



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 01 Sep 2018

### **General Studies-1**

#### **Mass Extinction on Earth:**

##### **What is it?**

The event, also known as the Great Dying, occurred around 250 million years ago when a massive volcanic eruption in what is today the Russian province of Siberia sent nearly 90% of all life right into extinction.

Geologists call this eruption the Siberian Flood Basalts, and it ran for almost a million years.

##### **Recent Evidences**

Destruction of the ozone layer may have contributed to the largest mass extinction in the history of Earth, known as the End-Permian Extinction, a study published in the journal *Nature Geoscience* has found.

The scale of this extinction was so incredible that scientists have often wondered what made the Siberian Flood Basalts so much more deadly than other similar eruptions.

##### **Lithosphere study**

- Researchers determined the composition of the lithosphere, a section of the planet located between the crust and the mantle.
- They analysed samples of mantle xenoliths, rock sections of the lithosphere that get captured by the passing magma and erupted to the surface during the volcanic explosion.
- The team found that before the Siberian Flood Basalts took place, the Siberian lithosphere was heavily loaded with chlorine, bromine, and iodine, all chemical elements from the halogen group.
- However, these elements seem to have disappeared after the volcanic eruption, researchers said.
- The large reservoir of halogens that was stored in the Siberian lithosphere was sent into the Earth's atmosphere during the volcanic explosion, effectively destroying the ozone layer at the time and contributing to the mass extinction.

### **General Studies -2**

#### **National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB)**

##### **Why in News?**

The Seventh meeting of National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB) of Ministry of AYUSH was held under the chairpersonship of Minister of State for AYUSH, Shri Shripad Yesso Naik at New Delhi on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

##### **About National Medicinal Plants Board**

- In order to promote medicinal plants sector, Government of India set up National



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Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB) on 24th November 2000.

- Currently the board is working under the Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha & Homoeopathy), Government of India.

### **Aims & Objectives of the Board**

- To meet increasing demand for medicinal plants NMBP focusses on in-situ & ex-situ conservation and augmenting local medicinal plants and aromatic species of medical significance.
- The NMPB also promote research & development, capacity building through trainings, raising awareness through promotional activities like creation of Home/School herbal gardens.
- NMPB also seek to support programs for quality assurance and standardization through development of Good Agricultural and Collection Practices (GACPs), development of monographs laying down standards of quality, safety and efficacy; development of agro-techniques and credible institution a mechanism for certification of quality of raw drugs, seeds and planting material.
- Overall, NMPB's main objective is the development of medicinal plants sector through developing a strong coordination between various ministries/ departments/ organization for implementation of policies / programs on medicinal plants.

### **India-BIMSTEC Relations:**

#### **Why in News?**

Making a strong pitch for enhanced regional connectivity, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday that India was committed to [working with the BIMSTEC member states](#) in the critical sector and to combating the menace of terrorism and drug trafficking.

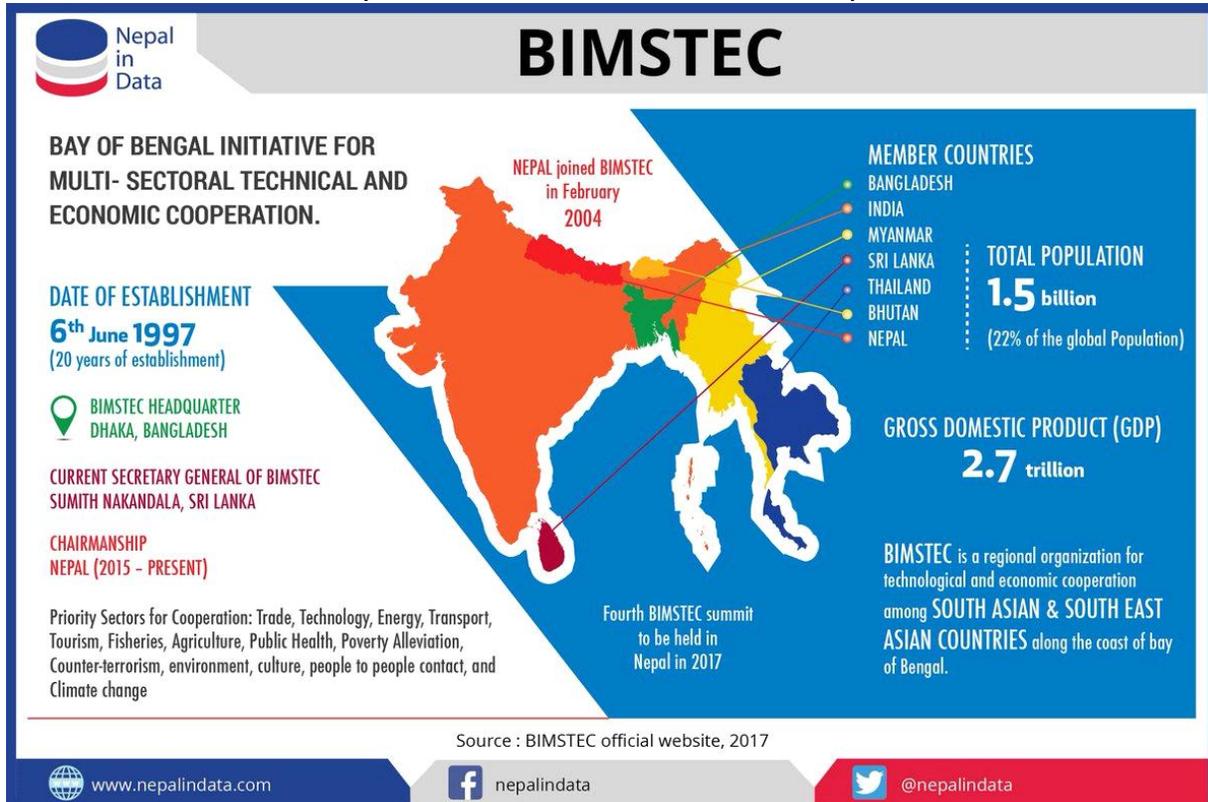
#### **Opportunities for India:**

- There is a big opportunity for connectivity — trade connectivity, economic connectivity, transport connectivity, digital connectivity, and people-to-people connectivity.
- The region had become a meeting point for India's 'Neighbourhood First' and 'Act East' policies.
- India is committed to working with the BIMSTEC member states to enhance regional connectivity..

#### **About BIMSTEC:**



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### **Law Commission on UCC:**

A uniform civil code "is neither necessary nor desirable at this stage" in the country, the Law Commission of India said on August 31.

### **Important Points of Report:**

- In a 185-page [consultation paper](#), the Commission said secularism cannot contradict the plurality prevalent in the country.
- The Commission, led by former Supreme Court judge Justice B.S. Chauhan, said "cultural diversity cannot be compromised to the extent that our urge for uniformity itself becomes a reason for threat to the territorial integrity of the nation".
- A unified nation did not necessarily need to have "uniformity".
- Efforts have to be made to reconcile our diversity with universal and indisputable arguments on human rights," the Commission said.
- Difference did not always imply discrimination in a robust democracy, the government's topmost law advisory body said.

### **Meaning of term "secularism"**

- In fact, term "secularism" has meaning only if it assured the expression of any form of difference.
- This diversity, both religious and regional, should not get subsumed under the



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louder voice of the majority, the Commission said.

At the same time, the Commission said, discriminatory practices within a religion should not hide behind the cloak of that faith to gain legitimacy.

**Way Forward:**

- It said the way forward may not be a uniform civil code, but the codification of all personal [laws](#) so that prejudices and stereotypes in every one of them would come to light and could be tested on the anvil of fundamental rights of the Constitution.
- By codification of different personal laws, one can arrive at certain universal principles that prioritise equity rather than imposition of a uniform code.
- It would discourage many from using the law altogether, given that matters of marriage and divorce can also be settled extra-judicially," the Commission reasoned.
- The Commission suggested certain measures in marriage and divorce that should be uniformly accepted in the personal laws of all religions.

**General studies- 3**

**Arctic Ice Melt:**

**Why in News?**

'Archived' heat trapped below the surface of the Arctic has the potential to melt the entire region's sea ice, scientists warn.

The study, published in the journal *Science Advances*, shows that Arctic sea ice is not just threatened by the melting of ice around its edges.

**Research Findings:**

- Warmer water that originated hundreds of miles away has penetrated deep into the interior of the Arctic, researchers found.
- We document a striking ocean warming in one of the main basins of the interior Arctic Ocean, the Canadian Basin," said Mary-Louise Timmermans, a Professor at Yale University in the U.S.
- The upper ocean in the Canadian Basin has seen a two-fold increase in heat content over the past 30 years, the researchers said.
- They traced the source to waters hundreds of miles to the south, where reduced sea ice has left the surface ocean more exposed to summer [solar](#) warming.
- In turn, Arctic winds are driving the warmer water north, but below the surface waters.
- This means the effects of sea-ice loss are not limited to the ice-free regions themselves, but also lead to increased heat accumulation in the interior of the Arctic Ocean that can have climate effects well beyond the summer season.
- Presently this heat is trapped below the surface layer. Should it be mixed up to the surface, there is enough heat to entirely melt the sea-ice pack that covers this region for most of the year.



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**Great Red Spot:**

**Context:**

NASA scientists peering deep inside Jupiter's Great Red Spot — a storm that has been raging on the planet for over 350 years — have detected signs of water above the planet's deepest clouds.

The pressure of the water combined with their measurements of another oxygen-bearing gas, carbon monoxide, imply that Jupiter has two to nine times more oxygen than the Sun, researchers said.

**What is Great Red Spot?**

- The Great Red Spot is full of dense clouds, which makes it hard for electromagnetic energy to escape and teach astronomers anything about the chemistry within.
- It turns out they're not so thick that they block our ability to see deeply.



**The Great Red Spot**

- Jupiter's most striking feature is the Great Red Spot. Sky watchers have known about it for more than 300 years.
- The Great Red Spot is an oval shaped storm that whirls at a speed of 400km per hour

- This storm is like a hurricane but much bigger; 25,000km across and is as big as almost 3 Earths
- The colours are caused by chemical reactions in the clouds
- Colours range from white to dark reddish brown

<http://solarsystem.nasa.gov/multimedia/gallery.cfm?Category=Spacecraft&Page=6>

**New evidences**

- The data collected will supplement the information NASA's Juno spacecraft is gathering as it circles the planet from north to south once every 53 days.
- Among other things, Juno is looking for water with its own infrared spectrometer and with a microwave radiometer that can probe deeper than anyone has seen — to 100 bars, or 100 times the atmospheric pressure at Earth's surface.
- If Juno returns similar water findings, it could open a new window into solving the water problem.

**Background:**



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- Jupiter is thought to be the first planet to have formed by siphoning the elements left over from the formation of the Sun as our star coalesced from an amorphous nebula into the fiery ball of gases we see today.
- A widely accepted theory until several decades ago was that Jupiter was identical in composition to the Sun; a ball of hydrogen with a hint of helium — all gas, no core. *But evidence is mounting that Jupiter has a core, possibly 10 times Earth's mass.*
- Spacecraft that previously visited the planet found chemical evidence that it formed a core of rock and water ice before it mixed with gases from the solar nebula to make its atmosphere.
- The way Jupiter's gravity tugs on Juno also supports this theory.
- There's even lightning and thunder on the planet, phenomena fuelled by moisture.
- Jupiter's water abundance will tell us a lot about how the giant planet formed, but only if we can figure out how much water there is in the entire planet.