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CURRENT AFFAIRS



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UNESCO RECOGNIZES KOZHIKODE AS THE CITY OF LITERATURE

(This article is related to the section ‘ Indian History, Art & Culture, Indian Literature ’ of UPSC Civil Services Mains General Studies Paper – 1 and ‘ Kozhikode city of Kerala, City of Literature, UNESCO Creative City Network, Kundalatha ’ of UPSC Preliminary Exam. It also includes suggestions from the PLUTUS IAS Team. This article is related to ‘ UNESCO recognizes Kozhikode as City of Literature ’ under ‘ Daily Current Affairs ’ .)

WHY IN THE NEWS ?



- Recently UNESCO included the Kerala city of Kozhikode under the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) recognized as ‘City of Literature’.

UNESCO :



UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) is a specialized organization of the United Nations aimed at promoting peace and security throughout the world.

- It promotes international cooperation in education, arts, science and culture.
- UNESCO's purpose is to encourage international cooperation in education, arts, science and culture to promote world peace and security.
- It promotes sharing of knowledge and free flow of ideas so that we can get better information about each other's life.
- UNESCO programs help the United Nations achieve the Sustainable Development Goals set out in the 2030 Agenda authorized by the General Assembly in 2015.

UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK :

- The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) aims to provide support to creative cities around the world as well as promote their cultural and economic development.
- UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was established in 2004.
- The network covers seven creative sectors covering cities. **Which are as follows –**
 1. **Crafts and Folk Arts:** It includes local arts, crafts, folklore, and tribal arts.
 2. **Design :** Design, fashion, graphics, and other creative arts are included.
 3. **Movie :** This category includes cinema, documentary, and other film styles or genres.

4. **Gastronomy** : The culinary arts category includes the culture of food and drink, especially the creation and presentation of special dishes.
 5. **Materials** : The category of literature under the Creative Cities Network by UNESCO includes languages, literature, folklore and other written literary genres.
 6. **Media Arts** : under this category Including television, radio, digital media, and other media formats.
 7. **Music** : Music, singing, instruments, and other music related styles are included under this category.
- The network promotes cultural exchange and cooperation through an annual conference between mayors of different cities and other stakeholders.
 - In the year 2024, this conference will be held in Braga, Portugal in the month of July.

THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK (UCCN):

- UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) includes 350 cities in the year 2024.
- The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) is an international recognition that aims to lead cities to prosperity through the development of cultural and creative industries.
- One of the main objectives of UCCN is to be dedicated to promoting creativity in local communities.
- It helps cities to safeguard their local cultural heritage and promote their creative industries.
- In addition, UCCN also seeks to promote international cooperation between cities.
- It provides cities with a medium to broadcast their creative products around the world and gives them the opportunity to become strongly connected on an international level.
- Kozhikode, Kerala has been recognized as “City of Literature” by UCCN. This is an important event, as the city is renowned for its literary and creative heritage and has now gained global recognition.

WHICH CITIES OF INDIA ARE INCLUDED IN UCCN?



The following cities are included under UCCN in India –

1. **Kozhikode** : Many prominent personalities of Kerala’s literary and cultural world, major media houses, and numerous libraries (more than 500) are present here. Moreover, over the years many films have been made here and theater professionals have made their mark. The first Malayalam novel “**Kundalatha**” was composed by Appu Nedungadi in Kozhikode in the year 1887. Poets, scholars and publishers here have contributed to Malayalam literature and cultural diversity.
2. **Jaipur** : It is involved in the field of crafts and folk art. (2015)
3. **Varanasi** : It is included as a Creative City of Music. (2015)
4. **Chennai** : It is included as Creative City of Music. (2017)
5. **Mumbai** : It is included in the field of film. (2019)
6. **Hyderabad**: It is involved in the field of culinary arts. (2019)
7. **Srinagar** : It is involved in the field of crafts and folk art. (2021)

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM :

Q.1. Manuscripts of which famous works of India have been included in the Memory of the World Register by UNESCO? (UPSC-2018)

- A. Ramcharit Manas
- B. Mahabharata
- C. Samveda
- D. Rigveda

Answer-D

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM :

Q.1. What do you understand about the UNESCO Creative Cities Network? Underlining the main objectives of UNESCO Creative Cities Network, discuss in detail the names of major cities of India included in different categories in this network and their importance. (Word limit – 250 marks – 15)

Dr. Akhilesh Kumar Shrivastava

“PLEA SEEKING TO STAY ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW CRIMINAL LAWS”

THIS ARTICLE COVERS “DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS” AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF “PLEA SEEKING TO STAY ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW CRIMINAL LAWS” THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT TO THE “POLITY AND GOVERNANCE” SECTION OF THE UPSC—CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS:

A petition was filed in the Supreme Court requesting a halt to the enforcement and enactment of three new criminal laws: **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023**, slated to take effect from July 1st.

REASONS FOR REFORMING CRIMINAL LAWS IN INDIA:

- **Historical Origins:** Previous laws in India stem from the colonial era and were designed to maintain British control over the legal system. **Example:** Section 124A of the IPC, which criminalises sedition, was introduced during British rule to suppress dissent against colonial authority. Its application remains contentious, particularly concerning its potential misuse against activists and journalists.
- **Emphasis on Punishment:** Earlier laws prioritised punitive measures over ensuring justice for citizens. For example, Several offences in the IPC carry the death penalty, prompting ongoing debates regarding its efficacy as a deterrent and its alignment with evolving societal values.
- **Obsolete Framework:** Enacted in the 19th century, existing laws do not adequately reflect contemporary societal norms, technological advancements, or evolving justice needs. For instance, in 2018, the Supreme Court deemed adultery laws unconstitutional, underscoring the necessity for laws to adapt to societal changes.
- **Low Conviction Rates:** Outdated laws contribute to low conviction rates and protracted legal procedures, eroding public confidence in the legal system. In 2022, the National Crime Records Bureau reported a conviction rate of only 19.7% for serious crimes such as murder and rape.
- **Gender Insensitivity:** Previous laws inadequately address crimes against women and children, reflecting insensitivity and gaps in legal protections. A 2020 National Family Health Survey-5 survey revealed that one in three women in India has experienced physical or sexual violence, necessitating robust legal safeguards.
- **Complex Procedures:** Cumbersome processes and excessive paperwork lead to delayed trials and inefficiencies in the criminal justice system. A 2023 study by the Centre for Public Interest Litigation highlighted that only 0.1% of witnesses in rape cases receive any form of protection, hindering prosecution efforts.
- **Potential for Misuse:** Authorities may exploit laws to target individuals and violate civil liberties, as seen in cases of misuse of sedition charges. For example, anti-terrorism laws with

vague definitions of “unlawful activities” have been used to target minority groups and activists, raising concerns about human rights abuses.

- **Lack of Victim-Centric Approach:** Legal proceedings often prioritise technicalities over providing support and justice for victims. According to a 2022 report by the National Crime Victims Relief Fund, only 30% of eligible victims receive compensation, highlighting the need for a more accessible and victim-oriented system.
- **Inadequate Technological Integration:** Older laws lack provisions for leveraging modern technology, hindering effective investigation and evidence presentation. Despite over 2.4 million cybercrime cases in 2022, the conviction rate stands at a mere 3.4%, underscoring the urgent need for technological advancements and skilled cybercrime investigators.
- **Limited Scope:** Existing laws fail to address emerging crimes such as cybercrimes, terrorism, and organised crime effectively. Crimes like crypto-jacking and drone-based attacks lack specific legal frameworks, leaving authorities ill-prepared and response mechanisms unclear.

COMPARISON OF EXISTING AND NEW CRIMINAL LAWS IN INDIA:

Features	Existing Laws (IPC, CrPC, IEA)	New Criminal Laws: (BNS, BNSS, BSB)	Key Changes in New Criminal Laws
Scope of Offences	IPC defines various crimes.	BNS aims to simplify and clarify offences, categorising them into minor, major, and heinous.	Potential for clearer sentencing guidelines and easier understanding of crimes.
Investigation & Trial Procedures	CrPC outlines procedures for investigation, trial, and appeals.	BNSS focuses on speedy trials, witness protection, and victim assistance.	Aims to reduce delays, improve witness protection, and offer a victim-centric approach.
Evidence Admissibility	IEA determines what evidence is admissible in court.	BSB proposes stricter standards for electronic evidence and introduces “judicial discretion” for certain evidence.	Potential for tighter control over electronic evidence and more flexible handling of sensitive information
Punishment & Sentencing	IPC prescribes punishments for various offences.	BNS introduces tiered sentencing based on offence severity and mitigating factors.	Potentially fairer sentencing and increased focus on rehabilitation for minor offences

Focus on Rights & Safeguards	All laws contain provisions for due process and fundamental rights.	BNS and BNSS emphasise legal aid, community policing, and restorative justice mechanisms.	Potential for better access to legal representation, community involvement in crime prevention, and victim reparation.
Technology Integration	Existing laws lack comprehensive provisions for technology.	BNS and BSB address cybercrimes, digital forensics, and electronic evidence handling.	Aims to better address modern forms of crime and utilise technology for efficient investigations.

ADVANTAGES OF THE BILLS:

- **Expanded Offences:** The bills include terrorism, corruption, mob lynching, and organised crime under penal laws.
- **Zero FIR Provision:** Allows complaints to be registered at any police station, regardless of where the crime occurred.
- **ICT Applications:** Proposes Video recording of search and seizure operations and increased use of electronic evidence and forensics.
- **Introduction of Community Service:** Community service is introduced as a new form of punishment.
- **Revised Sedition Laws:** Introduces a test for criminal intent to prevent misuse of sedition laws.
- **Speedy Justice Initiatives:** Advocates for Video trials and trials in absentia to expedite justice.
- **Alignment with Supreme Court Rulings:** Excludes attempted suicide and adultery as criminal offences, aligning with recent Supreme Court decisions.
- **Release of Undertrials:** Requires police superintendents to apply to release undertrials who have served half or one-third of their maximum possible sentence.

CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH THE BILLS:

- **New Definition of Sedition:** Defines sedition broadly, potentially infringing on free speech rights.
- **Police Powers:** Grants unchecked powers of arrest to the police.
- **Vagueness in Offences:** The drafting of offences remains vague, increasing the risk of arbitrary arrests.
- **Religious Offences:** Fails to revisit offences related to religion and blasphemy.

- **Borrowed Legislation:** Adopts offences from other laws without clarifying reasons, like those under the UAPA.
- **Criminalisation of Speech:** Offences such as sedition and obscenity may suppress freedom of expression.
- **Marital Rape:** Does not criminalise marital rape, despite existing laws against sexual violence.
- **Outdated Terminology:** Uses outdated terms like “modesty” in laws related to crimes against women.
- **Bail Adjudication:** Provides little improvement in the process of bail adjudication.
- **Torture in Investigation:** This does not address issues related to torture in obtaining evidence from suspects.
- **Death Penalty for Mob Lynching:** Imposing the death penalty for mob lynching may be seen as excessively harsh.
- **Retention of Outdated Laws:** Retains a significant portion of the antiquated IPC, which dates back over 160 years.
- **Forensic Investigation:** Mandates forensic investigation for every crime scene without addressing logistical challenges.
- **Committee Issues:** The committee lacks diversity and transparency in its public consultations and recommendations.
- **Political Use of Criminal Law:** Raises concerns about the political use of criminal law as a preemptive tool.
- **Police Custody:** Extends the period during which a person can be held in police custody, potentially infringing on civil liberties.
- **International Practices:** Lags behind other countries in updating colonial-era penal codes to meet present-day standards.

WAY FORWARD:

- **Balancing State Security and Individual Freedom:** Future reforms must balance state security needs and individual rights.
- **Ensuring Equality and Equitability:** Critical for maintaining public trust and fairness in criminal law reforms.
- **Impact on Vulnerable Groups:** Reforms’ effectiveness will be judged based on their impact on vulnerable populations, victims, and the disadvantaged.

MAINS BASED QUESTION:

Q1. Discuss the role of new Criminal Laws in contemporary society.

Vishal Yadav



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