

UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS NOTES

24-08-2023

Chandrayaan-3 Moon Landing Successful



India's Moon mission Chandrayaan-3 scripted history by successfully landing on the lunar surface. With the Lander accomplishing a 'soft landing' on the Moon's south pole, India becomes the only country to have ever done so.

- Soft landing simply means landing at a gentle, controlled speed to not sustain damage to a spacecraft. Doing so showcases a spacecraft's technical capabilities.
- During a soft landing, the spacecraft undergoes a series of manoeuvres and braking techniques to reduce its velocity and align itself with the landing site.
- This typically involves firing retro-rockets or thrusters to slow down the descent and make a controlled approach.
- The goal is to land the spacecraft gently without causing any significant damage.

Chandrayaan-3 landing on the south pole

All of the previous spacecraft (landed on the Moon) have landed in the region near the Moon's equator. This is because it is easier and safer here.

The terrain and temperature are more conducive for a long and sustained operation of instruments.

Sunlight is also present, offering a regular supply of energy to solar-powered instruments.

The polar regions of the Moon, however, are different. Many parts lie in a completely dark region without sunlight, and temperatures can go below 230 degrees Celsius.

This creates difficulty in the operation of instruments. In addition, there are large craters all over the place.



Water:

There is strong evidence that water ice is present in the permanently shadowed craters at the moon's south pole.

This water ice could be a valuable resource for future human exploration of the moon, as it could be used for drinking, growing food, and producing rocket fuel.

Volatiles:

In addition to water ice, the moon's south pole may also contain other volatiles, such as methane and ammonia.

These volatiles could also be used as resources for future human exploration.

Geological insights:

The moon's south pole is also a geologically interesting place. The region is home to the South Pole-Aitken basin, the largest impact basin on the moon.

Studying the South Pole-Aitken basin could provide insights into the Moon's formation and evolution.

Astronomical observations:

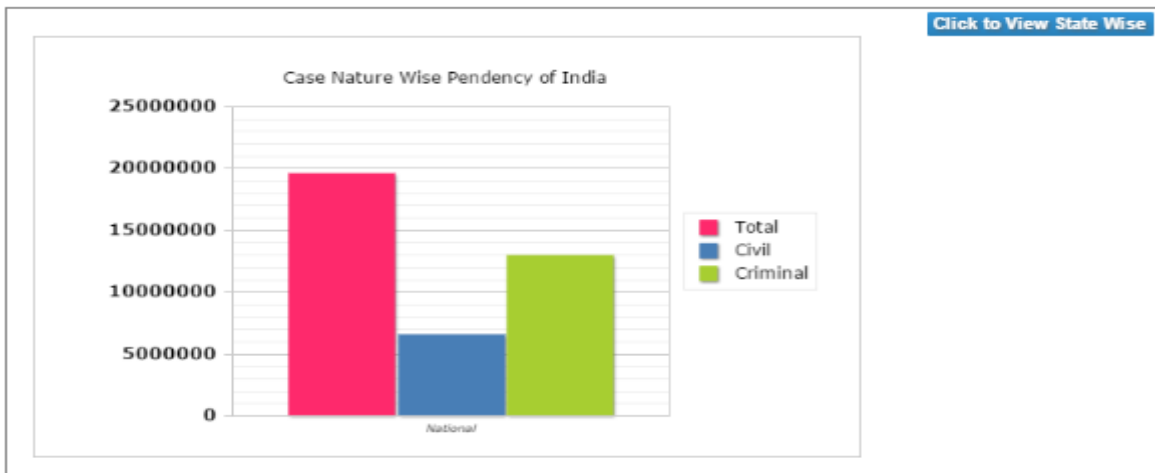
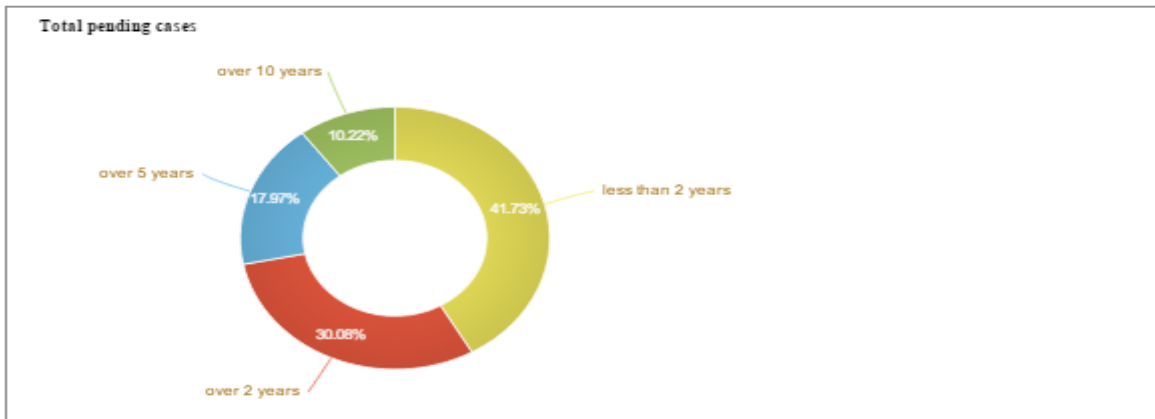
The moon's south pole is also a good location for astronomical observations.

The permanently shadowed craters at the south pole are shielded from the Sun's radiation, which makes them ideal for observing radio waves and other forms of radiation that are blocked by the Earth's atmosphere.

National Judicial Data Grid: a database of orders, judgments and case details created as an online platform under the e-Courts Project.

National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) is a database of orders, judgments and case details of 18,735 District & Subordinate Courts and High Courts created as an online platform under the e-Courts Project. Data is updated on a near real-time basis by the connected District and Taluka courts.

It provides data relating to judicial proceedings/decisions of all computerized district and subordinate courts of the country. All High Courts have also joined the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) through web services, providing easy access facility to the litigant public.



Through the eCourts services platform using elastic search technology, currently litigants can access case status information in respect of over 23.58 crore cases and more than 22.56 crore orders / judgments pertaining to these computerized courts as on date. Case data is available on NJDG for both civil and criminal cases with the ability to perform drill-down analysis based on the age of the case as well as the State and District.



NJDG works as a monitoring tool to identify, manage, and reduce pendency of cases. It helps to provide timely inputs for making policy decisions to reduce delays in disposing of cases and helps in reducing case pendency. It also facilitates better monitoring of court performance and systemic bottlenecks, and, thus, serves as an efficient resource management tool. To track cases related to land disputes, Land Records data of 26 States have been linked with NJDG.

World Bank praised the National Judicial Data Grid in the Ease of Doing Business report for 2018, that it made possible to generate case management reports, thereby making it easier to enforce contracts.

In consonance with the National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP) announced by the Government of India, Open Application Programming Interface (API) has been provided to the Central & State Government to allow easy access to the NJDG data using a departmental ID and access key.

This will allow the institutional litigants to access the NJDG data for their evaluation and monitoring purposes. It is proposed to expand the facility to non-institutional litigants as well in future.

Inauguration of Chintan Shivir on “CRTDHs Empowering MSMEs” at CRTDH-Indian Institute of Toxicology, Lucknow tomorrow

In view to create an enabling environment for nurturing Industrial Research and developing innovative products and processes among Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) has been implementing a scheme that supports creation of Common Research and Technology Development Hubs (CRTDHs). The CRTDHs are dedicated for use by MSMEs.

DSIR has established 18 CRTDHs across the country in five sectors, namely, Electronics/Renewable Energy, Affordable Health, Environmental interventions, low cost machining and New materials / Chemical Processes. The CRTDHs set up across the country aim to enhance productivity, increase the innovative skills of MSMEs and help them to become globally competitive and generate employment.

The CRTDHs promote and lead towards indigenous development of products and services that strengthen the momentum for “Vocal for Local” and “Atma Nirbhar Bharat” through the DSIR-CRTDHs.

DSIR has planned to organize “Chintan Shivir-CRTDHs Empowering MSMEs” at all the 18 CRTDHs in order to strengthen the interaction between the CRTDHs and MSMEs/Start-ups/innovators.

The first "Chintan Shivir" in this series was successfully organized on 27th July, 2023 at DSIR-CRTDH set up at Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur (IIT Kharagpur). Second one day ‘Chintan Shivir- CRTDH Empowering MSMEs’ will be organized by the CRTDH at Indian Institute of Toxicology Research, Lucknow along with DSIR on 24th August 2023.

Empowering 'Atmanirbhar Bharat': Introducing 'Khadi Rakshasoot' (Khadi-Rakhi) as a Step Forward"

The Chairman of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), Shri Manoj Kumar has launched 'Khadi Rakshasoot' to commemorate the Raksha Bandhan in New Delhi today. This '**Khadi Rakshasoot**' (**Khadi-Rakhi**) was introduced under the aegis of Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, in his address during the 'National Handloom Day' event on August 7th, 2023 in Pragati Maidan New Delhi urged the citizens to wholeheartedly support rural artisans by choosing Khadi and Village Industries products for their upcoming festive celebrations, thereby ensuring optimal employment opportunities in the farthest rural parts of India.

On the occasion, Shri Manoj Kumar said that the uniqueness of 'Khadi Rakshasoot' lies in its creation by the dedicated spinner sisters from across the rural India, who spin multiple threads on the charkha.

This product is entirely natural, devoid of any chemical additives. To exemplify, the Rakhi crafted by the Gramodyogik Vikas Sansthan of Ambedkar Nagar in Uttar Pradesh is fashioned from the sacred cow dung of indigenous Holy Gau Mata.

Additionally, incorporating Basil, tomato, brinjal seeds in it further enhances its composition. The conception behind its making is rooted in the notion that, when disposed off into the earth, it will sprout up to basil, tomato, and brinjal plants. Prepared in different states of the country, a plethora of such Khadi Rakshasoots are now available for purchase at the Khadi Bhawan in New Delhi, with prices ranging from Rs.20 to Rs.250 each.



Shri Manoj Kumar highlighted the profound significance of Khadi, which is an emblem of our national heritage, and its pivotal role during India's struggle for independence. He further emphasized that, with this new found vigor of Khadi, the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has coined 'New India's new Khadi' as not only a symbol of clothing, but also as a 'weapon.' This weapon is wielded against poverty, geared towards empowering artisans, ensuring food security, bolstering women's empowerment, and eradicating unemployment.

As we approach the auspicious occasion of Raksha Bandhan, it's not only an opportunity to tie a Khadi Rakshasoot on your wrist as you celebrate the festival, but also a chance to bring a new smile on the faces of the women artisans of rural India.

First ABDM Microsite under the 100 Microsites Project by National Health Authority launched in Aizawl, Mizoram

Mizoram appoints Youth for Action as the Interfacing Agency for implementing the ABDM Microsite in Aizawl.



The National Health Authority (NHA) had announced 100 Microsites project for accelerated adoption of Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) across the country. Mizoram becomes the first state in India to operationalize an ABDM Microsite in its capital city Aizawl.

Under this, all healthcare facilities including the private clinics, small hospitals and labs in the region shall be made ABDM-enabled and will offer digital health services to the patients.

Speaking on the significance of the project, CEO, NHA said – “The 100 Microsite project under ABDM is a very important initiative for reaching out to the bulk of small and medium scale healthcare providers from the private sector.

The concept of Microsites was envisaged to provide a strong impetus to healthcare digitization efforts across the country. The efforts by Mizoram team have resulted in Aizawl becoming the first ABDM Microsite in India. NHA looks forward to similar enthusiastic response from other state teams.”

In Aizawl, at the Microsite launch event on 23rd August 2023, Ms. Betsy Zothanpari Sailo, Additional Secretary, H&FW Mizoram said “We firmly believe that digitization of health services can help us achieve our goal of universal health coverage.

With digital services at our health facilities and secure access to digital health records, the patients shall benefit the most. Our teams made conscious efforts in closely studying the process of ABDM enablement and have selected an implementation partner to operationalize our first Microsite in Aizawl. We are all geared up to take the implementation in mission mode and ensure that the Aizawl Microsite lives up to its role as the first ABDM Microsite in the country.”



NHA had previously overseen Microsites pilots in Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Surat. The learnings and experiences from these pilots have been incorporated in the overall structure of 100 Microsites project under ABDM.

Besides Mizoram, other states including Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh have also made significant progress regarding implementation of ABDM Microsites. More such microsites are expected to be operational in the next few weeks.

521.27 LMT rice estimated for procurement during the forthcoming KMS 2023-24 (Kharif Crop)

Seven States leading in terms of estimated procurement of rice including Punjab, Chhattisgarh and Telangana.

The Secretary, Department of Food & Public Distribution (DFPD), Government of India, chaired a meeting of State Food Secretaries and Food Corporation of India (FCI) on 21.08.2023, to discuss the procurement arrangements for Kharif Crop ensuing Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) 2023-24.

A quantity of 521.27 LMT rice has been estimated for procurement during the forthcoming KMS 2023-24 (Kharif Crop) as against the previous year estimates of 518 LMT wherein 496 LMT was actually procured during last KMS 2022-23 (Kharif crop). During KMS 2023-24 (Kharif Crop), the leading States in terms of estimated procurement of rice are Punjab (122 LMT), Chhattisgarh (61 LMT) and Telangana (50 LMT) followed by Odisha (44.28 LMT), Uttar Pradesh (44 LMT), Haryana (40 LMT), Madhya Pradesh (34 LMT), Bihar (30 LMT), Andhra Pradesh (25 LMT), West Bengal (24 LMT) and Tamil Nadu (15 LMT).

A quantity of 33.09 LMT of coarse grains /millets (Shri Anna) has been estimated for procurement by the States during the KMS 2023-24 as against actual procurement of 7.37 LMT during KMS 2022-23 (Kharif & Rabi). 6 minor millets have also been introduced to be purchased by the States at MSP of Ragi starting this KMS 2023-24, upto three years. For increasing the procurement & Consumption of millets, Govt of India has revised the distribution period of millets, incorporated inter-state transportation of millets, added provision of advanced subsidy, administrative charges @2% and also revised guidelines for facilitating procurement of six minor millets. States/UTs were advised to focus on procurement of millets,

not only on account of International Year of Millet-2023 but also for diversification of crops and enhanced nutrition in dietary patterns.

During the meeting, issues relating to gunny bags requirement, route optimization for transportation of foodgrains from designated depots to Fair Price Shops, improving infrastructure in procurement centres, monitoring of wheat stock limit portal etc. were also discussed.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary/Secretary (Food) or Representatives of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal. The meeting was also attended by Chairman & Managing Director, FCI & Other officers of FCI, Department of Food & Public Distribution, Indian Metrological Department and Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.

MAITRI SETU

The Maitri Setu connecting Sabroom is set to become operational from September 2023.

Maitri Setu (lit. friendship bridge) is a 150-metre (490 ft) bridge on the Feni River that links Tripura in India with Chittagong port in Bangladesh. Thus, it provides a shorter and more economical alternate land route between India's eastern and western states compared to the longer route through Assam.



Significance

The opening of the Maitri Setu connecting Sabroom in Tripura and Chittagong port will give India's northeastern region and landlocked countries like Bhutan and Nepal access to the Bay of Bengal.

This will significantly boost connectivity, development and security in the region.

- The bridge plays a very important economic role as a major trade route to Northeast India, with access to Chittagong Port, which is just 80 kilometers from the border.



- The land route between Agartala and Kolkata Port through this bridge is just 450 km via Bangladesh compared to the 1600 km land route via Siliguri Corridor.
- Logistics cost from Agartala to Kolkata Port will be 80% lower, as compared to the Siliguri Corridor, if the goods are sent through this bridge via Chattogram Port 200 km away
- Chittagong port is just around 80 km away from Tripura's last border town Sabroom and can be covered by road in two-and-a-half hours. The opening of Maitri Setu will further boost connectivity with India's strategic northeastern region.
- With the opening of this bridge, apart from India's northeastern region, other landlocked countries in the region like Bhutan and Nepal will now get access to the Bay of Bengal.
- Connectivity is vital for the development of every country in the Indo-Pacific region.

Other Strategic steps being taken

- The Maitri Setu is but another project to boost connectivity in the Northeast and neighboring countries, including Myanmar and Bangladesh in the face of Chinese influence in the region.
- China has already gained a backdoor entry to the Indian Ocean by investing in the Kyaukpyu port in Myanmar's Rakhine state. Other Chinese infrastructure projects in the region under the BRI include the construction of the Hambantota port in Sri Lanka and the building of an airport in the tourist city of Pokhara in Nepal.
- To counter these, the Sittwe port, also in the Rakhine state of Myanmar, was constructed by India. The port connects with Mizoram in northeastern India via the Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Corridor, the construction of which is close to completion.
- The Kaladan Multimodal Transport Corridor is not confined to connecting Mizoram to Myanmar but it also encompasses India's expanded outreach to the prosperous Southeast Asian economies.
- Additionally, India, being a member of the BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation), the new connectivity routes would help India deepen its presence and ties with the prosperous Southeast Asian countries.
- Access to the Bay of Bengal will also substantially bring down freight transportation costs to the Northeast. As of now, the only option for freight transportation between the Northeast and the rest of India is through the Siliguri Corridor, popularly known as the Chicken's Neck.
- With the chain of ports along India's eastern coast, Indian naval ships can now freely ply in the Bay of Bengal, which is at the centre of the Indo-Pacific region. This will help deter the presence of Chinese naval ships in these waters.

- In terms of land connectivity, India is also constructing the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway. The Highway connects Moreh in Manipur with Mae Sot in Thailand via Mandalay, Naypyitaw and Bago in Myanmar.
- In terms of sub-regional connectivity, India is a party to the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicle Agreement. The Agreement was conceived after the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) failed to agree on a regional motor vehicles agreement at a summit in Nepal in 2014, mainly because of opposition from Pakistan.

ADVISORY BOARD ON BANKING AND FINANCIAL FRAUDS

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has reconstituted the Advisory Board on Banking and Financial Frauds (ABBFF) to examine bank frauds before involving investigative agencies like the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The reconstituted ABBFF is chaired by Suresh N Patel, former Central Vigilance Commissioner, along with four other members:

Purpose and Scope: The primary purpose of the ABBFF is to provide advisory and consultative services in cases of significant fraud within the banking, insurance, and financial sectors. It aims to examine the roles and actions of officials, directors, and individuals associated with public sector banks, insurance companies, and financial institutions.



Examination of Fraud Cases: The ABBFF conducts examinations of cases involving financial frauds that amount to ₹3 crore and above. It evaluates the involvement of officials and whole-time directors, including former officials and directors, to determine their roles in the fraudulent activities.

Pre-Investigation Stage: Before cases are escalated to investigative agencies like the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the ABBFF acts as a preliminary body to assess the situation and provide advice. This ensures that potential fraud cases are thoroughly examined before formal investigations are initiated.



Referral and Advice: The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) have the authority to refer cases or technical matters related to financial fraud to the ABBFF for advice. The board's expert input helps these agencies make informed decisions regarding the initiation of criminal investigations.

Policy Formulation: The ABBFF contributes to the development of fraud-related policies within the financial sector. It provides recommendations and insights to key organizations such as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Central Vigilance Commission. This ensures that policies are well-informed and effective in preventing and managing fraud.

Timely Advisory: The ABBFF operates with efficiency, aiming to provide its advice within a month of receiving initial references from relevant sources, including ministries, departments, the CVC, or the CBI.

Composition: The ABBFF is composed of a chairman and four other members. The tenure for both the Chairman and the Members is set at two years.

Conclusion

The Advisory Board on Banking and Financial Frauds (ABBFF) plays a crucial role in the Indian financial sector by examining significant fraud cases, providing advisory services, and contributing to policy formulation for fraud prevention and management.

It operates at the pre-investigation stage, working in collaboration with investigative agencies to ensure a comprehensive examination of fraud cases before formal actions are taken.

MYLARA CULT

The recent discovery of ancient sculptures in Basrur unveils the presence of the Mylara cult in the coastal region of Karnataka. These sculptures not only provide insights into the historical timeline of the cult but also highlight the cultural and religious significance it held for the people of that era. As tangible artifacts of the past, these sculptures contribute to the understanding of the rich heritage and diverse traditions that shaped the region's history.



The recent discovery of two ancient sculptures in Basrur, near Kundapura, Udupi district, has provided significant evidence for the existence of the ancient Mylara cult in the coastal region.

These sculptures, believed to date back to the 15th and 17th centuries A.D., shed light on the historical significance of the Mylara cult and its presence in the area.

Mutilated Royal Hero Sculpture

Found in a well at Basrur, this sculpture depicts a royal hero seated on a horse, holding a sword and a bowl in his right and left hands respectively.

The uniqueness of this sculpture lies in the sitting posture of the horse and the absence of Mylaladevi on the horse's back.

It is believed to belong to the 15th century A.D. and was brought to the attention of historian T. Murugeshi by Pradeep Basrur.

Mylara and Mylaladevi Sculpture

- Another sculpture, in the form of a tiny stone tablet, was discovered in a water body or tank.
- This sculpture portrays Mylara and Mylaladevi sitting on an ornate horse, each holding swords in their right hands.
- The sculpture, showcasing side profiles of the figures, is associated with the 17th century A.D. and was found during dredging activities in a tank owned by Devananda Shetty of Halnad.

Historical and Cultural Significance

Proof of Mylara Cult Existence

The discovery of these sculptures adds weight to the historical existence of the Mylara cult in the coastal region.

The representation of Mylara and Mylaladevi in these sculptures indicates the popularity and reverence for this cult during the respective time periods.

The Mylara Cult

The Mylara cult, also known as the Milara cult, is a significant religious and cultural movement in Karnataka, India, rooted in the worship of the deity Mylaralinga or Milaralinga.

This syncretic cult combines elements of Hinduism and local folk traditions, holding deep spiritual and cultural importance for its followers.

Historical Evolution

The origins of the Mylara cult can be traced back to the 12th century CE, associated with the revered Lingayat saint and philosopher Siddharama, also known as Siddharameshwara or Siddhalinga.

His teachings emphasized devotion to Lord Shiva and social equality, which laid the foundation for the Mylara cult's principles.

National Curriculum Frameworks (NCFs)

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) aims to devise 4 NCFs, for which a comprehensive strategy has been worked out jointly by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and NCERT.

The National Steering Committee under the chairmanship of (former ISRO chief) K. Kasturirangan was set up by the MoE to undertake and develop NCFs.



These 4 NCFs are -

- National Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCFECCE)
 - National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE)
 - National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE)
 - National Curriculum Framework for Adult Education (NCFAE)
- NCFs aims to bring about a paradigm shift in education with focus on holistic development of children, emphasis on skilling, vital role of teachers, learning in mother tongue, cultural rootedness.
 - The NCF has been revised four times in the past (in 1975, 1988, 2000, and 2005). If implemented, the suggested modification would be the 5th one.
 - It's important to note that the NEP 2020 and the NCFs, based on the education policy, are not binding on the states.

Pre-draft of the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE):

- It covers the framework of curriculum for age groups 3 to 18 years.
- **A key part of the document is inclusion of values and its “rootedness” in India.**

This is in content and learning of languages, in the pedagogical approaches including tools and resources and in philosophical basis.

It advocated the teaching of three languages (referred to as R1, R2 and R3) in classes 6, 7 and 8, and two languages in classes 9 and 10 (R1 and R2).

No guidelines were provided for language learning in classes 11 and 12.

R1 denoted the mother tongue or home language, R2 could be any other language (including English), and R3 was any language that wasn't R1 or R2.

The document leans towards making students acquainted with true sources of knowledge, which have been a philosophical preoccupation of ancient Indians.

These sources focus on six pramanas:

- pratyaksa (perception through five senses),
- anumana (using inferences to come to new conclusions),
- upamana (knowing through analogy and comparison),
- arthapatti (knowing through circumstantial implication),
- anupalabdhi (perception of non-existence), and
- sabda (something an individual can only directly know a fraction of all reality).

Moral development: Through **panchakosha** vikas or five-fold development. This concept is an ancient explanation of the importance of the body-mind link in human experience and understanding.



For Grade 10 certification: Students will have to take two essential courses from humanities, maths and computing, vocational education, physical education, arts education, social science, science and interdisciplinary areas.

Grade 11 and 12:

- Students will be offered choice-based courses in the same disciplines for more rigorous engagement.
- **Modular Board Exams** will be offered as opposed to a single exam at the end of the year and final result will be based on cumulative result of each exam.
- **Immediate transition from annual to semester system in Class 12.**

The Final Version of the NCFSE:

- Holding the Class 12 board exam twice a year: To ensure students have enough time and opportunity to perform well.
- Students can appear for a board exam in subjects they have completed and feel ready for.
- They will also be allowed to retain the best score.

Mandatory and optional subjects:

- So far, the students from Classes 9 to 12 studied five mandatory subjects, with an option of adding one more subject.
- Now, the number of mandatory subjects for Classes 9 and 10 is seven, and it's six for Classes 11 and 12.
- Optional subjects have been grouped in three parts in the NCF.
- The first optional group includes art education (both visual and performing arts), physical education and vocational education.
- The 2nd group includes Social Science, the Humanities, and interdisciplinary areas.
- The 3rd group includes Science, Mathematics, and computational thinking.

Emphasis on Indian languages:

It mandates the compulsory instruction of 3 languages (referred to as R1, R2 and R3) up to Class 10. At least 2 of these 3 languages must be native to India.

- In classes 11 and 12, students will have to study two languages and one of them has to be an Indian language.
- The final NCF makes the study of Indian languages imperative across schools and boards, contrary to the optional nature of these subjects at present.

Offers flexibility:

- It offers students the freedom to pursue a mix of science and humanities to reduce the rigid boundaries separating arts, commerce and science in Classes 11 and 12 across school boards.
- It also offers freedom to all boards to change to semester or term-based systems in Class 12 in the long term.



For Classes 6 to 8:

The NCF states that:

- 20% content would be from the local level for the Social Science curriculum,
- 30% content would be from the regional level,
- 30% would be from the national level, and
- 20% content would be global.