



## Biodiversity Heritage Site

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# Biodiversity Heritage Sites

Well-defined, unique, ecologically fragile ecosystems with high diversity of wild and domesticated species, presence of rare and threatened species, and keystone species and having significant cultural, ethical or aesthetic values.

## Declaring Authority

Under Section 37(1) of 'Biological Diversity Act, 2002', The State Government may, from time to time, in consultation with the local bodies, notify in the Official Gazette, areas of biodiversity importance as BHS.

## Restrictions Imposed

Creation of BHS may not put any restriction on the prevailing practices and usages of the local communities, other than those voluntarily decided by them.

As of November 2022, there are

**35** BHS  
in India.

## First and Latest Additions

**First:** Nallur Tamarind Grove in Bengaluru, Karnataka (January 2007)

**Latest:** Arittapatti in Madurai, Tamil Nadu (November 2022) (India's 35th BHS)

## Last 5 Additions

- Debbari or Chabimura in Tripura (September 2022)
- Betlingshib & its surroundings in Tripura (September 2022)
- Hajong Tortoise Lake in Assam (August 2022)
- Borjuli Wild Rice Site in Assam (August 2022)
- Amarkantak in Madhya Pradesh (July 2022)



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## Trends in Demography

**For Prelims:** India's demographic dividend, TFR, Maternal mortality ratio

**For Mains:** Demographic Changes of India, Significance of Population Growth

### Why in News?

According to the projection by the [United Nations](#), in 2022, **China will for the first time register an absolute decline in its population** and in 2023, India's population to reach 1,428.63 million, will surpass China's 1,425.67 million.

### What are the Drivers of Population Change?

#### ▪ Total Fertility Rate (TFR):

- TFR has **fallen for India in the last three decades**.
  - Between 1992-93 and 2019-21, **it came down from 3.4 to 2**; the fall was especially significant in the rural areas.
  - In 1992-93, the average rural Indian woman produced one extra child compared to her urban counterpart (3.7 versus 2.7). By 2019-21, that gap had halved (2.1 versus 1.6).
  - A TFR of 2.1 is considered as "replacement-level fertility".
  - The TFR is the average number of births by women aged 15-49 based on surveys for a particular period/year.

#### ▪ Fall in Mortality:

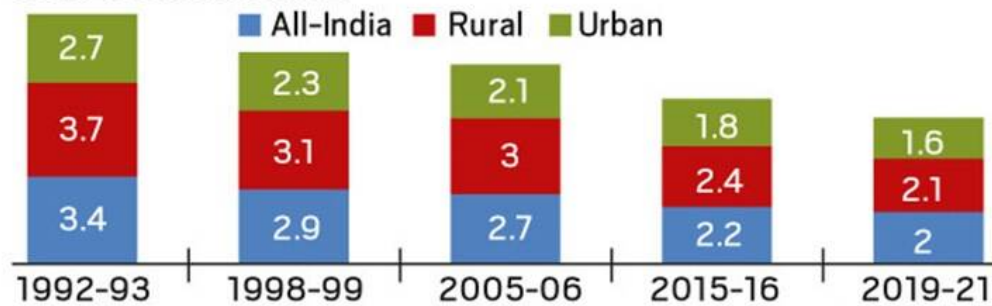
- **Crude Death Rate (CDR) fell to single digits for China first in 1974 (to 9.5) and for India in 1994 (9.8)**, and further to 7.3-7.4 for both in 2020.
  - The CDR was 23.2 for China and 22.2 for India in 1950.
  - CDR is the **number of persons dying per year per 1,000 population**.
- Mortality falls with increased education levels, public health and vaccination programmes, access to food and medical care, and provision of safe drinking water and sanitation facilities.

#### ▪ Life Expectancy at Birth:

- Between 1950 and 2020, **life expectancy at birth went up from 43.7 to 78.1 years for China and from 41.7 to 70.1 years for India**.
  - Reduction in mortality normally leads to a rising population. A drop in fertility, on the other hand, slows down population growth, ultimately resulting in absolute declines.

## CHART-1

### TOTAL FERTILITY RATE

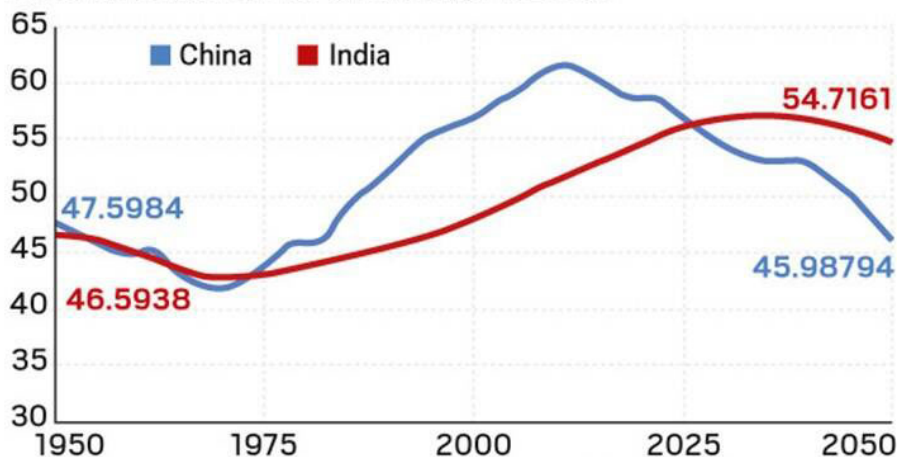


## What are the Implications of the Trends for China?

- China's **TFR was 1.3 births per woman, marginally up from the 1.2 in the 2010 and 2000 censuses**, but way below the replacement rate of 2.1.
- From 2016, **China officially ended its one-child policy** which was introduced in 1980.
- The UN, nevertheless, projects its total population at 1.31 billion in 2050, a 113 million-plus drop from the 2021 peak.
- The decline in China's population of prime working age is concerning as it **creates a vicious cycle wherein the number of working people to support dependent decreases but the number of dependents starts increasing**.
- The proportion of the **population aged between 20 and 59 years crossed 50% in 1987** and peaked at 61.5% in 2011.
- As the cycle reverses, China's working-age population will fall below 50% by 2045.
- Moreover, the average (median) age of the population, which was 28.9 years in 2000 and 37.4 years in 2020, is expected to soar to 50.7 years by 2050.

## CHART-2

### PERCENT SHARE OF POPULATION AGED 20-59



## What are the Steps taken by India to Control Population?

- India **became one of the first developing countries** to come up with a state-sponsored family planning programme in the 1950s.
  - A population policy committee was established in 1952.
  - In 1956, a Central Family Planning Board was set up and its focus was on sterilisation.
  - In 1976, GOI announced the **first National Population Policy**.

- **National Population Policy, 2000** envisaged achieving a stable population for India.
  - The Policy aims to achieve stable population by 2045.
  - One of its immediate objectives is to address the unmet needs for contraception, health care infrastructure, and personnel and provide integrated service delivery for basic reproductive and child health care.
- [National Family Health Survey \(NFHS\)](#) is a large-scale, multi-round survey conducted in a representative sample of households throughout India.
  - NFHS has had two specific goals:
    - To provide essential data on health and family welfare needed for policy and programme purposes.
    - To provide information on important emerging health and family welfare issues.
- Realising the potential of education in tackling the problems of growing rate of population, the Ministry of Education launched a **Population Education Programme** with effect from 1980.
  - The Population Education programme is a central sector scheme designed to introduce Population Education in the formal education system.
  - It has been developed in collaboration with the **United Nations Funds for Population Activities (UNFPA)** and with the active involvement of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

## Way Forward

- There is an **opportunity for India to reap a demographic dividend** as its working-age population's share of the overall population reached 50% only in 2007 and will peak at 57% by the mid-2030s.
  - But reaping demographic dividend is contingent upon the creation of meaningful employment opportunities for a young population.
- There **needs to be preparedness with suitable infrastructure**, conducive social welfare schemes and massive investment in quality education and health.
- For those already in the 25-64 age bracket, **there is a need for skilling**, which is the only way to ensure they are more productive and have better incomes.
- New skills and opportunities for women and girls befitting their participation in a [3 trillion dollar economy](#) is urgently needed.

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

### Prelims

**Q.** As per India's National Population Policy, 2000, by which one of the following years is it our long-term objective to achieve population stabilization? **(2008)**

- (a) 2025
- (b) 2035
- (c) 2045
- (d) 2055

**Ans:** (c)

### Mains

**Q.** Discuss the main objectives of Population Education and point out the measures to achieve them in India in detail. **(2021)**



## India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement

**For Prelims:** Location of Australia and the Neighbourhood, Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement, Free Trade Agreement, CEPA, CECA, Supply Chain Resilience Initiative, QUAD, UNCLOS

**For Mains:** International Treaties & Agreements, Groupings & Agreements Involving India and/or Affecting India's Interests, Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement, Free Trade Agreement and its Significance.

### Why in News?

Recently, the Australian Parliament approved the India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (Ind-Aus ECTA).



**What is Ind-Aus ECTA?**

- It is the first [Free Trade Agreement \(FTA\)](#) that India has signed with a major developed country in over a decade.
- The **Agreement encompasses cooperation across the entire gamut of bilateral economic and commercial relations** between the two friendly countries, and covers areas like:
  - Trade in Goods, Rules of Origin
  - Trade in Services
  - Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)
  - [Sanitary and Phytosanitary \(SPS\)](#) measures
  - Dispute Settlement, Movement of Natural Persons
  - Telecom, Customs Procedures
  - Pharmaceutical products, and Cooperation in other Areas
- ECTA provides for an **institutional mechanism to encourage and improve trade** between the two countries.
- The **ECTA between India and Australia covers almost all the tariff lines** dealt in by India and Australia respectively.
  - India will benefit from preferential market access provided by Australia on 100% of its tariff lines.
  - This includes all the labour-intensive sectors of export interest to India such as Gems and Jewellery, Textiles, leather, footwear, furniture etc.
  - On the other hand, India will be offering preferential access to Australia on over 70% of its tariff lines, including lines of export interest to Australia which are primarily raw materials and intermediaries such as coal, mineral ores and wines etc.
- Under the agreement, **Indian graduates from [STEM \(Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics\)](#)** will be granted extended post-study work visas.
  - Australia will also set up a programme to grant visas to young Indians looking to pursue working holidays in Australia.
  - Annual Visa quota of 1800 is to be instituted for India Yoga teachers and Chefs.
- It is also **estimated that 10 lakh jobs will be created** as a result of ECTA.

## How has been the India- Australia Relation so far?

- India and Australia enjoy excellent bilateral relations that have undergone transformational evolution in recent years, developing along a positive track, into a friendly partnership.
- This is a special partnership characterised by **shared values of pluralistic, parliamentary democracies, Commonwealth traditions**, expanding economic engagement, long standing people-to-people ties and increasing high level interaction.
- The India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership initiated during the [India-Australia Leaders' Virtual Summit](#) held in June 2020 is the cornerstone of India-Australia multi-faceted bilateral relations.
- Growing India-Australia economic and commercial relations contribute to the stability and strength of a rapidly diversifying and deepening bilateral relationship between the two countries.
- **India and Australia have been each other's important trading partners.**
  - Australia is the 17<sup>th</sup> largest trading partner of India and India is Australia's 9th largest trading partner.
  - India-Australia bilateral trade for both merchandise and services is valued at USD 27.5 billion in 2021.
  - India's merchandise exports to Australia grew 135% between 2019 and 2021. India's exports consist primarily of a broad-based basket largely of finished products and were USD 6.9 billion in 2021.
  - India's merchandise imports from Australia were USD 15.1 billion in 2021, consisting largely of raw materials, minerals and intermediate goods.
- India and Australia are partners in the trilateral [Supply Chain Resilience Initiative \(SCRI\)](#) arrangement along with Japan which seeks to enhance the resilience of supply chains in the [Indo-Pacific Region](#).
- Further, India and Australia are also members of the [QUAD grouping \(India, the US, Australia and Japan\)](#), also comprising the US, and Japan, to further enhance cooperation and develop partnership across several issues of common concern.

## Way Forward

- The India-Australia ECTA will further cement the already deep, close and strategic relations between the two countries and will significantly enhance bilateral trade in goods and services, create new employment opportunities, raise living standards, and improve the general welfare of the peoples of the two countries.
- Both India and Australia share a vision of a free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific region and cooperative use of the seas by adherence to international law including the [United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea \(UNCLOS\)](#) and peaceful resolution of disputes rather than through unilateral or coercive actions.

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

**Q. Consider the following countries: (2018)**

1. Australia
2. Canada
3. China
4. India
5. Japan
6. USA

**Which of the above are among the 'free-trade partners' of ASEAN?**

- (a) 1, 2, 4 and 5  
(b) 3, 4, 5 and 6  
(c) 1, 3, 4 and 5  
(d) 2, 3, 4 and 6

**Ans: (c)**

[Source: PIB](#)

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## Election Commission of India

**For Prelims:** Election Commission of India, Supreme Court

**For Mains:** Election Commission of India and its functions

### Why in News?

In a recent ruling, the [Supreme Court](#) claimed the government pays lip service to the independence of Election Commissioners, pointing out that **Chief Election Commissioners' terms have fallen from over eight years in the 1950s to less than three hundred days since 2004.**

### What is the Election Commission of India?

- **About:**
  - The [Election Commission of India \(ECI\)](#) is an autonomous constitutional authority



responsible for administering Union and State election processes in India.

- It was **established in accordance with the Constitution on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1950** (celebrated as [national voters' day](#)). The secretariat of the commission is in New Delhi.
- The body administers elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, and State Legislative Assemblies in India, and the offices of the President and Vice President in the country.
  - It is not concerned with the elections to panchayats and municipalities in the states. For this, the Constitution of India provides for a separate [State Election Commission](#).
- **Constitutional Provisions:**
  - **Part XV (Article 324-329) of the Indian Constitution:** It deals with elections and establishes a commission for these matters.
  - **Article 324:** Superintendence, direction and control of elections to be vested in an Election Commission.
  - **Article 325:** No person to be ineligible for inclusion in, or to claim to be included in a special, electoral roll on grounds of religion, race, caste or sex.
  - **Article 326:** Elections to the House of the People and to the Legislative Assemblies of States to be based on adult suffrage.
  - **Article 327:** Power of Parliament to make provision with respect to elections to Legislatures.
  - **Article 328:** Power of Legislature of a State to make provision with respect to elections to such Legislature.
  - **Article 329:** Bar to interference by courts in electoral matters.
- **Structure of ECI:**
  - Originally the **commission had only one election commissioner** but after the Election Commissioner Amendment Act 1989, it was made a multi-member body.
  - The **Election Commission shall consist of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)** and such number of other election commissioners, if any, as the President may from time-to-time fix.
  - Presently, it consists of the CEC and two Election Commissioners.
    - At the state level, the election commission is helped by the Chief Electoral Officer who is an IAS rank Officer.
- **Appointment & Tenure of Commissioners:**
  - The **President appoints CEC and Election Commissioners**.
  - They have a **fixed tenure of six years**, or up to the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.
  - They enjoy the same status and receive salary and perks as available to Judges of the [Supreme Court \(SC\)](#) of India.
- **Removal:**
  - They can **resign anytime or can also be removed** before the expiry of their term.
  - The CEC can be removed from office only through a process of removal similar to that of a SC judge by Parliament.
- **Limitations:**
  - The Constitution has **not prescribed the qualifications** (legal, educational, administrative or judicial) of the members of the Election Commission.
  - The **Constitution has not specified the term of the members of the Election Commission**.
  - The **Constitution has not debarred the retiring election commissioners** from any further appointment by the government.

## What are the Powers and Functions of ECI?

- **Administrative:**
  - To determine the territorial areas of the electoral constituencies throughout the country on the basis of the [Delimitation](#) Commission Act of Parliament.
  - To prepare and periodically revise electoral rolls and to register all eligible voters.
  - To [grant recognition to political parties](#) and allot election symbols to them.
  - Election Commission ensures a level playing field for the political parties in election fray, through strict observance by them of a [Model Code of Conduct](#) evolved with the consensus of political parties.

- It decides the **election schedules for the conduct of elections**, whether general elections or bye-elections.
- **Advisory Jurisdiction & Quasi-Judicial Functions:**
  - Under the Constitution, the **Commission has advisory jurisdiction** in the matter of post-election disqualification of sitting members of Parliament and State Legislatures.
    - The opinion of the Commission in all such matters is binding on the President or, as the case may be, the Governor to whom such opinion is tendered.
  - Further, the **cases of persons found guilty of corrupt practices at elections which come before the SC and High Courts are also referred to the Commission for its opinion** on the question as to whether such person shall be disqualified and, if so, for what period.
  - The **Commission is vested with quasi-judicial power** to settle disputes relating to splits/ mergers of recognised political parties.
  - The Commission has the power to disqualify a candidate who has failed to lodge an account of his election expenses within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

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

### Prelims

**Q. Consider the following statements: (2017)**

1. The Election Commission of India is a five-member body.
2. The Union Ministry of Home Affairs decides the election schedule for the conduct of both general elections and bye-elections.
3. Election Commission resolves the disputes relating to splits/mergers of recognised political parties.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**Ans: (d)**

### Mains

**Q. Discuss the role of the Election Commission of India in the light of the evolution of the Model Code of Conduct. (2022)**

[Source: TH](#)

## RBI's Concerns on Slow Deposit Growth

**For Prelims:** Inflation, Covid-19, Russia-Ukraine, Asset Quality, NPA.

**For Mains:** Concerns over slow deposit growth and Asset Quality.

## Why in News?

Recently, the RBI has raised concerns over the lagging growth in deposits in relation to credit growth, asset quality, and adoption of new-age technology solutions and advised banks to remain watchful.

## Why have Banks been Asked to Remain “Watchful”?

- RBI said the domestic macroeconomic outlook can be best characterised as resilient but **sensitive to formidable global headwinds**.
- The present Global headwinds are **emanating from three sources**;
  - [Russian actions in Ukraine](#) impacting energy supplies and prices (especially in Europe),
  - **Economic slowdown** in China because of frequent lockdowns due to its zero-[Covid](#) policy,
  - **Increased cost-of-living** because of resulting [inflationary pressures](#).
- Thus, monetary policies across the globe, especially of advanced economies, are being tightened, spurring concerns **about financial stability risk in emerging and developing economies**.

## What about Deposit and Credit Growth?

- Banks' credit-disbursing **bandwidth is determined by its in-house reserves**. More importantly, demand for credit increases with greater economic activity.
- As per the RBI, aggregate credit demand domestically bears an **“uneven profile” at present**.
- Urban demand appears **robust and rural demand which was muted has also started acquiring some strength** recently.
- Commercial bank credit growth too has been surging, led by services, personal loans, agriculture and industry, in that order.
- This reflects the **growing preference for bank credit for meeting working capital** requirements.
  - As per the RBI's latest weekly data for scheduled commercial banks, aggregate deposits have grown 8.2% in comparison to 11.4% on a year-over-year basis whereas credit off-take has jumped 17% in comparison to a 7.1% increase on a YoY basis.
- As per CRISIL it is not that **deposit growth has fallen materially**, but that credit growth has risen in the last few quarters.
- During the pandemic, owing to lower economic activity credit growth was on a lower trajectory. Now with economic activity returning to normalcy, the credit growth has picked up — especially in the previous three quarters.

## How has been Banks' Asset Quality?

- The **Gross [Non-Performing assets \(GNPAs\)](#)** have consistently declined, with net NPAs **sliding down to 1% of total assets**.
- Liquidity cover is robust and profitability is shored up. However, market participants have **raised concerns with respect to corporates** in light of the macroeconomic situation.
- The reason for the improving asset quality is the **de-leveraging that has happened in corporate India over the years** wherein most corporates have been able to cut down on their debt level and improve their credit profiles.
  - Corporate NPAs are expected to come down in the current amid upcoming fiscals due to **the setting up of the [National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd](#)** which is expected to take over some of the legacy corporate loan NPAs which are still with banks.

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

### Q. Consider the following statements:

1. The Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is appointed by the Central Government.
2. Certain provisions in the Constitution of India give the Central Government the right to issue

- directions to the RBI in public interest.  
3. The Governor of the RBI draws his power from the RBI Act.

**Which of the above statements are correct?**

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

**Ans: (c)**

[Source: TH](#)

## Climate Change Performance Index 2023

### Why in News?

India has ranked **8<sup>th</sup>** in the [Climate Change Performance Index \(CCPI\) 2023](#).

- India ranked 10th in CCPI, 2022.

### What is CCPI?

- About:**
  - Published by:**
    - Germanwatch, the **New Climate Institute** and the **Climate Action Network** annually since **2005**.
  - Scope:**
    - It is an independent monitoring tool for tracking the climate protection performance of **59 countries and the European Union**.
      - These countries collectively account for **more than 92% of global Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions**.
  - Aim:**
    - It aims to **enhance transparency in international climate politics** and enables comparison of climate protection efforts and progress made by individual countries.
  - Criteria:**
    - The CCPI looks at four categories, with 14 indicators: **GHG Emissions (40% of the overall score)**, [Renewable Energy \(20%\)](#), [Energy Use \(20%\)](#), and [Climate Policy \(20%\)](#).
- CCPI 2023:**
  - Overall Performance (Country-wise):**
    - No country** performs well enough in all index categories to achieve an **overall very high rating**.
      - The **first three overall positions** therefore remain **empty**.
    - Denmark, Sweden, Chile and Morocco** were the only four small countries that were ranked above India as **4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> respectively**.
    - The ranking given by CCPI places **India as the only G-20 country in the top 10 rankers**.
    - The **United Kingdom ranked 11<sup>th</sup>** in CCPI 2023.

- **China falls ranked 51<sup>st</sup>** in CCPI 2023 and received an **overall very low rating**.
- The **United States (US)** rises three ranks to **52<sup>nd</sup>** **that's still overall very low rating**.
- **The Islamic Republic of Iran ranked 63<sup>rd</sup>**, hence, placing it **last in the CCPI 2023**.
- **India's Status:**
  - **Performance:**
    - India+ has been **ranked amongst top 5 countries in the world**, and the **best among the G20 countries**.
    - India's rank is the **best amongst all large economies**.
    - India earns a **high rating in the GHG Emissions and Energy Use categories**, with a **medium for Climate Policy and Renewable Energy**.
    - The country is **on track to meet its 2030 emissions targets** (compatible with a well-below 2°C scenario).
      - However, the **renewable energy pathway is not on track for the 2030 target**.
  - **Concerns:**
    - Since the last CCPI, **India has updated its [Nationally Determined Contribution \(NDC\)](#) and announced a [net zero target](#) for 2070**. However, **roadmaps and concrete action plans for achieving the targets are missing**.
    - India is among the **nine countries responsible for 90% of global coal production**. It also **plans to increase its oil, gas, and oil production** by over 5% by 2030.
      - This is **incompatible with the 1.5°C target**.
  - **Suggestions:**
    - The experts suggested to lay stress on a **just and inclusive energy transition**, as well as the need for **decentralised renewable energy** and capacities for **rooftop photovoltaics**.
    - A **carbon pricing mechanism**, the need for **more capacities at the subnational level**, and **concrete action plans** for achieving the targets are **key demands**.

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

### Prelims

**Q. The term 'Intended Nationally Determined Contributions' is sometimes seen in the news in the context of (2016)**

- (a) pledges made by the European countries to rehabilitate refugees from the war-affected Middle East
- (b) plan of action outlined by the countries of the world to combat climate change
- (c) capital contributed by the member countries in the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
- (d) plan of action outlined by the countries of the world regarding Sustainable Development Goals

**Ans: (b)**

**Exp:**

- Intended Nationally Determined Contributions is the term used under the UNFCCC for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in all countries that signed the Paris Agreement.
- At COP 21 countries across the globe publicly outlined the actions they intended to take under the international agreement. The contributions are in the direction to achieve the long-term goal of the Paris Agreement; "to hold the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C to pursue efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C, and to achieve net zero emissions in the second half of this



century.”

- **Therefore, option B is the correct answer.**

[Source: PIB](#)

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## General Lachit Borphukan of Ahom Kingdom

### Why in News?

The 400<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Assam’s legendary war hero Lachit Borphukan will be celebrated in the New Delhi from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2022

### Who was Lachit Borphukan?

- Born on 24<sup>th</sup> November, 1622, **Borphukan was known for his leadership in the Battle of Saraighat**, 1671 in which an attempt by Mughal forces to capture Assam was thwarted.
  - The battle of Saraighat was fought on the banks of the Brahmaputra in Guwahati in 1671.
  - It is considered as one of the greatest naval battles on a river which resulted in the victory of Ahoms over the Mughals.
- He was the **inspiration behind strengthening India’s naval force** and revitalising inland water transport and creating infrastructure associated with it due to his great naval strategies.
- The **Lachit Borphukan gold medal is awarded to the best cadet from the National Defence Academy**.
  - The medal was instituted in 1999 to inspire defence personnel to emulate Borphukan’s heroism and sacrifices.
- He died on 25<sup>th</sup> April, 1672.

### What do we Know about Ahom Kingdom?

- **About:**
  - Established in 1228 in the Brahmaputra valley of Assam, the Ahom kingdom retained its sovereignty for 600 years.
  - **The kingdom was founded by Chaolung Sukapha**, a 13th century ruler.
  - The Ahoms ruled the land till the province was annexed to British India in 1826 with **the signing of the Treaty of Yandaboo**.
  - Renowned for their bravery, the Ahoms didn’t even fall to the might of the powerful Mughal Empire.
- **Political Setup:**
  - Ahoms created a new state by suppressing the older political system of the bhuiyans (landlords).
  - The Ahom state depended upon forced labour. Those forced to work for the state were called **paiks**.
- **Society:**
  - Ahom society was divided into clans or khels. A khel often controlled several villages.
  - Ahoms worshipped their own tribal gods, yet they accepted the Hindu religion and the Assamese language.
    - However, the Ahom kings did not completely give up their traditional beliefs after adopting Hinduism.
  - Intermarriage with local also increased assimilation processes of Ahoms in Assamese culture.

#### ▪ **Art and Culture:**

- Poets and scholars were given land grants and theatre was encouraged.
- Important works of Sanskrit were translated into the local language.
- Historical works, known as buranjis, were also written, first in the Ahom language and then in Assamese.

#### ▪ **Military Strategy:**

- The Ahom king was the supreme commander of the state as well as the Military.
- The **Ahom king himself led the state forces** in the time of wars. The Paiks were the main army of the state.
  - There were two types of Paiks i.e., serving and nonserving. The non-serving Paiks constituted a standing militia which could be mobilized at a short notice by the kheldar (an expert military organizer).
- The **full contingent of the Ahom Army consisted of infantry, navy, artillery, elephantry, cavalry and spies**. The main war weapons consisted of bows and arrows, swords, javelins discus, guns, match-locks and cannons.
- The Ahoms sent spies to the enemy's camp to study the strength and the war strategies of the enemies before leading an expedition.
- The **Ahom soldiers were experts in guerilla fighting**. Sometimes they allowed the enemies to enter the country, then cut off their communications and attack them in front and rear
- **Few important forts:** Chamdhara, Saraighat, Simlagarh, Kaliabar, Kajali and Pandu.
- They also **learnt the technique of constructing boat bridges in the Brahmaputra**.
- Above all, the **mutual understanding among the civil and military wings**, and unity among the nobles always worked as strong weapons of the Ahoms.

[Source: TH](#)

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## **Arittapatti Biodiversity Heritage Site**

### **Why in News?**

Recently, the **Tamil Nadu Government** issued a notification declaring **Arittapatti in Melur block, Madurai district, a Biodiversity Heritage Site (BHS)**.

- It is Tamil Nadu's first and India's 35<sup>th</sup> Biodiversity Heritage Site.

### **What are the Key Facts about Arittapatti?**

- Arittapatti village is **rich in ecological and historical significance**, it houses around **250 species of birds** including three important **raptors, birds of prey namely:**
  - Laggar Falcon
  - Shaheen Falcon
  - Bonelli's Eagle
- It is also home to wildlife such as the **Indian Pangolin, Slender Loris and Pythons**.
- The biodiversity-rich area is surrounded by a **chain of seven hillocks or inselbergs** that serve as a watershed, charging **'72 lakes, 200 natural springs and three check dams.'**
  - **The Anaikondan Lake**, built during the reign of [Pandiyans](#) in the 16<sup>th</sup> century is one among them.
- Several **megalithic structures, rock-cut temples, Tamil Brahmi inscriptions and Jain beds** add to the historical significance of the region.

### **What is a Biodiversity Heritage Site?**

- **About:**
  - Biodiversity heritage sites are well-defined areas that are unique, ecologically fragile ecosystems with **high diversity of wild and domesticated species, presence of rare and threatened species, and keystone species.**
- **Legal Provision:**
  - As per provision under **Section 37(1)** of '[Biological Diversity Act, 2002](#)'. The **State Government may**, from time to time in **consultation with the local bodies**, notify in the Official Gazette, **areas of biodiversity importance** as under this Act.
- **Restrictions:**
  - Creation of BHS may **not put any restriction on the prevailing practices and usages** of the local communities, other than those **voluntarily decided by them**. The purpose is to **enhance the quality of life of the local communities** through conservation measures.
- **First BHS of India:**
  - **Nallur Tamarind Grove** in Bengaluru, Karnataka was the first Biodiversity Heritage Site of India, declared in 2007.
- **Last Five Additions to BHS:**
  - Debbari or Chabimura in Tripura (September 2022)
  - Betlingshib & its surroundings in Tripura (September 2022)
  - Hajong Tortoise Lake in Assam (August 2022)
  - Borjuli Wild Rice Site in Assam (August 2022)
  - Amarkantak in Madhya Pradesh (July 2022)

## Infographic

[Source: TH](#)

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## National Centre of Excellence for Green Port & Shipping

### Why in News?

Recently, **India's first National Centre of Excellence for Green Port & Shipping (NCoEGPS)** was launched at **"INMARCO 2022"** held in Mumbai.

- The INMARCO is a quadrennial International Maritime Conference and Exhibition, hosted by the Institute of Marine Engineers (India).

### What is NCoEGPS?

- **About:**
  - It is a major **initiative by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MOPSW)** towards providing greener solutions.
  - The NCoEGPS will be working under the framework of the [Sagarmala programme of the MoPSW](#).
  - **The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)** is the **knowledge and implementation partner** for this project.
- **Aim:**
  - The centre aims to develop a **regulatory framework and alternate technology adoption road map for Green Shipping** to foster **carbon neutrality and circular economy (CE)** in shipping sector in India.
    - Green Shipping refers to the use of resources and energy to transport people and goods by ship and specifically concerns the reduction in such resources and energy

in order to **preserve the global environment from Green House Gases (GHGs) and environmental pollutants generated by ships.**

- India intends to **increase the share of renewable energy to 60% of the total power demand** of each of its major ports from a present share of less than 10%.
  - This will be through **solar and wind-generated power.**

▪ **Objectives:**

- **To empower 'Make in India'** in Port, Coastal and Inland water transport, and Engineering by developing state of art technologies and application products.
- **To enable fast-track innovations** in order to provide most appropriate solutions to various challenges in these sectors.
- **To create a pool of competent manpower** to the industry equipped with state of the art theoretical and practical knowhow.
- **Self-sufficiency in providing short term solutions** through scientific studies technology development technical arm in identifying and analysing complex problems and solving issues.

▪ **Significance:**

- It is a major attempt towards **realising Mission [Lifestyle for the Environment \(LiFE\) movement](#)** as it aims to **transform ports and shipping turn more Environment friendly.**
- The Center will **interact with all the ports, shipping, maritime states in understanding their problems and offering solutions** through well proven and upstream scientific approaches.

▪ **Related Initiatives:**

- The ports have also aimed to reduce **Carbon emissions per ton of cargo handled by 30% by 2030.**
- The **[Maritime Vision Document 2030](#)** is a 10 Year blueprint on **India's vision of a sustainable Maritime sector and vibrant blue economy.**
- India has been selected as the first country under the **IMO's Green Voyage 2050 project** to conduct a **pilot project related to Green Shipping.**

## What is Green Voyage 2050 Project?

- The **Green Voyage 2050 Project** is a **partnership project between the Government of Norway and [International Maritime Organisation \(IMO\)](#) launched in May 2019** aiming to transform the shipping industry **towards a lower carbon future.**
- The global partnership is **supporting developing countries, including Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs)**, in meeting their commitment towards relevant climate change and energy efficiency goals, for international shipping, **through supporting the Initial IMO Green House Gas (GHG) Strategy.**
- One of the important aims of GreenVoyage2050 is to **spur global efforts to demonstrate and test technology solutions.**

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

**Q. With reference to 'Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC)', consider the following statements: (2015)**

1. It was established very recently in response to incidents of piracy and accidents of oil spills.
2. It is an alliance meant for maritime security only.

**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: (d)**

**Exp:**

- Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) is a regional cooperation initiative of the Indian Ocean Rim countries which was established in Mauritius in March, 1997 with the aim of promoting economic and technical cooperation among its members. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- IOR-ARC is the only pan-Indian ocean grouping. It has 23 Member States and 9 Dialogue Partners.
- It aims to create a platform for trade, socio-economic and cultural cooperation in the Indian Ocean Rim area, which constitutes a population of about two billion people. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- The Indian Ocean Rim is rich in strategic and precious minerals, metals and other natural resources, marine resources and energy, all of which can be sourced from Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ), continental shelves and the deep seabed.
- **Therefore, option D is the correct answer.**

[Source: PIB](#)

## Rozgar Mela and Karmayogi Prarambh Module

### Why in News?

As part of the government's '**Rozgar Mela**' (employment fair), the Prime Minister has distributed over 71,000 appointment letters to new **recruits via video conferencing**.

- The Prime Minister has also launched 'Karmayogi Prarambh', a special online orientation course designed for new appointees in government departments.

### What are the Key Points of Rozgar Mela?

- The Rozgar Mela is an initiative of the central government to provide employment opportunities to the youth of the country.
- Under the Rozgar Mela Scheme, 10 lakh jobs will be available for candidates to apply in Group A and B Gazetted Posts, Group B Non-Gazetted and Group C Non-Gazetted posts.
- The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) would also fill a **significant number of posts in various Central Armed Police Forces**.
- These recruitments are being done in mission mode by ministries and departments either by themselves or through recruiting agencies such as UPSC, SSC and Railway Recruitment Board.

### What is Karmayogi Prarambh Module?

- The Karmayogi Prarambh module is an initiative under Mission Karmayogi - a National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB).
- The module is an **online orientation course for all new appointees** in various government departments.
- It will include a **code of conduct for government servants**, workplace ethics and integrity, human resource policies and other benefits and allowances that will help them to get acclimatized



to the policies and transition smoothly into the new roles.

- The motive of the program is to **keep the essence of civil service within the people of the country** which is the center of all change.

[Source: TH](#)

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