

1. Uniform Civil Code



Topic: Polity and Governance

In News: The 22nd Law Commission of India Wednesday (June 14) sought the views of religious organisations and the public on the issue of a Uniform Civil Code (UCC).

More on the Topic

- 21st Law Commission's opinion on the matter:
- Underlining that the Uniform Civil Code is "neither necessary nor desirable at this stage", the 21st Law Commission of India, in 2018, argued for reform of family laws of every religion through amendments and codification of certain aspects so as to make them gender-just.
- The Law Commission took a stand in favour of "equality 'within communities' between men and women" (personal law reform), "rather than 'equality between' communities" (UCC).
- Cultural diversity cannot be compromised to the extent that our urge for uniformity itself becomes a reason for threat to the territorial integrity of the nation.
- It further noted that "**women must be** guaranteed their freedom of faith without any compromise on their right to equality" as it would be unfair to make women choose between one or the other.

About Uniform Civil Code?



- A UCC would provide for one law for the entire country, applicable to all religious communities, in their personal matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption etc.
- Currently, Indian personal law is fairly complex, with each religion adhering to its own specific laws.
- Separate laws govern Hindus including Sikhs, Jains and Buddhist, Muslims, Christians, and followers of other religions.
- Moreover, there is diversity even within communities. All Hindus of the country are not governed by one law, nor are all Muslims or all Christians.
- For instance, in the Northeast, there are more than 200 tribes with their own varied customary laws.
- The Constitution itself protects local customs in Nagaland. Similar protections are enjoyed by Meghalaya and Mizoram. Even reformed Hindu law, in spite of codification, protects customary practices.
- The exception to this rule is the state of **Goa**, where all religions have a common law regarding marriages, divorces, and adoption.

What does the Constitution say about a UCC?

- Article 44 of the Constitution lays down that the state shall endeavour to secure a UCC for citizens throughout the territory of India.
- Article 44 is among the Directive Principles of State Policy. Directive Principles are not enforceable by court, but are supposed to inform and guide governance.

Why is there no uniform code for personal law?

- **Article 25** lays down an individual's fundamental right to religion; **Article 26(b)** upholds the right of each religious denomination or any section thereof to "manage its own affairs in matters of religion"; **Article 29** defines the right to conserve distinctive culture.
- An individual's freedom of religion under Article 25 is subject to "public order, health, morality" and other provisions relating to fundamental rights, but a group's freedom under **Article 26** has not been subjected to other fundamental rights.

Way Ahead:

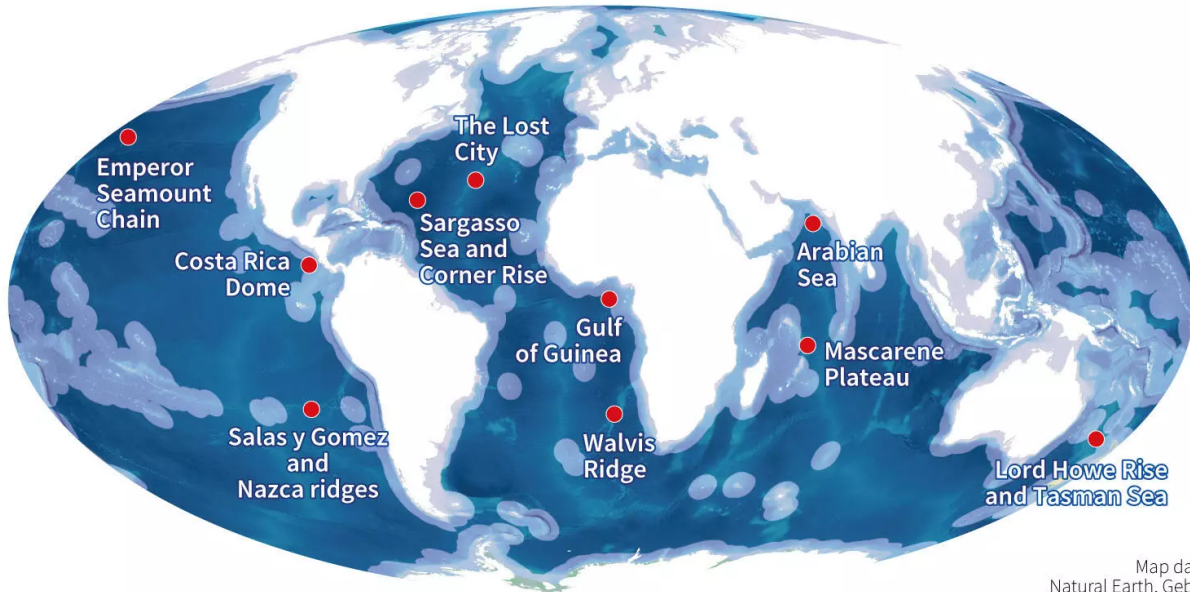
- We need to follow a **bottom-up approach**. The demand for UCC must come from the people.
- It can only emerge through an evolutionary process, which preserves India's rich legal heritage, of which all the personal laws are equal constituents.

Source: Indian Express

1. High Seas Treaty

Proposed marine protection areas

■ Exclusive economic zones (EEZ*) ■ High seas ● Proposed protection zones in the high seas



Sources: NGOs Pew and High Seas Alliance, Chilean authorities, Marine regions

* up to 200 nautical miles maximum from the coasts (370 km)

Map data:
 Natural Earth, Gebco



Topic: Environment and Ecology

In News: The world's first international treaty to protect the high seas was adopted by the United Nations.

More on the Topic:

- The treaty is considered as historic achievement" as the treaty will establish a **legal framework to extend swathes of environmental protections to international waters**, which make up more than 60 percent of the world's oceans.
- Agreed under the UNCLOS, this treaty is commonly known as the **agreement on biodiversity beyond national jurisdictions (BBNJ)**.
- This treaty will be legally binding in nature.
- UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is an international treaty that establishes a **framework for the use and management of the world's oceans and their resources**.
- **It was adopted by the United Nations in 1982 and came into force in 1994.**

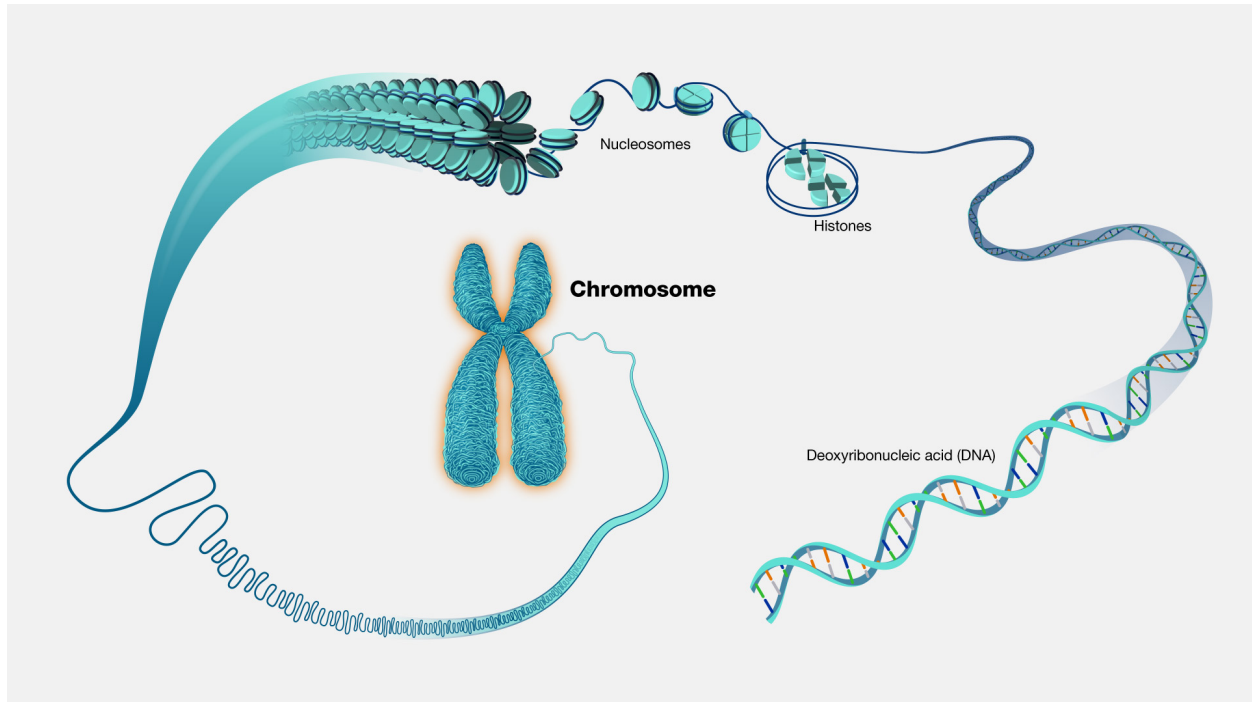
Key provisions of the UN high seas treaty:



- **Demarcation of marine protected areas (MPAs):** MPAs are where ocean systems, including biodiversity, are under stress, either due to human activities or climate change.
- Activities in these areas will be highly regulated, and conservation efforts similar to what happens in forest or wildlife zones, will be undertaken.
- As per IUCN, only about 1.44 per cent of high seas are currently protected.
- The treaty is seen as **crucial to countries protecting 30 percent of the world's oceans and lands by 2030**, as agreed by world governments in a separate historic accord reached in Montreal in December 2022.
- The treaty is giving the means to achieve" the 30 percent target.
- **Sustainable use of marine genetic resources and equitable sharing of benefits arising from them:** Genetic information from marine organisms is already being extracted, and their benefits are being investigated.
- The treaty seeks to ensure that any benefits arising out of such efforts, including monetary gains and knowledge are free from strong intellectual property rights controls, and are equitably shared amongst all.
- **Environmental impact assessments for all major activities in the oceans:** The high seas are international waters that are open for use by all countries.
- Under the new treaty, commercial or other activities that can have significant impact on the marine ecosystem would require an environmental impact assessment to be done.
- **Inclusivity to small island states and landlocked nations:** Through capacity building and technology transfer small island states and landlocked nations, who do not have the resources or the expertise will get the opportunity to meaningfully participate in the conservation efforts.

Source: UN

3. Y chromosome



Topic: Science and Technology

In News: Researchers have discovered that the Y chromosome possesses genes linked to ageing and lifespan regulation.

More on the Topic:

- In humans, in addition to the 22 pairs of chromosomes in each, we have a pair of sex chromosomes called X and Y. Sex as a specification is determined by these sex chromosomes.
- They carry sex-determining genes. All biological males have X and Y chromosomes and all biological females have two X chromosomes.
- The 'sex-determining region Y' on the Y chromosome determines the biological male sex.

How is the Y chromosome characterised?

- In the animal kingdom (including mammals), scientists have noticed substantial differences in lifespan between the sexes: the females tend to live longer than the males.
- **This phenomenon has been attributed largely to the absence of a second Y chromosome in males, exposing the deleterious mutations in the X chromosome.**
- It is also well known that men lose the Y chromosome (LoY) with age and that this is associated with a higher frequency of cancers, Alzheimer's disease, and a shorter lifespan.

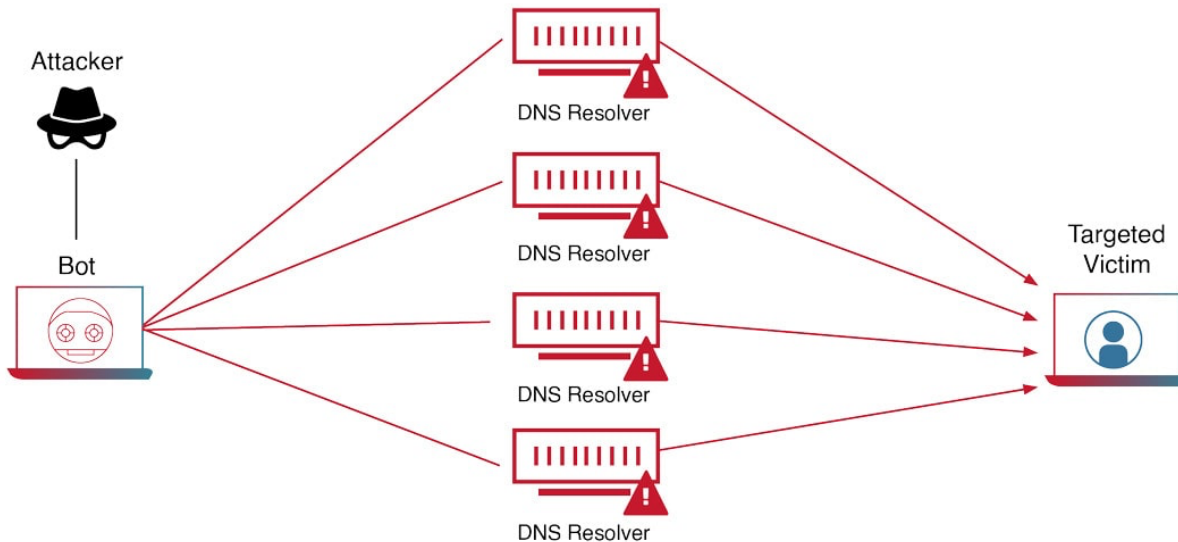
About Chromosome:

- Chromosomes are **threadlike structures made of protein and a single molecule of DNA** that serve to carry the genomic information from cell to cell.
- In plants and animals (including humans), chromosomes reside in the nucleus of cells.
- **Humans have 22 pairs of numbered chromosomes** (autosomes) and one pair of sex chromosomes (XX or XY), for a total of 46.
- Each pair contains two chromosomes, one coming from each parent, which means that children inherit half of their chromosomes from their mother and half from their father.
- Chromosomes can be seen through a microscope when the nucleus dissolves during cell division.

Source: Hindu

4. Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) Attack

Topic: Science and Technology



In News: A series of services disruptions experienced by users of Microsoft Azure, OneDrive and Outlook were the result of a major distributed denial of service (DDoS) attack.

More on the Topic:

- A distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attack is a malicious attempt to **disrupt the normal traffic of a targeted server, service or network by overwhelming the target or its surrounding infrastructure with a flood of Internet traffic.**
- DDoS attacks achieve effectiveness by utilizing multiple compromised computer systems as sources of attack traffic.
- Exploited machines can include computers and other networked resources such as IoT devices.

- Unlike other kinds of cyberattacks, **DDoS assaults don't attempt to breach your security perimeter. Rather, a DDoS attack aims to make your website and servers unavailable to legitimate users.**
- DDoS can also be used as a smokescreen for other malicious activities and to take down security appliances, breaching the target's security perimeter.

Source: PIB

5. Hindu Kush Himalayas



Topic: Geography

In News: The Hindu Kush Himalayas (HKH) have seen a 65 per cent faster loss of glacier mass, (new report from International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)).

More on the Topic:

- **Highlights from the Report:**
- The glaciers of the Hindu Kush Himalaya are a major component of the Earth system. With two billion people in Asia reliant on the water that glaciers and snow here hold, the consequences of losing this cryosphere are too vast to contemplate.
- **Ice and snow in the HKH are an important source of water for 12 rivers that flow through 16 countries in Asia.**



- About 240 million people are in the mountains and 1.65 billion downstream are dependent on them.
- **The average temperature in the region has increased by 0.28°C per decade between 1951 and 2020.**
- Nine out of 12 river basins have witnessed increased warming rates at higher elevations. The strongest impacts are being felt in the Brahmaputra, Ganges, Yangtze, and Indus Basins.
- The region is expected to see **an increase in floods and landslides**. These hazards increase the risk of loss and damage, including population displacement.

About Hubble Telescope:

- The Hindu-Kush-Himalayan (HKH) region encompasses **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.**
- It is considered the **Third Pole (after the North and South Poles)** and has significant implications for climate.
- It contains the largest volume of ice and snow outside of the Arctic and Antarctica.

Source: Hindu

6. Asia Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC)



Topic: Environment and Ecology

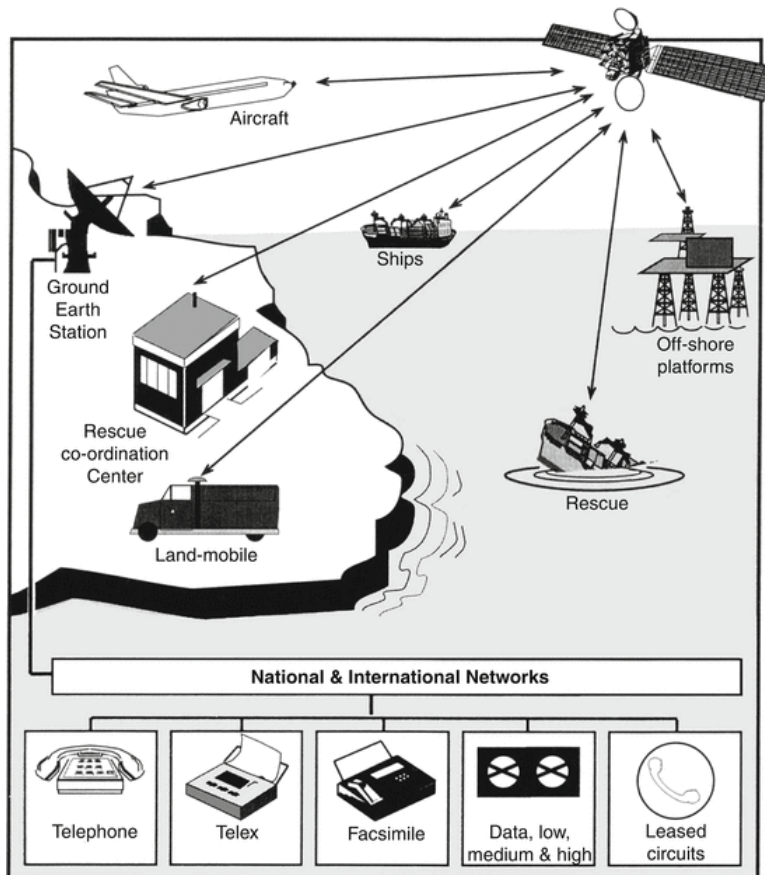
In News: APPPC unanimously elected India as chair of Standing Committee on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for biennium 2023-24.

More on the Topic:

- It is an intergovernmental organisation that promotes cooperation among countries in the Asia-Pacific region **to enhance plant health and plant protection.**
- It was established in 1956 as a regional body **approved by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.**
- The commission consists of 25 member countries, including India.

Source: Hindu

7. Mobile satellite service (MSS) terminals



Topic: Science and Technology

In News: To establish better communication with vessels in sea and monitor Indian waters more efficiently, NewSpace India Ltd, the commercial arm of the Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro), is setting up mobile satellite service (MSS) terminals on at least one lakh motorised and fishing boats across 13 coastal states.

More on the Topic:



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- The overall scope of work of the project includes establishment of a **dedicated MSS satcom network for supporting emergency communication and tracking of maritime assets Xponders.**
- This includes establishment of dedicated 9m/11m **C-band ground station and hub baseband system, arranging for satellite bandwidth and guiding required service approvals and building satellite terminals** for field deployment across nine coastal states and four union territories.
- The system will be powered by India's own navigation satellite system, **NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation).**

Source: Hindu
