



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 16-Apr-18

General Studies-1

Indus Valley Civilization

The [Indus Valley](#) civilisation was wiped out 4,350 years ago by a 900-year-long drought, scientists at the [Indian Institute of Technology](#) in Kharagpur (IIT-Kgp) have found.

Evidence gathered during their study also put to rest the widely accepted theory that the said drought lasted for only about 200 years.

About The Study:

Researchers from the geology and geophysics department have been studying the monsoon's variability for the past 5,000 years and have found that the rains played truant in the northwest Himalayas for 900 long years, drying up the source of water that fed the rivers along which the civilisation thrived.

This eventually drove the otherwise hardy inhabitants towards the east and south, where rain conditions were better.

The IIT-Kgp team mapped a 5,000-year monsoon variability in the **Tso Moriri Lake** in Leh-Ladakh — which too was fed by the same glacial source — and identified periods that had continuous spells of good monsoon as well as phases when it was weak or nil.

“The study revealed that from 2,350 BC (4,350 years ago) till 1,450 BC, the monsoon had a major weakening effect over the zone where the civilisation flourished.

A drought-like situation developed, forcing residents to abandon their settlements in search of greener pastures.

About Tso Moriri Lake

Tso Moriri or **Lake Moriri** or "Mountain Lake", is a brackish water lake in the Ladakhi part of the [Changthang](#) Plateau (literally: northern plains) in [Jammu and Kashmir](#) in Northern [India](#). The lake and surrounding area are protected as the Tso Moriri Wetland Conservation Reserve.



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 16-Apr-18

The lake is at an altitude of 4,522 m (14,836 ft). It is the largest of the high altitude lakes entirely within India and entirely within [Ladakh](#) in this Trans-Himalayan biogeographic region.

The [Korzok Monastery](#), on the western bank of the lake is 400 years old and attracts tourists and [Buddhist](#) pilgrims.

Largely based on the ecological diversity of the Lake (explained in the previous section) and its surroundings, the Tsomiriri was notified in November 2002 under the List of Ramsar Wetland sites under the [Ramsar Convention](#).

General Studies-2

Indian Polity-Judicial reforms

According to the Union Law Ministry, 14,249 courts are being made ready under its E-courts Mission Mode Project — all of them will get computer hardware, local area networks and standard application software.

These courts have been connected to the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG).

How will it Benefit Court Functioning?

Apart from the obvious benefits of transparency and real-time tracking, the e-move has sharply reduced the time taken to process a case, especially transcription of evidence.

The NJDG now finds a mention in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business 2018 report. The grid has "made it possible to generate case management reports on local courts, thereby making it easier to enforce contracts", states the report.

But more importantly, say researchers, it has thrown up real-time data that shows the patterns in which justice is delivered at the lowest level.

The preparation of summons only took 10 minutes and an hour was sufficient for their delivery, while other processes too consumed only a fifth of their original time," the study by the National Council of Applied Economic Research found.



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 16-Apr-18

The story of change is not just confined to computerisation, though. Judges in Delhi point out that it has made the system of disposal “transparent”.

The pendency of cases and the orders passed are uploaded real-time. This is of much help in criminal cases, where litigants don't have to wait for signed copies from the court.

But the actual impact will be seen when the filing of cases are done digitally. It is being followed in the Delhi High Court. The same has to be adopted at all trial courts.”

About E-Courts Project

What is it?

The e Courts Mission Mode Project (Phase I 2010-15; Phase II 2015-19) is a national eGovernance project for ICT enablement of district and subordinate courts of the country.

Implementation: It is being implemented by the Government of India with a total outlay of 1670 crores (Phase II).

The major objectives of the Project are to make whole judicial system ICT enabled by putting in place adequate and modern hardware and connectivity; automation of workflow management in all courts; electronic movement of records from taluka/trial to appeal courts; installation of video conferencing (VC) facility and recording of witness through Video Conferencing.

Specific targets set under the Project include: computerization of all the courts (around 20400) and DLSA and TLSC; WAN and cloud connectivity in 3500 court complexes; full Installation and use of Video Conferencing facility at 3000 Court Complexes and 1150 prisons; charting out key identified citizen services like electronic filing, daily orders, delivery of decrees, online case status in all the district courts etc.



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 16-Apr-18

General Studies-3

Left wing Extremism

Government's new policy paying dividends in containing Left Wing Extremism

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has been implementing the 'National Policy and Action Plan' since 2015 to combat Left Wing Extremism (LWE).

This envisages a multi-pronged strategy involving security and development related measures.

The significant features of the new policy were zero tolerance towards violence coupled with a big push to developmental activities so that benefits of development reached the poor and vulnerable in the affected areas.

Categorization of LWE Areas:

MHA had categorized 106 districts in 10 states as Left Wing Extremism affected.

These districts are covered under the Security Related Expenditure Scheme (SRE) of the MHA for the purpose of reimbursement of security related expenditure like transportation, communication, hiring of vehicles, stipend for surrendered Maoists, temporary infrastructure for forces etc to the states.

Out of 106 districts, 35 districts which accounted for 80-90 % of country-wide LWE violence were categorized as 'Most Affected Districts'.

Impact Of programme:

Over the last four years, there has been a substantial improvement in the LWE scenario.

Incidents of violence have seen a 20% decline with a 34% reduction in related deaths in 2017 as compared to 2013.

The geographical spread of LWE violence also shrunk from 76 districts in 2013 to just 58 districts in 2017.

Besides, just 30 of these districts account for 90% of the LWE violence in the country. At the same time certain new districts have emerged as the focus of expansion by the Left Wing Extremists.



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 16-Apr-18

What Now?

As a result of the exercise, 90 districts in 11 States will now be covered by the Scheme, down from 126. The list of 'Most Affected Districts' has been pruned to 30, down from 36. The revised categorization is a more realistic representation of the actual LWE scenario.

Role of Technology in Women Safety:

The Ministry of Electronics and IT in partnership with IIT-Delhi is working on a switch-based device in cars and buses to aid safety of women.

The proposed panic switch system when invoked will generate a loud alarm in the vehicle which will attract public attention, and send the coordinates of the person to a server [police control room] to provide necessary help.

The project, being developed by IIT-Delhi, is being funded by the Nirbhaya Fund, set up in 2013 for implementation of initiatives aimed at enhancing the safety and security of women in the country.

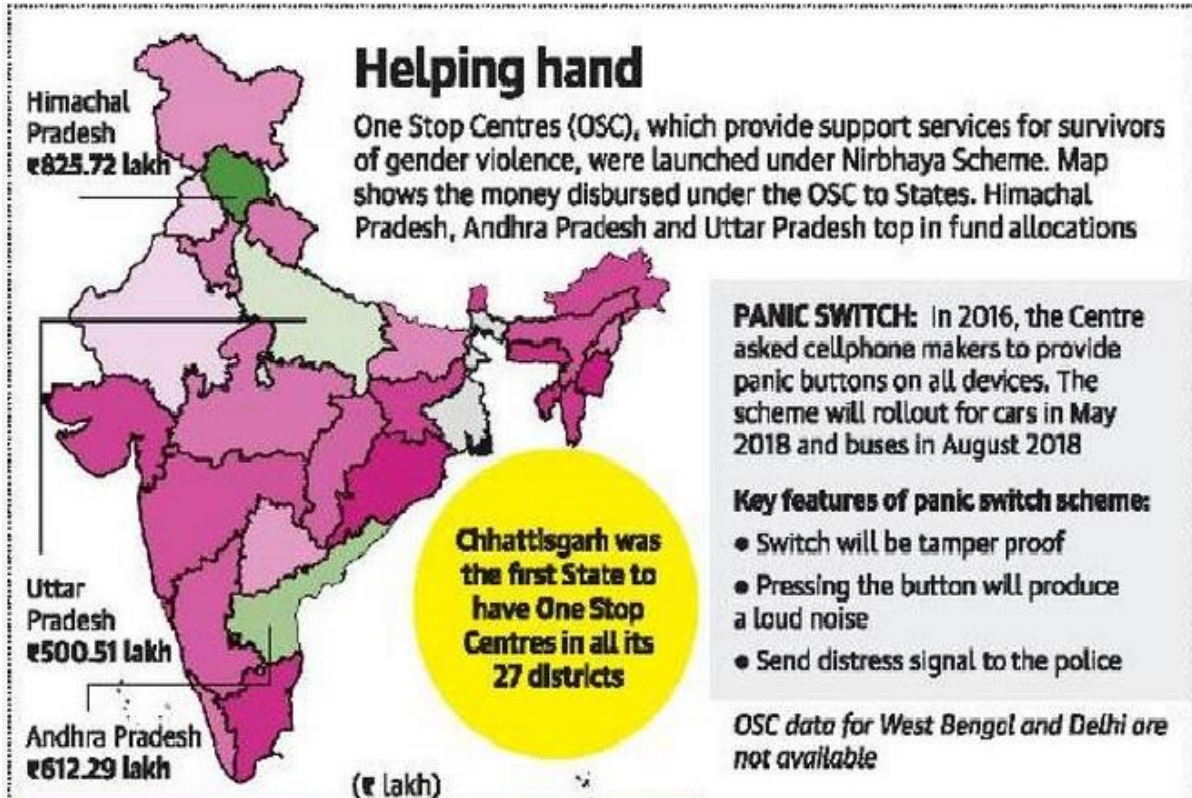
However, the government has been facing criticism for under-utilisation of the fund.

In 2016, the government had announced plans to make it mandatory for mobile phone makers to provide a panic button on the device, starting January 2017. However, the plans were delayed by almost a year.

The trial for the system finally started in U.P. earlier this year.



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 16-Apr-18



National Anti Profiteering Authority:

Why In News?

The National Anti-Profiteering Authority in GST will soon reach out to e-commerce companies seeking responses on whether they profited from sale of good after reduction in the Goods and Services Tax rates.

Majority of complaints are against firms in real estate and the FMCG sector. The complaints include selling goods at an MRP that did not reflect the revised GST rates or the benefits of input tax credit received by a business not being passed on to the end consumer.

NAA has now partnered with community social network Local

Circles to reach out to the people as part of their awareness campaign on the issue.



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 16-Apr-18

About the National Anti-profiteering Authority:

What is it?

The National Anti-profiteering Authority is tasked with ensuring the full benefits of a reduction in tax on supply of goods or services flow to the consumers.

The National Anti-profiteering Authority shall be responsible for applying anti-profiteering measures in the event of a reduction in rate of GST on supply of goods or services or, if the benefit of input tax credit is not passed on to the recipients by way of commensurate reduction in prices.

Composition:

The National Anti-profiteering Authority shall be headed by a senior officer of the level of a Secretary to the Government of India and shall have four technical members from the Centre and/or the States.

Powers and functions of the authority:

- In the event the National Anti-profiteering Authority confirms the necessity of applying anti-profiteering measures, it has the power to order the business concerned to reduce its prices or return the undue benefit availed along with interest to the recipient of the goods or services.
- If the undue benefit cannot be passed on to the recipient, it can be ordered to be deposited in the Consumer Welfare Fund.
- In extreme cases the National Anti-profiteering Authority can impose a penalty on the defaulting business entity and even order the cancellation of its registration under GST.

Till now, FMCG (fast moving consumer goods) major HUL had deposited about ₹120 crore in the fund while last week almost ₹13 crore was deposited by Nestle.

Money Laundering and FATF

Why In News?

India will have to make money laundering an explicitly standalone offence to upgrade its compliance ahead of the on-site mutual evaluation by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which is due in November-December 2020.



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 16-Apr-18

The first FATF mutual evaluation of India was done in 2010 when the body expressed satisfaction with the measures taken by the country.

However, in the same breath, the FATF highlighted, in its 256-page report, a number of lacunae in the then extant legislation, for which it suggested changes. Since then, a range of laws have been amended.

Current Scenario:

Despite several amendments, the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) remains a predicate-offence-oriented law.

This means a case under the Act depends on the fate of cases pursued by primary agencies such as the CBI, the Income Tax Department or the police. The latest instances are the verdicts in the 2G spectrum and Aircel-Maxis cases by the CBI courts, in which the money laundering angle probed by the Enforcement Directorate fell apart.

Why Money Laundering as Standalone Offence?

"The predicate offence conviction condition creates fundamental difficulties when trying to confiscate the proceeds of crime in the absence of a conviction of a predicate offence, particularly in a standalone ML case, where the laundered assets become *corpus delicti* [concrete evidence of a crime] and should be forfeitable as such."

About FATF:

What is it?

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 on the initiative of the G7. It is a "policy-making body" which works to generate the necessary political will to bring about national legislative and regulatory reforms in various areas.

Objectives:

The objectives of the FATF are to set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.



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What it does?

The FATF monitors the progress of its members in implementing necessary measures, reviews money laundering and terrorist financing techniques and counter-measures, and promotes the adoption and implementation of appropriate measures globally.

In collaboration with other international stakeholders, the FATF works to identify national-level vulnerabilities with the aim of protecting the international financial system from misuse.