



Saudi Arabia-Iran Relations

For Prelims: Houthi rebels in Yemen, Israel and the Palestinian issue, Geographic Location of Middle Eastern Countries, West Asia.

For Mains: Role of India in Saudi-Iran Relations, Effect of Policies & Politics of Countries on India's Interests.

Why in News?

Recently, Saudi Arabia has **mass executed 81 people**, including seven **Yemenis and one Syrian national** for crimes related to **terrorism and other capital crimes**. This has prompted the **Iranian government to suspend talks with the country**.

- Both countries have had tense diplomatic relations since a long time ago.
- Regional rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia, which **severed diplomatic ties in 2016, launched direct talks hosted by Iraq in 2021 as UN (United Nations)-led efforts** to end a war in Yemen stall. They have held **four rounds of talks** in Iraq.



Which one of the following countries of South-West Asia does not open out to the Mediterranean Sea? (2015)

- (a) Syria
- (b) Jordan
- (c) Lebanon
- (d) Israel

Ans: (b)

What is Background of Saudi Arabia-Iran Conflict?

- **Religious Factionalism:** Relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran have been sour in part because of religious differences, which go back centuries. They each follow one of the two main branches of Islam.
 - Iran is largely Shia Muslim, while Saudi Arabia sees itself as the leading Sunni Muslim power.
- **Leader of Islamic World:** Historically, Saudi Arabia, a monarchy and home to the birthplace of Islam, saw itself as the leader of the Muslim world.
 - However this was challenged in **1979 by the Islamic revolution** in Iran which created a new type of state in the region - a kind of revolutionary theocracy - that had an explicit goal of exporting this model beyond its own borders.
- **Regional Cold War:** Saudi Arabia and Iran - two powerful neighbors - are locked in a fierce struggle for regional dominance.
 - Uprisings across the Arab world (after the [Arab Spring in 2011](#)) caused political instability throughout the region.
 - Iran and Saudi Arabia exploited these upheavals to expand their influence, notably in Syria, Bahrain and Yemen, further heightening mutual suspicions.
 - Moreover, external powers like the US and Israel have a major role in exacerbating conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran.
- **Proxy Wars:** Iran and Saudi Arabia are not directly fighting but they are engaged in a variety of proxy wars (conflicts where they support rival sides and militias) around the region.
 - For Example, [Houthi rebels in Yemen](#). These groups can acquire greater capabilities which can cause further instability in the region. Saudi Arabia accuses Iran of supporting them.
- **2016 Flash Point:** Many Iranian protesters attacked Saudi diplomatic missions in the Iran following Saudi Arabia's execution of the Shiite Muslim cleric **Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr**.

What can be the Possible Impact of Normalization of Relations?

- **Resolution of Israel-Palestine Conflict:** Warming of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia may have a positive impact in dealing with [Israel and the Palestinian issue](#).
- **Stabilization of Oil Market:** Iran and Saudi Arabia share a common interest for [stable oil prices](#) given the importance of the market to their economies.
 - Normalization of relations would ensure steady oil revenues for all producing countries and more predictability to economic planners in both Saudi Arabia and Iran.

PYQ

Which of the following is not a member of 'Gulf Cooperation Council'? (2016)

- (a) Iran

(b) Saudi Arabia

(c) Oman

(d) Kuwait

Ans: (a)

Way Forward

- **Role of India:** Historically, India has good diplomatic relations with both the countries. Stabilization of relations between the two countries may impact India in a mixed way.
 - On the negative side, higher oil prices will affect the balance of trade in India.
 - On the positive side, this could provide easing of investments, connectivity projects across the region.
- **Reciprocity by Iran:** Iran still needs to make a mark in its diplomatic efforts by publicly supporting a cease-fire in Yemen.
- **Easing of US Sanctions:** Clarity on [US sanctions over Iran](#) is of prime importance, if Iran-Saudi Arabia relations are to get normalized.

PYQ

What is the importance of developing Chabahar Port by India? (2017)

(a) India's trade with African countries will enormously increase.

(b) India's relations with oil-producing Arab countries will be strengthened.

(c) India will not depend on Pakistan for access to Afghanistan and Central Asia.

(d) Pakistan will facilitate and protect the installation of a gas pipeline between Iraq and India.

Ans: (c)

[Source: IE](#)

Bail Provision Under UAPA

For Prelims: Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, Citizenship (Amendment) Act, Code of Criminal Procedure, Supreme Court, First Information Report, National Crime Records Bureau.

For Mains: Judgements & Cases, Judiciary, Government Policies & Interventions, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and Related Issues.

Why in News?

Recently, a Delhi court granted bail to a former Congress (Political Party) councillor in an [Unlawful Activities \(Prevention\) Act 1967 \(UAPA\)](#) case filed in connection with the 2020 anti-[Citizenship \(Amendment\) Act, 2019](#), (CAA) protests.

What is the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019?

- The CAA provides citizenship to six undocumented non-Muslim communities (**Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians**) from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who **entered India on or before 31st December, 2014**.
- It exempts the members of the six communities from any criminal case under the **Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Passport Act, 1920**.
 - The two Acts specify punishment for entering the country illegally and staying here on expired visas and permits.

What was the Current Ruling?

- The **court granted bail** to the accused despite the prosecution arguing that there were limitations contained in **Section 43D(5) of the UAPA**, a provision which makes grant of bail virtually impossible, as it leaves little room for judicial reasoning.
 - The Defence argued that Section 43D UAPA only **puts restrictions but is not an absolute bar to the grant of bail**.

What are the Bail Related Provisions and Issues in UAPA?

- The major problem with the UAPA lies in its **Section 43(D)(5), which prevents the release of any accused person on bail** if, police have filed the chargesheet that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the accusation against such person is prima facie true.
 - The effect of Section 43(D)(5) is that **once the police elect to charge an individual under the UAPA, it becomes extremely difficult for bail to be granted**. Bail is a safeguard and guarantee of the constitutional right to liberty.
- This provision leaves very **little room for judicial reasoning, and makes the grant of bail virtually impossible under UAPA**.
 - In the case of *Zahoor Ahmed Shah Watali*, the [Supreme Court](#) in 2019 confirmed that **courts must accept the state's case without examining its merits**.
 - However, **courts have since read this provision differently, emphasizing the right to a speedy trial** and raising the bar for the state to book an individual under UAPA.

What is Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967?

- The UAPA was enacted in 1967, and later **strengthened to be modelled as an anti-terror law by the government in 2008 and 2012**.
- In August 2019, Parliament cleared the [Unlawful Activities \(Prevention\) Amendment Bill, 2019](#) to designate individuals as terrorists on certain grounds provided in the Act.
- In order to **deal with the terrorism related crimes**, it deviates from ordinary legal procedures and creates an exceptional regime where constitutional safeguards of the accused are curtailed.
- Between 2016 and 2019, the period for which UAPA figures have been published by the [National Crime Records Bureau \(NCRB\)](#), a total of 4,231 [First Information Report \(FIR\)](#) were filed under various sections of the UAPA, of which 112 cases have resulted in convictions.
 - This frequent application of UAPA indicates that it is often misused and abused like other anti-terror laws in the past in India such as **POTA (Prevention of Terrorism Act) 2002 and TADA (Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act) 1987**.

What are other Associated Issues of the UAPA?

- **Vague Definition of Terrorist Act:** The definition of a **“terrorist act”** under the UAPA

substantially **differs from the definition promoted by** the [United Nations \(UN\)](#) Special Rapporteur on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism.

- According to Special Rapporteur to call an offence a “terrorist act”, three elements must be cumulatively present:
 - The means used must be deadly.
 - The intent behind the act must be to cause fear amongst the population or to compel a government or international organisation to do or refrain from doing something.
 - The aim must be to further an ideological goal.
- **UAPA**, on the other hand, **offers an overbroad and ambiguous definition** of a “terrorist act” which includes the death of, or injuries to, any person, damage to any property, etc.
- **Pendency of Trials:** Given the state of justice delivery system in India, the rate of **pendency at the level of trial is at an average of 95.5%**.
 - This means that trials are completed every year in less than 5% cases, signifying the reasons for long years of undertrial imprisonment.
- **State Overreach:** It also includes any act that is **“likely to threaten” or “likely to strike terror in people”**, giving unbridled power to the government to brand any ordinary citizen or activist a terrorist without the actual commission of these acts.
 - Thus, the state gives itself more powers vis-a-vis individual liberty guaranteed under [Article 21 of the constitution](#).
- **Undermining Federalism:** Some experts feel that it is **against the federal structure since it neglects the authority of state police** in terrorism cases, given that ‘Police’ is a state subject under 7th schedule of Indian Constitution.

Way Forward

- There is a greater role for the judiciary here to carefully examine the cases of alleged misuse. Arbitrariness and subjectivity under the law should be checked through [Judicial review](#).
- Under the **right to appeal for the individual** against him being designated as terrorists, judiciary should follow the fundamental principle of fair procedure and should remain alert of any intention of executive to frame the individual by manufacturing fake evidence.
- **Officers who are found guilty of any misuse and abuse** of the powers under the law must be strictly punished.
- Drawing the line between individual freedom and state obligation to provide security is a case of classical dilemma. It is up to the state, judiciary, civil society, to **strike a balance between constitutional freedom and the imperative of anti-terror activitie**.

[Source: IE](#)

PM-DAKSH Scheme

For Prelims: PM-DAKSH Scheme, Initiatives Related to Skill Development.

For Mains: Government Policies & Interventions, Significance of PM-DAKSh Scheme in Providing Skill in the Marginalised Groups.

Why in News

Recently, the **Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment** has informed the Lok Sabha that the amount

of funds earmarked under [PM-DAKSH \(Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi Yojana\)](#) during 2020-21 and 2021-22 are Rs.44.79 crores and Rs.79.48 crores respectively.

- Earlier, the Ministry launched '**PM-DAKSH' Portal and 'PM-DAKSH' Mobile App** to make the skill development schemes accessible to the target groups - [SC \(Scheduled Caste\)](#), [OBC \(Other Backward Classes\)](#), [Economically Backward Classes \(EBC\)](#), [Denotified tribes](#), [Sanitation workers](#).

What are the Key Points?

- **About:**
 - It is being implemented **from the year 2020-21**.
 - Under this, **eligible target groups are provided with the skill development training programmes** on Short Term Training Program; Up-Skilling/Reskilling; Entrepreneurship Development Programme, and Long Term Training Programme.
 - These **training programmes are being implemented through the government training institutes**, sector skill councils that have been constituted by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, and other credible institutions.
- **Eligibility:**
 - Marginalised persons of **SC, OBC, EBC, Denotified tribes, Sanitation workers** including waste pickers, [manual scavengers](#), [transgenders](#) and other similar categories.
- **Implementation:**
 - It is implemented by the three Corporations under the Ministry:
 - **National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC)**,
 - **National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation (NBCFDC)**,
 - **National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC)**.
- **Status of Skill Development Training of Target Groups:**
 - Skill development training has been imparted to **2,73,152 people of the target groups in the last 5 years**.
 - A target, during the year 2021-22, has been set to provide the skill development training to approx 50,000 people of the target groups through these three corporations.

What is the Significance of the Scheme?

- **Minimal Economic Assets:**
 - Most of the persons of the **target groups have minimal economic assets**; therefore, provision of **training and enhancing their competencies is essential** for economic empowerment/ upliftment of these marginalised target groups.
- **Helps Category of Rural Artisans:**
 - Many of the persons of the **target groups belong to the category of rural artisans who have become marginalised** owing to the coming of better technologies in the market.
- **Empowers Women:**
 - Women due to their overall domestic compulsions, **cannot be involved in wage employment** which normally involves long working hours and sometimes migration to other cities, **there is a need to empower the women amongst the target groups**.

What are the Initiatives Related to Skill Development?

- [Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 3.0](#): It was **launched by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** in 2021 in a bid to empower India's youth with employable skills by making over 300 skill courses available to them.
- [National Career Service Project](#): Launched in 2015 to offer **free online career skills training to job-seekers registered with it**. It is an initiative of the Ministry of Labour & Employment.
- [Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood \(SANKALP\)](#): Its focus is on district-level skilling ecosystem through convergence and coordination. It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme which is collaborated with the [World Bank](#).
- [Kaushalacharya Awards](#): Launched to recognize the contribution made by skill trainers and to

motivate more trainers to join the Skill India Mission.

- **Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS)**: The scheme is to provide industry apprenticeship opportunities to the general graduates exiting in April 2019 through the **National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS)**. It was launched by the Ministry of Education.
- **Atmanirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping (ASEEM)**: Launched by MSDE in 2020, it is a portal to help skilled people find sustainable livelihood opportunities.

PYQs

1. Recognition of Prior Learning Scheme' is sometimes mentioned in the news with reference to (2017)

- (a) Certifying the skills acquired by construction workers through traditional channels.
- (b) Enrolling the persons in Universities for distance learning programmes.
- (c) Reserving some skilled jobs to rural and urban poor in some public sector undertakings.
- (d) Certifying the skills acquired by trainees under the National Skill Development Programme.

Ans: (a)

2. With reference to Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana, consider the following statements: (2018)

- 1. It is the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
- 2. It, among other things, will also impart training in soft skills, entrepreneurship, financial and digital literacy.
- 3. It aims to align the competencies of the unregulated workforce of the country to the National Skill Qualification Framework.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (c)

Source: PIB

Periodic Labour Force Survey

For Prelims: Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), National Statistical Office (NSO), Unemployment Rate, Labour Force,

For Mains: Employment, Growth & Development, Human Resource, Types of Unemployment in India, Recent Initiatives by Government to fight Unemployment

Why in News?

Recently, the latest [Periodic Labour Force Survey \(PLFS\)](#) released by the [National Statistical Office \(NSO\)](#) shows that the **unemployment rate** had shot up sharply during the [nationwide lockdown](#) in 2020 during the [first wave of the pandemic](#).

- NSO is the central statistical agency of the Government-mandated under the **Statistical Services Act 1980** under the [Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation](#).

What is the Unemployment rate?

- **Unemployment Rate:** The unemployment rate is defined as the **percentage of unemployed persons in the labour force**.
- **Labour Force:** The Labour force, according to **Current Weekly Status (CWS)**, is the number of persons either employed or unemployed on an average in a week preceding the date of the survey.
- **CWS Approach:** The urban unemployment PLFS is based on the CWS approach.
 - Under CWS, a person is considered **unemployed if he/she did not work even for one hour on any day during the week but sought or was available for work at least for one hour on any day during the period**.
 - Labour force participation rate in current weekly status in urban areas for people aged **15 years and above** was 46.8% in the April-June quarter of 2021.

PYQ

Disguised unemployment generally means (2013)

- (a) large number of people remain unemployed
- (b) alternative employment is not available
- (c) marginal productivity of labour is zero
- (d) productivity of workers is low

Ans: (c)

What is the Periodic Labour Force Survey?

- Considering the importance of the availability of labour force data at more frequent time intervals, **the NSO** launched the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) in April 2017.
- The objective of PLFS is primarily twofold:
 - To estimate the key employment and unemployment indicators (viz. **Worker Population Ratio, Labour Force Participation Rate, Unemployment Rate**) in the short time interval of three months for the urban areas only in the **CWS**.
 - To estimate employment and unemployment indicators in both usual Status and CWS in both rural and urban areas annually.

What are Recent Initiatives by the Government to fight Unemployment?

- [Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise \(SMILE\)](#)
- [PM-DAKSH \(Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi\)](#)
- [Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act \(MGNREGA\)](#)
- [Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana \(PMKVY\)](#)
- [Start Up India Scheme](#)

Types of Unemployment in India

- **Disguised Unemployment:** It is a phenomenon wherein **more people are employed than actually needed**.
 - It is primarily traced in the agricultural and unorganised sectors of India.
- **Seasonal Unemployment:** It is unemployment that occurs **during certain seasons** of the year.
 - Agricultural labourers in India rarely have worked throughout the year.
- **Structural Unemployment:** It is a category of unemployment arising from the **mismatch between the jobs available in the market and the skills** of the available workers in the market.
 - Many people in India do not get jobs due to a lack of requisite skills and due to poor education levels, it becomes difficult to train them.
- **Cyclical Unemployment:** It is a **result of the business cycle**, where unemployment rises during recessions and declines with economic growth.
 - Cyclical unemployment figures in India are negligible. It is a phenomenon that is mostly found in capitalist economies.
- **Technological Unemployment:** It is the loss of jobs due to **changes in technology**.
 - In 2016, World Bank data predicted that the proportion of jobs threatened by automation in India is 69% year-on-year.
- **Frictional Unemployment:** Frictional Unemployment also called **Search Unemployment**, **refers to the time lag between the jobs when an individual is searching for a new job** or is switching between the jobs.
 - In other words, an employee requires time for searching for a new job or shifting from the existing to a new job, this inevitable time delay causes frictional unemployment.
 - It is often considered voluntary unemployment because it is not caused due to the shortage of jobs, but in fact, the workers themselves quit their jobs in search of better opportunities.
- **Vulnerable Employment:** This means, people, working informally, **without proper job contracts and thus sans any legal protection**.
 - These persons are deemed 'unemployed' since records of their work are never maintained.
 - It is one of the main types of unemployment in India.

PYQ

Increase in absolute and per capita real GNP do not connote a higher level of economic development, if (2018)

- (a) industrial output fails to keep pace with agricultural output.
- (b) agricultural output fails to keep pace with industrial output.
- (c) poverty and unemployment increase.
- (d) imports grow faster than exports.

Ans: (c)

WPI and CPI Inflation Rates

For Prelims: Wholesale Price Index, Consumer Price Index, Monetary Policy Committee, Reserve Bank of India.

For Mains: Inflation and its impact, Monetary Policy.

Why in News?

Data released by the government showed that **wholesale inflation in India rose to 13.11%** while the retail inflation rate in India -measured by the **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**- came in at 6.07% in February 2022.

What is the Wholesale Price Index?

- It measures the **changes in the prices of goods sold and traded** in bulk by wholesale businesses to other businesses.
- Published by the **Office of Economic Adviser**, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- It is the **most widely used inflation indicator in India**.
- Major criticism for this index is that the **general public does not buy products at wholesale price**.
- The base year of All-India WPI has been revised from **2004-05 to 2011-12 in 2017**.

What is the Consumer Price Index?

- It measures **price changes from the perspective of a retail buyer**. It is released by the [National Statistical Office \(NSO\)](#).
- The CPI **calculates the difference in the price of commodities and services** such as food, medical care, education, electronics etc, which Indian consumers buy for use.
- The CPI has **several sub-groups including food and beverages**, fuel and light, housing and clothing, bedding and footwear.
- Four types of CPI are as follows:
 - CPI for Industrial Workers (IW).
 - CPI for Agricultural Labourer (AL).
 - CPI for Rural Labourer (RL).
 - CPI (Rural/Urban/Combined).
 - Of these, the first three are compiled by the **Labour Bureau in the Ministry of Labour and Employment**. Fourth is compiled by the **NSO in the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation**.
- **Base Year** for CPI is **2012**.
 - Recently, the Ministry of Labour and Employment released the [new series of Consumer Price Index for Industrial Worker \(CPI-IW\)](#) with base year 2016.
- [The Monetary Policy Committee \(MPC\)](#) uses CPI data to control inflation. In April 2014, the [Reserve Bank of India \(RBI\)](#) had adopted the CPI as its key measure of inflation.

PYQ

With reference to India, consider the following statements: (2010)

1. The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) in India is available on a monthly basis only.
2. As compared to Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI(IW)), the WPI gives less weight to food articles.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

What is the difference between CPI and WPI?

- WPI tracks **inflation at the producer level** and CPI **captures changes in prices levels at the consumer level**.
- WPI **does not capture changes in the prices of services**, which CPI does.
- **In WPI, more weightage is given to manufactured goods**, while in **CPI**, more weightage is given **to food items**.

What is Inflation?

- Inflation refers to the **rise in the prices of most goods and services** of daily or common use, such as food, clothing, housing, recreation, transport, consumer staples, etc.
- Inflation measures the **average price change in a basket of commodities and services over time**.
- Inflation is **indicative of the decrease in the purchasing power** of a unit of a country's currency.
 - This could ultimately lead to a deceleration in economic growth.
- However, a **moderate level of inflation is required in the economy** to ensure that production is promoted.
- In India, **inflation is primarily measured by two main indices** — WPI & CPI which measure wholesale and retail-level price changes, respectively.

PYQ

Consider the following statements: (2020)

1. The weightage of food in Consumer Price Index (CPI) is higher than that in Wholesale Price Index (WPI).
2. The WPI does not capture changes in the prices of services, which CPI does.
3. The Reserve Bank of India has now adopted WPI as its key measure of inflation and to decide on changing the key policy rates.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only

(c) 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (a)

Source: IE

Project Dolphin

For Prelims: National Mission for Clean Ganga, Gangetic Dolphin, steps taken by the government to conserve dolphins.

For Mains: Conservation, Government Policies & Interventions, Project Dolphin and its Significance.

Why in News

Recently, the Ministry of Jal Shakti expressed his displeasure **over the slow pace of the approval process for [Project Dolphin](#)**.

What is Project Dolphin?

- The initiative got in-principle approval in 2019 at the first meeting of the **[National Ganga Council \(NGC\)](#)**, headed by the Prime Minister.
 - Project Dolphin is one of the activities planned under **Arth Ganga**, an ambitious inter-ministerial initiative of the government approved in 2019.

PROJECT DOLPHIN

PRESERVING OUR UNDERWATER FRIENDS



10-YEAR PROJECT TO FOCUS ON BOTH RIVER AND SEA DOLPHINS



AIM TO STRENGTHEN BIODIVERSITY, CREATE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND ATTRACT TOURISM



KILLING, HABITAT FRAGMENTATION BY DAMS AND BARRAGES AND INDISCRIMINATE FISHING HAS REDUCED THE GANGES RIVER DOLPHIN POPULATION FROM TENS OF THOUSANDS TO AROUND 3,700 OVER THE LAST CENTURY



GANGES RIVER DOLPHIN, A SPECIES OF FRESHWATER DOLPHINS, IS PRIMARILY FOUND IN GANGA AND BRAHMAPUTRA RIVERS, AND THEIR TRIBUTARIES IN INDIA, BANGLADESH AND NEPAL



IN INDIA, THESE DOLPHINS ARE SIGHTED IN DEEP RIVERS IN ASSAM, BIHAR, JHARKHAND, MADHYA PRADESH, RAJASTHAN, UTTAR PRADESH AND WEST BENGAL



GANGES RIVER DOLPHIN, OFFICIALLY DISCOVERED IN 1801, CAN LIVE ONLY IN FRESHWATER

- Project Dolphin will be on the lines of [Project Tiger](#), which has helped increase the tiger population.
- It is expected to be **implemented by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**.
 - A Special Conservation program **needs to be taken up for Gangetic Dolphin which is a national aquatic animal** and also [indicator species](#) for the river [Ganga](#) spread over several states.
 - Indicator species, organisms—often a microorganism or a plant—that serves as a measure of the environmental conditions that exist in a given locale.
 - As the Gangetic dolphin is at the top of the food chain, protecting the species and its habitat will ensure conservation of aquatic lives of the river.
 - So far, the [National Mission for Clean Ganga \(NMCG\)](#), which implements the government's flagship scheme [Namami Gange](#), has been taking some initiatives for saving dolphins.
- **Global Experience:** The **Rhine Action Plan (1987)** of the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine (ICPR) — representing Switzerland, France, Germany, Luxemburg and the Netherlands — helped in conservation of the **salmon fish** (also an indicator species).

PYQ

Which one of the following is the national aquatic animal of India? (2015)

- (a) Saltwater crocodile
- (b) Olive ridley turtle
- (c) Gangetic dolphin
- (d) Gharial

Ans: (c)

What are the Key Points Related to Gangetic Dolphin?

- **Scientific Name:** *Platanista gangetica gangetica*.
- **Discovery:** It was officially discovered in **1801**.
- **Habitat:** They live in the **Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna** and **Karnaphuli-Sangu** river systems of Nepal, India, and Bangladesh.
 - The Ganges river dolphin can **only live in freshwater and is essentially blind**.
 - They **hunt by emitting ultrasonic sounds**, which bounces off of fish and other prey, enabling them to “see” an image in their mind. They are also **called ‘susu’**.
- **Population:** The global population of the species is estimated at 4,000, and nearly **80% found in the Indian subcontinent**.
- **Significance:**
 - It is a reliable **indicator of the health of the entire river ecosystem**.
- **Threats:**
 - **Bycatch:** These dolphins and people both favour areas of the river where fish are plentiful and the water current is slower.
 - This has led to **fewer fish for people and more dolphins dying as a result of accidentally being caught** in fishing nets, also known as bycatch.
 - **Pollution:** Industrial, agricultural, and human pollution is another serious cause of habitat degradation.
 - **Dams:** Construction of dams and other irrigation-related projects make them susceptible to inbreeding and more **vulnerable to other threats because they cannot move to new areas**.
 - Dolphins below a dam are **threatened by heavy pollution**, increased fishing activities and vessel traffic. They also have less food because dams disturb the migration, breeding cycles and habitat of fish and other prey.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - **Indian Wildlife (Protection), Act 1972:** Schedule I.
 - **International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN):** Endangered.
 - **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES):** Appendix I (most endangered).
 - **Convention on Migratory Species (CMS):** Appendix II (migratory species that need conservation and management or would significantly benefit from international co-operation).
- **Other Steps Taken:**
 - **National Dolphin Research Centre (NDRC):** The NDRC is coming up on the 4,400 square metre plot of land on the premises of Patna University for the conservation of the endangered Gangetic river dolphin.
 - **Dolphin Sanctuary:** **Vikramshila Ganges Dolphin Sanctuary** has been established in Bihar.
 - **National Ganga River Dolphin Day:** The **National Mission for Clean Ganga** celebrates 5th October as National Ganga River Dolphin Day.
 - **Conservation Plan:** The Conservation Action Plan for the Ganges River Dolphin 2010-2020, which “identified threats to Gangetic Dolphins and impact of river traffic, irrigation canals and depletion of prey-base on Dolphins populations”.

PYQ

Other than poaching, what are the possible reasons for the decline in the population of Ganges River Dolphins? (2014)

1. Construction of dams and barrages on rivers
2. Increase in the population of crocodiles in rivers
3. Getting trapped in fishing nets accidentally
4. Use of synthetic fertilisers and other agricultural chemicals in crop-fields in the vicinity of rivers

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Ans: (c)

[Source: IE](#)

Fundamental Rights of Foreigners

Why in News?

The Union government has **urged the [Supreme Court](#) to help lay down a law with a “long-lasting” implication** for the country on the subject of **Foreigners’ Right to approach local courts** for relief after violating their visa conditions.

- The Government asked the scope of Foreigners right to approach the local court, when [Article 19](#) is not applicable to them.
- Article 19 of the Constitution, which deals with right to free speech and expression, and also holding of meetings peaceably, is restricted to citizens unlike in the case of Article 21, which mandates that “no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law” and is applicable to citizens and non-citizens alike.

What are the Fundament
Fundamental rights available only to citizens and not to foreigners
Article 15: Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.
Article 16: Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment.
Article 19: Protection of six rights regarding freedom of (speech and expression, (ii) assembly (iii) association, (iv) movement (v) residence and profession.
Article 29: Protection of language, script and culture of minorities.
Article 30: Right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions.

PYQs

1. Which one of the following categories of Fundamental Rights incorporates protection against untouchability as a form of discrimination? (2020)

- (a) Right against Exploitation
- (b) Right to Freedom
- (c) Right to Constitutional Remedies
- (d) Right to Equality

Ans: (d)

2. Right to Privacy is protected as an intrinsic part of Right to Life and Personal Liberty. Which of the following in the Constitution of India correctly and appropriately imply the above statement? (2018)

- (a) Article 14 and the provisions under the 42nd Amendment to the Constitution.
- (b) Article 17 and the Directive Principles of State Policy in Part IV.
- (c) Article 21 and the freedoms guaranteed in Part III.
- (d) Article 24 and the provisions under the 44th Amendment to the Constitution.

Ans: (c)

3. Which of the following are envisaged by the Right against Exploitation in the Constitution of India? (2017)

- 1. Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour
- 2. Abolition of untouchability
- 3. Protection of the interests of minorities
- 4. Prohibition of employment of children in factories and mines

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (b) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 1 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Ans: (c)

4. What is the position of the Right to Property in India?

- (a) Legal right available to citizens only
- (b) Legal right available to any person
- (c) Fundamental Right available to citizens only
- (d) Neither Fundamental Right nor legal right

Ans: (b)

[Source: TH](#)

MANPADS

Why in News?

The United States and [North Atlantic Treaty Organization \(NATO\)](#) are shipping weapons into [Ukraine](#), including highly sensitive items such as shoulder-fired missiles called **Man-Portable Air-Defence Systems (MANPADS)** that can take down aircraft.

- Countries such as **India, Pakistan, Germany, UK, Turkey and Israel** have also used MANPADS in their defence efforts.
- **Russia is by far the biggest exporter of MANPADs**, having sold over 10,000 such systems between 2010 and 2018 to various countries including Iraq, Qatar, Kazakhstan, Venezuela, and Libya.



What are MANPADS?

- **About:**
 - MANPADS are **short-range, lightweight and portable surface-to-air missiles** that can be fired by individuals or small groups to destroy aircraft or helicopters.
 - They help **shield troops from aerial attacks** and are most effective in targeting low-flying aircrafts.
 - **MANPATs or Man-Portable Anti-Tank Systems** work in a similar manner but are used to destroy or incapacitate military tanks.
 - MANPADS have a **maximum range of 8 kilometers and can engage targets at altitudes of 4.5 km.**
 - The **first MANPADS were introduced by the United States and Soviet Union** in the 1960s.
- **Features:**
 - **Shoulder-Fired, Light Weight:**
 - They can be **shoulder-fired, launched from atop a ground-vehicle, fired from a tripod or stand**, and from a helicopter or boat.
 - They are **fairly lightweight as compared to other elaborate weapon systems**, making them easy to operate by individual soldiers.
 - They weigh anywhere between 10 to 20 kilograms and are not longer than 1.8 meters.
 - **Fire and Forget Guidance Systems:**
 - Most of them have passive or 'fire and forget' guidance systems, meaning that the operator is not required to guide the missile to its target, enabling them to run and relocate immediately after firing.
 - **Infrared (IR) Seekers:**
 - The missiles are fitted with infrared (IR) seekers **that identify and target the airborne vehicle through heat radiation** being emitted by the latter.
- **Common Variants:**
 - Stinger Missiles (US), Igla MANPADS (Russia), Starstreak (Britain), RBS-70 MANPADS Series (Sweden), Next Generation Light Antitank Weapon or NLAW missiles and Javelin missiles (US and NATO).
- **Concerns:**
 - **Civilian Attacks:**
 - According to a 2019 study, **more than 60 civilian aircraft have been hit by MANPADS since the 1970s**, claiming the lives of more than 1,000 civilians.
 - **Illicit Use by Non-State Actors:**
 - Over time, non-state actors such as rebel and terrorist groups are known to have illicitly acquired MANPADS, using them during civil wars and other high-intensity conflicts.
 - **Illegal Weapon Trade:**
 - Observers fear that sending lightweight ground-based MANPADS to Ukraine may contribute to intensifying the network of illegal weapon trade.

PYQ

What is "Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD)", sometimes seen in the news? (2018)

- (a) An Israeli radar system
- (b) India's indigenous anti-missile programme
- (c) An American anti-missile system
- (d) A defence collaboration between Japan and South Korea.

Ans: (c)

Source: TH

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