

1. Significance of Human Rights

Topic: Governance



In News: Addressing the 30th Foundation Day celebration of the National Human Rights Commission, the Vice President appreciated NHRC for being guardian of the human rights of underprivileged and vulnerable sections of society.

More on the Topic:

- Human rights are rights we have simply because we exist as human beings - they are not granted by any state. These universal rights are inherent to us all, regardless of nationality, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status.
- They range from the most fundamental - the right to life - to those that make life worth living, such as the rights to food, education, work, health, and liberty.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, was the first legal document to set out the fundamental human rights to be universally protected.
- The UDHR, which turned 70 in 2018, continues to be the foundation of all international human rights law.
- Its 30 articles provide the principles and building blocks of current and future human rights conventions, treaties and other legal instruments.

National Human Rights Commission of India (NHRC):

- The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India is a statutory public body constituted on 12 October 1993 under the Protection of Human Rights Ordinance of 28 September 1993.
- It was given a statutory basis by the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 (PHRA).
- The chairperson is retired chief justice of India or a judge of the Supreme Court.
- They are appointed by the President on the recommendations of a six-member committee consisting of:

- Prime Minister (head), Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, Leaders of the Opposition in both the Houses of Parliament and Union Home Minister.

Source: Indian Express

2. Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act

Topic: Polity and Governance



In News: The Union Cabinet has approved amendments to the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act to bring transparency in the sector and reform the electoral process.

More on the Topic:

- To make the governance of multi-state cooperative societies more democratic, transparent and accountable, **the bill has provisions for setting up of Cooperative Election Authority, Cooperative Information Officer and Cooperative Ombudsman.**
- The Bill will **incorporate the provisions of the 97th Constitutional Amendment.**
- The Bill also seeks to **improve the composition of board and ensure financial discipline,** besides enabling the raising of funds in the multi-state cooperative societies.

97th Amendment Act:

- The Constitution (97th Amendment Act), 2011 makes provisions for Co-operative societies in India.
- The Amendment provided **legal status and protection to Co-operative societies,** and it makes an effort to address all of their issues and develop effective management techniques.

About MSCS Act:

- The Act was passed **to govern Multi State Cooperative Societies.**
- Administrative and financial control of these societies is with the central registrar. No state government official can wield any control on them.

- Maharashtra has the highest number (567) followed by Uttar Pradesh (147) and New Delhi (133).
- Credit societies constitute the bulk of registered societies followed by agro-based ones. (96 multistate cooperative dairies and 66 multistate cooperative banks)

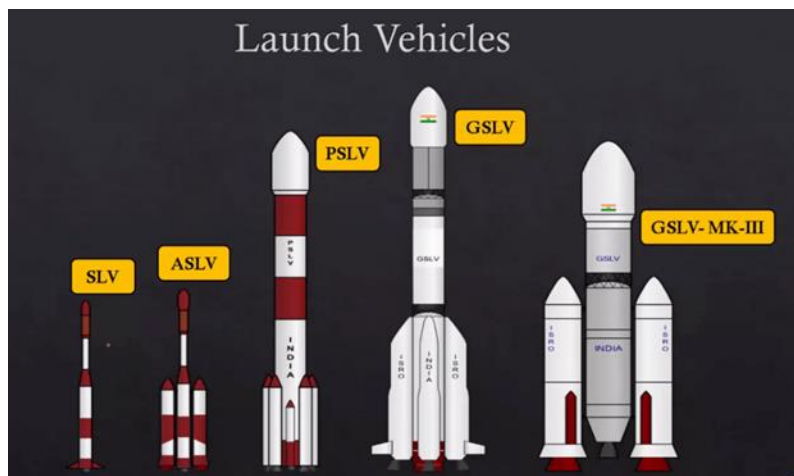
About MSCS:

- Cooperatives are a state subject. But many societies have their members and areas of operation spread across more than one state.
- For example, sugar mills along the districts on the Karnataka-Maharashtra border. They are thus registered under the MSCS Act.
- **Their board of directors has representation from all states they operate in.**

Source: Indian Express

3. Next-Gen Launch Vehicle

Topic: Science and Technology



In News: The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is developing a Next-Gen Launch Vehicle (NGLV), which will one day replace operational systems like the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV).

More on the Topic:

- NGLV will be a **cost-efficient, three-stage to orbit, reusable heavy-lift vehicle with a payload capability of ten tonnes to Geostationary Transfer Orbit (GTO).**
- NGLV will feature **semi-cryogenic propulsion** (refined kerosene as fuel with liquid oxygen (LOX) as oxidiser) for the booster stages which is cheaper and efficient.

PSLV:

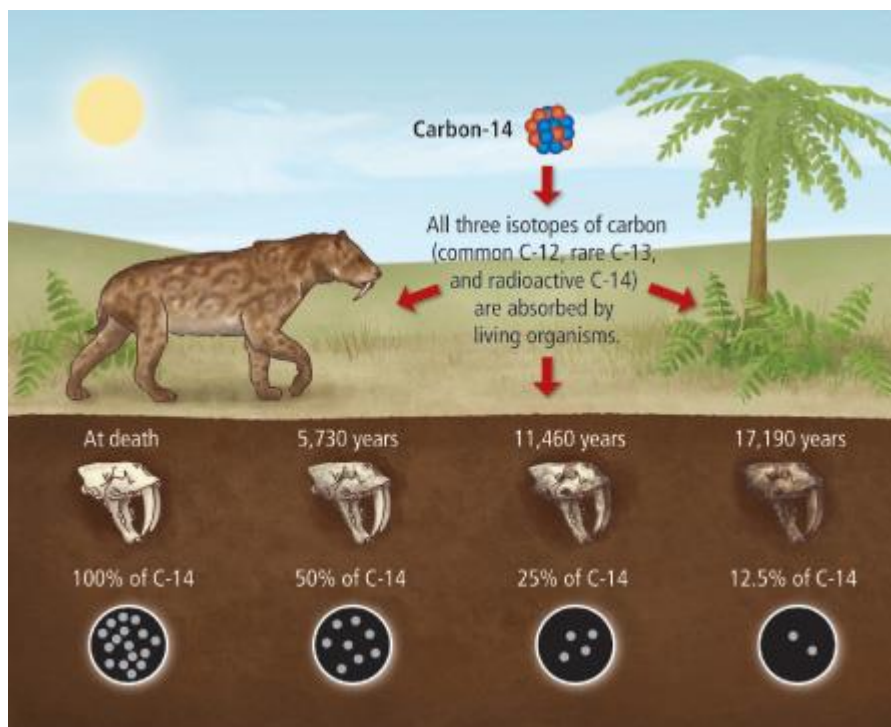
- The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) is **an expendable medium-lift launch vehicle designed and operated by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).**

- It was developed **to allow India to launch its Indian Remote Sensing (IRS) satellites into sun-synchronous orbits**, a service that was, until the advent of the PSLV in 1993, was commercially available only from Russia.
- PSLV can also launch **small size satellites into Geostationary Transfer Orbit (GTO)**.
- Some notable payloads launched by PSLV include India's first lunar probe Chandrayaan-1, India's first interplanetary mission, Mars Orbiter Mission (Mangalyaan) and India's first space observatory, Astrosat.
- The PSLV has four stages using solid and liquid propulsion systems alternately.

Source: Hindu

4. Radio Carbon Dating

Topic: Science and Technology



In News: The technique of carbon dating has re-emerged at the centrestage in an ongoing controversy pertaining to the discovery of an alleged 'Shivling' within the premises of the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi.

More on the Topic:

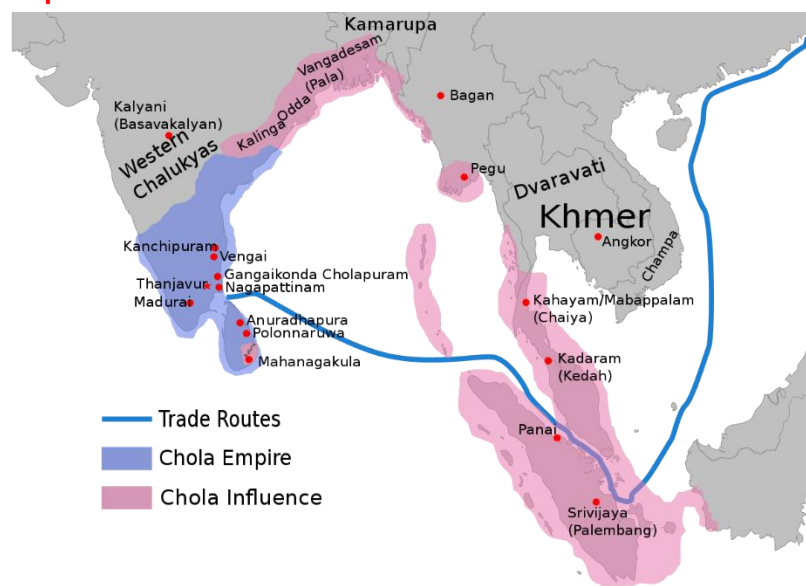
- Carbon dating, or radiocarbon dating is **simply a technique deployed by archaeologists to ascertain the age of organic objects up to 50,000 years old**.
- This method has helped historians to acquire knowledge about past civilizations, changes in the earth, and in the climate.

- The basis of radiocarbon dating is simple: **all living things absorb carbon from the atmosphere and food sources around them**, including a certain amount of natural, radioactive isotope of carbon referred to as carbon-14.
- Natural processes such as photosynthesis and respiration aid this absorption process.
- When the plant or animal dies, they stop absorbing, but the radioactive carbon that has been accumulated continues to decay at a steady pace.
- Measuring the amount left over gives an estimate as to how long something has been dead, a study published in the journal Nature has revealed.

Source: PIB

5. Chola Dynasty

Topic: Art and Culture



In News: Chola dynasty is in news related to a recent movie by Maniratnam.

More on the Topic:

- The Chola Dynasty was a Tamil thalassocratic empire of southern India and one of the longest-ruling dynasties in world history.
- The earliest datable references to the Chola are from inscriptions dated to the 3rd century BCE during the reign of Ashoka of the Maurya Empire.
- As one of the Three Crowned Kings of Tamilakam, along with the Chera and Pandya, the dynasty continued to govern over varying territories until the 13th century CE.
- Despite these ancient origins, the rise of the Chola, as the "Chola Empire," only begins with the medieval Cholas in the mid-9th century CE.
- The heartland of the Cholas was the fertile valley of the Kaveri River.

Famous rulers:

- **Rajaraja I (985 – 1014 A.D.)**- engaged in naval expeditions and emerged victorious on the West Coast, Sri Lanka and conquered the Maldives in the Indian Ocean.
- He completed the construction of the famous Rajarajeswara temple or Brihadeeswara temple at Tanjore in 1010 A.D.
- **Rajendra I (1012-1044 A.D.)** – founded the city of Gangaikondacholapuram, annexed complete Ceylon, got the title Pandita Chola and constructed the famous Rajesvaram temple.
- **Rajendra III** – the last Chola king who was defeated by Jatavarman Sundarapandya II
- On the ruins of the Chola empire, Pandya and Hoysala kingdoms came into existence.

Administration:

- **Chola Empire was divided into mandalams** and each mandalam was into valanadus and nadus.
- In each **nadu** there were a number of autonomous villages.
- The royal princes or officers were in charge of mandalam.
- Various units of land measurement are **kuli, ma, veli, patti, padagam, etc.**
- The tax rates were fixed depending on the fertility of the soil.

Source: Business Standard

6. Collective Security Treaty Organization

Topic: International Relations



In News: Kyrgyzstan has canceled the military drill of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) recently.

More on the Topic:

- The Collective Security Treaty Organization is a Russia-led intergovernmental military alliance of six post-Soviet states: Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan.

- Similar to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty and the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, Article 4 of the Collective Security Treaty (CST) establishes that an aggression against one signatory would be perceived as an aggression against all.
- The CSTO charter reaffirmed the desire of all participating states to abstain from the use or threat of force. Signatories are prohibited from joining other military alliances.

Source: Business Standard

7. Galápagos Islands

Topic: Places in News



In News: According to a recent study, Cold ocean currents have sheltered the Galápagos Islands from global warming.

More on the Topic:

- Galapagos is described by the UNESCO World Heritage Convention as a “living museum and showcase of evolution.”
- Galápagos is home to the critically endangered — Galápagos penguin, Galápagos fur seal and Galápagos sea lion.
- Galapagos includes land iguana, giant tortoise and many types of finch, inspiring theory of evolution by natural selection (Charles Darwin).

Source: Business Standard
