MOST IMPORTANT TOPICS

➤ UTTARAKHAND SET TO IMPLEMENT UCC   THE HINDU   GS-1, GS-2

➤ GLOBAL WATER MONITOR REPORT   THE HINDU   PRELIMS

➤ GREEN FUELS ALLIANCE INDIA (GFAI)   THE HINDU   PRELIMS

➤ VADNAGAR   THE HINDU   PRELIMS, GS-1

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PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. Consider the Following With Context to International Court of Justice (ICJ)

1. The ICJ is the only international court that adjudicates general disputes between countries.

2. The International Court of Justice is composed of 15 judges elected to nine-year terms of office by the United Nations General Assembly.

3. Judges are Not Eligible for Re- Election.

Which of the above statements are Incorrect?

A. 1 only

B. 2 and 3 only

C. 1, 2 and 3

D. 3 Only

UTTARAKHAND SET TO IMPLEMENT UCC AS FIRST STATE
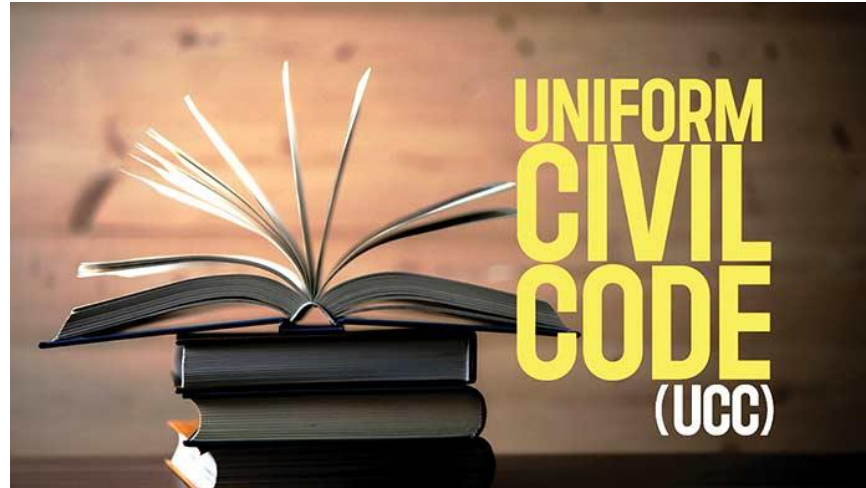
CONTEXT

➤ India's Defence Minister announced that Uttarakhand is poised to be the country's first state to adopt a Uniform Civil Code (UCC).

WHAT IS UNIFORM CIVIL CODE?

➤ A Uniform Civil Code (UCC) is a single legal framework for all Indian citizens, regardless of religion, covering personal matters like marriage, divorce, inheritance, and adoption, replacing the existing religion-based personal laws.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION

➤ Article 44 in the Constitution's Part IV states that the government should strive to implement a uniform civil code across India.

➤ Part IV, featuring Directive Principles of State Policy, guides governance but isn't legally enforceable in court.

UCC IN INDIA

➢ Goa's UCC is based on the Portuguese Civil Code of 1867, applying uniform laws on marriage, divorce, and succession to all religions.

➢ The 1962 Goa Daman and Diu Administration Act allowed Goa to continue using the Civil Code after joining India in 1961.

➢ Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Assam have shown interest in adopting the UCC, but none have officially implemented it yet.

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF UCC

➤ Governance Efficiency: A UCC simplifies governance and justice administration, ensuring equal rights for all citizens.

➤ Women's Empowerment: It addresses discriminatory religious personal laws, offering a fairer legal system for women.

➤ Secular Reinforcement: UCC upholds India's secular ethos by treating citizens equally, regardless of religion.

- ➤ **International Reputation**: Adopting UCC could boost India's global standing as a nation committed to equality, secularism, and human rights.

- ➤ **Supreme Court Advocacy**: The court, in judgments like the 1985 Shah Bano case, has repeatedly urged UCC implementation.

- ➤ **National Unity**: UCC fosters integration across diverse communities, strengthening India's national spirit.

ARGUMENT IN AGAINST OF UCC

➢ Plural Law Concerns: Experts question applying 'one nation, one law' to diverse personal laws, given the plurality in existing civil and criminal laws.

➢ Diverse Implementation Challenges: UCC's implementation is complex due to India's religious diversity and unique personal laws.

➢ Tribal Rituals at Risk: There are worries that UCC might prohibit distinct tribal customs, differing from Hindu traditions.

- ➢ **Minority Unrest Risk**: UCC could lead to minority oppression and potential national unrest.

- ➢ **Constitutional Conflict**: Critics view UCC as violating constitutional rights to religious freedom (Articles 25, 26) and protections under the Sixth Schedule.

- ➢ **Minority Fears**: Concerns exist that UCC might impose Hindu-influenced norms on all communities.

- ➢ **Law Commission's Stance**: It advised against a UCC for now, suggesting amendments to discriminatory practices within religions instead.

A WAY FORWARD

➢ Inclusive Consultation: Authorities must engage with various societal groups before implementing UCC to ensure inclusivity, transparency, and respect for diversity.

➢ Law Commission's View: It advocates for achieving equality within communities, rather than imposing uniformity between different communities.

2023 GLOBAL WATER MONITOR REPORT
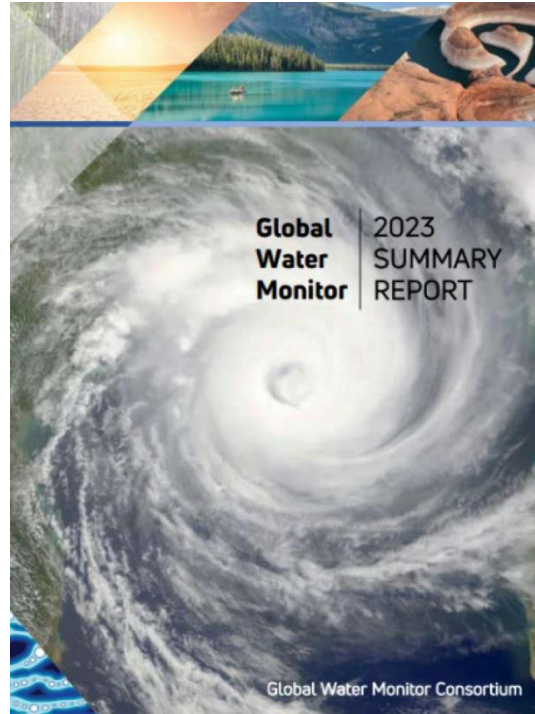
CONTEXT

➤ The 2023 Global Water Monitor report indicates that more than 77 countries experienced their highest annual average temperatures in nearly half a century, affecting precipitation and water patterns year-round.

WHATS IN THE REPORT?

➢ **Weather Effects**: El Niño shifts rainfall; stronger cyclones and intense rains cause floods.

➢ **Soil Moisture**: Slightly higher despite hotter air; overall water storage declines.

➢ **Vegetation**: Increases due to warming and CO2; aids crops in cold areas.

➢ **Hydrological Extremes**: More frequent droughts and floods; surface water coverage decreases.

➢ **2024 Outlook**: More rain in Africa/Asia; less in Americas/Australia; droughts in West, floods in India/East Africa.

GREEN FUELS ALLIANCE INDIA (GFAI)

CONTEXT

➤ Denmark has launched the

   Green Fuels Alliance India (GFAI)

   to foster collaboration with India

   in sustainable energy,

   supporting the carbon neutrality

   objectives of both countries.

PURPOSE

➢ The GFAI is dedicated to developing the green fuels industry, including green hydrogen, by fostering innovation and partnerships. Its goal is to create a conducive environment for sustainable energy advancements in India, involving collaboration among businesses, government agencies, and academic institutions.

BACKGROUND

➤ This initiative is a part of the Green Strategic Partnership formed between India and Denmark in 2020. It aligns with India's commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2070 and Denmark's leading position in the 2024 Climate Performance Ranking.

VADNAGAR (OLDEST LIVING CITY OF INDIA)

CONTEXT

➢ **Multi-institution study found India's oldest living city in Vadnagar, Gujarat**

India's oldest living city found in Vadnagar: multi-institution study

Bishwanath Ghosh
KOLKATA

A joint study by five prominent institutions has found evidence of a cultural continuity in Vadnagar in present-day Gujarat even after the collapse of the Harappan civilisation, thus making it likely that the "Dark Age" was a myth.

"From deep archaeological excavation at Vadnagar, a consortium of scientists from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Physical Research Laboratory, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and Deccan College has now found evidence of a human settlement that is as old as 800 BCE contemporary to late-Vedic/pre-Buddhist *Mahajanapadas* or oligarchic republics," the IIT said on Friday.

"The study also indicates that the rise and fall of different kingdoms during the 3,000-year period and recurrent invasions of India by central Asian warriors were driven by severe changes in climate like rainfall or droughts. The findings [have been] just published in a paper titled 'Climate, human settlement, and migration in South Asia from early historic to medieval period:

The study also indicates the rise and fall of different kingdoms during the 3,000-year period. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

evidence from new archaeological excavation at Vadnagar, Western India' in the prestigious Elsevier journal *Quaternary Science Reviews*," it said.

Based on study
While the excavation was led by the ASI, the study was funded by the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums (Government of Gujarat), entrusted with building India's first experiential digital museum at Vadnagar.

The IIT said the research at Vadnagar and Indus Valley Civilisation has also been supported by "generous funding" from Sudha Murthy (former chairperson of the Infosys Foundation) for the past five years.

"Vadnagar was a multi-

cultural and multireligious (Buddhist, Hindu, Jain and Islamic) settlement. Excavation in several deep trenches revealed the presence of seven cultural stages (periods) namely, Mauryan, Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian or Shaka-Kshatrapas ('Satraps'), descendants of provincial governors of ancient Achaemenid Empires, Hindu-Solankis, Sultanate-Mughal (Islamic) and Gaekwad-British colonial rule and the city endures even today. One of the oldest Buddhist monasteries has been discovered during our excavation. We found characteristic archaeological artefacts, potteries, copper, gold, silver and iron objects and intricately designed bangles. We also found coin moulds of the

The findings have been just published in Elsevier journal *Quaternary Science Reviews*

Greek king Appollodatus during the Indo-Greek rule at Vadnagar," said ASI archaeologist Abhijit Ambekar, co-author of the paper.

The period between the collapse of the Indus Valley Civilisation and the emergence of the Iron Age and cities such as Gandhar, Koshal, and Avanti is often depicted as a Dark Age by archaeologists.

"Archaeological records are rare, the earliest one being the rock-inscription of Emperor Ashoka at Sudarsana Lake, Girnar hill, Gujarat. Our evidence makes Vadnagar the oldest living city within a single fortification unearthed so far in India. Some of our recent unpublished radiocarbon dates suggest that the settlement could be as old as 1400 BCE contemporary to very late phase of post-urban Harappan period. If true, then it suggests a cultural continuity in India for the last 5500 years and the Dark Age may be a myth," said Professor Anindya Sarkar of the IIT, the lead author of the paper.

KEY FACTS

➤ Historical Significance: Vadnagar is a multi-layered, multi-cultural mercantile town dating back to the 8th Century BCE.

➤ Archaeological Evidence: Excavations indicate a human settlement from the late-Vedic/pre-Buddhist era, corresponding to the Mahajanapadas period.

➤ Earliest Records: The oldest archaeological finding is an inscription by Emperor Ashoka from the Mauryan period (320-185 BCE) near Sudarsana Lake, Girnar hill, Gujarat.

➢ Cultural Continuity: A study by IIT Kharagpur suggests continuous habitation in Vadnagar since the Indus Valley Civilization (IVC), challenging the notion of a 'Dark Age' post-IVC.

➢ Archaeological Misconception: The period between the IVC's decline and the Iron Age emergence, featuring cities like Gandhar, Koshal, and Avanti, is often wrongly termed as a 'Dark Age'.

➢ Cultural Stages Uncovered: Excavations in Vadnagar revealed seven distinct cultural stages: Mauryan, Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian or Shaka-Kshatrapas, Hindu-Solankis, Sultanate-Mughal (Islamic), and Gaekwad-British colonial rule.

ABOUT VADNAGAR

➢ Location: Vadnagar is in Mehsana district, North Gujarat, India, known for its multicultural and multireligious (Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Islamic) heritage.

➢ Alternate Names: Also called Vridhanagar, Anandapur, Anantapur, and Nagar.

➢ **Geography**: The town has an L-shape, bordered by Sharmishtha Lake to the northeast.

➢ **Historic Significance**: Vadnagar is a continuously evolving historic urban landscape, significant in Western India's hinterland trade network.

➢ **UNESCO Recognition**: Added to UNESCO's tentative World Heritage Site list in December 2022.

By the Officers,

For the Officers