



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 03-01-2024

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Puri temple project

Syllabus: GS-1: Indian Art and Architecture

Context:

- *Jagannath Puri heritage corridor project to open to public on January 17, 2024.*

About the project:

- *The Jagannath Puri Heritage Corridor Project is a grand undertaking to revitalize and enhance the sacred city of Puri in Odisha, India, centered around the revered Jagannath Temple.*

Vision and Goals:

- **Transforming Puri:** *The project aims to transform Puri into a world-class heritage city, preserving its rich cultural and spiritual legacy while promoting sustainable tourism and development.*
- **Enhancing pilgrim experience:** *The focus is on creating a more comfortable and enriching experience for devotees visiting the Jagannath Temple. This includes improved infrastructure, amenities, and facilities.*
- **Preserving heritage:** *The project prioritizes the conservation and restoration of historical landmarks and traditional architecture within the temple precinct and surrounding areas.*

Key Components:

- **75-meter-wide corridor:** *A spacious pedestrian-only corridor is being created around the Jagannath Temple, free from vehicular traffic and lined with restored heritage buildings, gardens, and public spaces.*
- **Revitalized infrastructure:** *Roads, drainage systems, and lighting are being upgraded to improve accessibility and safety for visitors.*
- **Pilgrim amenities:** *New reception centers, restrooms, drinking water kiosks, and seating areas are being built to cater to the needs of devotees.*
- **Cultural rejuvenation:** *Plans are underway to establish museums, art galleries, and performance spaces to showcase Puri's vibrant cultural heritage.*
- **Sustainable development:** *The project incorporates eco-friendly practices like rainwater harvesting and waste management to ensure long-term sustainability.*

Significance of the project:

- **Enhanced Pilgrim Experience:**
 - *Widened corridor for circumambulation (Parikram).*
 - *Improved amenities for comfortable darshan.*

- *Dedicated facilities to ease logistical burdens.*
- *Enhances spiritual experience for thousands of daily devotees.*
- **Heritage Preservation and Cultural Revival:**
 - *Prioritizes restoration of ancient temples and cultural spaces.*
 - *Safeguards historical artifacts.*
 - *Rejuvenates Puri's cultural scene, promoting unique traditions.*
- **Sustainable Urban Development:**
 - *Incorporates eco-friendly practices (rainwater harvesting, waste management, improved drainage).*
 - *Aims for long-term environmental well-being, economic, and cultural growth.*
- **Boosting Tourism and Economic Prosperity:**
 - *Improved infrastructure attracts more tourists.*
 - *Increased footfall leads to economic growth.*
 - *Creates job opportunities and benefits local businesses.*
- **Strengthening Puri's Identity as a Spiritual and Cultural Destination:**
 - *Emphasizes spiritual importance as a pilgrimage center.*
 - *Highlights rich cultural heritage.*
 - *Positions Puri as a unique destination for religious and cultural tourism.*

Finance commission

Syllabus: GS-2: Constitutional Body – Finance Commission.

Context:

- *Centre appoints former NITI Aayog V-C Dr Arvind Panagariya as head of 16th Finance Commission.*

About The 16th Finance Commission of India

- *The 16th Finance Commission of India was constituted on November 25, 2020, by the President of India, Ram Nath Kovind.*
- *The commission is headed by renowned economist Dr. Arvind Panagariya, with Ashok Lavasa, G. R. Gopinath, Akhilesh Ranjan, and Abhijit Sen as members.*

Terms of reference to 16th FC:

Distribution of Tax Revenues:

- *The commission's primary task is to recommend the distribution of net tax proceeds between the central government and the states, and among the states themselves.*
- *This involves addressing the vertical imbalance between the Centre's taxation powers and the States' expenditure responsibilities.*

Grants-in-Aid:

- *The commission also recommends principles for the Centre's grants-in-aid to states, considering factors like fiscal needs, developmental requirements, and revenue disabilities of individual states.*

Local Body Finances:

- *The commission's mandate extends to suggesting measures to strengthen the finances of local bodies like Panchayats and Municipalities.*

Other Matters:

- *Review the current financing structures related to Disaster Management initiatives and suggest improvements.*
- *Examine the impact of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) on state finances and suggest adjustments if necessary.*
- *Consider any other issues pertinent to fiscal federalism and the financial stability of states.*

Challenges and Expectations:

- **Impact of GST:** *The introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in 2017 has significantly altered the landscape of India's fiscal federalism.*
 - *The commission must grapple with the implications of GST on tax devolution and state finances.*
- **Fiscal Consolidation:** *The Indian economy faces challenges like rising fiscal deficit and debt levels.*
 - *The commission must balance the need for fiscal consolidation with promoting equitable development across states.*
- **Addressing Inequalities:** *Regional disparities in development and income levels persist in India.*
 - *The commission is expected to recommend measures to bridge these gaps and promote inclusive growth.*
- **Climate Change and Disaster Management:** *The commission may also consider the financial implications of climate change and natural disasters and recommend ways to strengthen states' preparedness and response capabilities.*

Timeline and Report:

- *The 16th Finance Commission is expected to submit its report by October 31, 2025. Its recommendations will then be considered by the central government and implemented for the period 2026-31.*

About Finance Commission:

- **Establishment:** *Constitutional body established under Article 280 of the Indian Constitution.*
- **Primary Function:** *Recommends the distribution of financial resources between the central government and the state governments in India.*

Hit and run law

Syllabus: GS-2: Indian Polity – Law and Order.

Context:

- *Protesting new hit-and-run law, truckers dial down after talks with Home Secretary.*

Protest Reason:

- *Truck drivers and bus operators protested **against provisions in the BharatiyaNyay Sanhita (BNS) for hit-and-run cases.***

BNS Overview:

- *BharatiyaNyay Sanhita replaced the colonial-era Indian Penal Code.*
- *Under BNS, drivers causing a serious road accident by negligent driving and fleeing can face up to 10 years in prison and a fine of Rs 7 lakh.*

Criticism and Demand:

- *Transporter and farmer organizations strongly criticized the new law.*
- *Demanded an immediate repeal of the law.*

Comparing the previous hit-and-run law under Section 304A of the Indian Penal Code with the new law introduced by BharatiyaNyay Sanhita:

Aspect	Previous Law (Section 304A IPC)	New Law (BharatiyaNyay Sanhita)
Legal Framework	<i>Indian Penal Code (Section 304A)</i>	<i>BharatiyaNyay Sanhita</i>
Penalties	<i>Up to two years in jail upon identification</i>	<i>Up to 5 years or 10 years in jail, depending on the category of offense, along with fines</i>
Categories of Offenses	<i>Not explicitly mentioned</i>	<i>Two distinct categories:</i>
		<i>1. Causing death by negligence: Up to 5 years imprisonment and fine</i>
		<i>2. Causing death through rash and negligent driving: Up to 10 years imprisonment and fine</i>
Reporting Requirement	<i>Not explicitly mentioned</i>	<i>Offenders must promptly report the incident to a police officer or magistrate</i>
Impact and Shift	<i>Relatively less severe consequences</i>	<i>Significantly stricter penalties, reflecting a substantial shift towards addressing hit-and-run offenses with more severity</i>
Date of Implementation	<i>Before the introduction of BharatiyaNyay Sanhita</i>	<i>After the introduction of BharatiyaNyay Sanhita</i>

India Korea defence co-operation

Syllabus: GS-2: Bilateral Relations – India- S. Korea

Context:

- *Reigniting the flame of India-Korea defence cooperation.*

Drivers of Cooperation:

- **Convergence of Strategic Interests:** *Both countries face similar security challenges, including maritime threats, terrorism, and cyber warfare. Cooperation can enhance collective defences and regional stability.*
- **Shared Technological Know-How:** *India and Korea boast strong capabilities in different areas, forming a complementary synergy. India's expertise in missile technology and space systems can be combined with Korea's advancements in shipbuilding and radar technology.*
- **Economic Opportunities:** *Joint research and development of weapons systems, co-production ventures, and technology transfers can boost domestic defence industries and create jobs in both countries.*

Areas for Collaboration:

- **Joint Development and Production:** *Co-developing advanced military platforms like fighter aircraft, drones, and maritime patrol aircraft can leverage mutual strengths and reduce costs.*
- **Transfer of Technology:** *Collaborating in fields like artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and cyber security can benefit both militaries and civilian sectors.*
- **Knowledge Sharing and Training:** *Exchange programs for officers, joint military exercises, and training in specialized fields can enhance operational readiness and interoperability.*
- **Maritime Security:** *Joint patrols, information sharing on piracy and terrorism, and collaboration in developing underwater technologies can secure vital sea lanes.*
- **Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Assistance:** *Combining expertise in UN peacekeeping operations and disaster relief can contribute to global stability and build goodwill.*

Challenges to Overcome:

- **Bureaucratic Hurdles:** *Streamlining regulations and simplifying procurement processes can expedite joint ventures and technology transfers.*
- **Intellectual Property Concerns:** *Clear agreements on intellectual property rights are crucial to encourage technology sharing and joint development.*
- **Geopolitical Considerations:** *The evolving regional dynamics, including China's assertiveness, require careful navigation and coordination to ensure cooperation aligns with strategic interests.*

Moving Forward:

- **High-Level Engagement:** Regular meetings between ministers, defence officials, and industry leaders can build trust and momentum for concrete initiatives.
- **Institutional Mechanisms:** Establishing a dedicated India-Korea Defence Forum or working groups on specific areas like technology collaboration can provide a structured framework for cooperation.
- **Public Awareness:** Generating public understanding and support for defence cooperation through seminars, media outreach, and educational programs can build broader societal backing.

Free Movement Regime at Myanmar border to end soon

Syllabus: GS-3: Internal Security – Border Management.

Context:

- The Indian government plans to end the Free Movement Regime (FMR) along the 1,643-kilometer-long border with Myanmar.



What is the Free Movement Regime?

- The FMR, established in 1970s and last revised in 2016, allowed people residing within 16 km on either side of the border to cross over without visas.
- This facilitated cross-border trade, cultural exchange, and family ties between communities with shared ethnicities.

Why is the government ending the FMR?

- **Security concerns:** *Some argue that insurgent groups misuse the FMR to carry out attacks in India and escape back to Myanmar.*
- **Immigration control:** *Concerns exist about illegal immigration and potential influx of refugees from Myanmar's ongoing political crisis.*
- **Smuggling:** *Drug and gold smuggling across the porous border is another stated concern.*

What are the potential consequences?

- **Impact on border communities:** *Local communities dependent on cross-border trade and family ties could be adversely affected.*
- **Strain on Myanmar-India relations:** *The decision might cause diplomatic friction with Myanmar.*
- **Humanitarian concerns:** *Refugees fleeing Myanmar might face difficulties seeking asylum in India.*

What's next?

- *The government plans to start tendering for an advanced smart fencing system along the entire border, aimed to be completed within 4.5 years.*
- *Anyone crossing the border will then require a visa.*