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**INSTITUTE FOR IAS EXAMINATION**

(IAS, IFS, IPS, IRS, IRMS, IFoS & Other Civil Services)

Ashok Nagar X Road, Hyderabad

+91-90000 36699 / 90000 66690

www.sosinclasses.com / info@sosinclasses.com

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DAILY NEWS DIARY

Of

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**FOR PRELIMS AND MAINS**

Warm Greetings.

- DnD aims to provide every day news analysis in sync with the UPSC pattern.
- It is targeted at UPSC – Prelims & Mains.
- Daily articles are provided in the form of Question and Answers
- To have a bank of mains questions.
- And interesting to read.
- Providing precise information that can be carried straight to the exam, rather than over dumping.

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## GS 2

### ❖ POLITY & GOVERNANCE

**Q) Elucidate the necessity and significance of the Bharat New Car Assessment Programme (BNCAP).**

**Context:**

The government is planning a new car assessment programme (NCAP) in India, to be called the Bharat NCAP or BNCAP.

**Bharat NCAP:**

- Bharat NCAP is a new car safety assessment programme which proposes a mechanism of awarding 'Star Ratings' to automobiles based upon their performance in crash tests.
- BNCAP standard is aligned with global benchmarks and it is beyond minimum regulatory requirements.
- The proposed Bharat NCAP assessment will allocate Star Ratings from 1 to 5 stars.
- The testing of vehicles for this programme will be carried out at testing agencies, with the necessary infrastructure.

**Its implementation:**

BNCAP will be rolled out from April 1, 2023. It will be applicable on type-approved motor vehicles of category M1 with gross vehicle weight less than 3.5 tonnes, manufactured or imported in the country. M1 category motor vehicles are used for the carriage of passengers, comprising eight seats, in addition to driver's seat.

**Significance of Bharat NCAP:**

- BNCAP rating will provide consumers an indication of the level of protection offered to occupants by evaluating the vehicle in the areas of:
  1. Adult occupant protection
  2. Child occupant protection
  3. Safety assist technologies
- It will serve as a consumer-centric platform, allowing customers to opt for safer cars based upon their Star-Ratings.
- It will also promote a healthy competition among original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) in India to manufacture safer vehicles.
- It will ensure structural and passenger safety in cars, along with increasing the export-worthiness of Indian automobiles.
- It will prove to be a critical instrument in making our automobile industry Aatmanirbhar.

**Necessity:**

Indian vehicles have historically not been crash-tested in the country. Despite being home to only 1% of the world's vehicles, India shoulders 11% of the global road crash fatality burden.

**How will a homegrown NCAP help?**

Global NCAP (GNCAP) crash tests for many best-selling Indian vehicles have dismal ratings, many of them rated zero in a bias. The government hopes that by facilitating these tests by in-house agencies, more automakers will voluntarily undergo safety assessments and build vehicles that hold up to global standards.

**How will it compare with GNCAP?**

- ✓ The government wants the two tests to be in congruence with each other.
- ✓ It intends to design the BNCAP to resemble the GNCAP, the global gold standard, as closely as possible, including the speed for crash testing at 64kmph.
- ✓ Central Motor Vehicle rules encompass standards with respect to pedestrian protection and seat belt reminders among others and will be retained in the testing under the BNCAP.
- ✓ The government hopes the move will increase the export-worthiness of Indian automobiles.

**Source: Mint**

**Q) Critically analyse the road safety issues in India. Explain the necessary measures to prevent the road fatalities.****Context:**

The United Nations is holding a high-level meeting on Global Road Safety on June 30 and July 1, 2022 to review the progress and challenges.

**Road Accidents in India:**

- In spite of several years of policymaking to improve road safety, India remains among the worst-performing countries in this area.
- Total 1,47,913 lives lost to road traffic accidents in 2017 as per Ministry of Road Transport and Highways statistics.
- The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) figure for the same year is 1,50,093 road accident deaths.
- The persistently high annual death toll brings into question the country's ability to meet Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.6.
- This aims to halve the fatalities and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2030.

**Lancet's findings on road safety:**

A new analytical series on road safety worldwide, published by The Lancet, proposes that India and other countries could cut accident-related deaths by 25 to 40%. This is based on evidence that preventive interventions produce good outcomes when applied to four well-known risk factors:

- a. High speed
- b. Driving under the influence of alcohol
- c. Not using proper helmets
- d. Not wearing seat-belts and not using child restraints

**Issues highlighted in developing countries:**

- The structural problems linked to unplanned motorisation and urbanisation remain.
- In India, speedy highway construction takes place without reconciling fast and slow-moving traffic.
- There is a rampant presence of ramshackle vehicles, wrong-side driving, absence of adequate traffic police forces etc.

**Road fatalities in India:**

- Weak enforcement of traffic laws: People hardly oblige to traffic rules and find easier to bribe policemen rather than paying hefty challans.
- Speeding issue: More accidents on the highways have been attributed to higher vehicle speeds and higher volume of traffic on these roads.
- Engineering bottlenecks: Issues such as gaps in the median on the national highways, untreated intersections, and missing crash barriers are some of the biggest engineering issues.
- Behavioural issue: Driver violations such as wrong-side driving, wrong lane usage by heavy vehicles, and mass violation of traffic lights, intoxication are the biggest behavioural issues.
- Lack of Golden hour treatment: Lack of rapid trauma care on highways leads to such high fatalities.

**Various steps taken by India:**

- India amended Motor Vehicles Act in 2019, but its implementation by State governments is not uniform or complete.
- A National Road Safety Board was constituted under the Act, with advisory powers to reform safety.
- The World Bank has approved a \$250 million loan to support for India State Support Programme for Road Safety.

**Issues with implementation:**

- ✓ The focus of State governments, however, remains conventional, with an emphasis on user behaviour (drivers and other road users), education and uneven enforcement.
- ✓ Low emphasis is placed on structural change such as raising engineering standards for roads, signages, signals, training for scientific accident investigation, raising policing skills and fixing responsibility on government departments for design, creation and maintenance of road infrastructure.

**What can be done to cut death and injury rates?**

The ambitious amendments to the Motor Vehicles Act in 2019 (MV Act) have not yielded significant results. Major interventions in India, first suggested by the Sundar Committee (2007) and ordered by the Supreme Court in *Rajasekaran vs Union of India* have not made a dent in the problem.

**Key findings of Sundar Committee:**

- The Sundar Committee pointed out that India lacked a technically competent investigation arm that could determine the cause of accidents.
- There is little clarity on whether the States have formed such units to aid traffic investigation, or whether the insurance industry has pressed for these to accurately determine fault.
- In the absence of scientific investigation, perceptions usually guide the fixing of liability.

**Solutions provided by the Lancet:**

- ✓ The Lancet calculated that 17% of road traffic injury-related deaths could be avoided if trauma care facilities improved.
- ✓ This is significant as several accidents take place in rural areas on highways, and victims are taken to poorly-equipped district hospitals or medical college hospitals.
- ✓ While positive user behaviour — slower travel, wearing of helmets, seat belts and so on — could save thousands of lives.
- ✓ In the short term, slowing down traffic, particularly near habitations, segregating slower vehicles, enforcing seat belt and helmet use and cracking down on drunken drivers could produce measurable gains.

**Source: The Hindu**

**GS 3****❖ AGRICULTURE**

**Q) Explain the effectiveness of 'Project Bandhan' in tackling pink bollworm pest in cotton cultivation.**

**Context:**

As the pink bollworm infestation spreads in cotton plants in North India, stakeholders including the Central Institute of Cotton Research (CICR), State agricultural universities and private players including the South Asia Biotechnology Centre (SABC) are taking up large-scale demonstration of the use of technologies such as mating disruption and pheromone traps to tackle the dreaded pest.

**Common Name** : Pink bollworm  
**Local Name** : Gulabi/Shendri bond ali  
**Scientific Name** : *Pectinophora gossypiella* Saund.  
**Family** : Gelechiidae  
**Order** : Lepidoptera  
**Pest Category** : Borer



#### **Pink Bollworm (PBW):**

- ❖ The PBW, which has surfaced early in the kharif season of North, typically has a short life cycle and can multiply 4-5 generations in a crop cycle, potentially threatening cotton from early stage, flower, green bolls and cotton locules, affecting cotton lint quality, Choudhary said.
- ❖ South Asia Biotechnology Centre (SABC), which had implemented the Project Bandhan in the last kharif season in the Central Zone has found it to be very effective in controlling the pest.

#### **Mating disruption technique:**

- Mating disruption is an innovative pheromone-based technique that interferes with the reproductive cycle of pink bollworm (PBW) in such a way that the population is significantly reduced and crop damage is minimised.
- CICR and the other players have come out with PBKnot, a solid metric dispenser rope which can be easily tagged to the cotton plants.
- The PBKnot charges the surrounding air with Gossyplure, a pheromone scent that confuses the male adults preventing them from finding and mating with female adults and reducing the number of eggs laid and controlling the PBW population.
- SABC, Jodhpur, is implementing a large-scale “Project Bandhan” to control the spread of PBW across 16 districts of seven major cotton-growing States this kharif.

#### **Current methods:**

- PBW has emerged as a key pest affecting cotton over almost 12 million hectares annually in India.
- The current methods of controlling pink bollworms primarily rely on chemical spraying.

- However, it is increasingly becoming difficult to achieve a high degree of suppression due to the non-existence of highly effective insecticides leading to the PBW population being well-established across different cotton-growing zones

**Project Bandhan:**

1. Project Bandhan will be implemented in some 19 clusters each over 62.5 acres covering a total area of 1,200 acres across the country.
2. It is implemented in the partnership with Ambuja Cement Foundation, PI Foundations, Agrovision Foundation, State Agriculture Universities, KVKs and local organisations under the technical guidance of ICAR-Central Institute for Cotton Research (CICR), Nagpur.
3. The tagging of mating disruption PBknot has been completed on 469 acres in the northern zone, where over 250 farmers have been trained about PBW and tagging of mating disruption PBKnot technology and installation of pheromone traps for monitoring purposes.
4. The project is being implemented in Bhatinda, Mansa and Fazilka districts of Punjab covering some 193 acres.
5. In Haryana, the demonstration project is being implemented in Sirsa and Fatehabad districts of Haryana covering some 152 acres.
6. Similarly in Rajasthan, the PBKnot project is being implemented in Hanumangarh and Ganganagar districts in some 124 acres.

**Source: BusinessLine**

**SNIPPETS****GS 3****❖ SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY****Q) What are the features of the PSLV Orbital Experimental Module (POEM)?****Context:**

The ISRO has launched three Singaporean satellites in precise orbit through the PSLV Orbital Experimental Module or 'POEM'.

**POEM:**

- The POEM is a platform that will help perform in-orbit experiments using the final, and otherwise discarded, stage of ISRO's workhorse rocket, the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV).
- The PSLV is a four-stage rocket where the first three spent stages fall back into the ocean, and the final stage (PS4) — after launching the satellite into orbit — ends up as space junk.

- However, in PSLV-C53 mission, the spent final stage will be utilised as a “stabilised platform” to perform experiments.
- POEM is carrying six payloads, including two from Indian space start-ups Digantara and Dhruva Space.

#### Features of POEM:

- ✓ POEM has a dedicated Navigation Guidance and Control (NGC) system for attitude stabilisation, which stands for controlling the orientation of any aerospace vehicle within permitted limits.
- ✓ The NGC will act as the platform’s brain to stabilize it with specified accuracy.
- ✓ POEM will derive its power from solar panels mounted around the PS4 tank, and a Li-Ion battery.
- ✓ It will navigate using four sun sensors, a magnetometer, gyros & NavIC.
- ✓ It carries dedicated control thrusters using Helium gas storage. It is enabled with a telecomm and feature.

**Source: The Hindu**

## GS 2

### ❖ INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

#### Q) Why Black Sea is significant to Russia?

##### Context:

Russian forces abandoned the strategic Black Sea outpost of Snake Island, in a major victory for Ukraine that could loosen the grip of Russia’s blockade on Ukrainian ports.



**Snake Island:**

- Zmiinyi Island, also known as Snake or Serpent Island, is a small piece of rock less than 700 metres from end to end, that has been described as being “X-shaped”.
- It is located 35 km from the coast in the Black Sea, to the east of the mouth of the Danube and roughly southwest of the port city of Odessa.
- The island, which has been known since ancient times and is marked on the map by the tiny village of Bile that is located on it, belongs to Ukraine.

**Russia seeks to control the Black Sea:**

- ✓ Domination of the Black Sea region is a geostrategic imperative for Moscow.
- ✓ The famed water body is bound by Ukraine to the north and northwest, Russia and Georgia to the east, Turkey to the south, and Bulgaria and Romania to the west.
- ✓ It links to the Sea of Marmara through the Bosphorus and then to the Aegean through the Dardanelles.
- ✓ It has traditionally been Russia’s warm water gateway to Europe.
- ✓ For Russia, the Black Sea is both a stepping stones to the Mediterranean as well as a strategic buffer between NATO and itself.
- ✓ Cutting Ukrainian access to the Black Sea will reduce it to a landlocked country and deal a crippling blow to its trade logistics.

**Source: The Hindu**

**Q) The below statements best describe which of the following personalities?**

1. He believed data to be instrumental in efficient planning for national & human development.
2. He founded the Indian Statistical Institute.

**Options:**

- a) Pamulaparthy Venkata Narasimha Rao
- b) Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis
- c) Aryabhata
- d) Sir Jagdish Chandra Bose

 **Hey from Yesterday –**

**Q) Which of the following aspects related to Uranium is incorrect?**

1. Uranium-235 (its isotope) is the only naturally occurring isotope, capable of sustaining nuclear fission.
2. The largest producers of Uranium in the world are Russia.

**Options:**

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

Huge reserves of uranium were found at Rohil (Khandela Tehsil) in Sikar district, which is over 120 km from the state capital Jaipur.

- **Status:** After Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan is the third state where uranium — which is considered one of the rare minerals in the world — has been found.
- **World:** The largest producers of uranium in the world are Kazakhstan, Canada and Australia
- **India imports uranium mostly from Kazakhstan and Canada**
- **Commercial:** The Rajasthan government has forayed into the field of uranium mining by issuing a letter of intent (LoI) to the Uranium Corporation of India.
- **Use:** Uranium is mainly used for generating electricity and also for nuclear energy, medicines, defence equipment and photography
- **Characteristics:** Uranium is a silvery-white metallic chemical element. Uranium-235 (its isotope) is the only naturally occurring isotope, capable of sustaining nuclear fission.

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