UPSC Daily Current Affairs| One Liners 29-03-2025

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History, Art and Culture

India's Cultural Outreach: Global Engagement Scheme

Recently, Ministry of Culture implements "Global Engagement Scheme" to promote India's rich cultural heritage internationally and enhance India's global image.

• **Scheme Objective –** Aims to elevate India's global cultural profile and strengthen international ties.
• **Festival of India –** Showcasing diverse Indian art forms globally, including folk, classical, and contemporary performances, through "Festival of India" events.
• **Indo-Foreign Cultural Societies –** Providing grants to foster cultural exchange and friendship between India and foreign nations.
• **ICCR's Role –** The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) promotes Indian culture through centers worldwide, teaching arts, organizing events, and leveraging digital platforms.
• **Digital Promotion –** Utilizing digital and social media to enhance cultural outreach and promote Indian heritage.
• **Digital Platforms & Initiatives –** ICCR's AIMS, A2A (Admission 2 Alumni), and Gyan Setu portals streamline global operations, student admissions, and scholarship distribution.
• **Universalization of Traditional Indian Knowledge Systems (UTIKS)** - Platform offers online courses on Indian knowledge systems.

Swadesh Darshan (SD) Scheme

After an in-depth evaluation, the Ministry of Tourism has revamped this initiative, now called Swadesh Darshan 2.0, aiming to foster sustainable and responsible tourism destinations.

• **Launched in** – 2015.
• It is 100% centrally funded scheme.
• Under the scheme, the Ministry of Tourism provides financial assistance to State governments, Union Territory Administrations or Central Agencies for development of tourism infrastructure in the country.
• **Original Scheme (SD 1.0) -** Thematic circuits were developed, encompassing multiple destinations per circuit, to boost tourism.
• **Scheme Revamp (SD 2.0) -**Aiming for sustainable and responsible tourism, SD 2.0 focuses on delineated areas and includes niche tourism elements.
• **Impact Assessment (SD 1.0) -** A 2019 study by the National Productivity Council highlighted the scheme's positive impact on local livelihood and employment during construction phases**.**
• **Monitoring and Evaluation (SD 2.0) -** SD 2.0 guidelines mandate regular evaluation and monitoring based on various parameters to ensure project success.

Sri Sri Harichand Thakur: Social Reformer

PM pays tribute to Sri Sri Harichand Thakur Ji on his Jayanti

• **Birth and Background**: Born in 1812 in Orakandi, Bangladesh, Harichand Thakur belonged to a peasant farmer family of the Thakur (SC) community.
• **Matua Sect Foundation**: He established the Matua sect, a Vaishnavite Hinduism offshoot, based on truth, love, and sanity.
• **Rejection of Traditional Teachings –** Thakur differed from earlier Hindu saints, emphasizing family life and work as integral to spiritual fulfillment.
• **Social Upliftment –** His teachings resonated with the Namasudra community, challenging caste oppression and attracting other marginalized groups.
• **Divine Status –** Followers consider him an avatar of Vishnu or Krishna, addressing him as Sri Sri Harichand Thakur.
• **Legacy –** He dedicated his life to improving the lives of oppressed and deprived people in pre-independence Bengal, passing away in 1878.

Social Issues

PM VIKAS: Uplifting Minority Communities

• **Scheme -** Is a Central Sector Scheme, consolidates five former initiatives to empower six notified minority communities. (Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Jain and Zorastrians (Parsis)
• **Skilling and Training -** Provides both traditional and non-traditional skill development opportunities.
• **Women Empowerment -** Focuses on leadership and entrepreneurship programs for women.
• **Educational Support -** Facilitates education through the National Institute of Open Schooling.
• **Infrastructure Development -** Integrates with the Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram for infrastructure improvements.
• **Credit Linkages -** Connects beneficiaries with loan programs from the National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation (NMDFC).
• **Implementation and Outreach -** The Ministry is currently processing proposals and collaborating with government entities. Awareness is spread through events like Hunar Haat, Lok Samvardhan Parv, and digital media.

Polity & Governance

India Measures to improve dak services in rural areas

Recently, Revenue generated by post offices is tracked at various levels at regular intervals. The Department has implemented several initiatives to enhance postal services in rural regions.

• **Real-Time Delivery -** Mobile app updates provide delivery status during door-to-door service.
• **Digitalized Branch Post Offices -** Equipped with digital tools for various transactions (postal, financial, and insurance).
• **Enhanced Savings Access -** Internet banking, mobile banking, eKYC, and e-Passbook improve convenience.
• **Streamlined Parcel Delivery -** Has been established to streamline parcel distribution through mechanized delivery.

Zero Hour: Indian Parliamentary Innovation

• **Unique Origin** - Zero Hour is an Indian Parliament creation, not found in formal rulebooks.
• **Timing** - It follows Question Hour, preceding the day's agenda.
• **Informal Mechanism** - Not in the Rules of Procedure, it allows raising issues without notice.
• **Duration** - Begins post-Question Hour, ending when the House's daily business starts.
• **Purpose -** Provides MPs an avenue for immediate, unplanned issue presentation.
• **Historical Context** - This practice, an Indian innovation, has been operational since 1962.

Economy

Treasury Bills

The Government of India, in consultation with Reserve Bank of India, hereby, notifies the calendar for the issuance of Treasury Bills for the quarter ending June 2025.

• **Definition -** Treasury Bills (T-bills) are short-term government debt instruments, allowing investors to park surplus funds.
• **Issuance -** Auctioned by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) at a discount to face value.
• **Market Context -** T-bills operate within India's money market, alongside commercial bills.
• **Issuer Distinction -** T-bills are issued by the Central Government, while commercial bills are issued by financial institutions.
• **Risk Advantage -** T-bills have zero risk weightage, due to their sovereign backing.
• **Liquidity -** High liquidity is ensured by short-term maturities, such as 91 and 364 days.
• **Who can buy** - Individuals, trusts, institutions and banks can purchase T-Bills. But they are usually held by financial institutions.

White Revolution 2.0: Cooperative Dairy Expansion

The Ministry of Cooperation has launched cooperative-led "White Revolution 2.0" aimed at expanding cooperative coverage, employment generation and women's empowerment.

• **Objective**- Aims to increase dairy cooperative milk procurement by 50% within five years.
• **SOP and Targets**- Launched on September 19, 2024, the initiative targets 1007 lakh kg of daily procurement by 2028-29.
• **Strategies -** Achieving this through expanding dairy cooperative coverage and deepening their reach.
• **Implementation** - Plans include establishing 75,000 new Dairy Cooperative Societies (DCSs) in uncovered areas and strengthening 46,422 existing ones.
• **Women Empowerment** - Recognizing women's crucial role in dairy farming, the initiative seeks to empower them by bringing more into the organized cooperative sector.
• **Punjab Initiative** - Punjab aims to create 2,378 new DCSs and strengthen 2,440, with 87 already registered, contributing to the national goal. NDDB **(National Dairy Development Board is a statutory body)** will coordinate the activities.

Wholesale Price Index (WPI): Tracking Wholesale Inflation

The annual rate of inflation based on all India Wholesale Price Index (WPI) number is 2.38% (provisional) for the month of February, 2025 (over February, 2024).

• **Definition**: WPI measures price changes of goods before retail, indicating wholesale-level inflation.
• **Scope-** Excludes services, focusing solely on commodity prices.
• **Issuing Authority**- Released by the Office of Economic Adviser, DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
• **Base Year** - The current base year for WPI calculation is 2011-2012.
• **Index Categories** - The WPI basket comprises three main categories: Manufactured Products (64.2%), Primary Articles (22.6%), and Fuel & Power (13.2%).
• **Purpose** - Provides a macroeconomic overview of price fluctuations at the wholesale stage of the economy.

Miscellaneous

Digital Bharat Nidhi & NABARD: Rural Digital Empowerment

Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN) under Department of Telecommunications (DoT), signed a MoU with National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) for Digital Rural Empowerment for rural areas of the across the country.

• **Partnership Objective –** To enhance rural development via digital services and high-speed broadband under BharatNet.
• **Reference Data Sharing –** Geo-coordinates and contact details of rural institutions will be shared, enabling targeted broadband connectivity.
• **Digital Content & Services –** Both entities will exchange digital content and integrate their digital services for wider dissemination.
• **Capacity Building –** Joint awareness programs will empower rural entrepreneurs and institutions.
• **Digital Economy Promotion –** Leveraging BharatNet, they will foster a digital economy through high-speed broadband access.
• **Information & Communication Technology (ICT) Infrastructure Inclusion –** NABARD will integrate ICT infrastructure into its schemes, ensuring broadband support for rural institutions.

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