



## State of World Population 2022 Report

**For Prelims:** Findings of the State of World Population 2022 Report, United Nations Population Fund's

**For Mains:** State of World Population 2022 Report, Issues Related to Women, Population and Associated Issues

### Why in News?

Recently, the [United Nations Population Fund's \(UNFPA\)](#) flagship State of World Population Report 2022 titled "**Seeing the Unseen: The case for action in the neglected crisis of unintended pregnancy**" was launched.

### What are the Key Findings of the Report?

- **Rising Unintended Pregnancies:**
  - Between 2015 and 2019, there were roughly **121 million unintended pregnancies globally each year.**
- **Lack of Safe, Modern Methods of Contraception:**
  - Globally, an **estimated 257 million women** who want to avoid pregnancy are **not using safe, modern methods of contraception.**
- **Rising Rape-Related Pregnancies:**
  - Nearly a quarter of all women are not able to say no to sex.
    - **Contraceptive use is 53% lower among women** who have experienced intimate partner violence.
    - **Rape-related pregnancies are equally or more likely to occur** than pregnancies from consensual sex.
- **Rising Abortion:**
  - Over **60% of unintended pregnancies**, and almost 30% of all pregnancies, end in abortion.
    - 45% of all abortions performed globally are unsafe.
    - In developing countries, [unsafe abortions](#) cost an estimated USD 553 million per year in treatment costs alone.
- **Impact of Humanitarian Emergencies:**
  - In humanitarian emergencies, such as the [ongoing war in Ukraine](#), many women lose access to contraception and / or experience sexual violence.
    - Some studies have shown that **over 20% of refugee women and girls** will face sexual violence.
  - In the first 12 months of the [Covid-19 pandemic](#), the estimated disruption in contraceptive supplies and services lasted an average of 3.6 months, leading to as many as **1.4 million unintended pregnancies.**

### What are the Contributing Factors of Unintended Pregnancies?

- Lack of sexual and reproductive health care and information
- Contraceptive options that don't suit women's bodies or circumstances

- Harmful norms and stigma surrounding women controlling their own fertility and bodies
- Sexual violence and reproductive coercion
- Judgmental attitudes or shaming in health services
- Poverty and stalled economic development
- [Gender inequality](#)

## What are the Issues with the Unintended Pregnancies?

- **Health Risks:**
  - Unintended pregnancies can pose **certain health risks and may be associated with adverse outcomes** for both mother and baby.
    - Women with an unplanned pregnancy, for example, are less likely to receive prenatal care and may have a higher risk for postpartum depression and mental health problems later in life.
- **Higher Rates of Preterm Birth:**
  - Unintended pregnancies have been **associated with higher rates of preterm birth and low birthweight**, although some studies note the difficulty of separating confounding demographic factors from pregnancy intention.
- **Impact Future of Children:**
  - Children born as a result of an **unplanned pregnancy may be more likely to fare worse in school achievement, social and emotional development**, and later success in the labor market compared to children born as a result of a planned pregnancy.
    - Unintended pregnancy may also be an important risk factor in predicting and understanding **child maltreatment**.
  - An unplanned pregnancy can **also disrupt educational goals and severely affect future earning potential** and family financial well-being—costs which extend to state budgets.

## What are the Suggestions?

- Decision-makers and health systems **need to prioritize the prevention of unintended pregnancies by improving the accessibility, acceptability, quality and variety** of contraception and greatly expanding quality sexual and reproductive health care and information.
- Policy makers, community leaders and all individuals **should empower women and girls to make affirmative decisions** about sex, contraception and motherhood.
- Foster societies that recognize the full worth of women and girls.
  - If they do, women and girls will be able to contribute fully to society, and will have the tools, information and power to make this fundamental choice—to have children, or not—for themselves.

## What is the United Nations Population Fund?

- **About:**
  - It is a subsidiary organ of the [UN General Assembly](#) and works as a sexual and reproductive health agency.
  - The [UN Economic and Social Council \(ECOSOC\)](#) establishes its mandate.
- **Establishment:**
  - It was **established as a trust fund in 1967** and began operations in 1969.
  - In 1987, it was officially renamed the **United Nations Population Fund** but the original abbreviation, 'UNFPA' for the United Nations Fund for Population Activities was retained.
- **Objective:**
  - UNFPA works directly to tackle [Sustainable Development Goals](#) on health (SDG3), education (SDG4) and gender equality (SDG5).
- **Funding:**
  - UNFPA is **not supported by the UN budget**, instead, it is entirely supported by voluntary contributions of donor governments, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, foundations and individuals.
- **Report:**

- State of World Population Report.

[Source: UNFPA](#)

---

## BRICS Media Forum

**For Prelims:** BRICS countries, BRICS Media Forum, New Development Bank , Contingent Reserve Arrangement, Nuclear Supplier Group.

**For Mains:** Important International Institutions, Groupings & Agreements Involving India and/or Affecting India's Interests, Significance of BRICS,

### Why in News?

Recently, the [BRICS countries \(Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa\)](#) launched a **three-month-long training programme for journalists**.

- The programme was an **initiative of the [BRICS Media Forum](#)**.

### What is BRICS Media Forum?

- The Forum was established in **2015 by media organisations from five countries**, including **The Hindu (India) , Brazil's CMA Group, Russia's Sputnik, China's Xinhua and South Africa's Independent Media**.
- The forum aims to establish an efficient coordination mechanism among BRICS media, **advance innovation-driven media development** and **gather stronger momentum for the development of BRICS countries** through exchange and pragmatic cooperation under the mechanism.

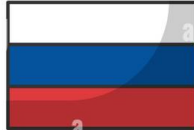
//

# BRICS

## 5 countries



Brazil



Russia



India



China



South Africa

### What is the History of BRICS?

- **Origin of Idea:** The acronym "BRICS" was initially formulated in 2001 by economist Jim O'Neill, of Goldman Sachs, in a report on growth prospects for the economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China - which together represented a significant share of the world's production and population.
- **Formalised Setup:** The grouping was formalised during the first meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers in 2006.
  - The first BRIC Summit took place in 2009 in the Russian Federation and focused on issues such as reform of the global financial architecture.
  - South Africa was invited to join BRIC in December 2010, after which the group adopted the acronym BRICS.
  - South Africa subsequently attended the [Third BRICS Summit in Sanya, China](#), in March 2011.
- **Key Initiatives:** During the **Sixth BRICS Summit in Fortaleza (Brazil) in 2014**, the leaders signed the Agreement establishing the [New Development Bank](#) (NDB headquarters - Shanghai, China).
  - They also signed the BRICS [Contingent Reserve Arrangement](#) to provide short-term liquidity support to the members.

### What is the Significance of BRICS?

- **Big Five Nations:** The importance of BRICS can be reflected in the fact that it represents:
  - 42% of the world's population.
  - 30% of the land area.
  - 24% of global [Gross Domestic Product](#).
  - 16% of international trade.
- **Bridge Between North and South:** The grouping has gone through a reasonably productive journey. It strove to serve as a bridge between the Global North and Global South.

- **Common Global Perspective:** The BRICs called for the reform of multilateral institutions in order that they reflect the structural changes in the world economy and the increasingly central role that emerging markets now play.
- **Development Cooperation:** It developed a common perspective on a wide range of global and regional issues; established the New Development Bank (NDB); created a financial stability net in the form of Contingency Reserve Arrangement; and is on the verge of setting up a Vaccine Research and Development Virtual Centre.

## What is the Importance of BRICS for India?

- **Geo-Politics:** Present geopolitics has made it difficult for India to carve a middle path for **balancing its strategic interests between the U.S and the Russia-China axis.**
  - Therefore, the BRICS platform provides an opportunity for India to **balance the Russia-China axis.**
- **Global Economic Order:** BRICS countries shared a common objective of reforming the international financial and monetary system, with a strong desire to build a more just, and balanced international order
  - To this end, the BRICS community **plays an important role in the G20**, in shaping global economic policies and promoting financial stability.
- **Terrorism:** BRICS also provides a platform for India to galvanize its efforts against terrorism.
- **Global Grouping:** India is actively pursuing its membership for the **United Nation Security Council (UNSC)** and **Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG).**
  - China forms the major roadblock in pursuing such goals.
  - Therefore, BRICS provides an opportunity to actively engage with China and resolve the mutual disputes. It also helps in garnering support of other partner countries.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs), IAS

### Q. Consider the following statements: (2016)

1. New Development Bank has been set up by APEC.
2. The headquarters of New Development Bank is in Shanghai.

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)**

### Q. The 'Fortaleza Declaration', recently in the news, is related to the affairs of (2015)

- (a) ASEAN
- (b) BRICS
- (c) OECD
- (d) WTO

**Ans: (b)**

**Source: TH**

---

# Central Armed Police Forces Reforms

**For Prelims:** Type of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), Assam Rifles (AR), Border Security Force (BSF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), National Security Guard (NSG), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)

**For Mains:** Major Functions challenges and Solutions regarding CAPFs, Various Security Forces & Agencies & Their Mandate

## Why in News?

Recently, the **Government of India told the Lok Sabha** that nearly **1,200 paramilitary troopers died by suicide in last 10 years.**

- Also, more [Central Armed Police Force \(CAPF\)](#) personnel died by suicide in the [Covid-19 pandemic](#) years of 2020 and 2021.
- **Domestic problems, illness and financial problems** are some of the contributory factors among others behind the incidents of suicide.

## What are Central Armed Police Forces?

- The **Ministry of Home Affairs** maintains seven CAPFs:
  - The [Central Reserve Police Force \(CRPF\)](#), which assists in internal security and counterinsurgency.
  - The **Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)**, which protects vital installations (like airports) and [public sector undertakings](#).
  - The [National Security Guards \(NSG\)](#), which is a special counterterrorism force.
  - Four border guarding forces, which are the [Border Security Force \(BSF\)](#), [Indo-Tibetan Border Police \(ITBP\)](#), [Sashastra Seema Bal \(SSB\)](#), and [Assam Rifles \(AR\)](#).

## What are Major Functions of CAPFs?

- **Border Security:** Safeguard the security of borders of India and promote a sense of security among the people living in border areas.
  - Prevent trans-border crimes, smuggling, unauthorised entry into or exit from the territory of India and to prevent any other illegal activity.
- **Industrial Security:** Provide security to sensitive installations, persons at security risk.
- **Other Functions:** Counter Insurgency Operations, Anti Naxal Operations, Internal Security Duties, VIP Protection, Lead Intelligence Agency, Security To Diplomatic Missions Abroad, [United Nations \(UN\) Peacekeeping Operations](#), Disaster Management, Civic Action Nodal Agency for UN Police Missions, etc.

## What are Associated Issues with CAPFs?

- **Working Conditions:** The **Standing Committee on Home Affairs** in the year 2017 had expressed concern over the **working conditions of personnel of the border guarding forces.**
  - The Committee observed that they had to **work 16-18 hours a day, with little time for rest or sleep.**
  - The personnel were also **not satisfied with medical facilities** that had been provided at border locations.
  - In addition, the Standing Committee observed that personnel of the CAPFs have **not been treated at par with the Armed Forces**, in terms of pay and allowances.

- **Impediments to Modernisation:** The MHA has been making efforts to provide modern arms, ammunition, and vehicles to the CAPFs.
  - The Plan aims to provide financial support to CAPFs for modernisation in areas of arms, clothing, and equipment.
  - However, the [Estimates Committee](#) observed that the **procurement process under the Plan was cumbersome and time consuming.**
- **Burdened By States' Responsibilities:** There is heavy dependence of states on CAPFs, even for everyday law and order issues.
  - This affects the **anti-insurgency and border guarding operations**, besides curtailing the training needs of these forces.
- **Cadre Management Issue:** Each of the seven has its own cadre of officers, but they are **headed by officers of the Indian Police Service.**
  - This has a demoralising effect on the officers of the CAPFs, and **impacts the effectiveness of the forces.**
  - In addition, there was frustration in CAPFs due to stagnation in promotions and lack of cadre review.
- **Increasing Cases of Fratricide:** There have been more than **25 incidents of fratricide** (killing of one's brother or sister) **reported in the forces since 2019.**

## What can be the Way Forward for CAPFs?

- **Modernising the CAPFs:** MHA should ensure the **bottlenecks in procurement should be identified** and corrective action should be taken.
  - Moreover, given the evolution of [hybrid warfare](#), the contents of training should be a mix of conventional matters as well as latest technologies such as ICT, and cyber security.
- **Augmenting States' Capacity:** States must develop their own systems, and augment their police forces by **providing adequate training and equipment.**
  - The central government should supplement the efforts of state governments by providing financial assistance and other help needed by states for capacity building of their forces.
- **Corrective Measures in Cadre Policy:** Citing the dissatisfaction in **Cadre policy, Joshi Committee recommended** that top positions should be filled from the respective cadre of the CAPF.
  - Further, the Committee recommended that **cadre review of all the CAPFs should be carried out within a defined timeline.**
  - It is high time to implement these recommendations as soon as possible.
- **Personnel Reforms:** Workshops on **stress management** should regularly be undertaken, and yoga and meditation be made part of the daily exercise for CAPF personnel.
  - Further, the provision of accommodation near the deployment of the respective force, to enable personnel to meet their family members, can also be explored.

[Source: IE](#)

---

## Microplastics in Human Blood

**For Prelims:** Microplastics.

**For Mains:** Environment Pollution and Degradation.

### Why in News?

Tiny particles of plastics, called [Microplastics](#), were detected in human blood for the first time,

according to a study by a group of researchers in the Netherlands.

- The researchers adapted existing techniques to detect and **analyze particles that were as small as 700 nanometers** in size.
- They **targeted five common plastics**, including **Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET)**, and polyethylene.

## What are Microplastics?

### ▪ About:

- They are **defined as plastics less than five millimeters in diameter**—smaller in diameter than the standard pearl used in jewelry. It can be harmful to our ocean and aquatic life.
- There are **two categories of microplastics**: primary and secondary.

### ▪ Classification:

- **Primary Microplastics**: They are tiny particles designed for commercial use and microfibers shed from clothing and other textiles.
  - E.g. Microbeads found in personal care products, plastic pellets and plastic fibres.
- **Secondary Microplastics**: They are formed from the breakdown of larger plastics such as water bottles.
  - This breakdown is caused by exposure to environmental factors, mainly the sun's radiation and ocean waves.

## What does the Study Say?

- The scientists **analysed blood samples from 22 anonymous donors, all healthy adults and found plastic particles in 17.**
  - Half the samples contained PET plastic, which is commonly used in drinks bottles.
  - A third contained polystyrene, used for packaging food and other products.
  - A quarter of the blood samples contained polyethylene, from which plastic carrier bags are made.
- This is the **first indication that we have polymer particles in blood.**
  - Previous work had shown that microplastics were 10 times higher in the faeces of babies compared with adults and that babies fed with plastic bottles are swallowing millions of microplastic particles a day.
- The particles can **travel around the body and may lodge in organs**. The impact on health is as yet unknown.
- The results **support the hypothesis that human exposure to plastic particles results in the absorption of particles into the bloodstream, but further study is needed to assess the impacts** of exposure and whether it is a public health risk.

## What are the Concerns related to Microplastics?

- Microplastics can latch on to the outer membranes of red blood cells and **may limit their ability to transport oxygen.**
- The particles have also been found in the **placentas of pregnant women, and in pregnant rats they pass rapidly through the lungs** into the hearts, brains and other organs of the fetuses.
- Microplastics **cause damage to human cells in the laboratory** and air pollution particles are already known to enter the body and cause millions of early deaths a year.



- In general, babies and young children are more vulnerable to chemical and particle exposure.

## What are the Initiatives to Tackle Microplastics?

- **Elimination of Single Use Plastic:** In 2019, the Prime Minister of India pledged to [eliminate all single-use plastic in the country by 2022](#), with an immediate ban in urban Delhi.
- **Important Rules:** [Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016](#) state that every local body has to be responsible for setting up infrastructure for segregation, collection, processing, and disposal of plastic waste.
  - Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules 2018 introduced the concept of [Extended Producer Responsibility \(EPR\)](#).
- **Un-Plastic Collective:** [Un-Plastic Collective \(UPC\)](#) is a voluntary initiative launched by the UNEP-India, Confederation of Indian Industry and WWF-India.
  - The Collective seeks to minimise externalities of plastics on the ecological and social health of our planet.
- **Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML):** The GPML was launched at the [Earth Summit](#) in 2012 in response to a request set out in the Manila Declaration.
- **London Convention, 1972:** The [1972 Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping Wastes and Other Matter](#) was signed to control all sources of marine pollution and prevent pollution of the sea through regulation of dumping into the sea of waste materials.
- **Plastic Pacts:** The [Plastics Pacts](#) are business-led initiatives to transform the plastics packaging value chain for all formats and products.

## Way Forward

- **Combination of Degradation Mechanisms:** A combination of photo and biological degradation systems for effective and complete decomposition of microplastics has been suggested.
- **International Collaboration:** Plastic waste around the world demands a new global treaty modelled on the [Montreal Protocol](#) and the [Paris Agreement](#).
  - The global problem of plastics will only be solved if all countries and decision-making policies decide to monitor microplastics along their respective coasts and also implement orders to use only biodegradable plastics.
- **Reducing Plastic Consumption:** Plastic consumption can be reduced **to ensure the reduction in the level of microplastic pollution.**
  - Government, industry and the community shall work together to significantly reduce the amount of litter seen along beaches and in oceans.
  - Personal initiatives such as **zero-waste trips, shunning disposable and using own utensils, quitting the use of bottled water and giving up plastic packaging are some of the steps** that every citizen can take to curb microplastic pollution.
- **Economic Support for Recycling Projects:** The economical support including tax rebates, R&D funds, technology incubation, [Public-Private Partnerships](#) and support to projects that recycle single-use items and turn waste into a resource can be enforced.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

**Q. Why is there a great concern about the 'microbeads' that are released into environment? (2019)**

- (a) They are considered harmful to marine ecosystems.

- (b) They are considered to cause skin cancer in children.
- (c) They are small enough to be absorbed by crop plants in irrigated fields.
- (d) They are often found to be used as food adulterants.

**Ans: (a)**

[Source: TH](#)

---

## Malabar Rebellion

**For Prelims:** Malabar Rebellion, Variamkunnaathu Kunhahamad Haji, Mahatma Gandhi, Non-Cooperation Movement, Tipu Sultan.

**For Mains:** Malabar Rebellion, Modern Indian History, Indian National Movement.

### Why in News?

Recently, the **Indian Council for Historical Research (ICHR)** has deferred its decision on a recommendation to remove the [1921 Malabar Rebellion \(Moplah riots\) martyrs](#) from the list of India's freedom fighters.

- The recommendation also included the names [Variamkunnaathu Kunhahamad Haji](#) and **Ali Musliyar**.

### What is the Indian Council of Historical Research?

- **About:**
  - It is an **autonomous organization**, established under Societies Registration Act, 1860 in 1972.
  - It is under the **Ministry of Education**.
- **Objectives:**
  - To bring historians together for exchange of views.
  - To give a national direction to an objective and scientific writing of history.
  - To promote, accelerate and coordinate research in history and ensure its dissemination.
  - The council also provides grants, assistance and fellowships for historical research.

### What is the Background?

- In the **sixteenth century when Portuguese traders arrived on the Malabar coast**, they noted the Mappilas to be a mercantile community concentrated in urban centres and fairly segregated from the local Hindu population.
- However, **with the rise in Portuguese commercial power**, the Mappilas found themselves a competitor and increasingly started moving inland in search of new economic opportunities.
- The **shifting of the Mappilas led to a clash of religious identities** both with the local Hindu population and the Portuguese.

## Who was Moplahs/Mappilas?

- The name Mappilla (lit. son-in-law; anglicized form Moplah) is given to Malayali-speaking Muslims who reside along the entire length of the Malabar Coast of northern Kerala.
- By 1921, the **Moplahs formed the largest and fastest growing community in Malabar**. With a population of one million, 32% of that of Malabar as a whole, the Moplahs were concentrated in South Malabar.

## What was Mapillah Revolt?

- **About:**
  - Fuelled by the **fiery speeches by Muslim religious leaders and anti-british sentiments**, the Mopillahs launched a violent rebellion. Numerous acts of violence were reported and a series of persecutions were committed both against the British and the Hindu landlords.
  - While there are some who call it a **case of religious fanaticism**, there are others who look at it as an instance of struggle against British authority, and then there are others who perceive the Malabar rebellion to be a peasant revolt against unfair practices of the landlords.
  - While **historians continue to debate on the matter**, the broad consensus on the episode notes it to have started off as a struggle against political power, which later took on a communal colour.
    - Most of the **landlords were Namboodiri Brahmins** while most of the tenants were Mapillah Muslims.
    - The **riots led to the mass killings of over 10,000 Hindus, raping of women**, forced religious conversions, destruction or damage of nearly 300 temples, loot and arson of properties worth crores of rupees and burning of houses belonging to the Hindus.
- **Support:**
  - In the initial stages, the movement had the support of [Mahatma Gandhi](#) and other Indian nationalist leaders, but as it turned violent they distanced themselves from it.
- **Collapse:**
  - By the end of 1921, the rebellion was crushed by the British who had raised a special battalion, the Malabar Special Force for the riot.
- **Wagon Tragedy:**
  - In November 1921, **67 Moplah prisoners were killed** when they were being transported in a closed freight wagon from Tirur to the Central Prison in Podanur. They died of suffocation. This event is called the Wagon Tragedy.

## What were the Reasons behind the Mapillah Revolt?

- **Non-Cooperation & Khilafat Movement:**
  - The trigger of the uprising came from the [Non-Cooperation Movement](#) launched by the Congress in 1920 along with the Khilafat agitation.
  - The anti-British sentiment fuelled by these agitations affected the Muslim Mapillahs.
- **New Tenancy Laws:**
  - After the death of [Tipu Sultan in 1799](#) in the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War, Malabar had come under British authority as part of the Madras Presidency.
  - The British had **introduced new tenancy laws** that tremendously favoured the landlords known as Janmis and instituted a far more exploitative system for peasants than before.
  - The new laws **deprived the peasants of all guaranteed rights to the land**, share in the produce they earlier got and in effect rendered them landless.

[Source: TH](#)

---

## Bill to Include Darlong Community of Tripura in ST List

**For Prelims:** Lok Sabha, Kuki tribal, Scheduled Tribes, Padma Shri, NCST, Darlong, Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council, Reangs or Brus, Santhal.

**For Mains:** Status of Scheduled Tribes in India and related constitutional Provisions.

### Why in News?

Recently, [Lok Sabha](#) passed the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2022.

- The bill **sought to include the Darlong community as a sub-tribe of the [Kuki tribal community](#)** in the list of **[Scheduled Tribes \(STs\)](#)**.
- The bill has been passed by amending **Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950**.
- Earlier, it was found that the **[National Commission of STs has been dysfunctional](#)** for the last four years.

### What is the Status of Darlong Community in Tripura?

- Darlong is a **tribal community of Tripura**, which has a population of 11,000.
- The **community has a high prevalence of education and cultural activities** and members of the community **serve in senior positions in the local administration**.
  - For example, a **tribal musicologist and Rosem (a tribal instrument) maestro Thanga Darlong** was awarded the prestigious **[Padma Shri](#)** a few years ago for his contributions to culture.

### What is the Status of Tribal Population in Tripura?

- Tripura has **20 tribal communities**, people of which live in the **[Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council](#)** formed on **18<sup>th</sup> January 1982**.
- The tribal council **covers nearly 70% of the total area of Tripura** and houses roughly 30% of the state's population.
- A large majority of them **still depend on [slash and burn cultivation](#)** and traditional livelihood for sustenance.
- The **tribal communities of the state include** Tripura/Tripuri, **[Riang](#)**, Jamatia, Noatia, Uchai, Chakma, Mog, Lushai, Kuki, Halam, Munda, Kaur, Orang, **[Santal](#)**, Bhil, Bhutia, Chaimal, Garo, Khasia, and Lepcha.
  - The **Halam community has several small tribal clans** within it. Many of these are linguistically endangered groups like Bongcher, Karbongs etc.

### What are the Recent Steps taken for the Betterment of the Tribal Population?

- Recently the government came up with a **plan to develop broadband and 4G connectivity in [aspirational districts](#)**.
  - Funds for it will be allocated under the **Scheduled Tribes component**.
- On the issue of healthcare of tribals, recently the **[Indian Council of Medical Research \(ICMR\)](#)** was allocated funds for research into the field.

### What is the Status of Scheduled Tribes in India?

- **About:**

- As per **Census-1931, Schedule tribes are termed as "backward tribes"** living in the **"Excluded" and "Partially Excluded" areas**. The **Government of India Act of 1935** called for the first time for representatives of "backward tribes" in provincial assemblies.
  - The Constitution **does not define the criteria for recognition of Scheduled Tribes** and hence the definition contained in 1931 Census was used in the initial years after independence.
  - However, **Article 366(25) of the Constitution only provides process to define Scheduled Tribes**: "Scheduled Tribes means such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this Constitution."
    - **342(1)**: The President may with respect to any State or Union Territory, and where it is a State, after consultation with the Governor, by a public notification, specify the tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups within tribes or tribal communities as Scheduled Tribe in relation to that State or Union Territory.
  - There are **over 705 tribes which have been notified**. The largest number of tribal communities are found in Odisha.
  - The **Fifth Schedule** lays out provision for Administration and Control of Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes in states other than **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram**.
  - The **Sixth Schedule deals with the administration of the tribal areas** in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.
- **Legal Provisions:**
- **Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 against Untouchability.**
  - [Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes \(Prevention of Atrocities\) Act, 1989](#)
  - [Provisions of the Panchayats \(Extension to the Scheduled Areas\) Act, 1996](#)
  - [Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers \(Recognition of Forest Rights\) Act, 2006](#)

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

**Q. The provisions in Fifth Schedule and Sixth Schedule in the Constitution of India are made in order to (2015)**

- (a) protect the interests of Scheduled Tribes
- (b) determine the boundaries between States
- (c) determine the powers, authority and responsibilities of Panchayats
- (d) protect the interests of all the border States

**Ans: (a)**

**Q. With reference to 'Changpa' community of India, consider the following statements: (2014)**

1. They live mainly in the State of Uttarakhand.
2. They rear the Pashmina goats that yield a fine wool.
3. They are kept in the category of Scheduled Tribes.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Ans: (b)**

**Exp:**

- The Changpa are semi-nomadic community which inhabit Changthang (which is spread across Ladakh and Tibet Autonomous Region) or other regions of Ladakh. Hence, statement 1 is not

correct.

- They herd Changthangi (Pashmina) goats and are among the few suppliers of authentic cashmere wool of the finest quality. Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- As of 2001, the Changpa were classified as a Scheduled Tribe under the Indian Government's reservation program of affirmative action. Hence, statement 3 is correct.

[Source: TH](#)

---

## Shrinkflation

### Why in News?

Due to rising costs many companies are practising “**Shrinkflation**”.

### What is Shrinkflation?

- Shrinkflation is the practice of **reducing the size of a product while maintaining its sticker price**.
  - It is a **form of hidden inflation**.
- Raising the price per given amount is a strategy employed by companies, mainly in the food and beverage industries, **to stealthily boost profit margins or maintain them in the face of rising input costs**.
- Shrinkflation is also **referred to as package downsizing in business and academic research**.
- A less common usage of this term may **refer to a macroeconomic situation where the economy is contracting while also experiencing a rising price level**.
  - **Macroeconomics** is the study of the behaviour of a national or regional economy as a whole.
  - It is concerned with understanding economy-wide events such as the total amount of goods and services produced, the level of unemployment, and the general behaviour of prices.
- Nowadays, shrinkflation is a **common practice among producers**. The number of products that **undergo downsizing increases every year**.
  - Large **producers in the European and North American markets rely on this strategy** to maintain the competitive prices of their products without significantly reducing their profits.
- At the same time, **shrinkflation can frequently lead to customer frustration and deteriorating consumer sentiment** regarding the producer's brand.

2 liters



\$5

1.75 liters



\$5

*Shrinkflation*



### What are the Major Causes of Shrinkflation?

- **Higher Production Costs:** Rising production costs are generally the primary cause of shrinkflation.
  - Increases in the cost of ingredients or raw materials, energy commodities, and labour increase production costs and subsequently diminish producers' profit margins.
  - Reducing the products' weight, volume, or quantity while keeping the same retail price tag can **improve the producer's profit margin**.
  - At the same time, **the average consumer will not notice a small reduction** in quantity. Thus, sales volume will not be affected.
- **Intense Market Competition:** Fierce competition in the marketplace may also cause shrinkflation.
  - The food and beverage industry is generally an extremely competitive one, as consumers are able to access a variety of available substitutes.
  - Therefore, **producers look for options that will enable them to keep the favour of their customers** and maintain their profit margins at the same time.

### UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

**Q. With reference to inflation in India, which of the following statements is correct? (2015)**

- (a) Controlling the inflation in India is the responsibility of the Government of India only
- (b) The Reserve Bank of India has no role in controlling the inflation
- (c) Decreased money circulation helps in controlling the inflation
- (d) Increased money circulation helps in controlling the inflation

**Ans: (c)**

**Exp:**

- Controlling inflation is the responsibility of both the GoI and the RBI.
- Decreased money supply helps in controlling inflation as people have less money to spend.
- Increased money supply does not help in controlling the inflation, rather it increases inflation.

[Source: WEF](#)

---

## Legal Aid Clinic for Women

### Why in News?

Recently, the [National Commission for Women \(NCW\)](#) in collaboration with Delhi State Legal Services Authority (DSLISA) has launched a **Legal Aid Clinic**.

### What is the Legal Aid Clinic?

- It is a single-window **facility for resolving grievances of women** by offering them **free legal assistance**.
- NCW is also planning to set up similar legal services clinics in other State Commissions for Women.
- Under the new legal aid clinic, counselling will be provided for walk-in complainants, women in distress will be given legal assistance, advice and information on various schemes of the [National Legal Services Authority \(NALSA\)](#)/ DSLISA, assistance in mahila jansunwai, free legal aid, hearings in matrimonial cases and other complaints registered with the Commission will be provided among other services.

### What is the National Commission for Women?

- **About:**
  - It was set up as **a statutory body in January 1992 under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990**.
  - Its **mission** is to strive towards enabling women to achieve equality and equal participation in all spheres of life by securing her due rights and entitlements through suitable policy formulation, legislative measures, etc.
- **Functions:**
  - Review the [constitutional and legal safeguards for women](#).
  - Recommend remedial legislative measures.
  - Facilitate redressal of grievances.
  - Advise the Government on all policy matters affecting women.

[Source: PIB](#)

---

## Desert Fox and Mange Disease

### Why in News

Recently a few **Desert Foxes were spotted** in the scrub forests of **Rajasthan's Jaisalmer district**, suffering from a loss of fur due to the **Mange Skin Disease**.



- There were 8,331 foxes — both Indian and desert foxes — in the state according to the 2019 wildlife census of Rajasthan.

## What is a Desert Fox?

- **Common Name:** White-footed fox



- **Scientific Name:** *Vulpes vulpes pusilla*

- **About:**

- Desert fox is the **third sub-species of red fox in India.**
  - Other two subspecies are: the Tibetan Red Fox and the Kashmir Red Fox.
- They can be differentiated from other fox species by their **white tail-tip**. Beady eyes and a small snout give them an endearing, almost adorable look.
- Its range does not overlap with that of other red fox sub-species.

- **Habitation:**

- Desert fox **inhabits the dry and semi-arid regions of western and north-western India.**
- Desert foxes occupy less than half of their potential habitats in India.
- Desert foxes can be found wandering around sand dunes and semi-dried river beds, where they build their dens.
- They are omnivores consuming almost everything from berries and plants to desert rodents, insects, spiders, small birds, and lizards, like the spiny tail.

- **Threat:**

- They are threatened by habitat loss, road-related mortality and negative interactions with free-ranging/domestic dogs.

- **Protection Status:**

- [IUCN Red List](#): Least Concern
- [CITES listing](#): Appendix II
- India's [Wildlife \(Protection\) Act](#): Schedule II

## What is Mange?

- Mange is **a skin disease of animals caused by mite infestations**, characterized by inflammation, itching, thickening of the skin, and hair loss.
- The **most severe form of mange is caused by varieties of the mite *Sarcoptes scabiei***, which also causes human scabies.
- Some form of mange is **known in all domestic animals, although many varieties of mange mites infest only one species.**
- They are transmitted between **animals by direct contact and by objects that have been in contact** with infested animals.
- Most forms of mange are **treatable.**
- When the infected animal scratches and the skin breaks, it lays eggs and multiplies. The affected

area becomes scabbed and no hair grows there.

[Source: DTE](#)

---

## Earth Hour

### Why in News?

Every year on 26<sup>th</sup> March, people around the planet take an hour off electricity by switching off their lights at homes and offices as a show of support for conservation of energy during the [World Earth Hour](#).

- It has to be noted here that the Earth Hour is different from [Earth Day \(22<sup>nd</sup> April\)](#).



### What is the World Wildlife Fund for Nature?

- **About:**

- It is the **world's leading conservation organisation** and works in more than 100 countries.

- **Established:**

- It was **established in 1961** and is headquartered at Gland, Switzerland

- **Mission:**

- **To conserve nature and reduce the most pressing threats** to the diversity of life on Earth.

- **Other Initiatives of WWF:**

- [TX2 Goal](#)
- [TRAFFIC](#)
- [Living Planet Report](#)

## What is an Earth Hour?

### ▪ About:

- Earth Hour is the [World Wildlife Fund for Nature \(WWF\)](#)'s annual initiative that began in 2007.
- It is held every year on **the last Saturday of March**.
- It encourages people from more than 180 countries to **switch off the lights from 8.30 pm to 9.30 pm as per their local time**.
- The idea is to **refrain from the use of non-essential lighting** to save energy in a symbolic call for environmental protection.

### ▪ 2022 Theme:

- Shape Our Future

## What are the Objectives and Significance?

- Earth Hour aims to **increase awareness and spark global conversations on protecting nature, tackling the [climate crisis](#)**, and working together to shape a brighter future for humans.
- It calls for the world to **unite in a moment of solidarity for people and the planet**.
- The practice has **become a catalyst for dramatic change and collective action** towards protecting the environment.
- The symbolic lights-out Earth Hour has become **the world's largest grassroots movement to raise awareness about climate change and [energy conservation](#)** and to assure a sustainable, brighter future.

## What are the Major Indian Initiatives for Energy Conservation?

- **[Perform Achieve and Trade Scheme \(PAT\)](#)**: It is a market based mechanism to enhance the cost effectiveness in improving the Energy Efficiency in Energy Intensive industries through certification of energy saving which can be traded.
- **[Standards and Labeling](#)**: The scheme was launched in 2006 and is currently invoked for equipment/appliances.
- **[Energy Conservation Building Code \(ECBC\)](#)**: It was developed for new commercial buildings in 2007.
- **Demand Side Management**: It is the selection, planning, and implementation of measures intended to have an influence on the demand or customer-side of the electric metre.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

### Q. Consider the following statements regarding 'Earth Hour': (2014)

1. It is an initiative of UNEP and UNESCO.
2. It is a movement in which the participants switch off the lights for one hour on a certain day every year.
3. It is a movement to raise the awareness about the climate change and the need to save the planet.

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: HT**

---

PDF Referenece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/news-analysis/30-03-2022/print>