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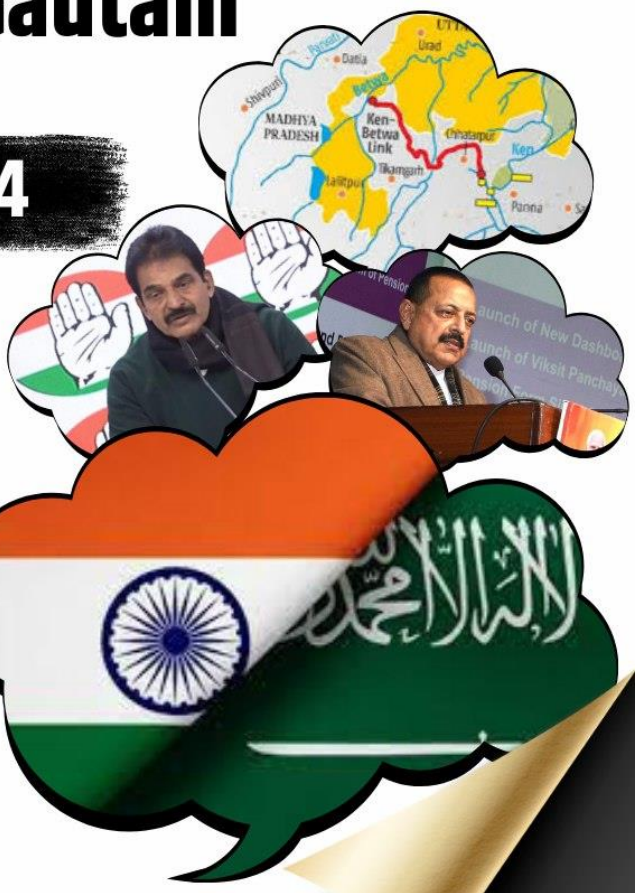

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GS Paper 3 – Infrastructure

1 Ken-Betwa River Linking Project: A Step Towards Water Sustainability

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently **laid the foundation stone** for the **Ken-Betwa River Linking Project**, a significant initiative aimed at addressing water scarcity in India's **Bundelkhand region**.

Ken-Betwa River Linking Project Overview:

Project Details:

- This project will transfer water from the **Ken River** to the **Betwa River**, both tributaries of the Yamuna.
- It includes the construction of the **221 km-long Ken-Betwa Link Canal**, which features a **2 km tunnel**.
- The project is divided into two phases:
    1. **Phase I:** Construction of the **Daudhan Dam Complex** and subsidiary units.
    2. **Phase II:** Development of the **Lower Orr Dam**, **Bina Complex Project**, and **Kotha Barrage**.

Region Benefited:

- The project will primarily benefit the **Bundelkhand region**, which spans 13 districts across **Madhya Pradesh** and **Uttar Pradesh**, alleviating its **water scarcity** problems.

Timeline:

- The project is expected to be completed in **eight years**.

National Perspective Plan for Interlinking Rivers (ILR)

The project is a part of the **National Perspective Plan (NPP)**, introduced in **1980** by the Ministry of Water Resources and the Central Water Commission. The **National Water Development Agency (NWDA)** oversees this program.

Key Components of the NPP:

1. **Himalayan Rivers Development:**
    - Construction of storage reservoirs on the **Ganga** and **Brahmaputra tributaries** in India, Nepal, and Bhutan.
    - Linking canals to transfer surplus water from the eastern Ganga tributaries to the western regions.
2. **Peninsular Rivers Development:**
    - Interlinking rivers like the **Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna**, and **Cauvery**.
    - Developing west-flowing rivers near Mumbai and south of Tapi.
    - Linking rivers such as **Ken and Chambal**.

Significance of River Linking Projects:

1. **Tackling Water Scarcity:** Transfers surplus water from water-rich areas to **water-deficient regions**.
2. **Agricultural Boost:** Increases **water availability** for irrigation, improving **agricultural productivity**.

3. **Flood Mitigation:** Helps in **distributing excess water** during heavy rains, reducing flood risks.
4. **Hydropower Generation:** Reservoirs and canals create opportunities for **renewable energy**.
5. **Employment Opportunities:** Construction and maintenance generate jobs, boosting **local economies**.
6. **Dispute Resolution:** Equitable distribution of water reduces **inter-state conflicts** over resources.

Challenges of River Linking Projects:

1. **Environmental Impact:** Altering river courses disrupts ecosystems, leading to **biodiversity loss** and habitat destruction.
2. **Community Displacement:** Dams and reservoirs displace populations, causing **social and economic hardships**.
3. **Inter-State Conflicts:** Disagreements over water sharing can lead to prolonged **legal disputes**.
4. **Financial Constraints:** High costs of construction and operation often exceed initial estimates, raising concerns about **economic viability**.
5. **Seismic Risks:** Large dams in earthquake-prone areas increase the risk of **catastrophic failures**.
6. **Maintenance Challenges:** Poor upkeep can result in system breakdowns and inefficiencies.
7. **Resistance from Communities:** Opposition from locals and environmentalists due to potential **livelihood** and **cultural losses**.

Conclusion:

The **Ken-Betwa River Linking Project** is a bold step toward addressing water scarcity and fostering development in underprivileged regions. However, to ensure long-term success, the government must address environmental, social, and financial concerns through:

- **Comprehensive planning** and **impact assessments**.
- **Engaging local communities** in decision-making.
- Adopting **sustainable practices** and modern technologies.

Striking a balance between development and sustainability is essential for the success of such projects, ensuring both human and ecological well-being.

GS Paper 3 – Economic Development, Inclusive Growth, and Employment

2 Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE) 2023-24

Context: The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** has released the **Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE)** for the year **2023-24**, covering the period from **October 2023 to September 2024**. This survey provides vital insights into the performance of the unincorporated non-agricultural sector in India.

Scope of ASUSE:

1. **Geographical Coverage:** The survey encompasses both **rural** and **urban** areas across India, excluding **villages in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands**.
2. **Sectoral Coverage:** It focuses on **unincorporated non-agricultural establishments** in three key sectors:
   - **Manufacturing**
   - **Trade**
   - **Other Services** (excluding construction).
3. **Economic Characteristics Analyzed:** Metrics such as **number of workers**, **Gross Value Added (GVA)**, **emoluments paid**, **fixed assets owned**, and **outstanding loans**.

Key Findings from ASUSE 2023-24:

1. **Growth in Establishments:** The number of establishments rose significantly from **6.50 crore in 2022-23** to **7.34 crore in 2023-24**, reflecting a robust **12.84% growth**.
2. **Enhanced Economic Contribution:**
   - **Gross Value Added (GVA):** GVA increased by **16.52%**, driven by a **26.17% rise** in the **other services sector**.
   - **Labour Productivity:** GVA per worker grew by **5.62%**, reaching ₹**1,49,742 in 2023-24**, compared to ₹**1,41,769 in 2022-23**.
   - **Gross Value of Output (GVO):** GVO per establishment rose from ₹**4,63,389** to ₹**4,91,862**, highlighting improved **enterprise efficiency**.
3. **Strong Labour Market Performance:**
   - **Female Entrepreneurship:** The share of **female-owned proprietary establishments** increased from **22.9%** in 2022-23 to **26.2%** in 2023-24.
   - **Wage Growth:** Average **emoluments per hired worker** grew by **13%**, indicating better **wage levels**.
4. **Improved Digital Adoption:** The percentage of establishments using the **internet** surged from **21.1%** in 2022-23 to **26.7%** in 2023-24, reflecting **enhanced digital penetration**.

Conclusion: The **ASUSE 2023-24** highlights the **dynamic growth and productivity** of India's unincorporated sector. With a surge in establishments, increased female entrepreneurship, higher wages, and improved digital adoption, the data provides valuable insights for:

- **Policymaking**
- **National Accounts Statistics**
- Supporting key ministries such as **MSME**, **Textiles**, and **Labour & Employment**.

These findings empower stakeholders to make **informed, data-driven decisions**, ensuring the continued growth and resilience of the unincorporated sector.

GS Paper 1– Modern Indian History

3 Celebrating 100 Years of the Belagavi Session of the Indian National Congress

Context: The **Indian National Congress (INC)** is commemorating the **100th anniversary** of its historic **Belagavi Session** with a series of events, including a **two-day extended Congress Working Committee (CWC) session** and a public rally themed **'Jai Bapu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan.'**

The Belagavi Session of 1924: A Turning Point in History:

When and Where:

- The **39th session** of the **INC** was held in **Belagavi (then Belgaum)**, Karnataka, on **December 26-27, 1924**.
- This period marked significant political activity and growing momentum in India's struggle for independence.

Mahatma Gandhi's Leadership:

- It was the **only time Mahatma Gandhi presided** as the Congress president.
- His leadership emphasized **unity, non-violence**, and **collective action**, which became the bedrock of India's freedom movement.

Participants:

- The session was attended by eminent leaders such as **Jawaharlal Nehru**, **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**, **Sarojini Naidu**, and **Khilafat leaders Muhammad Ali Jauhar** and **Shaukat Ali**.

Key Decisions and Highlights:

1. Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience:

- Gandhi reaffirmed his dedication to **non-cooperation** and **civil disobedience** as effective strategies against British oppression.
- These principles inspired major movements like the **Salt March** and the **Quit India Movement**.

2. Promotion of Khadi:

- The session emphasized **Khadi** as a symbol of **self-reliance** and resistance to British economic exploitation.
- This initiative aimed to rejuvenate **indigenous industries** and reduce dependency on British goods.

3. Communal Harmony:

- Gandhi advocated for **communal unity**, stressing the importance of harmony among India's diverse religious and ethnic communities.
- This was crucial in countering the **divisive policies** of the colonial regime.

Significance of the Belagavi Session:

1. Gandhi's Leadership Legacy:

- The session showcased Gandhi's unwavering commitment to **non-violence**, **communal harmony**, and **Swaraj** (self-rule).
- His strategies laid the foundation for future anti-colonial movements.

2. Strengthened Freedom Movement:

- The session fostered **peasant awareness**, promoted **Khadi**, and encouraged **village industries**, particularly in Karnataka.
- It mobilized greater participation from peasants in Congress-led initiatives.

3. Unity in Diversity:

- Prominent leaders like **Lala Lajpat Rai**, **C. Rajagopalachari**, **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad**, and **Sarojini Naidu** participated, symbolizing the collective resolve to achieve independence.

4. Cultural Resonance;

- The event featured cultural highlights like the song **'Udayavagali Namma Chaluva Kannada Nadu,'** performed by noted vocalist **Veene Seshanna**, which became an anthem for Karnataka's unification.

Conclusion:

The **Belagavi Session of 1924** was a defining moment in India's freedom struggle. It reflected **Gandhi's visionary leadership**, **unity among leaders**, and the integration of **cultural expressions** in the fight against colonialism. This centenary celebration honors the indomitable spirit and resolve that brought India closer to independence.

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

4 India and Saudi Arabia: Advancing Defence Cooperation Through Joint Ventures

Context: India and Saudi Arabia are strengthening their **defence collaboration** by exploring **joint ventures** and industrial partnerships aimed at **localizing defence production** and achieving mutual growth in the sector.

India-Saudi Arabia Defence Collaboration:

A Shared Vision for Self-Reliance:

- Both nations are committed to enhancing **defence manufacturing** under **Vision 2030** (Saudi Arabia) and **Make in India** (India).
- **Saudi Arabia** aims to localize **50% of its defence spending**, aligning with India's goal of boosting indigenous defence production.

Key Initiatives and Contracts:

- Saudi Arabia signed a **$250 million deal** for ammunition with **Munitions India Limited**, a Defence PSU.
- The kingdom also procured the **155mm Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS)** from **Bharat Forge**.

Joint Military Exercises:

- **Sada Tanseeq**: The inaugural **Army exercise** held in Rajasthan in January 2024.
- **Tarang Shakti**: Saudi Arabia participated as an observer in **India's largest air exercise**.
- **Al Mohed Al Hindi**: A bilateral **naval exercise** launched in 2022.

India-Saudi Arabia Relations: A Broader Perspective:

1. Political Relations:

- Diplomatic ties were established in **1947**.
- The **Delhi Declaration (2006)** and **Riyadh Declaration (2010)** elevated bilateral relations to a **strategic partnership**.
- In **2019**, the **Strategic Partnership Council (SPC) Agreement** created a high-level mechanism to deepen ties.

2. Economic Relations:

- India is Saudi Arabia's **second-largest trade partner**, while Saudi Arabia ranks as **India's fourth-largest trade partner**.
- **Bilateral trade** reached **$43.3 billion** in 2023-24.
- Saudi investments in India totalled **$3.15 billion**, with **2,783 Indian companies** operating in Saudi Arabia as of 2022.

3. Energy Cooperation:

- Saudi Arabia was India's **third-largest source** of crude oil in FY23, supplying **39.5 MMT**, which accounted for **16.7%** of India's total crude imports.
- India's **LPG imports** from Saudi Arabia stood at **7.85 MMT** in FY23.

4. Indian Diaspora:

- As of 2023, **2.6 million Indians** live in Saudi Arabia, forming the **second-largest foreign workforce** in the kingdom after Bangladesh.

Future Outlook: A Partnership for Growth:

- The shared goal of reducing reliance on **defence imports** and boosting **domestic production** offers immense opportunities for both nations.
- **Collaboration in advanced technologies** such as **AI** and **cybersecurity** can further bolster their **strategic autonomy**.
- Aligning objectives under **Vision 2030** and **Make in India**, India and Saudi Arabia are well-positioned to emerge as global leaders in **defence innovation**.
- Continued cooperation will ensure the success of Indian workers in Saudi Arabia, fostering greater **economic stability** and **development** for both countries.

Conclusion:

The evolving defence partnership between India and Saudi Arabia is a testament to their shared vision of **self-reliance, innovation, and economic growth**. By working together on defence localization and technological advancements, both nations can significantly impact the **global defence landscape** while deepening their bilateral ties.

GS Paper 2 – Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice

5 Viksit Panchayat Karmayogi Initiative: Strengthening Grassroots Governance

Context: On **Good Governance Day**, the Union Minister of Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions launched the **Viksit Panchayat Karmayogi Initiative**, marking a significant step toward empowering **Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)** and fostering participatory governance at the grassroots level.

About the Initiative:

Empowering Panchayati Raj Institutions:

- Focused on enhancing the effectiveness of **PRIs** through **innovative tools** and **capacity-building frameworks**.
- Piloted in **Odisha**, **Assam**, **Gujarat**, and **Andhra Pradesh**.
- Utilizes **e-learning platforms**, **AI-powered chatbots**, and **mobile applications** to bridge knowledge gaps and improve **service delivery**.

Aligned with Decentralized Governance Goals:

- Part of the broader **'Prashasan Gaon Ki Aur' campaign**, aimed at decentralizing governance and promoting **citizen participation** in decision-making.
- Seeks to equip **elected representatives** and **officials** with the knowledge and tools needed for **effective governance** and **inclusive planning**.

Driving Sustainable Development:

- Aims to create scalable models of **citizen-centric governance**, enabling PRIs to lead **equitable** and **sustainable development** across rural India.

Other Key Initiatives Launched:

1. iGOT Karmayogi Platform Dashboard:

- Designed to empower **ministries, departments**, and **state administrators** with advanced tools for monitoring progress in capacity building.
- Features include:
  - Tracking **user registrations** and **course completions**.
  - Providing customizable views and robust data filtration for better insights.
- Enhances decision-making and optimizes **training initiatives** through detailed progress analysis.

2. CPGRAMS Annual Report 2024:

- Offers a comprehensive review of the **Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS)**.
- Highlights achievements such as:
  - Resolution of over **25 lakh grievances annually**.
  - Implementation of the **Grievance Redressal Assessment and Index (GRAI)** for improved grievance handling.

Significance:

- The **Viksit Panchayat Karmayogi Initiative** reflects the government's commitment to enhancing **grassroots governance**.
- By leveraging technology and capacity-building programs, it aims to create a robust system for **participatory decision-making**, ensuring sustainable growth and development in rural areas.

Conclusion:

The initiative, along with complementary programs like the **iGOT Karmayogi dashboard** and **CPGRAMS enhancements**, underscores the government's vision of **empowering institutions** and fostering **good governance**. These efforts collectively pave the way for a more **responsive, inclusive, and efficient governance framework** at all levels.

GS Paper 1 – Geography, Disaster Management, and Environmental Issues

6 Transforming Tsunami Science: Key Lessons from the 2004 Indian Ocean Earthquake

Context: The year **2024** marks the **20th anniversary** of the devastating **2004 Indian Ocean earthquake** and tsunami, one of the deadliest natural disasters in recorded history. This anniversary serves as a crucial moment to reflect on the remarkable progress made in **tsunami science**, **disaster preparedness**, and **mitigation strategies** that have been inspired by the events of that tragic day.

The 2004 Indian Ocean Earthquake: A Catastrophic Event:

The Earthquake's Origins:

- The earthquake struck **30 km beneath the ocean floor** in the **Sunda Trench**, where the **Indo-Australian plate** subducts beneath the **Burma microplate**.
- It spanned a staggering **1,300 km** from **Sumatra** to the **Coco Islands**, and was the third-largest earthquake globally since 1900.

Devastating Impact:

- The tsunami affected **multiple countries**, including **Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka**, and **Thailand**, causing immense damage.
- Approximately **227,000** people lost their lives, with **1.7 million displaced**.
- Although tsunamis had struck the region in the past, none had been as catastrophic as the 2004 disaster.

Understanding Tsunamis:

What is a Tsunami?

- The term **tsunami** (Japanese for "harbour wave") refers to a series of **giant ocean waves** triggered by sudden movements beneath the ocean, such as **earthquakes**, **volcanic eruptions**, or even **meteorite impacts**.
- **Earthquakes** cause large portions of the ocean floor to move, displacing vast volumes of water and creating waves that travel across the ocean at speeds akin to **jet planes**. These waves are not immediately dangerous in deep water, but become **extremely destructive** when they approach coastal areas.

Tsunami Wave Characteristics:

- **Wave height** increases as the wave enters shallow coastal waters, a phenomenon known as **shoaling**. This results in a dangerous increase in the tsunami's force.
- The **shape of the ocean floor** and the **distance of the earthquake's epicenter** determine the severity and characteristics of the tsunami.

Tsunami Warning Systems: A Lifesaving Advancement:

India's Tsunami Warning Efforts:

- The **Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre (ITEWC)** was established in **2007** under the Ministry of Earth Sciences at **INCOIS**, Hyderabad.
- It uses **seismological stations**, **bottom pressure recorders**, and **tidal stations** to monitor and issue tsunami alerts within **10 minutes** of detecting a potential earthquake.

- India has become the **fifth** country globally to develop advanced tsunami warning systems, joining **Japan**, the **U.S.**, **Chile**, and **Australia**.

Global Vulnerabilities and Case Studies:

At-Risk Regions:

- **Makran Coast**: A potential **threat** to India's **west coast**, including cities like **Mumbai**.
- **Myanmar Coast**: A significant risk for the **Northern Indian Ocean** regions.

The Kalpakkam Nuclear Plant Case Study:

- The **2004 tsunami** caused a **shutdown** at the **Kalpakkam nuclear plant**, though it resumed operations without any **radioactive leaks**.
- **Lessons from Fukushima (2011)** emphasized the need for robust **safety protocols**, as radiation leaks can have long-lasting and widespread consequences.

Key Lessons and Future Directions:

- The **2004 Indian Ocean tsunami** was a wake-up call that highlighted gaps in **disaster preparedness** and **tsunami science**.
- Over the past two decades, countries have significantly improved their **tsunami warning systems**, allowing for faster response times and saving countless lives.
- **Global cooperation**, **technology**, and **scientific advancements** have made it possible to mitigate the risks posed by these devastating natural events.

By continually evolving and strengthening these systems, we can better prepare for future **tsunamis**, minimizing the impact on human lives and infrastructure.