



Electoral Bonds

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The lowdown on a vexed issue

What are electoral bonds?

Sold four times a year (in January, April, July and October), electoral bonds allow political parties to accept money from donors whose identities are kept anonymous. They are sold in multiples of ₹1,000, ₹10,000, ₹1 lakh, ₹10 lakh, and ₹1 crore. The scheme was first floated in 2017 and implemented in 2018

Who can sell them?

SBI is the sole authorised bank to sell and redeem the bonds. Customers of other banks can also purchase the bonds via different payment channels provided to them. However, a political party can only redeem the bond from one of the 29 authorized branches of the bank.

Which parties can receive donations via electoral bonds?

A political party must also have at least 1% vote share in most recent general elections or assembly elections to receive donations via electoral bonds.

What is the controversy around them?

The scheme has been challenged on the grounds that it lacks transparency. Those opposed to it have also asserted that a large chunk of the donations have gone to the BJP, the ruling party. In 2019-20, the BJP received over 75% of the electoral bonds, according to the Election Commission data. Critics have also argued that since the bonds are sold through a government-owned bank there is a possibility that the party in power can find out who is funding their political rivals

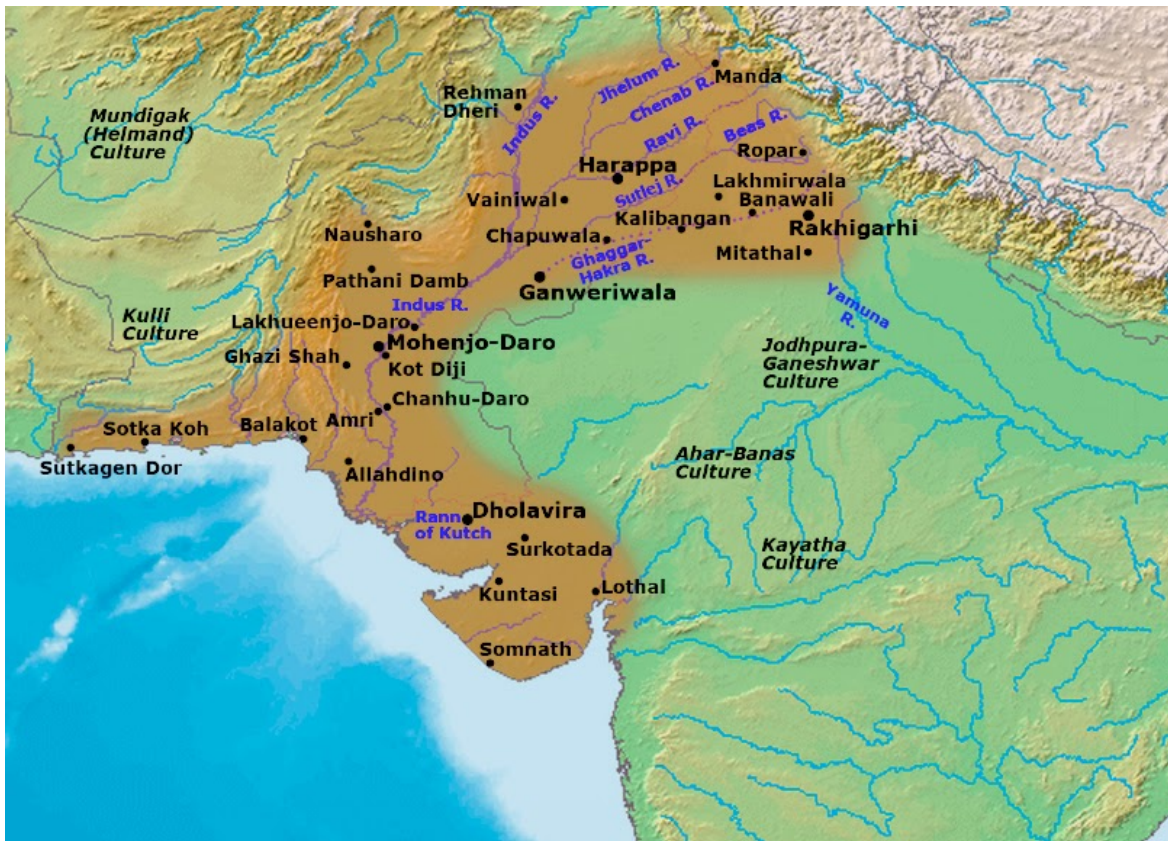
Lothal: World's Earliest Known Dock

For Prelims: Indus Valley Civilization, Significance of World Heritage, ASI.

For Mains: Lothal, Mohenjo Daro, UNESCO's World Heritage Site.

Why in News?

Recently, the Prime Minister has reviewed the construction of the **National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) site** at Gujarat's Lothal.



What is the National Maritime Heritage Complex?

- The project began in March 2022, and is being developed at a cost of Rs 3,500 crore.
- It will have several innovative features such as **Lothal mini-recreation, which will recreate Harappan architecture and lifestyle** through immersive technology.
- It has four theme parks – Memorial theme park, Maritime and Navy theme park, Climate theme park, and Adventure and Amusement theme park.
- It will act as **a center for learning and understanding India’s maritime history.**
- The NMHC is being developed with the aim of **displaying India’s diverse maritime heritage and also help Lothal emerge as a world-class international tourist destination.**

Where is Lothal?

- **About:**
 - [Lothal](#) was one of the **southernmost sites of the [Indus Valley civilization \(IVC\)](#)**, located in the Bhāl region of what is now the state of Gujarat.
 - The port city is believed to have been built in **2,200 BC**.
 - Lothal was a thriving trade center in ancient times, with its trade of **beads, gems and ornaments reaching West Asia and Africa**.
 - The meaning of Lothal (a combination of Loth and (s) thal) in Gujarati is **“the mound of the dead**.
 - Incidentally, the name of the city of [Mohenjo-daro](#) (**also part of the Indus Valley Civilisation, now in Pakistan**) means the same in Sindhi.
 - Lothal had the **world’s earliest known dock**, which connected the city to an ancient course of the Sabarmati River on the trade route between **Harappan cities in Sindh and the peninsula of Saurashtra**.
- **Discovery:**
 - Indian archaeologists started the search for cities of the Harappan Civilisation post-1947 in Gujarat’s Saurashtra.
 - Archaeologist SR Rao led the team which discovered **a number of Harappan sites at the time, including the port city of Lothal**.
 - Excavation work was carried out in Lothal between **February 1955 and May**

1960.

▪ **Identification of Dockyard:**

- The National Institute of Oceanography in Goa discovered **marine microfossils and salt, gypsum crystals at the site**, indicating that sea water once filled the structure and it was definitely a dockyard.
- In later excavations, ASI unearthed **a mound, a township, a marketplace, and the dock**.
- Adjacent to the excavated areas stands the archaeological site museum, where some of the **most prominent collections of Indus-era antiquities in India are displayed**.

What is the Heritage Value of Lothal?

- Lothal was nominated in April 2014 as a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#), and its application is pending on the tentative list of UNESCO.
- The excavated site of Lothal is the **only port-town of the Indus Valley Civilisation**.
- Its heritage value is comparable to other ancient port-towns around the world including,
 - Xel Ha (Peru)
 - Ostia (Port of Rome) and Carthage (Port of Tunis) in Italy
 - Hepu in China
 - Canopus in Egypt
 - Gabel (Byblos of the Phoenicians)
 - Jaffa in Israel
 - Ur in Mesopotamia
 - Hoi An in Vietnam
- In the region, it can be compared with other Indus port towns of **Balakot (Pakistan), Khirasa (in Gujarat's Kutch) and Kuntasi (in Rajkot)**.

What are the Important Sites of IVC?

- **Harappa in present Pakistan** - granaries with big platform, stone symbol of lingam and yoni, mother goddess figure, wheat and barley in wooden mortar, dice, copper scale and mirror.
- **Mohenjo-daro in present Pakistan** - bronze dancing girl, the sculpture of bearded priest, the great bath, the great granary.
- **Dholavira in Gujarat** - giant water reservoir, unique water harnessing system, stadium, dams and embankments, inscription comprising 10 large sized signs like an advertisement board.
- **Ropar in Punjab** - dog buried with human oval pit burials.
- **Balathal and Kalibangan in Rajasthan** - bangle factory, toy carts, bones of camel, decorated bricks, citadel and lower town.
- **Banawali in Haryana** - toy plough, barley grains, oval-shaped settlement, the only city with radial streets.
- **Alamgirpur in Uttar Pradesh** - impression of a cloth on a trough.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q1. Which one of the following ancient towns is wellknown for its elaborate system of water harvesting and management by building a series of dams and channelizing water into connected reservoirs? (2021)

- (a) Dholavira
- (b) Kalibangan
- (c) Rakhigarhi
- (d) Ropar

Ans: (a)

Exp:

- The city of Dholavira was located on Khadir Beyt in the Rann of Kutch, where there was fresh water and fertile soil. Unlike some of the other Harappan cities, which were divided into two parts, Dholavira was divided into three parts, and each part was surrounded with massive stone walls, with entrances through gateways.
- There was also a large open area in the settlement, where public ceremonies could be held. Other finds include large letters of the Harappan script that were carved out of white stone and perhaps inlaid in wood. This is a unique find as generally Harappan writing has been found on small objects such as seals.
- Being the 6th largest of more than 1,000 Harappan sites discovered so far, and occupied for over 1,500 years, Dholavira not only witnesses the entire trajectory of the rise and fall of this early civilization of humankind, but also demonstrates its multifaceted achievements in terms of **urban planning, construction techniques, water management, social governance and development, art, manufacturing, trading, and belief system.**
- With extremely rich artefacts, the well-preserved urban settlement of Dholavira depicts a vivid picture of a regional centre with its distinct characteristics, that also contributes significantly to the existing knowledge of Harappan Civilization as a whole.
- **Therefore, option (a) is the correct answer.**

Q2. Which of the following characterizes/characterize the people of Indus Civilization? (2013)

1. They possessed great palaces and temples.
2. They worshipped both male and female deities.
3. They employed horse-drawn chariots in warfare.

Select the correct statement/statements using the codes given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 only
(c) 1, 2 and 3
(d) None of the statements given above is correct

Ans: (b)

Q3. Which one of the following is not a Harappan site? (2019)

- (a) Chanhudaro
(b) Kot Diji
(c) Sohgaora
(d) Desalpur

Ans: (c)

Exp:

- **Kot Diji (now in the Sindh region of Pakistan) was an early Harappan site on the east bank of the Indus river** and was excavated between 1955 and 1957.
- **Chanhudaro** in Pakistan and **Desalpur** in Gujarat **are mature Harappan sites.**
- **Sohgaora in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh,** is known for Sohgaora copper plate inscription which is considered to be from **the Mauryan period. It is not a Harappan site.**
- **Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q. To what extent has the urban planning and the culture of the Indus Valley Civilization provided inputs to the present day urbanization? Discuss. **(2014)**

[Source: IE](#)

Fresh Hindi Imposition Row

For Prelims: Constitutional provisions related to promotion of the Hindi, Language commission, Official Languages Act 1963.

For Mains: Use of Hindi as official/National Language, 3 language formula, Anti-Hindi agitation, etc.

Why in News?

The 11th volume of the Report of the Official Language Committee submitted to the President of India, has triggered angry reactions from some of the Southern states (they view the report as an attempt to impose Hindi on them).

What are the Recommendations of the Panel?

- Hindi should be **the medium of instruction in IITs, IIMs, and central universities** in the Hindi-speaking states.
- The language used for communication in the administration should be Hindi, and efforts should be made to teach the curriculum in Hindi.
- High Courts in other states, where proceedings are recorded in English or a regional language can make available translations in Hindi, because verdicts of High Court of other states are often cited in judgments.
 - Lower courts in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, and Rajasthan already use Hindi.
- The use of Hindi, by the officers and other employees in the central government, in Hindi-speaking states would **reflect in their Annual Performance Assessment Report (APAR)**.
- It is the Committee's responsibility and role to see that the Hindi language is promoted in official communication.
- There are specific proposals to make the language in official letters and invitations simpler.
 - "There should be a deliberate attempt to reduce the usage of the English language in official communication and to increase the usage of Hindi".
 - "Knowledge of Hindi would be compulsory in a number of government jobs,".

Are these Recommendations Intended for Every State Government, its Institutions, and Departments?

- **States like Tamil Nadu and Kerala are exempt as per The Official Languages Act, 1963** and the Rules and Regulations (of the Act), 1976.
- **The law is implemented only in 'A' category states, in which the official language is Hindi.**
 - According to the Rules, **region 'A' includes** the states of Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh, and the Union Territories of Delhi and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
 - **Region 'B'** includes Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Punjab, and the Union Territories of Chandigarh, Daman and Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

- Other states, where the **use of Hindi is less than 65%, are listed under region 'C'**.
- The **Committee** has suggested that efforts should be made to use **Hindi "100%" in the 'A' states**.
 - The medium of instruction in IITs, central universities, and Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs) in the 'A' states should be Hindi, while the regional language should be used in other states.
- **As per Committee, Use of Hindi in Government Departments:**
 - The use of Hindi in Ministries like Defence and Home are 100% but the Education Ministry has not yet come to that level.
 - The **Committee had certain parameters to assess the usage of language**.
 - Many central universities including Delhi University, Jamia Millia Islamia, BHU, and AMU, the usage is just 25-35% when it should have been 100%.

What is Committee of Parliament on Official Language?

- The Committee of Parliament on Official Language was **set up in 1976 under Section 4 of The Official Languages Act, 1963**.
- With the active promotion of Hindi being mandated by Article 351 of the Constitution, the Official Language Committee was set up to review and promote the use of Hindi in official communications.
- The **first Report** of the Committee was submitted in **1987**.
- The Committee is constituted & chaired by the union home minister, and has, in accordance with the provisions of the 1963 Act, 30 members (20 MPs from Lok Sabha and 10 MPs from Rajya Sabha).
- Unlike the **other Parliamentary panels submit its report to Parliament, this panel submits its report to the President**, who "shall [then] cause the report to be laid before each House of Parliament, and sent to all the State Governments".

What are the Government's Effort to Promote Hindi and Other Regional Language?

- **Three-Language Formula (Kothari Commission 1968)**
 - **First language:** It will be the **mother tongue** or regional language.
 - **Second language:** In **Hindi** speaking states, it will be other modern Indian languages or English. In non-Hindi speaking states, it will be Hindi or English.
 - **Third Language:** In Hindi speaking states, it will be **English or a modern Indian language**. In the non-Hindi speaking state, it will be **English or a modern Indian language**.
- The new **National Education Policy (NEP) in 2020** too had attempts to "promote Hindi, Sanskrit" and regional languages. The **NEP says that mother tongue or the regional language would be the "preferred" mode of instruction until Class 5, and possibly Class 8**.
 - **NEP 2020 it was decided to push for the three-language formula, to promote multilingualism and national unity.**

What is Position of Hindi in India with respect to other Regional Languages?

- **As per, 2011 Linguistic census:** there are 121 mother tongues in India.
 - 52.8 crores individuals or 43.6% population declared Hindi as its mother tongue and 11% of the population reported Hindi as their second language.
 - So, 55% of the population knows Hindi as either as mother tongue or as their second language.
 - Bengali 9.72 crore individual and 8% population, as 2nd most spoken language in India.
 - The share of the languages like Bengali, Malayalam and Urdu has declined but Hindi and Punjabi speakers have increased.
 - Between 1971 to 2011 the speakers of Hindi multiplied by the 2.6 times from 20.2 Crore to 52.8 crores.

What is the Constitutional Status of Hindi?

- **Schedule 8** of the Indian Constitution has 22 Official Languages, **including Hindi as well.**
- **Article 351** states that, it is the duty of the Union to **encourage the spread of the Hindi language** to make it lingua franca (a shared language of communication used by people who are speakers of different languages) in India without interfering with its genius, style and expressions.
- **Article 348 (2)** provides that the Governor of the State may, with the previous consent of the President, authorize the use of the **Hindi language** or any other language used for **any official purpose of the State, in the proceedings of the High Court** having its principal seat in that State provided that **decrees, judgments or orders passed by such High Courts shall be in English.**
- As per **Article 343(1)** of the Constitution of India, **Hindi in Devanagari script shall be the official language of the Union.**
- The **Official Language Act, 1963** provides under **Section 7** that the use of Hindi or official language of a State in addition to the English language may be authorized, with the consent of the President of India, by the Governor of the State for the purpose of judgments, decrees etc. made by the High Court for that State.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. 21st February is declared to be the International Mother Language Day by UNICEF.
2. The demand that Bangla has to be one of the national languages was raised in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- The Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, in its session at Karachi on 23rd February, 1948 proposed that the members would have to speak either in Urdu or in English at the Assembly. Dhirendranath Datta, a member from the East Pakistan Congress Party, moved an amendment motion to include Bangla as one of the languages of the Constituent Assembly. In the same year, the Government of the Dominion of Pakistan ordained Urdu as the sole national language, sparking extensive protests among the Bengali speaking majority of East Bengal.
- The students of the University of Dhaka and other political activists defied the law and organised a protest on 21st February, 1952. After years of conflict, the government relented and granted official status to the Bengali language in 1956. In Bangladesh, 21 February is observed as Language Movement Day. Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- International Mother Language Day is observed on 21st February every year. It was declared by UNESCO and not by UNICEF. It is in tribute to the Language Movement and the ethnolinguistic rights of people around the world. Hence, statement 1 is not correct. Therefore, option B is the correct answer.

Source: IE

Right to Privacy

For Prelims: Data Protection, Personal Data, Privacy, Personal Data Protection Bill, Data Localisation, Other Related Laws

For Mains: Right to privacy

Why in News?

The Supreme Court rejects WhatsApp-Meta pleas against **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** probe into **privacy policy of 2021**.

- Both WhatsApp and Meta have argued that the anti-trust watchdog cannot investigate the privacy policy as it has been kept in abeyance until the introduction of the **revised [data protection bill](#)**.
- The CCI is an independent authority to consider any violation of the provisions of the Competition Act of 2002 and cannot be dissuaded from investigation and alleged violation of Competition Act, 2002.

What are Issues with the Privacy Policy of WhatsApp?

- The information that **WhatsApp automatically collects and will be sharing with Facebook** includes the mobile phone number, user activity, and other basic information of the WhatsApp account.
 - WhatsApp's privacy policy to share commercial user data with Facebook establishes that it is the **owner of the data rather than an intermediary**.
- The policy essentially **takes away the choice** users had until now to not share their data with other Facebook-owned and third-party apps.
- The WhatsApp policy contradicts the recommendations of the **Srikrishna Committee report**, which forms the basis of the Data Protection Bill 2019. For Example:
 - The principle of Data Localisation, which aims to put curbs on the transfer of personal data outside the country, may come in conflict with WhatsApp's privacy policy.

What was the Personal Data Protection Bill?

- The Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019 was introduced in **[Lok Sabha](#)** by the Minister of Electronics and Information Technology, on December 11, 2019.
- Commonly referred to as the "Privacy Bill", it intended to protect individual rights by regulating the collection, movement, and processing of data that is personal, or which can identify the individual.
- The govt withdrew the bill due to various concerns raised by technology giants and other issues raised by the common people.

What is Right to Privacy?

- Generally understood that privacy is synonymous with the right to be let alone.
- The Supreme Court described privacy and its importance in the landmark decision of **[K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India](#)** in 2017 that - **Right to Privacy is a fundamental** and inalienable right and attaches to the person covering all information about that person and the choices that he/ she makes.
- The right to privacy is protected as an intrinsic part of the right to life and personal liberty under **[Article 21](#)** and as a part of the freedoms guaranteed by Part III of the Constitution.
- **Restrictions (as stated in the Judgement):**
 - The right may be restricted only by state action that passes each of the three tests:

- First, such state action must have a legislative mandate,
- Second, it must be pursuing a legitimate state purpose, and
- Third, it must be proportionate i.e., such state action- both in its nature and extent, must be necessary in a democratic society and the action ought to be the least intrusive of the available alternatives to accomplish the ends.

What are the Government Steps to Protect Privacy?

▪ B N Srikrishna Committee:

- Government appointed a committee of experts on data protection under the chairmanship of Justice B N Srikrishna that submitted its report in July 2018.

▪ Information Technology Act, 2000:

- The IT Act provides for safeguard against certain breaches in relation to data from computer systems. It contains provisions to prevent the unauthorized use of computers, computer systems and data stored therein.

What is the Competition Commission of India (CCI)?

▪ About:

- The CCI was established in March 2009 by the Government of India under the Competition Act, 2002 for the administration, implementation, and enforcement of the Act.
- It primarily pursues three issues of anti-competitive practices in the market:
 - Anti-competitive agreements.
 - Abuse of dominance.
 - Combinations.

▪ Objectives:

- Eliminate practices having adverse effects on competition.
- Promote and sustain competition.
- Protect the interests of consumers.
- Ensure freedom of trade in the markets of India.
- Establish a robust competitive environment through:
 - Proactive engagement with all stakeholders, including consumers, industry, government, and international jurisdictions.

▪ Composition:

- The Commission consists of one Chairperson and six Members who shall be appointed by the Central Government.
 - The commission is a **quasi-judicial body** which gives opinions to statutory authorities and also deals with other cases.
 - The Chairperson and other Members shall be whole-time Members.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. 'Right to Privacy' is protected under which Article of the Constitution of India?

- (a) Article 15
- (b) Article 19
- (c) Article 21
- (d) Article 29

Ans: (c)

[Source: IE](#)

India-Africa Defence Dialogue

For Prelims: India-Africa Defence Dialogue, India Africa Trade

For Mains: India Africa Relations and Agreements, Significance of Africa in Indian Economy

Why in News?

The **2nd India-Africa Defence Dialogue (IADD)** was held on the sidelines of [DefExpo 2022](#) in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

What is India-Africa Defence Dialogue?

- **Theme:**
 - Adopting Strategy for Synergizing and Strengthening Defence and Security Cooperation.
- **Outcome Document:**
 - The Gandhinagar Declaration was adopted as an outcome document of IADD 2022.
 - It proposes to enhance cooperation **in the field of training in all areas of mutual interest by:**
 - increasing training slots and deputation of training teams,
 - empowerment and capability building of the defence forces of Africa,
 - participation in exercises, and
 - providing humanitarian assistance during natural disasters.
 - A volume on India–Africa Defence cooperation was also released.
- **India-Africa Security Fellowship Programme:**
 - IADD also encouraged further research of security issues through offer of fellowships to experts from African countries.
 - This will be done under the India–Africa Security Fellowship Programme.

How has India's Relations with Africa been?

- **Loan and Assistance:**
 - India has extended concessional loans of over **USD 12.3 billion to Africa.**
 - In addition, India has granted USD 700 millions of grant assistance.
- **Projects:**
 - India has completed **197 projects so far, 65 more** are currently under execution, and 81 are at the pre-execution stage.
 - In Gambia, India has constructed the National Assembly building and undertaken projects in water supply, [agriculture and food processing.](#)
 - In Zambia, India is involved in an important [hydro-power project](#), in the erection of pre-fabricated health posts and in the supply of vehicles.
 - **In Mauritius**, recent notable projects include the metro express, the new Supreme Court and social housing.
 - **In Namibia**, a new Centre of Excellence in IT has just become operational.
 - Whereas in South Sudan, India is focusing on training and education.
- **Covid - 19 Assistance:**
 - 32 African countries received 150 tonnes of medical assistance from India.
 - Many of them also utilized [‘Made in India’ vaccines](#) received directly or otherwise from India.
 - At international forums, India has worked together to press for equitable and affordable access to vaccines, **including through a [TRIPS waiver.](#)**
- **Human Resource:**

- India had announced 50,000 scholarships during [India-Africa Forum Summit \(IAFS\)-III in 2015](#), out of which more than 32,000 scholarship slots have already been utilized.
- To provide high quality [virtual education](#) and medical services to partners, the [e-VidyaBharti and e-ArogyaBharti](#) networks were launched in 2019 for [tele-education](#) and [tele-medicine](#) respectively.
- **Help & Relief Assistance:**
 - Operation Sahayata to **assist cyclone** IDAI-hit Mozambique in 2019, [Operation Vanilla](#) to provide relief to flood victims in Madagascar in January 2020, the support to Mauritius in containing **the oil spill** due to the grounding of ship Wakashio.
- **Energy:**
 - [The International Solar Alliance](#) is a notable platform that has promoted the rapid development of [clean energy technologies](#).
 - This has been followed by the '[One Sun One World One Grid](#)' **initiative** to further promote solar and renewable energy.
 - In recent years, clean and green energy have been increasingly prominent in India's development programmes in Africa as also in third country collaborations.
- **Trade and Economics:**
 - India's bilateral trade with Africa has now reached USD 89.5 billion in 2021-22 compared with USD 56 bn the previous year.
 - With cumulative investments at USD 73.9 billion from 1996-2021, India is among the top five investors in Africa.
 - Through the Duty-Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) Scheme that extends duty free access to 98.2% of India's total tariff lines, India has opened its market to African countries.
 - So far 33 Least Developed Countries (LDC) African nations have been entitled to get benefits under this scheme.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following statements: (2016)

The India-Africa Summit

1. held in 2015 was the third such Summit
2. was actually initiated by Jawaharlal Nehru in 1951

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: (a)

Exp:

- India-Africa Summit is a forum to re-initiate and reboot relation between India and African countries.
- It started from 2008 with New Delhi as its first venue. Since then, the summit has been held every three years, alternately in India and Africa. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- The second summit was held in Addis Ababa in 2011. The third summit, scheduled to be held in 2014, was postponed because of the Ebola outbreak, and took place in October, 2015 in New Delhi. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- **Therefore, option (a) is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q. How does India see its place in the economic space of rising natural resource rich Africa? (2014)

Q. Increasing interest of India in Africa has its pro and cons. Critically Examine. (2015)

[Source: PIB](#)

UNSC 1267 Committee

Why in News?

Recently, China placed a “hold” on two joint India-US proposals, to designate Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) top leaders at the United Nations Security Council’s (UNSC) 1267 list of terrorists affiliated to Al Qaeda and ISIS.

What is the UNSC 1267 Committee?

- It was **first set up in 1999** (updated in 2011 and 2015), and strengthened after the September, 2001 attacks.
- It is now known as the Da’esh and Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee.
- It comprises all permanent and non-permanent members of the [United Nations Security Council \(UNSC\)](#).
- The 1267 list of terrorists is a global list, with a UNSC stamp. It is full of Pakistani nationals and residents.
- It is **one of the most important and active UN subsidiary bodies** working on efforts to combat [terrorism](#), particularly in relation to Al Qaeda and the Islamic State group.
- It **discusses UN efforts to limit the movement of terrorists**, especially those related to travel bans, the freezing of assets and arms embargoes for terrorism.

What is the Procedure of Listing?

- Any member state can **submit a proposal for listing an individual, group, or entity**.
- The proposal **must include acts or activities indicating the proposed individual/group/entity** had participated “in the financing, planning, facilitating, preparing, or perpetrating of acts or activities” linked to “ISIL (Da’esh), Al-Qaida or any cell, affiliate, splinter group or derivative thereof”.
- Decisions on listing and de-listing are adopted by **consensus**. The proposal is sent to all the members, and if no member objects within five working days, the proposal is adopted.
 - An “objection” means curtains for the proposal.
- **Any member of the Committee may also put a “technical hold”** on the proposal and ask for more information from the proposing member state. During this time, other members may also place their own holds.
- The matter remains on the “pending” list of the Committee until such time as the member state that has placed the hold decides to turn its decision into an “objection”, or until all those who have placed holds remove them within a timeframe laid down by the Committee.
- Pending issues must be resolved in six months, but the member state that has placed the hold may ask for an additional three months. At the end of this period, if an objection is not placed, the matter is considered approved.

[Source: TH](#)

Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat

Why in News?

Recently, Government of India has announced a month-long programme named the '**Kashi-Tamil Sangamam**' "to strengthen" and "rekindle" the cultural and civilisational bond between Tamil Nadu and Varanasi.

- This programme would be a part of the [Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat](#) initiative.

What is Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat?

- **Launched:** It was launched in **2015 to promote engagement** amongst the people of different States/UTs so as to enhance mutual understanding and bonding between people of diverse cultures, thereby securing stronger unity and integrity of India.
- **Ministry Involved:** It is an initiative of the **Ministry of Education**.
- **Activities Under the Scheme:** Every State and UT in the country would be paired with another State/UT for a time period, during which they would carry out a structured engagement with one another in the spheres of language, literature, cuisine, festivals, cultural events, tourism etc.
- **Objectives:**
 - **Create the Unity in Diversity of our Nation** and to maintain and strengthen the fabric of traditionally existing emotional bonds between the people of our Country.
 - **Promote the Spirit of National Integration** through a deep and structured engagement between all Indian States and Union Territories through a year-long planned engagement between States.
 - **Showcase the rich Heritage and Culture, Customs and Traditions** of either State for enabling people to understand and appreciate the diversity that is India, thus fostering a sense of common identity.
 - **Establish long-term Engagements.**
 - Create an environment which **promotes learning between States** by sharing best practices and experiences.

[Source: TH](#)
