



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 13-12-2024

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India Maritime Heritage Conclave in 2024

Syllabus: GS-1: Ancient History and Heritage.

Context:

- The **India Maritime Heritage Conclave (IMHC)**, organized by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways, is a landmark event held on **December 11-12, 2024**, at the **Yashobhoomi Convention Center, New Delhi**. The event seeks to spotlight India's rich maritime history and its enduring cultural significance.

Event Launch and Dignitaries

Union Minister **Shri Sarbananda Sonowal** will inaugurate the conclave, joined by the **Vice President of India** and the **Chief Minister of Gujarat**, reflecting the event's national importance.

Key Themes and Objectives

The conclave will delve into:

- The vibrant lives of India's coastal communities.
- Ancient trade routes that fostered cultural and economic exchange.
- Significant maritime events shaping India's historical trajectory.

Historical Highlights

- **Ancient Ports:** The prominence of **Lothal** and **Muziris** as hubs of commerce and cultural exchange will be discussed, including their roles in global trade networks.
- **Navigation and Innovation:** Indian sailors' advanced navigation techniques and the use of unique shipbuilding methods will feature prominently.

Maritime History and Culture

Experts will explore **10,000 years of maritime history**, focusing on:

- The impact on Indian **language, literature, art, and architecture**.
- Unique traditions, such as the **cuisine, clothing, sports, and festivals** of coastal states.

Sustainability and Vision

Aligned with the **Prime Minister's vision of India as a Vishwaguru**, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal will stress:

- The adoption of sustainable maritime practices.

- Conservation of **ocean health** and protection of **marine biodiversity**.

Two-Day Session Highlights

Day 1:

- Discussions on **ancient trade networks**, including connections with the **Greco-Bactrian and Roman worlds**.
- Insights into the maritime heritage showcased at the **Lothal Museum**.

Day 2:

- Exploration of **Indian naval power**, particularly the **Chola dynasty's contributions** to maritime expansion.
- Special focus on traditional **stitched boat construction** and updates on the upcoming **National Maritime Museum at Lothal**.

Inspiring Conservation and Innovation

The conclave aims to foster dialogue on conserving India's maritime heritage while exploring innovative pathways for sustainable development, thus celebrating India's historic maritime prowess and envisioning a future rooted in its legacy.

No-confidence motion against Rajya Sabha chairperson

Syllabus: GS-2: Parliament.

Context:

- On December 10, opposition parties submitted a notice to move a no-confidence or impeachment resolution against Vice President and Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar.

Allegations: Accused of:

- Partisan conduct.
- Acting as an "impassioned spokesperson" of government policies in public forums.

Background:

- A similar motion was considered during the Budget Session (August 2023) but was shelved.

Constitutional Provisions Related to Vice President

➤ **Powers and Responsibilities:**

- Drawn from **Article 63**: Establishes the Vice-President as the second-highest constitutional authority after the President.
- **Article 64**: Empowers the Vice-President to serve as the *ex-officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha*.

➤ **Tenure and Resignation:**

- **Article 67(a)**: Term of 5 years but can resign by submitting a letter to the President.

➤ **Removal Process (Article 67(b)):**

- A resolution must be passed by:
 - Majority of Rajya Sabha members.
 - Subsequently agreed to by the Lok Sabha.
- **14-day notice** is mandatory before moving such a resolution.

Procedure for Removal

➤ **Steps:**

- The resolution must be submitted to the Rajya Sabha.
- It requires a **simple majority** in both Houses for passage.
- After approval, the Vice-President is removed from office.

➤ **Mandated Notice Period:**

- 14 days must elapse before the resolution can be discussed.

➤ **Chairperson's Role During the Process:**

- **Article 92**: The Chairperson (or Deputy Chairperson) cannot preside over the proceedings considering their removal.
- However, they are allowed to speak and participate in discussions but are barred from voting.

Current Scenario

➤ **Impediments to Immediate Discussion:**

- The Winter Session concludes on December 20, less than 14 days after the notice was submitted.
- Historically, motions requiring a 14-day notice were dismissed if not meeting the timeline (e.g., 2020 no-confidence motion against Deputy Chairman Harivansh).
- **Symbolic Gesture:**
 - The opposition lacks the requisite numbers for the resolution's passage, rendering the move largely symbolic.
- **Resolution's Validity Beyond Session:**
 - Constitutional resolutions do not lapse with the prorogation of a session.
 - Can be discussed in subsequent sessions or during a special session.

Key Expert Opinion

- **P.D.T. Achary (Former Secretary General, Lok Sabha):**
 - The motion is unlikely to be taken up within the Winter Session.
 - The resolution remains valid for future sessions.

Conclusion

- The opposition's move appears to be aimed at highlighting alleged partisan behavior by the Vice President rather than achieving a procedural outcome, given the lack of numbers for its passage.
- Constitutional safeguards ensure fairness in the process by prohibiting the presiding officer from influencing the proceedings directly.

Freedom of association at work – ILO

Syllabus: GS-2: Reports and Indices – Policy related.

Context:

- The **Social Dialogue Report** of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), released in Geneva on Wednesday (December 11, 2024), has recommended the governments to uphold fundamental principles and rights at work, especially

freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.

Social Dialogue Report by International Labour Organisation (ILO), 2024

Key Recommendations by the ILO

- **Upholding Fundamental Rights at Work**
 - Governments should prioritize **freedom of association** and the **effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining**.
- **Empowering Labour Administrations**
 - Equip labour administrations and social partners with resources and technical capacities for effective participation in **peak-level social dialogue (PLSD)**.
- **Expanding Inclusivity**
 - National Social Dialogue Institutions (NSDIs) should expand their outreach to under-represented groups.
- **Evidence-based Evaluation**
 - Conduct regular, evidence-based evaluations on the role and influence of PLSD institutions in socio-economic decision-making.

Findings of the Report

- **Deterioration in Rights Compliance**
 - Compliance with freedom of association and collective bargaining rights declined by **7% between 2015 and 2022**.
 - Driven by increasing violations of civil liberties and bargaining rights of employers, workers, and representative organisations.
- **Economic and Social Balance**
 - Social dialogue supports economic development and social progress.
 - Facilitates **inclusive transitions to low-carbon and digital economies**.

Peak-Level Social Dialogue (PLSD)

- **Definition and Structure**
 - Involves representatives of governments, employers' and business membership organisations (EBMOs), and workers' organisations.

- Includes:
 - **Bipartite processes:** Engagement between social partners (e.g., collective agreements).
 - **Tripartite processes:** Includes government representatives for broader consultation and negotiation.

➤ **Functions**

- Facilitates negotiation, consultation, and information exchange on **labour, economic, and social policy issues**.

Case Study: Rajasthan, India

➤ **Platform-Based Gig Workers Bill**

- Enacted to establish the **Rajasthan Platform Based Gig Workers Welfare Board**.
- Welfare Board Composition:
 - 12 members, including:
 - 6 from the government.
 - 2 representatives each from gig workers, aggregators, and civil society.

Importance of Social Dialogue

➤ **Governance in Instability**

- Provides a credible governance model amid economic and geopolitical instability.

➤ **Navigating Complexity**

- Addresses challenges posed by technological advances, climate change, and demographic shifts in labour markets.
- Helps identify fair solutions and advance social justice.

Sources and Methodology of the Report

- Based on:
 - **Case studies.**
 - Industrial relations data.

- Global review of PLSD processes and outcomes.
- **Perception survey** of 71 employers' and workers' organisations across 38 countries, including India.

National Housing Bank (NHB)

Syllabus: GS-3; Economy- Infrastructure Development

Context

- After the fraud at mortgage lender Aviom India Housing was uncovered, the National Housing Bank (NHB) alerted housing finance companies (HFCs) to pay closer attention to their risk management and audit functions.

About NHB

- **Establishment:** NHB was established on **July 9, 1988**, under the **National Housing Bank Act, 1987**.
- **Parent Organization:** Initially, it was wholly owned by the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**. However, in 2019, the ownership was transferred to the **Government of India**.

Mission and Objectives

The NHB aims to promote a sound and healthy housing finance system in India. Its core objectives are:

- **Promotion of Housing Finance Institutions (HFIs):**
 - Support and develop financial institutions catering to housing needs.
- **Regulation:**
 - Supervise and regulate housing finance companies (HFCs).
- **Facilitation of Resources:**
 - Channelize resources for affordable housing through loans, refinancing, and market development.
- **Affordable Housing:**
 - Promote credit for affordable housing, particularly for economically weaker sections (EWS) and lower-income groups (LIG).
- **Policy Formulation:**

- Assist in framing national policies for housing and urban development.

Functions

- **Refinancing:**
 - Provides financial assistance to banks, housing finance companies, and cooperative societies for extending housing loans.
- **Regulation:**
 - Acts as the regulator for Housing Finance Companies (HFCs).
- **Housing Schemes:**
 - Facilitates and implements various government-sponsored housing schemes like the **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)**.
- **Market Development:**
 - Facilitates the development of a robust housing finance market.
- **Capacity Building:**
 - Provides training and advisory services to housing finance stakeholders.

Key Initiatives and Schemes

- **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY):**
 - NHB plays a pivotal role in implementing the **Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS)** under PMAY.
- **Affordable Housing Fund (AHF):**
 - Established under NHB to promote low-cost housing projects.
- **Reverse Mortgage Scheme:**
 - Supports senior citizens by providing loans against their residential property.

Recent Developments

- **Ownership Transfer (2019):**
 - NHB became fully owned by the Government of India, enhancing its role in implementing housing policies.
- **Merger of HFC Regulation:**
 - Regulation of HFCs was transferred to the RBI in 2019, leaving NHB to focus more on development and financing.

Challenges

- **Rural Penetration:**
 - Limited reach in rural and underserved areas.

- **Funding Constraints:**
 - Dependence on government and external funding for large-scale affordable housing projects.
- **Market Volatility:**
 - Vulnerability to fluctuations in interest rates and real estate demand.

Way Forward

- Focus on innovative financing models like green housing finance.
- Strengthen the ecosystem for affordable housing in rural and semi-urban areas.
- Enhance collaboration with private players for sustainable housing development.

Jim Corbett National Park

Syllabus: GS-3; Biodiversity

Context

- A study has concluded that the drones and cameras originally planted in the Jim Corbett National Park for conservation activities, such as monitoring animals, are being deliberately misused by local government officials and men to surveil women without consent.



About

- **Location:** Nainital and Pauri Garhwal districts, Uttarakhand.
- **Established:** 1936 as Hailey National Park; renamed Jim Corbett National Park in 1957.
- **Named After:** Jim Corbett, a British hunter-turned-conservationist who played a key role in its establishment.
- **Significance:** First national park in India and part of the first Project Tiger initiative in 1973.

Geography and Ecology

- **Area:** Approx. 521 square kilometers.
- **Terrain:** Diverse landscapes including hills, riverine belts, marshy depressions, grasslands, and a large lake.
- **Elevation:** Ranges between 400 and 1,200 meters.
- **Climate:** Subtropical with cold winters and hot summers. Monsoon brings heavy rainfall.

Flora and Fauna

- **Flora:**
 - Predominantly **Sal trees**.
 - Grasslands and riverine vegetation are also found.
 - Other tree species include Sheesham, Khair, and Chir pine.
- **Fauna:**
 - **Tigers:** Known for its Bengal Tiger population.
 - **Mammals:** Leopards, elephants, deer (chital, sambar, hog deer), sloth bears, and otters.
 - **Birds:** Over 600 species including the Great Hornbill and Pallas's Fish Eagle.
 - **Reptiles:** Crocodiles, gharials, and pythons.

Key Rivers and Water Bodies

- **Rivers:** The **Ramganga River** is the lifeline of the park. Tributaries like Sonanadi also flow through it.
- **Dams:** Kalagarh Dam, which forms a reservoir, attracts migratory birds.

Conservation Efforts

- **Project Tiger:**

- Launched in 1973 to protect tigers and their habitats.
- Jim Corbett National Park was chosen as the first tiger reserve.
- **Eco-Tourism:**
 - Divided into **buffer zones** and **core zones** for wildlife protection and tourism.
 - Popular for jeep safaris and bird-watching tours.

Threats

- **Human-Wildlife Conflict:** Expansion of human settlements near the park.
- **Poaching:** Threat to tigers, elephants, and other wildlife.
- **Deforestation:** For agriculture and infrastructure development.
- **Tourism Impact:** Unregulated tourism can disturb wildlife.