

MGNREGA: A Committee formed to check its efficacy

❖ Context

- Recently, the Central government constituted a **committee to review the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme**, especially to assess the programme's efficacy as a poverty alleviation tool.

Key Highlights

- The committee, **headed by** former Rural Development secretary **Amarjeet Sinha**, had its first meeting on November 21, 2022.
- It has been **given three months** to submit its suggestions.
- There are currently 15.51 crore active workers enrolled under the scheme.
- **Task of Sinha Committee**
 - The Sinha committee has now been tasked to study the various factors behind
 - Demand for MGNREGA work.
 - Expenditure trends and inter-state variations.
 - The composition of work.
 - It will suggest what changes in focus and governance structures are required to make MGNREGA more effective.
 - It will review whether it should focus more on community-based assets or individual works.



About MGNREGS

- The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 introduced the scheme.
- The scheme was introduced as a social measure that guarantees **“the right to work”**
- It **guarantees 100 days of work a year** to every rural household with an aim to enhance the livelihood security of people.
- In 2010, NREGA was renamed as MGNREGA.
- **Within 15 days** of submitting the application or from the day work is demanded, wage employment will be provided to the applicant.
 - Applicant will get **unemployment allowance** in case employment is not provided within fifteen days of submitting the application
- The Act currently covers all districts except for those that have a **100% urban population**.
- The **Ministry of Rural Development (MRD)** in association with the state governments monitors the implementation of the scheme.
- **Social Audit** of MGNREGA works is mandatory, which lends to accountability and transparency.
- It is the **Gram Sabha and the Gram Panchayat** which approves the shelf of works under MGNREGA and fix their priority.

UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation

❖ Context

- Recently, the heroic restoration of the **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya Museum** received the **Award of Excellence** in this year's UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation.

Key Highlights

- **Thirteen projects from six countries** – Afghanistan, China, India, Iran, Nepal and Thailand – have been acknowledged for awards by the jury this year.
- **Indian Award-Winning Sites**
 - **Award of Excellence**- Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya Museum, Mumbai, India.
 - **Award of Distinction**- Stepwells of Golconda, Hyderabad, India

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya

- The museum is a **part of the Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles** of Mumbai's world heritage property.
- It was **established as the Prince of Wales Museum** of Western India in 1922.
- It incorporates **elements of other styles** of architecture like the Mughal, Maratha and Jain.

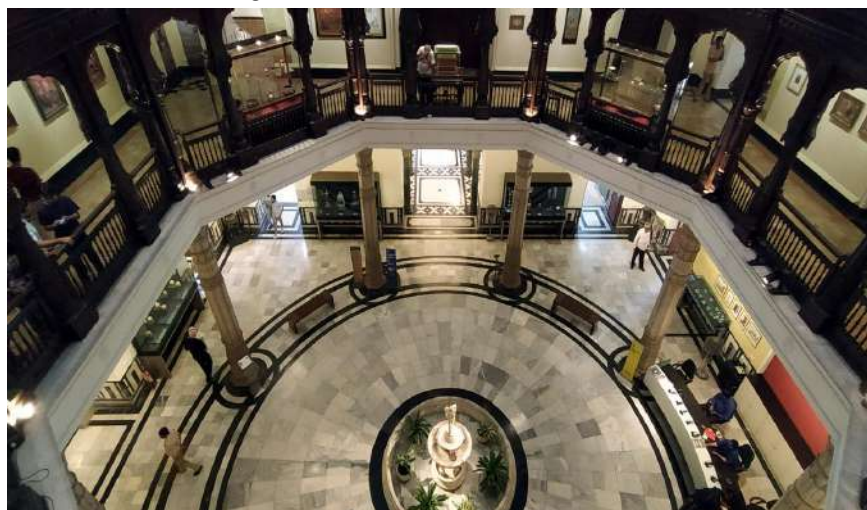


- **Award of Merit-** Domakonda Fort, Telangana and Byculla Station, Mumbai, India.

About UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation

- The UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation is **supported by a partnership between UNESCO and Ng Teng Fong Charitable Foundation since 2021.**
- Since 2000, the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation programme has been recognizing the efforts of private individuals and organizations in restoring, conserving, and transforming structures and buildings of heritage value in the region.
- By acknowledging private efforts to restore and adapt historic properties, the Awards encourage others to undertake conservation projects within their own communities, either independently or through public-private partnerships (PPPs).

- The museum building is surrounded by a garden of palm trees and formal flower beds.
- The jury applauded the museum project for **restoring a major civic institution in the historic city of Mumbai.**



News in Between the Lines

PSLV-C54



❖ **Context**

- Recently, ISRO successfully **placed nine satellites, including an Earth Observation Satellite (EOS-06)** in multiple orbits with the help of the space agency's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C54).

❖ **Key Highlights**

- This is the **56th flight of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)** and the 24th flight of the PSLV-XL version with 6 PSOM-XIs.
- The **eight nano-satellites include ISRO Nano Satellite-2 for Bhutan (INS-2B)**, Anand, Astrocast (four satellites), and two Thybolt satellites.
- The India-Bhutan satellite is a **very important milestone in the history of joint collaboration** of Indian scientists and Bhutanese scientists in building this satellite with two payloads.
- ISRO is also working with Bhutan in establishing a **ground station in Thimphu**, which will be commissioned shortly.
- ISRO is planning to have its mission to the sun with its satellite Aditya-L1, a coronagraphy spacecraft to study the solar atmosphere, with a PSLV rocket next year.
- **EOS-6**
 - Notably, EOS-6 is the **Oceansat series' third-generation satellite.**
 - EOS-06 is envisaged to **observe ocean colour data, sea surface temperature and wind vector data** to use in oceanography, climatic and meteorological applications.
 - The satellite also **supports value added products** such as potential fishing zone using chlorophyll, SST and wind speed, and land based geophysical parameters.



Black Corals



Context

➤ Recently, **Scientists discovered five new species of black corals** living as deep as 2,500 feet (760 meters) below the surface in the Great Barrier Reef and Coral Sea off the coast of Australia.

❖ About Black Corals

- Black corals **can be found growing both in shallow waters** and down to **depths** of over 26,000 feet (8,000 meters).
- Some individual corals **can live for over 4,000 years**.
- Many of these corals are **branched and look like feathers, fans or bushes**, while others are straight like a whip.
- Unlike their colourful, shallow-water cousins that rely on the sun and photosynthesis for energy, black corals are filter feeders and eat tiny zooplankton that are abundant in deep waters.
- Black corals **act as important habitats** where fish and invertebrates feed and hide from predators in what is otherwise a mostly barren sea floor.
- Many black corals are **threatened by illegal harvesting for jewelry**.

Sixth Schedule

<p>MEGHALAYA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council ● Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council ● Garo Hills Autonomous District Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mara Autonomous District Council
<p>MIZORAM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chakma Autonomous District Council ● Lai Autonomous District Council 	<p>TRIPURA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council
	<p>ASSAM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dima Hasao Autonomous Council ● Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council ● Bodoland Territorial Council

❖ Context

➤ Recently, The **Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council-Kargil (LAHDC-K)**, an elected body of the Union Territory (U.T.) of Ladakh, has passed a joint resolution and **demanding statehood and special status under the sixth schedule** of the Constitution for the region.

❖ Key Highlights

- It provides for the **administration of tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram** to safeguard the rights of the tribal population in these states.
- The Sixth Schedule under **Article 244** provides for the formation of autonomous administrative divisions – **Autonomous District Councils (ADCs)** – that have some legislative, judicial, and administrative autonomy within a state.
- **ADCs have up to 30 members with a term of five years.**
- It can make laws, rules and regulations with regard to land, forest, water, agriculture, village councils, health, sanitation, village- and town-level policing, inheritance, marriage and divorce, social customs and mining, etc.
- The **Bodoland Territorial Council in Assam** is an exception with more than **40 members** and the right to make laws on 39 issues.
- Under the provision of the Sixth Schedule, the **Governor of the State is empowered to determine the area or areas** as administrative units of the Autonomous Districts and Autonomous Regions.
- The **Governor has the power** to create a new Autonomous District/Region or alter the territorial jurisdiction or the name of any Autonomous District or Autonomous Regions.

China-Indian Ocean Region Forum

❖ Context

➤ Recently, China convened a first **“China-Indian Ocean Region Forum”** bringing together 19 countries from the region – and all of India’s neighbours, except for India itself.

❖ Key Highlights

- The forum underlined **China’s stepped up diplomacy** in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).





- China “proposed to establish a marine disaster prevention and mitigation cooperation mechanism between China and countries in the Indian Ocean region, and stood ready to provide necessary financial, material, and technical support to countries in need.
- China also “proposed the establishment of a blue economy think tank network for China and countries in the Indian Ocean region.
- It is learned that **India was not invited to this forum** which is seen by experts as an **attempt to challenge India’s traditional presence in the region** amid apprehensions of politicization of the Indian Ocean region.

Shiveluch Volcano



❖ Context

- According to scientists, the **Shiveluch volcano in Russia’s far eastern Kamchatka** peninsula may be gearing up for its first powerful eruption in 15 years.

❖ Key Highlights

- **Kamchatka is home to 29 active volcanoes**, part of a vast belt of Earth known as the “Ring of Fire”.
- Ring of Fire circles the Pacific Ocean and is prone to eruptions and frequent earthquakes.
- Most of the peninsula’s volcanoes are surrounded by sparsely populated forest and tundra, so pose little risk to local people.
- However, **big eruptions can spew glass, rock and ash into the sky, threatening aircraft.**
- Shiveluch is one of the largest and most active volcanoes in Kamchatka, having erupted at least 60 times in the past 10,000 years.
- It has two main parts
 - Old Shiveluch, which tops 3,283 metres (10,771 ft).
 - Young Shiveluch – a smaller, 2,800-metre peak protruding from its side.
- **Six volcanoes in Russia’s northeast** are currently showing signs of increased activity, including Eurasia’s highest active volcano Klyuchevskaya Sopka.

Food Animal Tag (Yak)

❖ Context

- Recently, the **Himalayan yak** has been accepted as a food animal by the scientific panel of **Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI)**, after recommendation from Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD).

❖ Key highlights

- **Food Animal**
 - According to National Research Centre (NRC), at Dirang in West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh, Food Animals are those that are raised and used for food production or consumption by humans.
- **Significance of the Tag**
 - The categorisation is expected to help check the decline in the population of the high-altitude bovine animal by making it a part of the conventional milk and meat industry.
 - It will help farmers **benefit economically for rearing the animal** and it will **open up several vistas of economic** benefits for both farmers and food processors

❖ Himalayan Yak

- **Scientific name-** Bos grunniens.





- It is a **species of long-haired domesticated cattle**.
- They are found throughout the Himalayan region of the Indian subcontinent.
- The yak **plays a multidimensional socio-cultural-economic role** for the pastoral nomads who rear it mainly for earning their nutritional and livelihood security.
 - In the higher reaches of the Himalayan region there is lack of other agricultural activity where it is difficult for animals except the yak to survive.
- Yak **milk and meat are not a part of the conventional dairy and meat industry**, their sale is limited to local consumers.
- Commercialisation of yak milk and meat products will lead to entrepreneurship development. But for that the yak has to be included as a food producing (milk and meat) animal in the **Food Safety and Standards Regulation, 2011**.
- Yaks are traditionally reared under a **transhumance system** which is primitive, unorganised and full of hardship.

Imphal's Ima Market



❖ Context

- Recently, External Affairs Minister of India tweeted pictures of his visit to **Manipur's Ima market**, calling it a "great example of nari shakti (women's power) powering economic growth".

❖ Key highlights

- Ima Keithel, or Mothers' Market, is an **all-women market**, said to be the largest such shopping complex in Asia.
- According to the website of the Imphal West district, "A unique all women's market, having 3,000 "Imas" or mothers who run the stalls.
 - It is split into two sections on either side of road.
 - Vegetables, fruits, fish and household groceries are sold on one side and exquisite handlooms and household tools on the other.
 - Male vendors and shopkeepers are barred here

➤ History

- The Ima Market is **centuries-old, and has origins in Lallup Kaba**, an ancient **bonded labour system**.
- Under the system, Meitei men had to compulsorily serve some time working in the military and on other civil projects, keeping them away from home.
- The women, thus, were left to manage on their own, and they developed a market system which is today the Ima Keithel.

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