



**PAREEKSHA BAAZ**  
Institute for CSE Examination

# PRELIM POINTERS

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## Global Engagement Scheme



### About Global Engagement Scheme:

- It was previously known as the Scheme **for promotion of International Cultural Relations**.
- It promotes **India's rich cultural heritage** and enhances India's image in the global arena in a concerted manner.
- It has following **three components**:
  - **Festival of India:** It is organized abroad to **promote people to people connect** and bilateral cultural contacts. The artists from diverse cultural fields such as Folk Art including Folk Music, Folk Dance, Folk Theatre & Puppetry, Classical and Traditional Dance, Experimental/Contemporary Dance, Classical/ Semi Classical Music, Theatre etc. perform in the 'Festivals of India' abroad.
  - **Grant in aid to Indo Foreign Friendship Cultural Societies Scheme:** The Grants under this scheme will be sanctioned with the object of **fostering closer friendship and cultural contacts between India and foreign country** concerned.
  - **Contribution Grant:** This component is meant for **Indian contribution towards membership of International Organizations** like ICROM, UNESCO, World Heritage Fund and to facilitate Indian participation and hosting of international meetings
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Culture

### Q1: What is Folk arts?

It reflects the cultural life of a community. The art form encompasses the expressive culture associated with the fields of folklore and cultural heritage. Tangible folk art can include objects which historically are crafted and used within a traditional community.

## UN Peacebuilding Commission



### Overview:

*Recently, India has been re-elected to the U.N. Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) for 2025–2026.*

### About UN Peacebuilding Commission:

- It was **established on 20 December 2005** by resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and the UN Security Council.
- It is an **intergovernmental advisory body** that supports peace efforts in conflict-affected countries and is a key addition to the capacity of the International Community in the broad peace agenda, according to its website.
- The PBC is **composed of 31 Member States**, elected from the **General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council**.
- The top financial contributing countries and the top troop-contributing countries to the United Nations system are also members.
- The Commission is mandated
  - To bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for **post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery**;
  - To focus attention on the **reconstruction and institution-building** efforts necessary for recovery from conflict and to support the development of integrated strategies in order to lay the foundation for sustainable development.
  - It is also mandated to **provide recommendations and information** to improve the coordination of all relevant actors within and outside the United Nations, to develop best practices, to help to ensure predictable financing for early recovery activities and to extend

the period of attention given by the international community to post-conflict recovery, the Commission said.

- The Commission also focuses on **promoting an integrated, strategic and coherent approach to peacebuilding.**
- India is among the largest contributors of uniformed personnel to U.N. Peacekeeping.
- It currently deployed about 6,000 military and police personnel to UN operations in Abyei, the Central African Republic, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lebanon, the Middle East, Somalia, South Sudan, and Western Sahara.

**Q1: What is the United Nations?**

The United Nations (UN) is an intergovernmental organization that was established with the purpose of promoting international cooperation and maintaining peace and security among its member states.



## Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) Programme



### Overview:

*The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) organised a two-day global India Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) programme in association with the World Bank on 28th and 29th Nov. 2024, in New Delhi.*

### About Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) Programme:

- It is a programme under the aegis of the **World Customs Organization (WCO) SAFE Framework of Standards** to secure and facilitate Global Trade.
- The programme aims to **enhance international supply chain security** and facilitate movement of legitimate goods.
- Under this programme, an entity engaged in international trade is approved by Customs as compliant with supply chain security standards and granted AEO status & certain benefits.
- An AEO is a **business entity** involved in the **international movement of goods** requiring compliance with provisions of the national customs law.
- It is **approved by or on behalf of the national administration** in compliance with the World Customs Organization (WCO).
- The WCO in June, 2005, with a view to secure the international supply chain, adopted the SAFE Framework of Standards (WCO SAFE FoS).
- AEO is one of the three pillars on which the SAFE FoS is formed.
- AEO helps to build a closer partnership between the customs department and the trade industry.
- WCO SAFE FoS is the basis of the **Indian AEO programme**.

### What is the India AEO programme?

- It was introduced in India by the **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)** in 2011.

- It is a **voluntary programme** administered by the CBIC.
- It seeks to provide benefits in the **form of simplified customs procedures** and faster customs clearances to those business entities that offer a high degree of security guarantees regarding their role in the supply chain.
- Thus, an entity with an AEO status can be considered a reliable trading partner and a secure trader.
- This segmentation approach enables customs resources to focus on less-non-compliant or risky businesses for control.

**Q1: What is the World Customs Organization (WCO)?**

WCO, established in 1952, is an independent intergovernmental body whose mission is to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of customs administrations. It is the only intergovernmental organization exclusively focused on customs matters.



## High Energy Stereoscopic System (HESS) Observatory



### Overview:

*Scientists at the HESS observatory in Namibia have found the most energetic cosmic rays ever detected, reaching up to 40 teraelectronvolts.*

### About High Energy Stereoscopic System (HESS) observatory:

- It is an **array of Cherenkov Telescopes** located in the **Khomas Highlands in Namibia**.
- H.E.S.S. started operations in 2003 and has been operated very successfully since then.
- It **observes gamma rays, the most energetic form of light, in the very high energy range (> 100 GeV)**, which are produced by some of the most violent processes in the universe.
- Being in the **southern hemisphere**, H.E.S.S. is **very well located for observations of gamma-ray sources within** our galaxy, the **Milky Way**.
- Since **gamma rays cannot penetrate the Earth's atmosphere**, H.E.S.S. detects them indirectly via their interactions with the air molecules.
- Besides sources from our Milky Way sources, it has a rich and wide physics program, **covering also outbursts in very distant galaxies** and **fundamental physics questions** related to dark matter and Lorentz invariance.
- The H.E.S.S. observatory is **operated by** a collaboration of more than **260 scientists** from about **40 scientific institutions and 13 different countries**.

### Q1: What are gamma rays?

Gamma rays have the smallest wavelengths and the most energy of any wave in the electromagnetic spectrum. They are produced by the hottest and most energetic objects in the universe, such as neutron stars and pulsars, supernova explosions, and regions around black holes. On Earth, gamma waves are generated by nuclear explosions, lightning, and the less dramatic activity of radioactive decay.





## Koraga Tribe



### Overview:

*The Revenue department in Kerala has initiated steps to provide land titles (patta) to the Koraga tribe (ST) group in Kasaragod and Manjeswaram taluks under a project called Operation Smile.*

### About Koraga Tribe:

- Koragas are one of the **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group** (PVTG) found in the southern part of India particularly **Kerala and Karnataka**.
- **Language:** At present most of the Koragas are speaking **Tulu languages** but they have their own independent language.
- Koragas are **divided into a number of exogamous clans** or sects. The clan is known as bali. There are 17 balis found among Koragas.
- **Economy:** The Koragas are **basically agriculturists** and eke out their livelihood depending on the forest produce such as bamboo, cane, **creepers for basketry**.
- They sing songs and perform folkdances, rituals and magics to appease their deity for bountiful crops and eradicate epidemics.
- **Dholu and Voote** (Drum and Flute) were two important musical instruments of the Koragas.
- The Family among the **Koraga is matrilineal**, the decent being reckoned along the female line. But residence after marriage is patrilocal.
- The property is equally divided among both son and daughters.
- The Koragas were **worshippers of different Bhuta's** (Bhuta Kola is a ritual folk dance in Tulu Nadu) such as Panjurli, Kallurti, Korathi and Guliga etc.

### Q1: Who are known as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)?

PVTGs are a more vulnerable group among tribal groups in India. These groups have primitive traits, geographical isolation, low literacy, zero to negative population growth rate and backwardness.



## What is Silica?



### About Silica:

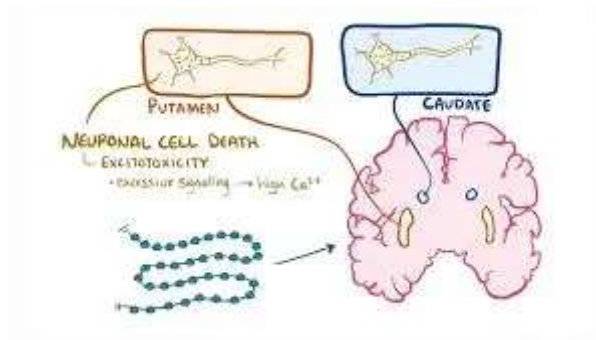
- Silica is another name for the **chemical compound** composed of **two most abundant elements in Earth's crust, silicon and oxygen, SiO<sub>2</sub>**.
- The **mass of Earth's crust is 59 percent silica**, the main constituent of more than 95 percent of the known rocks.
- Silica exists in many different **forms** that can be **crystalline as well as non-crystalline (amorphous)**.
- Silica has **three main crystalline varieties: quartz** (by far the **most abundant**), **tridymite**, and **crystalite**.
- Other varieties include coesite, keatite, and lechatelierite.
- **Uses:**
  - Silica sand is used in buildings and roads in the **form of port land cement, concrete, and mortar**, as well as **sandstone**.
  - Silica is also used in grinding and **polishing glass and stone**; in foundry molds; in the **manufacture of glass, ceramics**, silicon carbide, ferrosilicon, and silicones; **as a refractory material**; and as **gemstones**.
  - **Silica gel** is often **used as a desiccant to remove moisture**.

### Q1: What is tridymite?

Tridymite is a low pressure, mostly high-temperature-stable polymorph of silica that can also form or persist metastably at low temperatures.



## What is Huntington's Disease (HD)?



### Overview:

*A team of scientists in the UK recently developed non-invasive measurement techniques and novel analysis methods to decode disease progression and evaluate the effect of potential treatments or lifestyle changes in people with Huntington's disease.*

### About Handigodu Disease:

- It is a **rare and peculiar osteoarthritic disorder (bone and joint disease)** prevalent in **Shimoga and Chikmagalur Districts of Karnataka**.
- It is **named after the village of Handigodu**, where it was first noticed, in Shimoga district of the state of Karnataka.
- It is an **inherited degenerative osteoarthropathy**.
  - In this **progressive skeletal system disorder**, affected individuals are presented with **severe joint and hip pain**.
  - **In certain extreme cases** in adults, **crippled individuals are made to crawl** due to pain.
  - **Lack of normal growth** is noticeable **from early childhood**, such as deformation of the limbs and dwarfism.
  - **Symptom onset is at preadolescence** (as early as age 10) to young adulthood.
  - Difficulty in walking and pain in hip joints eventually affect HS patients' locomotion and nominal routine chores.
- The prevalence of HS in the general population may not be meaningful as it is **restricted to a specific geographic region**. However, it is known to have **killed over 1000 people** since it was first noticed around 1975.
- Though not clinically identical, Handigodu Disease is **akin to Mseleni Joint Disease in the Zululand of South Africa**.



**Q1: What is Mseleni Joint Disease?**

Mseleni joint disease (MJD) is a crippling osteoarthritis that is endemic to an area in the Maputaland region in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. This rare disease is geographically confined to this isolated region and only affects people from a Bantu-speaking background and who are mainly of the Zulu culture.



## Phlegraean Fields



### Overview:

*The Phlegraean Fields, now considered one massive supervolcano, are beginning to stir, making the scientific community uneasy.*

### About Phlegraean Fields:

- The Phlegraean Fields (also known in Italian as '**Campi Flegrei**') is an **active volcanic area** located in the vicinity of **Naples, Italy**.
- Unlike the nearby Mount Vesuvius, Campi Flegrei is **not characterised by a single volcano**.
- It is more of a **volcanic system**, with several centres situated **within a depressed area called a caldera** (essentially a deep sinkhole or cauldron).
  - The caldera has a diameter of about 12-15 km (7.5-9.3 miles).
  - It was **formed 39,000 years ago** after an **eruption emptied it of magma**. According to a new hypothesis, this eruption could have been the **beginning of the end of the Neanderthal**.
  - **One-third** of it **lies under the Tyrrhenian Sea**, between the Italian mainland and the country's island of Sardinia.
  - It is the **largest active caldera in Europe**. It is much larger than the cone-shaped Vesuvius, which destroyed the ancient Roman city of Pompeii in AD79, and is much more active.
- Phlegraean Fields has been in a **restless state since 1950**. It is a **result of a phenomenon known as bradyseism**, which scientists understand to be the **gradual movement of part of Earth's surface caused by the filling or emptying of an underground magma chamber or hydrothermal activity**.

- It **last erupted in 1538**, after an interval of about 3000 years. This eruption, although minor in comparison, **formed Monte Nuovo**, a new mountain.
- Scientists consider Phlegraean Fields to be a supervolcano whose eruptions can have worldwide effects.
- These volcanic fields are among the **top eight emitters of volcanic carbon dioxide** worldwide.

**Q1: What is Magma?**

Magma is extremely hot liquid and semi-liquid rock located under Earth's surface. Earth has a layered structure that consists of the inner core, outer core, mantle, and crust. Much of the planet's mantle consists of magma. This magma can push through holes or cracks in the crust, causing a volcanic eruption. When magma flows or erupts onto Earth's surface, it is called lava.



### Key Facts about Niger River



#### Overview:

*India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) recently urged Indian nationals to leave Niger, following a military coup that deposed the democratically elected President.*

#### About Niger River:

- It is the **principal river of western Africa**.
- With a length of 2,600 miles (4,200 km), it is the **third longest river in Africa**, after the Nile and the Congo.
- **In West Africa, it's the longest and largest** river and is **nicknamed** the "**Boomerang River**" due to its serpentine shape.
- **Course:** The Niger **rises in Guinea** 150 miles (240 kilometers) from the Atlantic Ocean, from where the river **detours into the Sahara Desert**, taking a sharp right turn near Mali's Timbuktu city, and then flowing southeast **into the Gulf of Guinea**.
- **Niger, Guinea, Cote de Ivoire, Mali, Burkina Faso, Algeria, Benin, Chad, Cameroon, and Nigeria** are the ten African countries that the river runs through.
- The Niger River Basin covers 7.5 percent of the African continent, and its **main tributary is the Benue River**.

#### Q1: Where is the Gulf of Guinea?

It is the northeastern most portion of the tropical Atlantic Ocean, located off the western coast of the African continent. It is found at the junction of the Prime Meridian and the Equator at 0°0'N and 0°0'E. The area covers 2.3 million square kilometers, with approximately 6,000 kilometers of coastline. It has a narrow continental shelf. Its major tributaries are the Volta and Niger rivers. The 16 coastal countries that are situated along the Gulf of Guinea are Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Guinea, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Gabon, Nigeria, Ghana, São Tomé and Príncipe, Togo, and Sierra Leone.