to education and skills training for women, addressing discriminatory practices, and offering support for women entrepreneurs, can help narrow the gender gap and enhance overall labor force participation.

**Nut Graf:** Addressing the multifaceted challenges of youth unemployment requires concerted efforts from policymakers, employers, civil society, and other stakeholders. By adopting a holistic approach that prioritizes skill development, formal sector promotion, and gender mainstreaming, India can unlock the potential of its youth population, foster inclusive growth, and build a more resilient and prosperous society.

**Category:** Environment

**1. Will global forest expansion hit tribals?**

**Syllabus:** Conservation, Environmental pollution and degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment

**Mains:** Impact of global forest expansion on tribals
Context: The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) aims to significantly increase the areas under forest cover, inland water, coastal, and marine areas globally to at least 30% of the world's terrestrial area. While this initiative holds promises for biodiversity conservation, it also raises concerns, particularly regarding its potential impact on indigenous communities, such as tribes in India.

Issues

- Impact on Indigenous Communities: The GBF's target to expand protected areas (PAs) raises concerns about its adverse effects on indigenous communities residing in these areas. Many tribal villages in India are located within or near national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, making them vulnerable to displacement and loss of livelihoods.
- Denial of Rights: Indigenous peoples often face violations of their rights, including denial of housing, healthcare, education, and security, when PAs are established or expanded. Instances from countries like Indonesia and Cambodia highlight the marginalization and mistreatment of indigenous communities in the name of conservation efforts.
- Role of Private Sector: The involvement of the private sector in forest conservation, as facilitated by legislation such as the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act of 2023 in India, raises concerns about commercial interests taking precedence over indigenous rights and environmental conservation.

Significance

- Threat to Tribal Existence: The expansion of PAs under the GBF could jeopardize the existence and livelihoods of indigenous communities who have historically lived in harmony with nature. Protecting tribal lands is crucial not only for biodiversity conservation but also for safeguarding the cultural heritage and rights of indigenous peoples.
- Environmental Justice: Ensuring the rights of indigenous communities in conservation efforts is essential for promoting environmental justice and equitable development. Excluding indigenous voices and perpetuating injustices in the name of conservation undermines the principles of sustainability and human rights.

Solutions

- Recognition of Indigenous Rights: Governments, including India, must recognize and uphold the rights of indigenous communities, including the right to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) as guaranteed under relevant laws. Indigenous peoples should be made custodians of protected areas, acknowledging their traditional knowledge and stewardship of the environment.
- Inclusive Policy Formulation: Policy interventions should prioritize the inclusion of indigenous perspectives in conservation planning and decision-making processes. Amendments to existing laws should ensure that tribal lands are not targeted disproportionately and that tribal communities have a say in the management of protected areas.
- Addressing Human Rights Violations: Governments must take concrete steps to address human rights violations in protected areas, including access to essential services like education, healthcare, and housing. Indigenous peoples should be respected and recognized for their role in biodiversity conservation, rather than being subjected to punitive measures.

Nut Graf: The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework presents an opportunity to enhance conservation efforts worldwide. However, it is imperative to address the concerns regarding its potential impact on indigenous communities, particularly in countries like India with significant tribal populations.
E. Editorials

Nothing here for today!!!

F. Prelims Facts

1. Bohag - Bihu

Context: Bohag - Bihu will be celebrated in Assam from April 13 to mark the beginning of the Assamese New Year

Details:

- Bihu – A Folk Dance of Assam
- Nearly 60 acres of forest were affected by a major fire, ostensibly triggered by some unidentified miscreants, at Biligiri Ranganathaswamy Temple (BRT) Tiger Reserve, in Karnataka of Karnataka
- 4 mpox vaccines in animals reveal correlates of protection.
- Mpox - Mpox (monkeypox) is an infectious disease caused by the monkeypox virus. It can cause a painful rash, enlarged lymph nodes and fever

G. Tidbits

Nothing here for today!!!

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statement about BrahMos missiles:

1. It is a subsonic cruise missile developed jointly by Russia and India.
2. The missile can be launched from submarines, ships, aircraft, or land platforms.
3. It is a part of India’s Integrated Guided Missiles Development Programme.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two
- c. All the three
- d. None of the above

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: a

Q2. Which of the following statements are true regarding Brain Stroke?
1. A stroke occurs when the blood supply to part of your brain is interrupted or reduced, preventing brain tissue from getting oxygen and nutrients.
2. There are two main types of stroke: ischemic and hemorrhagic.
3. High blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, obesity, and diabetes are some of the leading risk factors for stroke.
4. Stroke increases the likelihood of developing dementia

Which of the above statements are correct?

a. 1 and 2 only
b. 1, 2, and 3 only
c. 2, 3, and 4 only
d. 1, 2, 3, and 4

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: d

Q3. Which of the following best describes the term 'Gross Domestic Product' (GDP)?

a. The total market value of all final goods and services produced within a country in a given period, regardless of the ownership.

b. The total value of all goods and services produced by the nationals of a country on its land or on foreign land in a given period.

c. The total market value of all intermediate goods produced within a country in a given period.

d. The sum of all personal consumption expenditures, business investments, and government spending, excluding net exports of a country in a given period.

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: a

Q4. Consider the following statements

1. A country's placement on the FATF's "Grey List" automatically triggers economic sanctions from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.
2. The FATF Recommendations are legally binding on member countries, requiring them to implement necessary legislative changes to comply.
3. FATF is an intergovernmental organization established by the G7 Summit in Paris in 1989 to combat money laundering and terror funding.

How many of the above statements are correct?

a. Only one
Check answers:

Answer: d

Q5. "Momentum for Change: Climate Neutral Now" is an initiative launched by

a. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
b. The UNEP Secretariat
c. The UNFCCC Secretariat
d. The World Meteorological Organisation

Check answers:

Answer: c

Click on the link for the video explanation of the above questions and answers.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Explain the purpose of Green Grid Initiative launched at the World Leaders Summit of COP26 UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow in November 2021. When was the idea first floated in the International Solar Alliance (ISA)? (10 marks 150 words) (General Studies - III, Environment)

2. Describe the key points of the revived Global Air Quality Guidelines (AQGs) recently released by the World Health Organisation (WHO). How are these different from its last update in 2005? What changes in India’s National Clean Air Programme are required to achieve these revised standards? (10 Marks 150 words) (General Studies - III, Environment)

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