



## UN Specialised Agencies - UNWTO, IFAD and UPU (Part-2)

**UN SPECIALISED AGENCIES**

UNSAAs are 15 autonomous international organizations working with the UN

Part II  
UNWTO,  
IFAD  
and UPU

### UN World Tourism Organisation

- Estd. - 1975
- Headquarters - Madrid, Spain
- Function -
  - » Promotion of responsible, sustainable & universally accessible tourism
  - » Implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism
- Member States - 160 (India is a member of UNWTO Executive Council for last 19 years and has chaired it twice)

World Tourism Day is celebrated on 27 September

### International Fund for Agricultural Development

- Estd. - 1977 (an outcome of World Food Conference, 1974)
- Headquarters - Rome, Italy
- Function -
  - » Intl. financial institution
  - » Poverty eradication in rural areas of developing countries
- Member States - 177 (incl. India)
- Flagship Publication - Rural Development Report (annual)

### Universal Postal Union

- Estd. - 1874 (by Treaty of Bern, 1874)
- Headquarters - Bern, Switzerland
- Function -
  - » Coordinates postal policies among member nations
  - » Sets rules for intl. mail exchanges
  - » Has an advisory/mediating/liaison role
- Member States - 192 (India joined in 1876)

UPU is the 2nd oldest intl. organization worldwide after ITU (estd. 1865)



**Drishti IAS**

[UN Specialised Agencies: FAO, UNIDO and ICAO \(Part-1\)](#)

[UN Specialised Agencies: ILO, WHO and ITU \(Part-3\)](#)

[UN Specialised Agencies: WIPO, WMO and IMO \(Part-4\)](#)

[UN Specialised Agencies: IMF, World Bank and UNESCO \(Part -5 \)](#)

# Centre Opposes Same-Sex Marriage

**For Prelims:** Navtej Singh Johar Case, Fundamental Right, Personal Laws, LGBTQIA+ Rights.

**For Mains:** Arguments in Favour of Same Sex Marriage, Arguments Against Same Sex Marriage.

## Why in News?

The Centre has opposed [same-sex marriage in the Supreme Court](#), stating that **marriage between a biological man and woman is a holy union**, a sacrament, and a sanskar in India.

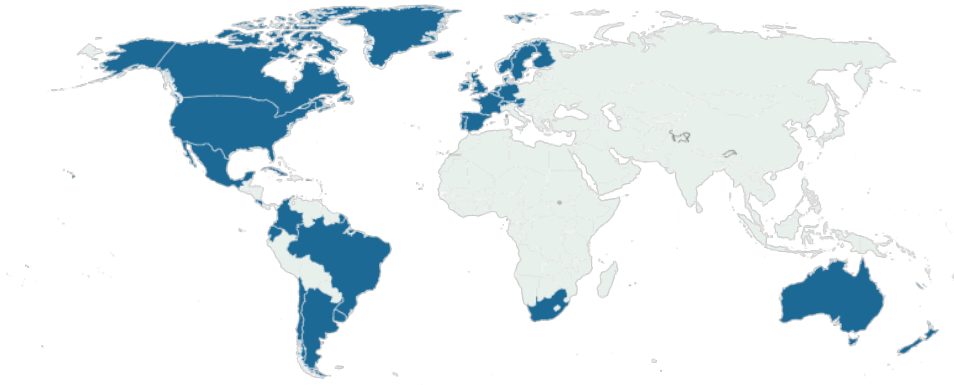
- A Bench led by [Chief Justice of India](#) refers petitions to legally recognise same-sex marriages to a [Constitution Bench](#) of **five judges of the Supreme Court**

## What is the Stand of Government Regarding Same Sex Marriage?

- The government argued that the Court had **only decriminalised sexual intercourse between same-sex persons** in its 2018 judgement in [Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India](#), and not legitimised this “conduct”.
  - The court, **while decriminalising homosexuality**, did not accept same-sex marriage as part of the [fundamental right to life and dignity](#) under **Article 21 of the Constitution**.
- The government argues that **marriage depends on customs**, rituals, practices, cultural ethos, and societal values.
  - **Same-sex marriage cannot be compared to a man and woman living as a family** with children born out of the union.
- The [Parliament](#) has designed and framed the marriage laws in the country to recognise only the union of a man and a woman.
  - Registration of marriage of same-sex persons would result in a **violation of existing personal as well as codified law provisions**.
    - The [Special Marriage Act of 1954](#) provides a civil form of marriage for couples who cannot marry under their personal law.
- The government argued that **any deviation from this norm can only be made through the legislature**, and not the Supreme Court.

## What are the Arguments in Favour of Same Sex Marriage?

- **Equal Rights and Protection Under the Law:** All individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation, have the right to marry and form a family.
  - Same-sex couples should have the **same legal rights** and protections as opposite-sex couples.
  - Non-recognition of same-sex marriage **amounted to discrimination that struck at the root of the dignity** and self-fulfillment of [LGBTQIA+ couples](#).
- **Strengthening Families and Communities:** Marriage provides social and economic benefits to couples and their families. Allowing same-sex couples to marry **strengthens families and communities by promoting stability and security**.
- **Global Acceptance:** Same-sex marriage is legal in many countries around the world, and denying this right to individuals in a democratic society goes **against the global principles**.
  - In 133 countries homosexuality decriminalised, but only in **32 of them same-sex marriage is legal**. **Countries legalised same sex marriage:**



## What are the Arguments Against Same Sex Marriage?

- **Religious and Cultural Beliefs:** Many religious and cultural groups believe that **marriage should only be between a man and a woman.**
  - They argue that **changing the traditional definition of marriage** would go against the **fundamental principles** of their beliefs and values.
- **Procreation:** Some people argue that the primary purpose of marriage is **procreation**, and that same-sex couples cannot have **biological children.**
  - Therefore, they believe that same-sex marriage should not be allowed because it goes **against the natural order of things.**
- **Legal issues:** There are concerns that allowing same-sex marriage will create legal problems, such as issues with **inheritance, tax, and property rights.**
  - Some people argue that it would be too difficult to **change all the laws and regulations to accommodate same-sex marriage.**

## Way Forward

- **Cultural Sensitivity:** India is a **culturally diverse country** with different religious and societal values.
  - **Any legislative or judicial decision on same-sex marriage** must consider the cultural sensitivities of different communities while also ensuring that the fundamental rights of individuals are protected.
- **Social Acceptance and Education:** India still has a long way to go in terms of social acceptance of the **LGBTQ+ community.**
  - Education and awareness campaigns should be developed to promote acceptance and understanding of heterosexuality then **same-sex marriages should be considered on table.**
- **International Obligations:** India is a **signatory to various international human rights treaties and conventions**, which require it to protect the rights of all individuals, including the **LGBTQ+ community.**
  - As many other countries such as **Canada, the United States, and Australia** have recognized same-sex marriage, **it is imperative that India legalizes it to ensure equal rights and opportunities** for all individuals regardless of their sexual orientation.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question:(PYQ)

Which Article of the Constitution of India safeguards one's right to marry the person of one's choice? (2019)

- (a) Article 19
- (b) Article 21
- (c) Article 25
- (d) Article 29

Ans: (b)

[Source: TH](#)

## Menace of Missing Antiquities in India

**For Prelims:** Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), UNESCO, Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act 1958, Antiquities and Art Treasures Act of 1972.

**For Mains:** Issues Regarding Missing Artefacts, Initiatives Related to Protection of Antiquities.

### Why in News?

There is a formidable gap between [artefact](#) that has been “officially” declared missing and what is surfacing in global markets or being found in museum shelves and catalogues.

- Since Independence, **486 antiquities have been reported as missing** from the **3,696 monuments** protected and maintained by the [Archaeological Survey of India \(ASI\)](#).

### What are the Issues Highlighted Regarding Missing Artefacts?

- According to ASI, **292 antiquities have been brought back to India** from abroad since 2014 and 13 between 1976 and 2013.
  - The ASI’s list of missing antiquities covers 17 states and two Union Territories. It includes **139** from Madhya Pradesh, **95** from Rajasthan and **86** from Uttar Pradesh.
- The Parliament committee flagged that “**number of antiquities retrieved**” by the ASI from abroad “are not **even the tip of the iceberg in comparison to the huge number of antiques smuggled** out from the country”.
- Monuments and sites maintained by the ASI is only a “**small percentage**” of the total number of archaeological sites and monuments across the country.
- The menace of **missing antiquities is also illustrated by UNESCO**. It estimates that “**more than 50,000 art objects** have been **smuggled out of India till 1989**”.

### What is Antiquity?

- **About:**
  - The **Antiquities and Art Treasures Act of 1972**, which came into effect on April 1, 1976, defines an “**antiquity**” as **any object or work of art that has been in existence for at least 100 years**.
    - This includes **coins, sculptures, paintings, epigraphs, detached articles**, and other items that reflect science, art, literature, religion, customs, morals, or politics from a bygone era.
  - For “manuscript, record or other document which is of scientific, historical, literary or aesthetic value”, this duration is “**not less than 75 years.**”
- **Protection Initiative:**
  - **Indian:**
    - In India, Item-67 of the **Union List**, Item-12 of the **State List**, and Item-40 of the



- **Concurrent List of the Constitution** deal with the country's heritage.
- Before Independence, the **Antiquities (Export Control) Act** was passed in April 1947 to ensure that no antiquity could be exported without a license.
- The **[Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act](#)** was enacted in 1958 to protect ancient monuments and archaeological sites from destruction and misuse.
- **Global:**
  - **UNESCO** formulated the 1970 **Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.**
  - The **[United Nations Security Council](#)** also passed resolutions in 2015 and 2016 calling for the **protection of cultural heritage sites in conflict zones.**

### What is 'Provenance' of Antiquity?

- **Provenance** includes the list of all owners from the time the object left its maker's possession to the time it was acquired by the current owner.

### What is the Procedure of Bringing Back the Antiquities?

- **Categories:**
  - **Antiquities taken out of India pre-independence;**
  - Antiquities which were taken out **since independence until March 1976;**
  - **Antiquities have been taken out of the country since April 1976.**
- For **Antiquities taken out of India before independence**, requests for their retrieval must be raised bilaterally or on international fora.
  - For example, in **November 2022**, the **Maharashtra government** announced that it was working to bring back the **sword of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj from London.**
- Antiquities in the **second and third categories** can be retrieved easily by **raising an issue bilaterally with proof of ownership** and with the help of the **UNESCO** convention.

### UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

#### Mains

**Q.1** Safeguarding the Indian Art Heritage is the need of the moment. Discuss. **(2018)**

**Q.2** Indian Philosophy and tradition played a significant role in conceiving and shaping the monuments and their art in India. Discuss. **(2020)**

**Source: IE**

### World Air Quality Report

**For Prelims:** World Air Quality Report, PM 2.5, System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and

Research (SAFAR) Portal, Air Quality Index, Push for Electric Vehicles (EVs), Commission for Air Quality Management, Turbo Happy Seeder (THS) Machine.

**For Mains:** Initiatives taken by India for Controlling Air Pollution, Ways to Enhance Air Quality in India.

## Why in News?

According to the [World Air Quality Report](#) prepared by IQAir, **Delhi ranked 4<sup>th</sup> out of 50 of the world's most polluted cities** in terms of **PM2.5 levels** in 2022.

- Out of 131 countries, India ranked 8<sup>th</sup> with a population weighted average PM2.5 level of **53.3 µg/m3** in 2022.

## What are the Key Findings of the Report?

- **About:**
  - IQAir, a Swiss air quality technology company, prepares the **annual world air quality reports** based on **data from monitoring stations** operated by governments and other institutions and organisations across the world.
    - The 2022 report is based on PM2.5 data **from 7,323 cities and 131 countries.**
- **Findings:**
  - **Chad, Iraq, Pakistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh** are the 5 most polluted countries in 2022.
  - **Delhi** had an average **PM2.5 level of 92.6 µg/m3 in 2022**, a little below the average of **96.4 µg/m3 in 2021.**
    - The report makes a distinction between New Delhi and Delhi, with New Delhi having an annual average PM2.5 level of 89.1 µg/m3.
    - The [WHO guideline](#) for annual PM2.5 levels is **5 µg/m3.**
  - **Lahore** was the most polluted city in the world, followed by **Hotan in China, and Bhiwadi in Rajasthan.**
  - **New Delhi is the second most polluted capital** city in the world, with N'Djamena in **Chad** topping the list.
  - A total of **39 Indian cities (including 'Delhi' and 'New Delhi')** are on the list of 50 of the world's most polluted cities based on annual average **PM2.5 levels in 2022.**

## What is PM 2.5?

- PM 2.5 is an **atmospheric particulate matter** of diameter of fewer than **2.5 micrometres**, which is around 3% the diameter of a human hair.
- PM 2.5 particles are small enough to **penetrate deep into the lungs** and even enter the bloodstream, and long-term exposure to PM 2.5 can lead to **lung cancer, heart disease, stroke**, and other chronic health conditions.

## What are Initiatives taken by India for Controlling Air Pollution?

- [System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research \(SAFAR\) Portal](#)
- [Air Quality Index](#)
- [Push for Electric Vehicles \(EVs\)](#)
- [Commission for Air Quality Management](#)
- [Turbo Happy Seeder \(THS\) Machine](#)

## How Air Quality Can be Enhanced in India?

- **Link Zero Emissions with Human Rights:** Air pollution needs to be **recognized more as a human right issue** rather than merely as an environmental challenge, and should be linked with the mission of **net zero emission** (by 2070).
  - The **UN General Assembly (UNGA)** has also passed a resolution recognizing the **right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment as a human right**.
- **Green-Transition Finance:** There is a need to create a financial architecture that can mobilise private finance for clean-air solutions in India. **Green sectors** such as clean energy and e-mobility offer tangible solutions to improve air quality.
- **Bio Enzyme-PUSA: A bio-enzyme called PUSA** has been developed by the Indian **Agriculture Research Institute** as a solution to stubble burning.
  - As soon as it is sprayed, this enzyme starts decomposing the stubble in 20-25 days, turning it into manure, which further improves the soil.
- **Ready-Made Concrete for Construction:** Construction dust is a major contributor to pollutants in air in expanding cities.
  - To deal with this situation, **Niti Aayog** has suggested the use of **ready-made concrete** that can minimise environmental impacts of building activities.

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

### Prelims

**Q. In the cities of our country, which among the following atmospheric gases are normally considered in calculating the value of the Air Quality Index? (2016)**

1. Carbon dioxide
2. Carbon monoxide
3. Nitrogen dioxide
4. Sulphur dioxide
5. Methane

**Select the correct answer using the code given below:**

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only  
(b) 2, 3 and 4 only  
(c) 1, 4 and 5 only  
(d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

**Ans: (b)**

### Mains

**Q. Describe the key points of the revised Global Air Quality Guidelines (AQGs) recently released by the World Health Organisation (WHO). How are these different from its last update in 2005? What changes in India's National Clean Air Programme are required to achieve revised standards? (2021)**

**Source: IE**

## Landfill Fires and Mitigation

**Prelims:** Landfill Sites, Air Pollution, Ground Water Contamination, Bioremediation.

## Why in News?

The **Kochi landfill site around Brahmapuram, Kerala that recently caught fire** is a stark reminder that Indian cities need to be prepared for more such incidents as summer approaches.

- Landfills are **sites where waste materials are deposited, compacted**, and covered with soil for long-term storage. These sites are designed **to prevent contamination of the surrounding environment** by isolating the waste from **groundwater**, surface water, and air.

## Why do Landfills Catch Fire?

- **Unprocessed Waste:**
  - It is expected to process the wet and dry waste separately and to have the recovered by-products recycled. But the **rate of processing in India's cities is far lower than the rate of waste generation**, so unprocessed waste remains in open landfills for long periods.
    - India's municipalities have been collecting more than 95% of the waste generated in cities but the efficiency of waste-processing is **30-40% at best**.
- **High Calorific Value:**
  - The openly disposed waste **includes flammable material like low-quality plastics**, which have a relatively higher calorific value, and rags and clothes.
  - In summer, the biodegradable fraction **composts much faster, increasing the temperature of the heap** to beyond 70-80° C.
    - Indian municipal solid waste consists of about 60% biodegradable material, 25% non-biodegradable material and **15% inert materials, like silt and stone**.
  - Higher temperature + flammable material = a chance for the landfill to catch fire. Some fires have been known to go on for months.
- **Hot Weather:**
  - In hot and dry weather conditions, **waste materials can become dry** and more flammable, increasing the risk of a fire.

## What can be the Impact of Landfill Fires?

- **Air Pollution:** When a landfill fire burns, it releases harmful gases and **particles into the air, including carbon monoxide**, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). These pollutants can cause respiratory problems, **exacerbate asthma and other lung conditions**, and contribute to smog and acid rain.
- **Groundwater Contamination:** Landfill fires can release **toxic chemicals and heavy metals into the groundwater**, which can contaminate nearby water sources and potentially harm aquatic ecosystems.
- **Soil Contamination:** Landfill fires can also release harmful chemicals and heavy metals **into the soil, which can harm plant growth** and contaminate crops.
- **Economic Impact:** Landfill fires can result in significant cleanup costs for local governments, as well as economic losses for nearby businesses and property owners.

## How can the Landfill Fires be Managed?

- **Permanent Solution:**
  - **Capping and Closing Landfills:**
    - Completely cap the material using soil and close landfills in a scientific manner.
    - This solution is **unsuitable in the Indian context as the land can't be used again** for other purposes.
    - Closed landfills have specific standard operating procedures, including managing



the methane emissions.

- **Bioremediation:**

- Clear the piles of waste through [Bioremediation](#).
  - Bioremediation is the use of either naturally occurring or deliberately introduced **microorganisms to consume and break down environmental pollutants**, in order to clean a polluted site.
- However, implementing a **bioremediation project usually takes up to two or three years**, necessitating a short-term solution for landfill fires in the summer.

- **Immediate Solution:**

- The first immediate action is to divide a **site into blocks depending on the nature of the waste**.
- At each site, blocks with fresh waste should be separated from blocks with flammable material.
  - Blocks that have been **capped using soil are less likely to catch fire**, so portions like these should also be separated out.
  - The different blocks should ideally be separated using a drain or soil bund and a layer of soil should cap each block.
  - This reduces the chance of fires spreading across blocks within the same landfill.
- Next, the **most vulnerable part of the landfill**, the portion with lots of plastics and cloth, should be capped with soil.
  - The fresh waste block shouldn't be capped but enough moisture should be provided by sprinkling water which will help cool the waste heap.
- Once a site has been **divided into blocks, the landfill operator should classify incoming waste on arrival to the site** and dispose of it in designated blocks rather than dumping mixed fractions.
- Already segregated non-recyclable and nonbiodegradable waste should be sent to cement kilns instead of being allowed to accumulate.
  - Dry grass material and dry trees from the site should also be cleared immediately.

## Way Forward

- The permanent and essential solution is to **ensure cities have a systematic waste-processing system** where wet and dry waste are processed separately and their by-products treated accordingly (recycling, soil enrichment, etc.).
  - This will need multiple stakeholders, including municipalities and **waste-processing unit operators, to cooperate**.
- Considering India's summer has already begun, **municipalities must implement short-term measures to prevent fire outbreaks** while also focusing on long-term solutions to improve solid waste management.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Prelims

**Q.1 As per the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016 in India, which one of the following statements is correct? (2019)**

- (a) Waste generator has to segregate waste into five categories.
- (b) The Rules are applicable to notified urban local bodies, notified towns and all industrial townships only.
- (c) The Rules provide for exact and elaborate criteria for the identification of sites for landfills and waste processing facilities.
- (d) It is mandatory on the part of waste generator that the waste generated in one district cannot be moved to another district.

**Ans: (c)**

### Mains

**Q.1** What are the impediments in disposing the huge quantities of discarded solid waste which are continuously being generated? How do we remove safely the toxic wastes that have been accumulating in our habitable environment? **(2018)**

[Source: TH](#)

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## Carbon Footprint of Marine Fisheries Lower than Global Average

**For Prelims:** National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA), Emissions from Marine fisheries

**For Mains:** Impacts of Increasing Carbon Footprint on marine ecosystems and initiatives to reduce it.

### Why in News?

According to **Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI)**, India's marine fisheries produced 1.32 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) to produce one kilogram of fish in 2016 during entire value chain (from the construction of boats to retail) **lower than the global average of 2 tonnes.**

### What are the Key Findings of CMFRI?

- **About:**
  - The findings were discussed at a **review meeting of the fisheries component of the [National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture \(NICRA\)](#)**, a research project launched in 2011.
- **Findings:**
  - **Active fishing** consumes more than **90% of the fuel used in the sector**, contributing 4,934 million kilograms of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions annually.
  - The country's carbon emissions from the marine mechanized fisheries sector is **16.3%, lower than the global level.**
  - While the **use of fossil fuels has increased the availability of fish to fisheries**, the dependence of the fishing sector on fossil fuels **raises concerns related to climate change.**
- **Reasons for Low Carbon Footprint:**
  - The carbon footprint from Indian marine fisheries is **smaller because they depend largely on human force.**
  - Large **mechanised fishing boats** were introduced in India in the late 1950s, but the **fleet size is growing.** Their number increased to 72,559 in 2010 from 6,708 in 1961.

### What are the Impacts of Increasing Carbon Footprint on Marine Ecosystems?

- **[Ocean Acidification:](#)**
  - When carbon dioxide dissolves in seawater, it forms carbonic acid, which **lowers the pH of the water.**
  - This can make it **difficult for many marine organisms** to build and **maintain their shells and skeletons**, which can have serious consequences for their survival.
- **Changes in Marine Food Webs:**

- Increasing carbon footprint can lead to **changes in the distribution and abundance of plankton**, which form the base of the marine food web.
- This can affect the growth and survival of fish, marine mammals, and other species.
- **Coral Bleaching:**
  - Coral reefs are **highly sensitive to changes in water temperature** and chemistry, and increasing carbon footprint can cause widespread coral bleaching.
- **Changes in Species Diversity:**
  - Marine ecosystems are changing due to an **increase in the intensity of cyclones, sea-level rise and the warming of the Indian Ocean.**
  - The **diversity of species is changing.** For example, during coral bleaching, reef-associated fish deplete.

## What are the Initiatives to Reduce Carbon Emissions from Fishing Sector?

- **Promotion of Green Fishing Practices:**
  - The **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)** scheme includes developing **Integrated Modern Coastal Fishing Villages** with an investment of Rs. 750 crores to promote sustainable fishing practices and leverage the **blue economy** for maximizing benefits to coastal fishers.
  - The government is promoting the use of renewable energy in the fishing sector, such as **solar-powered boats** and wind turbines.
- **Encouraging Alternative Livelihoods:**
  - The government is promoting alternative livelihoods for fishermen and women to reduce overfishing and pressure on marine resources.
- **Introducing Fuel Efficiency Measures:**
  - The government has introduced measures to improve fuel efficiency in fishing vessels, such as **mandating the use of high-efficiency propulsion systems and reducing idling time.**
- **Monitoring Fishing Vessels:**
  - The government has implemented a vessel monitoring system (**ReALCraft: Registration and Licensing of Fishing Craft**) to monitor fishing activities and reduce illegal fishing.
  - The system allows authorities to **track the location and movement of fishing vessels**, ensuring that they adhere to sustainable fishing practices.
- **CMFRI Initiatives:**
  - CMFRI is **developing a climate-smart value chain**, which will use science to decide where interventions are needed.
  - Further, the institute is also developing a **Coastal Climate Risk Atlas** to identify vulnerable areas in the coastal districts of India.
  - CMFRI is working at **greener fishing methods** to reduce carbon emissions. This includes **optimising fuel usage** and reducing fuel wastage.

## What is Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute?

- The **CMFRI** was established by **Government of India in 1947** under the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare** and later it joined the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) in 1967.**
  - ICAR is the largest network of agricultural research and education institutes in the world functioning under the Department of Agricultural Research and Education, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare.

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

### Prelims

Q. Other than poaching, what are the possible reasons for the decline in the population of

## Ganges River Dolphins? (2014)

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

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Ans: (c)

- Habitat of Ganges River Dolphins is freshwater mainly the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Karnaphuli-Sangu River systems of Nepal, India, and Bangladesh. They are essentially blind. They hunt by emitting ultrasonic sounds, which bounces off of fish and other prey, enabling them to “see” an image in their mind.
- As per the study conducted by WWF-India, the causes of decline in population of Gangetic River Dolphins are:
  - Construction of dams and barrages on the rivers; **hence, 1 is correct.**
  - Dolphins getting trapped in fishing nets; **hence, 3 is correct.**
  - Use of synthetic fertilizers and other industrial pollutants around the vicinity of rivers. **hence, 4 is correct.**
- The increased population of crocodiles in the rivers has not been cited as a reason for the decline in population of Ganges River Dolphins. **Hence, 2 is not correct. Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.**

## Mains

Q. Defining blue revolution, explain the problems and strategies for pisciculture development in India. (2018)

[Source:DTE](#)

## British' Online Safety Bill and End-to End Encryption

**Prelims:** End-to End Encryption, Information Technology Rules, 2021, Information Technology Act of 2000.

**Mains:** British' Online Safety Bill and End-to End Encryption.

## Why in News?

Recently, WhatsApp's head said that WhatsApp would not comply with the country's proposed **Online Safety Bill (OSB)** which will in effect outlaw [End-to-End \(E2E\) encryption](#).



## What is the British' Online Safety Bill?

- The OSB is a proposed British legislation **aimed at improving online safety by placing "Duty of Care" obligations** on online platforms.
- Clause 110 of the OSB empowers the regulator to **issue notices to most internet service providers**, including private messaging apps, to identify and take down [Terrorism](#) and **Child Sex Exploitation and Abuse (CSEA) content**.
- The OSB does not mandate removal of E2E encryption, but it would require messaging apps to scan all messages to flag such content, which would **de facto mean breaking encryption**.
  - Privacy and free speech advocates view the OSB as a disproportionate step that **allows for bulk interception and surveillance**.

## Is there any Similar Law in India?

- Through the [Information Technology \(Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code\) Rules, 2021](#), the Indian government made it mandatory for messaging platforms with more than five million users in India to **"enable the identification of the first originator"** of a message, or what is commonly called traceability.
- This is not the same as asking for scanning and flagging of all encrypted content; it is about getting to the first person who sent a message that may have been forwarded multiple times.
- In India, WhatsApp did not threaten to leave the market. It instead sued the Indian government **over the traceability requirement**.
  - This is mainly because India, with 487.5 million WhatsApp users, is home to 22% of the platform's 2.24 billion monthly active users. WhatsApp's penetration rate in India is over 97% while in the U.K., it is at about 75%.

## What is End-to-End Encryption?

- E2E encryption is a **secure communication mechanism** that allows data to be encrypted on the sender's device, transmitted securely over the internet or any communication channel, and then **decrypted only by the intended recipient**.
- The message can only be decrypted by the intended recipient using a unique **decryption key** that is **only accessible by the recipient's device**.
  - This means that no one else, **not even the service provider, can access the content of the message or data** being transmitted.
- E2E encryption is used to **ensure privacy and security in various communication platforms**, such as messaging apps, email services, and file-sharing services, as it provides a high level of protection against unauthorized access, interception, or eavesdropping by hackers, governments, or service providers.

## What is the other Legal Framework for Encryption in India?

- **Minimum Encryption Standards:**
  - India does not have a specific encryption law. Although, a number of industry rules, such as those governing the banking, finance, and telecommunications industries, include requirements for minimum **encryption standards to be utilised in protecting transactions**.
- **Prohibition on Encryption Technologies:**
  - Users are not authorised to employ encryption standards larger than 40 bits using symmetric key algorithms or similar methods without prior clearance and deposition of decryption keys, **according to the licensing agreement between the ISP (Internet Service Provider) and the DoT (Department of Telecommunications)**.
  - There are a variety of additional rules and recommendations that use a greater encryption level than 40 bits for particular sectors.
- **Information Technology Act of 2000:**
  - It regulates electronic and wireless modes of communication, is devoid of any substantive provision or policy on encryption.

## 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: TH**

## World Consumer Rights Day 2023

### Why in News?

The **Department of Consumer Affairs** is celebrating [World Consumer Rights Day](#) on **March 15, 2023**. The theme for this year's celebration is "**Empowering consumers through [clean energy transitions](#)**".

- It is a step towards creating a more sustainable and consumer-friendly ecosystem. India celebrates **24<sup>th</sup> December as [National Consumer Day](#)** every year.

### What are the Recent Initiatives Related to Consumer Rights?

- **Reducing Dependence on Traditional Sources:**
  - The primary focus is to **deploy technology to reduce dependence on traditional energy sources** like fossil fuels and enable a rapid transition to clean energy solutions that promote **sustainability, security, affordability, and access to consumers** in the long term.
- **National Consumer Helpline:**

- [E-commerce](#) has become one of the most preferred mediums of shopping for consumers. However, there has been a rise in the number of e-commerce grievances registered by consumers on the **National Consumer Helpline (NCH)**.
- Therefore, **NCH is being strengthened technologically to receive more complaints and redress common consumer grievances** of refund, replacement, and deficiency in service speedily.
- NCH works as an **alternate dispute redressal mechanism at the pre-litigation** level. NCH is accessible in over **17 languages**, including recently added **Maithili, Kashmiri, and Santhali languages**.
- **E-Daakhil Portal:**
  - The [E-Daakhil Portal](#) has been set up to **facilitate online filing of consumer complaints**.
  - It provides a **hassle-free, speedy, and inexpensive facility** to conveniently approach the relevant consumer forum, dispensing the need to travel and be physically present to file their grievance.
  - The objective is to digitise and make it **easy for consumers to access justice** with the help of technology.
- **Right to Repair Portal:**
  - In line with the **LiFE (Lifestyle for environment) movement**, the Department has initiated the creation of a **“Right to Repair portal”** to protect consumers against planned obsolescence, resulting in increasing e-waste.
  - The portal is expected to address concerns regarding the **price, originality, and warranty of spare parts**.
- **Reducing E-Waste:**
  - The Department is planning to organise a **hackathon for designing charging solutions** that work with wearable devices, with an emphasis on **reducing electronic and electrical waste (e-waste)** and promoting a more sustainable consumer ecosystem.
  - **Wireless charging methods** are also being explored, which will help significantly in **e-waste proliferation**.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

**Q.1 With reference to ‘consumers’ rights/privileges under the provisions of law in India, which of the following statements is/are correct ? (2012)**

1. Consumers are empowered to take samples for food testing.
2. When a consumer files a complaint in any consumer forum, no fee is required to be paid.
3. In case of death of consumer, his/her legal heir can file a complaint in the consumer forum on his/her behalf.

**Select the correct answer using the codes given below:**

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

**Ans: (c)**

[Source: PIB](#)

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# Synchronised Survey of Vultures

## Why in News?

There are 246 vultures spread across Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala, **according to the first-ever synchronised census** on the bird carried out in February 2023.

- The survey was conducted by the Kerala Forest and Wildlife department along with its counterparts in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka in the **select regions of the [Western Ghats](#)**.

## What are the Key Highlights of the Survey?

- The survey was carried out in the **[Mudumalai Tiger Reserve \(MTR\)](#)** and the adjoining landscape consisting of Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve (STR) in Tamil Nadu, **[Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary \(WWS\)](#)** in Kerala, **[Bandipur Tiger Reserve \(BTR\)](#)** and **[Nagerhole Tiger Reserve \(NTR\)](#)** in Karnataka.
  - A total of 98 vultures were seen in MTR, two in STR, 52 in WWS, 73 in BTR, and 23 in NTR.
- Volunteers sighted **White-rumped vultures (183)**, **Long-billed vultures (30)**, Red-headed vultures (28), Egyptian vultures (3), Himalayan Griffon (1), and Cinereous vultures (1).
- Vultures are witnessing a catastrophic decline **from the 2000s as these species are being exposed to diclofenac drug** which is mainly used as a painkiller for cattle and experts believe that increasing wild carcass availability was one of the major steps needed to help vultures thrive.

## What are Vultures?

- **About:**
  - It is one of the **22 species of large carrion-eating birds** that live predominantly in the tropics and subtropics.
  - They act an **important function as nature's garbage collectors** and help to keep the environment clean of waste.
    - Vultures also play a valuable role in keeping wildlife diseases in check.
  - India is home to **9 species of Vulture** namely the Oriental white-backed, Long-billed, Slender-billed, Himalayan, Red-headed, Egyptian, Bearded, Cinereous and the Eurasian Griffon.
    - Most of these **9 species face dangers of extinction**.
      - Bearded, Long-billed, Slender-billed, Oriental white-backed are protected in the Schedule-1 of the **[Wildlife Protection Act 1972](#)**. Rest are protected under '**Schedule IV**'.
- **[International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#):**



Sr. No.	Name of the Vulture Species	IUCN status	Pictorial Representation
1.	Oriental White-backed Vulture (Gyps Bengalensis)	Critically Endangered	
2.	Slender-billed Vulture (Gyps Tenuirostris)	Critically Endangered	
3.	Long-billed Vulture (Gyps Indicus)	Critically Endangered	
4.	Egyptian Vulture (Neophron Percnopterus)	Endangered	
5.	Red-Headed Vulture (Sarcogyps Calvus)	Critically Endangered	
6.	Indian Griffon Vulture (Gyps Fulvus)	Least Concerned	
7.	Himalayan Griffon (Gyps Himalayensis)	Near Threatened	
8.	Cinereous Vulture (Aegypius Monachus)	Near Threatened	
9.	Bearded Vulture or Lammergeier (Gypaetus Barbatus)	Near Threatened	



#### Threats:

- Loss of Natural Habitats due to anthropogenic activities.
- Food Dearth and Contaminated Food.
- Electrocution by Power lines.

#### Conservation Efforts:

- Recently, the Ministry for Environment, Forests and Climate Change launched a **Vulture Action Plan 2020-25** for the conservation of vultures in the country.
  - It will ensure **minimum use of Diclofenac and prevent the poisoning of the principal food of vultures, the cattle carcasses.**
- To study the cause of deaths of vultures in India, a **Vulture Care Centre (VCC) was set up at Pinjore, Haryana in 2001.**
- Later in 2004, the VCC was upgraded to being the **first Vulture Conservation and Breeding Centre (VCBC) in India.**
  - At present, there are **nine Vulture Conservation and Breeding Centres (VCBC) in India**, of which three are directly administered by the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS).

### UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

**Q. Vultures which used to be very common in Indian countryside some years ago are rarely seen nowadays. This is attributed to (2012)**

- (a) the destruction of their nesting sites by new invasive species
- (b) a drug used by cattle owners for treating their diseased cattle
- (c) scarcity of food available to them
- (d) a widespread, persistent and fatal disease among them.

Ans: (b)

Source: TH

## Rapid Fire Current Affairs

### 13<sup>th</sup> edition of Exercise Bold Kurukshetra



The Singapore Army and Indian Army **participated in the 13<sup>th</sup> edition of Exercise Bold Kurukshetra**, a bilateral armour exercise at Jodhpur Military Station, India. The exercise was hosted by the Indian army.

For the first time in the exercise series, **both armies participated in a command post Exercise**, which involved Battalion and Brigade level planning elements and computer wargaming.

Exercise **Bold Kurukshetra** is conducted under the ambit of the bilateral arrangement for the **joint Army Training and exercises between the Singapore Army and the Indian Army**. The exercise was first conducted in 2005. **Other exercise between India and Singapore includes Joint Military Training** (Air Force), [Trilateral Maritime Exercise SIMTEX](#) (With Thailand) and [Exercise Agni Warrior](#) (Army).

Read More: [India-Singapore Relations](#)

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## No More Compensation for the Victims of Bhopal Gas Tragedy: SC

Recently, **the Supreme Court of India dismissed the Centre's curative petition seeking more compensation from the Union Carbide Company (UCC)** for the victims of the gas tragedy that struck Bhopal in 1984.

On December 3, 1989, **the highly dangerous and toxic gas, methyl isocyanate (MIC)** (Chemical formula-  $\text{CH}_3\text{NCO}$  or  $\text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{NO}$ ), leaked from the Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL) in Bhopal. **The tragedy resulted in the death of 5,295 people and injuries to almost 5,68,292 persons** besides substantial loss of livestock and property.

**Read More:** [Bhopal Gas Tragedy](#)

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## Nuclear-powered Attack Submarines & AUKUS

The United States, Australia and Britain unveiled details of a plan to **provide Australia with nuclear-powered attack submarines from the early 2030s to counter China's ambitions in the Indo-Pacific.**

The agreement **is included under the 2021 AUKUS partnership** as part of a shared commitment to a free-and-open Indo-Pacific region.

In September 2021, **the US announced a new trilateral security partnership for the Indo-Pacific, between Australia, the UK and the US (AUKUS).** The major highlight of this arrangement is the **sharing of US nuclear submarine technology to Australia.** Its Indo-pacific orientation makes it an alliance against China's assertive actions in the [South China Sea](#).

**Read More:** [AUKUS, China's Expansion in Indo-Pacific Region](#)

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## Very Short Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS)

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted two consecutive **successful flight tests of the Very Short Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS) missile** at the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.

VSHORADS is a **Man Portable Air Defence System (MANPAD) meant for neutralising low-altitude aerial threats at short ranges.** It has been designed and developed indigenously by Research Centre Imarat, Hyderabad in collaboration with other DRDO laboratories and Indian Industry Partners. **The missile incorporates many novel technologies.**

**Read More:** [Defence Research and Development Organisation \(DRDO\), VSHORADS & MANPAD](#)

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