

National Recruitment Agency

Why in the news?

- The **Union Cabinet** has given its **approval for creation of National Recruitment Agency (NRA)**, paving the way for a **transformational reform in the recruitment process** for **central government jobs**.



About National Recruitment Agency (NRA)

- It is a **multi-agency body** which will **conduct a Common Eligibility Test (CET)** to **screen/shortlist candidates** for the **Group B and C (non-technical) posts**.

Single exam | The National Recruitment Agency (NRA) will conduct a Common Eligibility Test (CET) for recruitment to government jobs

- The NRA will initially conduct the CET for three sectors – Railway Recruitment Board, Staff Selection Commission and Institute of Banking Personnel Selection
- It will be held separately for three levels – graduate, 12th pass and 10th pass – for the non-technical posts of the three agencies
- Examination will be conducted online twice a year in 12 languages and will be based on a common curriculum
- Scores will be valid for a three-year period. Students can write the test multiple times and their best score will be taken into account
- According to the DoPT

- NRA will have **representatives of Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Finance/Department of Financial Services, the SSC, RRB & IBPS**.
- It is **envisioned that the NRA** would be a **specialist body bringing the state-of-the-art technology and best practices to the field of Central Government recruitment**.

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- The test will be conducted for **three levels**:
 - a. **Graduate**
 - b. **Higher secondary (12th pass)**
 - c. **The matriculate (10th pass) candidates.**
- However, the **present recruitment agencies– IBPS, RRB and SCC – will remain in place.**
- The recruitment is **based on the screening done** at the **CET score level**; **final selection for recruitment** shall be made through **separate specialised Tiers (II, III, etc.)** of examination which shall be **conducted by the respective recruitment agencies.**
- The **curriculum for CET** would be common.

How long will the CET score be valid?

- The **CET score** of a **candidate shall be valid for a period of three years** from the date of declaration of the result.
- The best of the **valid scores** shall be deemed to be the **current score of the candidate.**
- While there will be **no restriction on the number of attempts** to be taken by a **candidate to appear in the CET**, it will be subject to the **upper age limit.**
- However, the **relaxation in the upper age limit** shall be given to **candidates of SC/ST/OBC** and other categories as per the **extant policy of the Government.**

What will be the medium of CET?

- The **CET will be conducted in multiple languages.**
- The exam will be conducted in **12 languages** that are in the **Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India.**

Topic- GS Paper II–Governance

Source- Indian Express

Railways to deploy ‘Ninja UAVs’ for surveillance

Why in the news?

- **Indian Railways** has started deploying “**Ninja UAVs**” (**unmanned aerial vehicles**) for establishing a **drone-based surveillance system** in a bid to intensify its **security mechanism across its network.**



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About NINJA UAVs

- These are the **lightweight and economical micro contraptions** built for mapping and surveillance.

Benefits

- Drones can be **deployed for data collection analysis** and may prove to be **useful in vulnerable sections for safe operations of trains**.
- Drones may be pressed into service at disaster sites for helping in rescue, recovery, and restoration operations and coordinating of efforts of various agencies.
- Drones can be useful while undertaking **mapping of railway assets** to assess the **encroachments on railway properties**.
- During **large-scale crowd management efforts**, drones may give vital inputs such as the **magnitude of a gathering, probable time of arrival and dispersal** based on which such an **exercise can be planned and executed**.
- Drones were also used to **enforce lockdown restrictions** and **monitor the movement of migrants** back to their native places following the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) outbreak.

Related Information

About Drone Innovators Network

- It was **formed in 2018 at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland**.

Purpose

- It is a **community of progressive governments**, supported by **industry and other key stakeholders** who are **accelerating the adoption of drones** with **progressive regulatory approaches**.

Topic- GS Paper III–Science and Technology

Source- Indian Express

Swadeshi Microprocessor Challenge

Why in the news?

- Recently **Union Minister of Electronics & Information Technology** launched “**Swadeshi Microprocessor Challenge- Innovate Solutions for #Aatmanirbhar Bharat**” to provide **further impetus to the strong ecosystem of Start-up, innovation, and research in the country**.

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- It will **provide further impetus** to the **strong ecosystem of Start-up**, innovation, and research in the country.

About the Swadeshi Microprocessor Challenge:

- **IIT Madras and Center for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) have developed two microprocessors** named **SHAKTI (32 bit) and VEGA (64 bit)**.
- They used **Open Source Architecture** under the **aegis of Microprocessor Development Programme of Ministry of Electronics and IT**.
- It **seeks to invite innovators, startups, and students** to use these **microprocessors to develop various technology products**.
- The **Challenge spreads over a time span of 10 months, kick-started with the registration process through MyGov Portal on 18th August 2020 and will culminate in June 2021**.

Significance:

- It is **aimed at meeting India's future requirements of strategic and industrial sectors**.
- It has the **potential to mitigate the issues of security, licensing, technology obsolescence** and most crucially cutting dependency on imports.
- It **offers benefits to the contestants by providing internship opportunities and regular technical guidance** from the best **VLSI & Electronics System Design Experts** in the country.
- It also provides the **business mentorship & funding support, facilitated by Incubation Centres**.

Topic- GS Paper III–Science and Technology

Source- PIB

Kudremukh National Park

Why in the news?

- Recently, the **Karnataka administration** has said that **declaring areas within 1 km from the border of Kudremukh National Park as Eco Sensitive Zone (ESZ)** will not affect the **life of residents** inside the **identified areas**.

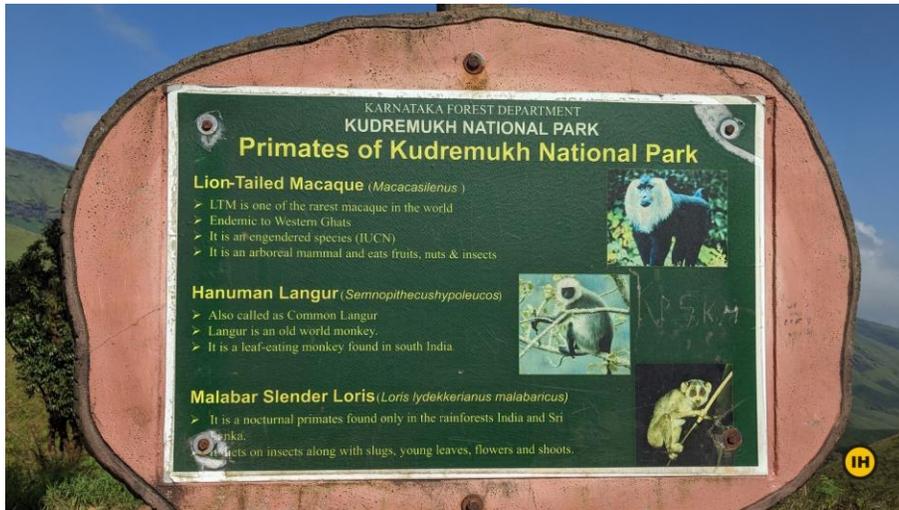
About Kudremukh National Park

- It is **located in the Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Chikmagalur districts of the state of Karnataka**.
- It stretches between **Narasimha Parvatha (in Sringeri Taluk) in the north to the Jamalabad Fort (in Belthangady Taluk) in the south**.
- It began its existence as a **Reserved Forest in the year of 1916** and was declared as a **National Park in the year of 1987**.



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Rivers

- Three **important rivers** i.e. the **Tunga**, the **Bhadra** and the **Nethravathi** are said to have their **origin in the park**.
- The Park is divided into four ranges i.e. **Kudremukh, Kerekatte, Kalasa and Shimoga**.
- The **Kadambi Waterfalls** lies in the **Kudremukh National Park**.

Related Information

About Someshwara Wildlife Sanctuary

- Someshwara Wildlife Sanctuary lies in the **Western Ghats of Karnataka** and it is named after the **Someshwara temple located** within the sanctuary.
- It is situated **very close** to the **Kudremukh National Park**.
- The **sanctuary** is mostly **made up of evergreen forests, semi-evergreen and moist deciduous forests**.
- **Sitanadi River** flows through the sanctuary.

Topic- GS Paper III–Environment

Source- The Hindu

Bhadbhut project

Why in the news?

- Recently **Gujarat government** has awarded the **contract for the construction of Bhadbhut barrage project**.

What is the Bhadbhut project?

- The project is part of the **larger Kalpasar Project**, which entails construction of a **30-km dam across the Gulf of Khambhat** between **Bharuch and Bhavnagar districts**.
- The **reservoir** is meant to **tap the waters of the Narmada, Mahisagar and Sabarmati**.



Aim of the Project

- The project also **aims to prevent flooding** in years when **rainfall is higher than normal**.
- Embankments **22 km long** will be made and **will extend upstream towards Bharuch**, from either side of the river.

Purpose

- To **prevent salinity ingress** which refers to the **process of saltwater invading areas** which previously **contained only freshwater**.
- To stop most of the **excess water flowing** out of the **Sardar Sarovar Dam** from **reaching the sea and thus create a sweet water lake** on the river.
- To **prevent flooding** in years when **rainfall is higher** than normal by **building embankments**.

Topic- GS Paper I–Geography

Source- Indian Express

Domicile-based job quota

Why in the news?

- The **Madhya Pradesh government's recent decision** to reserve all government jobs for “**children of the state**” raises questions relating to the **fundamental right to equality**.



What does the Constitution say?

- **Article 16 of the Constitution**, which guarantees **equal treatment under law in matters of public employment**, prohibits the state from discriminating on **grounds of place of birth or residence**.
- **Article 16(2)** states that “**no citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect or, any employment or office under the State**”.
- The provision is supplemented by the other clauses in the **Constitution that guarantee equality**.
- However, **Article 16(3) of the Constitution** provides an **exception** by saying that Parliament may **make a law “prescribing” a requirement of residence for jobs in a particular state**.
- This power vests **solely in the Parliament, not state legislatures**.

Why does the Constitution prohibit reservation based on domicile?

- When the Constitution came into force, **India turned itself into one nation** from a **geographical unit of individual principalities** and the idea of the **universality of Indian citizenship** took root.
- As **India has common citizenship**, which **gives citizens the liberty to move around freely in any part of the country**, the requirement of a **place of birth or residence** cannot be **qualifications for granting public employment in any state**.

What has the Supreme Court said on reserving jobs for locals?

- The **Supreme Court** has **ruled against reservation based on place of birth or residence**.
- In 1984, ruling in **Dr Pradeep Jain v Union of India**, the issue of legislation for “**sons of the soil**” was discussed.
- The court expressed an **opinion that such policies** would be **unconstitutional** but did not **expressly rule** on it as the case was on **different aspects of the right to equality**.

- **Despite Article 16(2)**, “some of the States are adopting ‘sons of the soil’ policies prescribing reservation or preference based on domicile or residence requirement for employment or appointment.
- In a subsequent ruling in **Sunanda Reddy v State of Andhra Pradesh (1995)**, the Supreme Court affirmed the **observation in Pradeep Jain to strike down a state government policy** that gave **5% extra weightage** to candidates who had studied with **Telugu as the medium of instruction**.
- In 2002, the Supreme Court **invalidated appointment of government teachers in Rajasthan** in which the **state selection board** gave preference to “**applicants belonging to the district or the rural areas of the district concerned**”.
- In **2019**, the **Allahabad High Court** struck down a **recruitment notification** by the **UP-Subordinate Service Selection Commission** which prescribed preference for women who are “**original residents**” of the **UP alone**.

Topic- GS Paper II–Polity

Source- Indian Express

Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament

- Recently the **Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla** has attended the **inaugural ceremony** of the **Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (5WCSP)**.
- This is the **first time** that an **international Parliamentary Conference** of such a **magnitude is being organised in Virtual mode**.
- The theme of the Conference is **Parliamentary leadership for more effective multilateralism that delivers peace and sustainable development for the people and planet**.



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About Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament

- The conference is being **organized jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Geneva** and the **Parliament of Austria** with the **support of the United Nations (UN)**.
- The **Conference is being held** in the **backdrop of the current crisis of COVID-19 pandemic** is expected to **strengthen multilateralism and international cooperation** in order to **rebuild a better world**.
- The **Conference is part of the series of high-level meetings** leading up to the **UN Summit in late September 2015**, at which the **new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** will be launched.

Topic- GS Paper II–International Organization

Source- AIR

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