

Current Affairs (15-11-2024, Friday)

Inauguration of the First Bodoland Mahotsav

- **Event:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 1st Bodoland Mahotsav in New Delhi.
- **Duration:** The Mahotsav is a two-day cultural event.
- **Objective:** To celebrate Bodo language, literature, and culture while promoting peace and the vision of a "Vibrant Bodo Society."
- **Theme:** "Peace and Harmony for Prosperous Bharat."
- **Participants:** Over 5,000 attendees, including cultural, linguistic, and art enthusiasts from Assam, West Bengal, Tripura, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, and other parts of India.

Background:

- **The Bodo Peace Accord (2020):** Signed under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, this accord brought an end to decades of conflict in the Bodoland region. It aimed to create peace, boost development, and promote socio-economic growth within Bodoland and neighboring areas.
- **Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR):** Created after the Bodo Peace Accord, the BTR is a semi-autonomous region within Assam that includes several Bodo-majority districts.
- **Cultural and Linguistic Identity:** The Bodo community, an indigenous group in Assam, has a rich heritage. The Mahotsav highlights this identity, with a focus on cultural integration and celebration.

Explanation:

- **Purpose of the Mahotsav:**
 - **Promotion of Cultural Heritage:** By celebrating the language, literature, and traditions of the Bodo people, the Mahotsav fosters a strong sense of identity and unity among Bodos and other regional communities.
 - **Integration of Communities:** The event brings together not only people from Bodoland but also from Assam, West Bengal, Tripura, and

neighboring regions, including areas along the Indo-Nepal border, thereby enhancing cultural integration.

Stage III of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) Activated in Delhi NCR

- **Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM):** The CAQM has invoked **Stage III of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)** in Delhi-NCR to combat worsening air quality.
- **Objective:** This step is in response to the severe pollution levels in the region and aims to prevent further air quality degradation.
- **Agencies Involved:** Pollution Control Boards of the National Capital Region (NCR) and the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) are mandated to enforce these measures strictly.

Background:

- **Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP):** GRAP is a set of anti-pollution strategies developed to respond to varying levels of air pollution in the Delhi-NCR region. The stages range from Stage I (lowest) to Stage IV (severe).
- **Stage III Measures:** Invoked when air quality worsens to a severe level, Stage III includes actions targeting industrial, construction, and transportation sectors to reduce emissions and curb dust pollution.
- **Pollution in Delhi NCR:** Seasonal factors, vehicular emissions, industrial activities, and agricultural stubble burning contribute significantly to high pollution levels, especially during winter.

Explanation:

- **Measures under Stage III of GRAP:**
 - **Dust Control:** Increased mechanized road sweeping, daily water sprinkling, and use of dust suppressants to reduce dust in the air.
 - **Construction and Demolition Ban:** All activities related to earthwork, such as excavation, boring, drilling, laying of utility lines, and brick and masonry works, are suspended.

- **Industrial Closures:** Closure of stone crushers, mining, and associated activities across the NCR to limit particulate emissions.
- **Public Advisory:**
 - **Commuting:** Citizens are encouraged to use bicycles or walk for short distances and opt for public or shared transport when possible.
 - **Work-from-Home:** Individuals with flexible job positions are advised to work from home to minimize commuting-related pollution.

Centre Issues Guidelines to Regulate Misleading Advertisements by Coaching Institutes

- **Issuing Authority:** The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has issued new guidelines to prevent misleading advertisements by coaching institutes.
- **Objective:** These guidelines require coaching institutes to disclose accurate information about their courses, student success rates, and infrastructure to prevent misinformation among parents and prospective students.
- **Key Requirements:** Institutes must include disclaimers and clarifications about their operations, and they need consent before using testimonials and photographs of minor candidates. Strict warnings were issued against exaggerated success claims, with penalties for violations.

Background:

- **Rising Demand for Coaching:** Coaching institutes have proliferated across India, especially for competitive exams like the UPSC, IIT-JEE, and NEET. However, exaggerated success claims and misleading advertisements have raised concerns about transparency.
- **Consumer Protection:** In response, the CCPA has introduced guidelines under the Consumer Protection Act, aiming to safeguard consumers from deceptive claims and empower them to make informed choices.
- **Enforcement Actions:** The CCPA has already issued notices to 45 UPSC coaching institutes, resulting in over 5.6 million rupees in penalties for misleading advertisements.

Explanation:**• Key Guidelines:**

- **Transparency in Advertisements:** Institutes must disclose accurate information about their services, infrastructure, and actual student success rates. False claims, guarantees, and unverifiable results are prohibited.
- **Consent for Testimonials:** Coaching centers must obtain permission before using photographs or testimonials from minor students, particularly after they achieve exam success.

Supreme Court Rules on Non-Applicability of Article 14 to Repeat Illegalities

- **Supreme Court Decision:** The Supreme Court held that **Article 14 (Right to Equality)** cannot be invoked to claim an illegal benefit given to someone else. This means that equal treatment cannot be sought based on a benefit conferred unlawfully on another person.
- **Judgment Details:** Justices Abhay S. Oka, Ahsanuddin Amanullah, and Augustine George Masih rejected a claim for a compassionate appointment made by a petitioner. The petitioner argued for equal treatment, citing instances where time-barred appointments had been granted to others.
- **Court's Position:** The Court ruled that a benefit conferred illegally cannot justify granting the same to others. Article 14 aims to uphold lawful equality, not perpetuate actions contrary to policy.

Background:

- **Article 14:** Part of the **Fundamental Rights in the Indian Constitution**, Article 14 guarantees **equality before the law** and prohibits discrimination, aiming to ensure fair and equitable treatment under the law.
- **Compassionate Appointment Policy:** In government jobs, a compassionate appointment policy allows the family of a deceased employee to seek employment on compassionate grounds. Policies may include restrictions, such as time limits on when applications can be made after the employee's death.

- **Case History:** The petitioner's father passed away in 1997, and he applied for a compassionate job in 2008 upon reaching adulthood. His claim was denied under Haryana's 1999 policy, which imposed a three-year limit for filing such requests.

Maori Lawmakers Protest Controversial Treaty Bill in New Zealand

- **Event:** New Zealand's parliament was briefly suspended after Maori lawmakers staged a **haka protest** against a **controversial bill** that seeks to redefine the **Treaty of Waitangi**, New Zealand's founding agreement between the Indigenous Maori tribes and the British Crown.
- **Bill Overview:** The proposed legislation seeks to extend the special rights originally granted to Maori tribes under the Treaty of Waitangi to all New Zealand citizens, a move seen as controversial by many.
- **Current Status:** While the bill passed its first reading, it faces significant opposition and is unlikely to become law, as the ruling coalition partners have expressed they will not support it beyond the first reading.

Background:

- **Treaty of Waitangi (1840):** Signed between the British Crown and Maori chiefs, this treaty granted Maori tribes the right to retain their lands, protect their interests, and maintain a degree of self-governance in exchange for ceding sovereignty to the British.
- **Proposed Bill's Impact:** The bill aims to extend the special rights secured by the Treaty to all citizens of New Zealand, a move that Maori leaders and their supporters argue could undermine the Treaty's unique significance for Indigenous Maori people.
- **Political Context:** The bill was introduced by the **ACT New Zealand party**, a junior member of the ruling centre-right coalition. Despite initial support from coalition partners **National** and **New Zealand First**, both parties have since withdrawn their backing, making the bill's passage unlikely.

Explanation:

- **Maori Lawmakers' Protest:**

- **Haka Protest:** In response to the bill, Maori lawmakers performed a **haka**, a ceremonial war dance, which is traditionally used to demonstrate defiance and protest. This gesture symbolized their strong opposition to the bill and its perceived threat to Maori rights.

Philippines Issues Highest Storm Alert for Super Typhoon Usagi

- **Event:** The Philippines has issued its **highest storm alert** and evacuated thousands as **Super Typhoon Usagi** approaches the northern region with the power of a **Category 4 storm**.
- **Storm Details:** Usagi, with sustained winds of up to 180 km/h, is expected to make landfall in northern Luzon, the Philippines' most populous island.
- **Impact Warnings:** Authorities have cautioned that the storm may bring severe flooding and landslides to the already disaster-affected north, which has endured five major storms in the past three weeks.

Background:

- **Philippines' Vulnerability to Typhoons:** The Philippines frequently experiences tropical storms and typhoons due to its location in the **Pacific Typhoon Belt**, particularly during the monsoon season. Climate change has intensified the severity and frequency of these storms in recent years.
- **Current Weather Anomalies:** Unusually, this week saw **four tropical storms** simultaneously forming in the **South China Sea and North Pacific**, the first time such an event has been recorded in November.
- **Human and Economic Toll:** Recent weather disturbances have caused widespread destruction, resulting in over 100 deaths, heavy property damage, and the displacement of thousands across the nation.

Union Minister Launches 'Know Your Medicine (KYM)' App to Combat Doping in Sports

- **Event:** Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, has launched a nationwide campaign to curb doping in sports by promoting the **National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) India's 'Know Your Medicine (KYM)' app**.
- **Objective:** The KYM app empowers athletes, coaches, and sports professionals to verify if medicines or substances contain any **prohibited ingredients** as per **World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)** guidelines.
- **Minister's Message:** Dr. Mandaviya emphasized the importance of clean sports, encouraging athletes to use the KYM app to avoid unintentional doping and promote integrity in competition.

Background:

- **Anti-Doping in Sports:** In the global and Indian sporting context, anti-doping measures are essential to maintain **fairness and integrity**. NADA India is responsible for enforcing anti-doping policies and educating athletes about prohibited substances.
- **The Role of WADA:** The **World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)** provides a list of banned substances to prevent performance enhancement through unfair means. NADA India aligns with WADA guidelines and works to inform athletes of these regulations.
- **Doping Issues in India:** Despite increasing anti-doping efforts, instances of unintentional doping due to lack of awareness about certain ingredients remain a concern. The KYM app aims to prevent this by providing accessible information.

Janjatiya Gaurav Divas 2024 - Honoring Tribal Heritage and Contributions

- **Event:** Janjatiya Gaurav Divas is observed on **November 15** every year to celebrate the contributions of India's tribal communities, especially honoring tribal freedom fighters.
- **2024 Celebrations:** This year marks the **150th birth anniversary** of **Bhagwan Birsa Munda**, a revered tribal leader who led the fight against British colonial rule.

Key Events:

- **‘Maati Ke Veer’ Padayatra:** Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya led a commemorative march with MY Bharat Youth Volunteers in Jashpur, Chhattisgarh.
- **Prime Minister’s Visit:** PM Modi will visit Jamui, Bihar, on November 15 to unveil a commemorative coin and postal stamp honoring Birsa Munda, alongside launching projects worth **₹6,640 crore** for tribal development.

Background:

- **Significance of Janjatiya Gaurav Divas:**
 - Initiated in **2021** as part of **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav** to celebrate tribal contributions to India's freedom struggle.
 - Commemorates the struggles of leaders like **Birsa Munda** and movements by tribes including the Santhals, Kols, and Bhils against colonial exploitation.
- **Bhagwan Birsa Munda:**
 - Known for leading the **Ulgulan (Revolution)** against the British, he inspired unity and resilience among tribal communities, making his birth anniversary a fitting tribute to tribal heritage.

Explanation:

- **2024 Celebrations:**
 - **Development Projects:** PM Modi will initiate projects to improve tribal infrastructure, healthcare, and education, including **11,000 new houses** under PM-JANMAN and **23 Mobile Medical Units (MMUs)**.
 - **Cultural Recognition:** Tribal Freedom Fighters’ Museums and **Tribal Research Institutes** in Chhindwara, Jabalpur, and other locations will be inaugurated to preserve tribal history and heritage.

Government Initiatives for Tribal Welfare:

- **Major Schemes:**

- **PM-JANMAN:** Focuses on building tribal housing and mobile healthcare units.
- **Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan:** Launched in 2024 to enhance social infrastructure in **63,843 tribal villages**, benefiting over **5.38 crore tribal individuals**.
- **Education and Entrepreneurship:**
 - **Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS):** Aimed at offering quality education to tribal children, with 728 schools approved to date.
 - **Van Dhan Vikas Kendras and Scholarships:** Initiatives for entrepreneurial and educational support to empower tribal youth and women.
- **Healthcare Focus:**
 - **Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission and Mission Indradhanush:** These missions provide critical health screenings, vaccinations, and other resources for tribes vulnerable to genetic and infectious diseases.

NADA India Launches 'Know Your Medicine' App to Combat Doping in Sports

- **Event:** Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, launched a nationwide appeal urging athletes, coaches, and sports professionals to adopt the '**Know Your Medicine (KYM)**' app by the **National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) India**.
- **Objective:** The app aims to empower athletes with essential information to avoid inadvertent doping, promoting fair play and integrity in sports.

Background:

- **Anti-Doping Measures in India:**
 - India has been increasingly focused on enhancing anti-doping efforts, aligning with World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) standards.
 - With rising instances of doping cases, NADA has taken several initiatives to educate athletes and promote clean sports practices.
- **Launch of KYM App:**

- The KYM app is a recent tool introduced by NADA India, offering an easy-to-use verification system for athletes to check if any substance in a medicine is on WADA's prohibited list.
- This app empowers athletes to make informed decisions and helps reduce instances of inadvertent doping.

Nepal PM KP Oli's Visit to China and Its Impact on India-Nepal Relations

- **Prime Minister KP Oli of Nepal** stated that Nepal's relations with **India** will not be affected by his upcoming visit to **China**.
- Speaking at the **Kantipur Conclave-2024** in Kathmandu, Oli emphasized that, like in religion where followers visit certain shrines in a specific order, **foreign relations** do not follow such rules.
- He clarified that as a sovereign nation, Nepal has the right to visit any country it finds appropriate, highlighting that a visit to China does not harm relations with India.

Background:

- **Nepal's Foreign Policy Tradition:**
 - Traditionally, Nepal's new Prime Ministers visit **India** first, owing to the close cultural, geographical, and economic ties between the two nations.
 - **KP Oli's decision** to visit China first marks a deviation from this norm, signaling a potential shift or recalibration of Nepal's foreign policy towards China.
- **Recent Political Context:**
 - KP Oli assumed office in July 2024, forming a coalition government between the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) and the Nepali Congress.
 - His predecessor, Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda), lost a confidence vote in parliament, paving the way for Oli's leadership.
- **Oli's Remarks on Bilateral Relations:**
 - **Symbolism of Religious Sites:** Oli drew a comparison between religious visits to **Nizamuddin (Delhi)** and **Ajmer Sharif (India)** in Islam to

illustrate that countries, like individuals, do not follow any predetermined sequence for visits.

- He downplayed concerns that visiting China first would hurt relations with India, stating that Nepal values its deep and historically rooted ties with both neighbors.

- **India-Nepal Relations in Recent Times:**

- Relations between **India and Nepal** have seen ups and downs in recent years due to territorial disputes, such as the Kalapani issue.
- Nepal has also expressed concerns over some Indian policies, while India has urged Nepal to maintain strong ties with its southern neighbor.

Explanation:

- **Sovereign Right of a Nation:**

- **Oli's statement** reinforces Nepal's **sovereignty** and its **right to pursue foreign relations based on its national interests**, without adhering to any diplomatic protocol that dictates the order of visits to neighboring countries.
- His analogy of **Nizamuddin and Ajmer** underscores the flexibility of international diplomacy and the independence of sovereign nations in conducting their foreign affairs.

- **The Visit to China:**

- **KP Oli's visit to China** in early December is seen as an attempt to **strengthen bilateral ties** and explore opportunities for infrastructure development, trade, and connectivity under initiatives like the **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**.
- It could also signal a desire to **diversify Nepal's foreign policy** and reduce over-reliance on India, particularly after India's absence in extending the usual diplomatic invitation to Oli.

- **Geopolitical Implications:**

- Nepal's growing engagement with China could influence its **traditional ties with India**. However, Oli's remarks suggest that **Nepal aims to**

balance its relationships with both India and China, given the significant strategic, economic, and historical importance of both neighbors.

- This delicate balance is crucial for Nepal to maintain, considering its geopolitical position between two large regional powers.

AFSPA Reinstated in Parts of Manipur

- The **Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA)** has been reinstated in areas under **six additional police stations** in Manipur, declared as "**Disturbed Areas**" following a recent review of the security situation.
- The move reflects ongoing efforts to restore law and order in the state, which has been grappling with ethnic tensions and violence since May 2023.

Background:

- **AFSPA Overview:**
 - Enacted in **1958**, AFSPA empowers security forces to operate in "Disturbed Areas" with special powers, including arrest without a warrant, search operations, and the use of force.
 - Declaring an area "Disturbed" under **Section 3 of AFSPA** is typically based on internal disturbances or threats to national security.
- **AFSPA in Manipur:**
 - Manipur has seen a phased **withdrawal of AFSPA** in recent years.
 - In **April 2022**, areas under 15 police stations in six districts were exempted from AFSPA's purview, reflecting improved security conditions at the time.
- **Ethnic Tensions in 2023:**
 - Since **May 2023**, Manipur has experienced **ethnic violence** between the **Meitei** and **Kuki** communities, resulting in loss of lives, displacement, and destruction of property.
 - Several instances of targeted violence, arson, and clashes with security forces have disrupted peace in the state.
- **Latest Developments:**
 - Following a review of the law-and-order situation, the government has reimposed AFSPA in six more police station areas. This reinstatement

highlights the **volatile security environment** and the need for additional military oversight.

Explanation:

• **Why AFSPA Was Reimposed?**

- Despite efforts to de-escalate tensions, **sporadic violence** and communal clashes have continued.
- Declaring these areas as "Disturbed" provides the armed forces with additional powers to address security challenges and restore normalcy.

• **Implications of AFSPA:**

- **Enhanced Security Measures:** Enables faster and decisive actions by the military in conflict zones.
- **Human Rights Concerns:** AFSPA has been criticized for alleged misuse of powers, extrajudicial actions, and lack of accountability.
- **Trust Deficit:** The reimposition could widen the gap between the government and affected communities, particularly in regions with a history of ethnic strife.

Practice Questions:

1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Bodo Peace Accord (2020) was aimed at ending ethnic conflict in the Bodoland region.
2. The Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) is a semi-autonomous region in West Bengal.
3. The Bodoland Mahotsav was inaugurated by the Prime Minister.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

2. In the context of coaching institutes' advertisements, the principle of "transparency" refers to:
- (a) Guaranteeing admission to top institutions.
 - (b) Providing accurate and verifiable information.
 - (c) Securing testimonials from successful candidates.
 - (d) Offering free counseling sessions for all applicants.

3. Statement-I: Article 14 of the Indian Constitution prohibits discrimination.
Statement-II: Illegal actions can form the basis for lawful claims under Article 14.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- (a) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct, and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
 - (b) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct, and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
 - (c) Statement-I is correct, but Statement-II is incorrect
 - (d) Statement-I is incorrect, but Statement-II is correct
4. With reference to the Treaty of Waitangi, consider the following statements:
- 1. It was signed between the British Crown and Maori chiefs.
 - 2. It guarantees equal rights for all New Zealand citizens.
 - 3. The proposed bill seeks to extend Maori rights to all citizens.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 3 only
 - (b) 1 and 2 only
 - (c) 2 and 3 only
 - (d) All three

5. Consider the following statements:

1. Janjatiya Gaurav Divas celebrates tribal freedom fighters like Birsa Munda.
2. It was initiated as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav in 2021.
3. The Ulgulan movement was led by Bhagwan Birsa Munda.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) All three

