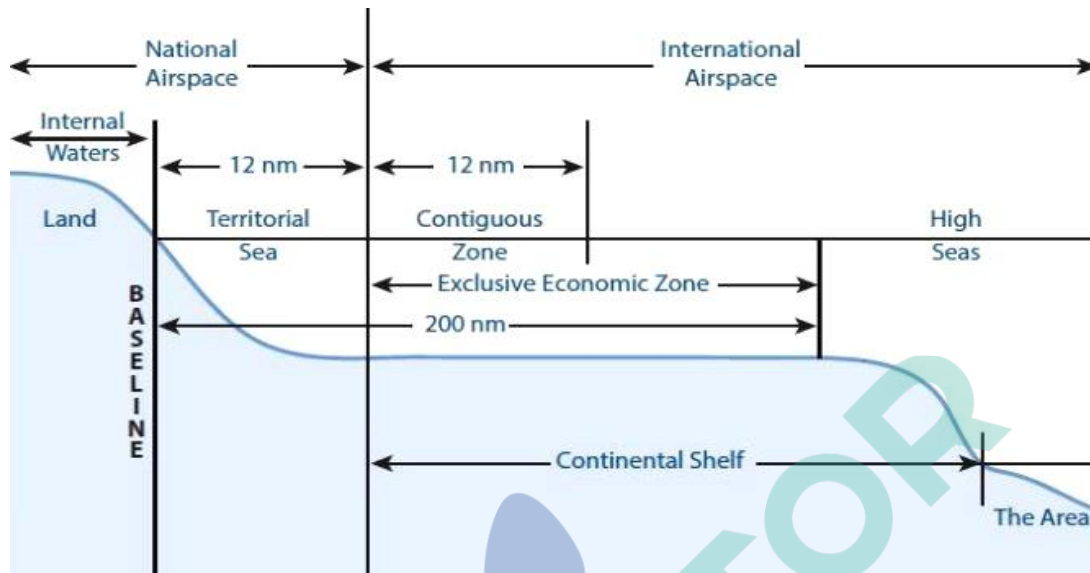


**INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE (IGC-4) WAS HELD IN NEW YORK**

GS Paper - 2 - Effect of Policies & Politics of Countries on India's Interests - GS Paper - 3 - Conservation



**Why in News?**

Recently, the **fourth meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC-4)** was held in New York to conclude a draft of the instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine Biological diversity in areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ).

- The IGC-4 is convened under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

**WHAT IS THE BBNJ TREATY?**

- The “BBNJ Treaty”, also known as the “Treaty of the High Seas”, is an international agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, currently under negotiation at the United Nations.
- This new instrument is being developed within the framework of the UNCLOS, the main international agreement governing human activities at sea.
- It will achieve a more holistic management of high seas activities, which should better balance the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources.
- BBNJ encompasses the high seas, beyond the exclusive economic zones or national waters of countries.
  - According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), these areas account for “almost half of the Earth’s surface”.
  - These areas are hardly regulated and also least understood or explored for its biodiversity - only 1% of these areas are under protection.
- Launched at the One Ocean Summit in February 2022, the High Ambition Coalition on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction brings together many delegations engaged in the BBNJ negotiations on a common and ambitious outcome at the highest political level.
- The negotiations are centred around a package of elements agreed upon in 2015, namely:
  - the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, in particular, together and as a whole, marine genetic resources, including questions on the sharing of benefits

- area-based management tools, including marine protected areas
- environmental impact assessments
- capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology

#### WHAT IS THE NEED OF LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT FOR BBNJ?

- **Areas beyond national jurisdiction comprise 95% of the ocean** and provide invaluable ecological, economic, social, cultural, scientific and food-security benefits to humanity.
- However, these areas teeming with life are now **vulnerable to growing threats**, including pollution, overexploitation, and the impacts already visible of climate change.
  - The increasing demand for marine resources in the coming decades – for food, minerals or biotechnology – threatens to exacerbate this problem.
- The high seas are **extremely biodiverse and have been exploited** without even knowing its impacts.
- While there are scientific explorations of the surface water of the high seas, **the deep sea i.e. below 200 metres of the surface has hardly been studied.**
- The deep seafloors, believed to be the harshest habitat, the extinction process is setting in.
  - The 184 species (of Molluscs) assessed, 62% are listed as threatened: 39 are critically endangered, 32 are endangered and 43 are vulnerable.
  - In the Indian Ocean vents, 100% molluscs are already listed as critically endangered. This shows the urgent need to protect them from extinction. Yet, the International Seabed Authority, a Jamaica-based intergovernmental body, is allowing deep sea mining contracts.

#### WHAT IS UNCLOS?

- The **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1982** is an international agreement that **establishes the legal framework for marine and maritime activities**. It is also known as **Law of the Sea**.
- It divides marine areas into **five main zones** namely- **Internal Waters, Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)** and the **High Seas**.
- It is the only international convention which stipulates a framework for state jurisdiction in maritime spaces. It provides a different legal status to different maritime zones.
- It provides the backbone for offshore governance by coastal states and those navigating the oceans.
- It not only zones coastal states' offshore areas but also provides specific guidance for states' rights and responsibilities in the five concentric zones.

Source: DTE

**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCHEDULED TRIBES**

GS Paper - 2 - Constitutional Bodies - Issues Related to SCs & STs

**Constitutional Provisions**

I.A-Definition and Specification of STs	
Art.	Title
Preamble	
342	Scheduled Tribes
366	Definitions
II.B - Educational, Economic and Public Employment-related Safeguards	
15	Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth
16	Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment
19	Protection of certain rights regarding freedom of speech, etc
46	Promotion of Educational and Economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections
244	2Clause(1) Provisions of Fifth Schedule shall apply to the administration & control of the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes in any State other than the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura which are covered under Sixth Schedule, under Clause (2) of this Article.
335	Claims of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to services and posts
II.C- Political Safeguards	
330	Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People
332	Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assemblies of the States
334	10 years period for reservation ( <i>Amended several times to extend the period</i> )
243D	Reservation of seats (in Panchayats)
243T	Reservation of seats
II.D- Agency for monitoring safeguards	
338A	National Commission for Scheduled Tribe

**Why in News?**

According to a parliamentary committee's recent report, the **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes** has been dysfunctional for the last four years and has not delivered a single report to **Parliament**.

**WHAT IS THE NCST?**

- **Formation:** NCST was set up with effect from 19th February, 2004 by amending Article 338 and by **inserting a new article 338A in the Constitution** through the **89th Constitution Amendment Act, 2003**. Hence, it is a **constitutional body**.
- **Objective:** Article 338A inter-alia gives powers to the NCST to oversee the implementation of various safeguards provided to STs under the Constitution or under any other law for time being in force or under any other order to the Government and to evaluate the working of such safeguards.
- **Composition:** It consists of a **Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and 3 other Members** who are appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal.
  - At least one member should be a woman.
  - The Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson and the other Members hold office for a term of 3 years.
  - The members are not eligible for appointment for more than two terms.
- The Chairperson has been given the **rank of Union Cabinet Ministers**, the Vice Chairperson has the rank of a Minister of State and other Members have the rank of a Secretary to the Government of India.

### WHAT ARE THE DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE NCST?

- To **investigate and monitor all matters relating to the safeguards** provided for the STs under the Constitution or under any other law for the time being in force or under any order of the Government.
- To **inquire into specific complaints with respect to the deprivation of rights** and safeguards of the STs.
- To **participate and advise in the planning process of socio-economic development** of the STs and to evaluate the progress of their development.
- To present to the President, **annually and at such other times as the Commission may deem fit, reports** upon the working of those safeguards.
- To **discharge such other functions in relation to the protection, welfare and development and advancement of the Scheduled Tribes** as the President may be subject to the provisions of any law made by Parliament by rule specified.

### WHAT ARE THE ISSUES WITH THE NCST?

- **Pending Reports:**
  - In the **financial year 2021-22**, it has met only four times. Its rate of pendency of resolution of complaints and cases that it receives is also close to 50%.
- **Manpower and Budgetary Shortage:**
  - The Committee expressed dismay over the near paralysis of the Commission's working with manpower and budgetary shortage.
  - The recruitment in the Commission was constrained **because of lack of applicants as the eligibility bar was set too high** and the rules being tweaked to enable many more candidates to apply.

### WHAT ARE THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL?

- The **vacancies should be immediately filled** as there should be no reason now for any further delay since the recruitment rules have been suitably revised.
- The **budgetary allocation for the Commission needs to be reviewed** so that its functioning is not made to suffer for lack of funds.

### WHAT IS THE STATUS OF SCHEDULED TRIBES IN INDIA?

- **About:**
  - As per Census-1931, Schedule tribes are termed as "backward tribes" living in the "Excluded" and "Partially Excluded" areas. The **Government of India Act of 1935** called for the first time for representatives of "**backward tribes**" in **provincial assemblies**.
  - The Constitution **does not define the criteria for recognition of Scheduled Tribes** and hence the definition contained in 1931 Census was used in the initial years after independence.
  - However, **Article 366(25) of the Constitution only provides process to define Scheduled Tribes:** "Scheduled Tribes means such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this Constitution."
    - **342(1):** The **President may with respect to any State or Union Territory**, and where it is a State, after consultation with the Governor, by a public notification, specify the tribes or tribal communities or part of or groups

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 23 MARCH 2022

within tribes or tribal communities as Scheduled Tribe in relation to that State or Union Territory.

- There are over **705 tribes which have been notified. The largest number of tribal communities are found in Odisha.**
- **Legal Provisions:**
  - Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 against Untouchability.
  - **Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989**
  - **Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996**
  - **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006**
- **Related Initiatives:**
  - TRIFED
  - Digital Transformation of Tribal Schools
  - Development of PVTGs
  - Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana
- **Related Committees:**
  - **Xaxa Committee (2013)**
  - Bhuria Commission (2002-2004)
  - Lokur Committee (1965)

[Source:TH](#)

**SECTION 23 OF THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL OFFENCES ACT, 2012**  
**(POCSO)**

GS PAPER - 2 - ISSUES RELATED TO CHILDREN

**Why in News?**

Recently, a 2-judge bench of the Supreme Court has delivered a split verdict on the issue whether **Section 155(2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure** will apply to the investigation of an offence under **Section 23 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO)**.

- As per **Section 155(2) CrPC**, a police officer cannot investigate a non-cognizable offence without the order of a Magistrate.
- **Section 23 of POCSO** relates to the **offence of disclosure of the identity of the victim of the sexual offence**.
- One of the judges opined that **disclosure of the identity of a child** who is a victim of sexual offences or who is in conflict with the law is in **fundamental breach of the right of the child to dignity, the right not to be embarrassed**.

**WHAT ARE THE ISSUES RELATED TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?**

- **Multi-layered Problem:** Child sexual abuse is a **multi-layered problem which negatively impacts children's physical safety, mental health**, well-being and behavioural aspects.
- **Amplification Due to Digital Technologies:** Mobile and digital technologies has further amplified child abuse and exploitation. New forms of child abuse like online bullying, harassment and **Child Pornography** have also emerged.
- **Ineffective Legislator:** Although Government of India has enacted the **Protection of Children against Sexual Offences Act 2012 (POCSO Act)**, it has **failed to protect child from sexual abuse**. The reasons for this can be following:
  - **Low Conviction Rate:** The rate of conviction under the **POCSO act is only about 32%** if one takes the average of the past 5 years and the percentage of cases pending is 90%.
  - **Judicial Delay:** The Kathua Rape case took 16 months for the main accused to be convicted whereas the POCSO Act clearly mentions that the entire trial and conviction process has to be done in one year.
  - **Unfriendly to Child:** Challenges related to **age-determination of the child**. Especially laws that focus on biological age and not mental age.

**WHAT ARE THE RELATED INITIATIVES?**

- **Child Abuse Prevention and Investigation Unit**
- **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao**
- **Juvenile Justice Act/Care and Protection Act, 2000**
- **Child Marriage Prohibition Act (2006)**
- **Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act, 2016**

**WHAT ARE THE RELATED CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS?**

- The Constitution guarantees to every child the **right to live with dignity (Article 21)**, the **right to personal liberty (Article 21)**, the **right to privacy (Article 21)**, the **right to equality (Article 14)** and/or the **right against discrimination (Article 15)**, the **right against exploitation (Article 23 & 24)**.
  - **Right to free and compulsory elementary education** for all children in the 6-14 year age group (Article 21 A)



- **The Directive Principles of State Policy**, and in particular **Article 39(f)**, cast an **obligation on the State to ensure that children are given opportunities and facilities** to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.

**WAY FORWARD**

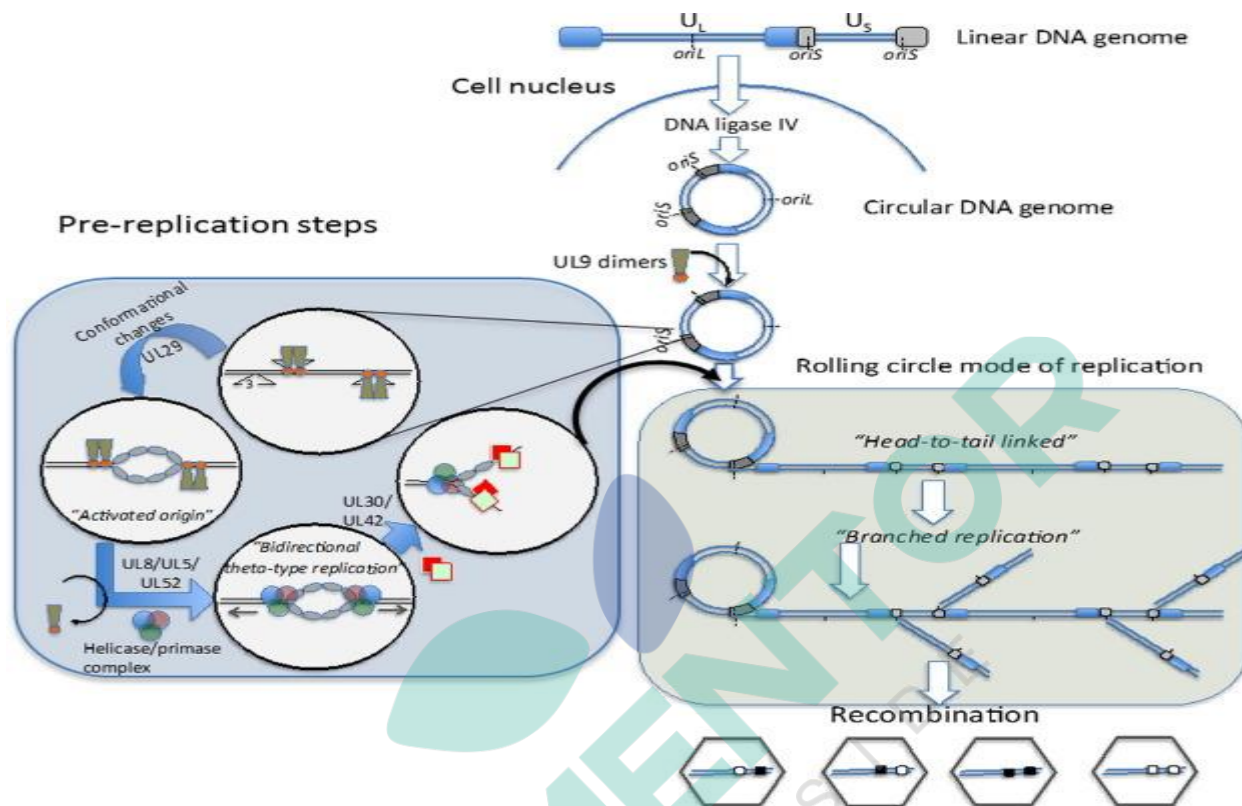
- The need of the hour is to **prioritise prevention activities against abuse, creating safe online environments for children.**
- Developing a comprehensive outreach system to engage parents, schools, communities, **Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)** partners and local governments as well as police and lawyers is needed to ensure better implementation of the legal framework, policies, national strategies and standards.

**SOURCE:TH**



## Recombination of Viruses

GS Paper - 2 - Health



### Why in News?

The recent study published in **Nature Microbiology** revealed a few things about the **mutation in viruses, increased fitness and recombination of viruses**.

### **WHAT ARE KEY POINTS OF THE RESEARCH?**

- According to it, **RNA viruses** have a **higher rate of mutations** compared with **DNA viruses**.
  - However, unlike other RNA viruses, **coronaviruses have fewer mutations**.
- This is because coronaviruses have a genetic **"proofreading mechanism"** that corrects some of the errors made during replication.
- This is applicable to **SARS-CoV-2 viruses too**.
- As a result, SARS-CoV-2 viruses have more accurate mutations or attained more fitness than that of other **single-stranded RNA viruses**.
- **Increased fitness** of the virus means **increased infectiousness of the virus** and the ability of the mutations to **allow the virus to escape from immunity**.
- Such mutations that provide increased fitness to the virus increase in numbers and **become the dominant strain or variant**.
- Further, when a person is simultaneously infected with two different SARS-CoV-2 variants or strains or sub-lineages, chunks of genetic material from one variant can get mixed with the other. **This is called recombination**.
  - For example, recombination of Delta and Omicron variants.



**DNA VIRUSES  
VERSUS  
RNA VIRUSES**

DNA viruses refer to viruses whose genetic information is stored in the form of DNA	RNA viruses refer to viruses whose genetic information is stored in the form of RNA
Contain DNA as their genetic material	Contain RNA as their genetic material
Most are double-stranded	Most are single-stranded
Replicated inside the nucleus of the host cell	First transcribed and then replicated in the cytoplasm
Viral DNA is first transcribed into RNA, and then mRNA is translated into viral proteins	Can bypass transcription during protein synthesis since they already contain RNA in the genome
Stable due to the lower mutation rate	Unstable due to the higher mutation rate
Shows an accurate replication	Shows an error-prone replication
Contain a large genome	Contain a small genome
Newly-synthesized viral DNA is packed into a pre-formed capsid called procapsid	Newly-synthesized viral RNA is not packed in a procapsid
Include Class I, II, and VII of the Baltimore classification of viruses	Include Class III, IV, V, and VI of the Baltimore classification of viruses
Ex: Adenoviruses, Herpesviruses, Poxviruses, Parvoviruses, and Hepadnaviruses	Ex: Reoviruses, Picornaviruses, Togaviruses, Rhabdoviruses, and Retroviruses
Smallpox, herpes, and chickenpox are diseases of DNA viruses	Aids, Ebola hemorrhagic fever, SARS, common cold, etc. are some diseases of RNA viruses

Visit [www.pediaa.com](http://www.pediaa.com)

**WHAT IS MUTATION?**

- Mutation is an **alteration in the genetic material (the genome)** of a cell of a living organism or of a virus that is more or less permanent and that can be transmitted to the cell's or the virus's descendants.
- The genomes of organisms are all composed of **Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA)**, whereas **viral genomes can be of DNA or Ribo Nucleic Acid (RNA)**.

Source: TH

PM GREETED THE PEOPLE ON THE OCCASION OF NAVROZ

*Quasi Judicial Bodies - GS Paper - 1*



**Why in News?**

Recently, the PM greeted the people on the occasion of Navroz (21st March 2022).

**WHAT ARE THE KEY POINTS?**

- Navroz is **also known as Parsi New Year**.
- In Persian, '**Nav**' stands for **new**, and '**Roz**' stands for **the day**, which literally translates to 'new day'.
- Though **celebrated in March globally**, Navroz arrives **200 days later in India and is celebrated in the month of August** as the Parsis here follow the Shahenshahi calendar that doesn't account for leap years.
  - In India, Navroz is also known as **Jamshed-i-Navroz, after the Persian King, Jamshed**.
  - The king Jamshed is credited with having created the Shahenshahi calendar.
- Interestingly **in India, people celebrate it twice a year** - first according to the Iranian calendar and the second according to the Shahenshahi calendar which is followed by people here and in Pakistan.
- The tradition is **observed by Iranians and Zoroastrian** around the world.
- Navroj was **inscribed in the list of UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity of India in 2009**.
  - This coveted list is made up of those intangible heritage elements that help demonstrate diversity of cultural heritage and raise awareness about its importance.

### Existing Traditions of India Recognised by UNESCO

1.	Tradition of Vedic chanting, 2008	8.	Buddhist chanting of Ladakh: recitation of sacred Buddhist texts in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir, India, 2012
2.	Ramlila, the traditional performance of the Ramayana, 2008	9.	Sankirtana, ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur, 2013
3.	Kutiyattam, Sanskrit theatre, 2008	10.	Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab, India, 2014
4.	Ramman, religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas, India, 2009	11.	Yoga, 2016
5.	Mudiyettu, ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala, 2010	12.	Nowruz, 2016
6.	Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan, 2010	13.	Kumbh Mela, 2017
7.	Chhau dance, 2010	14.	Durga Puja in Kolkata, 2021

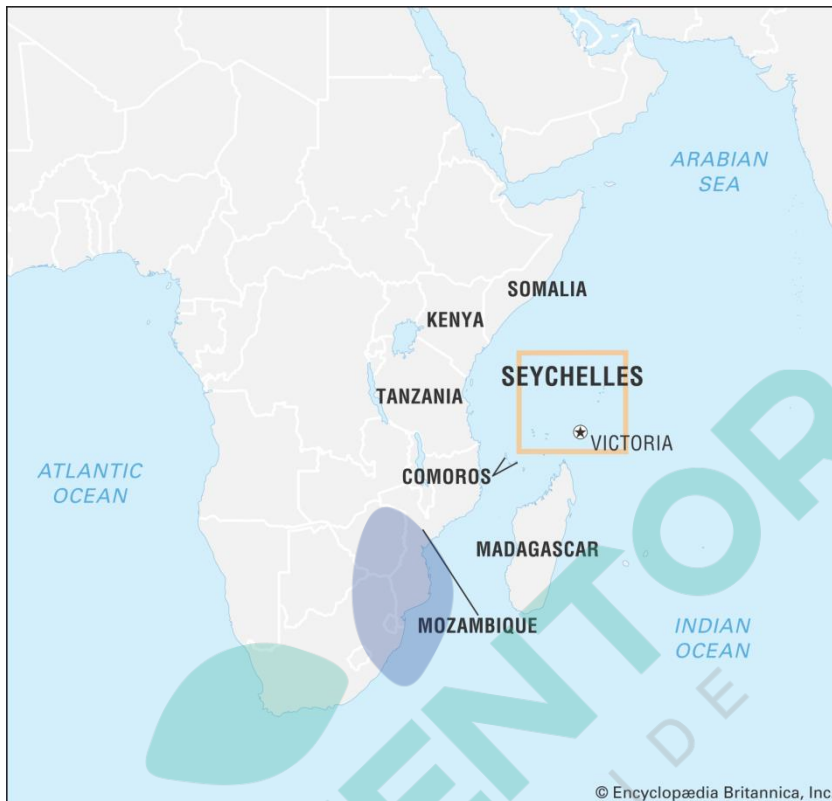
#### WHAT IS ZOROASTRIANISM?

- Zoroastrianism, **one of the earliest known monotheistic faiths**, is practised by Parsis.
- It was **created over 3,500 years ago in ancient Iran** by Prophet Zarathustra.
- It was the **official religion of Persia (now Iran)** from 650 BCE until the emergence of Islam in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, and it was one of the most important faiths in the ancient world for over 1000 years.
- When the Islamic troops invaded Persia, numerous Zoroastrians fled to India (Gujarat) and Pakistan.
- The Parsis ('Parsi' is Gujarati for Persian) are the largest single group in India, with an estimated 2.6 million Zoroastrians worldwide.
- Zoroastrians (Parsis) are one of the notified **minority communities**.

[Source: PIB](#)

**NINTH EDITION OF THE JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE LAMITIYE 2022**

GS Paper - 2 - Bilateral Groupings & Agreements - GS Paper - 3



**Why in News?**

An Indian Army contingent has arrived in Seychelles for the **ninth edition of the Joint Military Exercise Lamitiye 2022** between the Indian Army and Seychelles Defence Forces (SDF).

- Seychelles is an **Archipelago in the western Indian Ocean**, comprising about 115 islands.

**WHAT ARE THE KEY POINTS?**

- Lamitiye, which in Creole means friendship, is a **biennial training event being conducted in Seychelles since 2001**.
- The **aim** is to build and promote bilateral military relations in addition to exchanging skills, experiences and good practices **between both armies**.
- Exercise Lamitiye is significant **in terms of security challenges faced by both the nations** in the backdrop of the current global situation and growing security concerns in the **Indian Ocean Region**.

**Source: IE**