

## **Halam tribe**

(Topic- GS Paper II –Governance– Source-The Hindu)

### **Why in the news?**

- Recently, the repatriation of several hundred Halam people who had taken shelter in Assam's Karimganj district following clashes with Bru refugees in north Tripura began.

### **Background**

- At least 700 people of Halam sub-tribes were displaced after rioters torched several houses in the Damcherra area of the North Tripura district.
- The displaced people crossed the Longai River to reach Karimganj of Assam. Karimganj district administration provided them shelter and distributed relief materials.

### **About Halam tribe**



- The Halam community is various tribes native to the state of Tripura and Assam, Mizoram in India.
- The name Halam was coined by the Tipra Maharaja.
- As per their oral tradition, they called themselves "Riam", which literally means "Human being" and lyrically they also call themselves "Riamrai, Reivon, Longvon, Manyâ, Chepvon etc.".
- The Halam is further divided into 12 sub-tribes, namely Chorei, Molsom, Hrangkhol, Kaipeng, Kalai, Ranglong, Sakache, Thangache, Marache, Marachepang/Morsephang Saimâr, Bongcher, Korbwng, Dab and Rupini.

### **Related Information**

#### **About the Bru people**

- The Brus community is also known as Reangs.
- These people are scattered across the states of Assam, Mizoram and Tripura.
- In the state of Mizoram, they inhabit small pockets of Mamit, Lunglei and Lawngtlai districts.
- However, the biggest chunk is in Mamit bordering the North Tripura district of Tripura.

### **What is the conflict between the Mizos and the Brus?**

- A conflict with the majority Mizos in 1995 made influential organisations like the Mizo Zirlai Pawl (students' union) demand that the Brus, labelled a non-indigenous tribe, be deleted from Mizoram's electoral rolls.
- This led to an armed movement by the extremist Bru National Liberation Front, which killed a Mizo forest official on October 21, 1997.
- **Many Bru villages were burnt down and allegedly raped and killed.**
- As a result, thousands of Brus fled to North Tripura where they were given shelter in six relief camps, three each in the Kanchanpur and Panisagar subdivisions.
- **Most of the refugees were from Mamit and a few from Kolasib and Lunglei.**
- Meanwhile, Tipraha Indigenous Progressive Regional Alliance or the TIPRA, which is governing the Tribal Autonomous District Council, has called for 'peace and unity among the State's 19 tribal clans'.

### **India takes over UNSC presidency for August**

**(Topic- GS Paper II –International Organization– Source-Indian Express)**

#### **Why in the news?**

- India has recently assumed the presidency of the United Nations Security Council for August begins, it is set to bring focus to its three priorities:
  - a. Maritime security,
  - b. Counterterrorism and
  - c. Peacekeeping.
- This will be the country's first presidency during its 2021-22 tenure as a non-permanent member of the Security Council.
- India began its two-year tenure as a non-permanent member of the UNSC on January 1, 2021.

#### **Related Information**

- India has won the unanimous support of all countries in the 55-member Asia-Pacific Group at the United Nations in support of its bid for a non-permanent seat at the UN Security Council (UNSC) for a two-year term in 2021-22.

### **About United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**

- It is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations and is charged with the maintenance of international peace and security.
- Its powers include the establishment of peacekeeping operations, the establishment of international sanctions, and the authorization of military action through Security Council resolutions.
- It is the only UN body with the authority to issue binding resolutions to member states.

### **Members**

- The Security Council consists of fifteen members which consist of five permanent and ten non-permanent members

#### **Permanent member**

- a. Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, and the United States—serve as the body's five permanent members.
- b. These permanent members can veto any substantive Security Council resolution, including those on the admission of new member states or candidates for Secretary General.

#### **Non- Permanent members**

- The Security Council also has 10 non-permanent members, elected on a regional basis to serve two-year terms.
- Non-permanent members of the Security Council, however, do not have veto rights.
- At present, the non-permanent members are Estonia, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Niger, Norway, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia and Vietnam.
- **The body's presidency rotates monthly among its members.**

### **Principal Organs of the United Nation**

- United Nations Secretariat
- United Nations General Assembly
- International Court of Justice
- United Nations Security Council
- United Nations Economic and Social Council
- United Nations Trusteeship Council

**Note:**

- India has already held a non-permanent seat on the UNSC for seven terms.

## **New strategic oil reserves**

**(Topic- GS Paper II –Governance– Source-Indian Express)**

### **Why in the news?**

- Recently, under the second phase of the Petroleum Reserves programme, the government has approved the setting up of two additional commercial-cum-strategic facilities with a total storage capacity of 6.5 MMT underground storage on PPP mode.
- These two storage locations at Chandikhol (4 MMT) and Padur (2.5 MMT).

### **Related information**

- Under the first phase of the Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) programme, the Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserve Limited (ISPRL), has set up petroleum storage facilities with a total capacity of 5.33 Million Metric Tonnes (MMT) at 3 locations, namely (i) Visakhapatnam (1.33 MMT), (ii) Mangaluru (1.5 MMT) and (iii) Padur (2.5 MMT), and all the storage facilities have been filled with crude oil.

### **Related Information**

- According to the agreement on an International Energy Programme (I.E.P.), each International Energy Agency (IEA) country must hold emergency oil **stocks equivalent to at least 90 days of net oil imports.**
- In case of a severe oil supply disruption, IEA members may decide to release these stocks to the market as part of collective action.
- **India became an associate member of the International Energy Agency in 2017.**

### **Importance of Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) programme**

- **The concept of dedicated strategic reserves was first mooted in 1973 in the US, after the OPEC oil crisis.**

- The Gulf War in 1990 led to a sharp rise in oil prices and a huge increase in India's imports.
- During the post-1991 Indian economic crisis, foreign exchange reserves could barely finance three weeks' worth of imports, while the government came close to defaulting on its financial obligations. India was able to address the crisis through policies that liberalized the economy.
- However, India continued to be affected by volatility in oil prices.
- In 1998, former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee administration proposed the creation of petroleum reserves as a long-term solution for managing the oil market.
- Three storage facilities were built in underground locations at Mangalore, Visakhapatnam and Padur.
- A total of 5.33 Million Metric Tonnes of storage capacity was created in the first phase.

### **Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana**

**(Topic- GS Paper II –Governance– Source-The Hindu)**

#### **Why in the news?**

- Recently, the Ministry of Rural Development has started a scheme called **Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana** which provides facilities to women farmers.

#### **About Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana**

- It is a sub-component of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana- National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM), which is under implementation since 2011 through State Rural Livelihoods Mission as Project Implementation Agencies.

#### **Objectives**

- To empower women in agriculture by making systematic investments to enhance their participation and productivity.
- It also creates and sustains agriculture-based livelihoods of rural women.
- To enable women to gain better access to the inputs and services provided by the government and other agencies.

## **Tanker attack: UK and US blame Iran for deadly ship attack**

(Topic- GS Paper II –IR, Source-The Hindu)

### **Why in the news?**

- Recently, the United States and the United Kingdom joined Israel in alleging Iran carried out a fatal drone strike on an oil tanker off the coast of Oman in the Arabian Sea, putting further pressure on Tehran as it denied being involved in the assault.
- The UK and US believe Iran was behind a tanker attack that killed two people, and have vowed to respond, calling it a violation of international law.

### **More in the news**

- The strike on Mercer Street marked the first-known fatal attack after years of assaults on commercial shipping in the region linked to tensions with Iran over **its tattered nuclear deal.**

### **About The Mercer Street**



- It has been owned by Japan's Taihei Kaiun Co. and is managed by London-based Zodiac Maritime, part of Israeli billionaire Eyal Ofer's Zodiac Group.
- In early July, the Liberian-flagged container ship CSAV Tyndall, once tied to Zodiac Maritime, suffered an unexplained explosion on board while in the northern Indian Ocean, according to the U.S. Maritime Administration.

## **Table-top war-gaming exercise**

**(Topic- GS Paper III –Defense– Source-The Hindu)**

### **Why in the news?**

- Recently, a **table-top exercise** was war-gamed with operational settings, has been played across all theatres simultaneously, multi-domain and cross theatre.

### **About the Table-top war-gaming exercise**

- It is a part of the process of evolving consensus among the three services on the reorganisation of the forces into integrated tri-service theatre commands and fine-tunes the model.
- The exercise was played for a full day and was attended by around 40 officers including the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Gen. Bipin Rawat, three Service Chiefs, Vice Chiefs and Director General of Military Operations equivalent from the three services.

### **Frank and freewheeling exchange**

- There was a frank and freewheeling exchange to evolve the best process on theatrisation and many of the concerns put forward by various sides over the creation of the commands were addressed including that of the Air Force

### **Significance**

- It will help to prepared defence as a collusive threat of two-front war from China and Pakistan.

## **Related Information**

### **Exercise Kavach**

- It is a large-scale Tri-service Military which is recently conducted in January 2021 under the aegis of the Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC), the only Joint Forces Command of the country.
- **The Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) is the first integrated theatre command in India with headquarters at Port Blair.**

### **Features**

- The exercise involves synergised application of maritime surveillance assets, coordinated air and maritime strikes, air defence, submarine and landing operations.
- The joint force would execute multi-domain, high-intensity offensive and defensive manoeuvres in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

### **Aims**

- The tri-services exercise aims to fine-tune joint war-fighting capabilities and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) towards enhancing operational synergy.

## **Exercise INDRA NAVY-21**

**(Topic- GS Paper III –Defense– Source-The Hindu)**

### **Why in the news?**

- Recently, the 12th edition of exercise INDRA NAVY was held in the Baltic Sea.

### **About the Exercise INDRA NAVY-21**

- This exercise was undertaken as part of the visit of INS Tabar to St Petersburg, Russia to participate in the 325th Navy Day celebrations of the Russian Navy.
- It is a biennial bilateral maritime exercise between the Indian Navy and the Russian Navy which was initiated in 2003.

### **Aims**

- To consolidate interoperability built up by the two Navies over the years and also to enhance understanding and procedures for multi-faceted maritime operations.

- To strengthen confidence and enable sharing of best practices between both Navies.

## Related Information

### About Baltic Sea



- The Baltic Sea is positioned in Northern Europe and bordered by Sweden (a part of the Scandinavian Peninsula), Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, and Denmark and its numerous islands.

### About Baltic members

- The Baltic States, also known as the Baltic countries, are the three countries in northern Europe on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.
- The Baltic States cooperate on a regional level in several intergovernmental organizations, principally through the Baltic Assembly.
- All three countries are members of the European Union, NATO and the Eurozone.
- **Estonia and Latvia are also members of the OECD.**

[e-RUPI](#)

(Topic- GS Paper III –Economics– Source-The Hindu)

**Why in the news?**

- Recently, the Prime Minister of India has launched an electronic voucher-based digital payment system "e-RUPI".

### About e-RUPI



- It has been developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the National Health Authority.
- It will be a person-specific and purpose-specific payments system.

### How will e-RUPI work?

- e-RUPI is a cashless and contactless digital payments medium, which will be delivered to mobile phones of beneficiaries in form of an SMS string or a QR code.
- This will essentially be like a prepaid gift voucher that will be redeemable at specific accepting centres without any credit or debit card, a mobile app or internet banking.
- e-RUPI will connect the sponsors of the services with the beneficiaries and service providers in a digital manner without any physical interface.

### How will these vouchers be issued?

- The system has been built by NPCI on its UPI platform and has onboarded banks that will be the issuing entities.
- Any corporate or government agency will have to approach the partner banks, which are both private and public-sector lenders, with the details of specific persons and the purpose for which payments have to be made.
- The beneficiaries will be identified using their mobile number and a voucher allocated by a bank to the service provider in the name of a given person would only be delivered to that person.

## **Use of e-RUPI**

- According to the government, e-RUPI is expected to ensure a leak-proof delivery of welfare services.
- It can also be used for delivering services under schemes meant for providing drugs and nutritional support under Mother and Child welfare schemes, TB eradication programmes, drugs & diagnostics under schemes like Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, fertiliser subsidies etc.
- The private sector also can leverage these digital vouchers as part of their employee welfare and corporate social responsibility programmes.

## **What is the significance of e-RUPI and how is it different from a digital currency?**

- The government is already working on developing a central bank digital currency and the launch of e-RUPI could potentially highlight the gaps in digital payments infrastructure that will be necessary for the success of the future digital currency.
- In effect, e-RUPI is still backed by the existing Indian rupee as the underlying asset and the specificity of its purpose makes it different to a virtual currency and puts it closer to a voucher-based payment system.
- **Also, the ubiquitousness of e-RUPI in the future will depend on the end-use cases.**

## **Global examples of a voucher-based welfare system**

- In the US, there is the system of education vouchers or school vouchers, which is a certificate of government funding for students selected for state-funded education to create a targeted delivery system.
- These are essentially subsidies given directly to parents of students for the specific purpose of educating their children. In addition to the US, the school voucher system has been used in several other countries such as Colombia, Chile, Sweden, Hong Kong, etc.

## **Direct seeding of rice (DSR)**

**(Topic- GS Paper III –Agriculture– Source-The Hindu)**

**Why in the news?**

- Recently, Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) upgraded technology for the direct seeding of rice (DSR), the ‘tar wattar’ (good soil moisture) DSR, seems to have caught the fancy of paddy farmers in the State.
- It is an improved version of the earlier DSR (dry) technique.

### **About Direct Seeding of Rice**



- In this, the pre-germinated seeds are directly drilled into the field by a tractor-powered machine.
- There is no nursery preparation or transplantation involved in this method.
- Farmers have to only level their land and give one pre-sowing irrigation.
- In DSR as flooding of fields is not done during sowing, chemical herbicides are used to kill weeds.

### **The advantage with Direct Seeding of Rice**

- The DSR method saves a lot of groundwater because the crop does not need frequent irrigation as in the case of a puddled paddy field.
- The method is also pocket-friendly as manual transplanting is getting costlier with each passing season.
- This method also addresses the shortage of farm labour.
- Reduce methane emissions due to a shorter flooding period and decreased soil disturbance compared to transplanting rice seedlings.

### **Drawbacks of Direct Seeding of Rice**

- Non-availability of herbicides.
- The seed requirement for DSR is also high, 8-10 kg/acre, compared to 4-5 kg/acre in transplanting.

- Further, laser land levelling is compulsory in DSR.
- The sowing needs to be done timely so that the plants have come out properly before the monsoon rains arrive.

## **14 tiger reserves get CA|TS accreditation**

(Topic- GS Paper III –Environment– Source-Indian Express)

### **Why in the news?**

- Recently Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change has announced that 14 tiger reserves in India have received accreditation of the Global Conservation Assured Tiger Standards (CA|TS).
- **It has been announced on the occasion of International Tiger Day.**

### **More in the news**

#### **The 14 tiger reserves which have been accredited are:**

- Manas, Kaziranga and Orang in Assam,
- Satpura, Kanha and Panna in Madhya Pradesh,
- Pench in Maharashtra,
- Valmiki Tiger Reserve in Bihar,
- Dudhwa in Uttar Pradesh,
- Sunderbans in West Bengal,
- Parambikulam in Kerala,
- Bandipur Tiger Reserve of Karnataka and
- Mudumalai and Anamalai Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu
- **India has now 51 tiger reserves across 18 states.**

### **About CA|TS**

- **CA|TS was officially launched in 2013. It has been developed by tiger and protected area experts.**

### **Objectives**

- It is a set of criteria that allows tiger sites to check if their management will lead to successful tiger conservation.

- It also sets minimum standards for effective management of target species and encourages the assessment of these standards in relevant conservation areas.
- CA|TS is a globally accepted conservation tool that sets best practices and standards to manage tigers and encourages assessments to benchmark progress.
- CA|TS is being implemented across 125 sites in seven tiger range countries and India has the highest 94 sites, out of which assessment was completed for 20 tiger reserves in 2021.

## **Significance**

- CATS accreditation is a global recognition of good tiger governance.
- This recognition means a lot in the context of adaptation to climate change, sustainability of ecosystem services, and safeguarding disruption of zoonotic cycles, through an umbrella species approach.
- The aspects monitored for accreditation include the importance and status of a reserve, management, community participation, tourism, protection, habitat management, and tiger populations.

## **About International Tiger Day**

- Global Tiger Day, often called International Tiger Day, is an annual celebration to raise awareness for tiger conservation, held annually on 29 July.
- It was created in 2010 at the Saint Petersburg Tiger Summit in Russia.
- The goal of the day is to promote a global system for protecting the natural habitats of tigers and to raise public awareness and support for tiger conservation issues.