

NATIONAL CREDIT FRAMEWORK (NCrF): VEDAS, PURANAS TO FETCH STUDENTS CREDITS UNDER NEW FRAMEWORK



Why in News?

- According to the final report on the new National Credit Framework (NCrF) released by the University Grants Commission (UGC), students will be able to earn credits for specialised knowledge in

Puranas, Vedas and the Indian Knowledge System.

What is the National Credit Framework (NCrF)?

- Based on the **inter-ministerial committee** report, the Union Ministry of Education (MoE) unveiled the draft NCrF in 2022.
- The NCrF is a **set of guidelines** to be followed by schools, colleges and universities in adopting the credit system.
- It also brings the **entire school education** system under the ambit of credits for the first time.
 - So far, only the **National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS)** followed a credit system. The NCrF also covers skill and vocational education.
- The document lists **theoretical, applied sciences or vocational and skill disciplines** that can count towards credits earned during school education.

What are the Proposed Benefits of NCrF for Various Stakeholders?

- **Students:**
 - Establishing multidisciplinary and holistic education with **flexible curricula**.
 - Removing the distinction between arts, science, social sciences, commerce, etc.
 - Giving student credits for every academic/skill/experience.
 - Enhancing the **scope of core learning** to include foundational and cognitive both.
- **Institutions:**
 - Promoting stronger collaboration between institutions.
 - Making credit mechanisms simpler and uniform.
 - Increasing focus on research and innovation.

- Leveraging the institutional infrastructure.
- **Government:**
 - NCrF is expected to assist the government to **increase the enrolment of students.**
 - Complementing the **demographic dividend** and transforming India into the **Skill Capital** of the World.
- **Industry:**
 - NCrF will allow students to attain NSQF-approved foundational skills developed by industry and be **more employable.**
 - The provision of micro-credentials will allow integration of quick educational upgradation/upskilling.

What is the Significance of NCrF?

- Taking the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, NCrF will -
 - Enable the **integration** of academic and vocational domains to ensure **flexibility** and **mobility** between the two. Thus, **mainstreaming skilling and vocational education.**
 - Enable students who have **dropped out** of mainstream education to re-enter the education ecosystem.
 - Promote **Recognition of Prior Learning** for workers who have acquired knowledge and skills informally through traditional family inheritance, work experience, or other means.

UN COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT



In 56th session of UN's Commission on Population and Development, held at New York, deputy Secretary-General warned that the goal of achieving quality education for all by 2030 is "seriously off track".

Key Points:

- Currently around **263 million** children and young people are **out of school** in the world.

- Nearly **70 % of children in poorer countries** cannot understand a basic text by age 10, mainly due to chronic factors such as poverty and malnutrition.
- The situation of **women and girls in Afghanistan** is severe where they have been banned from high school and university.
- Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) empowers girls to avoid unintended pregnancies and encourages both genders to stay in school, among other benefits.
- Most of countries are facing “a **triple crisis in education** – one of **equity and inclusion, quality and relevance**, to equip current and future generations with the skills they need to thrive in a fast-changing world.”

About UN Commission on Population and Development:

- A Population Commission was established by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in **1946**, which was **renamed as the Commission on Population and Development** by the General Assembly in 1994.
- The Commission is composed of **47 Member countries**.
- Member countries are **elected by the Economic and Social Council** for a period of **four years** on the basis of geographic distribution.
- Commission was constituted as **three-tiered intergovernmental mechanism** that plays the primary role in the follow-up to the implementation of the programme of Action.
- **The meetings of commission** was held typically every two or three years until 1994, after which it has been **held once a year**.

AMRIT BHARAT STATION SCHEME

South Western Railway (SWR) is all set to revamp two railway stations, Krishnarajapuram and Whitefield stations under Amrit Bharat Station scheme.



About Amrit Bharat Station Scheme:

- It envisages **development of stations on a continuous basis with a long term vision**.

- It is based on **Master Planning for long term** and implementation of the elements of Master Plan as per the needs and patronage of the station.
- **Broad Objectives:**
 - Implementation of the Master Plan in phases to enhance **the facilities including and beyond the Minimum Essential Amenities (MEA)** and aiming for **creation of Roof Plazas and city centres** at the station in long run.
 - The scheme shall **aim to meet the needs of the stakeholders, station usage studies** as far as possible based on availability of funds and inter-se priority.
 - The scheme shall **cater for introduction of new amenities** as well as upgradation and **replacement of existing amenities**.
 - It will also **cover the stations where detailed techno-economic feasibility studies have been conducted or are being conducted** but the work for **construction of Roof Plazas has not been taken up yet**, ensuring the phasing of Master Plan being suitably implemented.
 - Attempts shall be made to **club different grades/types of waiting halls** and **provide good cafeteria/retail facilities** as far as possible
 - **High level platforms** (760-840 mill meter) shall be provided at all categories of stations.
 - Station **approaches shall be improved** to ensure smooth access by widening of roads, removal of unwanted structures, properly designed signages, dedicated pedestrian pathways, well planned parking areas, improved lighting etc.
 - **Amenities for Divyangjan at stations shall be as per guidelines issued by Railway Board** from time to time.

GREAT NICOBAR ISLAND PROJECT

Why in news?

- The eastern bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has ordered a stay on the ₹72,000 crore Great Nicobar Island project.
- Environmentalists claim that the project will have adverse impact on the rich biodiversity of the area and damage the habitats of endangered species.

- Hence, an appeal was filed in the NGT.
- It also constituted a committee to revisit the environmental clearance granted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC).

National Green Tribunal (NGT)

- NGT was established in October 2010 under the National Green Tribunal Act 2010.
- It was established for effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources.
- It is a specialized body equipped with the necessary expertise to handle environmental disputes involving multi-disciplinary issues.
- India became the third country in the world to set up a specialised environmental tribunal, only after Australia and New Zealand.

Great Nicobar Island project

- In November 2022, the Environment ministry has given environmental clearance for the Centre's ambitious Rs 72,000 crore multi-development projects in Greater Nicobar Island.

Why government is keen to develop this Island?

- **Economic reasons**
 - The government's greater goal is to leverage the locational advantage of the island for economic and strategic reasons.
 - Great Nicobar is equidistant from Colombo to the southwest and Port Klang and Singapore to the southeast.
 - It is positioned close to the East-West international shipping corridor, through which a very large part of the world's shipping trade passes.
 - The proposed ICTT(International Container Trans-shipment Terminal) can potentially become a hub for cargo ships travelling on this route.
 - As per the NITI Aayog report, the proposed port will allow Great Nicobar to participate in the regional and global maritime economy by becoming a major player in cargo trans-shipment.
- **Strategic & Security reasons**

- The proposal to develop Great Nicobar was first floated in the 1970s, and its importance for national security and consolidation of the Indian Ocean Region has been repeatedly underlined.
- Increasing Chinese assertion in the Bay of Bengal and the Indo-Pacific has added great urgency to this imperative in recent years.

What are the Concerns raised by environmentalists?

- The proposed massive infrastructure development in an ecologically important and fragile region has alarmed many environmentalists.
- The loss of tree cover will not only affect the flora and fauna on the island, it will also lead to increased runoff and sediment deposits in the ocean, impacting the coral reefs in the area.
- Environmentalists have also flagged the loss of mangroves on the island as a result of the development project.

INSTITUTE OF COMPANY SECRETARIES OF INDIA (ICSI)

The Institute of Company Secretaries of India will now be able to induct members from



regulators as well as sectoral experts in its secretarial and auditing standards board after recent amendments by the government.

About the Institute of Company Secretaries of India:

- It is the only recognized **professional body** in India to develop and regulate the profession of Company Secretaries in India.
- It is a premier national professional body set up under an act of Parliament, the **Company Secretaries Act, 1980**.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India.
- The Institute provides top-quality education to the students of Company Secretaries (CS) Course and best quality set standards to CS Members.
- At present, there are more than 65,000 members and around 2.5 Lakh students in the role of ICSI.
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi and has four Regional Offices in New Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata, and Mumbai and 72 Chapters across India.

- ICSI has been contributing to the initiatives of the Government of India that have the potential to excel in the social-economic growth of India.
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DEBATE OVER GAMBLING IN INDIA

Why in News?

- Recently, the Tamil Nadu Governor approved a long pending Bill to ban online gambling, which includes online rummy and poker with stakes in the state.

Background:

- The Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly had passed the **Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Online Gambling and Regulation of Online Games Ordinance, 2022** in October, 2022.
- However, in early March, the Governor RN Ravi returned the ordinance for reconsideration.
- A few weeks later, the assembly readopted the Bill and sent it to Raj Bhavan once again.

What is Tamil Nadu's Law on Online Gambling?

- The **Bill prohibits online gambling and online games of chance played for money or other stakes.**
- While it specifically names Rummy and Poker as games of chance, it can go much wider in scope.
- It also establishes the **Tamil Nadu Online Gaming Authority** and empowers it to regulate online gaming companies.
- Companies that are based outside the state are required to follow specified due diligence or restrict access to prohibited games for people in Tamil Nadu.
- The state's proposed gaming authority will identify games of chance and recommend them to be included in the Schedule of prohibited games.

Central Laws related to Gambling/Betting in India:

- Under the **7th Schedule of the Constitution**, the state governments have the exclusive power to enact their own laws on Gambling/Betting for their own territory.
- However, the **Public Gambling Act, 1867**, a colonial-era statute still in force, has been adopted by several states including Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi.

- Other states have enacted their own pieces of legislation to regulate Gambling/Betting related activities within their territories.

Should Gambling Be Legalised Across India?

• Arguments in Favour of Legalisation –

- Legalising gambling will not only help in breaking off sources of black money but it will also **generate a good amount of revenue for the state exchequer.**
- The unaccounted money earned from gambling activities is managed by the criminal syndicates which are spent on nefarious activities like **terror financing.**
- Legalising gambling will not only put a halt on it but also the money generated from betting and gambling **can be used by the authorities for various constructive social schemes.**
- In a large country like India, a legal and effectively regulated gambling sector will **generate large-scale employment opportunities.**
- In sports events like cricket, people tend to bet on it and the majority of time players go for fixing the matches, even though betting on it is illegal in India.
- If betting gets a legal permit, then there will be more transparency in such activities and **it will also curb fixing of the matches** as it will create a sense of fear of getting caught among the players and bookies.

• Arguments Against Legalisation –

- Gambling is **morally wrong and is not ethically correct** in the Indian context.
- It is one of the reasons for bankruptcy, addiction, loss of livelihood, divorce, crime.
- Legalised gambling hurt and **destroys those who are poor and disadvantaged people of the society.**
- If gambling were illegal, then it would be difficult for the gambling industries to openly promote their casinos, lotteries, or any other gambling activities and exploit these people.
- Since gambling is portrayed as something clean and a way to earn money quickly, **it attracts young people, who eventually become gambling addicts.**

DARK MATTER

Astronomers have recently made the most detailed map ever of mysterious dark matter using the universe's very first light



Why in News?

- Researchers from S. National Science Foundation's (NSF) used the **Atacama Cosmology Telescope to create this new map of the dark matter.**
- The new image, made using 14 billion-year-old light from the turbulent aftermath of the Big Bang, shows the enormous matter tendrils that formed not long after the universe exploded into being.
- It turns out the shapes of these tendrils are remarkably **similar to those predicted using Einstein's theory of general relativity.**
- The new result contradicts previous dark matter maps that suggested the cosmic web is less clumpy than Einstein's theory predicted.

About Dark Matter:

- **What is it?** Dark matter is a **hypothetical invisible mass** thought to be **responsible for adding gravity to galaxies** and other bodies.
- **How much is dark matter?**
 - According to NASA, **Dark matter seems to outweigh visible matter roughly six to one**, making up about **27% of the universe.**
 - Roughly **68% of the universe is dark energy.** Dark matter makes up about 27%. The rest visible matter is 5% of the universe.
- **Why called dark matter?** It is called so because unlike normal matter (i.e. stars and galaxies), **dark matter does not interact with the electromagnetic force.**
- **Detection:** As it does not interact with the electromagnetic force, thus **it does not absorb, reflect or emit light or electromagnetic radiation of any kind.** And this makes it **extremely hard to spot/detect. It can be detected only through its gravitational effects.**
- **Importance:** Its gravitational force prevents stars in our Milky Way from flying apart.



CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK



- The **Atacama Cosmology Telescope:**
 - The telescope was commissioned at its site in late 2007.
 - It is a six-meter diameter telescope on Cerro Toco in the **Atacama Desert of northern Chile.**
 - **Its goal** is to study how the universe began, what it is made of, and how it evolved to its current state.
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