

MANTHAN

JANUARY 2025 : WEEK-2

Registered / Corporate Office:

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1. Chagos Islands deal

- The Chagos Islands deal refers to a series of diplomatic and legal developments surrounding the sovereignty of the Chagos Archipelago, a group of islands in the Indian Ocean.
- These islands are currently administered by the United Kingdom (UK) as part of its British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), but they have been a subject of long-standing dispute between the UK, Mauritius, and the United States.

Sovereignty Dispute

- The Chagos Islands were part of Mauritius until the UK separated them in the 1960s when it acquired control of the islands.
- Mauritius claims that the islands were wrongfully separated and that the UK should return them.
- The islands have been occupied by the US since the 1960s, which built the Diego Garcia military base on one of the islands, using it for strategic military operations, particularly in the Gulf region.
- The US and UK have maintained a long-term lease agreement for the base.

Legal Developments

- In 2019, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that the UK's continued administration of the Chagos Islands was illegal and that the islands should be handed over to Mauritius as soon as possible.
- However, the UK has refused to comply with the ruling, arguing that the situation is complicated by strategic and defense concerns.
- In 2021, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution reaffirming the ICJ's decision and urging the UK to return the islands to Mauritius.

The Deal

- The "Chagos Islands deal" primarily refers to negotiations and discussions surrounding the future of the islands. In particular, it involves potential agreements between Mauritius, the UK, and the US regarding the continued use of Diego Garcia for military purposes, while addressing Mauritius' claims to sovereignty.
- In 2023, reports suggested that Mauritius and the UK were in negotiations about the future of Diego Garcia, with talks focused on ensuring continued military access while also addressing the sovereignty issue.
- These discussions are often framed as a possible compromise where Mauritius may gain control over the islands, but the US maintains its military presence under a new agreement.

Implications for the Region

- The Chagos Islands are strategically important due to their location in the central Indian Ocean, serving as a critical base for US military operations.
- The outcome of the deal could affect regional security dynamics, including the US's military posture in the Indian Ocean region.
- The sovereignty dispute also affects the Chagossian people, who were forcibly displaced from the islands in the 1960s and 1970s to make way for the military base.
- Many Chagossians have been fighting for the right to return to their homeland.
- Diego Garcia is a strategically significant atoll in the Indian Ocean that hosts a major military base.

Geographic and Strategic Importance

Location

- Diego Garcia is part of the Chagos Archipelago, a British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), situated approximately 1,800 kilometers south of India and Sri Lanka.

Strategic Position

- It is ideally located for military operations in the Indian Ocean, connecting the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific.

Military Base Details

Lease Agreement

- The island is under British sovereignty but leased to the United States for defense purposes. The current agreement between the UK and the US extends until 2036.

Primary Users

- The United States Navy and Air Force operate the base, which serves as a key logistics and support hub for military operations.

Facilities

- A deep-water port.
- An airstrip capable of supporting heavy bombers and refueling aircraft.
- Pre-positioned ships and supplies for military operations.

Operational Roles

Regional Security

- The base supports operations across the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa.
- It plays a critical role in counterterrorism, maritime security, and power projection.

Global Reach

- Diego Garcia has been used in major military campaigns, including the Gulf War, the Iraq War, and ongoing operations in Afghanistan.

Surveillance

- The base houses advanced radar and surveillance systems for monitoring maritime activity and regional threats.

Controversies

Displacement of Chagossians

- The native population of Diego Garcia was forcibly removed in the 1960s and 1970s to make way for the military base, leading to ongoing legal and humanitarian disputes.

Sovereignty Disputes

- Mauritius claims sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago and has garnered support from international bodies, including a 2019 advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) calling for the return of the islands to Mauritius.

QUESTIONS

Fill in the Blank:

1. The Chagos Islands are currently administered by the _____ as part of its British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT).
2. The Chagos Islands were separated from _____ by the United Kingdom in the 1960s.
3. _____ claims that the Chagos Islands were wrongfully separated and that the UK should return them.
4. The United States has occupied the Chagos Islands since the _____, building the Diego Garcia military base.
5. In 2019, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that the UK's continued administration of the Chagos Islands was _____.
6. The United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution in _____ reaffirming the ICJ's decision and urging the UK to return the islands to Mauritius.
7. The "Chagos Islands deal" refers to negotiations between Mauritius, the UK, and the _____ regarding the future of the islands and Diego Garcia.
8. Diego Garcia is strategically located in the central _____ Ocean, connecting the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific.
9. The United States Navy and Air Force operate the _____ military base, which serves as a key logistics and support hub for military operations.
10. The native population of Diego Garcia, known as the _____, was forcibly removed in the 1960s and 1970s to make way for the military base.

2. National Turmeric Board established at Nizamabad

- Union Minister of Commerce & Industry inaugurated the National Turmeric Board in New Delhi.
- Shri Goyal announced Shri Palle Ganga Reddy as its first Chairperson.
- The headquarters of the Board has been set up at Nizamabad.
- The Minister noted that the launch of the National Turmeric Board is on an auspicious day of celebrations across the country.
- He highlighted that representatives from various ministries will also be a part of the National Turmeric Board.
- Representatives from exporters and producers bodies will also be added to the Board.
- Adding that turmeric is also known as 'Golden Spice', he pointed out that the newly formed Board will pay special attention to the welfare of the turmeric farmers spread across 20 states, including Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya and others.
- He said that there is immense potential in increasing turmeric production in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana and formation of the Turmeric Board will boost income of turmeric producers in the country.
- The Minister noted that the new Board will promote research and development of new turmeric products, and will look into the value addition of turmeric related products for marketing abroad.

- The Board will also look into creating awareness on the essential and medical properties of turmeric, ways to increase its yield and boost logistics and supply chain to foster trade into newer markets, he said.
- Shri Goyal also highlighted that the Board will also ensure quality and safety standards of turmeric production and exports.
- Shri Goyal said that last year, 2023-24, an area of 3.05 lakh hectare was under turmeric cultivation in India with a production of 10.74 lakh tonnes. India was responsible for over 70% of global turmeric production, he informed. He also shared that there are 30 varieties of turmeric produced in India.
- In addition to the Chairperson of the Board, representatives of Ministry of AYUSH, Department of Pharmaceuticals, Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and Department of Commerce have also been nominated. Representatives from the top two turmeric growing states of Maharashtra and Telangana and from the state of Meghalaya, which is famous for its Lakadong Turmeric, will also be part of the Board. States will be represented on the Board by rotation.
- The National Turmeric Board will focus on the overall development and growth of the turmeric sector in the country.
- The National Turmeric Board will provide leadership, augment efforts and facilitate coordination with other Government Departments/Agencies in matters pertaining to the turmeric sector and facilitate growth and development of the Turmeric sector in the country.
- It will help bring focus to efforts of tapping the vast potential that exists for increasing trade of turmeric and its products, especially in view of the health and wellness benefits of turmeric.
- India is the largest producer, consumer and exporter of turmeric in the world. India has more than 62% share of world trade. During 2023-24, 1.62 lakh tonnes of turmeric and turmeric products valued at 226.5 million USD was exported.

Golden Spice

- The term “Golden Spice” refers to turmeric, a spice widely known for its vibrant yellow color, distinct flavor, and numerous health benefits. Turmeric has been used for centuries in culinary, medicinal, and religious practices, particularly in South Asia.
 - **Scientific Name:** Curcuma longa.
 - **Active Ingredient:** Curcumin, which has anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and antimicrobial properties.
 - **Culinary Use:** A staple in Indian, Southeast Asian, and Middle Eastern cuisines, often used in curries, soups, and rice dishes.

Medicinal Properties

- Used in traditional medicine systems like Ayurveda and Traditional Chinese Medicine.
- Promotes digestion, boosts immunity, and supports joint health.
- Studied for its potential in managing conditions like arthritis, diabetes, and cancer.
- **Cultural Significance:** Often used in religious rituals and ceremonies in India, symbolizing purity and prosperity.
- **Economic Importance:** India is the largest producer, consumer, and exporter of turmeric globally.

QUESTIONS

Fill in the Blank:

1. The National Turmeric Board was inaugurated by the Union Minister of _____ in New Delhi.
2. The headquarters of the National Turmeric Board has been set up in _____.

3. The newly formed National Turmeric Board will pay special attention to the welfare of turmeric farmers in _____ states, including Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana.
4. India is responsible for over _____% of global turmeric production, making it the largest producer and exporter of the spice.
5. The active ingredient in turmeric, which has anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and antimicrobial properties, is _____.

3. Southern California wildfires 2025

- Wildfires continued to blaze across Los Angeles, California, killing five people, forcing over 130,000 people to evacuate, and burning down homes, including of celebrities like Paris Hilton, Adam Brody, Billy Crystal, and others.
- Some of the blazes still burning are the Palisades fire, the Eaton fire, Sunset, Hurst, and Lidia fires. Hollywood Hills is among the areas affected, and the Oscars nominations announcement has been delayed by two days because of the fire.
- While California is no stranger to wildfires, the current flare-up is very big and very fast.

Wet weather, followed by dry weather

- The last two winters, in 2022 and 2023, were unusually wet for the Los Angeles region.
- This led to lots of trees and shrubs sprouting up. Now, this winter has been exceptionally dry for Southern California.
- Thus, all the vegetation has dried up, literally sitting like dry kindling in the path of flames.
- According to NASA, “Since October, Southern California has received negligible rain, and according to climate scientist Daniel Swain, the region has experienced the driest start to the winter on record.
- The Los Angeles airport, for example, recorded 0.03 inches (0.08 centimeters) of rain since October 1—the start of the water year in the state—making it the area’s driest start to the water year on a record maintained by the National Weather Service dating back to 1944.”

Santa Ana winds

- Santa Ana winds are common in California in this season, but this year, they are unusually strong. Thus, once a fire started in the prevailing dry conditions, the strong winds made the flames get bigger and spread faster.
- Between October and January high pressure builds up in the deserts of the Great Basin.
- This high pressure system circulates clockwise and brings wind westwards, towards the coast — different from the usual system of wind blowing inland from the sea.
- This wind blows down over the Sierra Nevada and Santa Ana mountains, losing humidity, heating up, and, as it is squeezed through mountain passes, gaining a lot of speed.
- Thus, by the time it is blowing over southern California, the wind is fast, dry, and warmer.
- It is this wind that is blowing flames across Los Angeles, which are devouring the kindling of dry vegetation, power cables, wooden houses built to withstand earthquakes, etc.

Climate change

- Across the world, climate change is making extreme weather events more devastating.
- “Experts say the wildfire season in California has lengthened in recent years.
- For instance, a 2021 study found that the state’s annual burn season has lengthened in the past two decades and that the yearly peak has shifted from August to July.
- The wildfires have also become more intense in the past few year.
- Rise in global temperatures over the years has led to warmer springs and summers, and early spring snow melts.
- Such conditions cumulatively cause longer and more intense dry seasons, putting more moisture stress on vegetation.”

California

- California is a U.S. state located on the West Coast, known for its diverse geography, economy, and culture. It’s the most populous state in the U.S., home to over 39 million people, and it has the largest economy of any state in the nation.

Geography

- California offers a wide variety of landscapes, from beaches along the Pacific Ocean, to vast deserts like the Mojave, to the majestic Sierra Nevada Mountains, and fertile agricultural areas like the Central Valley.
- Notable natural landmarks include Yosemite National Park, Lake Tahoe, and the Redwood National and State Parks.

Economy

- **Technology:** The Silicon Valley in the San Francisco Bay Area is a global hub for technology and innovation, housing major companies like Apple, Google, and Facebook.
- **Entertainment:** Los Angeles is the center of the American film, television, and music industries, with Hollywood as its iconic symbol.
- **Agriculture:** California is a leading producer of fruits, vegetables, and nuts in the U.S., with its Central Valley serving as a key agricultural region.

Climate

- The state experiences a wide range of climates, from Mediterranean along the coast to desert in the interior, and alpine in the mountains.
- California is known for its mild winters and hot, dry summers in many areas, though the coastal regions tend to be cooler due to the Pacific Ocean.

Culture

- California is a melting pot of cultures, drawing people from all over the world. Its diverse population contributes to a rich cultural scene, with a vibrant arts and music community.
- It’s a major center for global trends in fashion, cuisine, and entertainment.

Environmental Issues

- California faces environmental challenges such as wildfires, droughts, and air pollution, but the state is also a leader in environmental policy and renewable energy development.

QUESTIONS

Fill in the Blank:

1. Wildfires continued to blaze across Los Angeles, California, killing _____ people and forcing over 130,000 people to evacuate.
2. Some of the blazes still burning in California are the Palisades fire, the Eaton fire, Sunset fire, and the _____ fire.
3. The current wildfire flare-up in California is very big and very fast, partly due to unusually _____ weather in the region.
4. The last two winters, in 2022 and 2023, were unusually _____ for the Los Angeles region, which led to an increase in vegetation.
5. According to NASA, Southern California has experienced the driest start to the winter on record, with Los Angeles airport recording only _____ inches of rain since October 1.
6. The _____ winds, which are common in California during this season, have been unusually strong, helping the flames spread rapidly.
7. The high pressure system that brings the Santa Ana winds originates in the deserts of the _____ Basin.
8. Global warming and climate change have contributed to a _____ in the length of California's wildfire season over the past two decades.
9. The wildfires in California have become more _____ in recent years, partly due to rising global temperatures.
10. California is the most _____ state in the U.S., with a population of over 39 million people.

4. What Is HMPV Virus Currently Spreading In China?

- Five years after the Covid-19 pandemic, China is now grappling with a surge in cases of Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV), a respiratory virus.
- Some claim that hospitals and crematoriums are overwhelmed by the influx of patients.
- Videos circulating online show crowded hospitals, with users reporting multiple viruses, including Influenza A, HMPV, Mycoplasma pneumoniae, and Covid-19, as the culprits behind the surge in respiratory illnesses.
- Reports indicate that the spike in HMPV cases has led to a notable increase in sudden deaths, particularly affecting individuals aged 40 to 80.
- "China is facing a surge in multiple viruses, including Influenza A, HMPV, Mycoplasma pneumoniae, and Covid-19, overwhelming hospitals and crematoriums.
- Children's hospitals are particularly strained by rising pneumonia and 'white lung' cases," stated by the SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) handle.
- Data from the Chinese CDC in late December revealed a fluctuating but increasing positive rate of HMPV cases among children aged 14 and below, according to China's state broadcaster CCTV.

What Is HMPV?

- Discovered in 2001, HMPV belongs to the Pneumoviridae family, which also includes Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV).
- However, serological studies suggest that the virus has been present in humans for over 60 years and is globally distributed.
- HMPV can cause both upper and lower respiratory diseases in people of all ages, with young children, older adults, and those with weakened immune systems being most vulnerable.
- According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), common symptoms include cough, fever, nasal congestion, and shortness of breath.
- HMPV spreads through respiratory droplets, direct contact such as handshakes, or touching contaminated objects. The virus has an incubation period of three to five days.
- Preventive measures include wearing masks, frequent hand washing, and boosting immunity.
- Experts caution against the use of antiviral drugs to treat HMPV. In an interview with the state-backed National Business Daily, a respiratory expert in Shanghai warned against blindly using antiviral medications, as no vaccine exists for HMPV, and its symptoms often resemble those of a common cold.
- In 2023, HMPV cases were reported in the Netherlands, Britain, Finland, Australia, Canada, the US, and China.

SARS-CoV-2

- SARS-CoV-2 (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2) is the virus responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic.
- It was first identified in Wuhan, China, in late 2019 and subsequently spread worldwide. SARS-CoV-2 is a novel coronavirus, part of a family of viruses that also includes SARS-CoV (which caused the 2002-2003 SARS outbreak) and MERS-CoV (which caused the 2012 Middle East Respiratory Syndrome outbreak).
- **Transmission:** Primarily spreads through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. It can also spread by touching surfaces contaminated with the virus and then touching the face.
- **Symptoms:** Common symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, loss of taste or smell, and muscle aches. Some individuals remain asymptomatic, while others may develop severe respiratory issues, especially in older adults or those with underlying health conditions.
- **Variants:** SARS-CoV-2 has mutated over time, leading to various variants with distinct characteristics. Some notable variants include:
 - **Alpha (B.1.1.7):** First identified in the UK.
 - **Delta (B.1.617.2):** First identified in India, associated with increased transmissibility and severity.
 - **Omicron (B.1.1.529):** First identified in South Africa, characterized by a large number of mutations, particularly in the spike protein.
- **Prevention and Vaccination:** Vaccines have been developed to prevent COVID-19, with mRNA vaccines like Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna, as well as viral vector vaccines like AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson. Public health measures such as mask-wearing, social distancing, and frequent handwashing have also been important in controlling transmission.
- **Impact:** The virus has caused a global health crisis, with millions of deaths and economic disruption worldwide. It has also prompted widespread research into treatment options, including antivirals, monoclonal antibodies, and supportive care.

- **Long COVID:** Some individuals experience lingering symptoms after recovering from the acute phase of COVID-19, a condition known as “Long COVID,” which can involve fatigue, brain fog, and respiratory issues.

QUESTIONS

Fill in the Blank:

1. Five years after the Covid-19 pandemic, China is grappling with a surge in cases of _____, a respiratory virus.
2. HMPV belongs to the _____ family, which also includes Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV).
3. According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), common symptoms of HMPV include cough, fever, nasal congestion, and _____.
4. HMPV spreads through respiratory droplets, direct contact, or touching _____ objects.
5. In 2023, HMPV cases were reported in countries such as the Netherlands, Britain, Finland, Australia, _____, the US, and China.

5. National Youth Day 2025

- The National Youth Day or Rashtriya Yuva Divas is celebrated on 12th January every year in commemoration of the great spiritual leader, philosopher and thinker Swami Vivekananda, whose unwavering belief in potential of youth continues to resonate deeply with young citizens of the country.
- His inspiring life and empowering message urge the youth to nurture their dreams, unleash their energies, and shape a future worthy of his envisioned ideals.
- The youth, defined as those within the age group of 15-29 years, make up nearly 40% of India’s total population.
- Representing the most vibrant and dynamic segment of society, this group constitutes the nation’s most valuable human resource.
- With their limitless potential, the youth hold the power to propel India to new heights of progress and innovation.
- National Youth Day serves as a moment to acknowledge, celebrate, and harness this potential, inspiring young minds to contribute meaningfully to the nation’s development.
- The Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue 2025, commemorating Swami Vivekananda’s 162nd birth anniversary, is scheduled for January 11-12, 2025, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports and Labour & Employment formally inaugurated the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue on 11 January 2025.
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will also engage with 3,000 dynamic young leaders from across India, selected through a merit-based, multi-level process from over 30 lakh participants on 12 January 2025.
- The event aims to break the 25-year-old tradition of holding the National Youth Festival in a conventional manner.
- It will provide a platform for youth to present innovative solutions for a developed India.
- Participants will make presentations to the Prime Minister on ten thematic areas pivotal to India’s development, including technology, sustainability, women empowerment, manufacturing, and agriculture.

- Additionally, a compilation of the best essays on these themes will be released. In a unique setting, the Prime Minister will join the young leaders for lunch, offering them an opportunity to share their ideas, experiences, and aspirations directly with him.

Objectives of National Youth Day

- To generate awareness about the life and message of Swami Vivekananda to inspire and motivate youth into participate in nation building.
- To involve youth in various activities and to promote spirit of service and volunteerism.

SCHEMES AND INITIATIVES

- In order to support the youth, achieve its full potential, The department of youth, Ministry of Youth and Sport Affairs has carried out many schemes and initiatives like:

Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS)

- Launched in 1972, NYKS is one of the world's largest youth organizations with the primary goal to develop the personality of youth and engage them in nation-building activities. NYKS activities fall into four categories.

Core Programs: Implemented with NYKS's own budget.

- **Youth Affairs Schemes:** Includes National Program for Youth and Adolescent Development (NPYAD) and National Young Leaders Program (NYLP).
- **Collaborative Projects:** Funded by other ministries for youth development.
- **Special Programs:** Focused on critical youth-centric activities.

National Youth Policy (NYP-2024)

- The Government has reviewed and updated the National Youth Policy (NYP) 2014, and has released a draft for the new NYP 2024.
- This draft outlines a ten-year vision for youth development in India, aligned with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- It focuses on five main areas: education, employment, youth leadership, health, and social justice, with a commitment to social inclusion.
 - A clear plan to achieve youth development goals by 2030.
 - Alignment with the National Education Policy 2020 to improve career and life skills.
 - Strengthening leadership and volunteering opportunities and using technology to empower youth.
 - Enhancing healthcare, especially mental health and reproductive health, and promoting sports and fitness.
 - Ensuring safety, justice, and support for marginalized youth.

National Youth Corps (NYC)

- The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports introduced a scheme called National Youth Corps during 2010-11.
- The objective of the scheme is to set up a group of disciplined and dedicated youth, who have the inclination and spirit to engage in the task of nation building, to facilitate the realization of inclusive growth (both social and economic), to act as points for dissemination of information, basic knowledge in the community, to act as group modulators and peer group educators and to act as role models for the younger cohorts especially towards enhancement of public ethics, probity and dignity of labour.

National Young Leaders Programme (NYLP)

- NYLP focuses on fostering leadership and innovation among young individuals to enable them to contribute effectively to social and economic development.
- The aim of the programme is to create an institutional platform where youth can articulate their views and draw the attention of the local administration to such issues/ concerns affecting their lives, educate youth about contemporary socio-economic development issues and enable them share their experiences and ideas on community development and social welfare activities.

National Youth Awards

- Recognizing exemplary contributions by youth and NGOs, the National Youth Awards are conferred every year for excellent work done by them for nation-building/ community service.
- A cash award of Rs. 1,00,000, a medal and a certificate are given to each individual awardee. The award to voluntary youth organisations comprises of a certificate, a medal and an amount of Rs. 3,00,000.

National Programme for Youth and Adolescent Development (NPYAD)

- Under NPYAD Scheme, financial assistance is provided to Government/ non-Government organisations for taking up activities for youth and adolescent development.
- The assistance under NPYAD is provided under 5 major components, namely,
 - Youth Leadership and Personality Development Training
 - Promotion of National Integration (National Integration Camps, Inter-State Youth Exchange Programmes, Youth Festivals, multi-cultural activities, etc.)
 - Promotion of Adventure; Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Awards
 - Development and Empowerment of Adolescents (Life Skills Education, Counselling, Career Guidance, etc.)
 - Technical and Resource Development (Research and Studies on Youth issues, Documentation, Seminars/ Workshops)

National Service Scheme (NSS)

- Established in 1969, NSS encourages students to engage in community service with the motto “NOT ME, BUT YOU” (Swayam se pehle aap)’.
- Its objectives include fostering social responsibility, leadership, civic engagement, and national integration while promoting meaningful links between educational institutions and communities.

Youth Hostels

- Youth Hostels promote travel and exploration by offering affordable accommodations, fostering social and cultural exchange.
- Hostels provide good accommodation for the youth at reasonable rates, and are looked after by Managers and Wardens, appointed by the Central Government

International Cooperation

- The Department endeavors to create an international perspective among youth in collaboration with other countries and international agencies/ organizations on various youth issues.
- The Department also collaborates with UN Agencies like United Nations Volunteers (UNV)/ United National Development Programme (UNDP) and the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) on various youth-related issues.
- The Department has initiated collaboration with The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) since July, 2020 for imparting skill training & for providing gainful employment to the youth.

- National Youth Day serves as an essential reminder of the pivotal role that youth plays in shaping the future of India.
- As we commemorate the life and message of Swami Vivekananda, we are reminded of the boundless potential within the youth of India.
- Through various initiatives and schemes like NYKS, NYC, NYLP, and others, the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports continues to empower young individuals, guiding them toward nation-building and personal growth.
- With the support of these programs, the youth are not only equipped to pursue their dreams but also contribute meaningfully to the social and economic progress of the nation, furthering the vision of a prosperous, self-reliant India.

QUESTIONS

Fill in the Blank:

1. National Youth Day, also known as _____, is celebrated on January 12th every year to commemorate the birth of Swami Vivekananda.
2. The Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue 2025 is scheduled to take place at _____, New Delhi.
3. The Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports launched the _____ in 1972, which is one of the world's largest youth organizations focused on personality development and nation-building.
4. The National Youth Policy (NYP-2024) aims to achieve youth development goals by the year _____.
5. The National Youth Corps (NYC) was introduced in _____ with the objective of engaging youth in nation-building activities.
6. The National Youth Awards recognize exemplary contributions by youth and NGOs, with a cash award of Rs. _____ for each individual awardee.
7. The National Programme for Youth and Adolescent Development (NPYAD) provides financial assistance to organizations for promoting youth leadership, national integration, and _____.
8. The National Service Scheme (NSS) was established in the year _____ with the motto "NOT ME, BUT YOU."
9. The National Young Leaders Programme (NYLP) focuses on fostering leadership and _____ among young individuals.
10. Youth Hostels are established to promote travel and exploration by offering _____ accommodations to the youth.

6. Genome India project

- The Department of Biotechnology recently announced its new platform and framework for sharing its 10,000 human genome dataset.
- The sequences of healthy individuals — from 99 ethnic populations of the country — has helped create a baseline map of India's genetic diversity.
- The researchers in the second phase plan to sequence genomes of those with specific diseases.

First, what is genome sequencing?

- The human genome is essentially an instruction manual we inherit from our parents that decides how our body develops and functions.
- This genetic information determines everything from a person's height, to the colour of their hair and eyes, to the diseases they may inherit, or the ones they are pre-disposed to.
- It is a tome written with just four letters A,C,G, and T — the four bases that come together to create the unique genetic makeup of everyone. There are around 3 billion pairs of bases in the complete human genome.
- To sequence the genome, researchers first extract the information from the blood.
- Handling the entire genome, however, is extremely difficult. So, the researchers cut it up into smaller pieces and tag them.
- A sequencer is then used to decode these smaller chunks of the genetic material.
- Once done, it is put together using the tags to create a whole genome — in the same way one would assemble say an Ikea furniture by numbers.

What is the Genome India project?

- India is a country that is varied not only in geography, languages that are spoken, food, and culture, it is also diverse in genetic make-up. There are over 4,600 distinct populations.
- The Genome India project was first approved in 2020 with the aim of capturing this diversity at the genomic level.
- Researchers from 20 different scientific institutions have come together to sequence the first 10,000 genomes under the project.
- With everything in place — a successful collaboration, a data storage facility, data sharing platform, and a framework — the department of biotechnology aims to expand the programme further and sequence up to 1 million genomes.

How does creating the database help?

- One, this map can help identify genetic basis or genetic risk factors for various diseases.
- These can then be used as targets for developing therapies and diagnostic tests.
- Newer therapies for several diseases work by modifying, deleting, or adding certain genes — something that would not be possible without having a genetic map and an understanding of which genes lead to the disease.
- Two, an Indian dataset helps identify new variants.
- The researchers have identified 135 million genetic variations in the 10,000 genomes so far, 7 million of which are not found in the global databases.
- Three, population level sequencing can also tell scientists and clinicians the frequency at which certain genetic variations that are known to cause disease appear and hence how common a disease might be.
- Take for example, the MYBPC3 mutation known to lead to cardiac arrest at a young age is found in 4.5% of the Indian population but is rare globally.
- Or, another mutation called LAMB3 that causes a lethal skin condition is found in nearly 4% of the population near Madurai but it is not seen in global databases. This is the reason India requires its own genome dataset.
- Four, it may also help identify rare disease and develop gene therapies that can treat them.

- Five, it can also help in identifying resistance indicating variants, for example genes that might make certain medicines or anaesthetics ineffective in certain populations.
- An example from India is a sect of the Vaishya community from South India who have the gene missing for properly processing common anaesthetics.
- Use of these anaesthetics can result in them remain under for hours or even death.

What is the second phase of the project?

- The second phase of the project would involve sequencing the genomes of those with specific disease.
- This will enable researchers compare the diseased genomes with the healthy ones, helping in identifying genes that are responsible for or pre-dispose a person to certain diseases.
- They may be able to study the genetic changes when someone gets a disease, take for example cancer.
- The team is currently in discussion with experts to identify the diseases for which genomes should be sequenced and the number of genomes for each disease required to produce meaningful results.
- The diseases that would most likely be included in the list would be different types of cancers, chronic conditions such as diabetes, and various neurological or neurodegenerative diseases.
- Rare diseases that are found in Indian populations are also likely to be included in the list of diseases to be studied for the next phase of Genome India project.

How will the data be shared?

- For now, the data will be available to Indian researchers through managed access.
- “This is the first time that we have created a resource such as this and we have to be very careful how we share this highly sensitive data.
- The data will be made available only through managed access — meaning it would be available only to research institutes that partner with us for the study.
- Scientists wishing to utilise the data would have to respond to a call for proposals and collaborate with the department.
- The research will be funded by the government.
- To maintain the anonymity of the data, it would also be double blinded. “After the samples from different regions are collected and sequenced by one of the partner institutes, it would be encoded before being uploaded to the central database.
- When the data is shared further with those wishing to study it, it would be encoded once again.
- This is to ensure that there is no way for the anonymity to be breached.

Are there other such projects across the world?

- The first Human Genome Project — which was an international consortium funded by the US National Institutes of Health among others — published the world’s first complete human genome in 2003.
- Since then, the 1,000 genome project — again through international collaboration — published 1,092 sequences in 2012.
- A UK government project sequenced 100,000 genomes by 2018.
- There has also been a European effort to sequence 1+ Million Genomes across 24 countries.

QUESTIONS

Fill in the Blank:

1. The Department of Biotechnology recently announced a new platform and framework for sharing its _____ human genome dataset.

2. The Genome India project aims to capture India's genetic diversity, as India has over _____ distinct populations.
3. To sequence the genome, researchers first extract the information from _____.
4. The human genome consists of around _____ billion pairs of bases.
5. The first phase of the Genome India project involved sequencing _____ genomes from various ethnic populations in India.
6. The second phase of the Genome India project will sequence genomes of individuals with specific _____.
7. One of the goals of creating the genetic database is to identify _____ risk factors for various diseases.
8. The MYBPC3 mutation, which leads to cardiac arrest at a young age, is found in _____% of the Indian population.
9. The Genome India project has already identified _____ million genetic variations in the 10,000 genomes sequenced so far.
10. The data from the Genome India project will be shared with Indian researchers through _____ access to maintain security and confidentiality.

7. INS Surat, INS Nilgiri and INS Vaghsheer commissioned

- Three frontline combatants — INS Nilgiri, lead ship of the Project 17A stealth frigate class, INS Surat, fourth and final ship of the Project 15B stealth destroyer class, and INS Vaghsheer, sixth and final submarine of the Scorpene-class project — were commissioned in the Indian Navy at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai.

INS Nilgiri

- The Nilgiri-class stealth frigate, built under the codename Project 17A, is a follow-on vessel of the Shivalik class or Project 17 frigates that are currently in service.
- INS Nilgiri is the first of seven frigates in Project 17A being built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), Mumbai, and Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata.
- This class of ships has an “integrated construction” philosophy, which involves extensive pre-outfitting at the block stages to reduce overall building periods.
- The multi-mission frigates are capable of operating in a “blue water” environment — in the deep seas far from the coast — and deal with both conventional and non-conventional threats.
- With their versatile weapons and capabilities, these ships can play a crucial role in anti-surface, anti-air, and anti-submarine warfare.
- The ships are fitted with a supersonic surface-to-surface missile system, a Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missiles (MRSAM) system, a 76 millimetre upgraded gun, and a combination of rapid-fire close-in weapon systems.
- The keel of INS Nilgiri was laid on December 28, 2017, and the ship was launched into water on September 28, 2019.

- It sailed out for maiden sea trials in August last year, and underwent a comprehensive schedule of trials in harbour and at sea, leading up to its delivery to the Navy on December 20 last year.
- The other six ships of this class — Himgiri, Taragiri, Udaygiri, Dunagiri, and Vindhyagiri — are at various stages of construction at MDL, Mumbai, and GRSE, Kolkata.

INS Surat

- The fourth and final stealth guided missile destroyer under Project 15B follows INS Visakhapatnam, INS Mormugao, and INS Imphal, which were commissioned over the past three years.
- INS Surat is the Indian Navy's first AI (artificial intelligence) enabled warship, which will utilise indigenously developed AI solutions to enhance its operational efficiency manifold.
- Over the past decade, guided missile destroyers of the Kolkata class built under the project codenamed 15A — INS Kolkata, INS Kochi, and INS Chennai — have been commissioned into the Navy.
- To build an advanced variant of the Kolkata class, a contract for the construction of four more guided missile destroyers under the project codenamed 15B was signed in January 2011.
- Designed by the Warship Design Bureau, the Indian Navy's in-house warship design unit, and built by MDL, the four ships under Project 15B are named after major cities in the four corners of the country.
- Destroyers are a category of warships that have high speed and manoeuvrability, greater strike capability, and longer endurance, because of which they are a key asset in various types of naval operations, mainly offensive.
- With their modern sensors and communication facilities, these ships are a key asset in “network-centric” warfare, in which information technology and computer networking tools are used to form networks of various force elements that are in play in conflict scenarios.
- A guided missile destroyer with a displacement of 7,400 tonnes and overall length of 164 metres, INS Surat is a potent and versatile platform equipped with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors, including surface-to-air missiles, anti-ship missiles, and torpedoes.
- Powered by a Combined Gas and Gas (COGAG) propulsion set comprising four gas turbines, it has achieved speeds in excess of 30 knots (56 km/h) during sea trials.

INS Vaghsheer

- INS Vaghsheer is the sixth and final submarine of the modern stealthy Kalvari class built under Project 75.
- The design of the Kalvari class of submarines is based on the Scorpene class designed and developed by the French defence major Naval Group (formerly DCNS), and the Spanish state-owned entity Navantia.
- They have diesel electric transmission systems, and are primarily “attack” or “hunter-killer” submarines — which means they are designed to target and sink adversary naval vessels.
- This is one of the world's most silent and versatile diesel-electric class of submarines.
- It is designed to undertake a wide range of missions, including anti-surface warfare, anti-submarine warfare, intelligence gathering, area surveillance, and special operations.
- The submarines are armed with wire-guided torpedoes, anti-ship missiles, and advanced sonar systems, and feature modular construction that allows for future upgrades such as the integration of Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) technology.
- The AIP systems, which significantly enhance the submerged endurance of a diesel electric submarine, are expected to be installed on this class of submarines from 2026 onward.
- The submarines in the current Kalvari class take their names from now-decommissioned classes of submarines named Kalvari — including Kalvari, Khanderi, Karanj — and the Vela class, which included Vela, Vagir, Vagshir.

- The erstwhile Kalvari and Vela classes were one of the earliest submarines of the Indian Navy after Independence, which belonged to the Soviet-origin Foxtrot class of vessels.
- Vaghsheer is named after a type of sandfish found in the Indian Ocean.

Three vessels together

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi presided over a historic commissioning ceremony where, for the first time, a destroyer, a frigate, and a submarine were inducted into the Indian Navy simultaneously.
- Highlighting the achievement, the Prime Minister emphasized that all three platforms were proudly made in India, reflecting the nation's growing self-reliance in defense manufacturing.
- A Navy veteran noted that the commissioning marked the culmination of extensive efforts spanning 10-15 years, from design to completion.
- The addition of these frontline vessels strengthens the Navy's capabilities, serving as a significant step toward enhancing deterrence against regional threats and bolstering India's strategic influence in the Indian Ocean Region and beyond.
- In his address, Prime Minister Modi highlighted India's role as a key security provider in the Indian Ocean Region, often emerging as the first responder during regional crises.
- He praised the Indian Navy and Coast Guard for their recent humanitarian efforts, including saving lives and safeguarding cargo worth thousands of crores.
- These actions, he remarked, have elevated global trust in India's maritime forces.
- The event underscored India's commitment to strengthening maritime security, showcasing its growing prowess in naval construction and its role in maintaining regional stability and global confidence.

QUESTIONS

Fill in the Blank:

1. INS Nilgiri is the lead ship of the _____ class, built under the codename Project 17A.
2. INS Surat is the Indian Navy's first _____ enabled warship, designed to enhance operational efficiency using indigenous solutions.
3. INS Vaghsheer is the sixth and final submarine of the _____ class, built under Project 75.
4. The multi-mission frigates of Project 17A, like INS Nilgiri, are capable of operating in a _____ environment, dealing with both conventional and non-conventional threats.
5. INS Surat is powered by a Combined Gas and Gas (COGAG) propulsion system and has achieved speeds exceeding _____ knots during sea trials.
6. The design of the Kalvari class submarines, including INS Vaghsheer, is based on the _____ class developed by the French defence major Naval Group.
7. INS Nilgiri is equipped with versatile weapons systems, including a _____ surface-to-surface missile system and a Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missiles (MRSAM) system.
8. The commissioning ceremony of INS Nilgiri, INS Surat, and INS Vaghsheer marked the first time a _____, a frigate, and a submarine were inducted into the Indian Navy simultaneously.
9. INS Vaghsheer is designed to undertake missions like anti-surface warfare, anti-submarine warfare, intelligence gathering, and _____ operations.
10. Prime Minister Modi emphasized that the commissioning of the three vessels reflects India's growing self-reliance in _____ manufacturing.

8. Jeff Bezos-owned Blue Origin's New Glenn rocket, set to launch into space

- Blue Origin called off blasting its New Glenn rocket from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida.
- According to reports, the Jeff Bezos-owned company chalked up the postponement to a “vehicle subsystem issue”.
- The launch date came weeks after the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issued a commercial space launch license.
- If it succeeds, the rocket will offer government agencies and companies an alternative to launch large satellites and spacecraft. It would also mark a significant milestone for the rocket company, 25 years after it was formed.
- A successful launch of the rocket would put Blue Origin in direct competition with SpaceX whose Falcon 9 rocket has dominated the launch industry.

What is the New Glenn rocket?

- The New Glenn rocket is a heavy-lift launch vehicle which has been named after John Glenn, the NASA astronaut who was the first American to circle the Earth in 1962.
- The two-stage rocket is around 320 feet tall — as tall as a 32-story building — and consists of a 7-metre payload fairing. The first stage is reusable and powered by seven BE-4 engines, which the company claims are the world's most powerful liquefied natural gas (LNG)-fueled, oxygen-rich staged combustion engines.
- They generate more than 3.8 million pounds of thrust.
- According to Blue Origin, the first stage is designed for a minimum of 25 flights.
- New Glenn's second stage is powered by two BE-3U engines, which use liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen to provide more than 320,000 pounds of vacuum thrust.

Why is New Glenn significant for Blue Origin?

- Founded by Bezos in 2000, Blue Origin has registered only small accomplishments over the years, especially in comparison to Elon Musk's SpaceX, which was established in 2002.
- So far, Blue Origin's most notable success has been a small rocket called New Shepard that has taken space tourists and experiments on short up-and-down flights.
- The company is hoping to change its fortunes with the help of the partially reusable New Glenn rocket.
- It also expects to challenge Falcon 9's — also a partially reusable launch vehicle — dominance in the market.
- Falcon 9 is considered one of the most successful and reliable rockets ever made. It has completed more than 400 missions successfully over the years.
- However, the road to New Glenn's first space mission has been bumpy.
- For instance, its first mission was supposed to take place in late October 2024 when it had to carry two small Mars-bound orbiters for NASA.
- But the space agency pulled the spacecraft off when it realised that Blue Origin would not be ready in time.

- The January mission of the New Glenn now involves launching technology related to the company's Blue Ring program, a line of business that will offer manoeuvrable spacecraft to the Pentagon.

Blue Origin

- Blue Origin is a private aerospace manufacturer and spaceflight services company founded in 2000 by Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon.
- The company focuses on making access to space more affordable and reliable through reusable rocket technology.
- Its mission is to enable a future where millions of people can live and work in space, advancing human spaceflight capabilities and space exploration.

Reusable Rocket Technology

- Blue Origin is known for developing reusable rockets to reduce the cost of access to space, a crucial step toward making space travel more sustainable.

Key Vehicles

- **New Shepard:** A suborbital rocket designed for space tourism and scientific research. Named after Alan Shepard, the first American in space, it has successfully conducted several crewed and uncrewed flights.
- **New Glenn:** A heavy-lift orbital rocket under development, named after astronaut John Glenn. It aims to serve commercial, government, and national security missions.
- **Blue Moon:** A lunar lander designed to support NASA's Artemis program and other lunar exploration missions.

Space Tourism

- Blue Origin began offering suborbital spaceflights for private citizens through its New Shepard rocket. In July 2021, Jeff Bezos was among the passengers on its first crewed flight, marking a milestone in commercial space tourism.

NASA and Lunar Exploration

- Blue Origin has partnered with NASA for lunar exploration, competing in the Artemis Human Landing System program. The company's "National Team" collaborates with other aerospace companies to develop lunar landing systems.

Headquarters and Facilities

- Blue Origin's headquarters is in Kent, Washington, with manufacturing facilities in various locations, including Texas, Florida, and Alabama. Its launch site, known as Launch Site One, is in West Texas.

QUESTIONS

Fill in the Blank:

1. Blue Origin postponed the launch of its New Glenn rocket due to a _____ issue.
2. The New Glenn rocket is named after _____, the first American to orbit Earth in 1962.
3. The first stage of the New Glenn rocket is powered by seven _____ engines, which are LNG-fueled and oxygen-rich.
4. Blue Origin received a commercial space launch license from the _____ for the New Glenn rocket.
5. A successful launch of New Glenn would position Blue Origin in direct competition with SpaceX's _____ rocket.
6. The second stage of New Glenn uses two _____ engines fueled by liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen.

7. The first stage of New Glenn is designed for a minimum of _____ flights.
8. Blue Origin's New Shepard rocket, named after Alan Shepard, is primarily used for _____ spaceflights.
9. Blue Origin's lunar lander, designed to support NASA's Artemis program, is called _____.
10. Blue Origin's mission is to enable a future where millions of people can _____ and _____ in space.

9. Moon added to list of threatened cultural sites

- The World Monuments Fund (WMF) has expanded its 2024 list of endangered cultural heritage sites to include the moon, a significant first. Traditionally focused on vulnerable Earth-based sites, this year's list features 25 locations, including the Qhapaq Ñan Andean road system, earthquake-damaged Antakya in Turkey, and Japan's Noto Peninsula.
- The moon was included due to concerns over its cultural heritage, such as artifacts and footprints from the Apollo missions, which face risks from upcoming commercial and governmental lunar activities.
- WMF highlighted the urgency of establishing international preservation protocols as space exploration accelerates. Items like Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin's footprints, the camera that captured the moon landing, and memorial objects left by Apollo astronauts are deemed significant to humanity's collective narrative.
- Private lunar missions are anticipated to increase following NASA's Artemis III mission in 2027, the first crewed moon landing since the 1970s, raising fears of potential disturbance to these iconic sites.
- Montlaur, a WMF representative, underscored the need for cooperative international mechanisms to protect lunar heritage in light of these developments. SpaceX's recent lunar lander launches and the involvement of five countries—the US, China, India, Japan, and the former Soviet Union—in past lunar missions add to these concerns.
- Other sites on the list include areas impacted by conflict and climate change. Gaza's historic urban fabric has suffered extensive damage due to ongoing war, while coastal erosion threatens the Swahili Coast of Africa, including Lamu Old Town and Fort Jesus in Kenya.
- Sustainable tourism opportunities were also highlighted, such as Albania's Orthodox monasteries in Drino Valley, while overcrowding at China's Buddhist grottoes at Maijishan and Yungang has raised preservation challenges.
- The WMF's 2022 list featured prehistoric cave paintings in Brazil, Aztec ruins in Mexico, and the pre-Columbian Garcia Pasture site in Texas. The inclusion of the moon underscores WMF's evolving approach to safeguarding cultural heritage, emphasizing proactive strategies to protect significant sites both on Earth and beyond.

World Monuments Fund (WMF)

- The World Monuments Fund (WMF) is a leading nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and protecting the world's most treasured cultural heritage sites.
- Established in 1965 and headquartered in New York City, WMF works globally to safeguard architectural and cultural landmarks that are at risk due to neglect, natural disasters, climate change, or human activity.

1. World Monuments Watch

- Launched in 1996, the World Monuments Watch is WMF's flagship advocacy program. It identifies and highlights endangered cultural heritage sites worldwide every two years.
- The program raises awareness and mobilizes funding and expertise for preservation efforts.
- Sites included in the list range from ancient archaeological wonders to modern cultural landmarks.

2. Scope of Work

- **Conservation and Restoration:** WMF collaborates with local communities, governments, and experts to restore and maintain historic sites.
- **Education and Training:** The organization provides training for local artisans and professionals in heritage conservation techniques.
- **Advocacy:** WMF raises global awareness about the importance of cultural heritage and the threats it faces.

3. Funding and Partnerships

- WMF receives funding from private donors, corporations, and public institutions.
- Partnerships with organizations such as UNESCO, the Getty Foundation, and various national governments help implement its projects.

4. Significant Projects

- WMF has worked on numerous iconic sites, including:
 - The Angkor Archaeological Park in Cambodia.
 - The Great Wall of China.
 - The Venice Lagoon in Italy.
 - The Mughal Gardens in India.
 - The Babylon Ruins in Iraq.

5. Focus on Climate and Sustainability

- In recent years, WMF has emphasized addressing climate change impacts on heritage sites, ensuring sustainable preservation practices.

Sustainable Tourism

- Sustainable Tourism is a form of tourism that seeks to minimize negative environmental, social, and economic impacts while maximizing positive contributions to local communities, ecosystems, and cultures.
- It aims to meet the needs of tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for future generations.

Environmental Responsibility

- Conserving natural habitats and biodiversity.
- Reducing carbon footprints through eco-friendly practices.
- Promoting renewable energy and waste reduction.

Socio-Cultural Preservation

- Respecting local cultures and traditions.
- Engaging local communities in tourism planning.
- Protecting cultural heritage sites and intangible cultural assets.

Economic Sustainability

- Supporting local businesses and employment.
- Ensuring equitable distribution of economic benefits.
- Reducing reliance on external resources.

Benefits of Sustainable Tourism

- **Environmental Conservation:** Protects ecosystems and wildlife while promoting responsible tourism.
- **Cultural Integrity:** Preserves cultural heritage and fosters cross-cultural understanding.
- **Economic Growth:** Provides sustainable income sources for local communities.
- **Enhanced Tourist Experiences:** Offers authentic and meaningful experiences to travelers.

Eco-Friendly Accommodation

- Using sustainable building materials and energy-efficient systems.
- Encouraging green certifications (e.g., LEED, Green Globe).

Community Involvement

- Hiring local guides and supporting local artisans.
- Sharing tourism revenues with host communities for infrastructure development.

Sustainable Travel

- Encouraging use of public transport, biking, or walking.
- Offering carbon offset programs for air travel.

Visitor Education

- Promoting awareness about conservation and cultural sensitivity.
- Providing guidelines on responsible behavior during visits.

Examples of Sustainable Tourism Initiatives

- **Eco-Tourism:** Destinations like Costa Rica, known for rainforest conservation.
- **Community-Based Tourism:** Programs in countries like Nepal and Kenya that empower local communities.
- **Green Tourism Certification:** Programs such as EarthCheck and Travelife to ensure sustainability standards.

QUESTIONS

Fill in the Blank:

1. The World Monuments Fund (WMF) was established in the year _____ and is headquartered in _____.
2. The inclusion of the _____ in WMF's 2024 list marks the first time a site beyond Earth has been recognized for its cultural heritage.
3. _____ and _____ were the astronauts who left footprints and artifacts on the moon during the Apollo missions.
4. The WMF's flagship advocacy program, launched in 1996, is known as the _____.
5. The _____ Peninsula in Japan was included in the WMF's 2024 list due to threats from climate change.

6. Private lunar missions are expected to increase following NASA's _____ mission in 2027, the first crewed moon landing since the 1970s.
7. The World Monuments Watch identifies endangered cultural heritage sites every _____ years.
8. Sustainable tourism aims to minimize negative impacts on _____ and _____ while maximizing benefits for local communities.
9. Examples of WMF's significant projects include the _____ in Cambodia and the _____ in Iraq.
10. Overcrowding challenges have been highlighted at China's Buddhist grottoes at _____ and _____.

10. Indian First War of Independence 1857

- Since the mid-eighteenth century, nawabs and rajas had seen their power erode.
- They had gradually lost their authority and honour.
- Residents had been stationed in many courts, the freedom of the rulers reduced, their armed forces disbanded, and their revenues and territories taken away by stages.
- Many ruling families tried to negotiate with the Company to protect their interests.
- For example, Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi wanted the Company to recognize her adopted son as the heir to the kingdom after the death of her husband. Nana Saheb, the adopted son of Peshwa Baji Rao II, pleaded that he be given his father's pension when the latter died.
- However, the Company, confident of its superiority and military powers, turned down these pleas. Awadh was one of the last territories to be annexed.
- In 1801, a subsidiary alliance was imposed on Awadh, and in 1856 it was taken over. Governor-General Dalhousie declared that the territory was being misgoverned and British rule was needed to ensure proper administration.
- The Company even began to plan how to bring the Mughal dynasty to an end.
- The name of the Mughal king was removed from the coins minted by the Company.
- In 1849, Governor-General Dalhousie announced that after the death of Bahadur Shah Zafar, the family of the king would be shifted out of the Red Fort and given another place in Delhi to reside in.
- In 1856, Governor-General Canning decided that Bahadur Shah Zafar would be the last Mughal king and after his death none of his descendants would be recognised as kings – they would just be called princes.
- In the countryside, peasants and zamindars resented the high taxes and the rigid methods of revenue collection.
- Many failed to pay back their loans to the moneylenders and gradually lost the lands they had tilled for generations.
- The Indian sepoys in the employ of the Company also had reasons for discontent.
- They were unhappy about their pay, allowances and conditions of service.
- Some of the new rules, moreover, violated their religious sensibilities and beliefs.
- So when in 1824, the sepoys were told to go to Burma by the sea route to fight for the Company, they refused to follow the order, though they agreed to go by the land route.

- They were severely punished, and since the issue did not die down, in 1856 the Company passed a new law which stated that every new person who took up employment in the Company's army had to agree to serve overseas if required.
- Sepoys also reacted to what was happening in the countryside. Many of them were peasants and had families living in the villages. So the anger of the peasants quickly spread among the sepoys.
- The British believed that Indian society had to be reformed. Laws were passed to stop the practice of sati and to encourage the remarriage of widows. English-language education was actively promoted. After 1830, the Company allowed Christian missionaries to function freely in its domain and even own land and property.
- In 1850, a new law was passed to make conversion to Christianity easier.
- This law allowed an Indian who had converted to Christianity to inherit the property of his ancestors.
- Many Indians began to feel that the British were destroying their religion, their social customs and their traditional way of life.

Subsidiary Alliance

- The subsidiary alliance was a diplomatic and military strategy introduced by Lord Wellesley, the British Governor-General of India, in the late 18th century.
- The policy aimed at strengthening British control in India and ensuring the dominance of the British East India Company over Indian states.

Under this system

- Indian rulers were required to maintain a British subsidiary force (an army) within their kingdom, paid for by the ruler himself.
- No foreign alliances could be made by the Indian ruler without the consent of the British.
- The ruler was also obliged to make the British East India Company the primary political and military ally.
- This policy effectively diminished the power of local rulers, leading them to be more dependent on the British for military protection and thus giving the British greater political control.
- The Maratha Empire, Hyder Ali, and Tipu Sultan were some of the major opponents of this policy, but it significantly reduced the power of smaller kingdoms and helped the British expand their influence in India.

QUESTIONS

Fill in the Blank:

1. Since the mid-eighteenth century, nawabs and rajas had seen their _____ erode.
2. The British East India Company imposed a _____ alliance on Awadh in 1801.
3. Many ruling families tried to _____ with the Company to protect their interests.
4. In 1856, Governor-General _____ declared that Awadh was being misgoverned and needed British rule for proper administration.
5. The Company removed the name of the Mughal king from the _____ minted by the Company.
6. In 1856, Governor-General _____ decided that Bahadur Shah Zafar would be the last Mughal king.
7. Peasants and _____ resented the high taxes and rigid methods of revenue collection.
8. The Indian sepoys were unhappy about their _____, allowances, and conditions of service.
9. In 1850, a new law was passed to make _____ to Christianity easier.
10. The _____ alliance was a diplomatic and military strategy introduced by Lord Wellesley to strengthen British control in India.