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- 
- 
- Home
- UPSC
  - Current Affairs IAS
  -    
  - Quiz IAS
  -     
  - UPSC News Editorial (/Eng)
  - Answer Writing ( /Eng)
  - UPSC Essay (/Eng)
  - UPSC GS (/Eng)
    - UPSC GS 1 ( /Eng)
    - UPSC GS-2 ( /Eng)
    - UPSC GS-3 ( /Eng)
    - UPSC GS-4 ( /Eng)
  - Kurukshetra ( /Eng)
  - Yojana ( /Eng)
  - IAS Strategy for Prelims
    - General Studies
    - CSAT
  - IAS Strategy for Mains
    - IAS GS 1
    - IAS GS 2
    - IAS GS 3
    - IAS GS 4
  - IAS Test Series
- Himachal HPAS
  - Himachal Daily Current Affairs
  -   
  - Daily Himachal GK Quiz

- Himachal News Editorial (Hindi/Eng)
- Answer Writing (Hindi /Eng)
- Himachal Essay (Hindi/Eng)
- Giriraj
  - Magazine
  - Giriraj Quiz
- Himachal Pradesh
  - Himachal Pradesh
  - Himachal Pradesh Government Schemes
- HP Government Schemes
- Himachal Pradesh Government Schemes
- Syllabus Prelims Himachal HPAS
  - GENERAL STUDIES
  - CSAT
    - English
    - Hindi
- Syllabus Mains Himachal HPAS
  - English,Hindi,Essay & One Optional
  - HPAS GS 3
  - HPAS GS 2
  - HPAS GS 1
- Himachal HPAS Test Series
- All You need to Know about Himachal HPAS
- HARYANA HCS
  - Haryana Current Affairs
  - Himachal Pradesh Government Schemes
  - HCS Quiz
  - Himachal Pradesh Government Schemes
  - Haryana News Editorial (Hindi/Eng)
  - Answer Writing (Hindi /Eng)
  - Haryana Essay (Hindi/Eng)
  - HR Government Schemes
  - Himachal Pradesh Government Schemes
  - Syllabus Mains Haryana HCS
  - Syllabus Prelims Haryana HCS
  - HCS Prelims Test Series

- [Punjab PCS](#)
- [Punjab PCS Current Affairs](#)
- [Daily Quiz Punjab PCS](#)
- [Punjab News Editorial \(Eng\)](#)
- [Answer Writing \(Eng\)](#)
- [Punjab Essay \(Eng\)](#)
- [All you need to know about Punjab PCS Exam 2021](#)
- [Syllabus Prelims Punjab PCS](#)
  - [General Studies](#)
  - [Prelims GS 1](#)
- [Syllabus Mains Punjab PCS](#)
  - [PCS GS 1](#)
  - [PCS GS 2](#)
  - [PCS GS 3](#)
  - [PCS GS 4](#)
  - [Online PUNJAB PCS TEST SERIES 2020](#)
- [CSAT](#)
  - [CSAT English](#)
  - [Punjab PCS CSAT](#)
- [Concept Mindmaps](#)
  - [Polity \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
  - [Geography \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
  - [Environment \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
  - [History \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
  - [Economics \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
  - [Science and Technology \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
  - [CSAT Concepts \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
  - [Maps \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
  - [Art and Culture \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
  - [International Affairs \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
  - [Punjab PCS Concepts](#)
  - [Himachal HPAS Concepts \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
  - [Haryana HCS Concepts \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
  - [Rajasthan RAS Concepts \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
- [Concept Quiz](#)
  - [Polity Quiz \(Hindi/Eng\)](#)

- Geography Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Environment Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- History Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Economics Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Science and Technology Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- CSAT Concepts Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Maps Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Art and Culture Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Punjab PCS Concepts Quiz
- Himachal HPAS Concepts Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Haryana HCS Concepts Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Rajasthan RAS Concepts Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Mains
  - UPSC Answer Writing (हिंदी/Eng)
  - HPPSC Answer Writing (हिंदी/Eng)
  - Haryana HCS Answer Writing (हिंदी/Eng)
  - Punjab PCS Answer Writing
- Exam Blogs
  - UPSC Exam Blogs
  - Himachal Exam Blogs
  - Punjab exam Blogs
  - Haryana Exam Blogs
  - Rajasthan Exam Blogs
  - E-Magazine
    - E-Magazine for HPAS
    - हिमाचल प्रदेश प्रश्न उत्तर -हिंदी/अंग्रेजी
    - E-Magazine for Punjab PCS
- UPCOMING EXAMS
  - National Exams
  - Himachal Pradesh Exams
  - Punjab Exams
  - Test Series Planner
- About US
- Sign Up
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- facebook 

- instagram 
- youtube 

MENU

Click on Drop Down for Current Affairs

## ***December 3, 2019***

### ***Topic: Biodiversity and Eco-tourism.***

***News:- Keshopur wetland records the arrival of 15000 winged visitors.***

- Keshopur wetland is located in Gurdaspur district of Punjab.
- It is located around 4 km off the Pathankot to Gurdaspur National Highway.
- But the tourist footfall in the wetland is very dismal.

***Let's see the factors responsible for this sorry state of affairs:-***

- Lack of connectivity is there as public transport vehicles rarely operate in this region.
- The condition of the road connecting the wetland and the Pathankot to Gurdaspur National Highway is very poor.
- The road is not properly carpeted and it is merely 10 feet wide.

- Lack of proper signboards and tourism enquiry centres worsen the matters.
- The Tourist Interpretation Centre, built at a cost of rupees 8 crores ( with the help of the Asian Development Bank) has not seen many updations.

### ***Some of the steps that can be taken are:-***

- On the lines of Gujarat tourism campaign, Punjab can start its own campaign to promote tourism through advertisements on televisions and social media.
- The involvement of other stakeholders such as Civil Society, municipalities, business groups, etc should be promoted.
- PPP model of investment could be used where private investments could be invited to the tourism sector.
- The ecotourism circuit theme in Punjab can be remodelled so that neglected sites such as Keshopur wetland could be involved.
- More fiscal resources could be dedicated to the development of dedicated tourist corridors and spots.

(Source:- The Tribune)

## ***Topic: Science and Technology***

### ***News:- Punjab seeks to introduce electric buses in the State***

- Punjab government is seeking to ink a pact with the Japanese government to introduce Electric Vehicles ( EV

) in the state.

- Japanese state of the art quick charges Lithium-ion batteries EVs would be introduced in the state.
- The discussions on the same topic would be held in Progressive Punjab Investors Summit, 2019.

**The Japanese organisation, Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) would participate in the event representing Japan.**

- JETRO is a government-related trade body.
- JETRO promotes mutually beneficial trade and investment between Japanese organisations and other countries.
- Many companies from Japan are participating such as Mitsui, SML Isuzu and Mitsubishi.
- Punjab is also interested in establishing a Centre of excellence in advanced and emerging technologies such as Artificial intelligence and Internet of things.
- For setting up this centre, Japanese assistance would be taken.
- Earlier, India had established an MoU with the electronic ministry of Japan.

***Japanese companies have invested massively in the state already e.g:-***

- Japan's Aichi steel company had acquired an 11.4% stake in Ludhiana based Vardhaman special steels.
- Sumitomo group, which holds a 50% stake in SML Isuzu, also invested around rupees 200 crores in its Nawanshahr plant.
- Similarly, Kansai paint company from Japan had started operations from its new plant at Goindwal Sahib near Amritsar.
- It has a capacity of around 38000 MT per year.

## ***Way forward:-***

- The state can set up its foreign investment policy with the help of all the stakeholders.
- It can improve its logistics and infrastructure. Subsequently, Punjab can further improve its ranking in the Logistics index prepared by Niti Aayog.
- Ease of doing business can further be improved in the state by providing better roads, Electricity etc.
- A huge scope exists in the food processing sector, where corporate farming can go a long way in the diversification of Agriculture and boosting farm incomes.

(Source:- The Tribune)

## ***Topic: Social Welfare.***

**News:-Punjab government to regularise services of the Safai Sewaks of the state**

### ***The issue:-***

- It has been found that the contractors, who employ the Safai karamcharis pay them less than the minimum wages.
- Also, wages are often paid in cash. Whereas the amount should be deposited in the accounts of the karamcharis so that corruption could be reduced.



## ***Now, the government seeks to:-***

- Do away with the contractor system.
- Cancel the licenses of the guilty Contractors.
- Getting the life insurance of the safai karamcharis done.
- Other services such as free medical checkup would also be done ( once in 3 months).
- Also, the Safai Karamchari Commission has been asked to look into the grievances of the safai sewaks in entirety.

(Source:- The Tribune news)

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***Punjab PCS → See Last (Regular Quiz)***

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- National Current Affairs
- UPSC Quiz

- Editorials
- Mindmaps
- E-Magazine
- Free Mock Test
- Prelims Test Series

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- Examlife Online Mock Test
- Examlife Online Mindmaps
- Examlife Online E-Magazine
- Examlife Online Free Mock Test
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- Examlife Online HPAS Prelims Test Series

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- HPAS Quiz
- HP Editorials
- HP Mindmaps
- HPAS E Magazine
- HPAS Free Mock Test
- HPAS Prelims Test Series

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- Examlife Online Prelims Test Series
- Examlife Online Mock Test
- Examlife Online Mindmaps
- Examlife Online E-Magazine

- [Punjab Current Affairs](#)
- [PPSC Quiz](#)
- [Punjab Mindmaps](#)
- [Punjab Editorial](#)
- [Punjab E-Magazine](#)
- [PPSC Free Mock Test](#)
- [PPSC Prelims Test Series](#)

## Punjab PCS

- [Punjab Current Affairs](#)
- [PPSC Quiz](#)
- [Punjab Mindmaps](#)
- [Punjab Editorial](#)
- [Punjab E-Magazine](#)
- [PPSC Free Mock Test](#)
- [PPSC Prelims Test Series](#)

## Haryana HCS

- [Haryana Current Affairs](#)
- [HCS Quiz](#)
- [HCS Editorials](#)
- [HCS Mindmaps](#)
- [HCS E-Magazine](#)
- [HCS Free Mock Test](#)
- [HCS Prelims Test Series](#)

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- [UPSC Current Affairs](#)
- [UPSC Quiz](#)
- [UPSC Editorials](#)
- [UPSC Mindmaps](#)
- [UPSC E-Magazine](#)
- [UPSC Free Mock Test](#)
- [UPSC Prelims Test Series](#)

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- UPSC
- [संघीय सेवाएँ](#)
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