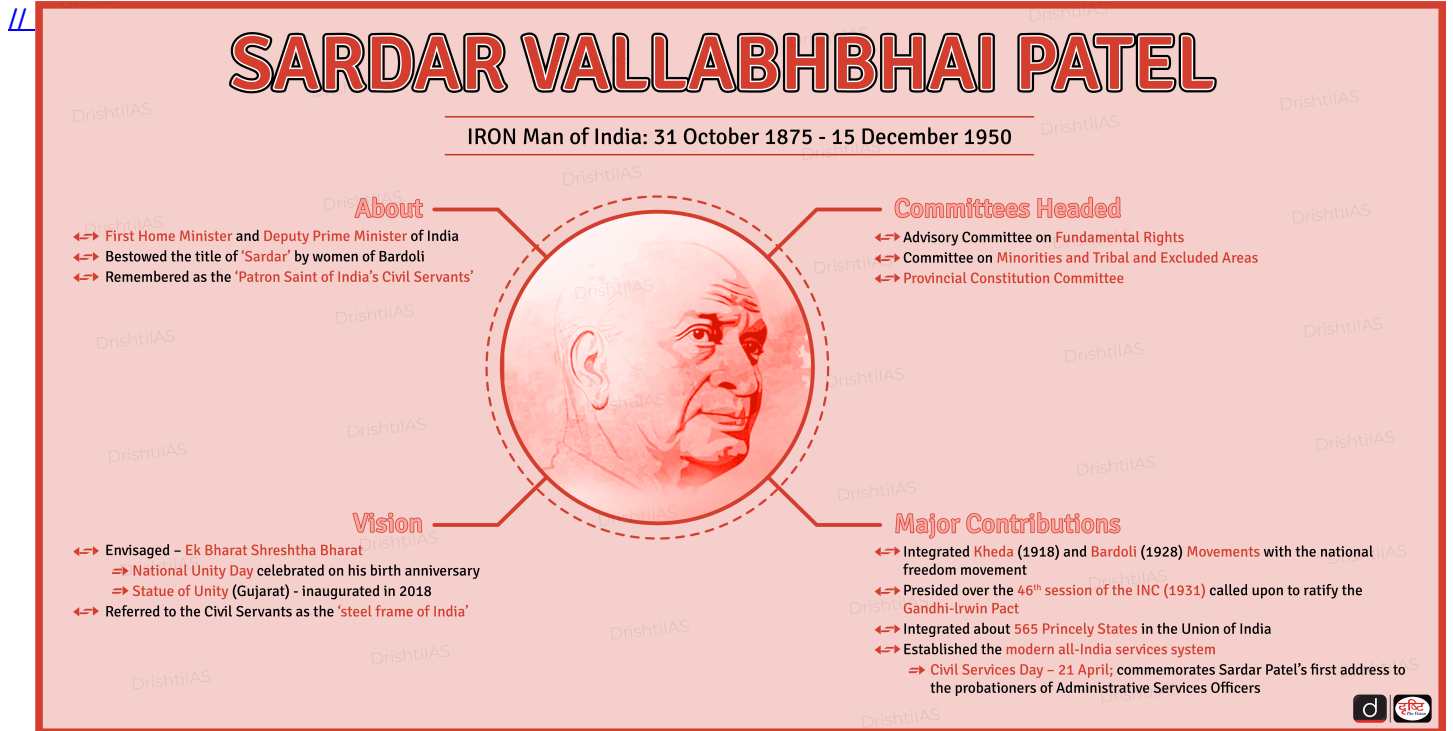




Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel



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Roles and Powers of Governor

For Prelims: Constitutional Provisions Related to Governor

For Mains: Friction Points in Governor-State Relations

Why in News?

Recently, Kerala Governor **warned ministers that the statements of individual ministers** that lower the dignity of the Governor's office **can invite action including withdrawal of pleasure.**

What is Pleasure Doctrine?

▪ **About:**

- The pleasure doctrine is a **concept derived from English common law**, under which the crown can dispense with the services of anyone in its employ at any time.
- In **India, Article 310 of the Constitution** says every person in the defence or civil service of the Union **holds office during the pleasure of the President**, and every member of the **civil service in the States** holds office during the **pleasure of the Governor**.
- However, **Article 311 imposes restrictions on the removal of a civil servant**. It provides for civil servants being given a reasonable opportunity for a hearing on the charges against them.
 - There is also a provision to dispense with the inquiry if it is not practicable to hold one, or if it is not expedient to do so in the interest of national security.
- Under **Article 164, the Chief Minister (CM) is appointed by the Governor**; and the other Ministers are appointed by the Governor on the CM's advice.
 - It adds that **Ministers hold office during the pleasure of the Governor**. In a constitutional scheme in which they are appointed solely on the CM's advice, the 'pleasure' referred to is also taken to mean the right of the CM to dismiss a Minister and not that of the Governor. In short, the Governor of an Indian State cannot remove a Minister on his own.

▪ **Supreme Court's View:**

- **Shamsher Singh & Anr vs State Of Punjab (1974):**
 - In this case, a **seven-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court said that** the President and Governor, custodians of all executive and other powers under various Articles, **shall exercise their formal constitutional powers only upon and in accordance with the advice of their Ministers** save in a few well-known exceptional situations.
- **Nabam Rebia And Etc. vs Deputy Speaker And Ors (2016):**
 - In this case, the **Supreme Court cited the observations of B R Ambedkar:** "The Governor under the Constitution has no function which he can discharge by himself; no functions at all. While he has no functions, he has certain duties to perform, and the House will do well to bear in mind this distinction."
 - SC ruled that **Article 163 of the Constitution does not give the Governor a general discretionary power** to act against or without the advice of his Council of Ministers
- **Mahabir Prasad v. Prafulla Chandra 1969:**
 - The case revolved around the question of the **nature of the governor's pleasure under article 164(1)**.
 - The **governor's pleasure under article 164(1) is subject to Article 164(2)**. Thus, the withdrawal of the governor's pleasure must coincide with the withdrawal of support to the ministry by the assembly.

What are Constitutional Provisions Related to the Governor?

- **Article 153** says that there shall be a Governor for each State. One person can be appointed as Governor for two or more States.
 - A **Governor is appointed by the President** and is a nominee of the Central Government.
- It is stated that the **Governor has a dual role**.
 - He is the constitutional head of the state, bound by the advice of his Council of Ministers (CoM).
 - He functions as a vital link between the Union Government and the State Government.
- **Articles 157 and 158** specify eligibility requirements for the post of governor. A governor must:
 - Be a citizen of India.
 - Be at least 35 years of age.
 - Not be a member of the either house of the parliament or house of the state legislature.
 - Not hold any office of profit.
- Governor has the power to grant **pardons**, reprieves, etc. (Article 161).
- There is a **CoM with the CM at the head to aid and advise the Governor** in the exercise of his functions, except some conditions for discretion. (Article 163).

- The Governor **appoints the Chief Minister and other Ministers** (Article 164).
- Governor assents, withholds assent, or reserves the bill for the consideration of the President passed by the Legislative Assembly (Article 200).
- Governors may promulgate the Ordinances under certain circumstances (Article 213).

What are the Friction Points in Governor-State Relations?

- **Governor is envisaged as an apolitical head** who must act on the advice of the council of ministers. However, the Governor enjoys certain discretionary powers granted under the Constitution. **For example:**
 - **Giving or withholding assent to a Bill** passed by the state legislature,
 - **Determining the time needed** for a party to prove its majority, or **which party must be called first to do so**, generally after a hung verdict in an election.
- There are no **provisions laid down for the manner in which the Governor and the state must engage publicly** when there is a difference of opinion.
- The Governor has a 5-year tenure, he can remain in office only until the pleasure of the President.
 - In 2001, the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution, held that the Governor owes his appointment and his continuation to the Union.
 - There is the apprehension that he is likely to act in accordance with the instructions received from the Union Council of Ministers.
- In the Constitution, **there are no guidelines for exercise of the Governor's powers**, including for appointing a CM or dissolving the Assembly.
- There is **no limit set for how long a Governor can withhold assent to a Bill**.
- The Governor sends a report to the centre which forms the basis of the Union cabinet's recommendations to the President for invoking [Article 356 \(President's Rule\)](#).

What Attempts have been Made to Address Concerns over the Alleged Partisan Role Played by Governors?

- **Changes regarding the Selection of Governors:**
 - The National Commission To Review the Working of the Constitution appointed by the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government in 2000 suggested that the **Governor** of a State should be **appointed by the President**, after consultation with the Chief Minister of that State.
- **Proposal by Sarkaria Commission:**
 - The Sarkaria Commission, set up in 1983 to look into Centre-state relations, proposed that the **Vice President of India and Speaker of Lok Sabha should be consulted by the Prime Minister** in the selection of Governors.
- **Punchhi Committee Proposal:**
 - The Justice Madan Mohan Punchhi Committee, constituted in 2007 on Centre-state relations, **proposed in its report that a committee comprising the Prime Minister, Home Minister, Vice President, Speaker, and the concerned Chief Minister** should choose the Governor.
 - The Punchhi Committee **recommended deleting the "Doctrine of Pleasure" from the Constitution**, but backed the right of the Governor to sanction the prosecution of ministers against the advice of the state government.
 - It also **argued for a provision for impeachment of the Governor by the state legislature**.

Way Forward

- While Governors may differ with the contents of a Bill and may exercise the available constitutional options, **they should not use their powers to stall legislation unpalatable to them**.
- It is time to implement the principle that the M.M. Punchhi Commission, which reviewed Centre-State relations, recommended that **Governors should not be burdened with the role of Chancellors**.
- Governors **seem to have an exaggerated notion of their own roles** under the Constitution. They are **expected to defend the Constitution and may use their powers** to caution elected regimes against violating the Constitution, but this does not mean that they can use the absence

of a time-frame for decision-making and the discretionary space given to them to function as a parallel power centre.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question

Prelims

Q. Which of the following are the discretionary powers given to the Governor of a State? (2014)

1. Sending a report to the President of India for imposing the President's rule
2. Appointing the Ministers
3. Reserving certain bills passed by the State Legislature for consideration of the President of India
4. Making the rules to conduct the business of the State Government

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Ans: (b)

- Article 163 of the Constitution says that the Governor shall exercise his functions with the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers except for functions which require his discretion.
- Under Article 356 of the Indian Constitution, the Governor of a State can **send a report to the President of India recommending imposition of President Rule in the State**. This is a discretionary power being conferred upon Governor. **Hence, 1 is correct.**
- **He appoints the Chief Minister (CM) and other ministers**. They also hold office during his pleasure. The appointment of ministers in State cabinet is not at the discretion of Governor. He only formally approves the appointment. The discretion comes under CM. **Hence, 2 is not correct.**
- Governor can reserve certain bills passed by the State legislature for the consideration of the President. In one case such reservation is obligatory, that is, where the bill passed by the State legislature endangers the position of the State High Court. In addition, the Governor can also reserve the bill if it is against the provisions of the Constitution, opposed to the Directive Principles of State Policy, against the larger interest of the country, of grave national importance, etc. **Hence, 3 is correct.**
- **He makes rules for the more convenient transaction of the business of a State government** and for the allocation among the ministers of the said business. But this power is not under Governor's discretion. He acts on the advice of Council of Ministers. **Hence, 4 is not correct. Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q. Whether the Supreme Court Judgment (July 2018) can settle the political tussle between the Lt.Governor and elected government of Delhi? Examine. **(2018)**

Q. Discuss the essential conditions for exercise of the legislative powers by the Governor. Discuss the legality of re-promulgation of ordinances by the Governor without placing them before the Legislature. **(2022)**

First Amendment to the Indian Constitution

For Prelims: Right to Freedom of Speech, Article 19, National Security, PIL, Supreme Court, Sedition.
For Mains: First Amendment to the Indian Constitution 1951, and its implications.

Why in News?

The [Supreme Court \(SC\)](#) has agreed to examine a [PIL \(Public Interest Litigation\)](#) challenging changes made to the [right to freedom of speech and expression](#) by the first amendment to the Constitution in 1951.

- The court said there is a legal issue, which arises for consideration, and has sought the Center's views.

What are the Petitioner's Arguments?

- **Objectionable Insertions:**
 - **Section 3(1) of the amending Act substituted original Clause (2) of [Article 19](#) with a new Clause (2), which contained two objectionable insertions.**
 - Original Clause (2) of Article 19 was dealing with reasonable restrictions on the freedom of speech and expression guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a).
 - New Clause (2), contained "two objectionable insertions" allowing restrictions also "in the interest of public order" and "in relation to incitement to an offence"
- **Neglects National Security:**
 - The amendment also neglects **national security** by dropping the expression '**tends to overthrow the State**' which raises **grave concern in the context of the dangers posed to the concept of secular democratic republic** by [radicalism, terrorism](#) and religious fundamentalism.
- **These two Insertions Protect Sections:**
 - **124A:** [Sedition](#)
 - **153A:** Promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony.
 - **295A:** Deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs)
 - **505:** Statements conducing to public mischief) of the Indian Penal Code from the vice of unconstitutionality.
- **Section 3 (1)(a)- 3 (2) Void:**
 - The plea urged the **court to declare Section 3 (1)(a) and 3 (2) of the First Amendment "beyond the amending power of Parliament"** and void since the "same damage the basic or essential features of the Constitution and destroy its [basic structure](#)".

What was the Constitution First Amendment Act, 1951?

- **About:**
 - The First Amendment was passed in **1951 by the Provisional Parliament, members of who had just finished drafting the Constitution as part of the Constitutional Assembly.**
 - The First Amendment Act amended **articles 15, 19, 85, 87, 174, 176, 341, 342, 372 and 376.**
 - Provided for the saving of laws providing for the acquisition of estates, etc.

- Added **Ninth Schedule** to protect the land reforms and other laws included in it from the judicial review. After Article 31, Articles 31A and 31B were inserted.
- **Reason for Amendments:**
 - The immediate reason for the amendments were a series of Supreme Court and High Court judgments that had struck down provisions of public safety laws, press related laws and criminal provisions that were deemed to be incompatible with the constitutional right to freedom of speech.
- **Implications:**
 - Under the **provisions of Article 31**, laws placed in the Ninth Schedule **cannot be challenged in a court of law** on the ground that they violated the fundamental rights of citizens.
 - Article 31(A), has vested enormous power to the State with respect to the acquisition of **estates or taking over management of any property or corporation in public interest**. It sought to exclude such acquisitions or from the **scope of judicial review under Articles 14 and 19**.
 - The Ninth Schedule was widely misused. Ninth Schedule contains more than **250 legislations receiving protection under Ninth Schedule** from judicial scrutiny.

Way Forward

- The First Amendment debates, although conducted in a very different political context, **remain relevant today**, as democracy in India is going through difficult or uncertain times.
- The custodial death of Stan Swamy, and the recent revelations around the misuse of the Pegasus surveillance spyware against Opposition leaders, lawyers, and human rights defenders, highlights **why institutional safeguards for freedom of speech must be protected and strengthened**.
- Revisiting the First Amendment debates, 74 years after independence, could be one step in this direction.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question

Q. The Ninth Schedule was introduced in the Constitution of India during the prime ministership of (2019)

- (a) Jawaharlal Nehru
- (b) Lal Bahadur Shastri
- (c) Indira Gandhi
- (d) Morarji Desai

Ans: (a)

[Source: TH](#)

Amendments to the IT Rules, 2021

For Prelims: Amendments to the Information Technology Rules 2021, Article 14, Article 19, Article 21.

For Mains: Amendments to the Information Technology Rules 2021, Government Policies & Interventions.

Why in News?

Recently, government notified amendments to the [Information Technology \(Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code\) Rules 2021](#).

- These are **aimed at making internet-open, safe & trusted and accountable**, for the digital nagriks of the country.

What are the Key Amendments to IT Rules, 2021?

- **New Guidelines for Social Media Intermediaries:**
 - Currently, intermediaries are only required to inform users about not uploading certain categories of harmful/unlawful content. These amendments impose a **legal obligation on intermediaries to take reasonable efforts to prevent users from uploading such content**. The new provision will ensure that the **intermediary's obligation is not a mere formality**.
 - The amendment requires intermediaries to **respect the rights guaranteed to users under the [Articles 14, 19 and 21](#) of the Indian Constitution**, therefore, including a reasonable expectation of due diligence, privacy and transparency.
 - For effective communication of the rules and regulations of the intermediary, it is important that the communication is done in regional Indian languages as well.
- **Amendments to the Rule 3:**
 - The grounds in **subclause 1 of rule 3 (rule 3(1)(b)(ii))** have been rationalized by **removing the words 'defamatory' and 'libellous'**.
 - Whether any content is defamatory or libellous will be determined through judicial review.
 - Some of the content categories in **subclause 1 of rule 3 (rule 3(1)(b))** have been **rephrased to deal particularly with misinformation**, and content that could **incite violence between different religious/caste groups**.
- **Establishment of Grievance Appellate Committee(s):**
 - Grievance Appellate Committee(s) will be established to allow **users to appeal against the inaction of, or decisions taken by intermediaries on user complaints**.
 - However, users will always have the **right to approach courts for any remedy**.

What are the Key IT Rules, 2021?

- **Mandates Social Media to Exercise Greater Diligence:**
 - Broadly, the IT Rules (2021) mandate social media platforms to **exercise greater diligence with respect to the content on their platforms**.
- **Establish a Grievance Officer:**
 - They are required to establish a grievance redressal mechanism and **remove unlawful and unfitting content within stipulated time frames**.
 - The grievance officer of the platform's redressal mechanism is **responsible for receiving and resolving complaints of the users**.
- **Ensuring Online Safety and Dignity of Users:**
 - Intermediaries **shall remove or disable access withing 24 hours** of receipt of complaints of contents that exposes the private areas of individuals, show such individuals in full or partial nudity or in sexual act or is in the nature of impersonation including morphed images etc.
- **Educating Users about the Privacy Policies:**
 - The **privacy policies of the social media platforms must ensure** that users are educated about not circulating copyrighted material and anything that can be construed as defamatory, racially or ethnically objectionable, paedophilic, threatening the unity, integrity, defence, security or sovereignty of India or friendly relations with foreign states, or violative of any contemporary law.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question

Q. In India, it is legally mandatory for which of the following to report on cyber security incidents?

(2017)

1. Service providers
2. Data centres
3. Body corporate

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Ans: D

- According to section 70B of the Information Technology Act, 2000 (IT Act), the Union Government by notification should appoint an agency named Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) to serve as the national agency for incident response.
- The Union Government under section 70B of the IT Act, 2000 established and notified rules of CERT-In in 2014. According to Rule 12(1)(a), it is mandatory for service providers, intermediaries, data centers and corporate bodies to report cyber security incidences to CERT-In within a reasonable time of occurrence of the incident. **Hence, 1, 2 and 3 are correct.**
- **Therefore, option D is the correct answer.**

[Source: PIB](#)

First-Ever List of Fungal Infections

For Prelims: Fungal Infection, Fungal Priority Pathogen List, World Health Organization

For Mains: Concerns regarding Fungal Pathogen, Fungal Priority Pathogen List

Why in News?

Recently, The [World Health Organisation](#) released the first-ever **list of fungal infections (Priority Pathogens) that can be a threat to public health.**

What is WHO's Fungal Priority Pathogen List?

- **About FPPL:**

- **Fungal priority pathogens list (FPPL) includes 19 fungi that represent the greatest threat to human health.**
- The list takes precedence from the **bacterial priority pathogens list**, first established by **WHO in 2017** with a similar focus to galvanise global attention and action.
- **Aim:**
 - It aims to **focus and drive further research and policy interventions** to strengthen the global response to fungal infections and antifungal resistance.
- **Categories:**
 - The classification is based on the **pathogen's public health impact or emerging antifungal resistance risk.**
 - **Critical Priority Group:** It includes *Candida auris*, which is a highly drug-resistant fungi, *Cryptococcus neoformans*, *Aspergillus fumigatus*, and *Candida albicans*.
 - **High Priority Group:** It includes a number of other fungi from the *Candida* family as well as others such as *Mucorales*, a group containing "**black fungus**", an infection which rose rapidly in seriously ill people, particularly in India, during Covid-19.
 - **Medium Priority Group:** It includes a number of other fungi, including *Coccidioides* spp and *Cryptococcus gattii*.
- **Recommended Actions by FPPL Report:**
 - Strengthening laboratory capacity and surveillance.
 - Sustaining investments in research, development, and innovation.
 - Enhancing public health interventions for prevention and control.

What are the Rising Concerns related to Fungal Pathogens?

- **Concerns:**
 - Fungal pathogens are a major threat to public health and are becoming increasingly common and **resistant to treatment** with only **four classes of antifungal medicines currently available**, and few candidates in the clinical pipeline.
 - Most fungal pathogens **lack rapid and sensitive diagnostics** and those that exist are not **widely available or affordable globally.**
 - Emerging evidence indicates that the incidence and geographic range of fungal diseases are both expanding worldwide due to global warming and the increase of international travel and trade.
 - During the [COVID-19 pandemic](#), the reported incidence of **invasive fungal infections increased significantly** among hospitalized patients.
 - As the fungi that cause common infections (**such as candida oral and vaginal thrush**) become increasingly **resistant to treatment**, risks for the **development of more invasive forms of infections** in the general population are also growing.
- **Target Population:**
 - These fungal infections often affect **severely ill patients** and those with significant **underlying immune system** related conditions.
 - Populations at greatest risk of invasive fungal infections include those with [cancer](#), [HIV/AIDS](#), **organ transplants, chronic respiratory disease, and post-primary tuberculosis infection.**

[Source: IT](#)

National Unity Day 2022

Why in News?

On [National Unity Day 2022](#), the Union Home Minister of India remembered [Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel](#)

on his 147th birth anniversary saying that the latter realised the dream of a strong and united India with his farsightedness.

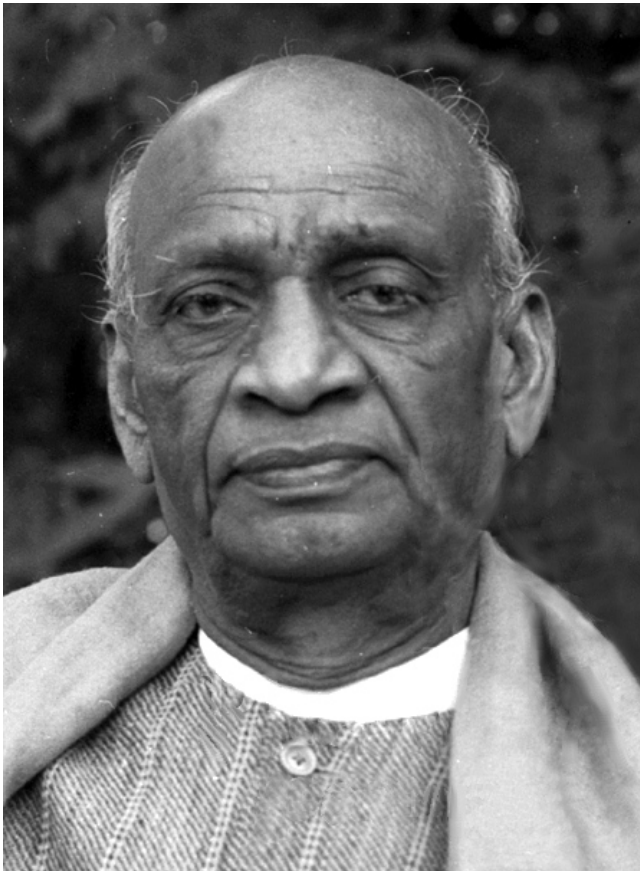
Why is National Unity Day Celebrated?

- National Unity Day is celebrated every year on 31st October to commemorate the birth anniversary of **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**. It is also known as **Rashtriya Ekta Diwas**.
 - The reason behind the celebration of this day is to **make people aware of the ideas of staying together and uplifting society**.
 - It was celebrated for the **first time in 2014**.
- Several events are organised on this day like **'Run For Unity'** - a nationwide **marathon** to increase awareness about the contribution of Sardar Patel to national integrity, **National Unity pledge**, etc.
- In 2018, the Government of India unveiled the **'Statue of Unity'** in Gujarat to mark the 143rd birth anniversary of Sardar Patel.

What is the Statue of Unity?

- The **Statue of Unity is the tallest statue in the world**. At 182 meters, it is 23 meters taller than **China's Spring Temple Buddha statue** and almost double the height of the **Statue of Liberty** (93 meters tall) in the US.
- In January 2020, it was added to the **'Eight Wonders' of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)**.

Who was Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel?



- **About:**
 - He was born on 31st October 1875 in Nadiad, Gujarat.

- Sardar Patel was the **first Home Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of India**.
- He is recognized as the **real unifier of India** for his colossal contribution to integrate and make India a united (Ek Bharat) and an independent nation.
 - He requested the people of India to live together by uniting in order to create **Shreshth Bharat** (Foremost India).
 - This ideology is still reflected in the **Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative** which seeks to **make India Self-Reliant**.
- He is also remembered as the **'Patron saint of India's civil servants'** as he established the modern all-India services system.
- **Role in Framing Constitution:**
 - He headed various Committees of the Constituent Assembly of India, namely:
 - Advisory Committee on **Fundamental Rights**.
 - Committee on **Minorities** and **Tribal** and **Excluded Areas**.
 - Provincial Constitution Committee.
- **Major Contributions:**
 - He **worked extensively against alcohol consumption, untouchability, caste discrimination** and for **women emancipation** in Gujarat and outside.
 - He integrated the farmer's cause in **Kheda Satyagraha (1918)** and **Bardoli Satyagraha (1928)** with the national freedom movement.
 - **Women of Bardoli bestowed the title 'Sardar'** on Vallabhbhai Patel, which means 'a Chief or a Leader'.
 - During the 1930 **Salt Satyagraha** (prayer and fasting movement), Sardar Patel served three months imprisonment.
 - In March 1931 Patel presided over the **Karachi session (46th session) of the Indian National Congress** which was called upon to ratify the **Gandhi-Irwin Pact**.
- **Integration of the Princely States:**
 - Sardar Patel played a key role in the integration of about 565 princely states into the Indian Union.
 - Few princely states like **Travancore, Hyderabad, Junagadh, Bhopal, and Kashmir** were averse to joining the state of India.
 - Sardar Patel worked tirelessly to build a consensus with the princely states but did not hesitate in employing methods of **Sama, Dama, Dand and Bhed** wherever necessary.
 - He had used force to **annex princely states of Junagadh ruled by Nawab and Hyderabad ruled by Nizam**, both of whom had wished not to merge their respective states with the Union of India.
 - Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel stitched the princely states along with British Indian territory and **prevented the balkanization of India**.
 - He is known as the **"Iron Man of India"** for playing an important role in unification and integration of Indian princely states into the Indian federation and for convincing princely states to align with the Indian Union.
- **Death:**
 - **15th December 1950** in Bombay.

Infographic

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims:

Q. Who among the following were official Congress negotiators with Cripps Mission? (2010)

- (a) Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel
- (b) Acharya J. B. Kripalani and C. Rajagopalachari
- (c) Pandit Nehru and Maulana Azad
- (d) Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai

Ans: (c)

Q. For the Karachi Session of Indian National Congress in 1931 presided over by Sardar Patel,

who drafted the Resolution on Fundamental Rights and Economic Programme? (2010)

- (a) Mahatma Gandhi
- (b) Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
- (c) Dr. Rajendra Prasad
- (d) Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

Ans: (b)

[Source: IE](#)

Kalanamak Rice

Why in News?

Recently, [Indian Agriculture Research Institute \(IARI\)](#) successfully tested two new dwarf varieties of Kalanamak rice i.e., Pusa Narendra Kalanamak 1638 and Pusa Narendra Kalanamak 1652 in Uttar Pradesh that give double the yield.

- This will address the problem of lodging responsible for low yield seen across the traditional variety.



KALANAMAK RICE

What is Kalanamak Rice?

- **About:**
 - Kalanamak is a traditional variety of paddy with a black husk and a strong fragrance.

- It is considered a **'gift from Lord Buddha'** to the people of the Sravasti when he visited the region after enlightenment.
 - It has been awarded under **'One District One Product' (ODOP) scheme** as an ODOP product of Siddharthnagar which is an aspirational district located in Terai belt of Uttar Pradesh.
- It is **grown in 11 districts of the Terai region of northeastern Uttar Pradesh and in Nepal.**
- It is **protected under the Geographical Indication (GI) tag system.**
- **Farmer's Benefits from Kalanamak Rice:**
 - **Natural Cultivation:** Kala Namak rice is grown mainly without using fertiliser or pesticide residues, making it perfect for crop production.
 - **Cost-effective factor:** Since pesticides and fertilisers are not used, the expense is lowered and the grower saves a lot of money.
- **Health Benefits of Kalanamak Rice:**
 - Kala Namak rice acts as an antioxidant like anthocyanin, which assists in the **prevention of cardiovascular disease and the advancement of skincare.**
 - Kalanamak rice includes a lot of **micronutrients like zinc and iron.** As a result, eating this rice is also said to **protect against illness caused by zinc and iron deficits.**
 - It is claimed that eating Kalanamak rice on a regular basis can help prevent **Alzheimer's disease.**
 - Kala Namak rice can also help **strengthen, regrow, and galvanise the body, as well as help regulate blood pressure, diabetes, and skin damage.**
- **Issue with the Traditional Variety:**
 - The problem with the traditional variety of Kalanamak paddy is that **it's tall and prone to lodging**, which badly impacted grain filling and quality.
 - **Lodging is a condition** in which the **top of the plant becomes heavy because of grain formation, the stem becomes weak, and the plant falls on the ground.**

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question

Q. India enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 in order to comply with the obligations to (2018)

- (a) ILO
- (b) IMF
- (c) UNCTAD
- (d) WTO

Ans: D

Exp:

- Geographical indications (GIs) are a type of intellectual property (IP). The World Trade Organisation (WTO) recognises intellectual property rights under TRIPS (TradeRelated Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) Agreement.
- Under Article 22(1) of the TRIPS Agreement, the GIs are defined as “indications which identify a good as originating in the territory of a Member, or a region or locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographic origin”.
- **Therefore, option D is the correct answer.**

Source: TH

Saras Food Festival-2022

Why in News?

Recently, Saras Food Festival, 2022 has been organized in New Delhi to promote ethnic and home-made handicrafts, paintings, toys, etc., prepared by women of [Self-Help Groups \(SHGs\)](#).

What is the Saras Food Festival?

- It is an initiative of the Union Ministry of Rural Development as an effort to **empower women on a large scale**.
- Women from self-help groups, formed under the flagship program '[National Rural Livelihoods Mission](#)' of the Union Ministry of Rural Development are participating in this festival.
- This event will give women SHGs an opportunity to **showcase their skills in the field of food making and introduce people to the food culture** of our country.
 - These SHG women are **proficient in making rural products and preparing traditional dishes of their states**.
- The Ministry also launched the **e-commerce portal for better and more effective marketing of Saras products** prepared by women of self-help groups.
 - There are about 8 crore 62 lakh women who are members of SHGs and they have presence in 97% of Blocks, while 85 % of them are directly connected with the network of the Ministry.
- Efforts are on to have at least 25% of all sales by women self-help groups through e-commerce portals annually.
- The Ministry will take steps to establish **Saras stalls by women SHGs** in all State capitals, major cities and metros, airports and railway stations for widening the reach of marketing.

What are Self-Help Groups (SHGs)?

- **About:**
 - **SHGs are informal associations of people** who choose to come together to find ways to improve their living conditions.
 - It can be defined **as a self-governed, peer-controlled information group of people with similar socio-economic backgrounds** and having a desire to collectively perform a common purpose.
 - SHG relies on the notion of **"Self Help" to encourage self-employment** and poverty alleviation.
- **Objectives:**
 - To build the functional capacity of the poor and the marginalized in the field of employment and income generating activities.
 - To resolve conflicts through collective leadership and mutual discussion.
 - To provide **collateral free loan with terms** decided by the group at the market driven rates.
 - To work as a collective guarantee system for members who propose to borrow **from organised sources**.
 - The poor collect their savings and save it in banks. In return they receive easy access to **loans with a small rate of interest to start their micro unit enterprise**.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question

Q. How does the National Rural Livelihood Mission seek to improve livelihood options of rural poor? (2012)

1. By setting up a large number of new manufacturing industries and agribusiness centres in rural areas

2. By strengthening 'self-help groups' and providing skill development
3. By supplying seeds, fertilizers, diesel pump-sets and micro-irrigation equipment free of cost to farmers

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- The National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) is a poverty alleviation project implemented by the **Ministry of Rural Development**. This scheme is focused on promoting self-employment and organization of rural poor. The basic idea behind this programme is to organize the poor into SHGs (Self Help Groups) and make them capable for self-employment.
- **Pillars of NRLM**
 - Enhancing and expanding existing livelihood options of the poor;
 - Building skills for the job market outside;
 - Nurturing self-employed and entrepreneurs. Hence, 2 is correct.
- The Mission neither focuses on setting up a large number of new manufacturing industries, nor agribusiness centres in rural areas. Its objective is not to supply seeds, fertilizers, diesel pump-sets and micro-irrigation equipment. Hence, 1 and 3 are not correct.
- **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

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