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CURRENT AFFAIRS

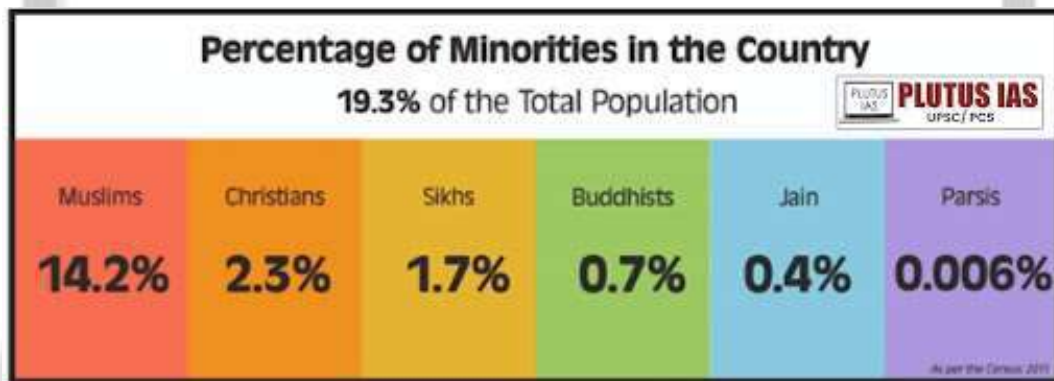


Date –19- December 2024

EMPOWERING MINORITIES: BUILDING INCLUSIVE INDIA!

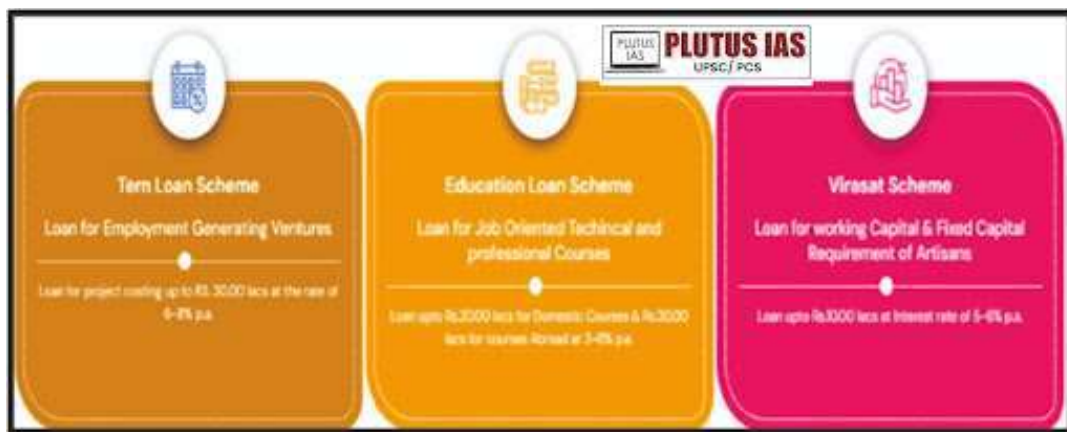
WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Ministry of Minority Affairs has launched multiple schemes targeting the six notified minority communities—Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, and Zoroastrians (Parsis)—which collectively make up 19.3% of India's population. Recent updates highlight the identification of 90 Minority Concentration Districts, 710 Blocks, and 66 Towns, where resources are being focused to uplift these communities.



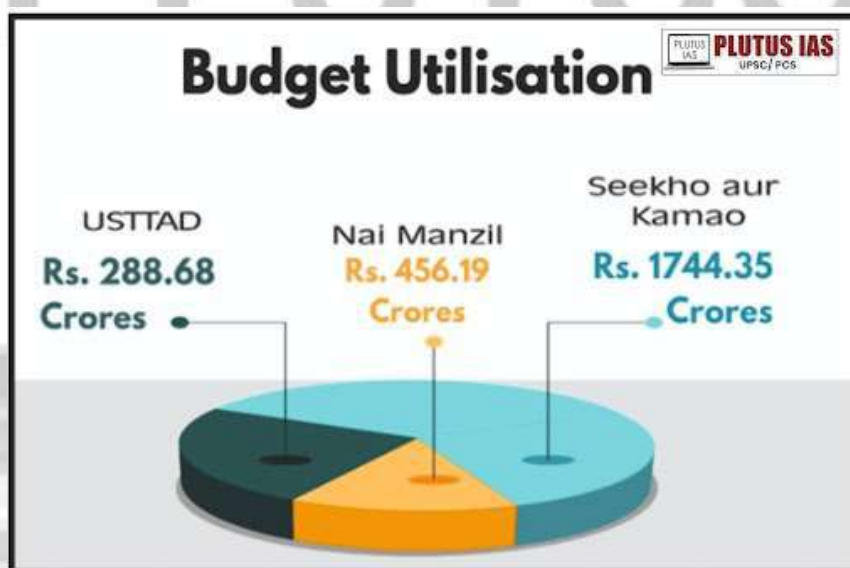
INITIATIVES AND INSTITUTIONS FOR THE MINORITY:

- 1. Ministry of Minority Affairs:** Established on 29th January 2006 with primary mandate includes policy formulation, coordination, evaluation, and oversight of development programs for minority communities.
- 2. National Commission for Minorities (NCM):** Set up under the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992, the NCM works to safeguard the rights of minorities in India.
- 3. The Waqf Act, 1995:** Administered by the Ministry of Minority Affairs, this Act governs waqf properties and establishes the Central Waqf Council (CWC), a statutory body to oversee the administration of waqf properties.
- 4. Dargah Khwaja Saheb, Ajmer:** Administered under the Durgah Khawaja Saheb Act, 1955, the Dargah Committee facilitates millions of devotees visiting the shrine of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti.
- 5. Education Promotion Schemes:**



6. Skill Development Initiatives: PM VIKAS (Pradhan Mantri Virsat Ka Samvardhan): Focuses on industry-relevant skills training for youth. USTTAD (Upgrading the Skills and Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development): Aims to preserve and develop traditional arts and crafts.

7. Economic Empowerment: The National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC), established in 1994, provides financial assistance to minority entrepreneurs. Till 2023-24, Rs 8,771.88 crore were disbursed to 23.85 lakh beneficiaries through various credit programs.



8. PMJVK (Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram): This infrastructure development scheme addresses socio-economic gaps in minority-concentrated areas.



9. Preserving Cultural Heritage: The Jiyo Parsi Scheme and Hamari Dharohar Scheme aim to preserve minority cultural heritage

CHALLENGES FACED BY MINORITIES IN INDIA:

Discrimination and Stigmatization: Minorities in India, particularly religious and ethnic groups, often face systemic discrimination and stigmatization.

Violence and Communal Riots: Communal violence remains a significant challenge for minorities in India. In 2023, over 200 people were killed in Manipur due to clashes between ethnic groups, with minorities disproportionately affected.

Legal Constraints on Minority Rights: Laws such as the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act limit funding for NGOs that advocate for minority rights, restricting their ability to support these communities.

Systemic Biases and Trust Issues in Law Enforcement: Minority communities face extrajudicial actions and arbitrary detentions, which undermine trust in law enforcement and the justice system.

Lower Income Levels: According to the Sachar Committee Report, Muslim households have lower average income levels than their Hindu counterparts, reflecting widespread economic disadvantage.

Unemployment Rates: The Employment-Unemployment Survey (2017-18) revealed that Muslims, in particular, have higher unemployment rates than other religious groups.

Restrictions on Freedom of Expression: According to the 2023 World Press Freedom Index, India ranked 161st out of 180 countries, signaling increased suppression of dissenting voices for minorities' rights.

Cultural Erosion: The dominance of majority cultural narratives often overshadows minority traditions, leading to cultural erosion.

Lack of Representation: The eighteenth Lok Sabha has the lowest share of Muslim Members of Parliament (MPs) in six decades, with less than 5% of its members belonging to the Muslim community, despite Muslims constituting over 15% of India's population. Currently, there are only 24 Muslim MPs, making up just 4.4% of the Lok Sabha.

WAYS TO EMPOWER MINORITIES IN INDIA

Enhance Legal Protections: The Sachar Committee Report (2006) highlighted the socio-economic disadvantages faced by Muslim minorities in India, recommending enhanced legal protections. The National Commission for Minorities (NCM) works to protect the rights of minorities by addressing grievances and ensuring legal safeguards.

Promote Inclusive Education: The Kundu Committee Report (2011) on the Social, Educational, and Economic Status of Muslims recommends measures to improve education, especially for the backward classes within the community.

Improve Economic Opportunities: The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) aims to provide financial inclusion for marginalized communities, including minorities, by promoting access to banking services.

Strengthen Healthcare Access: The Ranganath Misra Commission Report (2004) identified the health challenges faced by minorities and recommended increased healthcare services in minority-populated areas.

Encourage Political Representation: Implement policies to ensure greater political participation and representation of minorities at local, state, and national levels. Support leadership development programs for minority youth and women to encourage active participation in governance.

Curb Discrimination and Promote Social Integration: The Equitable Growth Program promotes social integration through educational scholarships and financial empowerment for minorities.

Strengthen Law Enforcement Accountability: Ensure that law enforcement agencies are trained in handling minority-related issues and held accountable for actions that violate minority rights.

Foster Community-Based Initiatives: Support the establishment of regional networks and organizations that advocate for minority rights and community welfare.

Empower Minority Women and Youth: Provide targeted programs for women and youth in minority communities to improve their educational, economic, and social opportunities.

CONCLUSION:

Government minority welfare programs focus on empowering marginalized communities by improving access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. These initiatives promote inclusivity, helping minorities thrive and contribute to India's social and economic development. The goal is to build an equitable society where every citizen has the resources to succeed and drive the nation's progress.

PRELIMS QUESTION:

Q. The main objective of the USTTAD Scheme is:

- A. Preservation of the traditional art and crafts
- B. Employing the Minority community
- C. women empowerment through technical training
- D. Doubling the farmer's income by 2030

ANSWER: A

MAINS QUESTION

Q. Despite various government policies to empower minority communities, significant challenges persist. Discuss the key challenges faced by minorities in India and suggest effective solutions.

(Answer in 250 words)

Munde Dhananjay Navnath

LA NIÑA: THE BLESSING IN DISGUISE FOR INDIA'S WEATHER PATTERNS

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasts a La Niña event by late 2024 or early 2025, leading to a milder winter due to its delayed onset. This follows a rare "Triple Dip La Niña" from 2020 to 2022, succeeded by an El Niño in 2023. The alternating La Niña and El Niño events significantly impact India's weather, including monsoon shifts, temperature changes, and agricultural patterns, making this development crucial for climate planning and resilience.

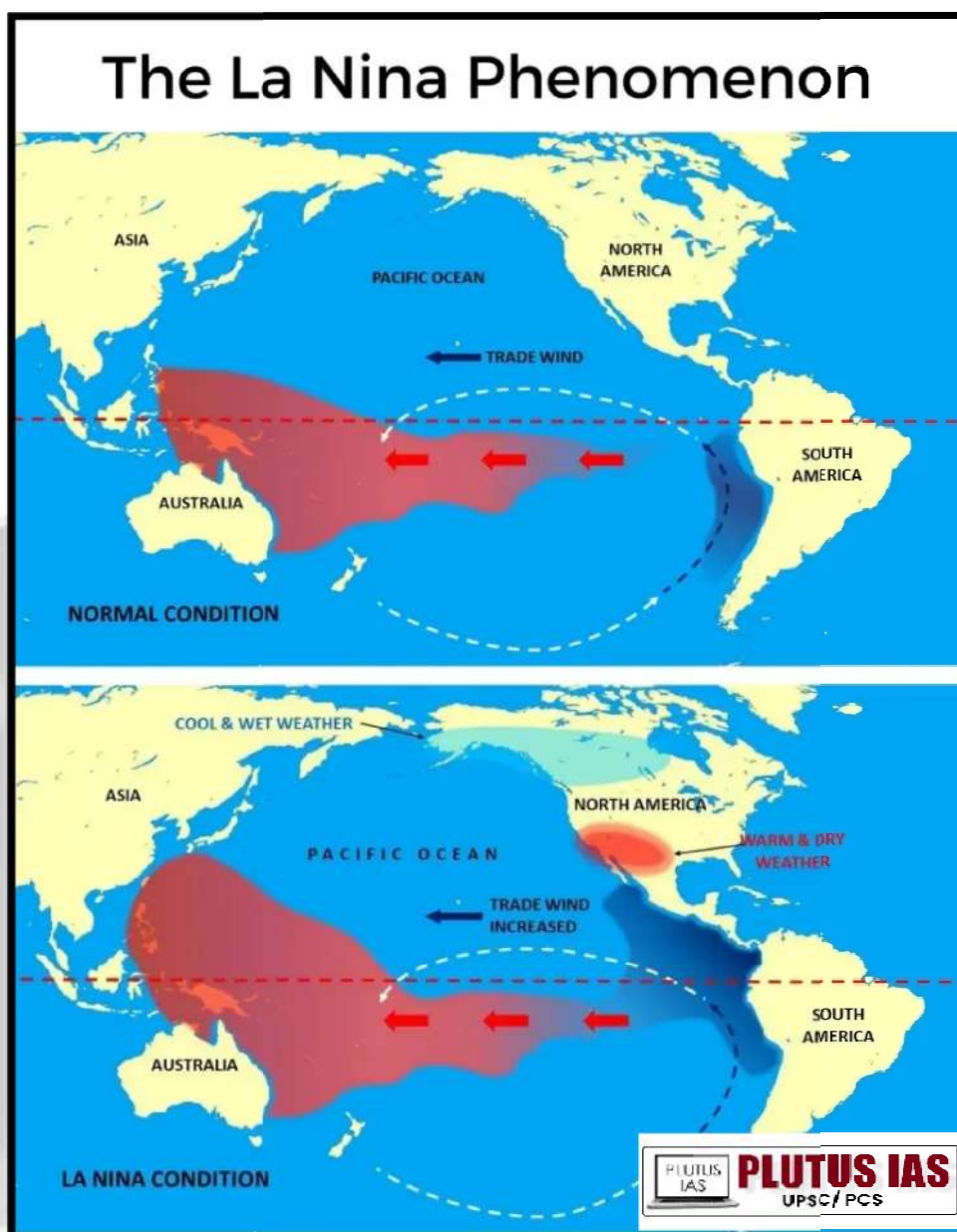
WHAT IS LA NIÑA?

La Niña is the cold phase of the El Niño/Southern Oscillation (ENSO) cycle, which represents a periodic fluctuation in sea surface temperatures and atmospheric pressures in the equatorial Pacific Ocean. During La Niña, cooler-than-average sea surface temperatures occur in the central and eastern Pacific, leading to significant shifts in global weather patterns.

Features of La Niña:

- 1. Cooler Sea Surface Temperatures:** La Niña is characterized by below-average sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean.
- 2. Atmospheric Changes:** The cooling of the ocean leads to stronger-than-normal trade winds that push warm water toward the western Pacific, leading to higher-than-usual sea surface temperatures in the western Pacific and around Indonesia.
- 3. Global Weather Impacts:** Warmer and drier conditions in parts of the southern United States, the southern tier of the U.S., and parts of the Gulf Coast. Increased rainfall in countries like Indonesia, the Philippines, and northern Australia. Colder winters in the northern U.S. and Canada. Drier conditions in parts of South America, especially the western coast, like Peru and Ecuador.
- 4. Tropical Cyclone Disruption:** La Niña increases hurricane activity in the Atlantic while reducing storms in the Pacific.
- 5. Agricultural Impact:** La Niña causes droughts in South America (e.g., Argentina, Brazil) and floods in Southeast Asia, disrupting crop yields.

The La Nina Phenomenon



IMPACTS OF LA NIÑA ON GLOBAL CLIMATE:

- 1. Stronger Trade Winds:** During La Niña, trade winds strengthen, pushing more warm water toward Asia. Results in cooler-than-average sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern Pacific.
- 2. Upwelling and Ocean Conditions:** The cooler waters caused by La Niña increase upwelling off the west coast of the Americas. Nutrient-rich, cold water rises, impacting marine ecosystems and fisheries.
- 3. Jet Stream Shift:** Cold Pacific waters push the jet stream northward. Alters weather patterns, with drier conditions in the southern U.S. and wetter conditions in the Pacific Northwest and Canada.
- 4. Regional Temperature Variations:** Shifts in the jet stream and atmospheric patterns. Warmer-than-normal winter temperatures in the southern U.S. and cooler-than-normal temperatures in the northern U.S. and Canada.
- 5. Droughts and Flooding:** La Niña causes abnormal rainfall patterns. Drought in the southern U.S., with heavy rains and flooding in the Pacific Northwest and parts of Canada.

IMPACTS OF LA NIÑA ON INDIAN CLIMATE:

Impact	Description
Rainfall	La Niña often brings above-normal rainfall during the southwest monsoon, benefiting agriculture by providing water for crops, but excessive rainfall can cause flooding.
Temperature	Colder-than-usual winters in northern India, with slightly warmer daytime temperatures, which may affect energy consumption and agricultural cycles.
Summer	Reduced intensity of summer heat, providing relief from heatwaves, especially in northern and central India, mitigating heat stress on people and crops.
Air Quality	Higher wind speeds help disperse air pollution, improving air quality, particularly in urban areas like Delhi, which face chronic pollution issues.
Agriculture	Increased rainfall can support crop growth, but excessive rainfall in flood-prone areas may damage crops, reducing yields and causing losses for farmers.
Fisheries	Cooling of ocean waters supports marine life, improving fishing conditions off India's coasts, but may also affect fish species diversity.
Wildfires	Reduced heat and increased rainfall lower the risk of wildfires in regions like the Western Ghats, though flooding could still cause landslides and erosion.
Economy	Above-normal rainfall and flooding can impact crop production, food supply, and exports. The fishing sector may benefit from improved conditions, supporting the coastal economy.
Flooding	Excessive rainfall can lead to flooding in low-lying areas and river basins, disrupting transportation, displacing people, and causing economic damage.

SIGNIFICANCE OF LA NIÑA:

- Enhanced Rainfall:** Above-normal monsoon rains boost agriculture, especially in water-scarce regions, leading to higher crop yields.
- Reduced Summer Heat:** La Niña helps lower the intensity of heatwaves, offering relief to both people and crops.
- Improved Air Quality:** Stronger winds disperse air pollution, improving air quality, particularly in urban areas like Delhi.
- Boost to Fisheries:** Cooler ocean waters support marine life, benefiting coastal fisheries with better fishing conditions.
- Lower Wildfire Risk:** Increased rainfall and cooler temperatures reduce the chances of wildfires in vulnerable regions.
- Drought Mitigation:** Extra rainfall helps mitigate drought conditions, supporting agriculture and water supplies.

CONCLUSION:

La Niña, forecasted to occur in late 2024 or early 2025, brings both challenges and benefits to India. It can enhance monsoon rainfall, support agriculture in water-scarce regions, and reduce summer heat, offering relief from heat waves. Cooler ocean temperatures benefit fisheries, while stronger winds improve air quality in urban areas like Delhi. Additionally, lower wildfire risk and drought mitigation are key advantages. However, the potential for flooding requires careful management to minimize disruptions. Overall, La Niña presents opportunities for agriculture, energy, and the environment but also demands proactive planning.

PRELIMS QUESTION:

Q. Which of the following statements regarding La Niña are correct?

1. La Niña is characterized by cooler-than-average sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern Pacific Oceans.
2. La Niña tends to cause drought in Southeast Asia and flooding in South America.
3. During La Niña, the jet stream shifts northward, bringing drier conditions to the southern United States and wetter conditions to the Pacific Northwest.
4. La Niña has no significant impact on India's monsoon season.

Select the correct answer using the code below:

- A. 1, 3 only
- B. 1, 2, 3 only
- C. 2, 4 only
- D. 1, 3, 4 only

Answer: A

MAINS QUESTION:

Q. Briefly explain the significant effects of *La Niña* on global and regional weather patterns. Discuss the impacts of *La Niña* on India's climate, agriculture, and economy. (250 words, 15 marks)

Ritik singh



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