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General Studies-1

Important figures in Indian History

PM pays tributes to Mahatma Phule on his birth anniversary

Jyotirao Govindrao Phule (11 April 1827 – 28 November 1890) was an Indian social activist, a thinker, anti-caste social reformer and a writer from Maharashtra.

His work extended to many fields including eradication of untouchability and the caste system, women's emancipation and the reform of Hindu family life.

On 24 September 1873, Phule, along with his followers, formed the Satyashodhak Samaj (Society of Seekers of Truth) to attain equal rights for people from lower castes.

Phule is regarded as an important figure of the social reform movement in Maharashtra. He and his wife, Savitribai Phule, were pioneers of women's education in India.

He is most known for his efforts to educate women and lower caste people. The couple were among the first native Indians to open a school for girls in India in 1st January 1848

Phule was bestowed with the title of Mahatma on 11 May 1888 by another social reformer from Bombay, Vithalrao Krishnaji Vandekar.

Mahatma Phule inspired B. R. Ambedkar, the first minister of law of Republic India and the architect of Indian Constitution.

General Studies-2

Swachh Bharat Mission:

Why in News?

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has said that sanitation coverage has expanded from about 40 percent in 2014, to about 80 percent today. He said toilet construction is ending social imbalances and is becoming a means of socio-economic empowerment and women empowerment. He described the mass movement of Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan as a phenomenon unparalleled anywhere in the world, in the 21st century.



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About Swachh Bharat Mission:

It was officially launched on 2 October 2014 and is India's biggest ever cleanliness drive.

The mission seeks to achieve clean India and aims to provide access to toilets to all households in the country.

Objectives of the mission:

- Eliminate open defecation.
- Conversion of insanitary toilets to pour flush toilets.
- Eradication of manual scavenging.
- 100% collection and scientific processing/disposal reuse/recycle of Municipal Solid Waste.
- To bring about a behavioral change in people regarding healthy sanitation practices.
- Generate awareness among the citizens about sanitation and its linkages with public health.
- Strengthening of urban local bodies to design, execute and operate systems.
- To create enabling environment for private sector participation in Capital Expenditure and Operation & Maintenance (O&M) costs.

Key findings of National Annual Rural Sanitation survey:

- 77% household have access to toilet
- 94% of them are using it regularly
- 96% ODF villages confirmed to remain ODF.
- Five states, 149 districts and 2.08 lakh villages have already been declared Open Defecation Free (ODF).
- Nearly 22% of the cities and towns have been declared ODF; 50% of the urban wards have achieved 100% door-to-door solid waste collection; and over 20,000 Swachhagrahi volunteers are working across urban local bodies, and over a lakh are working in rural India.
- The number of schools with separate toilet facilities for girls has increased from 0.4 million (37%) to almost one million (91%).

'NITI Forum for North East'

The first meeting of the newly constituted 'NITI Forum for North East' was held in Agartala, Tripura today.

The meeting, organized by the NITI Aayog, Ministry of DoNER and the North Eastern Council (NEC), was co-chaired by the Vice-Chairman, NITI Aayog, Shri



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Rajeev Kumar and the Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), Dr. Jitendra Singh.

Outcome:

The focus of development projects in the NER will be based on the concept of "HIRA" (Highways, Inland Waterways, Railways and Airways) as spelled out by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

The emphasis will also be made on Education, Health and Skill Development in the region.

Horticulture, Tourism, Food Processing, use of Bamboo and Made in North-East will be developed through five Mission Mode projects in a time-bound manner.

About NITI Forum:

- 'NITI Forum for North East' was constituted in February 2018 with an aim to ensure sustainable economic growth of the North Eastern Region (NER) of the country and periodically review the development status in NER.
- The forum will have its Secretariat in the Ministry of DoNER.
- The NITI Forum for Northeast is tasked to identify various constraints on the way of accelerated, inclusive and sustainable economic growth in the North East Region of the country and to recommend suitable interventions for addressing identified constraints. It will also review the development status in the NER.
- The Forum includes representation from all NE States, their Chief Secretaries and Secretaries of relevant Central Ministries/Departments, Directors of reputed institutions (IIT, IIM etc), experts and journalists have been included as members.

International relations:

President of India becomes first visiting Head of State to address Parliament of Swaziland

Following the conclusion of his visit to Swaziland, the President today (April 10, 2018) will leave for Zambia. This will be the final leg of his journey to three African nations – Equatorial Guinea, Swaziland and Zambia. In the evening, he will meet and address the Indian community in Lusaka.

India commits to cooperation in Health and Agriculture, to build new Parliament building.



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About Swaziland:

Swaziland, officially the **Kingdom of Swaziland** (/ˈswɑːzɪlænd/ or /-lənd/; Swazi: *Umbuso weSwatini*; sometimes called **kaNgwane** or **Eswatini**),^[5] is a sovereign state in Southern Africa. It is neighboured by Mozambique to its northeast and by South Africa to its north, west and south; it is a landlocked country.

Swaziland lies across a fault which runs from the Drakensberg Mountains of Lesotho, north through the Eastern highlands of Zimbabwe, and forms the Great Rift Valley of Kenya

General Studies-3

Space related Issues

Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch the IRNSS-1I satellite on April 12 at 04:04 a.m. from the first launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, through its PSLV-C41.

The launch of IRNSS-1I is important for ISRO and users. The satellites were built to last for 10 years each; but all three rubidium atomic clocks on the first satellite IRNSS-1A reportedly failed almost two years back; and the first spare or back-up, IRNSS-1H, flopped at launch on August 31, 2017.

What is IRNSS?

IRNSS stands for Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System. It is a set of satellites which together can provide India a regional positioning system similar to the GPS. According to the ISRO website, the system is designed to give position accuracy better than 20 metres to users in its primary coverage area. It can also service regions extending up to 1500 km around India's boundary.

How many IRNSS satellites are up there now?

There are currently seven IRNSS satellites (1A to 1G) in orbit. A, B, F, G are placed in a geosynchronous orbit, which means they seem to be at a fixed location above the Earth and they orbit along with the Earth. The remaining three, C, D, E, are located in geostationary orbit-they seem to be at a fixed location above the Earth along the equator and orbit along with the Earth.



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The last IRNSS, 1H, which was launched on August 31, 2017 was unsuccessful as the satellite did not come out of its heat shield.

What are the applications of IRNSS?

These satellites help not just in land navigation but also in marine and aerial navigation. The data from these satellites can be used to give vehicle drivers visual and voice navigation assistance. They also help in disaster management and in proper time-keeping.

List of Global Navigation Satellite Systems:

- GPS of the United States of America.
- GLONASS or Global Navigation Sputnik System of Russia.
- Galileo of the European Union.
- IRNSS or NAVIC of India.
- Quasi-Zenith Satellite System (QZSS) of Japan.

Economy

Goods and Services Tax Network

Why in News?

The government is considering raising its stake in the Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN), even up to 100 per cent, with equal ownership division between states and Centre.

The reasoning behind the proposal is that the majority private shareholding was considered necessary prior to introduction of GST to ensure adequate freedom and timely. Now, that the tax structure is believed to have stabilised, the government is mulling this proposal.

About GSTN:

- GSTN is currently a not for profit, non-government company with 24.5 per cent stake of Centre, 24.5 per cent by all states and empowered committee of state finance ministers, totalling to 49 per cent. Rest, 51 per cent stake is with private financial institutions.
- GSTN was incorporated as a private limited company on March 28, 2013.
- Non-government financial institutions such as HDFC, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, NSE Strategic Investment Co hold stake of 10 per cent each, LIC Housing
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- Finance Ltd holds 11 per cent stake, taking the total to 51 per cent stake in GSTN. Central and state governments hold 49 per cent stake.

Environment related matters:

Compensatory Afforestation Funds Management and Planning Authority

Why in News?

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said a staggering Rs 90,000 crore of environment restoration funds was lying with the Centre and states, and expressed concern that this was being misused.

The court asked the Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change to file an affidavit giving details of the total funds lying with Centre and states under the head Compensatory Afforestation Funds Management and Planning Authority as on March 31, 2018.

About CAMPA:

- **CAMPA Act or Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority bill** is an Indian legislation that seeks to provide an appropriate institutional mechanism, both at the Centre and in each State and Union Territory, to ensure expeditious utilization in efficient and transparent manner of amounts realised in lieu of forest land diverted for non-forest purpose which would mitigate impact of diversion of such forest land.
- The payments into the funds include compensatory afforestation, NPV, reforestation and any project specific payments. The National Fund will get 10% of funds collected and the remaining 90% will go to respective State Fund.

The collected funds will be utilised for afforestation, regeneration of forest ecosystem, wild life protection and infrastructure development.



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3R Forum

Smt. Sumitra Mahajan, Speaker, Lok Sabha said that the principles of 3R - Reduce, Reuse and Recycle - have been an integral part of Indian culture.

Preserving biodiversity, sustainable living and peaceful coexistence with nature have been the guiding philosophy of the Indian way of life and have always been part of the teachings of ancient scriptures.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of the Eighth Regional 3R Forum here today Smt. Sumitra Mahajan reminded the participating Mayors and the Municipal Commissioners that they have special responsibility of maintaining the cleanliness of their cities to promote the concept of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle of waste.

About Eighth Regional 3R Forum:

- The Eighth Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific is being held in Indore from 9-12 April in Indore.

Theme :

- "Achieving Clean Water, Clean Land and Clean Air through 3R and Resource Efficiency – A 21st Century Vision for Asia-Pacific Communities".
- It is being hosted by *the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs*, Government of India, and co-organized by the Ministry of the Environment, Government of Japan, and the UNCRD.
- The 3R (reduce, reuse, recycle) Initiative was launched at the Ministerial Conference on the 3R Initiative in Tokyo, Japan, in 2005, with an aim to shift the global consumption and production patterns towards building a sound-material-cycle society.
- In 2009, the Regional 3R Forum in Asia was established at Japan's proposal as a platform for broad cooperation on promotion of the 3Rs – reduce, reuse and recycle – in Asia.
- First Regional forum meeting took place in Tokyo in 2009.



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