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Gist of Editorials

NOVEMBER - 2020

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GIST OF EDITORIALS 3rd NOVEMBER - 2020

MAHARANI JINDAN KAUR

GENERAL STUDIES - I (MODERN INDIAN HISTORY)

Who was Rani Jindan?

Maharani Jindan Kaur, **the youngest wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh**, waged an unending struggle against the British.

- She was the **mother of Maharaja Duleep Singh**, the last ruler of the Sikh empire, who was raised by the British.
- The Sikh empire of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was spread from Kabul to Kashmir and the borders of Delhi.

When did she become the regent?

- Duleep Singh was five years old when he was placed on the throne in 1843 after the death of two heirs to Maharaja Ranjit Singh.
- Since he was just a child, Maharani Jindan was made the regent. Not a rubber stamp, she took an active interest in running the kingdom, introducing changes in the revenue system.

When did the British imprison and exile her?

The British declared war on the Sikh empire in December 1845.

- After their victory in the first Anglo-Sikh war, they retained Duleep Singh as the ruler but imprisoned Jind Kaur.
- The British campaign against her was vicious, describing her as a prostitute, seductress and the 'Messalina of the Punjab', a reference to the promiscuous third wife of Roman Emperor Claudius.
- Jindan believed that if united, Indian rulers could oust the British. She was in touch with Bhai Maharaj Singh, who tried to rebel against the British after the annexation of the Sikh empire.
- With many historians counting the Anglo-Sikh battles as the first war of independence, Jindan has now become a heroic figure.

Prison break

In a dramatic prison break on April 19, 1849, from Chunnar Fort in Uttar Pradesh, Rani Jindan, dressed in beggars' rags fled under cover of darkness, taunting her British captors as she went.

- Jindan, scattered money on the floor of her cell, and scrawled a note for the guards to find:

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'You put me in a cage and locked me up. For all your locks and your sentries, I got out by magic... I had told you plainly not to push me too hard – but don't think I ran away. Understand well, that I escape by myself unaided... don't imagine I got out like a thief.'

After escaping from Chunnar fort

Maharani Jind Kaur arrived at Kathmandu on April 29, 1849, where she was given asylum by Jung Bahadur, the prime minister.

- She was given a **house on the banks of river Bhagmati**. She stayed in Nepal till 1860, where she continued to reach out to rebels in Punjab and Jammu-Kashmir.
- Her letters **trying to contact rebels detained in Allahabad fort** were intercepted by the British government.
- She **established contact with Bhai Maharaj Singh** in Jammu and Kashmir. She also sent **emissaries to Maharaj Gulab Singh of Jammu**.
- At one point, the British caught some funds she was sending to rebels. Things reached such a pass that the **British asked the Nepal PM to rein her in**.

Reunite with Duleep Singh

Maharani Jindan met Duleep Singh at Calcutta in April 1861. The British, ever suspicious of the maharani's machinations, ordered then that she leave for London in May.

- It was **due to her influence that Duleep Singh, who had converted to Christianity, returned to Sikhism**.
- The long exile took a heavy toll on Maharani Jindan's health.
- She **passed away in her sleep on August 1, 1863**, two years after she walked into the Kensington Gardens in 1861.

GIST OF EDITORIALS 4th NOVEMBER - 2020

WHAT ARE THE RULES GOVERNING J&K?

GENERAL STUDIES - II (FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNION & THE STATES)

On October 26, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) announced several amendments to land laws for the Union Territory of Jammu Kashmir (J&K).

- The MHA notification said the **"Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Adaptation of Central Laws) Third Order, 2020** shall come into force with immediate effect and will encourage development in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir".

Background

On 5 August 2019, the special status granted to Jammu and Kashmir under **Article 370 and Article 35A** was revoked.

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Section 96 of the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019 empowers the MHA to adapt and modify any law by way of repeal or amendment before the expiration of one year from the appointed day of the Union Territory of J&K, which is October 31, 2019.

What are the changes?

The MHA has amended sections of the **J&K Land Revenue Act, 1996** and the **J&K Development Act of 1970**.

The 1996 Act pertains to management of agricultural land. And,

The 1970 Act deals with zonal development plans determining land use for public buildings, roads, housing recreation, industry, business, markets, schools, hospitals and public and private open spaces.

- Under the newly introduced **J&K Development Act**, the term **“being permanent resident of the State”** as a criteria has been **“omitted”**, paving the way for investors outside J&K to invest in the UT.
- **No land used for agriculture purposes shall be used for any non-agricultural purposes** except with the permission of the district collector.
- The **government may now allow transfer of land** “in favour of a person or an institution for the purpose of promotion of healthcare or senior secondary or higher or specialized education in J&K”.
- Also, **No sale, gift, exchange, or mortgage of the land shall be valid in favour of a person who is not an agriculturist.**
- **An Army officer not below the rank of Corps Commander** can declare an area as **“Strategic Area”** within a local area, only for direct operational and training requirements of the armed forces.

Open for sale

Some of the features of the new Jammu & Kashmir land laws:

- The new laws end the exclusive rights of permanent residents over land in the Union Territory
- People, including investors, outside J&K can purchase land now
- There will be a bar though on agriculture land to be used for non-agricultural purposes

- Land can be transferred in favour of a person or an institution for the purpose of promotion of healthcare or senior secondary or higher or specialised education

An Army officer not below the rank of Corps Commander can declare an area as “Strategic Area” for operational and training requirements of the armed forces

What about laws for Ladakh?

- The main political parties in J&K have questioned the land laws, and say the Centre engaged with Ladakh and not J&K on land laws and job protection.
- The laws for Ladakh have not yet been notified as local leaders have demanded inclusion in the Sixth Schedule (tribal) of the Constitution to protect their land from “outsiders”.

GIST OF EDITORIALS 5th NOVEMBER – 2020

ANT GROUP IPO

GENERAL STUDIES - III (INVESTMENT MODELS)

The scheduled **initial public offering (IPO)** of Ant Group has been delayed for now, after its plans of listing on the **Shanghai and Hong Kong's stock exchanges** were thwarted by authorities.

What is the Ant Group?

In 2004, **Jack Ma's Alibaba Group**, started to build out a **super-fast payments platform**, which it said would enable its users to make payments easily.

- The **third-party digital payment app, named Alipay**, has gained millions of users in a very short time.
- **In order to capitalise on the various offerings of Alipay**, Ma spun off the app and brought it under a company called Ant Financial. **The company was later re-christened as Ant Group.**
- Over time, Alipay, Ant Group's number one offering had, **also ventured into personal retail lending, wealth management and insurance.**
- The **Ant Group thus, even though founded by Ma, is different from the Alibaba Group.**

What Is an Initial Public Offering (IPO)?

An initial public offering (IPO) refers to **the process of offering shares of a private corporation to the public in a new stock issuance.**

- Companies must meet requirements by exchanges and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to hold an initial public offering (IPO).
- POs provide companies with an opportunity to obtain capital by offering shares through the primary market.
- Companies **hire investment banks to market, gauge demand, set the IPO price and date, and more.**
- An IPO can be **seen as an exit strategy for the company's founders and early investors**, realizing the full profit from their private investment.

Why did the regulators in Shanghai and Hong Kong suspend Ant Group's IPO?

In China, lending is a very tightly regulated state subject.

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- The government and regulators were very uncomfortable with the idea of third-party technology driven apps such as Alipay venturing into the consumer lending business.
- In October this year, **Ma criticised China's state machinery's financial regulations "outdated"** which were stifling innovation in the sector.
- The **comments are said to have irked top leaders of the Communist regime**, who have expressed concerns about how banks have tied up with micro-lenders such as Alipay.

What happens now to the IPO plans of Ant Group?

For now, the **Ant Group will have to change its working practices in order to satisfy the authorities** if it wishes to float a new IPO.

One of the changes, according to reports, **will have to be about the company being more transparent on its disclosure and other requirements** such as controlling the amount of micro-lending it does every month.

GIST OF EDITORIALS 6th NOVEMBER – 2020

A FAST RADIO BURST IN OUR OWN GALAXY

GENERAL STUDIES - III (AWARENESS IN THE FIELDS OF SPACE)

Recently, NASA has reported that, **it observed a mix of X-ray and radio signals never observed before in the Milky Way**. Significantly, the flare-up it observed included the **first fast radio burst (FRB)** seen within the galaxy.

Detection of simultaneous bursts in the Milky Way

The X-ray portion of the **simultaneous bursts was detected by several satellites**, including NASA's Wind mission, and the radio component was discovered by the Canadian Hydrogen Intensity Mapping Experiment (CHIME).

Further, a NASA-funded project called **Survey for Transient Astronomical Radio Emission 2 (STARE2)** also detected the radio burst seen by CHIME.

What is a fast radio burst (FRB)?

Essentially, **FRBs are bright bursts of radio waves whose durations lie in the millisecond-scale**, because of which it is difficult to detect them and determine their position in the sky.

- Radio waves **can be produced by astronomical objects with changing magnetic fields**.
- The **first FRB was discovered in 2007**, since when scientists have been working towards finding the source of their origin.

Origin of the detected FRB

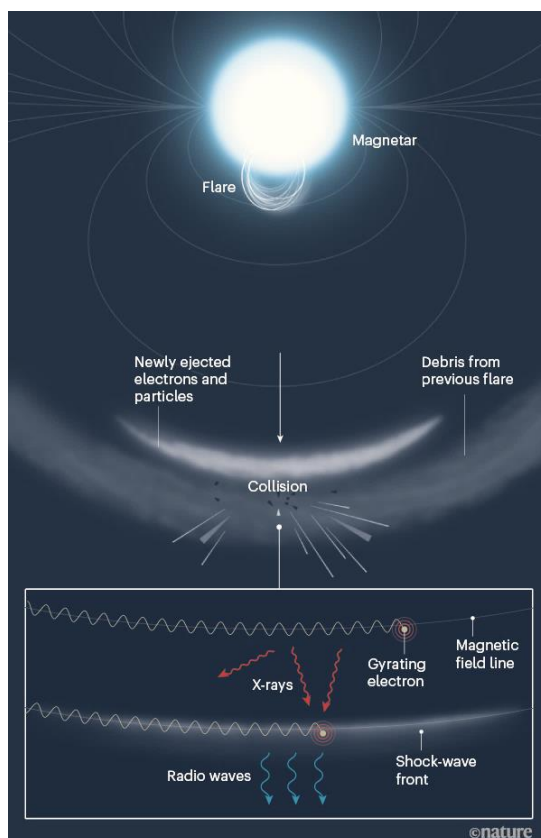
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- The source of the FRB detected in April in the **Milky Way** is a **very powerful magnetic neutron star, referred to as a magnetar**, called SGR 1935+2154 or SGR 1935,.
- It is located in the **constellation Vulpecula** and is estimated to be between 14,000-41,000 light-years away.

What is a magnetar?

As per NASA, a **magnetar is a neutron star, “the crushed, city-size remains of a star many times more massive than our Sun.”**

The **magnetic field of such a star is very powerful**, which can be over 10 trillion times stronger than a refrigerator magnet and up to a thousand times stronger than a typical neutron star's.



How they are formed?

Neutron stars are formed when the core of a massive star undergoes gravitational collapse when it reaches the end of its life.

Magnetars are a subclass of these neutrons and occasionally release flares with more energy in a fraction of a second than the Sun is capable of emitting in tens of thousands of years.

Significance of this observation

- Until now, there were various theories that tried to explain what the possible sources of an FRB could be. One of the sources proposed by the theories has been magnetars.
- But before April this year, scientists did not have any evidence to show that FRBs could be blasted out of a magnetar. Therefore, the observation is especially significant.

ALIMONY GUIDELINES: ON MAINTENANCE LAWS

GENERAL STUDIES - I (WOMEN RELATED ISSUES)

In India, the girls are married off early and bear children long before they should despite all the laws and regulations.

There is also the **possibility of a marriage not working out for varied reasons, leaving the girl or young woman in extreme distress because often she is not financially independent.**

Recently, the Supreme Court leaned on **the Article 15(3) and Article 39 of the Indian constitution** along with other laws, set down **comprehensive guidelines on alimony.**

Comprehensive guidelines on alimony

The apex court outlined specifics, including “reasonable needs” of a wife and dependent children, her educational qualification, whether she has an independent source of income, and if she does, if it is sufficient, to follow for family courts, magistrates and lower courts on alimony cases.

- The court ruled that an **abandoned wife and children will be entitled to ‘maintenance’ from the date she applies for it in a court of law.**
- A **violation would lead to punishment**, such as civil detention and even attachment of the property of the latter.
- The plea of the husband that he **does not possess any source of income ipso facto does not absolve him of his moral duty to maintain his wife**, if he is able-bodied and has educational qualifications.
- Both the applicant wife and the respondent husband **have to disclose their assets and liabilities in a maintenance case.**
- Any earlier **case filed or pending under any other law** should also be revealed in court.
- The **expenses of the children**, including their education, basic needs and other vocational activities, should be factored in by courts while calculating the alimony.
- Other factors such as **“spiralling inflation rates and high costs of living”** should be considered, but the wife should receive an alimony which fit the standard of life she was used to in the matrimonial home.

Implications

Women deserted by husbands were left in dire conditions and often reduced to destitution for lack of means to sustain themselves and their children.

- These uniform and comprehensive guidelines would address the problems of women in these situations.

- These guidelines should be followed by family courts, magistrates and lower courts while hearing applications filed by women seeking maintenance from their estranged husbands.

GIST OF EDITORIALS 9th NOVEMBER – 2020

ISLAMIC LAWS IN THE UAE HAS RELAXED

GENERAL STUDIES - II (EFFECT OF POLICIES OF OTHER COUNTRIES)

Recently, **The United Arab Emirates** announced a slew of legal reforms relating to personal freedoms that seek to move the country away from its hardline interpretation of **Islamic law**.

As per the state-run Emirates News Agency (WAM) and The National, The overhaul includes changes in laws related to honour killings, alcohol restrictions, cohabitation of unmarried couples, divorce and succession.

The legal reforms that the Gulf nation seeks to implement **Honour killings and harassment of women**

Previously, under “honour crimes”, male relatives could evade prosecution or get lighter sentences for assaulting women who purportedly brought “dishonour” to the family by acts such as disobeying religious scriptures or promiscuity.

- Such incidents would now be treated as similar to any other assault.
- There would be **stricter punishments for men who subject women to harassment**, including stalking and street harassment.
- **The rape of a minor or someone “with limited mental capacity” will be punished with execution.**

Consumption of alcohol

Drinking alcohol has been **decriminalised for those above 21 years of age**, and penalties for possessing or selling alcoholic beverages without an alcohol licence in authorised areas have been removed.

- **The Muslims**, who until now had been barred from obtaining licences, **would be allowed to drink alcoholic beverages.**
- Earlier too, alcohol-related prosecutions in the Gulf nation were rare, but **individuals drinking without a licence would get charged when arrested for a separate offence.**
- Under the new reforms, this will not occur. Underage drinking, however, remains punishable.

Unmarried couples living together

- “Cohabitation of unmarried couples” has been **made legal for the first time.**

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- Previously, it was illegal for an unmarried couple, or even unrelated flatmates, to share a home in the UAE.

Divorce and succession

In a major change, for couples who were married in their home country but want to get a divorce in the UAE, **laws of the country where the marriage took place would apply.**

- **As regards succession**, in bitterly fought cases, local courts could apply UAE's Sharia law to divide assets among family members.
- **Now, the law of a person's citizenship will determine how assets would be divided**, unless there is a written will.
- However, **property purchased in the UAE will continue to be administered according to Sharia law.**

Suicide and "Good Samaritans"

The reforms decriminalise suicide and attempted suicide. Previously, **a person who survived a suicide attempt could be prosecuted.**

- However, this offence has now been removed and the courts and police are supposed to provide mental health support to vulnerable people.
- Assisting a person in attempting suicide, however, remains a crime and can carry an unspecified jail sentence.

Procedural reforms

Courts have been mandated **to provide legal translators for defendants and witnesses who do not speak Arabic.**

- Privacy laws have also been strengthened, and evidence related to alleged indecent acts will now have to be protected and cannot be publicly disclosed, The National reported.
- However, **other offences in the UAE that have affected expatriates**, such as homosexuality, public displays of affection and cross-dressing, **have so far not been addressed.**

GIST OF EDITORIALS 10th NOVEMBER – 2020

NGT BAN ON SALE AND USE OF FIRECRACKERS IN DELHI-NCR

GENERAL STUDIES - II (INDIA AND ITS NEIGHBORHOOD- RELATIONS)

The NGT has imposed a complete ban on sale and use of all kinds of firecrackers in the Delhi-NCR. The ban shall come into effect from the midnight of November 9 and stay till November 30.

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How will NGT ban on sale and use of firecrackers in Delhi-NCR impact Haryana?

Amid worsening of the Air Quality Index (AQI) and increase in new cases of Covid-19 infections, the National Green Tribunal, announced a “complete ban on sale and use of all kinds of firecrackers in Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR).

- With this decision, **more than half of the neighbouring state of Haryana will not be able to sell or burst firecrackers** on the upcoming festivals of Diwali, Gurburab and Kartik Purnima – **the three main festivals** celebrated in the northern region in the coming days.
- On Sunday, the **Haryana government led by Manohar Lal Khattar had announced a two-hour window for sale and bursting of firecrackers.**

Which all districts of Haryana are covered in NCR?

There are at least 14 districts out of the total 22 of Haryana that are covered in the NCR.

- The **14 districts of Haryana** that will be affected by the NGT order.
- **Several districts of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan** are also included in the NCR, which too are likely to be affected with the NGT’s recent order.

What has the Haryana government said on firecrackers?

The order passed by the Chief Secretary, said, “To draw a balance between the potentially harmful consequences of bursting of crackers amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, **it will strictly be from 8 pm till 10 pm only.**

- **On Christmas and New Year eve**, when such fireworks start around midnight, i.e. 12 am, it will be from 11.55 pm till 12.30 am, only.”
- With NGT’s order, the **Haryana government too is likely to issue revised instructions** as the officials said that NGT’s order will have an overriding effect on the state government’s relaxation.

How Haryana wanted to implement its orders?

The Haryana government ordered that “any violation of such orders would invite immediate penal action under Section 51 to 60 of **Disaster Management Act, 2005** besides legal action under Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code and other provisions, as applicable.

GIST OF EDITORIALS 11th NOVEMBER – 2020

NEW PEACE DEAL BETWEEN ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN

GENERAL STUDIES - II (EFFECT OF POLITICS OF OTHER COUNTRIES)

On November 10, **Russia brokered a new peace deal between Armenia and Azerbaijan**, the two countries that have been in a **military conflict for over six weeks over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh in the South Caucasus.**

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What is the new peace deal?

As per the new peace deal, **both sides will now maintain positions in the areas that they currently hold.**

- It will mean a **significant gain for Azerbaijan** as it has reclaimed over 15-20 per cent of its lost territory during the recent conflict.
- Further, under this agreement, **all military operations are suspended**, Russian peacekeepers will be deployed along the line of contact in Nagorno-Karabakh and along the Lachin corridor that connects the region to Armenia.
- These **Russian peacekeepers** with a force of roughly 2,000 will be deployed in the area for a period of five years.
- **Refugees and internally displaced persons will return to the region** and the adjacent territories and the two sides will also exchange prisoners of wars and bodies.
- Significantly, a **new corridor will be opened from Nakhchivan to Azerbaijan, which will be under Russian control.**

What are the stakes for Russia?

- Russia's role in the conflict has been somewhat opaque since **it supplies arms to both countries and is in a military alliance with Armenia** called the Collective Security Treaty Organisation.
- According to a statement released last month, **Russia "has always taken a balanced position"** on the matter and has "traditionally good relations" with both countries.

What is the Nagorno-Karabakh region?

Straddling western Asia and Eastern Europe, **Nagorno-Karabakh is internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan**, but most of the region is controlled by Armenian separatists.

- Nagorno-Karabakh has been **part of Azerbaijan territory since the Soviet era.**
- While the **Armenian government does not recognise Nagorno-Karabakh as independent**, it supports the region politically and militarily.

GIST OF EDITORIALS 13th NOVEMBER – 2020

GOVERNMENT REGULATE ONLINE NEWS AND OTT PLATFORMS

GENERAL STUDIES - II (GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND INTERVENTIONS)

The Information and Broadcasting Ministry has found a vast swathe of unregulated content, namely news online and '**Over the Top**' (OTT) platforms which had escaped any architecture of regulation.

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While the **print** was regulated by the Press Council of India and **Television**, both **News and Entertainment**, were being regulated by the **Cable Networks Regulation Act (2005)**, content on online, the Government felt, fell into a black hole with no oversight.

The rationale behind OTT platforms regulations

- The **Ministry** was already regulating news and entertainment content on **TV and radio** through statutory bodies under the Ministry.
- Also, senior officials in the Ministry said they were in receipt of **several complaints from the public underlining the concern and need to regulate online content**.

Government's Notification

- The **films and audio-visual programs made available by online content providers and news and current affairs content** on online platform will be **under the purview of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry**.
- This shall come into force at once.

What is Over the Top (OTT)?

Over the top (OTT) **refers to film and television content provided via a high-speed Internet connection rather than a cable or satellite provider**.

- Viewers who dislike paying for bundled content are often referred to as cord cutters.
- OTT does not mean free, as the term encompasses services such as Netflix, Amazon, iTunes and HBO Now.
- OTT services circumvent traditional media distribution channels such as telecommunications networks or cable television providers.

Way forward

However, monitoring content 24×7 has its own challenges. Whether the Ministry will set up a committee involving the public to look into complaints received remains to be seen.

GIST OF EDITORIALS 17th NOVEMBER – 2020

LEONID METEOR SHOWER

GENERAL STUDIES - III (AWARENESS IN THE FIELDS SPACE)

The Leonid meteor showers are currently making their yearly appearance, and will reach their peak in India on November 17 and 18. In 2020, these showers are active from November 6th to November 30th.

What is the Leonids?

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The Leonids emerge from the **comet Tempel-Tuttle**, which requires 33 years to revolve once around the Sun.

- These meteors are bright and among the fastest moving— **travelling at speeds of 71 km per second**.
- During this year's showers, **peaks of around 10 to 15 meteors** are expected to be seen every hour.
- **Meteor showers are named after the constellation they appear to be coming from.**
- The Leonids originate **from the constellation Leo the Lion**— the groups of stars which form a lion's mane.

What is a meteor shower?

On its journey around the Sun, the Earth passes through large swathes of cosmic debris. The **debris is essentially the remnants of comets** — great frigid chunks of matter that leave behind **dirty trails of rocks and ice that linger long after the comets themselves have passed**.

- As the Earth wades through this cloud of comet waste, the bits of debris create what **appears from the ground to be a fireworks display in the sky** — known as a **meteor shower**.
- Several meteor showers can be seen around the year. According to NASA, over 30 meteor showers occur annually and are observable from the Earth.

What is the best way to see a meteor shower?

Meteors are **best seen on a cloudless night**, when the entire sky is visible, and when the Moon is not extremely bright.

- Chances of a successful viewing are **higher from locations far away from the lights of cities**.
- The showers peak when the Earth passes through the densest part of the debris cloud.
- The **Leonids will be most visible in the Northern Hemisphere**, but can also be seen from the Southern Hemisphere. India lies in the Northern Hemisphere.

GIST OF EDITORIALS 18th NOVEMBER – 2020

HURRICANE IOTA

GENERAL STUDIES - III (DISASTER AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT)

Hurricane Iota made landfall in Nicaragua in Central America on 18 November and **has developed into a category five storm**.

- Iota was spotted as a **tropical depression last week in the Central Caribbean Sea** by the US National Hurricane Center (NHC).
- **US National Hurricane Center (NHC)** is responsible for issuing forecasts for all tropical cyclones in the North Atlantic and Northeast Pacific basins.

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Atlantic Hurricane season

- The Atlantic Hurricane season runs from **June to November** and covers the Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico.
- While the Eastern Pacific Hurricane season runs from May 15 to November 30.

Severity of Hurricane Iota

Hurricanes are categorised on the **Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale**. It rates them on a scale of 1 to 5 based on wind speed.

- Hurricanes that reach **category three or higher** are called '**major hurricanes**' because of their potential to cause devastating damage to life and property.
- **Hurricane Iota is a category five storm.**

What are hurricanes and how do they form?

Tropical cyclones or hurricanes use warm, moist air as fuel, and therefore form over warm ocean waters near the equator.

As NASA describes it, when the warm, moist air rises upward from the surface of the ocean, it creates an area of low air pressure below. Air from the surrounding areas rushes to fill this place, eventually rising when it becomes warm and moist too.

- When the warm air rises and cools off, the moisture forms clouds. This system of clouds and winds continues to grow and spin, fuelled by the ocean's heat and the water that evaporates from its surface.
- As such storm systems rotate faster and faster, an **eye forms in the centre**.
- **Storms that form towards the north of the equator rotate counter clockwise**, while **those that form to the south spin clockwise** because of the rotation of the Earth.

Difference between a hurricane and a tropical storm

There is no difference. Depending on where they occur, hurricanes may be called typhoons or cyclones.

- The **tropical cyclones that form over the Atlantic Ocean or the eastern Pacific Ocean are called hurricanes** and the ones that **form in the Northwest Pacific are called typhoons**.
- Tropical storms that form in the Bay of **Bengal or the Arabian Sea** are called cyclones.

GIST OF EDITORIALS 19th NOVEMBER – 2020

CENTENARY CELEBRATION OF SGPC

GENERAL STUDIES - I (DIVERSITY OF INDIA)

The 100th foundation day of the **Shiromani Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC)** on November 17, was observed in Amritsar.

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Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Harpreet Singh **called the body the mother of the Shiromani Akali Dal.**

Gurdwara Reform Movement

The **sudden rise in the activities of Christian missionaries and Arya Samaj after the annexation of Punjab** by the British led to the **Singh Sabha movement** among Sikhs to stop what was then termed the 'degradation of Sikh thought and principles' in daily life.

- The foundation of **Khalsa College in Amritsar in 1892** was an amalgamation of this activism.
- But the **control of the Golden Temple and gurdwaras continued to be in the hands of 'mahants' (priests)** who enjoyed the tacit support of the British government.
- These **'mahants' often treated the gurdwaras as their personal fiefdoms** and encouraged practices such as **idol worship and discriminated against Dalits**, both in violation of the tenets of Sikhism.

The formation of SGPC

After much discussion, a big gathering was called at Jallianwala Bagh on October 12, 1920 **to restore the rights of Dalit Sikhs to offer parshad at the Golden Temple.**

Soon, the assembled people moved to Golden Temple **and removed the mahants** who had little mass support.

- A **25-member committee dominated by Dalit Sikhs was formed on the same day.**
- This committee encouraged the community members to get organised and **finally led to the formation of a 175-member body called Shiromani Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC)** on November 15, 1920.
- Two days earlier, **the British government had set up its own committee** consisting of 36 Sikhs to manage the Golden Temple.
- The **SGPC included members of the British committee** as well. The first SGPC meeting was held at the Akal Takht on December 12, 1920.
- The British government finally passed **the Gurudwaras Act in 1925**, making **SGPC a democratic body.**

Relationship between the SGPC and Shiromani Akali Dal

The Akali Dal was formed on December 14, 1920 as a task force of the Shiromani Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee.

- **During the five-year movement**, at least 500 Sikhs sacrificed their lives, and 4,000 were arrested that made SGPC the legal body of Sikhs to manage gurdwara affairs.
- The **movement also strengthened the Shiromani Akali Dal as a political party.**

The present crisis

There **have been no SGPC elections for the last nine years and the leadership has failed to act on the report about the 328 missing copies of Guru Granth Sahib**, arguably the biggest issue to grip the body in recent times. This is why there have been unprecedented protests outside the SGPC office in Amritsar.

GIST OF EDITORIALS 21st NOVEMBER – 2020

GUILLAIN BARRE SYNDROME

GENERAL STUDIES - III (HEALTH RELATED ISSUES)

In a rare complication, some patients infected with Covid-19 have been found suffering from Guillain Barre Syndrome (GBS). In India, such cases have been reported since August.

What is Guillain Barre Syndrome?

Guillain-Barré syndrome is a **rare but serious autoimmune disorder** in which the immune system attacks healthy nerve cells in your **peripheral nervous system (PNS)**.

- This leads to weakness, numbness, and tingling, and can eventually cause paralysis.
- The **cause of this condition is unknown**, but it's **typically triggered by an infectious illness, such as gastroenteritis (irritation of the stomach or intestines)** or a lung infection.
- There's **no cure for the syndrome, but treatment can reduce the severity of symptoms** and shorten the duration of the illness.

What causes Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS)?

The precise cause of Guillain-Barré is unknown. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Trusted Source, **about two-thirds of people with Guillain-Barré develop it soon after they've been sick with diarrhea or a respiratory infection.**

In the past, patients of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome showed GBS symptoms, **as did those infected with Zika, HIV, Herpes virus and Campylobacter jejuni.**

Guillain Barre Syndrome and Covid-19

Covid-19 is known **to affect digestive, cardiac and kidney functions**. It is also known that some — not all — patients are prone to **neurological problems if they contract the virus.**

- The virus can cause memory fog, anxiety, headache and depression if it attacks parts of the brain which form the central nervous system.
- It can **trigger an immune response so powerful that the body's peripheral nervous system** can come under attack.

Treatment

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Intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG) and sometimes plasma therapy helps recovery in patients with GBS.

Some patients may develop severe complications and require intensive care treatment or ventilator support.

GIST OF EDITORIALS 23rd NOVEMBER – 2020

SENTINEL-6 SATELLITE

GENERAL STUDIES - III (AWARENESS IN THE FIELDS OF SPACE)

The **Copernicus Sentinel-6 Michael Freilich satellite**, designed to monitor oceans, was launched from the Vandenberg Air Force base in California aboard a **SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket** on **November 21**.

The Sentinel-6 Michael Freilich satellite **has been named after Dr. Michael Freilich**, who was the Director of NASA's Earth Science Division from 2006-2019.

Why it is different from other satellites?

This is a part of the next mission **dedicated to measuring changes in the global sea level**.

Other satellites that have been launched since 1992 to track changes in the oceans on a global scale include the TOPEX/Poseidon, Jason-1 and OSTN/Jason-2, among others.

What is the mission?

The mission, called the **Jason Continuity of Service (Jason-CS) mission**, is designed to **measure the height of the ocean**, which is a **key component in understanding how the Earth's climate is changing**.

The spacecraft **consists of two satellites**, one of them launched on 21 November 2020, and the other, called **Sentinel-6B, to be launched in 2025**.

It has been developed jointly by:

- The European Space Agency (ESA),
- NASA,
- European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (Eumetsat),
- The USA's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and
- The EU, with contributions from France's National Centre for Space Studies (CNES).

What will the satellite do?

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According to NASA, **the satellite will ensure the continuity of sea-level observations into the fourth decade** and will provide measurements of global sea-level rise.

- Since 1992, **high-precision satellite altimeters have helped scientists understand** how the ocean stores and distributes heat, water and carbon in the climate system.
- Essentially, **the satellite will send pulses to the Earth's surface and measure how long they take to return to it**, which will help scientists measure the sea surface height.
- It will also **measure water vapour along this path and find its position** using GPS and ground-based lasers.

Other Applications

Further, **the data it collects will support operational oceanography**, by providing improved forecasts of ocean currents, wind and wave conditions.

- This **data will allow improvements in both short-term forecasting for weather predictions** in the two-to-four-week range (hurricane intensity predictions), and long-term forecasting, **for instance for seasonal conditions like El Niño and La Niña**.
- Data from satellites such as Sentinel-6 help scientists foresee the effects of the changing oceans on the climate.

Significance

In order **to measure and track changes in the oceanic heat budget**, scientists need to know the ocean currents and heat storage of the oceans, which can be determined from the height of the sea surface.

GIST OF EDITORIALS 24th NOVEMBER – 2020

CYCLONE NIVAR

GENERAL STUDIES - III (DISASTER AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT)

Within a week, the **second cyclone is taking shape in the North Indian Ocean region**.

The Bay of Bengal will see its **second Severe Cyclone of the year, after Super Cyclone Amphan** formed in May.

Why are Tamil Nadu and Puducherry on 'red' alert?

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast the development of a cyclone in the **Southwest region of the Bay of Bengal, off Tamil Nadu coast**.
- After **cyclone Gaja in 2018**, this will be the second cyclone to cross Tamil Nadu in the last two years.
- Once intensified, **it would acquire its name 'Nivar', proposed by Iran**.

When will the cyclone develop, what would be its intensity?

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The **depression will intensify into a cyclone**, and at this stage, the **wind speed will range between 70 to 80 km/ hr gusting to 90km/ hr**.

The cyclone will further gain strength into a **Severe Cyclone category (90 to 100 km/hr gusting to 110 km/hr)**.



Which areas will be affected by the cyclone?

- **Northern districts of Tamil Nadu** will face the maximum hazard.
- Coastal Andhra Pradesh, Nellore and Chittoor districts of Rayalaseema, Telangana, south interior Karnataka will also receive rainfall due to this cyclone between November 24 – 26.

What damage is expected in Tamil Nadu?

The IMD has suggested **complete suspension of fishing activity in the west-southwest regions** of the Bay of Bengal till November 25. Fishermen have been advised to not venture into the sea during the next three days.

GIST OF EDITORIALS 25th NOVEMBER – 2020

DESALINATION PLANTS

GENERAL STUDIES - III (SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY)

Worldwide, **desalination is seen as one possible answer to stave off water crisis**.

Recently, Maharashtra announced the setting up of a desalination plant in Mumbai, **becoming the fourth state in the country** to experiment with the idea.

What are desalination plants?

A desalination plant turns **salt water into water that is fit to drink**. The most commonly used technology used for the process is **reverse osmosis**.

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- **In Reverse osmosis**, an external pressure is applied to push solvents from an area of high-solute concentration to an area of low-solute concentration through a membrane.
- The microscopic pores in the membranes allow water molecules through but leave salt and most other impurities behind, **releasing clean water from the other side**.
- These plants are **mostly set up in areas that have access to sea water**.

This technology in India

Desalination has largely been limited to **affluent countries in the Middle East and has recently started making inroads in parts of the United States and Australia**.

- In India, **Tamil Nadu has been the pioneer in using this technology**, setting up two desalination plants near Chennai in 2010 and then 2013.
- The other states that have proposed these plants are **Gujarat**, which has announced to set up a 100 MLD RO plant at the Jodiya coast in Jamnagar district.
- **Andhra Pradesh**, too, has plans of setting up a plant.

Need to set up a desalination plant in Mumbai

Currently, **BMC supplies 3850 MLD as against the requirement of 4200 MLD each day**.

In 2007, a **state government-appointed high-level committee had suggested setting up desalination plants in Mumbai**, however, over the years the authorities have avoided claiming that the cost is prohibitive.

- However, with the **city's water problems on the rise owing to burgeoning population**, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray Monday has given the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (**BMC**) the go-ahead for the project.
- The project is proposed to be set up on 25 to 30 acres of land at **Manori** and will have a capacity of 200 MLD.

Ecologically concern

Desalination is an expensive way of generating drinking water as it requires a high amount of energy.

- The other problem is the disposal of the byproduct — **highly concentrated brine** — of the desalination process.
- While in **most places brine is pumped back into the sea**, there have been rising complaints that it ends up severely damaging the local ecology around the plant.

GIST OF EDITORIALS 27th NOVEMBER – 2020

INDIA'S CONSTITUTION DAY

GENERAL STUDIES - II (INDIAN CONSTITUTION)

CHROME IAS ACADEMY

On November 26, 1949, the Constituent Assembly adopted the Constitution of India, and it came into effect on January 26, 1950.

Since 2015, November 26 has been observed as the Constitution Day of India, or Samvidhan Divas.

Why is November 26 observed as Constitution Day?

In May 2015, the Union Cabinet announced that November 26 will be observed as Constitution Day to promote “constitutional values amongst citizens”.

- This was the year that marked the **125th birth anniversary of BR Ambedkar**, the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution.
- On November 19, 2015, the government formally notified November 26 as Constitution Day. **Before this, the day was observed as National Law Day.**

Timeline of events

- The **Constituent Assembly**, the body meant to draft the Constitution of India, **held its first session on December 9, 1946**, attended by 207 members, including nine women.
- Initially, **the assembly had 389 members, but after independence and the partition of India, the strength was reduced to 299.**
- The assembly took over **three years to draft the constitution, spending over 114 days** considering the content of the draft alone.
- On December **13, 1946**, **Nehru moved the “Objectives Resolution”** that was later **adopted as the Preamble on January 22, 1947.**
- The Drafting Committee chaired by Ambedkar was one among the over **17 committees of the Constituent Assembly.**
- **The last session of the Constituent Assembly ended on November 26, 1949**, when the Constitution was adopted.
- **Two months later on January 26, 1950 it came into effect** after 284 members signed it.
- **January 26 was chosen** since the **Congress’ Poorna Swaraj resolution** was declared on this day in the year 1930.

GIST OF EDITORIALS 28th NOVEMBER – 2020

‘BLUE TIDE’ AT THE WESTERN COAST ON MAHARASHTRA

GENERAL STUDIES - III (ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES)

Recently, Maharashtra have witnessed the **spectacle of a fluorescent bluish glow** when the waves hit the shoreline.

Why did the waves appear blue?

The **phenomenon is called 'blue tide'**, and appears when luminescent marine life make the sea appear a deep shade of blue.

- The spectacle occurs when **phytoplankton (microscopic marine plants), commonly known as dinoflagellates**, produce light through chemical reactions in proteins, said researchers.
- Waves disturb these unicellular microorganisms and make them release blue light.
- Experts have said the bioluminescence could have been caused by heavy rain, fertilizers run off, discharge of sewage into the ocean.

What is Bioluminescence?

Bioluminescence **is the property of a living organism to produce and emit light.**

- Animals, plants, fungi and bacteria show bioluminescence. **A remarkable diversity of marine animals and microbes are able to produce their own light.**
- **It is found in many marine organisms** such as bacteria, algae, jellyfish, worms, crustaceans, sea stars, fish and sharks.
- **Luminescence is generally higher in deep-living and planktonic organisms** than in shallow species.

Reason for their glow

They glow in as **anti-predatory response.**

- Bioluminescence is assumed to startle predators, causing them to hesitate, in a form of predator intimidation.
- Another explanation is **that bioluminescence helps these organisms gather together** and make colonies.

Ecological indicator

While **smaller blooms may be harmless**, slow-moving larger blooms may have an impact on deep-sea fishing.

- According to marine experts, **the phenomenon is an indicator of climate change.**
- Factors such as the pattern of the wind and the temperature of the ocean also determine the occurrence of bioluminescent waves.
- It is a spectacle but in reality, **it is an ecological indicator of degraded water quality.** The phytoplankton shows up where seawater has low dissolved oxygen and high presence of Nitrogen.

GIST OF EDITORIALS 30th NOVEMBER – 2020

CLIMATE EMERGENCY IN THE NEW ZEALAND

GENERAL STUDIES - III (ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES)

CHROME IAS ACADEMY

New Zealand's government will decide if a climate emergency should be declared in the country or not.

- The country's **Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern** will introduce the motion in the parliament and if passed the move **will be a symbolic announcement about the government's commitment** towards bringing climate change to the centre of policymaking.
- As prime minister, Ardern has been vocal about climate change and **last November, the parliament passed the Zero-Carbon Act**, which commits **New Zealand to zero carbon emissions by 2050 or sooner**.

What is the climate emergency?

In its ongoing online petition, **Greenpeace New Zealand** is urging the government to declare a climate emergency since people are **"facing more extreme weather events, catastrophic loss of wildlife and a crisis over access to freshwater and food"**.

- In 2019, the **Oxford dictionaries** declared "climate emergency" to be the word of the year, a word that reflects **"the ethos, mood, or preoccupations of the passing year, and have lasting potential as a term of cultural significance"**.
- It defines climate emergency as **"a situation in which urgent action is required to reduce or halt climate change and avoid potentially irreversible environmental damage resulting from it"**.

Status of climate emergency declaration in the New Zealand

- Even before the New Zealand government planned to declare a climate emergency, **some of the regions in the country** had already started declaring it since last year.
- However, **such a declaration is only symbolic and does not have any legal weight**.

Climate emergency declaration in the world

Some of the countries that have declared a climate emergency in recent years **include the UK, Portugal, Canada, France and, most recently, Japan**.

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