



## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 28-03-2024**

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## **Ramakrishna Mission**

### **Syllabus: GS-1; Socio-religious movements**

#### **Context**

- **Swami Smaranananda Maharaj**, *president of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, died in Kolkata.*

#### **About**

- *The Ramakrishna Mission is a philanthropic organization that was established in 1897 by **Swami Vivekananda**, a **disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahansa**.*
- *The mission's work is based on the principles of **karma yoga**, which are those of selfless service to God.*
- *The mission's work includes:*
  - *Health care, Disaster relief, Rural management, Tribal welfare, Elementary and higher education, and Culture.*
- *The mission also provides religious and spiritual teaching, and publishes a large number of important Hindu works.*
- *The organization primarily promotes **Advaita Vedanta**, a Hindu philosophy, as well as four yogic ideals: Jnana, Bhakti, Karma, and Raja yoga.*
- *The Ramakrishna Movement, also known as the **Vedanta Movement**, is a worldwide spiritual movement that was started by Swami Vivekananda to spread the message of Vedanta and help the poor and downtrodden.*
- *The movement's motto is "**for one's own liberation and for the good of the world**".*

#### **Swami Vivekananda**



- *Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) is an important figure in modern Indian history.*
- *He was a monk and spiritual leader who played a key role in introducing Indian philosophies to the West.*
- *He is known for his contributions to Indian history, including:*
- **Introducing Indian philosophies**
  - *Vivekananda introduced Vedanta and Yoga to the Western world.*
- **Representing India**
  - *In 1893, Vivekananda represented India at the first Parliament of Religions meeting in Chicago.*
- **Founding the Ramakrishna Mission**
  - *In 1897, Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Mission, named after his guru, Swami Ramakrishna Paramhansa.*
- **Teachings**
  - *Vivekananda's teachings opened up interfaith debates and awareness. He also advocated for women's rights and equality, and encouraged people to help others and work for the betterment of society.*
- **Inspiration**
  - *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose called Vivekananda the “**Maker of Modern India**”.*

## **Phillipines**

### **Syllabus: GS-2; International Relations**

#### **Context**

- *India supports Philippines' sovereignty, says Jaishankar, sparking response from China*

#### **About**

- *The Philippines, officially the Republic of the Philippines, is **an archipelagic country in Southeast Asia.***
- *In the **western Pacific Ocean**, it consists of 7,641 islands, with a total area of 300,000 square kilometers which are broadly categorized in three main geographical divisions from north to south: **Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.***
- *It is the world's twelfth-most-populous country, with diverse ethnicities and cultures. **Manila is the country's capital**, and its most populated city is Quezon City.*



### Borders

- *The Philippines is bounded by the South China Sea to the west, the Philippine Sea to the east, and the Celebes Sea to the south.*
- *It shares maritime borders with Taiwan to the north, Japan to the northeast, Palau to the east and southeast, Indonesia to the south, Malaysia to the southwest, Vietnam to the west, and China to the northwest.*
- *Its location as an island country on the **Pacific Ring of Fire** and close to the equator makes it prone to earthquakes and typhoons.*

## Economy

- *The Philippines has a mixed economic system that includes a variety of private freedom, combined with centralized economic planning and government regulation.*
- *It is a member of the **Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)** and the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**.*
- *The Philippines has seen significant economic growth over the past few decades, with an average annual growth rate of around 6% since 2010.*
- *In 2023, the Philippine economy is estimated to be at ₱24.27 trillion (\$435.67 billion), and in 2024, it is estimated to be \$12,127 per capita.*

## What is the dispute between China and Philippines?

- *China has asserted that its claim to the **Spratlys** dates back centuries.*
- *The Chinese government has stated that almost the entire South China Sea, including the Spratlys and other island groups, is within its sphere of influence.*
- *Those claims have been strongly disputed by the Philippines and Vietnam in particular.*

## ILO report

### Syllabus: GS-3: Indian Economy – Employment scenario.

#### Context:

- *India's employment conditions continue to be poor: ILO Report*

#### Major findings of the report:

- **The 'India Employment Report 2024'** by the Institute for Human Development (IHD) and International Labour Organisation (ILO) highlights improvements in overall labour force participation, workforce participation, and employment rates in recent years in India.
- *Despite improvements, employment conditions remain poor.*
- *The slow transition to **non-farm employment has reversed**.*
- *Women are largely involved in **self-employment and unpaid family work**.*
- ***Youth employment is of poorer quality** compared to adult employment, characterized by a higher proportion of unpaid family work and stagnant or declining wages.*
- ***The IHD-ILO report highlighted** that youth employment and underemployment increased from 2000 to 2019 but declined during the pandemic years.*

- However, **unemployment among youths**, particularly those with a secondary level of education or higher, has intensified over time.
- In 2022, **the share of unemployed youths in the total unemployed population was 82.9 percent.**
- The proportion of educated youths among all unemployed individuals also increased, **rising from 54.2 percent in 2000 to 65.7 percent in 2022.**
- Among educated (secondary level or higher) unemployed youths, **women accounted for a larger share (76.7 percent) compared to men (62.2 percent).**
- This indicates a **growing concentration of unemployment among youth**, particularly educated youths and women in urban areas in India.

#### **Government measures mentioned for employment include:**

- Payment of employers' contribution for new employees under the **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO).**
- **Implementation of a new tax regime** allowing deductions of wages to employers, thus promoting employment generation over capital accumulation.
- **Need for improvement in skill initiatives**, mentioning issues such as the availability of instructors and dropout rates, which require attention from the government.
- Economic policies should focus on boosting productive non-farm employment, particularly in the manufacturing sector, as **India is expected to add 7-8 million youths annually to the labor force in the next decade.**
- **Prioritizing labor-intensive manufacturing** employment is crucial to absorb unskilled labor, combined with select services.
- More support is needed for **micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs)**, including a decentralized approach, digitalization, artificial intelligence, and cluster-based manufacturing.
- Improving job quality requires investment in and regulation of **sectors like the care sector and the digital economy.**
- **Inclusive urban policies** are necessary to address the needs of migrants, women, and impoverished young people, considering higher urbanization and migration rates expected in India.
- **Effective skills development and active labor market policies (ALMPs)** are crucial to bridge the supply-demand gap in jobs and make the labor market more inclusive.
- State governments should play a larger and more targeted role, along with stronger partnerships with the private sector and other stakeholders.
- **The report outlines five key policy areas** for further action: promoting job creation, improving employment quality, addressing labor market inequalities,



strengthening skills and active labor market policies, and bridging knowledge deficits on labor market patterns and youth employment.

## Great Indian Bustard

### Syllabus: GS-3; Biodiversity, Conservation

#### Context

- The Supreme Court recently constituted a seven-member committee to find a balance between conservation measures for the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) and efforts to generate renewable energy in the same regions.

*Ardeotis nigriceps*

# GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD

A VERY LARGE GRASSLAND BUSTARD, DRIVEN TO EXTINCTION, DUE TO MASSIVE HABITAT LOSS AND HUNTING

**50-249**  
POPULATION OF MATURE INDIVIDUALS, NUMBERS DECLINING

**15.6 years**  
LIFESPAN

**92-122 cm**  
SIZE FROM HEAD TO TAIL

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED ON THE IUCN RED LIST LISTED ON SCHEDULE I OF WILDLIFE PROTECTION ACT OF 1972

MOSTLY IN RAJASTHAN WITH SMALL FRAGMENTED POPULATIONS IN ANDHRA PRADESH, GUJARAT, MAHARASHTRA, MADHYA PRADESH AND KARNATAKA

VOICE: A BARK WHEN ALARMED, A DEEP MOAN IN DISPLAY EATS: PLANTS, CROPS, INSECTS, LIZARDS AND RODENTS

GREGARIOUS, SOCIABLE BIRD, FORM SEGREGATED FLOCKS, WHICH DISPERSE DURING BREEDING TIME.

BROWN AND WHITE BUSTARD  
MALES - WHITISH NECK AND UNDERPARTS WITH NARROW BLACK BREAST BAND  
FEMALES - SMALLER WITH GREYER NECKS, NO BREAST BAND (NON-BREEDING) AND BROKEN BREAST BAND (BREEDING) BIRD

SPENDS MOST OF ITS TIME ON GROUND BUT IS A GOOD FLIER

**FAMILY**

- Males exhibit courtship displays by inflating their gular pouches and producing deep resonant calls. They also cock their tails and may get into territorial fights with other males.
- Females lay one egg and incubate it for 25-30 days. Chick fledges in about 75 days and stays with the mother for about a year.
- Breeding season March-September

**THREATS**

- HABITAT DESTRUCTION AND FRAGMENTATION, CONVERSION OF GRASSLANDS
- POWER LINES AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT DISTURBANCE
- OVERGRAZING
- HUNTING

**CONSERVATION MEASURES**

- Project Bustard
- Conservation breeding programmes
- Intense legal protection and severe penalties on killing the bird
- Research and Monitoring; Conservation sites identified and are being declared as small protected areas.
- Strengthening protection along protected Area boundaries
- Controlled grazing
- Control repeated grass burning
- Eradication of invasive species of flora
- Education and awareness programme

TEXT: ANSHUJEN KULSHARAN, PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/THOMAS HARDWICKE/PUBLIC DOMAIN, BIG BIRD, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/STEFAN SCHNEIDER/PUBLIC DOMAIN, SMALL BIRD, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/FRANK THOMAS/PUBLIC DOMAIN, EGGS, DESIGN: DIVYA MEHTA

#### About

- The great Indian bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) or Indian bustard, is a bustard occurring on the **Indian subcontinent**.
- A large bird with a horizontal body and long bare legs, giving it an ostrich like appearance, this bird is among the **heaviest of the flying birds**.

- *These birds are often found associated in the same habitat as blackbuck. It is protected under the **Wild life Protection Act, 1972** of the Parliament of India.*
- *This species was formerly widespread in **India and Pakistan**.*
- *The great Indian bustard is **omnivorous**.*
- *Apparently, insects, consisting mainly of Orthoptera, but also beetles are preferred in the diet.*

### Threat

- *The great Indian bustard is listed as **Critically Endangered** on the IUCN Red List since 2011.*
- *It has been extirpated in 90% of its former range, and the population was estimated at perhaps fewer than 250 individuals in 2008.*
- *The main threats are hunting and habitat loss.*
- *In the past they were heavily **hunted for their meat and for sport and, today, poaching** of the species may continue.*
- *In some places, such as Rajasthan, increased irrigation by the **Indira Gandhi canal** has led to increased agriculture and the altered habitat has led to the disappearance of the species from these regions.*
- *Current threats to the species include the development of linear infrastructure intrusions such as roads and **electric power transmission lines** in the desert that lead to collision-related mortality.*

### Conservation

- *The state of Rajasthan initiated "**Project Great Indian Bustard**" on World Environment Day 2013, identifying and fencing off bustard breeding grounds in existing protected areas as well as provide secure breeding enclosures in areas outside protected areas.*

## **The need to curb black carbon emissions**



## Syllabus: GS-3: Environment Conservation

### Context:

- *What is black carbon and why is it harmful for the environment? Which sector in India is the biggest contributor of black carbon? How has the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana helped in reducing the use of traditional cooking fuels?*

### Background:

#### COP26 Climate Talks (November 2021):

- *India pledged to achieve net-zero emissions by 2070.*
- *This commitment positioned India as a frontrunner in the race towards carbon neutrality.*

#### Renewable Energy Progress in India:

- *India had installed over 180 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2023.*
- *The country is on track to meet its target of 500 GW by 2030, according to the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.*

**Long-term Benefits of Carbon Mitigation:** *Strategies to mitigate carbon dioxide emissions will bring benefits in the long term.*

#### Need for Short-term Relief:

- *While long-term strategies are important, there is a need for efforts that provide short-term relief as well.*
- *Balancing both long-term and short-term efforts is crucial for effective climate action.*

#### Why is black carbon relevant?

- *Black carbon is significant because it is a dark, **sooty material emitted during incomplete combustion** of biomass and fossil fuels.*
- *It contributes to global warming and poses serious health risks.*
- *Exposure to black carbon is linked to higher risks of heart disease, birth complications, and premature death.*

#### Major Source of Black Carbon Emissions in India:

- *In India, the primary source of black carbon emissions is the burning of biomass, such as cow dung or straw, in traditional cookstoves.*
- *According to a 2016 study, the residential sector contributes 47% of India's total black carbon emissions.*

#### Distribution of Black Carbon Emissions:

- *Industries contribute 22% of India's black carbon emissions, diesel vehicles 17%, open burning 12%, and other sources 2%.*

### **Decarbonisation Efforts:**

- *Efforts to reduce black carbon emissions in industries and the transport sector have shown some success over the past decade.*
- *However, reducing emissions from the residential sector remains a challenge.*

### **Impact of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY):**

- *PMUY was launched in May 2016 to provide **free liquefied petroleum gas (LPG)** connections to households below the poverty line in India.*
- *Its primary aim was to offer **clean cooking fuel to rural and poor households**, reducing their reliance on traditional cooking fuels.*
- *PMUY has provided **over 10 crore households with LPG connections** as of January 2024.*
- *The program includes infrastructure such as **free gas stoves, deposits for LPG cylinders, and a distribution network.***
- **Contribution to Reducing Black Carbon Emissions:**
- *PMUY has played a crucial role in reducing black carbon emissions **by offering a cleaner alternative to traditional fuel consumption.***

### **Challenges and Shortcomings:**

- *Despite its successes, data from 2022-2023 via RTI revealed that 25% of PMUY beneficiaries (2.69 crore people) either **did not refill their LPG cylinders or only did so once.***
- *PMUY households **consume fewer LPG cylinders per year (3.5-4)** compared to the average non-PMUY household (6-7), indicating continued reliance on traditional fuels.*
- *As a result, up to half of the energy needs of PMUY beneficiary households are **still met by traditional fuels with high black carbon emissions.***

### **Health Implications:**

- *Continued usage of traditional fuels leads to higher indoor **air pollution**, disproportionately affecting women and children.*

*This exposure to indoor air pollution can cause various health issues and premature deaths.*

### **Government's role:**

- *The government plays a crucial role in **improving the quality of life in rural areas** by ensuring access to clean cooking fuels.*

- *While renewable energy sources hold future promise, immediate benefits for rural communities are seen through the use of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).*

### **LPG Subsidy Increases:**

- *In October 2023, the government raised the **LPG subsidy from ₹200 to ₹300.***
- *Despite this increase, the **cost of a 14.2-kg LPG cylinder remains high** (about ₹600), especially for PMUY beneficiaries.*
- *Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a **further price reduction of ₹100 in March 2024, although it's expected to be temporary.***

### **Subsidy Expenditure:**

- *The government estimates **spending about ₹12,000 crore** on PMUY subsidies in 2024-2025, an increasing figure since the scheme's inception.*
- ***Affordable clean fuel is a rightful duty** of the government through subsidies, but low refill rates persist if availability issues aren't addressed.*

### **Last-mile Connectivity Challenges:**

**Lack of last-mile connectivity** in the LPG distribution network is a significant hurdle for PMUY's success.

*Remote rural areas often rely on biomass due to this connectivity issue.*

### **Potential Solutions:**

- *Local production of **coal-bed methane (CBM) gas** by composting biomass could address last-mile connectivity challenges.*
- *CBM is a cleaner fuel with lower black carbon emissions and requires investment.*
- ***Panchayats (local government bodies)** can lead the initiative to produce CBM gas locally at the village level, ensuring access to clean cooking fuel for every rural household.*

### **India's Global Responsibilities:**

- *India is facing responsibilities on the global stage **concerning long-term decarbonisation efforts.***
- *There is an **urgent need for India to take action on various fronts**, including prioritizing black carbon reduction.*
- ***Initiatives like the PMUY scheme play a crucial role** in reducing black carbon emissions and positioning India as a global leader in addressing regional health concerns.*

- *Prioritizing black carbon reduction aligns with **India's commitment to the Sustainability Development Goal** of providing affordable clean energy to everyone and contributing to global climate mitigation efforts.*
- *Estimates suggest that mitigating residential emissions, such as through the PMUY scheme, **could prevent over 6.1 lakh deaths annually** from indoor exposure to air pollution.*
- *By addressing black carbon emissions and prioritizing clean energy initiatives, **India has the potential to emerge as a global leader** in combating climate change and promoting public health.*