

**DAILY
CURRENT
AFFAIRS
ANALYSIS**



LAKSHYA ACADEMY®

19 AUGUST 2024

1 - Improving Disability-Friendly Accessibility:

GS I

Social issues

- **Context:**

- The Central Public Works Department (CPWD) has made increasing accessibility in public buildings for people with disabilities (PwDs) a top priority. Even after the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act was passed in 2016, obstacles still exist, which is why the CPWD has put policies in place to guarantee that accessibility guidelines are followed.

- **The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwDs) Act of 2016: What is it?**

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which India ratified in 2007, is put into effect by the RPwDs Act, 2016.
- The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunity, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act of 1995 was superseded by this one.
- According to the 2011 Census, there were around 26.8 million Divyangjan, or people with disabilities, in India, making up 2.21% of the country's overall population.
- According to statistics from the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), 2.2% of Indians are disabled.
- According to the NSSO 76th round of 2019, there was also a record 86 cases of disability per 1,000,00,000 people in the Indian population over a 365-day period.
- The definition of disability is founded on a dynamic and ever-evolving idea.
- The RPWD Act, 2016 expanded the list of disabilities from seven to twenty-one, with room for the central government to add more.

- **Entitlements and Rights:**

- It is the responsibility of the relevant governments to guarantee equal rights for people with impairments.
- Extra benefits include a least 5% reserve in higher education, a minimum 4% reservation in government jobs, and a minimum 5% reservation in land for people with severe disabilities and high support needs.
- Every child between the ages of 6 and 18 who has a baseline disability is given free schooling.
- Educational institutions that are recognised and sponsored by the government are required to offer inclusive education to children with disabilities.
- A focus on improving the inclusion and involvement of people with disabilities by making public infrastructure and amenities accessible to them.

- **Requirements for Public Structures:**

- The federal government is required by Rule 15 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2017 to set criteria and guidelines for public buildings in order to provide accessibility for people with disabilities.
- For people with disabilities, these standards cover the built environment, transportation, and information and communication technologies.
- These requirements, which are based on the 2016 harmonised norms, must be followed by all establishments, including public buildings.
- Recent changes to Rule 15 mandate that establishments use the harmonised principles by 2021 in order to guarantee accessibility for people with impairments.
- The extensive rules address specifications, planning, and tendering for a range of accessible elements, including grab rails, ramps, elevators, and restrooms that take people with disabilities into account.
- For individuals with disabilities to have equitable access, all building plans must comply with these regulations.
- To improve inclusivity for people with disabilities, existing buildings must be retrofitted to meet accessible standards within five years.
- The RPWD Act of 2016 lists 21 disabilities, including dyslexia, cerebral palsy, low vision, leprosy-cured individuals, hearing impairment (deaf and hard of hearing), locomotor disability, dwarfism, intellectual disability, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, speech and language disability, thalassemia, haemophilia, sickle cell disease, multiple disabilities including deaf-blindness, and Parkinson's disease.

- **Which Other Initiatives Affect the Empowerment of Disabled People?**

- Specialised Portal for Disability Identification.
- Deen Dayal Scheme for Disabled Rehabilitation.
- Helping Handicapped People Buy and Install Appliances and Assistance Devices.
- National Scholarship Programme for Handicapped Students.
- The 2023 Divya Kala Mela.
- The Reaching India Initiative

- **What Are the Issues with Public Building Accessibility?**

- PwDs and campaigners report that there has been ineffective implementation of the 2016 recommendations. Moreover, state governments are similarly disregarding the more recent 2021 recommendations.
- The fact that no state has yet included the harmonised principles in their building bylaws, according to analysts, shows a general disregard for accessibility-related issues.
- Experts point out that public works department engineers, who are in charge of putting accessibility requirements into practice, lack awareness and accountability.

- Although there are funds available for retrofitting projects, many states and cities have not applied, suggesting that accessibility measures have not been given priority.
- The Central Public Works Department's memo is unclear and could waste money, which would make it more difficult to execute accessibility measures successfully.

Source → The Hindu

2 - Trade in Local Currency between Indonesia and India:

GS II

Judiciary related issues

- **Context:**
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Bank Indonesia (BI) to create a framework that encourages the use of local currencies, the Indonesian Rupiah (IDR) and the Indian Rupee (INR), for cross-border transactions.
- India and Malaysia had already declared in 2023 that they would settle commerce in INR in addition to other currencies.
- **What are the Main Points of the Memorandum of Understanding between Bank Indonesia and RBI?**
- The main goal of the MoU is to make bilateral transactions in INR and IDR easier. This includes all current account transactions, transactions that are allowed on the capital account, and other financial and commercial operations that both governments have mutually agreed upon.
- The framework promotes the growth of an INR-IDR foreign currency market by allowing exporters and importers to invoice and pay in their respective local currencies. This method optimises transaction costs and settlement times.
- It is anticipated to strengthen financial integration, advance commerce, and improve historical, cultural, and economic ties between Indonesia and India.
- **Indonesia-Indian Relations:**
- In the ASEAN area, Indonesia has become India's second-largest commercial partner.
- From USD 4.3 billion in 2005–06 to USD 38.84 billion in 2022–23, there has been a rise in bilateral trade.

- Both nations were strong proponents of Asian and African nations gaining their independence, which helped to spark the 1955 Bandung Conference and the 1961 founding of the Non-Aligned Movement.
- Bilateral relations have developed quickly since 1991, when India enacted the "Look East Policy".
- Both nations are members of the UN, the East Asia Summit, and the G20.

- **Cultural Interactions:**

- From the Indian coast, followers of the Hindu, Buddhist, and eventually Muslim religions migrated to Indonesia. Theatres and folk art from Indonesia are influenced by the tales found in the great epics of the Ramayana and Mahabharata.
- About 100,000 Indonesians are of Indian descent; the majority of them are found in Greater Jakarta, Medan, Surabaya, and Bandung.

- **What is the Rupee's Internationalisation Effort?**

- **Market liberalisation for capital goods:**

- To strengthen the rupee's appeal, India expanded the availability of financial instruments denominated in rupees, including derivatives and bonds (called Masala Bonds).
- Encouragement of Electronic Payment Methods:
- Digital transactions in rupees have been made easier by initiatives such as the Unified Payments Interface (UPI).
- Mauritius and Sri Lanka have recently embraced UPI.

- **SVRAs, or Special Vostro Rupee Accounts:**

- India allowed authorised banks to open Special Vostro Rupee Accounts (SVRAs) for the purpose of settling payments in rupees at market-determined currency rates. The nations that were excluded from this permit were Malaysia and Russia.
- Reduced transaction costs, increased pricing transparency, quicker settlement times, and general encouragement of global trade are the goals of the Mechanism.
- The RBI has signed agreements with a number of nations (such as Japan, Sri Lanka, and SAARC members) that facilitate the exchange of foreign exchange and rupees between the central banks of those nations, thereby promoting the use of the rupee abroad.

- **Agreements on Bilateral Trade:**

- The government's signing of bilateral trade agreements with other nations has encouraged the usage of the rupee in international transactions by facilitating increased cross-border trade and investment.

- The Balance of Payments (BoP), which summarises a nation's international trade with the rest of the world, is an essential measure of that nation's economic health.
- The balance of payments for India records transactions that take place between citizens of India and foreigners, also known as nonresident Indians (NRIs).
- Structure: There are two primary accounts that comprise the BoP.
- Current Account: This account shows current transfers, income, and the flow of commodities and services.
- It handles transactions that don't alter the total assets or liabilities of foreign or Indian people living overseas. It consists of:
 - **Goods and services exports and imports:**
 - Interest and dividend income from investments as well as employee remuneration
 - Present transfers (gifts, assistance, and remittances)
 - Capital Account: Transactions pertaining to capital assets are recorded in this account.
 - It keeps track of transactions that have an immediate effect on a nation's foreign assets and liabilities.
 - Purchasing or selling non-financial, non-produced assets (land, intellectual property)
 - Examples of capital account transactions include borrowing from foreign companies, investing in enterprises abroad, making deposits in Indian banks by Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), and engaging in foreign direct investment (FDI) and foreign portfolio investment (FPI).

Source → The Hindu

3 - Bhojshala Complex ASI Survey:

GS I

Indian Culture issues

- **Context:**
 - The Archaeological examination of India (ASI) has been directed by the Madhya Pradesh High Court's Indore Bench to carry out a scientific examination of the Bhojshala Temple-Kamal Maula Mosque complex in the Dhar district in order to ascertain its original character.
- **What is the Kamal Maula Mosque-Bhojshala Temple Complex?**

- The Bhojshala Temple-Kamal Maula Mosque complex was originally a temple of goddess Sarasvati built by Parawara King Bhoja in 11th Century AD.
- The temple's structural components were used to build the mosque. The monument also retains some slabs inscribed with Sanskrit and Prakrit literary works.
- Noted as a great patron of art and literature, King Bhoja is said to have established a school, now known as Bhojashala.
- Under an agreement with the ASI, Hindus perform puja in the temple every Tuesday, and Muslims offer Namaz every Friday.

- **Conflict:**

- The controversy revolves around the original status of the site as a temple.
- The petitioner cites an ASI report claiming that the original Bhojshala and Vagdevi temples were demolished to build a mosque. A survey was requested to determine the actual history of the site.
- One respondent challenged the suit's maintainability, citing the principle of res judicata (a thing adjudged), noting a similar petition was dismissed by the High Court's Principal Bench in 2003.

- **High Court's Order:**

- The court noted that the temple's character remains mysterious until determined. All parties agree on the need to clarify the monument's nature, a task assigned to the ASI under the Monument Act, 1958.
- The court mandated the ASI to promptly conduct a comprehensive scientific survey, excavation, and investigation using advanced methods like GPR-GPS and carbon dating, encompassing not only the site but also its 50-meter peripheral ring area.

- **Who was Raja Bhoj of Gurjara-Pratihara Dynasty?**

- Bhoja was the Pratihara dynasty's greatest emperor and the actual founder of the empire.
- The Gurjara-Pratiharas came to prominence in the second quarter of the 8th century, when they offered successful resistance to the Arabs.
- The Pratiharas who ruled over Kannauj for a long time are also called Gurjara-Pratiharas. The meaning of the word Pratihara is "doorman."
- They were in the tripartite struggle with the Palas and Rashtrakutas over dominance in the Kannauj, Malwa, and upper Ganga valley regions.
- He defeated the Pala king Devapala and the Rashtrakuta king Amoghavarsha, establishing the Gurjara-Pratiharas as the dominant power in northern India during his reign.
- Bhoja I/Mihir Bhoja (836 – 885 AD):
- The best-known Gurjara-Pratihara king was Bhoja, grandson of Nagabhata II.
- A glorious chapter of the history of the Pratiharas begins with the accession of Mihirabhoja.
- Mihirabhoja ascended to the throne in 836 AD. He ruled the Pratiharas for more than 46 years and is regarded as their most popular king.

- He reorganized and consolidated the empire inherited from his ancestors and ushered in an era of prosperity for the Pratiharas.
- Kannauj which was likewise known as Mahodaya was regarded as the capital of his empire.
- The Skandhavara military camp at Mahodaya is mentioned in the Barrah Copper Plate inscription.
- The Pratihara rulers reportedly had India's strongest cavalry, according to Arab travellers.
- He was a great follower of Vaishnavism and assumed the title of "Adivaraha".
- Al-Masudi, an Arab traveller, gave him the title "King Baura."
- The Arabs of Sindh, the Chandalas, and the Kalachuris all acknowledged his supremacy.

- **What are the Methods Adopted by the ASI for Excavation?**

- Excavation, the most invasive archaeological technique, involves digging using stratigraphic principles to gather information about the past while simultaneously destroying it.
- Stratigraphy is adopted by archaeologists to peel off layers in reverse order and understand the logical formation of the archaeological record.
- Non-Invasive Methods: Non-invasive methods are used when investigations are undertaken inside a built structure and no excavation is permitted. It has several Methods:
 - Active Methods: Inject energy into the ground and measure the response. The methods provide an estimate of the ground's material properties, such as density, electrical resistance, and wave velocity.
 - Seismic Techniques: Use shock waves to study subsurface structures.
 - Electromagnetic Methods: Measure electromagnetic responses after energy injection.
 - Passive Methods: Measure existing physical properties.
 - Magnetometry: Detect magnetic anomalies caused by buried structures.
 - Gravity Surveying: Measure gravitational force variations due to subsurface features.

- **Ground-Penetrating Radar (GPR):**

- ASI uses GPR to produce a 3-D model of buried archaeological features.
- GPR operates by introducing a short radar impulse from a surface antenna and records the time and magnitude of return signals from the subsoil.
- Radar beam spreads like a cone, causing reflections before the antenna passes over the object.
- Radar beams spread out in a cone, leading to reflections that may not directly correspond to physical dimensions, creating false images.

- **Carbon Dating:**

- Determine organic material age by measuring carbon content (C-14).
- What are the Limitations of Various Methods in Archaeological Surveys?
- Similar physical properties of different materials can generate the same response, leading to ambiguity in identifying targets.

- The data collected is limited and contains measurement errors, making it challenging to accurately estimate the spatial distribution of properties.
- Archaeological structures are often made of heterogeneous materials with complex geometry, making data interpretation challenging.
- Geophysical tools might not accurately reconstruct target images, especially in complex scenarios.
- In cases like disputes over religious sites, emotional and political factors can influence interpretations and decisions.

Source → The Hindu

4 - Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle Technology:

GS III

Science and Technology issues

- **Context:**
- India has recently made a significant advancement in missile technology, joining the select group of nations possessing Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV) capabilities.
- This milestone was achieved through the successful flight test named Mission Divyastra, conducted by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). It marked the first time the indigenously developed Agni-5 missile integrated MIRV technology.
- **What are the Key Facts About MIRV Technology?**
- **Inception:**
- MIRV technology originated in the United States, with the deployment of a MIRVed Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) in 1970.
- MIRV allows a single missile to carry multiple warheads (3-4), each capable of targeting different locations independently.
- MIRV technology enhances the missile's effectiveness by increasing the number of potential targets it can engage.
- MIRVs can be launched from both land-based platforms and sea-based platforms, such as submarines, expanding their operational flexibility and range.

- **Global Adoption and Proliferation:**

- Nations possessing MIRV technology include major nuclear powers such as the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, China, and India, while Pakistan tested the technology (Ababeel Missile) in 2017.
- The test flight of Agni-5 marked the first time that the MIRV technology was tested in India, which aims to deploy multiple warheads at different locations in a single launch.
- The Agni-5 weapon system is equipped with indigenous avionics systems and high-accuracy sensor packages, which ensured that the re-entry vehicles reached the target points within the desired accuracy.

- **Strategic Significance:**

- MIRVs were initially designed to enhance offensive capabilities rather than to defeat ballistic missile defences.
- Their ability to deploy multiple warheads independently makes them significantly more challenging to defend against compared to traditional missiles.

- **Challenges:**

- Deploying MIRV technology presents complex challenges, including the miniaturisation of warheads, the development of advanced guidance systems, and ensuring the reliability of individual re-entry vehicles.
- Addressing these challenges is crucial for maintaining the effectiveness and reliability of MIRV systems in strategic operations.

Source → The Hindu